

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (KENT)

MINUTES of a SACRE meeting held in the Council Chamber, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Tuesday, 19 March 2024.

PRESENT: Mr S Bowen, Mrs C Elapatha, Ms F Hawkes, Mr D Jeffrey, Mrs M Paddison-Chapman (Vice Chair), Mr J Paul and Ms N Ralph.

PRESENT VIRTUALLY: Ms C Bostock, Ms N Brownfield, Ms N Cheema, Mrs A Goldstein, Ms S Hamilton, Mrs M Lawson, Mrs B Naden, Ms K Porteous and Ms H Williams.

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs P Smith-Orr (Consultant Advisor) and Mr J Clapson (Democratic Services Officer).

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

1. Apologies for Absence/Substitutes

Mrs Paddison-Chapman chaired the meeting.

Apologies for absence were received from Dr Smith, Mr Shepherd and Mrs Burke.

2. Declarations of Interests

There were no declarations of interests.

3. Minutes of the Meeting Held on 9.11.23

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 9 November 2023 were correctly recorded and that they be signed by the Chair.

4. RE Advisor Verbal and Update on Local Network Groups

1. Mrs Smith-Orr provided her update and noted that Local Network Group meetings were successfully taking place.

2. During consideration of the item, the following points were noted:

- Ms Hawks, Mr Shepherd, Mrs Paddison-Chapman and Ms Brownfield had all held Local Network Group meetings.
- There was a Local Network Group meeting for religious education (RE) coordinators across all of Kent scheduled for the 25 March. Further details were available on the Kent Education Learning and Skills Information (KELSI) website.
- Upon confirmation of the cost, it was felt that it would not offer good value for money to provide a copy of the latest RE Today magazine to each attendee of the Kent wide Local Network Group meeting. Mrs Smith-Orr would look into

the possibility of providing digital copies or back issues of the magazine instead.

- It was suggested that sweet treats could be sent to those attending and would help to raise the profile of SACRE, however, it was not known in advance who would be attending.
- Consideration would be given to holding an RE conference in the Autumn for RE coordinators. Ms Paddison-Chapman and Ms Ralph offered their assistance in organising the event.

Wire Award Update

- There were no submissions for consideration at this meeting, however, a number of schools were currently collating information in preparation for submission.
- All of the schools who had previously been awarded the accolade had received their certificates, with the exception of Victoria Road school. They were scheduled to have theirs presented on 22 March.
- It was suggested that there could be a competition for schools to create a logo for the Wire Award certificates. The winning child could receive a book token, and their school could receive a year's subscription to RE Today. It was agreed that the suggestion would be discussed at the Local Network Group meeting on 25 March and a link to the competition could be put on the KELSI website.
- The competition could help raise the profile of SACRE and raise awareness of the WIRE Award.

3. RESOLVED that the update was noted.

5. The OFSTED Review into Religious Education and National Standards for Religious Education

1. Mrs Smith-Orr advised that Ofsted had conducted a review of schools and found that overall, RE could be taught better. Mrs Smith-Orr summarised the review as follows:

- Elements of the review findings appeared to be duplicated from previous reviews.
- Ofsted found that insufficient time was dedicated to the study of RE.
- Teachers should not try to teach everything. Ofsted recommended that some areas should be focused upon and taught in more in depth.
- Teachers should research into the topic and gain a deeper understanding before teaching.

National Standards for Religious Education

- Mrs Smith-Orr advised that the National Standards for RE document would be for those who set the curriculum and would be launched in May 2024.

2. During consideration of the item it was noted that:

- Some people believed that Government should make RE part of the National Curriculum as this would mean everyone used the same RE syllabus. Currently there were large variations in quality between locally agreed syllabuses.
- The publication made no mention of RE in special schools.

- There were adapted syllabuses that special schools could use. Mrs Smith-Orr could sign post special schools if needed.
- There was support and training available to special schools.
- Teachers should be allowed to teach without the additional burden of targets that were not present in other subjects.
- The syllabus needed to make RE accessible and engaging for all children, regardless of their ability, within mainstream schools.

3. RESOLVED to note the development of a National Standard document for Religious Education.

6. Development Plan September 2023- July 2024

1. It was agreed that the Kent Grammar School RE Group be added to the Plan. It was led by the Head of Religious Studies at Sir Roger Manwood's School and met three times a year.

7. Budget Update

1. Mrs Smith-Orr presented the budget update.

2. During consideration of the item the following was noted:

- There was £5000,00 remaining in the budget for the 2023/24 year.
- In 2024/25 some budget would be spent on the RE conference in the Autumn.
- Extended units could be bought from RE Today to provide schools with additional resources. This would help non-specialist teachers teach RE.
- SACRE could produce a pack for schools each year, so they could hold a Kent wide RE day within schools that would look at religious and non-religious world views.
- The Local Coordinator Network meetings could be used to ask teachers what support they needed. They could also become hubs for sharing resources between schools.
- Some schools might benefit from assistance with transportation costs to visit places of worship.

3. RESOLVED that the budget update be noted.

8. Submission of the Annual Report 2022/23

1. Mrs Smith-Orr advised that the Annual Report had been completed and circulated. The Children's, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee had also considered and noted the Report at their meeting in January. Members were asked to get in touch with Mrs Smith-Orr if they had anything for inclusion in the 2023/24 Annual Report.

2. RESOLVED that the Annual Report 2022/23 be noted.

9. 2024 NASACRE Conference - 20 May 2024 Venue: Hilton York

1. Mrs Smith-Orr advised that the 2024 NASACRE Conference would be held in York this year. Kent could send a maximum of two delegates. If any Member

wished to attend, they were asked to contact Mr Clapson who would make the necessary arrangements.

10. Films for Schools Update

1. Mr Clapson said that a number of links to publicly available videos and podcasts were available on the KELSI website. The KELSI website also directed teachers who wanted access to the films to contact Mrs Smith-Orr.
2. Mrs Smith-Orr advised that she had not received any requests for the films yet but would highlight that they were available upon request at the meeting on 25 March. She would try to show some of the clips at the meeting.

11. Any other items which the Chairman decides are urgent

1. It would be good to see GCSE exam result trends and how RE results compared to other subjects. However, since the Covid-19 pandemic, the Department for Education had not issued the data to Local Authorities. Ms Wigg offered to try and obtain the data.
2. Mrs Smith-Orr offered to feed back to NASACRE that it was difficult for some people to attend the conference because it took place during an exam period.