

Minutes of the Meeting of the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education held on 8 June 2022 at 6.30 pm

Present:

Committee A: Miss R Saul (at 18.40) and Mr L Trup

Committee B: Mr P Anderson and Mrs Everrett

Committee C: Ms Culloty

Committee D: Councillors Qaisar Abbas, Daniel Chukwu and James Thandi

Apologies: Mrs Fry, Mr A Kariyawasam, Mr T Ojetola, Mrs Pumfrey, Ms H Kaur

In attendance: Deborah Weston, Associate Advisor for Religious Education
Andrea Winstone, Strategic Lead for School Effectiveness and SEND
Alicia Thompson, Teacher Observer
Kenna-Victoria Healey, Senior Democratic Services Officer

1. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 January 2022 were approved as a true and correct record, subject to typos being corrected.

2. Items of Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

3. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

4. Appointment of Chair and Vice-Chairs

Nominations were invited for the appointment of Chair of the Committee. Mr Anderson commented he was happy to remain as Chair, unless someone else wish to, it was seconded by Councillor Abbas, that Mr Anderson be appointed and remain as Chair of the Committee.

Nominations were invited for the appointment of Vice Chair of Committees A, B, C and D.

RESOLVED that:

1. **That Mr P Anderson be appointed as Chair of Thurrock SACRE.**
2. **The following members be elected as Vice Chairs:**

Committee A: Mr T Ojetola
Committee B: Mr P Anderson
Committee C: Ms J Culloty
Committee D: Councillor Thandi

5. Collective Worship

The Associate Advisor for Religious Education presented the report and through doing so, it was noted that one of the appendices were absent from the agenda.

It was suggested that the item be deferred to the next meeting to enable SACRE Members to have a full discussion.

RESOLVED:

That the report be deferred to the next meeting of SACRE.

6. Agreed Syllabus Support Material Updates

The Chair of SACRE addressed members explaining at the June 2021 meeting it was agreed that SACRE would also be the Agreed Syllabus Conference. He sought if members were happy to convert to the Agreed Syllabus Conference. This was agreed by all present.

The Associate Advisor for Religious Education advised SACRE at the last meeting, it was agreed in principle to readopt the syllabus from RE today as Thurrock's agreed syllabus. She continued by stating the majority of the syllabus had already been agreed.

It was heard how there were two parts of the agreed syllabus. One part was the statutory agreed syllabus that the schools were required to follow and the second was additional material, which was not statutory, but was offered by SACRE as guidance.

The Associate Advisor for Religious Education then talked members through a presentation of changes made to the syllabus.

The Chair of SACRE thanked the Associate Advisor for Religious Education for the presentation and enquired if there were any questions, comments or

observations from members of the committee. He pointed out it was important to note that a number of the Academies also followed the agreed syllabus, even though it was no compulsory for them to do so.

The Associate Advisor for Religious Education advised members the Harris Academy Chafford Hundred had offered to host the launch of the revised document. Members heard the event was to be held on Monday 19th September and SACRE members were to be invited.

During discussions members of SACRE welcomed the agreed syllabus, With those present being teachers explaining it was exciting to be receiving a slightly updated syllabus and the guidance included would greatly assist teachers.

RESOLVED that SACRE:

1.1 Reconvened an Agreed Syllabus Conference (first meeting June 2021)

1.2 Reviewed the additional materials

1.3 Approved the amended titles as follows:

- **From U2.9 What can be done to reduce racism? Can religion help?
To U2.9 What can be done to reduce racism? What can we learn from religious and non-religious worldviews?**
- **From U2.10 Green religion? How and why should religious communities do more to care for the Earth?**
- **To U2.10 Green religion? What do religious and non-religious worldviews teach about caring for the earth?**

7. Verbal Update on the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education queries about RE provision in Thurrock Academies

The Strategic Lead for School Effectiveness and SEND explained she had been tasked with seeking the RE provision within the Thurrock Academies, and so as part of annual conversations with the secondary schools, she sought how they were teaching RE and how they reported this back through the census.

She continued to advise when the census workforce was returned, it asked how many hours there were devoted to the teaching of RE and in each year group, and in some year groups it looked like it wasn't any.

It was heard when the schools were asked the questions which were proposed by SACRE, it was clear that some schools called RE different things, and therefore they're their census return didn't look accurate.

The Associate Advisor for Religious Education advised this was a national problem when it came to religious education, and this was what had happened is a number of Thurrock schools due to all sorts of complex reasons. However, she continued by advising that RE was getting combined with PSHE and citizenship into a single lesson in some schools and in these circumstances, provision would be unlikely to be judged, 'similar in breadth and ambition' to provision in an LA maintained school – i.e. governed by the Agreed Syllabus.

Ms Thompson advised that in her school they are trying to change their reporting to take account of where citizenship and religious education are taught together. She stated in years 7 to 9 received 60 minutes a week for RE. Year 10s received an hour and a half every week which was covered in the mornings registration and year 11 an hour per week covering RE and Citizenship.

The Chair thanked all for their work on this item and was pleased to say that the feedback had validated assumptions that RE was not being taught within schools when in some cases, simply the wrong box on a form had been ticked.

RESOLVED that:

SACRE note the verbal update on the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education queries about RE provision in Thurrock Academies.

8. Any Other Business

The Associate Advisor for Religious Education mentioned a questionnaire had been circulated to SACRE members seeking how they would prefer to meet for forthcoming meetings be that in person, virtual or a mixture.

Members heard how before the pandemic 70% attended all meetings, it was mentioned how during the pandemic 80% of SACRE attended all meetings.

When asked how members would prefer to meet, 10% of responses said one meeting online and two face to face, two meetings per year virtual one face to face received 40% and all meetings held online received 50%.

During the discussion it was suggested that's that be a mixture of in person and virtual meetings, with the possibility of holding hybrid meetings be available should anyone not be able to attend in person. It was agreed that the next meeting be held in person.

The Associate Advisor for Religious Education stated she had managed to obtain free places for primary teachers on the program called Excellent RE offered by NATRE. She continued by advising places had already been taken up by schools including Herringham Academy, Graham James Primary Academy and Purfleet Primary School, and teachers from the schools had

been invited to observe the next meeting with the hope of them joining SACRE in the future.

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**

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