



Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE)

Date **Thursday 5 March 2015**
Time **1.30 pm**
Venue **Committee Room 1B, County Hall, Durham**

Business

Part A

**Items during which the Press and Public are welcome to attend.
Members of the Public can ask questions with the Chairman's
agreement.**

1. Introductions, Welcome and Apologies
2. Declarations of interest, if any
3. Minutes of the meeting held on 6 November 2014 (Pages 1 - 6)
4. Matters Arising
5. Chairs Comments
6. RE Inspector Report (Pages 7 - 8)
7. Revised GCSE Content
8. SMSC Conference June 2015
9. Report of Working Groups
10. Letter from Lord Nash to SACRE (Pages 9 - 10)
11. Date of the next meeting
12. Any other business
13. Any resolution relating to the exclusion of the public during the discussion of items containing exempt information

Colette Longbottom
Head of Legal and Democratic Services

County Hall
Durham

25 February 2015

To: **The Members of the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education**

1. Church of England

N Chapman, Revd. J Jewsbury, D Mowbray-Pape and K Passmore

2. Other Religious Denominations and Faiths

J Bainbridge	Methodist Church
N Barker	The Salvation Army
S Brown	Assemblies of God
V Gallant	Judaism
W Gray	Buddhism
B Guymer	Baptist Church
J Kidd	Methodist Church
J Nicholls	Society of Friends (Quaker)
I Osborne	Roman Catholic
J Pallister	Roman Catholic
S Purba	Sikhism
Bhakti Rasa Dasa	Hinduism
C Spencer	Bahá'í Faith
M Stephenson	United Reform Church

3. Teachers Associations

V Bain	RE Curriculum Group
S Baker	NUT
C Callaghan	NUT
A Hartley	NASUWT
P Lamb	SHA
S Lupton	RE Curriculum Group
P Welch	NUT

4. County Council Representatives

Councillors P Brookes, M Dixon, S Iveson and W Stelling

Specialist Inspector (Religious Education)

Isobel Short

Contact: Paula Nicholson

Tel: 03000 269710

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

At a Meeting of Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) held in Committee Room 2, County Hall, Durham on Thursday 6 November 2014 at 1.30 pm

Present:

Church of England

N Chapman, D Mowbray-Pape and K Passmore

Other Religious Denominations and Faiths

J Bainbridge	Methodist Church
N Barker	The Salvation Army
V Gallant	Judaism
W Gray	Buddhism
J Kidd	Methodist Church
J Nicholls	Society of Friends (Quaker)
J Pallister	Roman Catholic
Bhakti Rasa Dasa	Hinduism
C Spencer	Bahá'í Faith

Teachers Associations

S Baker	NUT
S Lupton	RE Curriculum Group
P Welch	NUT

County Council Representatives

Councillor M Dixon

Specialist Inspector (Religious Education)

Isobel Short

Voluntary and Community Sector Officer

Ian Hunter-Smart

1 Presentations from Schools on the Enquiry Project

Students from King James I Academy and Wellfield Community School attended the SACRE meeting to give members a presentation on the work they had undertaken of the Enquiry Project.

Members thanked the students for their very informative presentations and asked questions.

The Committee adjourned at 2.10 pm and re-convened at 2.15 pm

2 Election of a Chairman

Canon L Burton had indicated at the last meeting that she would no longer be a member of Durham SACRE and a new Chairman would need to be appointed at the November meeting.

Nominations were sought for a new Chairman to replace Canon L Burton.

Councillor Dixon moved and S Baker seconded that P Welch be appointed Chairman of Durham SACRE.

No further nominations were received.

Resolved: That P Welch be appointed Chairman of Durham SACRE.

P WELCH (in the Chair)

3 Introductions, Welcome and Apologies

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting in particular V Gallant and K Passmore as this was their first meeting. Everyone introduced themselves and gave a brief description of their background.

The Specialist Inspector for Religious Education introduced C Forbes who was an observer from Sunderland who is a Lead Teacher and had recently taken on an advisory role and was hoping to learn from Durham SACRE.

Apologies were received from V Bain, Councillor P Brookes, S Brown, Canon L Burton, C Callaghan, A Hartley and I Osborne.

