

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education

13 July 2021 – At a meeting of the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education held at 11.30 am at a virtual meeting with restricted public access.

Present:

Committee A

Mrs Flood – Roman Catholic
Mrs Ghundale – Sikh
Rev Higgin-Botham – United Reformed Church
Mrs Jones – Baha’i
Mr Sheldon – Baptist Union
Major Warner – Salvation Army

Committee B

Mr Simpson – Church of England
Mrs Smith (Vice-Chairman) – Church of England

Committee C

Miss Barker – Teacher Representative
Mr Cornford – NASUWT, the Teacher’s Union
Rev Millwood – Teacher Representative (Secondary)

Committee D

Cllr Burrett (Chairman) – Local Education Authority
Cllr Burgess – Local Education Authority
Cllr Lord – Local Education Authority
Cllr Pendleton – Local Education Authority
Cllr Quinn – Local Education Authority

In attendance:

Rev Pitkeathly – Free Churches

Apologies for Absence: Mrs Bell (Jewish) and Rev Carn (Methodist) (Committee A); Mrs Black (Church of England) and Rev Higgins (Church of England) (Committee B); and Cllr N Jupp (Local Education Authority) (Committee D).

Absent: Cllr Nagel (Local Education Authority) (Committee D).

1. Chairman’s Welcome and Introductions

1.1 The Chairman welcomed all members of SACRE to the first meeting of the new County Council term. He also welcomed Rev David Pitkeathly who was in attendance at the meeting.

2. Membership of SACRE

2.1 The Chairman updated the meeting that since the despatch of the agenda papers the Rev Dawn Carn had been reconfirmed as the Methodist representative on the Council.

2.2 The Chairman proposed Mrs Smith as Vice Chairman, which was seconded by Miss Barker and agreed by the SACRE members. The appointment would now need to be formally approved by the Cabinet Member for Learning and Skills.

2.3 Mr Gauntlett informed the meeting that there had been an approach by The Free Churches Group nominating Rev David Pitkeathly as a co-opted member to the SACRE. The Chairman had agreed to this approach. The nomination was proposed by Cllr Pendleton and seconded by Mr Cornford, and it was agreed by SACRE members that Rev Pitkeathly should join the SACRE as a co-opted member.

3. Members' Interests

3.1 No interests were declared.

4. Minutes of the last meeting

4.1 The Chairman introduced the minutes of the meeting held on 4 November 2020.

Matters Arising from the minutes:

4.2 Under 86.5 it was agreed there needed to be more clarity as time had changed the course of events.

4.3 Regarding item 88.1 of the minutes, it was reported that the RE teachers' network had not yet been established and had been superseded by the primary and secondary network meetings.

4.4 Under 89.2 the meeting agreed the need to bring the results of research by the Department of Education and Skills into the resourcing of other SACREs to the next meeting.

4.5 Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 4 November 2020 be approved as a correct record and that they be signed by the Chairman.

5. Update on the Agreed Syllabus

5.1 Mrs Hammond updated the meeting on the progress of the Agreed Syllabus since the last meeting. The members of SACRE and Mrs Hammond expressed their thanks to the team of people who had been supportive in the production of the Agreed Syllabus and the primary and secondary network meetings. Mrs Hammond reported the Local Authority had also been very supportive in administering the network training, collating evaluations and making headway in supporting the delivery of Religious Education in West Sussex schools.

5.2 The Agreed Syllabus was launched on 22 April 2021 and the Standing Conference had been held. The Agreed Syllabus was now available to all schools via the schools' services website and a limited number of hard copies would be produced for schools that requested them.

5.3 Four primary network meetings had been well attended along with one secondary network meeting. The network meetings focussed on introducing the Agreed Syllabus and reflecting on changes. Work was ongoing on future training and possibly a day conference on religion and world views. Mrs Hammond was also looking into the use of social media for sharing resources, articles and networking.

5.4 Mrs Hammond mentioned the Ofsted Research review series which had issued a paper on religious education on 12 May 2021 and relayed the main headlines in the paper:

- Insufficient time allocation within schools.
- Religious Education is often marginalised, with other subjects given priority.
- A lack of knowledge in non-specialist teachers, particularly in primary schools.
- The curriculum needed to build on earlier subject and personal knowledge.

5.5 It was agreed that SACRE had addressed some of the issues mentioned but there were still more issues that did not have answers. It was agreed to pick up issues in the network meetings. The Local Authority was well on task to address the issues raised.

5.6 Resolved – That SACRE discuss the Ofsted paper at the meeting on 22 November 2021.

6. Update from the Director of Education and Skills

6.1 The Director of Education and Skills, Mr Wagstaff, reported that funding had been found to develop the Agreed Syllabus, supporting the network meetings, artwork and presentation of the Agreed Syllabus. It had also been agreed to fund Mrs Hammond's work for the next year.

6.2 Work would be ongoing on the primary and secondary meetings to try and engage more schools. A Continuing Professional Development programme was being worked up on a traded basis for schools to buy from West Sussex County Council or other suppliers. Arrangements for a day conference were being looked into and would be impacted by what might happen with Covid-19 moving forward.

6.3 Mr Wagstaff asked SACRE members what areas they would like to look at and what information would they like to receive? Members asked how the role of local Members could be utilised in having conversations on Religious Education with their local schools. Mr Wagstaff agreed to prepare a briefing with the Cabinet Member for Learning and Skills, that

could be shared with SACRE and all County Councillors, including some additional key questions for the County Council Members.

Rev Millwood left the meeting.

7. Terms of Reference

7.1 SACRE members noted the terms of reference subject to a change to item 5.1 to read "Christian Denominations and other religions and religious denominations".

8. Appointments to Statutory Sub-Committees

8.1 SACRE members discussed the membership of the Complaints Panel and the Determinations Panel and made the following appointments:

- (a) **Complaints Panel:** Cllr Burrett (Chairman), Mrs Smith (Vice-Chairman), Maj Warner (Committee A) and Cllr Burgess (Committee D).
- (b) **Determinations Panel:** Mr Sheldon (Committee A), Rev Higgins (Committee B) – subject to confirmation – Angela Smith to cover until confirmed, Rev Millwood (Committee C) – confirmed after meeting - and Cllr Pendleton (Committee D).

8.2 It was requested that the Complaints Panel document be amended under 1.1 for the last line to read "or have failed to discharge any such duty."

9. Dates of Future Meetings

9.1 SACRE noted that its next meeting was scheduled to take place on 22 November 2021 at 10.30am.

The meeting ended at 12.45 pm

Chairman