

North Yorkshire County Council

North Yorkshire Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE)

Minutes of the remote meeting held on Tuesday 7th December 2021 at 4.00 pm.

Group A: Christian Denominations and such other religious denominations as, in the Authority's opinion, will appropriately reflect the principal religious traditions in the area: Sian Henderson (Methodist), Bill Kimberling (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints), Sarah Leach (Buddhist), Nasr Moussa Emam (Muslim),

Group B: Church of England: Reverend Simone Bennett and Philippa Boulding (Diocese of York) and Gill Simpson (Diocese of Leeds).

Group C: Teachers Associations: Tara Askew and Stuart Anslow

Group D: Local Authority: County Councillors Robert Heseltine, Janet Jefferson, Patrick Mulligan and Annabel Wilkinson (in the Chair)

Officers present: Adrian Clarke (Principal Education Advisor - Support), Daniel Harry (Democratic Services and Scrutiny Manager), Patrick Duffy (Principal Democratic Services Scrutiny Officer), Heather Russell (Senior Educational Advisor) and Olivia Seymour (Professional Religious Education Adviser)

In attendance: Helen Rivers, Religious Education Adviser at Kirklees Council, in connection with Minute No. 274

Copies of all documents considered are in the Minute Book

268. Welcome and Announcements

County Councillor Annabel Wilkinson welcomed people to the meeting and advised that she is the Member for Swale and the Young People's Champion for the County Council. She was chairing today's meeting as the Chair, Helen Sellers, was unable to attend. She also welcomed Helen Rivers, in connection with the Item on Jamyang Buddhist Centre and Welcome School Accreditation Scheme.

For the benefit of any members of the public or the media viewing the broadcast, the Chair advised that the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education is a Statutory Committee established by the Local Authority.

She added that its main function is to advise and support the Local Authority on matters related to Religious Education for Schools that follow the locally Agreed Syllabus and on Collective Worship.

Four Groups are represented on SACRE:-

Group A – Christian Denominations and such other religious denominations that reflect the principal religious traditions in the area

Group B – The Church of England

Group C – Teacher and Head Teacher Associations

Group D – The Local Authority

Members then introduced themselves.

269. Minutes of last meeting

Resolved –

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 20th October 2021 be confirmed as a correct record.

270 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

271 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Professor John Adams (Humanist), Mohinder Singh Chana and Helen Sellers (Baptist).

272. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

273. North Yorkshire SACRE Annual Report 2020/201 – Adrian Clarke, Principal Education Adviser (Support)

Considered –

The draft Annual Report of SACRE for 2020/2021.

The Chair thanked people for their work on the draft.

Adrian Clarke echoed the Chair's thanks and highlighted the following:-

- The draft follows a new format provided by the National Association of Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education (NASACRE), in conjunction with the Department for Education (DfE). This format will also be used for future years and enable reference back, to follow progress over the years.
- As a result of the Pandemic, the School Year in question was severely affected and, therefore, it has not been possible to include the data we usually would in relation to, for example, examinations.
- Schools were asked to provide information about the state of Religious Education. The response to the questionnaires was limited and this is most likely due to the pressures they face. The Authority will, however, continue to use these as templates to gauge change and developments.

At this stage, following the presentation on the Annual Report, the live broadcast was suspended so that SACRE could break into its four component Groups to consider the matter further.

After 15 minutes, the Chair then recommenced the meeting and the live broadcast.

Nasr Moussa Emam referred to Section 5 of the draft Annual Report about involving SACRE locally. He asked how did this occur – particularly with regard to Ramadan, as he had not seen a briefing to Schools about this. The Professional Religious

Education Adviser stated that this had followed the pattern of previous years – advice had been taken from the Muslim Council of Britain and posted on the website for Schools. This had been referred to at a SACRE meeting.

She added that the reason this Section is included is because it follows the Guidance in the template from NASACRE and the DfE. Next year, with a return to more normal working, it should be possible to be able to expand this Section.

Bill Kimberling confirmed the matter had been mentioned at SACRE and Tara Askew advised that, in her School, there are two sessions a week devoted to the discussion of big World issues. These include Religious Festivals like Ramadan. It could well be that other Schools do the same.

In accordance with the Committee's Constitution, each Group that comprises SACRE exercise a vote on this matter. Therefore, at the Clerk's request, the Chair/Spokespersons for each Group related their decision.

Each Group (A; B; C; and D) advised that their vote was to approve the Annual Report. Groups B and C also expressed their thanks to those involved in producing the Annual Report during current circumstances and commented that they hoped it would inform Schools, going forward.

Therefore, it was

Resolved –

That the Annual Report of North Yorkshire SACRE, 2020/2021, be approved.

274 Jamyang Buddhist Centre, Leeds and Welcome School Accreditation Scheme

Considered –

A presentation by Sarah Leach and Helen Rivers.

A flyer, outlining the offer to Schools and Colleges from the Centre, had been circulated with the papers for the meeting.

Sarah Leach, Buddhist representative on the Committee, informed Members about the Centre. She has developed a three-point plan/path to enhance visits:-

Part One:

Visits in person, which include Q/A Session; a tour; and activities for different Key Stages – concluding with a Meditation Session, followed by a vegetarian lunch.

Part Two

Online – includes a virtual tour and an opportunity to ask questions.

Part Three:

A Bespoke Session - these tend to be used for Universities and Colleges, who may want to examine bigger questions around patriarchy and religion, for example.