The Specialist Inspector for Religious Education told SACRE members that she had spoken to Canon L Burton on the phone. Canon L Burton was very sorry she could not attend her last SACRE meeting but was unable to travel up from Canterbury. She asked for her good wishes to be conveyed to all SACRE members.

The Specialist Inspector for Religious Education thanked Canon L Burton in her absence for the commitment she had shown to Durham SACRE over a period of 20 years. She told members again that Canon L Burton had expressed an interest in keeping in touch and possibly re-joining SACRE if she returned to the region in the future.

The Specialist Inspector for Religious Education conveyed that Canon L Burton would always feel welcome and could be a co-opted member in the future if there were no vacancies on SACRE at that point.

SACRE members agreed with this proposal and asked that their thanks and good wishes be conveyed to Canon L Burton.

4 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest in relation to items of business on the agenda.

5 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 June 2014, were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman subject to one minor grammatical change.

6 Matters Arising

SACRE members sought clarification on the progress made to appoint a Representative from Islam to SACRE as two of the members may know someone who would be able to represent Islam on Durham SACRE.

SACRE members were advised that S Brown was looking into the matter and members would be advised of the outcome accordingly.

The Chairman advised SACRE members that he had started the production of the annual report which would be sent out in draft to SACRE members in the next couple of months.

The Chairman also advised SACRE members that the SACRE Task Group had met and the outcome from this meeting would be discussed under agenda Item No. 10.

7 Chairs Comments

The Chairman indicated to SACRE members that he was delighted at becoming Chairman. He had grown up in County Durham and had been taught by J Kidd and I Short. Paul has taught RE for the past 12 years and has been a member of SACRE for 8 years.

The Chairman proposed to send a letter of thanks to the Headteachers' of the schools whose students kindly attended the meeting today to give members a presentation on the Enquiry project. He also proposed to send a letter of thanks to Canon Linda Burton.

Resolved:

That the Chairman send a letter of thanks to Canon L Burton and the Headteachers' of the students who attended the SACRE Meeting today.

8 RE Inspector's Report

The Specialist Inspector for Religious Education presented the circulated report which was the RE Inspector Report for Autumn Term 2014 (for copy see file of minutes).

The report looked at the following:-

- Durham RE Networks
- RE Contracts
- Regional RE Hub
- Holocaust Memorial Day
- Courses Next Year
- School Queries
- RE, Collective Worship, SMSC and Ofsted
- Interfaith Week
- Farmington Fellowship
- Raising the Profile of RE
- RE Bursaries

Members discussed the contents of the report in particular parental withdrawal of children from RE and/or Collective Worship. Members discussed how withdrawal did not mean that children would be given extra curriculum work.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

9 RE Enquiry Project

The Chairman presented the circulated NASACRE report on the Bursary 2013 – Enquiry Project, Durham and South Tyneside SACREs (for copy see file of minutes).

SACRE members indicated that it was a worthwhile project and wished to congratulate all involved. The Chairman indicated that he would send a thank you letter to every school involved in the project.

Resolved: (i) That the Chairman sends a thank you letter to all schools involved in the Enquiry Project.

(ii) That the report be noted.

10 SACRE Structure and Working Groups

The Chairman referred to the recent Task Group that had met to look at the structure of Durham SACRE and was attended by himself, C Spencer, Councillor Dixon and the Specialist Inspector for Religious Education.

The Task Group produced a Durham SACRE draft organisational structure which consisted of the three Durham SACRE Committee Meetings and three permanent Working Groups which would look at Communications, External Relations and SACRE Development. There would be a further Ad Hoc Task Group/Working Group which would be convened when necessary and would work on agenda items between SACRE meetings and organise specific projects and events (for copy of structure see file of minutes).

SACRE members were asked for their comments on the draft structure. Members agreed that working groups were required due to the gap between each SACRE Committee Meeting and people contributed more in smaller groups.

It was agreed that the Chairman would e-mail SACRE members for volunteers to sit on the working groups.

Resolved: (i) That the Draft Organisational Structure be approved.

(ii) That volunteers be sought to sit on the Working Groups.

11 Date of the next meeting

The next meeting of SACRE would be held on 5 March 2015.

The Clerk asked for agreement to arrange the 2015/16 meetings the first Thursday in March, June and November at 1.30 pm as in previous years.

