

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

At a Meeting of Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) held in Committee Room 1B, County Hall, Durham on Thursday 5 March 2020 at 1.30 pm

Present:

P Welch (Chair) In the Chair

Church of England

Canon L Burton, K Passmore, H Tait and C Weir

Other Religious Denominations and Faiths

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| J Bainbridge | - Methodist Church |
| S Baker | - Roman Catholic |
| W Gray | - Buddhism |
| F Johnson | - Methodist Church |
| J Pallister | - Roman Catholic |
| C Spencer | - Bahá'í Faith |
| D Van der Velde | - Judaism |

Teachers Associations

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| V Bain | - NEU |
| S Lupton | - RE Curriculum Group |

County Council Representatives

Councillor C Martin

Co-opted Member

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| S Walker | - Humanist |
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Education Durham Support and Provision Lead

Julie Rimmer

1 Introductions, Welcome and Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from N Dodd, B Dunn, A Hartley, M Lowden, J Nicholls, Bhakti Rasa Adhikhara, C Singh, M Turner and Councillors J Shuttleworth and F Tinsley.

2 Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 7 November 2019 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

3 Declarations of Interest

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

4 Matters Arising

K Passmore referred to the Primary Newly Qualified Teacher (NQT) Questionnaire that was discussed at the last meeting and advised Members that they had not yet had an opportunity to contact any of the educational providers.

The Chair referred to short and long-term plans for SACRE and indicated that he would like to set up a planning group to drive this forward and look at the agenda for SACRE meetings.

L Burton referred to the meeting that was held to look at the artwork for the agreed syllabus and asked for an update.

The Chair advised Members that a meeting had taken place and they had a long discussion regarding the inclusion of artwork and photographs into the agreed syllabus, they thought that photographs often looked dated and art work created issues around copyright, so it was agreed to use quotations on religious and non-religious worldviews.

5 Chairs Comments

The Chair indicated that there was nothing of huge national significance happening in the world of Religious Education. He then advised Members on a number of upcoming meetings and events such as the NASACRE AGM and the AREIAC conference.

K Passmore advised Members that she was also a member of AREIAC, and an analysis had recently been undertaken on RE reports in relation to Ofsted inspections. She advised members that she was happy to feedback to members on the AREIAC conference at the next SACRE meeting.

The Chair advised Members that there was a RE exchange 2020 being organised in Birmingham for teachers of RE.

There were also some opportunities for teacher training provided by the Jewish museum in London.

NATRE had recently held their annual RE conference and are also working on a programme about better RE in your primary school that had received funding.

He had also received correspondence from NATRE on the support they offered to SACRE's, details of which he had provided to the Education Durham Support and Provision Lead.

The Chair then referred to the results of the general election that compounded where SACRE stood for the next 5 years. He saw a situation in the future with increased academisation. Already there are a number of Roman Catholic (RC) schools in the process of converting to multi academy trusts in the region, Durham RC schools would be part of two different trusts.

He continued that until this point a low number of primary schools had converted to academies and this was something SACRE need to be mindful of as education becomes more disjointed with the systems available to schools and how do they ensure that academies continue to buy into the agreed syllabus.

The Education Durham Support and Provision Lead confirmed that there was also no guarantee that these schools would buy into service level agreements with the authority so there could be less influence with these schools.

The Chair indicated that the test would be the launch of the agreed syllabus which was well attended at the last launch 5 years ago.

The Chair suggested a small planning team to reflect on issues for SACRE and work on short and long-term strategies for SACRE and sought expressions of interest.

The Chair advised Members that he proposed to hold the planning meetings approximately 4 weeks before SACRE meetings. J Bainbridge, L Burton, W Gray K Passmore and S Walker agreed to be part of the planning team.

J Bainbridge referred to rural primary schools that were coming together and she knew of three that were under the one headteacher and it would be interesting to see if all schools were represented at the launch of the agreed syllabus.

