

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE)

MINUTES of a meeting of the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) held in the online on Tuesday, 22 June 2021.

PRESENT: Mr S C Manion (Chairman), Miss C Bostock, Mr A Brady, Ms K Burke, Mrs A Goldstein, Mrs J Grant, Ms F Hawkes, Mrs B Naden, Miss M Paddison, Mr J Paul, Mrs J Roddan, Mrs G Spragg, Mrs R Swansbury, Miss R Walters and Mrs J Wigg

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs P Smith-Orr (RE Consultant) and Mr M Dentten (Democratic Services Officer)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

1. Election of Chairman

(Item 1)

1. Miss C Bostock proposed that Mr Manion be elected Chairman of the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education. This was seconded by Mr J Paul and no other nominations were received.
2. Mr S Manion proposed that Mrs N Younosi be elected Vice Chairman of the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education. This was seconded by Mrs J Grant and no other nominations were received.

RESOLVED that:

- a) Mr S Manion be elected Chairman of the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education.
- b) Mrs N Younosi be elected Vice Chairman of the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education.

2. Membership

(Item 2)

RESOLVED that the membership of the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education be noted.

3. Apologies for Absence/Substitutes

(Item 3)

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs E Pope and Mr W Chambers.

4. Declarations of Interests

(Item 4)

There were no declarations of interest.

5. Minutes of the meeting held on 16 March 2021

(Item 5)

1. Miss C Bostock asked that her apologies be added to the minutes.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 16 March 2021, subject to the addition of apologies for absence from Miss C Bostock, are a correct record and that they be signed by the Chairman.

6. RE Consultant's Verbal Update

(Item 6)

1. Mrs Smith-Orr provided a verbal update. She addressed common teacher queries and confirmed that she had discussed Ofsted's review of Religious Education with other Religious Education Advisors. She recognised that a recent article from the Times Educational Supplement (TES) titled "Ofsted: Six ways to improve RE teaching" had provided a fair assessment. A summary of the TES article has been appended to these minutes. In relation to the Kent Syllabus she stressed the need to focus on religious issues in deep analytical ways in order to prevent misconceptions.
2. Mrs J Grant noted that taking a 'learning how to know' approach could lead to some religions being overlooked or not studied to the appropriate extent.
3. Ms F Hawkes emphasised the need to focus Religious Education on the children, which she contrasted with the approach of teaching through large volumes of religious information.

RESOLVED that the update be noted.

7. SACRE Budget Forecast and Update

(Item 7)

RESOLVED that the budget update be noted.

8. The Wire (Standing Item)

(Item 8)

1. Mrs Smith-Orr gave an update on the Wire Award. She confirmed that as a result of circumstances over the past year there had been no completed Wire submissions. She recognised that with virtual teaching arrangements it had been difficult for teachers to ensure award completion.
2. SACRE were informed that the award deadline had been extended and that virtual visits to places of worship would be possible as a replacement for physical visits, so long as the learning was demonstrated.
3. The Chairman asked for the list of places of worship which provide virtual visits to be provided to Wire participants.

RESOLVED that the update be noted.

9. School Website Monitoring (Standing Item)

(Item 9)

1. Mrs Smith-Orr confirmed that SACRE would write to schools on the subject of school websites in September, so long as the disruption caused to schools by Covid-19 was negligible.

RESOLVED that the update be noted.

10. Kent Films

(Item 10)

1. Mrs R Swansbury gave an update on the production of Religious Education films. She informed members that two films, involving interviews with Sikh and Catholic children and young people had been produced. She reassured SACRE that parental permission had been received prior to filming.
2. Mrs R Swansbury confirmed that the films would be added as unlisted videos to the Canterbury Diocese YouTube channel.
3. Mrs A Goldstein offered to provide live talks to schools on the Kindertransport.

RESOLVED that the update be noted.

