

Minutes of the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education Meeting held on 7 February 2024

Present: Rev. Preb. M. Metcalf (Chair)

Attendance	
Gabi Oldfield	Mike Wilcox
Maddy Belle	Kath Perry, MBE
Philip Atkins, OBE	Lisa Gretton
Paul Northcott	Vicki Wayman

Mary Gale, Simon Humble and Jo Piech

Part One

16. Welcome to New Members

The Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) welcomed 2 new representatives, joining Committee A as the Catholic representatives, Vicki Wayman and Lisa Gretton. The SACRE also welcomed a new representative joining the Muslim denomination, Hifsa Haroon-Iqbal, however on this occasion Hifsa had sent her apologies, which were accepted for this meeting as she was delivering workshops on Islam to schools.

17. Apologies

Lauren Nicholson Ward, Tajinder Singh, Sam Kirwan, Shaun Miles, Zoe Cahalan, Vicky Priestley, Paul Snape, Jacqueline Bandha

These were received and accepted.

18. Update on membership

The advisor shared that there were a number of current vacancies on the SACRE membership. The Chair advised if any members were aware of persons who wished to represent these denominations, they were more than welcome to get in touch with the committee clerk.

19. Declaration of Any other Business

There were no declarations of any other business on this occasion.

20. Minutes of the Previous Meeting 15th November 2023

That the minutes of the SACRE meeting held on 15 November 2023 be approved and signed by the Chair.

21. An Update on Key Issues - Report of the Director for Children and Families

Annual Report

The advisor updated that Tim Moss, Assistant Director for Education Strategy and Improvement, had suggested some minor amendments to the SACRE Annual Report. These amendments had been made, and the report would be shared and uploaded to the new SACRE webpage once approval had been given. The report would also be sent to NASACRE.

The Chair added that they had requested the Report be passed to the Prosperous Overview and Scrutiny committee for their consideration.

Westhill Legacy Project

The advisor gave an update on the budget utilised to support schools in understanding the Staffordshire 2023 Agreed Syllabus. The advisor shared the list of schools where workshops had already been delivered and the dates of the upcoming workshops were also shared. The very positive feedback from schools was noted.

Ofsted Reports

The advisor took the SACRE members through an extract of the Annual Ofsted report, stating that it included a specific section on Religious Education in schools, and noting it was currently of poor quality. Details were shared with the evidence of the report with the panel.

The advisor also shared information about a SIAMS inspection in a local school and noted there was praise for the teaching of Religious Education in line with the Staffordshire 2023 Agreed Syllabus.

Blasphemy in Schools

The Chair took the SACRE members through a report on Blasphemy in Schools, with the recommendation that it be noted. It was commented that teachers may be lacking knowledge of how to deal with situations described in the report. It was agreed that this topic would be the next focus for SACRE in supporting staff, governors, and pupils in this matter utilising the Culham St Gabriel Grant.

Resolved: That the updates be noted.

22. NASACRE Update - Report of the Director for Children and Families

The advisor gave a brief update on NASACRE. The Chair shared an update with the members of the leadership of NASACRE, due to the original Chair giving notice to resign, the current Vice Chair was standing in as acting Chairperson.

The advisor also shared details of the next NASACRE Conference and AGM being held on 20 May 2024, in York. It was confirmed that the Staffordshire SACRE had been allocated two spaces for the Conference, and any members interested in attending were asked to pass their details to the committee Clerk within 10 days of this meeting date.

Resolved:

- a. That the NASACRE update be noted.
- b. That the Committee Clerk share details of the NASACRE conference for interested members to respond.

23. Culham St Gabriel Grant - Report of the Director for Children and Families

The advisor gave an update to the SACRE regarding the successful award of the Culham St Gabriel Grant, that will be used to support ongoing developments in schools. Details were given to the SACRE committee of the work still needed to be completed, such as webinars.

Resolved:

- a. That the report be noted and recommended future work be agreed.
- b. That three reports be shared summarising the project over the next 3 meetings.

24. Interactive session

In order to support the work of the Culham St Gabriel Grant further, the advisor took the SACRE members through questions about Equality, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. The advisor opened up the meeting for a discussion in small groups, to gather this information. The committee came back together and shared their views on the questions which were collated by the advisor.

Resolved: That the information during the interactive session be noted.

25. Standards Report of the Director for Children and Families

Members were provided with a report on standards in RE, with an update on the results of the 2023 GCSE and A Level results.

Comparisons were made against last years results and members were briefed on key developments. It was shared that the profile of RE was

being raised within Staffordshire, which was a positive result. The advisor stated the data showed that results were stabilising following the pandemic, and that the 2019 results was a better data-set for comparison. It was confirmed that this summary would be included in next year's annual report.

Resolved: That the standard report be noted.

26. The SACRE Budget 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 - Report of the Director for Children and Families

Members were provided with the monitoring report of the 2023/24 budget. The advisor confirmed that the figures had not yet been given for 2024/25, but confirmed the amount would not be less than the 2023/24 budget.

The SACRE were informed where funds could be prioritised to support schools. It was noted that all workshops would be funded fully going forward in addition to subscriptions and conference fees; this would be facilitated by the advisor.

Funds from the Culham Grant would be carried forward, but the main SACRE budget would all be spent by the end of the financial year.

The advisor asked members for their approval of the implementation of this process. Members unanimously approved this request.

Resolved: That the final SACRE Budget for 2023/24, be noted.

27. Development Plan 2024-25 - Report of the Director for Children and Families

The advisor shared the Development Plan for 23-24 stating SACRE objectives, timescales and included links to the new SACRE and Entrust webpages, both of which had been created since the last meeting. It would be reviewed at future meetings.

Resolved: That the development plan be noted.

28. Applications for variation of practice - Report of the Director for Children and Families

There were no applications made on this occasion. It was confirmed that any applications received would be put to the committee for consideration.

29. Dates of next meetings

Dates of the next meetings were confirmed as:

- 26th June 2024
- 13th November 2024

All meetings commence at 2:00pm unless otherwise stated.

Chair