Resolved:

That the 2015/16 meetings are arranged as follows:-

4 June 2015 at 1.30 pm
5 November 2015 at 1.30 pm
3 March 2016 at 1.30 pm

12 Any other business

J Nicholls the Quaker Representative shared some literature with SACRE members which were entitled as follows:-

‘Peace Education Network – Teach, Peace pack, contains assembly ideas and activities for exploring peace themes with 5-11 year olds’

‘Conviction - A World War 1 critical thinking project, a secondary school focused teachers’ resource’

‘Conscience – A World War 1 critical thinking project, a primary school focused teachers’ resource’.

She also referred to an article ‘Wait until Wednesday’ and a website ‘ReforReal’ which invites views about what children need to know and understand about religion and belief and why.

Details of the websites would be circulated to SACRE members.

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Durham SACRE

The RE Inspector Report Spring Term 2015

Durham RE Networks

Spring Term 2015 RE networks are as follows:

- **PRIMARY** – Thursday 29 January (39 participants). Teachers shared some examples of good practice around the ‘Big Picture’ of Learning in RE and how to ensure pupils understand this. Overview plans for all the Easter units in the Agreed Syllabus were distributed and discussed.
- **SPECIAL** – Tuesday 27 January (4 participants). The session focussed on RE planning to meet the differing needs of students in special schools and how to use the Agreed Syllabus effectively.
- **SECONDARY** – to take place on 26 March (17 participants to date). This network will focus on the subject content for the revised GCSEs in RS and how RE contributes to pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Good practice will be shared.

I intend to run additional networks next year for NQTs/new practitioners/non-specialists of RE.

RE Contracts

The number of primary and secondary schools requesting subject specific support in RE remains healthy.

- I have worked with several primary schools together to develop planning and resources based on the Agreed Syllabus.
- Work in secondary schools has included subject monitoring visits, lesson observations, sample moderation of mock GCSE exams.

REImprove Group

This is a group of primary RE co-ordinators who want to work together to develop and share good practice in RE within and across the region. The current focus for work is engaging with local faith communities and developing guidance for schools when visiting places of worship.

This group is being supported by Regional Hub money and by myself, Karenza Passmore (NERLRC) and Natalie Chapman (Diocesan adviser). It is anticipated that the group will visit some places of worship in Newcastle and provide practical advice and guidance for other schools.

Christianity: The Big Picture

I am currently working with a few regional partners to develop a one day course and guidance material on Christianity. This course will focus on developing subject knowledge of teachers (from all phases) on the major beliefs of Christianity: Creation and Salvation. I am working alongside Chris Hudson (Barnabas in Schools), Karenza Passmore and Natalie Chapman. The course will run in Durham in October 2015 and also across the region and through local networks.

Enquiry Project: Phase 2

There is still some funding available through NASACRE and the RE Hub for further development of the enquiry based approach in RE. This was discussed at the last SACRE Task Group with Paul Welch and Sharon Lupton and will be developed in the Summer and Autumn terms. It is hoped that further work on engaging with the diversity of faiths and beliefs can be developed.

New GCSEs in Religious Studies

The revised GCSE and A level subject content for Religious Studies were published by the DfE in February 2015. Examination boards will produce their specifications for first teaching from September 2016. Students will sit the first examinations in Summer 2018. Durham will hold a conference for secondary teachers next year (Spring 2016) to help teachers prepare for this new teaching.

Trojan Horse Conference

I attended the NASACRE and AREIAC joint conference in November 2014 on the Birmingham Trojan Horse issue. The key speakers were Doctor Joyce Miller and Alan Brine. There were extensive opportunities to discuss the implications of this issue for RE. I am using this to advise and offer guidance to RE co-ordinators when considering how good RE helps pupils in their SMSC development, particularly in relation to British values.

Alan's Blog

Alan Brine, former HMI and RE National Adviser for Ofsted, has a blog on the RE Online website. He is raising a lot of very interesting questions about the provision for RE, including the use of big questions to explore big ideas, the debate about the purpose of RE, the implications for RE as a locally determined subject. You can find his blog on: www.reonline.org.uk

Moving House

The North East Religious Learning Resources Centre (NERLRC) has moved to Cuthbert House, Stonebridge, Durham, DH1 3RY (0191 375 0586). I am sure SACRE members will be very welcome to visit and help support this excellent centre. Please see Karenza for more details.

