

Lancashire Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE)

Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday, 22nd April, 2024 at 10.00 am in Committee Room 'C' - The Duke of Lancaster Room, County Hall, Preston

Attendees

SACRE Members

Peter Martin, Chair (Representing the Teacher Associations)
County Councillor Anne Cheetham, (Representing Lancashire County Council)
County Councillor Stewart Jones (Representing Lancashire County Council)
County Councillor Yousuf Motala (Representing Lancashire County Council)
Lisa Fenton, (Representing the Church of England)
Jaspal Kooner (Representing Sikhism)
Peter Lumsden (Representing Building Bridges Burnley)
Aruna Patel, (Representing the Teacher Associations)
Joan E O'Rourke (Representing the Church of England)
Harsha Shukla (Representing Hinduism)
Ian Watkinson, (Representing the Teacher Associations)
Francis Williams (Representing Lancashire County Council)

Co-opted Members

Kathleen Cooper, (Representing the Lancashire Association of School Governing Bodies)

Observers

Malcom Craig (Representing the Bahá'í Faith)
Keith Pennington (Representing Lancashire Humanists Association)

Officers

Alison Lloyd, School Adviser, School Improvement Service
Dave Gorman, Senior Democratic Services Officer
Jack Tickle, Business Support Officer

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from John Wilson and Ben McMullen.

2. Minutes of the Meeting held on 5 February 2024

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 February 2024 were approved as an accurate record.

3. Induction Pack for New Members

Alison Lloyd, School Improvement Service, provided an update on the proposal for a Lancashire Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) induction pack. This would include information on the role of SACRE and formal training resources for new members.

Members of SACRE were asked to provide recommendations to develop the induction pack and the following points were discussed:

- Peter Martin, the Chair and Representing the ASCL, confirmed that a SACRE leaflet was written and circulated amongst new members several years ago and a large brief was drawn up for new members on Lancashire SACRE's role and responsibilities. Information that was up to date would need to be developed for newer members.
- The experience of SACRE members, in terms of induction, varied.
- The leaflet that was distributed for member inductions was six pages in length, but it was felt that it would be beneficial for additional and updated information to be included for SACRE members.
- The Lancashire SACRE Quality and Standards Sub-group could be used to develop induction information on what SACRE was doing well and had accomplished at its next virtual meeting on the 5 June 2024.
- Aruna Patel, representing Teacher Associations, noted that an invitation to an event on SACRE and the work the body conducted would be beneficial.
- Whilst the terms of reference had been circulated to all SACRE members, not every member fully understood the role of the body and would welcome additional training, briefings and information. Members commented that the training they had already received on SACRE was very helpful.
- Some members highlighted that they had not received any formal induction or training on SACRE. Alison Lloyd offered to provide general information on SACRE at the upcoming meeting of the Lancashire SACRE Quality and Standards Sub-Group on the 5 June 2024 where the development of an induction pack would be discussed further.

4. Places of Worship Directory

Alison Lloyd presented the Places of Worship Directory on visits and visitors for Religious Education in Cumbria. The directory provided guidance on making it easier for Cumbrian schools to arrange visits to places of significance for Religious Education and to organise a visit to schools from a person of faith or belief.

A summary of points discussed is outlined below:

- Up to 14 schools had requested an individual directory to use for guidance on religious visits and visitors in a similar format to the document used by Cumbria County Council.

Other schools that had not requested a directory utilised Building Bridges for advice. Alison Lloyd noted that the Places of Worship Directory could be sent to schools that required additional guidance.

- A directory that included the religions and world views within the SACRE syllabus would be beneficial. Members suggested that BBC videos on Religious Education and a section on the names of relevant contacts and places could be added to the document. Additionally, the directory could be useful if religious representatives were not available for educational visits and tours.
- The Chair highlighted that the directory could be updated online when additional information was provided. Additionally, schools that did not require a directory could still be signposted to Building Bridges.
- Peter Lumsden from Building Bridges Burnley commented that a directory would complement the organisation's work, and that only 40 schools were working with Building Bridges this year.
- Alison Lloyd noted that a list of religions and world views could be circulated amongst SACRE members and that existing contacts and networks could be utilised.
- Malcolm Craig referred to the Preston Faith Covenant which was an interface between Preston City Council and the faith community, whilst County Councillor Motala referred to a former Lancashire County Council employee who had put together a similar directory which also included a helpful terminology.
- Members from the Northwest Sikh Community could attend a future meeting of the Lancashire SACRE.
- Members were asked to forward to Alison Lloyd the names and contact details of those who might be included in a Lancashire directory.

