

Lancashire Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE)

**Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday, 25th November, 2019 at 10.00 am
in Committee Room 'C' - The Duke of Lancaster Room, County Hall, Preston**

Attendees

Teachers Associations	Mr Peter Martin (Chair) Ms J Gordon (ATL)
Higher Education Sector	Sally Elton-Chalcraft
LASGB	Mrs K Cooper
NAHT	Ms K Stephens
Church of England	Mr J Wilson Mrs H Sage
Roman Catholic	Mr B McMullan
Jewish	Mr R Ash
Hinduism	Mr I Tailor
Building Bridges Burnley	Sajda Majeed
Lancashire County Council	County Councillor A Cheetham County Councillor Y Motala

Observers

The Bahá'í Faith	Dr Malcolm Craig
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Officers

Mrs A Lloyd – Advisor (School Improvement), Lancashire County Council

Mrs M Mahmood – Senior Democratic Services Officer, Lancashire County Council

Mr G Harbison – Committee Support Officer, Lancashire County Council

1. Annual General Meeting: Election of Chair and Deputy Chair

Peter Martin was proposed and seconded to be elected as Chair and County Councillor Yousuf Motala was proposed and seconded to be elected as Vice Chair.

2. Guest Speaker: Paul Smalley - Effective Practice of SACRE's

The Chair, Peter Martin, welcomed Paul Smalley, Course Leader for BA (Hons) Secondary R.E. with QTS at Edge Hill University and Chair of NASACRE, to the meeting. Along with Paul were also seven students from Edge Hill University.

Paul stated that it was good to have a representative from Lancashire on the NASACRE.

The SACRE was informed that there had been a survey carried out in 2017 asking what SACREs did. SACREs were primarily engaged with working with schools regarding Religious Education. It was noted that around 80% of SACREs stated that they wanted to play a wider role in relation to community cohesion.

SACREs helped each local education authority create a local syllabus for Religious Education in their community schools that taught more than just one religion. SACREs also provided advice to schools and school providers. They should also be in touch with schools' needs.

The new guidance stated that schools and local authorities should consult with parents and the wider community in terms of implementing the new curriculum. Non-statutory programmes of study for each of Key Stages 1 – 4 should be developed at a national level at a similar level of detail as those for history and geography, etc., in the national curriculum. These should be ratified by the Department for Education. It was also stated that the syllabus should be made public.

It was also stated that the subject of Religious Education should explore the important role that religious and non-religious worldviews played in all human life.

The best SACREs were truly representative and well attended. SACREs had to have the funds they needed to support schools. This was essential if SACREs stood any chance of doing more than just token meetings. The Government was continuing to provide local authorities with funding to support SACREs through the Central School Services Block from 2018/19 onwards. Local authorities were expected to ensure that SACREs were funded adequately to perform their duties.

The Lancashire SACRE was informed that under the new Education Inspection Framework, which set out how Ofsted would inspect state schools, further education and skills providers, non-association independent schools and registered early years settings in England, Ofsted was inspecting how RE was

delivered. Ofsted would then report on which schools were good at delivering RE and which were inadequate.

The question of what Lancashire could do more to help the SACRE was raised. It was stated that a Westhill/NASACRE Award could be applied for. The Westhill/NASACRE Award encouraged schools to engage with diversity through projects which would generate compelling learning experiences in RE for young people, relevant to today's context.

Overall it was felt by the Lancashire SACRE that the Commission on RE Report was very negative. It was noted that the high point for studying RE was in 2016. The numbers studying RE at 'A' Level were now smaller. It was pointed out that it was a statutory requirement for a local authority to deliver RE in schools.

3. Task Group Exercise - Curriculum Intent: What are the Aims and Vision of Religious Education?

The SACRE divided itself into three working groups with the Edge Hill students. The topic for discussion was:

'What was the school's vision and purpose for Religious Education?'

- Was this understood and shared by all stakeholders?
- How is this evident in lessons and around the school?
- How does the vision for Religious Education fit into the aims and vision for the whole school?

Points raised from discussions were:

Group 1

- Knowledge and understanding of principal religious, world views and contemporary issues.
- RE and worldviews should be inclusive.
- RE and worldviews should provide opportunities to participate in community engagement reflected in the whole school ethos.
- RE and world views was about so much more than passing an exam.
- Need a creative and experiential of RE.
- Learning about religion and worldviews was vital but learning from was important to ensure our young people could completely navigate through everyday life.

Group 2

- Personal development.
- Learn about faith.
- Explore, learn and develop more options.
- Tolerance and respect.

- Education and involvement of parents.
- Need 5 year reviews = life chances
- Section48 to balance being exam driven (from the document Paul Smalley referred to)
- Worldviews – No good changing name if the content was not changed.

Group 3

- To get this discussion going Robert Ash, the Jewish Representative, asked the students to think about what they would respond to a group of secondary school students who had asked the question what was religion and why were we here?
- Was religion about belief or was there more to religion
- Why? What was it about being human?

4. Apologies

Apologies were received from County Councillors Azhar Ali and Peter Steen, Ms Lisa Horobin, Mrs Joan E O'Rourke, Carolyn Reade, Ms Julie Roper, Mrs Tibret Safraz, Mrs Harsha Y Shukla and Mr Francis Williams.

5. Minutes of the last meeting held on 7 October 2019

The minutes of the last meeting held on 7 October 2019 were agreed as a true and accurate record.

6. 10 Minute Break and Networking Opportunity

No break was taken.

7. Draft Annual Report

The Lancashire SACRE Annual Report was circulated to members. Alison Lloyd informed the SACRE members that this was a first draft of the annual report. The annual report needed to be sent to the NASACRE and the DfE by January 2020. It was noted that no Key Stage 4 data had been received yet.