The visits are proving popular and Schools are invited to attend. There is no charge – the Centre just ask for a donation.

The Centre has been awarded the Welcome Schools Accreditation, which is delivered by Kirklees Council and Pennine Learning. Helen Rivers, Religious Education Adviser at Kirklees Council, informed Members about this.

The Scheme had been run in Kirklees for three years. The Religious Education Adviser in Kirklees, Alastair Ross, had the idea of linking places of Worship with Schools as a way of bringing them together, very practically, with a light touch accreditation process.

The Scheme provides Schools with confidence that if they go to a Place of Worship that is accredited by the Scheme, they will have a good visit. The intention is to introduce Faith Leaders to the local syllabus and give them an idea what Religious Education feels like in a School. It is a great opportunity for Faith Leaders to learn and meet together and has helped develop the Inter Faith Network in Leeds and Kirklees.

Host Events are held where people from different faiths connect and learn from each other. There have been good outcomes.

This is a small local programme that has blossomed.

The Chair thanked Sarah and Helen for their presentation. If Schools wish to progress this further they should contact Sarah or Helen.

275. North Yorkshire SACRE Development Plan 2020-2022 – Patrick Duffy, Clerk to SACRE

Considered –

The latest draft of the above-mentioned document.

The Clerk advised that this has been completed by the Chair, Helen Sellers, and highlighted the following:-

- There are three priorities which were agreed by SACRE:-
 1. Implementation of the Locally Agreed Syllabus
 2. To operate effectively as a SACRE
 3. Active links between SACRE and the Local Authority
- Across the three priorities generally good progress has been made.
- The Plan expires in 2022 and there will therefore need to be a new Plan - or certainly a refreshed one. Officers will report back to the next meeting on the process for this, which could include seeking a representative from each SACRE Group to comprise a Task and Finish Group to work on the draft.

NOTED.

276. Update by the Professional Religious Education Adviser – Olivia Seymour

Considered –

A report by the Report of the Professional Religious Education Adviser, informing Members of work undertaken since the last meeting.

The report provided details on the following issues:-

- Training
- SACRE Newsletter

The Professional Religious Education Adviser advised that training continues online. More Primary Schools are now engaging in the training.

With regard to the Newsletter, it is hoped to include a spotlight on a SACRE Member in each edition, using the information Members had provided in their profile. Anyone interested should let her know.

It is not possible to visit Schools in a way that we would like, due to the Pandemic. The Newsletter is an opportunity for Schools to find out more about Members of SACRE in a different way until it is possible again for School visits to be undertaken.

Tara Askew said she would be happy for her profile to be included in the next/future Newsletter.

NOTED.

277. Update by the Local Authority – Adrian Clarke, Principal Education Adviser (Support)

Considered -

A report by the Principal Education Officer (Support), which updated Members on developments on the following:-

- Communication and resourcing
- Training
- Support for Senior Leaders and Governors
- Monitoring of RE and the Agreed Syllabus
- Ofsted Inspections

He highlighted the following:-

- The Authority is continuing to plan for next year's training being available online.
- The Professional Religious Education Adviser had been invited to meet the School Inspection Team and Senior Education Advisers. She had provided a briefing on the role of SACRE and Religious Education and Collective Worship in Schools. This had been well received. It increases the Advisers' knowledge base and enables them to ask more probing questions when working with Schools.
- There are 227 Community Schools and 33 Academies who have access to the Agreed Syllabus and associated resources.
- There has been one published Monitoring Visit and two published Inspections this term. There is no mention of Religious Education or Collective Worship but, as reports are published, the Local Authority will extract elements referring to these issues.

The Chair commented that it was a concern that there are not many Ofsted Visits taking place. The Principal Education Adviser advised that the number is increasing, with a focus on safeguarding. There has been an increase in Inspections this term but we will not see the Reports from these until the New Year.

The Professional Religious Education Adviser added that, nationally, we are beginning to see comments in Ofsted Reports relating to deep dives and in terms of personal development and diversity. She will bring examples to the next SACRE

meeting if, by then, we do not have examples from our own Authority as to what Ofsted Reports are saying makes for effective, or ineffective, Religious Education.

NOTED.

278. Rolling Work Programme – Patrick Duffy, Clerk to SACRE

Considered –

The latest rolling Work Programme.

The Clerk reminded Members that at the last meeting SACRE had agreed that this should be a regular Item.

He added that the Work Programme is owned by the Committee; it is their Work Programme. Therefore, either now, or at any stage between meetings, Members are welcome to let him know if they have any suggestions for Items to be added to it.

NOTED.

279. Chair's Update

The Chair reiterated her thanks to officers who had produced reports and said that she would be interested to see the results of the Religious Education exams, which will enable comparisons to be made.

280. Date of Next Meeting

The Chair confirmed that the next meeting would be held on Tuesday 1st February 2022 at 2.00 p.m.

Daniel Harry, Democratic Services and Scrutiny Manager, added that the County Council had decided to continue with remote meetings in view of the significant risks around Covid. This will be reviewed in February 2022. If there is felt to be a compelling reason for a meeting to be held in person, the Chair concerned could take this up with the Chief Executive and Leader of the Council.

Members should work on the basis that meetings will continue remotely.

281. Any other business which, in the opinion of the Chair, should be considered as a matter of urgency

There was none. The Chair thanked people for attending

The meeting concluded at 4.57 p.m.

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