

Lancashire Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE)

Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday, 11th February, 2019 at 10.00 am in Committee Room 'D' (The Henry Bolingbroke Room) - County Hall, Preston

Attendees

Mr Peter Martin (Chair)

McMullen, (Representing the Roman Catholic Church)

Tailor

O'Rourke, (Representing the Church of England)

Horobin, (Representing the Blackburn Diocesan Board of Education)

Sage, (Representing the Church of England)

Wilson, (Representing the Church of England)

Mrs J Hamid

Gordon, Teacher Association ATL

Qureshi, Islam

Ibrahim, Islam

Lancashire County Council

A Cheetham

Ms S Malik

Y Motala

Observers

Craig, (Representing the Bahá'í Faith)

Officers

Mrs A Lloyd

Mrs J Hamid replaced Mrs K Cooper and Mrs Sajda Majeed replaced Mr Afrasiab Anwar for this meeting.

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Mrs Harsha Y Shukla, Joanne Harris, Ms Julie Roper, Sally Elton-Chalcraft, Mufti Javid Pathan, Mrs Tibret Safraz and County Councillor Peter Steen.

2. Minutes of the last meeting held on 26 November 2018

The minutes of the last meeting held on 26 November 2018 were agreed as a true and accurate record.

3. Secretary of State's Response to the Final Report on the Commission on Religious Education

The Chair, Peter Martin, asked SACRE members if there should be a response to the Secretary of State's response to the final report on the Commission on Religious Education.

It was stated that the Religious Education Council was disappointed with the response. It was vital to promote the Commission's work wherever possible. Members felt the Commission was the way forward for a successful long term future. They felt that the response from the Secretary of State was a missed opportunity and that he was looking for an excuse not to do anything. The response told SACRE nothing new and there was a lack of subject specialism now. There was nothing about the future of SACREs.

It was pointed out that the Lancashire SACRE would be able to make a comment on the response through the NASACRE. It was decided draft response to the Secretary of State's letter would be brought to the next SACRE meeting in April.

4. Report on Training Opportunities and Advice Provided to Schools Since the Start of Term

The Chair welcomed Alison Lloyd, School Advisor, to the meeting. Alison updated SACRE on training opportunities and advice provided to schools since the start of term.

There was positive feedback on the free training provided to teachers who had contacted the LA officer to express difficulties in the delivery of the Agreed Syllabus.

The postponed pupil debate would be reconvened in March.

Three primary school teachers had been invited to join an Exemplification Working Party led by Joanne Harris. Their schools had be reimbursed for supply cover.

Training had been provided by Joanne Harris and Lat Blaylock, on how to undertake accurate assessment within Religious Education using the new syllabus materials. The course had been fully booked with 24 attendees and the feedback had been positive.

Network meetings were taking place as follows:

Thursday 28th March – Hapton Primary, Burnley
Wednesday 20th March – Lea Community Primary, Preston
Monday 1st April – Bowerham Primary, Lancaster

Thursday 25th April – Pinfold Primary, Scarisbrick

Bespoke consultancies had been bought in by St Nicholas CE Primary, Newchurch and the 'Shares' Cluster, Skelmersdale.

The Chair, Peter Martin, thanked Alison Lloyd and Joanne Harris for the support they provided to schools and teachers.

In terms of advice provided, a Preston school had sought advice on how to respond to a request for withdrawal from a parent seeking alternative Religious Education provision for their child.

A school in Chorley had requested advice on how to respond to requests for Muslim pupils to pray in school on Fridays. It was against LCC policy to allow children to be taken out of school for Friday prayers. The prayers took approximately five minutes and it was felt schools must be willing and open to provide a quiet sheltered room for this purpose. A rational solution had to be found.

5. Sample New Exemplification Units

Alison Lloyd had provided sample new exemplification units to the SACRE. One of the units was regarding Sikhs and how did they express their beliefs and values. This gave pupils the opportunity to explore how Sikhs conveyed their beliefs and commitments in the way they lived their lives and through symbols which were observable expressions of faith. Pupils should also have opportunities to reflect on important questions such as how humans showed commitments to their values and communities, and issues of equality and justice.

