

**Telford & Wrekin Council**  
**Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education**  
**Meeting held on Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> February 2022 Remotely**

<b>Attendees</b>
Jacque Osmund-Smith (Chair), Tim Carter, Diane Whiteley, Jon Rawson, Mary Jennings, Cllr Veronica Fletcher and Cathy Landau
<b>In Attendance</b>
Rhys Attwell, Jayne Clark and Michelle Parker
<b>Apologies</b>
Majid Iqbal, Mark Harrington, Cllr Raj Mehta, Sajid Younis
<b>1. Welcome and Introductions</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Chair welcomes members of SACRE to the meeting and proceeds to read a poem by the Deli Lama.</li> </ul>
<b>2. Minutes of the previous meeting</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The minutes of the previous meeting held on the 10<sup>th</sup> November 2021 were agreed</li> </ul>
<b>3. Matters Arising-Visit to Synagogues</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chair asked if there is any updates on the visit to the Synagogue. Member stated that the contact links for the progressive Synagogue and Orthodox Synagogue would be passed onto the Chair by the admin from Birmingham Progressive Synagogue (BPS), so arrangements for a visit could be made.</li> <li>Chair asked SACRE members for an update on Schools sending to the group dialogue for topics? Member's stated that they were impressed with a fellow members students from Erccall Wood Academy, who on the topic of religious education spoke with "clarity and maturity".</li> </ul>
<b>3. Research findings into the teaching of Sikhism – Dr Opinderjit Takhar</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dr Takhar unable to attend, Item deferred.</li> </ul>
<b>4. Reporting on RE in schools/ SACRE members visits</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The members discussed the idea of Twilight training visits, with members looking to arrange a session. Some members stated that they could do a twilight session on the provision that there was enough room in the diary, but were concerned that if there were too many attendees it would make things more difficult and requested that sessions were held in smaller numbers. Members also wished to note that the ideal time for a Twilight session would be 4pm, allowing for people to attend straight from work.</li> <li>Member wished for SACRE to visit schools, with members expressing the wish to test out the integrity in the research, and test out the methodology of SACRE on a small number of schools.</li> <li>Other members suggested during the discussion that they have governors from one of the school involved in the SACRE visits. The reasoning behind this was that this may help with quality assurance with Ofsted. In addition this could also help to maintain the balance of views between science and faith. One member did raise the point, that some Schools do have a linked governor for RE, meaning that it were more beneficial to have a Governor specialising in this subject to be involved in the meeting.</li> </ul>
<b>5. NATRE and RE Today- Jon Rawson</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Jon Rawson from the National Association of Teachers of RE, updated members on NATRE which supported those who taught and supported RE subjects, providing a website with a list of resources. Telford and Wrekin NATRE group had been set up by Jon, with the aim of providing a network for RE teachers in primary schools. However, it was suggested that there might be a chance to create a network between Primary and Secondary school RE teachers.</li> <li>Jon Rawson also pointed out that teachers are able to access the resources for RE subjects at a discounted rate, the resources also allowed for subscriptions for RE subject teachers. In addition teachers would receive a termly newsletter national updates,</li> </ul>

recourses, conferences, competitions, rewards and power point sharing.

- Members asked Jon to keep NATRE updated with the SACRE team, Jon agreed to this.
- The Chair asked if SACRE should join NATRE, Jon, in response, said that it was possible for SACRE to join but there was a joining fee. NATRE were open to anybody for teachers to meet and share good practise of RE subject.
- Jon stated that NATRE meetings would take place in Jon's school after school hours, with SACRE members asking for the details, wishing to attend and participate in the event.
- Members wished to note that they felt it was important for NATRE to keep an eye on the ball nationally, with SACRE being helpful if Jon provided a standing agenda item, to keep SACRE up to date to be informed about NATRE.