6 Agreed Syllabus Launch Update

The Education Durham Support and Provision Lead advised Members that the Agreed Syllabus was currently waiting for a delegated decision and a copy of the syllabus was with the communications team for their approval and to check copyright, but no issues were anticipated before the launch.

Members were advised that the Chair was working with C Robson on the launch dates and the programme for the launch days.

Following a number of questions, the Education Durham Support and Provision Lead advised Members that the Agreed Syllabus would not be available on the website, but electronic copies would be circulated. She was aware that some schools share the agreed syllabus on their website as they were obliged to publish their curriculum.

The Chair advised Members that they were planning on holding 2 launch dates for Primary Schools, 1 for Secondary schools and a half day for Specialist Schools and provided details of the proposed programme.

The Education Durham Support and Provision Lead advised Members that C Robson was carrying out a separate piece of work with special schools on progress and assessment across all subject areas.

In response to a question, the Education Durham Support and Provision Lead advised Members that approximately 5 or 6 secondary schools were academies and around 85% of primary schools were still maintained schools so there were around 20/25 academies but that number was rapidly changing and would be around 30 by the end of the year. The exact figures could be provided to Members if required.

The service currently worked with 90% of primary schools in terms of school improvement and 80% of secondary schools. There were currently 5 or 6 academies that they did not work with.

7 Additional Guidance for Humanism

Members were provided with a copy of the Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education in Durham 2020: Additional Guidance for Humanism, which had been produced by the North East Humanists (for copy, see file of minutes).

S Walker the Humanist representative on SACRE presented the guidance document.

Members discussed the document that would be available for use by other authorities. Issues were raised regarding the title stating, 'Agreed Syllabus'

and S Walker agreed to amend the title so that 'additional guidance for Humanism' appeared first and the word 'support' be included.

Members discussed page 9 of the document in relation to the evolution discussion and the wording used and asked S Walker if she could take their comments back to the North EAST Humanists and give some consideration to the wording or pick this up in the training that would support the document.

S Walker responded that they could not amend the PowerPoint as the resources had been produced nationally.

Subject to the above, members endorsed the document.

The Chair, Mr Welch left the meeting

The Deputy Chair, Mrs Bainbridge took the Chair

8 Education Durham Report to SACRE

Members were provided with a copy of the 2019 GCSE Outcomes (for copy, see file of minutes).

The Education Durham Support and Provision Lead presented the report and advised Members that there had been a decline in the percentage of pupils taking GCSE Religious Studies, but the average grade achievement had increased and was above the national average.

The strongest performing schools in terms of GCSE Religious Studies attainment were St Bede's RC Comprehensive School and Byron Sixth Form College, Wolsingham School and Easington Academy. The strongest performing schools in terms of progress were St Bede's RC Comprehensive School and Byron Sixth Form College, St Johns School and Sixth Form College and St Bede's RC Comprehensive School and Sixth Form College, Lanchester.

53 students took an A Level RS qualification in 2019 compared to 58 in 2018. The average point score was above the national average and higher than in 2018.

Members discussed the report and in response to questions were advised that 26 secondary schools out of 32 secondary schools entered pupils for a GCSE in RS in 2019.

Members were provided with details of support offered to schools in 2018-19.

A RE Expert Panel had also been set up that had contributed to the development of a non-examined KS4 curriculum plan that formed part of the draft Durham Agreed Syllabus for RE.

Members asked if C Robson would be in attendance at future SACRE meetings to feedback on national conferences she had attended.

Members were advised that C Robson was an independent consultant, Education Durham could feedback on conferences but could not guarantee C Robson's attendance at SACRE as her time was paid for by Education Durham and not SACRE.

The Education Durham Support and Provision Lead advised Members that Education Durham no longer had Specialist Inspectors for subjects. Members indicated that SACRE was a statutory function and the way forward was a working group to look at the strategic future of SACRE and the short and long-term plans, as suggested by the Chair.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

9 County Council Representative on SACRE - Councillor Martin

Councillor Martin asked that this item be deferred to a future meeting of SACRE.

10 Date of the next meeting

The next meeting of Durham SACRE would be held on 4 June 2020.