5. Annual Survey Arrangements

Alison Lloyd provided an update on the annual survey which was closed in November with data shared in the December. The survey was re-circulated amongst secondary schools to increase the response rate in February 2023 and reported on in April 2023. Additionally, Cumbria University SACRE had done a survey on Religious Education (RE) training and retention but had not provided information for the SACRE annual report.

A summary of points discussed is outlined below:

- A shorter annual survey would be conducted to accompany the upcoming Lancashire SACRE Annual Report at the next meeting of SACRE on the 8 July 2024. Alison Lloyd offered to attach the annual survey as a synopsis to this report.
- Members were concerned about the quality of training for teachers and the effective promotion of RE within educational settings, teacher training bodies and institutions. Anecdotal evidence suggested that teachers had only been given three hours of formal RE training during their teacher training.
- Measurable data on whether additional RE teachers were needed within educational settings was becoming increasingly difficult to obtain.
- It was important to retain compliance from schools to provide a response to the annual survey for accountability and transparency.

- Alison Lloyd offered to circulate the key findings on the RE subject report with members of SACRE to inform questions on the teaching of RE within education settings.
- On the quality of RE education within academies, Lancashire SACRE only had the ability to advise these institutions and could not enforce a framework for RE education.
- Given the recent resignation of the Cumbria University representative, the Chair offered to contact Edge Hill University to inquire if Paul Smalley, the Chair of NASACRE, would be interested in becoming a university representative for Lancashire SACRE.
- Alison Lloyd highlighted that in a new cover letter for key stage three schools, reference would be made to the new Ofsted RE Subject Report entitled 'Deep and Meaningful'. Members suggested that providing reference to the Ofsted recommendations might stress the significance of the recommendations made.
- Whilst schools could purchase online education for RE, with one example being Discovery RE, it was expected that the Lancashire agreed syllabus was implemented to provide a quality framework for pupils' education.

6. North West RE Hub - Feedback

The Chair provided an update on the Northwest RE Hub.

Cheshire East SACRE had contacted Lancashire SACRE over concerns that Dharmic religions were not being represented within schools. However, it was noted that Dharmic religions were extensively covered under the agreed Lancashire syllabus. Whilst some schools could improve upon their teaching, Dharmic religions were consistently taught throughout primary and secondary school settings.

Alison Lloyd updated members on an upcoming interfaith network project to introduce artefacts from different faiths to take home to families. The organisers of the project were looking for 15 schools to take part, with some schools from Morecambe already involved. The project would be centred around the theme of community cohesion.

7. NASACRE Conference Attendance

Peter Martin, the Chair of SACRE, and John Wilson, Vice Chair of SACRE, could not attend the upcoming National Association of Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education (NASACRE) conference, which was due to take place in York on the 25 May 2024.

Aruna Patel offered to attend the conference in their place as a substitute and it was agreed to finalise attendance and travel arrangements outside of the meeting.

8. Members' News (Including Feedback from School Visits and Training and Development Undertaken)

Aruna Patel, Kathleen Cooper and John Wilson had visited Banks St Stephen's CE Primary School and St Stephen's CE Primary School, Preston to gain an overview of how Religious Education (RE) was being taught and the ethos being portrayed within the schools. Kathleen Cooper noted that the faith atmosphere was palpable and that the Headteachers and RE teachers had excellent working relationships.

The SACRE watched a short video produced by St Stephen's School, Preston. This was a recorded year 6 drama presentation of the Easter Story, and included various religious displays, with the pupils appearing to be well informed on the subject of RE. It was highlighted that the local Anglican Diocese had also expressed an interest in approaching the school to do a showcase on RE.

Peter Lumsden, representing Building Bridges, Burnley, confirmed that he had visited a Primary School in Colne and was due to visit a mosque within the district of Burnley.

9. Observers' Contributions

Keith Pennington, representing Lancashire Humanists:

- Reported that the Interfaith Network was due to close at the end of April 2024 as funding from Government had now ended.
- Interfaith week was due to take place at the University of Central Lancashire from the 12 - 19 November 2024. A religious display would be set up within the Students Union following the conclusion of Remembrance Sunday.
- A school visit by Lancashire Humanists to the Bishop Rawstorne Church of England Academy, Croston, was due to take place at the end of July 2024.

10. Correspondence

The most recent NASACRE briefing had been circulated amongst members.

Dan Dennis had stepped down as the only SACRE representative for Cumbria University and wider universities. It was hoped that a replacement would be notified soon.

Alison Lloyd confirmed that a report from OFSTED on RE within education settings was to be included in the next meeting of Lancashire SACRE.

The correspondence which had been circulated since the last meeting was noted.

11. Date of Next Meeting

The next scheduled meeting of the SACRE would be held at 10am on Monday 8 July 2024, in Committee Room C – The Duke of Lancaster Room at County Hall, Preston.

Paul Bond
Clerk to the SACRE

County Hall
Preston