

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

15 November 2023

Present:-

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

K Denby, J Carpenter, P Hannam, M Hext, W Houghton, M Miller, J Taylorson

Group B: The Church of England

S Gill, C Hulbert, K Keatley, E Underwood

Group C: Teachers Associations

P Hammett, M Harding, W Harrison, J Matthews, P Randall, D Tollerton, B Twiggs (Vice-Chair),

Group D: Devon County Councillors

Councillors T Adams, J Bradford, C Channon, D Sellis, M Squires, D Thomas

Co-opted Members

J Goody, R Northcott, S Spence

Apologies:-

G Kang, R Nathwani, J Roberts, E Mihas, M Squires and R Peart

37 **Election of Chair**

It was **PROPOSED** by Councillor Tracy Adams and **SECONDED** by Penny Hammett that Jeremy Roberts be appointed as Chair of Devon SACRE for the forthcoming year.

38 **Election of Vice Chair**

It was **PROPOSED** by Penny Hammett, **SECONDED** by Sandra Gill that Belinda Twiggs be appointed as Vice Chair of Devon SACRE for the forthcoming year.

39 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 June 2023 were signed as a correct record of the meeting.

40 Items Requiring Urgent Attention

There was no item raised requiring urgent attention.

41 Learn Teach Lead RE: Update

The annual conference took place on 13 October 2023 and was well received. Future training for hub leaders are planned within the current academic year. Hubs continue to meet, some virtually whilst other have moved to in person. The autumn meeting for the Exeter Hub will be held at the Quaker House. The Committee welcomed that £1000 would be made to the LearnTeachLead RE from the SACRE budget.

*** 42 Devon and Torbay SACRE - Agreed Syllabus Review**

The Committee noted that the new syllabus would be introduced from September 2024, launch events are schedule in June 2024 across Devon, Torbay and Plymouth.

Changes to the syllabus included:

- Updated forewords, introduction and cover
- Updated language from 'religion and belief' to 'religion and worldviews', in line with CoRE
- Updated language from 'religious and non-religious beliefs' to 'religious and non-religious worldviews'
- Adjust language (e.g. Hinduism to Hindi dharma)
- Make non-religious worldviews, specifically Humanism, more visible:
 - What does it mean to be Humanist in Britain today?' including some of the reasons for and against belief in God as part of this.
 - What difference does it make to be an atheist or agnostic in Britain today? to include some more specific study of Humanism but also more recent data on non-religiousness/Nones.
- Updated Early Years
- Addition of opportunities to add examples showing more diversity in the impact sections of units (e.g. more global and local examples of Christian harvest celebrations, prayer, grace)
- Addition of more examples of more local Devon/Torbay/Plymouth/SouthWest places in some of the units
- Updated demographics to 2021 Census

During general discussion, it was questioned how Church Schools would use the curriculum and it was welcomed that it had not changed significantly.

In response to confirmation about the County Council underwriting the syllabus cost, it was noted that an easily transmitted document would be circulated after the launch date and delegates would pay to attend the training sessions.

Educational settings would not be charged for document as costs would have been recouped through nominal delegate training fees through the Schools Effectiveness budget. It was noted that academy schools would pay for the curriculum document.

43 Devon SACRE Membership

The Chair welcomed Dr Pat Hannam, as Quaker representative to join group A (Christian and other religion and belief communities) and Jo Hunter to join Group B (The Church of England).

It was noted that the spokesperson of each group is as follows:

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

Group B – The Church of England – Sandra Gill

Group C – Teachers Associations – Belinda Twiggs

Group D – County Council – Councillor Dan Thomas

44 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in Devon schools

Lorna Legg, Head Teacher at Ofwell Church of England Primary School led a session on equality, diversity and inclusion in Devon schools.

The presentation highlighted the following points:

- importance of language used
- treat everyone with equal respect, always aim to see the individual before the group
- avoidance of phrases which are reductive and perpetuate stereotyping
- aim not to cause offence, but be alert to apologise and learn rather than blame the victim
- make the effort to find out more information

During general discussion the following issues were raised

- barriers and prejudices around religion, race, culture, class, poverty
- what prevents children learning about other religions and worldviews
- how can schools be more aware of diversity and be more inclusive
- the recent ongoing refugee crisis
- hate crime in Devon
- whether training should be mandatory in educational settings

In response to a question about the County Council's race equality audit, this can be found at www.devon.gov.uk/equality/news-and-reports/raceaudit21

45 Standards in Schools: Monitoring and Ofsted

In reference to the report showing some schools who were in need of help and assistance, further advice and guidance would be offered to offer curriculum support in specified areas.

46 Regional and National Developments - RE Hubs, National Content Standard in RE

During general discussion the Committee was **NOTED** the report and that the RE Hubs website was available at <https://www.re-hubs.uk>. Information on the website included courses and events, local groups and how to contact your local hub.

The Religious Education Council have released the national content standard for RE. the vision for every young person to experience an academically rigorous and inspiring education in religion and worldviews. Publication of a national Content Standard provides clarification and a benchmark for excellence in religion and world views in England. The RE Council's National Content Standard provided a non-statutory benchmark for syllabus providers and other bodies to evaluate engagement in relation to religion and belief.

Content included:

how world views are formed; relate to a wider institutional world view; feature continuity and change; offer responses; provide guidance on how to live a good life; are influenced by people and societies.

In Spring 2024 the REC Religion and Worldviews project will publish new religion and worldviews frameworks.

47 Devon SACRE Annual report

The Committee **NOTED** that the annual report would be available online at the following - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ofsted-annual-report-202223-education-childrens-services-and-skills>

48 Letter from Rt Hon Nick Gibb MP, Minister for Schools

The Committee welcomed and **NOTED** the correspondence from Councillor Tracy Adams to Ben Bradshaw MP for following up an important area of SACRE concern, regarding the recruitment crisis for secondary RE teachers in the south west and nationally.

Ben Bradshaw MP had written to Nick Gibb MP (Schools minister). It was noted that the reply from Nick Gibb MP did not seem to acknowledge or address the critical shortage of RE teachers.

It was also noted that the DfE has recently responded to this issue by reinstating a bursary of £10,000 for trainee RE teachers.

The letter therefore has been part of a successful campaign to address the recruitment crisis, and SACRE thanked Councillor Adams for her intervention.

49 Young Ambassadors Project

The Committee **NOTED** that the Devon SACRE Advisor and staff at Dartmoor Multi Academy Trust would be undertaking work to train and empower a group of primary and secondary students to become Ambassadors for Freedom of Religion or Belief.

The project aimed that the young Ambassador's would work with the students at Okehampton Primary School and Okehampton College, towards a significant community event in 2024. This would be followed by a visit to Westminster in June 2025 to address MPs and Lords about the importance of RE.

The project is led by the Association of RE Inspectors and Advisers (AREIAC) and funded by Culham St Gabriel's Trust.

50 Advice for Schools in Times of Conflict

The Committee NOTED that information had recently been circulated to schools.

The Chair led the Committee in a moments contemplation.

51 Holocaust Memorial Day - Planning for 2024

The Committee **NOTED** that the theme for Holocaust Memorial Day scheduled for 26 January in 2024 was 'Fragility of Freedom'.

52 SACRE Training

The Committee **NOTED** the NASACRE 2023-2024 virtual training programme.

53 Future SACRE Meetings

Future meetings to be held on the following dates commencing at 10am

Tuesday 6 February 2024

Thursday 20 June 2024

Monday 4 November 2024

The South West SACRE conference to be held online on Monday 4 March 2024.

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 12.27 pm