

Telford & Wrekin Council
Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education
Meeting held on 8 July 2021 at The Lillywhites Suite, AFC Telford United,
Wellington, Telford

Attendees
Mark Harrington (Acting Chair), Mary Jennings, Jon Rawson Cathy Landau, Younis, Angela Evans
In Attendance
Jayne Clarke (Clerk) and Michelle Parker
Apologies
Cllr Veronica Fletcher, Cllr Raj Mehta, Tim Carter and Jacquie Osmund-Smith
1. Welcome and Introductions
<ul style="list-style-type: none">The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.
2. Minutes of the previous meeting
<ul style="list-style-type: none">The minutes of the previous meeting were agreedIt was noted that Cathy Landau, Sajid Younis and Angela Evans had increase the representation on SACRE but that were we still vacancies and SACRE would need to explore how to fill the vacancies
3. Matters Arising
<ul style="list-style-type: none">These would be dealt with during the meeting.
4. Review of the Launch
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Feedback from the evaluations following the launch were very positive with the twilight sessions being well received. The units of work worked alongside the agreed syllabus and the information was available on the website. It was expected that all schools use the new syllabus but they may need to undertake additional work. Determinations weren't being undertaken if the agreed syllabus did not fit and that permission should be sought from SACRE. Not all Schools undertook a school assembly and most faith schools continued to have collective worship daily on a broadly Christian basis. Schools could apply for a determination but this was not sufficiently understood and during an Inspection schools would need to be able to state why it was not undertaken and there was work to be done around this area.The majority of primary schools attended the training and there was information on website to enable schools to transition from Y6 to Y7 with a directory of places of worship to visit which had been commissioned by the Cultural Development Team at Telford and Wrekin Council so it was up to date and accurate and would ensure that the syllabus was strong and that inaccuracies around the pronunciation of words from other faiths was important so resources and information needed to remain accurate and up to date.The Acting Chair thanked everyone involved with the development of the Syllabus and the website and to those who worked in the background to bring the event to a successful conclusion and to the Chair who had driven the project forward. It was also asked that SACRE thanked the Cultural Development Team for their time and effort on the project.With regard to maintained schools and academies, they were free to choose their syllabus but it needed to be one that had the right guidance and foundation documents. It was suggested that SACRE communicate with the academies to let them know the work that had been undertaken and that they could adopt advice from the website.It was raised that it was sad to see the lack of understanding of terminology during teaching

in secondary school teaching which could lead to people being offended. It was a huge task for the future for SACRE to liaise with schools/multi-faith trusts regarding core subjects and encouraging them to choose the RE syllabus and that meetings needed to be more open to the public and that this was an item to be discussed on the Agenda. The Multi-Cultural Team had been involved with the syllabus but it would take time to introduce new ways and address any issues.

- With regard to Ofsted, they had recently brought out a document that strongly recommended a local syllabus be used and it was a continual battle in order for RE to get recognition as results had been driven by a baccalaureate subjects with students having to complete 2 subjects of preferably history or geography and extra lessons being given to other subjects. SACRE took a big role in the conference which, going forward, should ensure teachers were more confident and comfortable with RE as a subject.
- It was raised that locally there were no specialists in RE as they have to also deliver other lessons and there was still a lack of understanding and lack of interest in the subject.
- It was suggested that as Ofsted now look at RE, SACRE need to look at the Ofsted Report and see what is happening within the local schools.

***Action point** – Agenda item to discuss whether the meetings of SACRE can be open to the public.

5. NASACRE Conference

- The Chair and Michelle Parker attended at the NASACRE Conference with Mark Harrington attending as a Shropshire representative.
- There was a vast disparity with regards to funding and T&W SACRE had received only £2,000 last year and £4,000 during the current year. A lot of work had been undertaken for free this year so resources could stretch a little further for the remainder of the year.
- There was a large debate during conference regarding world views on RE and the need to acknowledge diversity of belief within faiths and non-religious world views and it was discussed how pupils be encouraged to relate to world views. It was suggested that in future SACRE looked for speakers either locally or nationally in order we have diversity for our local schools.
- There was a good film called “Nobody Standards Nowhere (??)” which was a whole world concept and related to different beliefs and attitudes and how they changed and it was recommended that schools look at this and SACRE could do some training.

***Action Point** – the link to be put on the SACRE website

6. Any Other Business

National Quality Mark

- Michelle Parker was a Quality Mark Assessor and it was an award to give schools to encourage them to be the best they can be. It was suggested that SACRE buy into the Scheme and help schools write their paperwork as it needed to be undertaken in a specific way.
- It was asked if there would be a cost to the schools and if this could be supported
- A suggestion came forward that SACRE used its Members to support schools with their applications and have people of faith going into the schools to find out what is happening within the schools and listen to them. It would help to guild a good relationship with teachers

who are knowledgeable and cover topics which would engage, be controversial ie around equalities and may also be difficult subjects. It would help to have a structure to discuss things using intellectual skills and have courageous conversations such as racism and being respectful and tolerant and this would have a big impact together with planning and supporting. SACRE would then be able to build an outward facing role. A discussion group could be set up to support primary schools to help children think about articulating their beliefs and invite KS4 and KS2 to lead on the debate and get them talking about what matters.

