

DONCASTER METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE)

THURSDAY, 12TH NOVEMBER, 2020

A MEETING of the STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE) was held at the MICROSOFT TEAMS - VIRTUAL MEETING on THURSDAY, 12TH NOVEMBER, 2020, at 4.30 pm.

PRESENT:

Chair – John Gilliver

Councillor Derek Smith and Sally Faulkner (Teacher Representative)

Also in attendance:-

Paul Ruane - DMBC, Head of Learning Provision
Sameena Choudry – DMBC, Learning Standards and Effectiveness Officer
Lat Blaylock – External, RE Today

11 Apologies for absence.

Apologies for absence were received from the Vice-Chair, Father Dan Parkinson, Sandra Norburn, Tara Moxon and Pahani Kaur.

12 Quorum of the Meeting

It was noted that there were not a quorum of Members in attendance at the meeting to hold an official meeting. However, it was agreed that the meeting would continue on an informal basis to consider the agenda, with all decisions formally ratified at the next Quorate meeting of the Committee.

Announcement by the Chair

The Chair informed the Committee that the Jewish Representative on the Committee, Carole Cahm, had recently resigned as she was relocating to live in another country. Councillor Gilliver placed on record his thanks to Mrs Cahm for her contribution to the Committee in the past and wished her well for the future.

AGREED that a letter of thanks on behalf of the Committee be sent to Mrs Cahm.

14 Declarations of Interest, if any.

There were no declarations made at the meeting.

15 Minutes of the meeting held on 27th February, 2020.

AGREED that the minutes of the meeting be approved as a true record.

16 Matters Arising

Any updates farther to the information provided in the minutes was given with the following points raised:

- Collective worship – Luton and Wigan had produced guidance on this, and it was being reworked to be provide support to Doncaster Schools;
- It was noted that a number of actions had not been progressed during the past months since the last meeting, which was largely down to Covid, as stability was needed in education to move forward with a number of issues, and these would be deferred until a future date when schools were more settled again.
- Lat Blaylock had proposed a training date for the 3 December, 2020 and to date, uptake had been very low. Schools had been contacted directly, but again if there was no greater take up, this would be deferred until the spring term when hopefully things would be more settled.
- The Chair reported that they had been given funding to send two representatives to the SACRE Conference. However due to the impact of COvid-19, this had been held virtually and as the Members who had intimated they would attend, were not in attendance at the meeting, an update on this would be received at the next meeting.

17 SACRE National Update: Autumn 2020

Lat Blaylock was in attendance at the meeting and provided the Committee with an update on Religious Education across the country. The following points were raised:-

- GCSE results – this had been an extraordinary situation and whilst there had been 1% fall in entries for Religious Education this was positive in comparison with the falls for History and Geography which were larger.
- Antiracist RE Project – this had been run through the Summer and around 700 schools had picked up this project to promote a more positive outlook.
- Black History Month had been mirrored in Education with Black Religious History Month which was positive and a move in understanding the wider racial injustices across society.
- Covid-19 was widely spoken of in relation to its impact on schools. In terms of GCSEs in the coming year, schools had been alerted that they would need to evidence the grades of students as it was uncertain yet how final grades would be calculated.
- The Government Minister Nick Gibb had confirmed that it was important that Religious Education was still taught in schools throughout Covid.
- Additionally in relation to Covid-19, materials had been made available for students in Doncaster Schools who were self-isolating.

The update given by Lat was informative and interesting and provided a useful update for the Committee.

Members had a discussion on the issues raised with some thought provoking points raised.

AGREED that the update provided be noted.

18 Key priorities for SACRE in supporting educational settings during Covid-19 and how. (For Discussion)

The Committee were provided with a presentation that informed Members on the key priorities in the coming months following the onset of the Covid-19 Pandemic since March 2020.

The pandemic had obviously caused a lot of turbulence and uncertainty within school settings, with many children out of education for a number of months, and moving forward the key priority was keeping schools open and ensuring as many children as possible were attending throughout this period. It was important to safeguard vulnerable children and ensure that school remained a safe haven for them to go to.

A raft of measures had been put in to place to ensure that the mental health and well-being of children was paramount, and it was noted the Religious Education had a key part to play in terms of this and helping children from reception through to 18 feel safe and make sense of the ongoing situation.

Religious Education aimed to provide emotional security, empathy and provoked critical thinking, which was an essential part of the recovery curriculum being undertaken in schools.

Discussions had been held previously with regard to identifying key priorities for SACRE in terms of supporting RE but presently, there were practicalities whilst Covid-19 was ongoing in terms of how to address the priorities.

It was important that agreement was reached with regard to what schools should be doing for the remainder of the academic year and whilst it was unlikely that schools would be able to cover as much as normal, it would still enable schools to undertake some of the curriculum.

AGREED that the information be noted by the Committee.

19 Date and time of next meeting

Some discussion was held with regard to future meetings of SACRE and it was acknowledged that the next meeting at least would be held virtually. This date would also be utilised to host the Primary Teacher Group meeting prior to SACRE.

AGREED that the next meeting of the Committee be held on 25 February, 2021 at 4.30pm via Microsoft Teams.

CHAIR: _____

DATE: _____