

DONCASTER METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE)

THURSDAY, 10TH NOVEMBER, 2022

A MEETING of the STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE) was held at the on THURSDAY, 10TH NOVEMBER, 2022, at 4.30 pm.

PRESENT:

Chair - Mr Bob Kiddle

Vice-Chair - Councillor Glynis Smith

Councillors Tracey Moran, and Ms Danielle Heath, Harvey Kasein, Mr S Syed, Tara Moxon, Sally Faulkner, Andy Wright and Joel Ward

APOLOGIES:

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Sue Knowles, Mrs Pahani Kaur and Mr B Teimoori

42 **Declarations of Interest, if any**

There were no declarations made at the meeting.

43 **Minutes of the meeting held on 30 June, 2022**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education held on 30 June, 2022, be noted as a true record.

44 **Welcome to our new clerk - Stephanie Douglas**

The Chair, Bob Kiddle, extended a welcome to Stephanie Douglas, Head of Early Intervention and Localities, who was supporting SACRE following the departure of Paul Ruane.

45 **SACRE Appointments and Membership Update**

The Committee received a report that advised of the appointment of new Members onto SACRE.

SACRE is composed of four groups composing of different religious representations:-

- Christian Denominations and other religions
- The Church of England
- Teacher Associations
- The Local Authority (Elected Members)

There have been a number of occasions of SACRE in the past where the meeting has been inquorate due to lack of adequate representation across the four groups and by strengthening the membership would hopefully address this issue.

Stephanie Douglas extended a warm welcome to the new members present at the meeting and thanked them for joining the Committee.

RESOLVED that:-

- 1) the Committee note the appointment of the following representatives onto Doncaster's Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) :-
 - Vanessa Gregory – Church of England representative
 - Amy Roddam – Methodist representative
 - Sally Faulkner – Christian denominations and other religions representative
- 2) the Committee note the current Membership and vacancies attached at Appendix 1.

46 NASACRE

The Chair, Bob Kiddle informed the Committee that they had re-joined NASACRE (National Association of Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education) and now they were members of this organisation once again, had access to all training courses and webinars for no additional cost.

This was a brilliant tool to be utilised and would provide a lot of useful and helpful information and training and the Chair urged all Members where possible, to access this and take some time to explore what was on offer. On the NASACRE Website itself, there was a lot of data to look at and the log-in for Members was provided as follows if they wished to join any of the courses:-

Log in – Members
Password – 22N@sAcRE23

Members were pleased to hear that this membership had been reinstated as it was a fantastic organisation with many useful tools and resources.

47 RE Today National Report

Lat Blaylock, advisor to SACRE, presented an update from RE Today, which outlined the key issues nationally at the present time.

Points of interest to note included the following:-

- Inclusive Judaism – a range of classroom resources were offered to schools to encourage inclusivity and diversity in order that many aspects of the Jewish faith were understood
- Free Webinars for Primary and Secondary ECTs – Early Career Teachers were offered a number of courses and webinars, providing the chance to talk to more experienced teachers giving advice on classroom strategies
- GCSE and A level Numbers – it was noted that whilst the number of students studying RE at GCSE had risen slightly, numbers at A Level had however dropped

- Grants for teaching Christianity – applications could be made for the award of £600 to encourage the teaching of religious education in state funded schools across England and Wales.
- NATRE Spirited Arts – new themes had been announced for this year's competition and schools across Doncaster were encouraged to enter
- Birmingham Arts Society – 18 short films had been produced which provided virtual visits to different faith organisations provided a great alternative to visiting in person if this was not viable.
- Farmington Scholarship – this was a great opportunity for teachers to study at Oxford University whilst cover was provided for their own teaching post at no additional cost to their school. This was an excellent opportunity to promote to local teachers.

Lat Blaylock reminded the Committee that there were a number of live links within the document and they were encouraged to click on these and look at the information available.

RESOLVED that the RE Today National Report be noted.

48 Inter Local Authority SEND event

Stephanie Douglas outlined to the Committee that a SEND Training Session was being organised and Anne Krisman, a national expert in this field was coming to deliver this to teachers across Doncaster who wished to attend.

