

DONCASTER METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE)

WEDNESDAY, 25TH MAY, 2016

A MEETING of the STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE) was held at the 008 - CIVIC OFFICE, DONCASTER on WEDNESDAY, 25TH MAY, 2016 at 4.30 PM

PRESENT:

Councillors Nuala Fennelly, Sue Knowles, James Hart and Majid Khan

Mrs J Gessler, Mr R Iball, Mrs P Kaur, Rev T McCready (Chair), Ms J Stephenson, Mr S Syed, Mr B Teimoori, Mary Sivaanbu, Mrs J Crowther, Mr M McGuigan, Mrs P Cassidy, Ms N Nicolson, Mr T Griffiths.

Also in attendance:

Jo Moxon, Assistant Director Learning and Achievement

John Duhig, Clerk to SACRE

Akeela Mohammed, Faith and Culture Sub-Group (Pre-meeting)

Rosie Faulkner, Doncaster Safeguarding Children Board (Pre-meeting)

1 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR

Following the resignation of Councillor Kevin Rodgers, Reverend Tom McCready was nominated to be Chair and Bruce Gillham as Vice-Chair of SACRE.

AGREED that Reverend Tom McCready be appointed as Chair and Bruce Gillham as Vice-Chair of SACRE.

The Chair and Members thanked Councillor Kevin Rodgers for his work in managing the Group.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST, IF ANY

No declarations were made at the meeting.

3 PRE-MEETING ITEM

The Group received a presentation from Akeela Mohammed and Rosie Faulkner who were representatives from the Faith and Culture Sub-Group borne from the Children's Safeguarding Board. It was stated that the Sub-Group was devised to support faith groups and promote good standards for the safeguarding of children and to provide support in producing policies. It was highlighted that a

toolkit had been produced to provide a mechanism for training and in 2015 engagement was made with the wider community. The group would continue to liaise with the community and an Action Plan would be produced. It was noted that although this was a small focus group, a good representation from each faith group were members.

With regard to training, it was advised that training at present was provided by the Doncaster Safeguarding Board but that training pool may need to be increased in future. Whilst people had been invited to attend training sessions, representatives had also provided training within the community.

It was noted that there had been an increase in the numbers of black majority churches and Akeela advised members that she would be meeting with Pastor Florence this Friday. She stated that if anyone was aware of any group that would wish to be involved they should contact her following the meeting.

The Chair and Members thanked Akeela and Rosie for their presentation and attendance at the meeting.

#### 4 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 26TH NOVEMBER, 2015

The minutes of the meeting held on 26th November, 2015 were agreed as a true record.

#### 5 MATTERS ARISING

##### **Minute No 10 Analysis OfSTED Reports 2014-2015**

Pat Cassidy reported to Members that page 25 of the agenda pack detailed a letter which had been forwarded to Balby Academy highlighting that SACRE were committed to being supportive and were happy to provide any advice or assistance needed. Pat stated that although no response had been received at present, she would advise Members if the school were to be in touch.

##### **Minute No. 5 Membership and Attendance**

It was suggested that there was still an unbalance with the representative from the Christian faith on Committee A of SACRE. It was noted that Membership and Attendance was detailed at agenda item 7 of today's meeting and an update would be provided at that stage.

#### 6 MEMBERSHIP AND ATTENDANCE

John Duhig presented members with an update on the Membership and attendance of SACRE. He pointed out that at the request of SACRE the recruitment of Committee Members from Teachers' Unions had been reduced. Committee C now had 2 representatives from Teachers Unions, Alice Nicolson and Mr T Griffiths.

John stated that further recruitments had also been made with regard to Committee's A and D as follows:-

**Committee A**

Mary Sivaanbu – Hindu

Lucy Saxton – Roman Catholic

**Committee D**

Councillor Majid Khan

It was noted that there were still 2 vacancies available on SACRE for the Church of England faith. Mrs J Crowther who represents Church of England stated that Hugh Thomas from the Diocese had been approached regarding further representatives and she was awaiting a response.

