

## Minutes of the Meeting of the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education held on 5 January 2022 at 6.30 pm

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### Present:

**Committee A:** Miss R Saul (at 6.42pm) and Ms H Kaur (at 6.50pm)

**Committee B:** Mr P Anderson, Mrs Fry and Mrs Everett

**Committee C:** Ms Culloty, and Mrs Pumfrey

**Committee D:** Councillors Gary Collins, Martin Kerin and James Thandi

**Apologies:** Mr A Kariyawasam, Mr T Ojetola, Mrs A Jellicoe and Ms D Webster

**In attendance:** Deborah Weston, Associate Advisor for Religious Education  
Andrea Winstone, Strategic Lead for School Effectiveness and SEND  
Tony Ward, Strategic Lead for Teaching School Hubs  
Kenna-Victoria Healey, Senior Democratic Services Officer

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### 17. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 3 November 2021 were approved as a true and correct record, subject to showing Associate Advisor for Religious Education agreeing to work with Thurrock BME Group with regards to improving the update of RE as a subject in Secondary Schools.

### 18. Items of Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

### 19. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

### 20. Teacher Education in Thurrock – the role of Teaching School Hubs

The Strategic Lead for the Teaching School Hubs presented a presentation to SACRE on the role of the teaching school hubs.

During discussions it was observed that making the offer of attending teaching school hub maybe more accessible for teachers a more efficient for them to complete courses. It was commented by councillor Collins he was surprised to hear there was a shortage of teachers within the borough. The Strategic Lead for School Effectiveness and SEND advised there was a national shortage of teachers and with help from the Teaching School Hubs keeping a focus and assisting schools with recruitment and retention, would also assist to help keep teachers in teaching.

Mrs Pumfrey explained to be a teacher you had to have a work life balance as even when in school holidays most teachers we're still working. The Associate Advisor for Religious Education echoed Mrs Pumfrey's comment I'm further stated with Thurrock being on the border of London and London having extra allowances applied it was more likely for nearly qualified teachers to seek employment in London rather than Thurrock.

The strategic laid the teaching school hubs thanked members for their feedback in stated it was important for schools to support each other but developing networks I'm working as a community.

The Chair suggested an additional recommendation proposing should it be agreed, SACRE was to have an update on recommendation 1.3 in the next 6 to 12 months. This was supported by all Members.

**RESOLVED that SACRE:**

- 1.1 receive a presentation from one of the Teaching School Hubs working in Thurrock.**
- 1.2 share their ideas about the strengths and weakness of teacher education for RE nationally considered in previous meetings such as:**
  - primary trainees receiving between 0-3 hours teaching on RE during their initial training (NATRE primary survey)**
  - lack of primary teacher confidence in RE subject knowledge (NATRE primary survey)**
  - insufficient supply of secondary RE specialists reported by Thurrock senior leaders**
  - the need for RE Teachers' Network group**
- 1.3 Agree a series of actions for establishing a partnership between SACRE and Teaching School Hubs serving Thurrock**
- 1.4 That SACRE receive an update on Recommendation 1.3 (above) in the next 6/12months.**

**21. Annual Report 2020-2021 Thurrock SACRE**

The Chair of SACRE presented the report explaining it outlined the work undertaken by SACRE over the previous year. He continued by advising the foreword had been circulated to all Members via email following publication of the agenda.

The Associate Advisor for Religious Education referenced the spiritual competition had by SACRE for local schools which had been included within the annual report. She thanked Mr Ojetola and Mrs Fry for presenting prizes to the winners. Mrs fry advised members she presented the winner at Purfleet Primary School and it was a pleasure to do so.

**RESOLVED that SACRE:**

- 1.1 Accept this report as an accurate record of its work for the period September 2020 – July 2021**
- 1.2 Requests that the Assistant Director Education and Skills continues to include discussions about RE provision in the scheduled discussions with senior leadership teams**
- 1.3 Requests that the school effectiveness team include a review of schools' provision for RE and Collective Worship as part of their annual conversations. Specifically, that they consider:**
  - **whether the level and quality of provision in academy schools is similar in breadth and ambition to that provided in LA maintained schools (i.e. through compliance with the Thurrock Agreed Syllabus including the knowledge, understanding specified and the standards for each key stage. This is the expectation of the DfE and Ofsted**
  - **If timetabling of RE in secondary schools ensures that those delivering RE are suitably trained/qualified to do so.**
  - **Whether RE is treated differently from other subjects on the secondary curriculum, such as being offered in tutor time, drop down days, taught by teachers who mainly teach other subjects etc.**
  - **the impact on pupil outcomes of the combination of subjects such as RE, RSE, Citizenship and PSHE**
  - **the level of training provided to those teaching RE in all phases especially when they have no previous experience of teaching the subject**
  - **the impact on pupil attainment of pupils being entered for a GCSE at the end of year 10**

**22. Agreeing the Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education**

The Associate Advisor for Religious Education presented the report to members following the June meeting which proposed that SACRE make a decision to renew its licence with RE Today to use its model syllabus A with additional material -model A+ as the Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education.

Mr Anderson, Chair of SACRE proposed that members formed the Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC). SACRE agreed to form the Agreed Syllabus Conference for the remainder of Item 7.

During discussions members commended on Appendix 2, the Thurrock Agreed Syllabus Review, during which it noted that not one school had asked for a new syllabus or new content which was pleasing to see. Members further noted there was a general satisfaction with the agreed syllabus with all Schools in Thurrock including Academies, who were not obligated to use the agreed syllabus doing so.

It was commented that from a teacher's point of view option A appeared to be the best option, as it included schemes of work which were good foundation and starting point for teachers.

The Strategic Lead for School Effectiveness and SEND echoed the view of teachers stating option A gave teachers the resources they needed and as teachers knew the bulk of the curriculum already, it would make teaching the subject a little easier. She continued option A it would just be introducing some new units which would offer a refresh for teachers, as they would not teaching the same thing in the same way, maybe even a little refresh in material and some new current material.

SACRE Members highlighted some concerns with regards to the phrasing of some assessment titles within the syllabus, the Associate Advisor for Religious Education agreed to contact RE Today to seek if different or better wording could be used.

Members agreed they were happy with option A from RE Today in principle subject to any guidance received relating to being able to rename or reword assessment titles.

The Chair of SACRE suggested an additional recommendation that SACRE review and agree the detail of the supplement information within the Appendix 1 before formally agreeing the new Thurrock Syllabus. This was agreed by Members and the Chair stated he was happy for agreement to be received via email, give the timescales of meetings.

**RESOLVED that SACRE:**

- 1.1 Reconvene an Agreed Syllabus Conference (first meeting June 2021)**
- 1.2 Consider the results of the survey of teachers**
- 1.3 Confirm option A from the options set out in Appendix 1 from RE Today**
- 1.4 Review and agree the detail of the supplement information within the Appendix 1 before formally agreeing the new Thurrock Syllabus.**

**23. Any Other Business**

There was no other business to discuss.

**The meeting finished at 8.10 pm**

Approved as a true and correct record

**CHAIR**

**DATE**

**Any queries regarding these Minutes, please contact  
Democratic Services at [Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk](mailto:Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk)**