This was being held on 2nd March, 2023 starting at 9.30 am, and invites would also be extended to other SACRES in the region if they wished for any of their teachers to attend. Rotherham and Sheffield had expressed an interest and confirmation would be sent out once the arrangements were finalised.

49 Primary CPD and involving secondary schools

The Committee had a discussion regarding Continued Professional Development, following the session held earlier in the day prior to the Meeting.

Lat Blaylock provided 3 days to the authority each year in order to provide training and development to teachers and today's session had been used to visit the Gurdwara and the Mosque in Doncaster. There had been a huge turnout for the visit with 27 teachers from the Borough attending. All members of the Committee commented that they thoroughly enjoyed the visit, found it very informative and were warmly welcomed with their questions answered. It was definitely felt to be a worthwhile visit and one that could be particularly useful for school visits.

One point noted was the lack of secondary school teachers who had taken up the opportunity and this was an area that SACRE needed to target moving forward.

RESOLVED that the feedback from the visit be noted.

50 The Doncaster REsources project

The Chair provided an update with regard to the Doncaster Resources project, following some work undertaken by a sub-group created in relation to the issues.

A questionnaire had been created and circulated to all Members of the Committee, which feedback was now requested on, prior to rolling this out. The proposal was that the completed

questionnaires would be collated and a directory created with all the information of the representatives on SACRE for use by schools when arranging visits to talk about different religions, faiths and beliefs.

The questionnaire had been attached to the agenda for information if any Members had not seen this previously.

The Committee had a robust debate on this item and a number of suggestions were put forward as to how to strengthen the questionnaire and what processes could be put in place to ensure this was a good resource for schools.

It was reported that NASACRE offered an online training course for visiting schools with a kite mark accreditation and was a very useful tool for all Members to complete and the Chair urged everyone to take this on.

Queries were raised as to whether this questionnaire and database would be extended to other faiths that were not currently represented on SACRE, as this could be useful. However, at the present time, it was determined that it would be restricted to SACRE members alone but this would be revisited in the future.

RESOLVED that:-

- 1) the questionnaire be moved into a more user friendly version of the form; and
- 2) The information from the questionnaires be used to complete a database of information for schools to utilise in the future.

51 Communication

A discussion was held with regard to communication amongst members of the Committee in order that information was shared in an accessible and clear way between meetings. It was proposed that a 'Whats App' Group be created with all members in order that any questions, issues, concerns or suggestions could be raised when needed.

Additionally, it was suggested that a database of all teachers or contacts for Religious Education in both primary and secondary schools across the Borough be created in order that communication channels could be opened up in order to start conversations and promote Religious Education further. Levels of students studying RE across the borough were falling, with some Doncaster Schools entering none for GCSE level for the last three years, which was worrying. This demonstrated that support was needed to deliver this outcome and SACRE hoped they would be able to help schools achieve this.

RESOLVED that the issues raised be noted.

52 Our short, medium and longer term priorities

SACRE held a discussion in terms of their priorities moving forward, and spoke of how they wanted the meetings to run.

In terms of the short term, agenda setting would be undertaken by the Chair, Vice Chair along with Steph Douglas and Lat Blaylock to ensure there was meaningful content and discussion.

Guest speakers would be invited to attend the meetings, whether these be students or teachers or representatives from the Church to highlight any issues or areas of concern.

It was noted that thought may be given to changing the venue of the meetings, with schools hosting a session if possible in order to engage further.

In the longer term, SACRE would look to monitor the quality of RE teaching in Doncaster and work to provide solutions to problems, and support schools where it was needed. Additionally, they would look to spread best practice and promote examples of good work, identifying excellence.

Other points raised during the course of the discussion included:-

- Celebrating excellence with a SACRE Awards Evening
- Visiting skills and encouraging a student and teacher voice
- Agreed Syllabus Conference – put together a new syllabus for 2024 – this would mean agreeing if and what changes needed to be made
- Production of an annual report
- Introduce networking meetings for teachers to share ideas and problems

RESOLVED that the above points be noted and added to the work plan for future meetings.

53 Date and time of next meeting

RESOLVED that the next meeting of the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education be held on Thursday, 23rd February, 2023 at 4.30 pm.

CHAIR:_____

DATE:_____