Lancashire SACRE members were asked to take the draft annual report away with them to read through. They were asked to email any comments or recommendations for the annual report to Misbah Mahmood, Senior Democratic Services Officer at Lancashire County Council.

8. Building Bridges Burnley - Update Report

Building Bridges Burnley (BBB) continued to deliver assemblies, received visits from Faith Leaders in schools and facilitated places of worship visits. BBB were also involved in Interfaith Week celebrations

BBB continued to support schools through the 'Faith Friends' programme. The 'Faith Friends' supported the schools with RE bringing the curriculum to life by making connections between life and learning. The 'Faith Friends' interacted with the pupils and acted as positive role models to demonstrate that two people of different faiths, backgrounds and cultures could be friends.

BBB were working with local faith organisations and schools to tackle issues around Relationships and Sex Education, halal food provision and attendance. BBB were also working towards raising standards and breakdown stereotypes through school and community linking, contributing to community cohesion in the schools and colleges and therefore in the wider community.

Sajda Majeed, representing Building Bridges Burnley, informed the Lancashire SACRE that in this quarter 29 primary schools, 1 secondary school and 1 college had signed up the Building Bridges Burnley project.

It was pointed out that there was a problem with BBB's email system and Sajda Majeed would send a new email address for BBB to Alison Lloyd. This new email address would be uploaded on to the SACRE website.

The Chair, Peter Martin, was delighted that Lancashire SACRE was working closely with Building Bridges Burnley and that BBB had a good relationship with Lancashire County Council.

9. Newsletter

Alison Lloyd informed everyone that at the last QSS meeting it was decided to do a small write up on each SACRE member and have a photograph of them for each edition of the SACRE Newsletter.

John Wilson informed the SACRE members that he had invited to and attended a Remembrance Service at Edenfield Primary School. He would do a write up of the occasion for the SACRE Newsletter.

Helen Sage would do a write up for the newsletter on her visit to Rhyddings School in Oswaldtwistle for the First World War Centenary Project.

10. School Visits

The Lancashire SACRE Quality and Standards Sub-Group had looked at the Ofsted inspection reports on schools in Lancashire. From these reports the

chosen school to visit was Westwood Primary School in Bamber Bridge. Alison Lloyd had contacted the Head Teacher of Westwood Primary School, Julie Martin, and she was keen for the Lancashire SACRE to visit.

County Councillor Anne Cheetham, Mrs Kathleen Cooper and Dr Malcolm Craig volunteered to visit Westwood Primary School along with Alison Lloyd. The visit would be arranged for January 2020. After the visit the volunteers would provide a short report for the SACRE Newsletter.

11. Lancashire Youth Voice

There was no news from Lancashire Youth Voice.

12. Correspondence

A letter had been circulated to SACRE members regarding guidance for Key Stage 2 SATS 2020/21 and the festival of Eid.

The Key Stage 2 Standard Attainment Tests (SATs) were scheduled to take place between Monday 10 May and Thursday 13 May 2021. This would coincide with the Muslim festival of Eid. Lancashire, as a Local Authority, was not permitted to make a county-wide decision on how schools administer their tests as this was a decision for each individual school governing body to make. Lancashire would still continue to provide any support and advice that it could to ensure the issue was dealt with as effectively as possible. The Standards and Testing Agency (STA) had produced guidance on this.

As Eid was due to begin on the evening of Wednesday 12 May 2021, the STA understood that, given the significance of Eid, Muslim pupils might be absent from school on Thursday 13 May 2021, which was the scheduled day of the final KS2 test. Timetable variations might be appropriate for pupils who would be absent due to observing Eid. Schools were advised to read the timetable variation guidance before applying and they were also advised to discuss arrangements for the tests with their pupils' parents before the test period.

The situation in Lancashire appeared slightly more complicated than the STA statement implied as the start of the festival was calculated using the lunar calendar, therefore, depending upon which denomination a Muslim family belonged to Eid might commence on either the Wednesday, Thursday or Friday of that week.

Schools were giving consideration to solutions to minimize the impact of the Eid celebrations on the attendance figures at school specifically during SATs week.

When considering a timetable variation application, one of the qualifying criteria the STA would accept was observing a religious or cultural festival. The STA

would not allow the test timetable to be changed for school activities such as staff training events, field trips and excursions.

The STA would work with schools, closer to the examination time, to support them in a clearly agreed set of protocols to ensure timetable variations were carried out effectively to support children, whilst at the same time enabling high levels of test security and monitoring to ensure head teachers were not left vulnerable to allegations of maladministration of the tests.

Alison Lloyd informed SACRE members that the local authority had addressed the issue and had provided advice to schools.

13. Members' News

Kathleen Cooper informed the SACRE members that at the beginning of November 2019 she had been on a pilgrimage to Egypt with Aid for Christian Need.

County Councillor Yousuf Motala explained that Jamea School was still working with elements of the Lancashire Faith Community.

14. Observers' Contributions

Dr Malcolm Craig informed everyone that the Interfaith week, which had run from Sunday 10th November to Sunday 17th November, had been a great success and he looked forward to a wider involvement. He also stated that it was World Interfaith Harmony Week from 1st February 2020 to 7th February 2020. World Interfaith Harmony Week sought to spread the message of harmony and tolerance among the followers of the three monotheistic faiths and all the world's religions.

Helen Sage stated that Balshaw Lane Community Primary School had an Ofsted inspection in July 2019 and the school's delivery of Religious Education had been commended.

15. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the SACRE would be held at 10:00am on Monday 3 February 2020 in Cabinet Room D – The Henry Bolingbroke Room, at County Hall, Preston.

Paul Bond
Clerk to the SACRE

County Hall
Preston