

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

7 November 2022

Present:-

Group A: Christian and Other Religion and Belief Communities (with the exception of the Church of England)

B Becher, J Carpenter, M Miller, R Nathwani, J Taylorson

Group B: The Church of England

K Keatley, J Roberts (Chair), B Twiggs and T Wilson

Group C: Teachers' Associations

R Flanagan, P Hammett, W Harrison, J Matthews

Group D: The County Council

Councillors T Adams, J Bradford, C Channon, R Peart

Co-opted Members

S Spence

Advisor E Pawson

Apologies:- S Gill, G Winnall, M Squires, D Sellis and D Thomas

1 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 June 2022 were signed as a correct record subject to the addition of remote attendance of Wendy Harrison which was omitted from attendance list.

2 Items Requiring Urgent Attention

Election of Chair and Vice Chair

It was **PROPOSED** by Tatiana Wilson and **SECONDED** by Councillor Christine Channon that Jeremy Roberts be appointed as Chair of Devon SACRE for the forthcoming year.

It was **PROPOSED** by Ruth Flanagan, **SECONDED** by Jude Taylorson that Belinda Twiggs be appointed as Vice Chair of Devon SACRE for the forthcoming year.

Appointment of Spokespersons from groups and to be reported back to Devon SACRE

Group A - Christian and other religion and belief communities (with the exception of the Church of England)

Group B – The Church of England

Group C – Teachers Associations

Group D – County Council

3 Devon SACRE Membership Updates

Jane Carpenter replaces Richard Halsey - Group A (Christian and other religion and belief communities (with the exception of the Church of England))

Kelly Keatley joins Group B (The Church of England)

4 Transition from Babcock to Devon County Council

In July 2022 the administration of SACRE was transferred back to Devon County Council, in addition to all systems and materials previously available on the Babcock website.

5 Standards: monitoring Multi Academy Trust schools and Ofsted reports

Devon and Plymouth SACREs have been engaged with the Department for Education (DfE) over the provision for RE in a Multi-academy Trust (MAT). Following an investigation into the RE being taught and projected to be taught, an official complaint to the DfE has been made from the SACRE's.

This has been investigated and a report has been received, which is now being challenged.

The MAT plans to increase time allocation for RE in its schools. A lead for RE has been appointed across the MAT, however, the SACREs still considered the curriculum offer for RE to be inadequate. A further update will be made at the next meeting.

National Standards – It was noted that statistics showed that standards in Devon schools lower than the national expectation.

In 2022 Devon showed 56% attainment (where the national expectation 66%) for grades 9-5 and 70% (where the national expectation 77%) for grades 9-4. Concern was expressed about a lack of diverse community in the south west and the possibility that this may result in a more limited lived in knowledge base.

During discussion about opportunities for visits to schools, it was noted that applications for funding could be available from the following organisations:

- Devon Educational Trust Forum;
- Hele's Educational Trust

Ruth Flanagan, Exeter University, gave a presentation highlighting the accreditation process, the current shortage of teachers, the impact and challenges for recruitment and retention in the profession.

6 Devon SACRE: annual report 2021/2

The Devon SACRE Annual Report will be circulated to SACRE members and be submitted to the DfE by January 2023.

7 Devon SACRE: agreed syllabus review

The SACRE Adviser commented that

- The process of review of the RE syllabus for 2024 is currently underway.
- Discussions have taken place across Devon, Torbay, Plymouth and Cornwall SACREs.
- Focus groups to be convened to undertake analysis of the current syllabus, followed by a teacher survey.
- Discussion with RE Today about what a future syllabus written by them might look like in consultation with our teachers.
- An option suggested to delay any changes until 2025 or beyond.
- The licence for the current syllabus runs out in 2024.
- SACRE aim is to introduce a reviewed syllabus at low cost to schools and/or the local authority. However, while the financial impact of the last syllabus (introduced in 2019) was effectively cost neutral, this might not work the same way in 2024. Members warned that school budgets are currently extremely tight, and this understanding would need to impact on the way the introduction of a new syllabus is planned.

Concerns and comments expressed included:

- Not wanting to make a radical shift (5 years on from introducing a very different, and well received syllabus)
- The need to bring in new ideas to support schools in creating a high quality education in religion and worldviews perspective
- Useful to enhance the syllabus rather than change it.
- High financial constraints in Devon due to current budget strains.

8 Learn Teach Lead RE: updates

- The recent conference held in St Mellion, Cornwall was well received by over 100 delegates.
- The affordable cost of the conference makes it achievable for delegates to attend.

- Devon hubs dates have been planned for the year
- A new secondary RE hub leader appointed for South Devon/Torbay with a specialism in special education needs
- Request for funding towards the support of one of the Devon Hubs

RESOLVED: that Devon County Council be requested to allocate £900 to 'Learn Teach Lead RE' for the support of one of the Devon hubs

9 **National Developments: national standards, regional hubs, infographic**

The SACRE Adviser reported on a number issues relating to the national situation:

- A draft handbook has been published for syllabus writers and curriculum developers to support them in translating the REC's vision of an excellent education for all in Religion and Worldviews into a syllabus. Three school-based teams have been appointed to road test the first draft of the Handbook. The results to be published in the Spring of 2024.
- The national statement of entitlement (NSE) indicates that children and young people in schools, whatever their context, are entitled to an education in religion and worldviews that both reflect the changing religious and secular diversity of the UK and the world and is inclusive of, and relevant to, children and young people, whose worldviews may range across the secular and/or religious.
- Regional Hubs have been developed. Ed Pawson has been appointed as area hub lead for the south west.
- According to the School census published by the DfE in June 2021: RE teachers have reduced in numbers by 6%; 25% of hours taught in RE are by those with no post A level qualification; RE has no bursaries available.

10 **Holocaust Memorial Day: planning**

'Ordinary People' is the title for Holocaust Memorial Day on 27 January 2023. Judge Robert Rinder is due to attend the cathedral for a morning session.

Philippe Sands (International Human Rights expert) will speak at the Exeter commemorations Holocaust Memorial Day on Friday 26 January 2024.

11 **SACRE organisational issues: member training, exploring diversity, meeting arrangements**

Lorna Legg, Head at Offwell School will attend the next SACRE meeting.

12 **Future SACRE Meetings**

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 9 February 2023

A South West SACRE conference is planned for 6 March 2023

NOTES:

1. *Minutes should always be read in association with any Reports for a complete record.*
2. *If the meeting has been webcast, it will be available to view on the webcasting site for up to 12 months from the date of the meeting*

* **DENOTES DELEGATED MATTER WITH POWER TO ACT**

The Meeting started at 10.00 am and finished at 12.30 pm