AGREED that the update be noted.

7 **SACRE BRIEFING 11**

Members had received a copy of the SACRE Briefing paper and were asked to make comments. Pat Cassidy made comments to a few items highlighted within the report which were as follows:-

The implication for SACRE's detailed at page 9 of the report presented some views and ideas on the future of SACRE's. She stated that a review of an agreed syllabus must take place every 5 years which is the current legislative position. It was advised that until notified otherwise, the current law remains in place that Local Authorities have to appoint and maintain a SACRE as set out in statute and statutory instruments.

In relation to the DfE audit of SACRE annual reports, it was advised since 2011 there had been no analysis of SACRE annual reports following the abolition of the Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency. It was now suggested that the DfE would produce an analysis of the reports and a new template would be produced. It was highlighted that although the report template would be changing, NASACRE had recommended the use of the report template currently shown on their website.

In relation to Academies and their co-operation in Religious Education, it was asked how SACRE would tackle this in the future. Jo Moxon, Assistant Director Learning and Achievement stated that the Governing Body need to be reminded of their duty to share information and co-operate with the Local Authority by being an advocate for high quality education. It was suggested that the Governing Bodies for Academies be forwarded the report requesting them to read and respond to it. It was noted that if a response wasn't received then this would be reported to the Regional Schools Commissioner.

AGREED that:-

- (1) the report be noted; and

- (2) a letter be sent to all Academies seeking a response to the report. The data/information Team at the Council be asked to analyse the responses with a view to sharing with all schools to identify useful information and identify training requirements.

## 8 GOVERNING BODY AGENDA ITEM - SUMMER TERM 2016

The Group considered the report which raised concerns on the analysis of the Ofsted reports which revealed that three of the secondary Academies in Doncaster had entered no students for examination in Religious Studies at KS4 and 5 and other academies entered less than 40 students.

It was stated that Governing Bodies would be required to nominate a Governor with responsibility for RE which would ensure that the statutory/contractual arrangements for RE were in place.

A query was made in relation to what the process would be following academies sending their syllabus into the authority. It was stated that an analysis would be carried out which would highlight any gaps. It had been made clear to academies that SACRE were there to support and provide advice to them and once the information was gathered further discussion would take place with SACRE members.

It was pointed out that all academies differed, whilst some had expanded their curriculum to provide further provision of Religious Education due to popular demand, others were unsure of the subject knowledge and there was a fear of not knowing which needed to be broken down. It was also noted that it would also depend on the teaching staff of the school and whether they were enthusiastic towards Religious Education.

### AGREED that:-

- (1) the Group note the report;
- (2) a letter be forwarded to all Academies requesting a response to the Governors Legal Responsibility for Religious Education paper;
- (3) the Data/Information team at the Council be requested to analyse the responses; and
- (4) the data would be forwarded with all schools to identify useful information that can shared and outline any training requirements.

## 9 CONFERENCES ATTENDED

Revered Tom McCready shared his thoughts and comments with the Group

regarding his attendance at NASACRE conference and AGM in London on the 17th May. On reflection, the conference was encouraging and he had been impressed with the attendees. He also expressed that he felt that not enough attention had been given to multicultural element of religious education and whilst students/pupils were learning from their teachers they were also learning from each other. He pointed out that it was important to promote multicultural understanding and suggested that a letter be forwarded by SACRE seeking the inclusion of this matter on the agenda at the next NASACRE meeting.

Reverend Tom McCready stated that with regard to the AGM that he attend he would produce a report and forward to the Group prior to the next meeting.

Pat Cassidy shared with the Group the outcome from the Inspiring RE Conference attended by Bruce Gillham on the 4th March in Rotherham. A record of the conference had been forwarded to members of the Group and further copies were made available.

The following points were highlighted within the paper:-

- Imaginative RE;
- Encouraging deeper thinking about 'Values' and
- Assessing RE after 'Levels' and Assessing where the subject is heading.