AREIAC – Association of Religious Education, Inspectors, Advisers and Consultants
DfE – Department for Education
NASACRE – National Association of Standing Advisory Councils for RE
NERLRC – North East Religious Learning Resources Centre
SMSCD – Spiritual, Moral, Social Cultural Development



Lord Nash

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Schools

Sanctuary Buildings Great Smith Street Westminster London SW1P 3BT
tel: 0370 000 2288 www.education.gov.uk/help/contactus

7 January, 2015

Dear colleague

I am writing to you as Minister responsible for faith schools. I have recently had many conversations about the important role SACREs and local authorities have in supporting this area, which have encouraged me to write.

I would like to emphasise the importance of good teaching of religious education and the central role of SACREs and local authorities. All pupils benefit from good quality religious education teaching. RE makes a significant contribution to pupils' academic and personal development. It also plays a key role in promoting social cohesion and the virtues of respect and empathy, which are vitally important in our diverse society. The recent events in some schools in Birmingham have highlighted the importance of promoting the crucial values of respect and tolerance in our schools.

The role of a SACRE is to support the religious education curriculum and collective worship within schools. Local authorities have a duty to enable SACREs to fulfil their statutory responsibilities in these areas. They should assure themselves that the SACRE is functioning well and holding regular meetings. It may also be appropriate for the local authority to support the SACRE's work to provide teacher training in RE and collective worship training.

It is vital to continue to improve the academic rigour of RE in schools so that pupils develop their knowledge and understanding of this subject. The last Ofsted review of the subject found that the potential of RE was not being realised in many schools. The introduction of the new and more demanding national curriculum makes the importance of improving religious education even clearer.

The recent events in Birmingham schools have also highlighted the importance of all schools promoting the fundamental British values of the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. In some schools in Birmingham, inappropriate religious education teaching and a distorted school ethos served to undermine those fundamental British values. We have recently publishing guidance for all schools to make clear their responsibilities in this area, and have introduced new legislation for independent schools, academies and free schools to actively promote fundamental British values. The guidance is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/improving-the-sm-sc-development-of-pupils-in-independent-schools>.

Good progress has been made recently to improve religious education. All students studying a GCSE in religious studies will now be expected to study two religions along

with textual analysis, or philosophy and ethics, which will broaden their knowledge and understanding. We have also taken measures to ensure we have sufficient high-quality religious education teachers, who have detailed subject knowledge and expertise. We have introduced a new bursary scheme for the recruitment of high-quality RE teachers in 2015/16. Trainees who hold a 1st class degree qualify for a £9,000 bursary, and those with a 2:1 £4,000.

SACREs are well placed to contribute to this important work through their development of appropriate and demanding RE syllabuses, and their support to schools on the effective teaching of RE, including continuing professional development for RE teachers.

It is inappropriate for any school, whether they are a faith school or not, to offer their pupils a narrow interpretation of religious education. All schools should ensure their pupils are aware of the tenets of all the major faiths represented in Great Britain. SACREs can support this through their development of locally agreed RE syllabuses, and their advice to schools on collective worship and on effective RE teaching. I would encourage SACREs to consider the ways in which their locally agreed syllabus helps pupils to develop an understanding of Christianity, whilst also learning about the teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain.

As part of their responsibilities, SACREs must provide an agreed syllabus to support the religious education curriculum in schools, which must be reviewed every five years. A report must also be produced annually outlining the activities of the SACRE. All SACREs are encouraged to submit their annual reports to NASACRE for inclusion on their website to enable members to showcase the important work that is going on around the country, share knowledge and learn from best practice. The Department intends to commission a review of SACRE annual reports to identify good practice, and ensure that all SACREs are fulfilling their statutory duties.

SACREs would not be able to exist without the advice, help and support of the many dedicated individuals and communities, who work together to fulfil their many and varied roles. I understand that many members offer their time and expertise voluntarily, and they continue to offer professional and personal support to schools and communities in an increasingly complex and demanding environment. I would like to offer my sincere thanks to everyone who serves the pupils in their area in such a way.

Yours sincerely



JOHN NASH