

Telford & Wrekin Council
Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education
Meeting held on Wednesday 25th May 2022 at Donnington Wood Church of England
Junior School

Attendees
Jacquie Osmund-Smith (Chair), Diane Whitely, Karl Downes, David Rolf, Mary Jennings, Tim Carter, Sajid Younis, Cathy Landau, Jon Rawson and Mark Harrington
In Attendance
Rhys Attwell and Naomi Fisher
Apologies
Carol Morgan, Councillor Raj Mehta, Angela Evans and Councillor Veronica Fletcher
1. Welcome and Introductions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Chair welcomed those in attendance to the meeting. The Chair said prayers for peace in Ukraine.
2. Minutes of the previous meeting
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minutes of the previous meeting dated Tuesday 15th February 2022 were approved.
3. Matters arising
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An update over Synagogue visit was provided to those in attendance and the Committee were informed that visits were now possible, as Covid restrictions had been lifted. It was suggested that visits to the Progressive Synagogues were easier to organise and SACRE Members would link up over the organisation of a visit. Members were advised that Mosque visits could also be arranged, with a programme for visits being scheduled for next year. Members of the SACRE enquired about a proposed finance agenda item not being listed on the agenda. The Chair explained to the Committee that this was due to unforeseen circumstances. The Chair advised that a discussion would take place with Michelle Parker in respect of the presentation on Dr Takhar's research.
4. Presentation of Research findings- Karl Downes (Teacher at HLC undertaking a project through the Farmington institute from Oxford University).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Chair gave a brief overview of the presentation of the research findings. It was noted that it evaluated the best teaching methods for improving religious education and examined the obstacles that the teaching profession may face. The Chair also explained to the Committee that Karl Downes was scholar in association with Oxford University. Karl Downes addressed SACRE Members and during his presentation he explained that Hadley Learning Community (HLC) was a large non-selective secondary school in Telford, which served a culturally diverse community including a large Pakistani and Eastern European contingent. At the time of Mr Downes' appointment, HLC had outdated unengaging lessons, poor culture around the subject and a lack of uptake of the subject at GCSE level. Over a three-year period, Mr Downes had been able to make progress in the GCSE uptake at HLC. Mr Downes explained that in terms of aiding retention of students at HLC, a teaching method of quizzing students in an interactive environment helped to provide the core knowledge that students would need for their assessment. Formative assessment and summative assessments were also the methods of choice to test the abilities of HLC students in learning the curriculum and values of Religious Studies. These improvements to the curriculum were noted within the presentation as having been an unrecognisable change from two years prior, with Mr Downes being able to bring Religious Studies in with the whole school focus. Student voice had also been a concern for HLC, with the school keen for students to have their ideas on philosophical and ethical views accommodated, which allowed for engaging and structured debated throughout the curriculum. The Chair asked if HLC held RE coordinators meetings, however Mr Downes informed the Chair that they currently did not. Mr Downes informed SACRE that HLC intended to develop a social media presence, with the aims of drawing more attention to HLC RE activities. Mr Downes wished to develop relationships with faith leaders in the hope of creating a network between the community and HLC to enhance student experience through extracurricular activities such as field trips. The Chair questioned when students at HLC had the opportunity to discuss the topic of "when

faith relates to life?" In response Mr Downes stated that lessons around worship, and ethical values of the RE would relate to this topic through the use of spirituality.

- Discussions took place as to whether there was a bursary for an RE teacher. It was highlighted that this was no longer the case, however there had been historically. It was noted by Members that due to SACRE's allocated funds, a bursar could potentially be redistributed to support RE teachers in some shape or form.
- Members of SACRE were happy to communicate with Mr Downes and assist him in the challenge of finding suitable and appropriate resources needed in order to further enhance HLC growing curriculum.
- Members understood the struggle Mr Downes faced at HLC to bring RE in line with other subjects such as STEM which was more dominant. Members acknowledged that while these subjects were vital to the development of student's education, HLC and the schooling system in general should not neglect subjects, which could have specialist teachers enhancing the knowledge of children.

5. Reflection of Pupil Conference Wednesday 23rd March 2022 Climate Change

- The Chair thanked Cathy Landau for her commitment to the conference.
- The Chair congratulated all the schools who had taken part and noted that the David Attenborough video helped motivate children to create motivating speeches and rhetoric about climate change.
- The Chair hoped that a more measured approach for next year's conference would be undertaken, possibly to allow the children to meet face to face.

6. NASCRE Conference update Monday 23rd May 2022- Mark Harrington

- Mark Harrington explained to SACRE Members how the National Association of Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education conference was moved online. It was originally scheduled to take place in Birmingham, with some of the workshops no longer available.
- RSE and the draft handbook for constructing the curriculum for RE subject would be developed with three or four groups having been commissioned to look at its construction.
- SACRE Members discussed the debate around the title and whether it should be "RE and World views". Members agreed to continue this discussion at future meetings.
- It was requested that it be noted that the Booklets "RE and Worldview Handbook" could be provided by Mr Harrington, to help assist SACRE in its' discussions.
- Members were informed that the White Paper produced by the government could have major implications on the functions of SACRE, due to the potential changes that would mean that SACRE were no longer able to interact and feed into the RE curriculum. An additional concern was local authorities had changed their relationship with the schools, which at the time of the meeting was not regulated. It was noted that this could negatively impact the SACRE.

7. SACRE member visits to schools: (item added on by committee)

- SACRE members would visit schools which had taken part in the conference. SACRE members who would take part in school visits would be the Chair, Cathy Landau, and Tim Carter. The visits to schools were planned to take place during autumn term.
- SACRE Members enquired if it was possible to ask Schools if they had an RE based Governor. The aims of SCARE would be to create a network, and if not possible ask governors if they had any special interest in Religious Education to establish such a system.

8. Continued Professional Development (CPD) for Staff

- This item was deferred

9. Teaching Units for Special Needs

- This item was deferred

10. Reporting on RE in Schools/ SACRE members Visits

- This item was deferred

11. Any Other Business

- The Chair thanked everyone for attending.
- The Chair wished Michelle Parker a speedy recovery.
- A discussion took place on how different religions celebrate their different festivals e.g. Eid festival in Pakistan.
- It was suggested to cross primary schools and secondary school networks, to help assist one another.

The meeting ended at: 19:54.