11. Teacher Training

(Item 11)

1. Mrs Smith-Orr gave an update on teacher training on religion and world views, which included focuses on meaning and delivery. She highlighted Dr Trevor Cooling's NASACRE workshop, 'where now with world views.' Members were informed that Dr Cooling would be delivering virtual training on Thursday 23 September between 16:00-18:00. It was noted that The Education People had circulated event invites to teachers. It was stated that the training provided good value for money at £150.
2. Ms F Hawkes recommended training provided by Lat Blaylock. She noted his technical advice on curriculum and assessments.

RESOLVED that the update be noted.

12. NASACRE Conference

(Item 12)

1. Mrs Smith-Orr reminded the Advisory Council that a summary of the conference was available on the NASACRE website. She gave a further verbal summary of specific speeches given at the conference. It was acknowledged that though interesting, the conference had been too long and not without technical issues.
2. Mrs Smith-Orr informed members that Ofsted inspectors would receive Religious Education training to better inform their judgement.

3. Mrs B Naden noted that she had been pleased to see that Religious Education had been recognised as being diverse in delivery.
4. The Chairman recognised the increased attendance of SACRE members at NASACRE due to the use of virtual arrangements.

RESOLVED that the update be noted.

13. SACRE Funding in England

(Item 13)

1. Mrs Smith-Orr confirmed that SACRE was well provisioned and importantly fulfilled all requirements, which included a venue and support of a clerk and consultant.
2. The Chairman paid tribute to KCC as the Local Education Authority for their funding and noted that it had allowed additional teacher training.
3. The Advisory Council discussed spending differences between authorities.
4. The Chairman noted that KCC had a new Cabinet Member for Education and Skills, Shellina Prendergast.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

<https://www.tes.com/news/ofsted-six-ways-improve-re-teaching>

Here are the main findings Ofsted has identified [in its review of research](#) into RE teaching:

1. 'Ambitious' RE needs adequate curriculum time

The review found that adequate curriculum time should be given to RE, so that leaders can deliver an ambitious curriculum.

It says that most locally agreed syllabuses recommend spending the equivalent of approximately 60 minutes a week on RE at key stage 1 and about 75 minutes a week at key stage 2.

The review highlights the National Association of Teachers of Religious Education's (NATRE) view that a significant number of schools give insufficient curriculum time, according to its regular primary school surveys.

For NATRE, insufficient time is considered to be fewer than 45 minutes of teaching time a week. Its surveys have suggested that a quarter of primary schools were in this category last year.

2. 'Sensitive' topics need proper sequencing

Ofsted has said it is important that schools have a well-sequenced RE curriculum that gives pupils the knowledge they need to be able to understand new topics.

It adds: "The importance of this is very clear in the case of controversial and sensitive topics.

"Leaders and teachers might identify the necessary background knowledge that pupils need to learn for a topic and make sure that the curriculum is ordered to accommodate this."

3. Avoid 'superficial' coverage

Ofsted has warned against covering excessive amounts of material superficially.

Its review says schools should cover the "substantive content and concepts collectively or 'collectively enough'."

It adds that the content of lessons should be sufficient for pupils to grasp a bigger picture about the place of religion and non-religion in the world.

4. Prevent misconceptions about religion

Ofsted says that what is taught and learned in RE should be grounded in what is known about religion and non-religion from academic study.

It says that this helps teachers to prevent pupils from developing misconceptions about religion and non-religion.

5. Specialist teachers and training is needed

Another area highlighted in the Ofsted review is the need for sufficient training and professional development in order for teachers to have appropriate subject professional knowledge in RE

The report says having subject-specialist RE teachers can also contribute to high-quality provision. Ofsted says school and subject leaders have to make decisions about how specialist staff are distributed across a timetabled curriculum.

It adds: "Following this decision process, pupils in RE classes are often the ones deprived of a main or specialist teacher."

6. Pupils need knowledge, not 'mere facts'

The review refers to three different types of subject-specific knowledge that pupils learn in RE. It says each of these is powerful and should not be confused with "mere facts".

- The first is "substantive" knowledge about various religious and non-religious traditions.
- The second type is "ways of knowing", where pupils learn "how to know" about religion and non-religion.
- The third type is "personal knowledge", where pupils build an "awareness of their own presuppositions and values about what they study".