

Lancashire SACRE
Meeting to be held on 17 June 2013

SACRE Membership

SACRE membership is renewed every four years, coinciding with the County Council election cycle.

The basis for any discussion on membership of the SACRE must be the statutory requirements set out in the Education Act 1996. The government also issued "non-statutory guidance" in 2010.

This identifies four "representative groups" to which the County Council must appoint. The four groups are:

- A. Christian and other religions and denominations which appropriately reflect the principal religious traditions in the area
- B. The Church of England
- C. Associations Representing Teachers
- D. Representatives of the Local Authority

The size and membership of each group is determined locally, but each group, regardless of size, carries one vote in matters which fall to be determined by the SACRE.

The SACRE may also include non-voting co-opted members. Lancashire has chosen to appoint to a further category, "Observers"

The membership of the Lancashire SACRE is set out in the Constitution and Terms of Reference, attached at Appendix A. The Group D appointments are made by the County Council's cabinet. All other appointments to the groups must be formally approved by the Cabinet Member for Children and Schools.

Co-opted and Observer appointments are made by SACRE itself.

1. Representative Groups

In establishing the various representative groups, Lancashire County Council resolved to seek nominations from a number of "Sponsoring bodies", representing religious or educational organisations. These bodies then put forward the agreed number of nominations for approval. Members may serve more than one term.

The current membership of the SACRE is as follows:

Representative Groups		Sponsoring Body	
A	Christian and Other religions and denominations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Roman Catholic Church • The Free Churches Group • Islam • Hinduism • Judaism • Sikhism • Buddhism 	3 4 5 2 1 1 1	One nomination each from the Diocese of Lancaster, Diocese of Salford, Liverpool Archdiocese Churches Together in England Lancashire Council of Mosques Two nominations agreed from the five Hindu Societies in Lancashire Board of Deputies of British Jews Guru Nanak Gurdwara Bhatra Singh Sabha Vajravaraahi Buddhist Centre, Preston
B	The Church of England	5	Three nominations from the Diocese of Blackburn One from the Diocese of Liverpool One from the Diocese of Bradford and Ripon & Leeds
C	Associations Representing Teachers	5	One nomination each from the following associations: NASUWT; NAHT; NUT; ATL; ASCL
D	The Local Authority	5	Lancashire County Council

The make up of the representative groups is set out in the constitution of SACRE. Any changes would therefore also require a change to the constitution. Whilst this can be done, it is clear that there would need to be a compelling case to do so, and that changes should be based on an agreed policy.

The following criteria are presented for consideration to form a policy for amending membership:

Group A: Membership can only be offered to religions, and should be based on an assessment of the following criteria, in the order set out.

1. Major world religions. These must be represented on SACRE, regardless of their local significance, although the number of representatives may vary to reflect the position in Lancashire
2. Religions of local significance. The law says that this group should "reflect broadly the proportionate strength of the denomination or religion in the area".

Whilst this is not solely a question of numbers, census data should be one of the major considerations in assessing any application against this criterion.

3. A commitment to the aims and objectives of SACRE. This would be demonstrated through previous engagement with the SACRE itself (including, but not limited to, through existing Observer status) or with the teaching of RE and support for schools.

There is currently no limit on the overall number of members, and therefore no "threshold" which faiths or denominations must reach to be entitled to consideration for membership, although clearly it must satisfy the needs of representation without making the Group or the Committee unwieldy.

It is vital to note, in any assessment of a request to join Group A, that SACRE is awarding a place on the committee to a religion or denomination, and not to an individual.

Group B: Consideration should be given to a change in this group if requested by the Church of England and following discussion with representatives of all Dioceses involved.

Group C: A change to the number of members should only be considered in the event of a change in the number of associations representing teachers in Lancashire.

Group D: Consideration should only be given to a change in the number of Local Authority Representatives where it is felt that this is appropriate given changes in the number of representatives on other groups to ensure a continued approximate equivalency in numbers.

2. Co-opted members.

The Lancashire SACRE Constitution allows for the appointment of up to five Co-opted members. Co-opted members can take full part in all debates, but can't participate in any vote.

The Lancashire SACRE has chosen to appoint representatives from school and educational backgrounds to these posts, with one representative from each of the following groups:

- Lancashire Association of School Governing Bodies
- National Association of Teachers of RE
- Higher Education Sector
- Teachers in the Secondary Sector

- Teachers in the Primary Sector

The Constitution of SACRE does not require that the co-opteds are from an educational background. However, it is clear that the purpose of co-option is to ensure that different perspectives, specialisms and knowledge can be included beyond that covered by the statutory membership. Having specialist educationalists addresses that need.

3. Observers

The Lancashire SACRE currently includes two Observers, representing Paganism and Baha'i. The Observers have full speaking rights at committee, but cannot participate in any vote.

In addition, SACRE has previously agreed to award a place as an Observer to the British Humanist Association, but no representative has ever attended. SACRE may wish to consider whether the offer of a place to the BHA remains.

SACRE has, in the past, broadly welcomed requests from appropriate organisations to join as Observers, and this, rather than co-option, has been the favoured method of ensuring an input from faith and belief groups not represented in Group A.

Prospective observers are requested to make a presentation to the SACRE to explain a little about the faith or belief they represent, and how they would support the aims and objectives of SACRE.

4. Applications / Request for Membership

Membership changes to SACRE currently arise in two ways:

- i. Unsolicited applications. Groups or individuals may approach SACRE with a request to join. Religions or denominations may request to join Group A, but these would have to meet the criteria set out. Any group may apply to join as an Observer, and it is suggested that, in line with previous agreements made by SACRE, that the offer of Observer status is made first, to enable the group concerned, even if a religious group applying to join Group A, to demonstrate a commitment to the SACRE and its aims
- ii. SACRE itself may identify a skills gap in its membership, and seek to fill it through recruitment. In this case, it is anticipated that SACRE would seek to appoint a co-opted member (whether additional to the existing co-optees or as a replacement)

It is suggested that a third way of considering membership changes be introduced, via a general review of membership every four years (post county council election). Such a review would consider all types of membership and allocation of seats.

5. Aims and Objectives

In any consideration of membership, it is essential that a clear sight of the purpose, aims and objectives of SACRE is maintained. SACRE does not exist for the purpose of ensuring certain groups are represented. SACRE exists to oversee the teaching of RE and Collective Worship in schools maintained by the authority, and to support schools and teachers deliver excellent RE in line with the agreed curriculum to the children of Lancashire.

Recommendations

That the SACRE:

- i. notes the issues in relation to SACRE membership
- ii. comments as appropriate on any membership issues

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education - Constitution and Terms of Reference

1. Construction

In this document, unless the context otherwise requires:-

"The Act" means the Education Act 1996:

"The Authority" means Lancashire County Council:

"SACRE" means the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education required to be established in accordance with Section 390 of the Education Act 1996.

"Representative Group" means one of the four statutory representative groups required to be included on the SACRE by Section 390 of the Education act 1996.

2. Composition of SACRE

The SACRE shall include representatives of the following groups:

(a) *Representative Groups*

As required by Section 390 of the Act the SACRE is to include four representative groups as follows:-

(i) Christian and other religious denominations which appropriately reflect the principal religious traditions in the area:

The Roman Catholic Church	3 representatives
The Free Church Federal Council	4 representatives
Islam	5 representatives
Hinduism	2 representatives
Judaism	1 representative
Sikhs	1 representative

- | | | |
|-------|------------------------------------|-------------------|
| | Buddhism | 1 representative |
| (ii) | The Church of England | 5 representatives |
| (iii) | Associations representing teachers | 5 representatives |
| (iv) | The Authority | 5 representatives |
- (b) *Co-opted Members*

The representative groups on the SACRE may appoint a further five co-opted members.

The SACRE may make recommendations to the Authority in respect of its composition.

3. **Terms of Reference**

The SACRE shall have the following functions:-

- (a) To advise the Authority upon such matters connected with the religious worship in community schools or in foundation schools which (within the meaning of Part II of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998) do not have a religious character and the religious education to be given in accordance with an agreed (or other syllabus in accordance with Schedule 19 to that Act) as the Authority may refer to the SACRE or as the SACRE may see fit.
- (b) The matters referred to in (a) above include in particular methods of teaching, the choice of materials and the provision of training for teachers.
- (c) The SACRE shall each year publish a report with respect to the exercise of their functions. The report shall in particular:-
- (i) Specify any matters in respect of which the SACRE have given advice to the Authority;
 - (ii) Broadly describe the nature of the advice given;

- (iii) Where any such matter was not referred to the SACRE by the Authority, give the SACRE's reasons for offering advice on that matter.
- (d) To require the Authority (on a vote of the representative groups representing the Church of England, other denominations and teachers' associations) to review the agreed syllabus by convening a statutory conference in accordance with the provisions of Para 3, Schedule 31 to the Education Act 1996.
- (e) In accordance with Section 394 of the Act to consider applications made by the headteacher of any community school maintained by the authority or any foundation school which has not been designated under Section 69(3) of Schedule 20 to the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, as having a religious character, whether it is appropriate for the requirement for Christian collective worship to apply in the case of the school or in the case of any class or description of pupils at the school. Such applications to be made by the headteacher after consultation with the governing body.

4. Term of Office

- (a) Subject to sub-paragraph (c) below, each member of the SACRE shall hold office for a term of four years.
- (b) A member of the SACRE shall be eligible to be re-appointed for a further term.
- (c) The Authority may from time to time review the constitution and composition of the SACRE and any person appointed to the representative groups may be removed by the Authority.
- (d) A person appointed as a co-opted member may be removed by the SACRE.
- (e) A member of the SACRE may at any time resign his/her office.
- (f) On resignation or removal by the Authority, an appointed person shall be replaced by the Authority for the remainder of the term of office by another member.

5. **Chairmanship**

The representative groups on the SACRE shall each year, normally at their annual meeting, elect a Chairman and Vice-Chairman from amongst the membership of the representative groups. In the absence of the Chairman, the Vice-Chairman will take the chair and in the absence of both the Chairman and Vice-Chairman a Chairman will be elected for the meeting from amongst the members of the representative groups. The Chairman of the meeting shall not be entitled to exercise a second or casting vote.

6. **Meetings**

The SACRE shall hold at least one meeting per year at which the annual report shall be agreed.

7. **Quorum**

The Quorum for meetings of the SACRE shall be eight members provided that these shall include at least one member from each of the four statutory representative groups.

8. **Voting**

- (a) Subject to paragraph (b) below, on any question to be decided by the SACRE, only the representative groups shall be entitled to vote and each group shall have a single vote.
- (b) For the purpose of voting, each representative group will elect a spokesperson at each meeting.
- (c) In the event of a formal vote being taken, votes will be cast by the nominated spokesperson for each group. Arrangements will be made for each group to consider how its vote should be cast. the meeting shall, if necessary, agree a time limit for this purpose.
- (d) The single vote of each representative group shall be cast on the basis of the simple majority view within each such group. A tied vote within a group shall be treated as an abstention by that group.

9. **Officers**

- (a) The Clerk to the SACRE shall be the Head of Democratic Services or his/her representative.
- (b) The Director of Children and Young People shall be entitled to attend, or be represented by members of his/her staff at any meetings of the SACRE or any meetings of sub-groups or working parties established by the SACRE.