#### **6. Pupil Conference Wednesday 23rd March 2022 (Morning) Climate Change**

- Michelle provided SACE with an update on invitations to the conference which was titled 'Everyone has the power to make changes and make them now!', the Conference would be offered to yr6, secondary school students through to sixth form students, with weekly newsletters being sent out on a Thursday to schools.
- The Conference aimed to tackle the subject of climate change and reducing their carbon footprint. Discussion from pupils about what faiths says about looking after one another and the planet, with the hopes of introducing a debate around the issue. Michelle wished to note that she was glad that there would be students participating, with aim of the conference to combine science and faith in relation to looking after the planet and what people can do to ensure the earth is a "greener place". The talk would be supported by the six main faiths, and their perspective on being eco-friendly and tackling climate change.
- The offer for student participation would be extended to the following years 6, 7,8,10 and 12, with yr. 9, 11 and 13 not included in the conference due to examinations in schools. There had been a couple of invitations to a local university (University of Wolverhampton), about having an input in the climate and faith debate, but as of this meeting there had been no confirmation of their participation.
- There were also a discussion amongst members on the importance of climate change and relating this subject to children as their target audience, with some members suggesting that they use news round as a model in talking to children. This is an important tool to give children realistic ideas for climate change and what actual difference they can make in reality.
- Members stated their belief that it was vital that reality was not outweighed for unrealistic ambitions, with the chair indicating that it was important children knew that they could utilise vital transport like cars, while this was making a smaller impact individually, collectively it would result in a bigger impact. Members further discussed the issue of being realistic, talking about the need to scale back on the impact pupils can have on the environment, with there being reflection upon the environmental policy of Telford and Wrekin Council for inspiration. Two years ago the Council reduced single use plastic as a pledge, discussing how this was a measurable response to climate change, and not overly ambitious, grounded in the reality of what pupils could contribute.
- The issue of keeping the SACRE website alive was brought to the attention of members, with the hopes of this being used to increase awareness of SACRE, and change parent's attitude to RE subjects, hopefully being able create a youth forum around RE subjects.
- However, members did wish to note that Covid-19 have affected everyone, and worry that some schools would not wish to take part in the Pupil Conference.

#### **7. Continued Professional Development (CPD) for Staff**

- As part of the CPD there were a promise to take RE staff on site visits to places of

worships.

- Covid had caused issues with the site visits with members stating that zoom visits might be a possible alternative. A Member representing All Saint's Church stated that they had equipment to provide a virtual experience of what their Church was like, with this maybe an approach going forward. Some members thought that this was a good idea, with the suggestion that staff still attend for CPD in person, while students had a virtual reality experience.

#### **8. Teaching Units for Special Needs**

- Special Education Needs Schools in relation to SACRE - would need to adopt the teaching to the needs of children with learning difficulties. SACRE would aim to provide pupils with the same standards of learning but more adaptable to the understanding of those in attendance, without "watering" down the material.
- Southall, Horton and Bridge Schools would like to be involved with the teaching units for special needs, however they have had to withdrawn due to pressure on schools at the moment, but could potentially engage with SACRE after half term or during summer term.
- Reading material needs to be adapted to deal with reading age of children, but the message from a philosophical perspective was it needed to remain the same. It was suggested that getting a group of colleagues together who are specialist in teaching special need students, would be the most appropriate way to convey the message of RE issues to the students.

#### **9. NASCRE Briefing 30 - Conference Date Monday 23rd May 2022**

- The idea of having World views in relation to faith were contradictory in some member's opinion, and might go against SACE principals due to potentially being views which were unrelated to faith.
- The members of SACRE wished to have a more diverse membership, noting that the current SACRE had mainly white participants, and mostly Christian and Judaism backgrounds. The Chair stated that the lack of diversity did concern her and she wished to see other ethnic and religious groups take part in SACRE meetings and events.
- There was a discussion over how to attract minority ethnic groups, with the idea of inviting guests from other backgrounds to attend being suggested. Members discussed the idea of attracting new members and networking at religious events and places of worship

#### **10. Awards for Schools**

- Item deferred until next meeting

#### **11. AOB**

- The Chair wished to make note of the need to sort out the finance, so that it may be approved at the next meeting, with the requirements to approve in principal the expenditure. Chair further wished to note that this is to be brought to members as an item on the agenda at the next meeting to approve.

The meeting ended at 19:40pm