

Minutes of the Meeting of the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education held on 4 November 2020 at 6.30 pm

Committee A: Mrs S Lawson, Mr A Kariyawasam and Mr T Ojetola

Committee B: Mr A Anderson and Mrs L Fry

Committee C: Ms Jellicoe and Mrs Pumfrey

Committee D: Councillor Kerin

Apologies: Ms J Culloty, Mrs H Kaur, Ms Webster and Councillor Collins.

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

Before the start of the Meeting, all present were advised that the meeting was being live streamed to the Council's online webcast channel.

7. Minutes

The minutes of the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education held on 3 June 2020 were approved as a correct record subject to noting the incorrect spelling of Mr Kariyawasam surname.

8. Items of Urgent Business

There were no items of Urgent Business.

9. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

10. Monitoring Provision for RE in Thurrock Schools

The Associate Advisor for Religious Education introduced the report and in doing so explained that in order to discharge its legal duties SACRE monitored the provision for religious education within its local area, where Religious Education was delivered in accordance with the local agreed syllabus. She continued by stating that in the past it had been possible for SACRE to carry out its monitoring functions using a variety of methods such as school visits and analysis of data.

Members discussed the document in appendix 1 of the report commenting it was good news in relation to key stage three where provision appeared to be fairly consistent however the number of schools offering key stage four religious education seemed low. It was mentioned that schools needed to keep websites and information up to date, has it been brought to the associate advisors attention that the data reported by St Cleres school was not correct.

During discussions, the importance of schools ensuring data and information on the website being correct was raised. Members commented that perhaps SACRE could write to schools reminding them of their statutory duty to provide this information.

The teachers present commented that sometimes it could depend on the title of the subject on the school timetable as some schools would report their teaching hours under philosophy for example and therefore when data collecting would not receive all of the relevant data required as any system. The adviser explained that she had checked the philosophy data and did not find any Thurrock Schools reporting hours under that heading. The system used would not pick up on a different subject names so schools needed to be vigilant about this matter or risked misleading SACRE and others that use this data. SACRE Members heard how some schools were struggling to find time to teach key stage three and above in relation to Religious Education which was a shame as children who were taking the subject love the lessons and the schemes of work of which teachers followed.

Members moved on to discuss appendix 2 of the report which proposed a means of evaluating school websites for RE. It was commented that it was interesting to see the differences between the local primary schools' website descriptions of RE and the importance of following the syllabus it was stressed of the, one member who had looked at Aveley Primary School stated she felt it fell into the exceptional category set out on the table.

It was commented that headteachers would find this document useful and during discussions it was decided to include a document within the headteachers news bulletin and suggest that it might be used for self-evaluation and exemplifying good practice.

RESOLVED:

1.1 That SACRE considers

- **The school workforce data for 2019 in Appendix 1**
- **The task for reviewing primary school website in Appendix 2**

1.2 The SACRE consider any follow up action that might be warranted such as:

- **Where good practice is identified**
- **Where there is no evidence that the requirements of the Agreed Syllabus are met**

- Where there looks to be limited or no provision.

11. Work Plan Review and Update for 2020-2021

The work plan was presented by the Associate Advisor for Religious Education, who explains the work plan set out a list of objectives based on their responsibilities for SACRE as described in a non-statutory guidance. For each responsibility they were set of actions and success criteria listed.

It was enquired if monitoring of GCSE and A-level results could be included and if so how could SACRE insure there was a level playing field. The Associate Advisor explained the government published exam results data for GCSE and A-levels. The strategic lead for school effectiveness and SEND commented that no results would be published this year due to COVID-19, and therefore the last data published was that the previous academic year.

Members enquired as to where the invites to the youth Council could be included on the work plan for future meetings, as the Youth Council had been invited to previous meetings and their input was greatly received.

RESOLVED that SACRE review the workplan for 2019-2020 and consider the recommendations for work in 2020-21

12. Update on National Developments and Opportunities

The Associate Advisor for Religious Education addressed SACRE Members introducing the report which detailed the key national developments which impacted on Religious Education. Since the last meeting of SACRE a number of developments had taken place such as the publication of a report from Theos and decisions by the Department of Education, these were presented for consideration and comments by SACRE

Members discussed the Spirited Arts competition and suggested that SACRE promote the competition to all local schools and see what creative RE could be presented. The teachers on SACRE commented it was a great idea to circulate within schools and assured separate the beautiful pieces of work could be submitted by children. Chair commented he felt this was an excellent opportunity for SACRE to get in contact with schools and asked if this two could be included within the headteachers bulletin.

SACRE moved on to discuss the Farmington Scholarship, the Associate Advisor for Religious Education commented this had been very successful and she was keen to share with Thurrock local schools. She continued by explaining questions from schools were prepared ahead of the virtual meeting where the questions within answered for the children remotely. It was commented that St Cleres School had a very good teacher who taught the Islamic faith and was very keen to answer questions from students on the faith and regularly gave assemblies.

Discussions tend to Theo's latest report of worldviews in a religious education and the adviser to SACRE queried if members felt they had a sufficient understanding on the concept of worldviews and whether this subject should be on a future agenda. It was mentioned that out of the three meetings a year perhaps the understanding of worldviews within religious education should be added to the workplan and members of the youth cabinet invited to such a meeting so they could explain their own personal views.

RESOLVED that SACRE Members:

- **Review the information collected in Appendix 1**
- **Evaluate the relevance of each section for RE in Thurrock**
- **Consider the suggested actions**

The meeting finished at 8.03 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