

Lancashire Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE)

Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday, 15th June, 2015 at 10.00 am in Cabinet Room 'D' - The Henry Bolingbroke Room, County Hall, Preston

Islam	Miss I Hussain
Hinduism	Mrs H Shukla
The Roman Catholic Church	Mr S Jones Ms J Busby
The Free Churches Group	Mr C Wills
Teacher Associations	Mr P Martin (ASCL) – Chair Mrs A Robinson (ATL) Mrs S Greenhow (NAS/UWT) Mr D Fann (NAHT)
Church of England	Mr J Wilson Mrs H Sage
LCC	County Councillor A Cheetham County Councillor K Ellard County Councillor P Buckley County Councillor Y Motala
Observers	Mr A Brennand (Pagan Federation) Dr M Craig (Bahá'i Faith)
Co-Optees	Mrs K Cooper (LASGB) Ms J Harris (Teachers in the Secondary Sector)

Officers in attendance

Mr J Hewitt – Head of School Improvement, Lancashire County Council, Children and Young People Directorate

Mr H Patel – Democratic Services Officer, Lancashire County Council, Office of the Chief Executive

1. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Ben McMullen, Anita Tidswell, Pete Baker, Rev. Phil Clarke, Vijayanti Chauhan, Joan O'Rourke, Lisa Fenton, Francis Williams and Kate Murry.

2. Minutes of the last meeting

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 16 March 2015 be confirmed as a correct record.

The SACRE recognised that an MBE was recently mentioned in the Queen's Birthday Honours List to be given to Harsha Shukla for her services to interfaith relations. The board requested that the congratulations to her be recorded in the minutes.

3. Minutes of the Quality and Standards Sub-group

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting of the Quality and Sub-Standards group held on 18 May 2015 be confirmed as a correct record.

4. Dates of Future Meetings

The Chairman agreed that this item be dealt with earlier in the agenda.

The board was advised that the following dates were to be considered for future meetings of the SACRE and Quality and Sub-Standards group:-

MAIN	QSS
21 September	6 July
23 November (AGM)	13 October
22 February	11 January
27 June	9 May

Resolved:

- i. That, with the exception of 21 September, all considered dates be confirmed as acceptable for future meetings by the board.
 - a. The exceptional date of 21 September be revised and a new date, or a selection of dates, bearing in mind dates of significant remembrance, interfaith traditions and school terms, be presented to the QSS on 6 July.

5. SACRE Member Visits to Schools

The board noted that visits to schools had not yet occurred, but members of the board continued to express interest in visiting schools on behalf of the SACRE.

Resolved:

- i. That, following the meeting of the Quality and Sub-Standards group, a training session be offered to SACRE members. During the autumn term, some opportunities for trained members to carry out school visits on behalf of the SACRE would be offered.

6. Report from NASACRE conference

The board was informed that a pamphlet entitled "A new settlement: Religion and Belief in schools" was soon to be published as part of the Westminster Faith Debates. Several key questions were mentioned, and these were discussed amongst members; the board agreed that, when deciding which direction the SACRE should take, the decision should be made by the SACRE rather than being led by an outside body; the SACRE's view was that Religious Education in schools should be required by law but not as part of the national curriculum; the board agreed that the name of the subject was not as significant as defining the subject but a number of possible names were highlighted.

The board was asked to discuss, in small groups, whether there should be a national syllabus or whether it should remain local; the overall decision was mixed, as members concluded that nationalisation would be fair across the country, whilst localisation would continue to ensure that local needs informed the work of the SACRE and the Agreed Syllabus – there were many concerns that, in light of the good framework currently in place in Lancashire, the syllabus, if national, could potentially be written by another external body, and not meet the needs identified by the SACRE.

A presentation by Denise Cush was discussed with members. It was noted that support and training for teachers and head-teachers were important and required immediate action.

Resolved: That school staff be approached as part of a sense-check to validate the suitability of, and reactions towards, alternative names for the subject of Religious Education.

7. Reviewing the Agreed Syllabus

The board was informed that a section of the development plan would be written to cover this issue - it was agreed that the syllabus must be developed to reflect the Lancashire context, and that a plan be worked on during the autumn term in preparation for Summer/Autumn 2016.

Resolved:

- i. That work with teachers and key parties to review the current Agreed Syllabus be continued, with a clear and concise approach for its future use.
- ii. That a detailed action plan be ready for the next meeting of the full SACRE in September.

8. Professional Development Support

It was agreed by the board that the autumn term would be an ideal period to offer support to teachers and head teachers relating to the Agreed Syllabus, though

further discussion may be required if the board believes the syllabus should be amended to suit nationally-set standards. The importance of supporting head-teachers in implementing the Agreed Syllabus was highlighted, as well as aiding their understanding and support for Religious Education and teachers of RE.

Resolved: That the revision of the Agreed Syllabus be continued, taking into account the original 1990's guidance material discussed at the meeting of the Quality and Sub-Standards group.

9. Prevent Duty Guidance

Members noted that the Prevent Duty Guidance document was to be put under thorough examination and now to be developed in line with the Counter-Terrorism & Security Act 2015.

Members voiced concern where the role of the SACRE was to be considered amidst the guidance, but re-established the fact that one of the SACRE's main goals was to support teachers in areas where they felt they could not tackle certain, controversial issues. The Lancashire approach remains focussed on building resilience amongst young people and families. The board raised several valid points on the difficulty of tackling some issues as they originated outside of school (through media etc.), and whilst schools are expected to protect students from abuse it would not be possible for them to do so outside of their premises.

It was agreed that, akin to health and safety, the responsibility of protecting children in schools from abuse should be expanded to cover all members of staff as opposed to targeting teachers and head-teachers solely.

10. Membership (including HE Membership)

The board discussed the possibility of approaching co-opted representatives from the higher education sector, following Carrier Mercier's retirement from her post at the University of Cumbria. The board agreed that the University of Lancaster would be a good place to start, with the possibility of Edge Hill University to be approached also.

Resolved: That the board contact the appropriate establishments to arrange a replacing representative for higher education.

11. Members' News

There was no news reported by members.

12. Correspondence

There was no correspondence reported.

13. Youth Voice

It was reported that Joanne Harris would be leading the Youth Conference to be held on 8 July 2015.

14. Observer's Contributions

No contributions were reported from observers.

15. National Update

An update was received from Helen Harrison that the Rt Hon Nicky Morgan (Secretary of State for Education) recently gave her view that parents should consider schools which comply with the English Baccalaureate (EBac) performance measure.

The board discussed the implications, as Religious Education is not covered under this measure.

Paul Bond
Clerk to the SACRE

County Hall
Preston