With regard to assessing where the subject was heading, it was noted that there was a strong feeling that this was rather confusing and to some extent the invention of an interim model seemed to demonstrate the lack of comprehensibility of the new approach adopted nationally and perhaps the weakness of current centralised thinking.

It was noted that although the Religious network was outside of the Local Authorities influence on Academies, steps had been made into looking at how Religious Education can be accessed and looking at extending down into primary schools.

AGREED that:-

- (1) the Group noted the attendance at the conferences;
- (2) a letter promoting multicultural understanding be forwarded to NASACRE for inclusion on their next agenda; and
- (3) a report on the NASACRE Conference & AGM on the 17<sup>th</sup> May be produced and forwarded to Members prior to the next meeting.

## 10 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

AGREED that the public and press be excluded from the remaining proceedings of the meeting as the reports contained exempt and confidential information.

11 PRESENTATION: 2015 RELIGIOUS STUDIES EXAMINATION RESULTS

John Duhig presented the report to the Group which outlined the national picture from the Religious Education Council. Detailed discussion took place with regard to the up-take of Full courses and short courses. Concerns were raised with regard to removal of short courses from the Department for Education (DfE) performance tables which were having a serious and negative impact on the total number of pupils taking religious studies.

The key outcomes for Religious Education in England and Wales at KS4 in 2015 were also highlighted within the document which showed that Doncaster mirrored the national picture highlighting a decline in the uptake of religious studies. John highlighted a healthy improvement in relation to AS/A level figures which were hugging the national level and this was seen as a positive increase which showed the growing status of religious studies as a subject for Higher Education entry.

In relation to short course for 2016/17, it was reported that as yet DfE hadn't decided on what procedure would be followed. John stated that he had been invited to attend a meeting to discuss the way forward on the 7th June and would feedback any information to the Group in due course.

AGREED that the update be noted

12 DRAFT SACRE ANNUAL REPORT 2014-15

The Group were presented with the Draft Annual Report for SACRE and were asked to highlight any amendments they may have.

AGREED that:-

(1) Page 39, 4<sup>th</sup> paragraph to read as follows:-

Overall, compared with 2012, 85,000 more pupils in England will complete key stage 4 without having gained a qualification in Religious Studies; and

(2) Page 44, Membership 2nd paragraph, the number of vacancies on Committee A be shown

13 INFORMATION EXCHANGE

Pat Cassidy reported to the Group that she had been informed by Sandra Norburn that a new humanist website had been developed and it was the intention for Sandra to provide a presentation on the features of the website at the next meeting.

Members were advised of the exemplary attendance by Doncaster teachers at

the recent Inspiring RE Conference for Teachers. It was suggested that the good attendance was the result of the efficient networking of Doncaster teachers.

It was noted that EMTAS were tasked with producing an advice sheet on Ramadan and a copy would be forwarded to SACRE members in due course.

Reverend Tom McCready provided the Group with a brief update on his work schedule with Doncaster Interfaith. He stated that he would be relieving his responsibility for publishing and promoting events as a piece of work which had come to light would be taking up a considerable amount of his time but highlighted that he would still be heavily involved with the up and coming event for Ramadan. He explained that following the end of Ramadan he would be inviting people for a meal at his home and the invites would be forwarded shortly.

A suggestion was made to invite teachers to the SACRE meetings. It was reported that this was the case some time ago and teachers would attend SACRE meetings as observers. It was agreed that this Teacher/Pupils attendance at SACRE meetings be placed on the agenda for the next meeting.

In relation to the discussion on training of teachers, it was noted that 90% of schools had membership with the Partnership in Learning. It was agreed that SACRE receive a presentation from Partnerships in Learning at a future meeting.

#### 14 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

AGREED that the next meeting of the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education be held on Tuesday 29th November, 2016 in Room 008 at the Civic Office at 4.00 p.m.