Another sample unit was regarding Hindus and what might Hindus learn from stories about Krishna. This enabled pupils to examine how Hindu truths were transmitted using stories from revered literature. Opportunities were provided for pupils to explore some forms of Hindu literature and the beliefs and practices associated with a key story. Pupils should also be encouraged to consider whether there were links between the truths and values revealed in the stories and their own beliefs, values and experiences. It was important to share these new units that were being written.

Members enquired where Religious Sex Education sat as it did not fall within the remit of SACRE. It was a separate subject area. Members still asked why SACRE was detached from the subject as it was covered at GCSE level. Carolyn Reade was attending an upcoming conference around this.

Peter pointed out that Ofsted was changing the way it looked at what made a school good. Moral issues dealt with at key stage 4 were bound by the Equality Act. These moral issues had to be academic and rigorous, not confessional. There were problems in communities and families if schools were not equipped to deal with these issues. Members enquired if there could be SACRE involvement.

It was suggested that an item for the next SACRE meeting was to see what other North West SACREs were doing.

In terms of religion and belief, the religious background of each pupil had to be taken into account. This could maybe be looked at an upcoming QSS meeting.

6. QSS Agenda

There had been no QSS agenda in January. For the next QSS agenda there would be included a draft response to the Secretary of State for Education, Damian Hinds' letter.

There would also be an item on Withdrawal Policies and an item on the SRE document. It was thought a good idea to possibly invite an SRE advisor to the next QSS meeting.

The Chair, Peter Martin, stated he would like the QSS to be more of a working party.

7. Building Bridges Report

SACRE was informed that 14 schools had signed up to the Burnley Building Bridges – Interfaith Schools Project. The project had gone live at the end of November 2018. The number of schools pending was 26.

There were various ways of delivery by Burnley Building Bridges. They offered three faith visits and three assemblies. They also offered trips to places of worship. There was equalities training available as well as links to religious values.

It was noted that some schools had experienced difficulties in booking onto Building Bridges events. It would be a good idea to share local venues and it was pointed out that some of these venues had easy online booking systems.

SACRE felt that the Burnley Building Bridges – Interfaith Schools Project sounded exciting and healthy, and was glad it was taking off.

8. SACRE Representation and Membership Update

It was noted there was a lack of Jewish representation and Buddhism representation on the Lancashire SACRE. There was no representation from the Sikh community either. It was thought to be useful to contact the Preston Faith Covenant and the Preston Faith Forum to solve this. Another useful contact would be Gulab Singh at the Sikh Education Council.

9. School Visit - Final Preparations

SACRE members were informed that Carolyn Reade and Julie Roper were going to visit a school in Lancaster in February. Alison Lloyd asked if it would be possible to have a report for the Lancashire SACRE Newsletter along with photographs of the visit.

10. NASACRE Conference Information

Members were informed that the next NASACRE conference would be taking place on 22 May in Manchester after in the past being generally held in London. The conference would be useful to attend to get a flavour of what was going with SACREs in other parts of the country.

11. Newsletter - Gathering Content

SACRE members were informed that some topics in the next newsletter would include:

- Mrs Joan O'Rourke's report on her visit to Marsden Heights College would be in the next newsletter.
- An evaluation of Lat Blaylock's training course on how to undertake accurate assessment within Religious Education using the new syllabus materials.
- Information on John Wilson's withdrawal process.
- A brief comment on the Secretary of State for Education's response letter to the final report on the Commission on Religious Education.

Alison Lloyd was aiming at two newsletters a year.

12. Lancashire Youth Voice

There was no report on Lancashire Youth Voice.

13. Members' News

Seminars were being held with Lancashire Mosques. On 26 March there was Seminar on the universe, explaining how it started and where we are at now.

14. Observers' Contributions

There were no observers' contributions.

15. Correspondence

There was no correspondence.

16. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the SACRE would be held at 10:00am on Monday 29 April 2019 in Cabinet Room D – The Henry Bolingbroke Room, at County Hall, Preston.

Paul Bond
Clerk to the SACRE

County Hall
Preston