Faith within Schools

- It was raised that trips to synagogues had faded away over the last few years and it was suggested that the Multi-Cultural Team organise the visits. It was felt it was an important experience for children to visit.
- It was suggested that during one of the twilight training sessions that school staff visited places of worship to undertake a risk assessment and that faith leaders have conversations about misconceptions and that they could give their personal and differing views. It was also suggested that
- A further suggestion was that SACRE could have a twilight session from 4.30-6.30 to encourage senior leadership to undertake professional learning ie on cultural development and if space allowed these sessions be open to all staff

NATRAS / NATRE

- It was suggested that SACRE could engage with NATRAS and NATRE but it was unsure that there were any local groups.
- It was asked that a local NATRE be set locally and Jon Rawson would take the lead on this

***Action Point** – Jon Rawson to set up local NATRE

Newsletter

- A termly branded SACRE newsletter was suggested and an update if a CPD course was running and send this via email – Mary Jennings suggested that she looked into it with a colleague to start a group for secondary schools.
- Communication between primary and secondary schools needed to be improved and the change in language between primary and secondary schools caused difficulties for children.

Reporting on RE in Schools

- It was asked if there was a way of getting secondary schools to report what percentage of students were taking RE and what was being provided for them during their learning
- RE was always an option and schools were not compliant although this was changing due to Ofsted being in favour of RE being taught.
- The results should be on school websites together with curriculum plans and if it was not available to view it should be.
- Some schools now taught ethics rather than RE and this was done within form time rather than a proper lesson – but it would be wise to ask those questions and challenge the information once it was to hand.
- It was suggested that Simon Wellman and Jo Brittain be asked to SACRE to answer questions on behalf of the Local Authority as Directors, especially in light of the recent racist

incident and to listen and understand and to strengthen communities.

CPD Training / Twilight Sessions

- There was currently nothing in the diary for the coming year but it was suggested that 3 or 4 dates were offered with visits to places of worship with a local Mosque to start to develop the lack of understanding around practices within faiths
- The conference raised the profile of SACRE and this could be used as a link to school governors and they could undertake a deep dive into the quality and breadth of RE and personal views in their schools. This could be tied into community life and supporting modern British values.

SACRE Questionnaire

- It was suggested that a questionnaire be sent out in regards to the new agreed syllabus including:
 - How many students opt for RE long courses
 - How many students opt for RE short courses
 - How much time is spent at KS3 level on RE
 - Do you have a link to a governor and do they come into school / talk to leads and children
 - Has the Governor read the Ofsted Report
 - Does the school have assemblies
 - What is the nature of the assemblies
 - Do they need help with assembly material
- It was asked when the questionnaire was required for and would it be suitable to get this out at the beginning of September. The suggestion came forward that earlier rather than later so it could be returned and then reported on at the next meeting in order that SACRE did not lose momentum. An online survey would be quicker and then this be followed up by a call from Michelle Parker who could help with any questions
- A further question came forward as to whom the questionnaire would be sent- ie Heads / RE Leads / Chairs and it was confirmed it would be sent to the Heads but referred on to the RE teacher.
- It was hoped that this would bring competition between schools

Young People's SACRE

- It was asked if Young People's SACRE could be invited to attend meetings and if there was a representative that came along and this is something that could be explored in the future.

Profile of SACRE Members

- It was suggested that each SACRE Member gave a profile but that this would have to be sensitive and non-political but the purpose was to share a little bit of information about themselves, what they do, their faith and maybe their contact number or email address for the teachers. It was suggested that it may be more appropriate for communication to be sent via the Democracy Team.

FAQs regarding Faith

- Michelle Parker would think of questions and answers for an FAQ document
- It was suggested that RE today publication may have a good summary

Conference 2022

- The annual conference arrangements would need to be undertaken with a focus and on training, the survey preparation and planning. HMI to come in and BAME speakers in order for more representation in education. It would be necessary to establish the background of the speakers and draw the topics into an umbrella they would sit under. This is something that may come forward via NATRE.

7. Future meeting dates

The next meeting of the SACRE would be held at Ercall Wood Technology College details to be confirmed closer to the date. A tour of the School would be held and students could showcase their work and answer questions on

Wednesday, 10th November 2021 at 6.00-7.30pm

Provisional dates:

- Tuesday, 15 February 2022
- Wednesday, 25 May 2022

The meeting ended at 8.02 pm.