

Minutes of the Meeting of the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education held on 1 November 2023 at 6.30 pm

Present:	Committee A – Mr L Trup, Revd David Coaker Committee B – Mr P Anderson and Mrs R Everett Committee C – Ms J Culloty (arrived at 7.11pm) Committee D – No attendees were present.
Apologies:	Councillors Qaisar Abbas, Daniel Chukwu and James Thandi
In attendance:	Deborah Weston, Associate Advisor for Religious Education Andrea Winstone - Strategic Lead for School Effectiveness and SEND Salma Begum, Clerk

25. Minutes

The minutes of the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education meeting held on the 12 September 2023 were approved a correct record.

26. Items of Urgent Business

There were no urgent items of business.

27. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

28. Recruitment, Training and Retention of Teachers of RE (Verbal Update)

Item was deferred.

29. Update on National Developments and Opportunities

The Chair of SACRE introduced the report which suggested newsletter is included in the minutes.

The Associate Advisor for Religious Education provided an update on the campaign to improve the situation with recruitment and retention of teachers. Following the campaign, it was announced that the government will award £10,000 to religious education a bursary for training.

Secretary provided an update on the scheme for veterans leaving the armed forces. There is a scheme that exists to provide up to £50,000 bursaries to veterans leaving the armed forces to train to be a teacher, and that includes critically undergraduate courses which provide QTS as well. At the moment

that £50,000 bursary is only available to those seeking to teach stem. This can be a potential route is to lobby for that bursary for this to include RE. The veteran community make good candidates for teaching re in that they've engaged with ethical issues.

NATR analysis GCSE and A level Religious Studies data: National and regional variations.

This gives teachers a baseline of what the national figures look like and they can then compare their school data with the national. SACRE will wait for the Thurrock data to be released as they will be able to analyse this against national figures as the uptake in Essex is slightly lower than the uptake in the whole of England.

The Associate Advisor for Religious Education drew the attention that the Farmington Fellowship are now open, which are a great opportunity for people to be seconded to and further their studies in recent developments in British Education.

Ruth Everett suggested that they include the voice of somebody who had already done a Farmington Fellowship.

The committee was happy with the wording of the update. The committee would like to add an item regarding the new £10,000 bursary for the training for RE teachers and it will be issued to schools following the meeting at the discretion of the Chair.

RESOLVED

- 1. Review the information collected - see Appendix 1.**
- 2. Evaluate the relevance of each section for RE in Thurrock.**
- 3. Authorise the adviser to share the attached update with schools and their governing boards.**

30. The REC's National Content Standard for RE (2023)

The Associate Advisor for Religious Education presented the report found at 23-34 of the agenda.

The Associate Advisor for Religious Education explained that there is no national vision to what high quality RE looks like, this leads to that level of provision and quality of provision is declining.

RE Council suggested an idea that the committee can set a standard for themselves and other people to sign up to it. SACRE can try to set a benchmark is set some criteria for content as SACRE determines the content or in the or in the case of academies, themselves.

An exemplar that provides a benchmark has been created against which RE syllabuses and provision can be benchmarked and schools can put their own content in as agreed.

It must be comparable in breadth, depth and ambition to this example and schools are not required by law to teach the exemplar.

Major faith groups are enthusiastic about it.

Chair of SACRE posed a question to the Associate Advisor for Religious Education whether the provision the schools are providing is meeting the standard where they're not using the agreed syllabus?

The Associate Advisor for Religious Education responded the agreed syllabus is in their view comparable.

Student's children are not getting a consistent standard of RE. The policy document will be brought to academies, and they will have something to work towards.

The Associate Advisor for Religious Education to speak to the NASCAR executive - National Association of SACREs.

Chair of SACRE mentioned if there's consensus around this is what faith groups look think good RE looks like then that's helpful.

Outside bodies are the Board of Deputies of British Jews, the Catholic Education Service and the Church of England.

The Associate Advisor for Religious Education to speak to AREAIC on another date, the Association of RE Inspectors, Advisors and consultants. Chair of SACRE questioned whether they act as a SACRE to pursue it more specifically with local academies.

SACRE agreed to bring the item back into the January meeting. SACRE agreed that the adapted national curricular style has been communicated via the newsletter as per the previous item.

RESOLVED

Agreed to contact the CEOs of Academy Trusts with schools in Thurrock to ask them if they would consider recommending the National Content Standard to all their academies.

31. Any Other Business

Chair of SACRE mentioned it would be good just to monitor with awareness any impact the Israel/Gaza is having on community relations within Thurrock, Interfaith relations within Thurrock, how it's playing out in Thurrock schools, which obviously are of our more direct concerns, thorough SACRE.

Requests that Andrea Winstone explore if the Council are aware regarding school issues and SACRE members should be notified.

The meeting finished at 7.13pm

Approved as a true and correct record

CHAIR

DATE

**Any queries regarding these Minutes, please contact
Democratic Services at Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk**