



**STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
14 NOVEMBER 2017**

PRESENT:

Christian Denominations and Other Religious Denominations (Committee A)

Neville McFarlane BEM (Chairman) (Salvation Army), Lynette Gaylard (Ground Level Network of Churches in Lincolnshire), Peter Crosby (Baptist Church), Andrew Hornsby (Methodist Church), Swathi Sreenivasan (Hindu Community) and Dr Tanweer Ahmed MBA (Islamic Association of Lincoln)

The Church of England (Committee B)

David Clements, Cherry Edwards OBE, David Scoffield and Mark Plater

Associations Representing Teachers (Committee C)

Elizabeth Moore (NASUWT) and Kay Sutherland (NAHT)

The Local Authority (Committee D)

Councillor Bob Adams, Councillor Mrs Jacqueline Brockway and Councillor Mark Anthony Whittington

Officer/Advisers

Steve Blagg (Democratic Services Officer), Wendy Harrison (RE Adviser) and Gillian Georgiou (Diocesan RE Adviser)

1 OPENING REFLECTIONS BY CHERRY EDWARDS

Cherry Edwards gave the opening reflections.

2 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

In accordance with the procedures for election of the Chairman detailed in SACRE's constitution it was moved and seconded and -

RESOLVED

That Neville McFarlane be elected Chairman of SACRE for the ensuing year 2017/18.

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(Note: The Chairman informed the meeting that he did not intend to stand for the post of Chairman in 2018/19)

3 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

In accordance with the procedures for the election of Vice-Chairman detailed in SACRE's constitution it was moved and seconded and -

RESOLVED

That Chris Burke be elected as Vice-Chairman for 2017/18.

4 WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

The Chairman welcomed Peter Crosby (Baptist Church), Kay Sutherland (representing teacher associations) and Councillor M A Whittington (Lincolnshire County Council), to their first meeting. The Chairman also welcomed Mark Plater as the newly appointed Church of England representative on SACRE.

5 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Cherry Edwards requested that a note should be made in the minutes that she was the Chair of the Board of Directors of the West Grantham Academies Trust (minute 10).

6 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING OF SACRE HELD ON 11 JULY 2017

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 11 July 2017, be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to "2018" in bullet point four being amended to "2017". (Minute 53a).

7 ANNUAL REVIEW OF MEMBERSHIP OF SACRE

In accordance with its Constitution, SACRE was required to review its membership on an annual basis.

The Chairman stated that in connection with Committee A (Christian and Other Denominations), the East Midlands Synod of the United Reformed Church had been approached to fill the one remaining vacancy on Committee A but had not responded and therefore a vacancy still existed on this Committee.

RESOLVED

That the review of the membership of SACRE be noted.

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8 ACTIONS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES (IF NOT ALREADY ON THE AGENDA)

8a Training for the New Agreed Syllabus

SACRE noted that training in connection with the introduction of the new Agreed Syllabus was still being examined by Gillian Georgiou and Wendy Harrison.

9 AGREED SYLLABUS

The Chairman stated that this matter was on the agenda for notification purposes only and he made the following comments:-

- He stated that a draft of the new Agreed Syllabus, which was required to be reviewed every five years, had been circulated to members and they had been requested to let Wendy Harrison have their comments on the accuracy of the document. He stated that SACRE had agreed to set up an Agreed Syllabus Conference, comprising members of SACRE, to prepare and approve the final draft before it was approved by the County Council's Executive and then sent to schools in the Spring Term 2018 to be followed by training.
- A copy of the new Agreed Syllabus would be sent to all schools and he hoped that a copy would be put on the www. He was examining publicity of the syllabus with the County Council's Communications section.
- He gave a brief outline of the purpose of the new syllabus.
- He appreciated that it had not been possible to satisfy everyone on the final outcome of the syllabus particularly the compulsory elements in Key Stage 1. He stated that the importance of Judaism in the development of Christianity was recognised and stated that Wendy Harrison had spoken to Robin Young, the newly appointed Jewish representative on SACRE who had some reservations about Judaism's omission from Key Stage 1 as a compulsory focus of study. He stated that it was not possible to reopen discussion on this matter as the responsibility for producing the new syllabus had been delegated to the Agreed Syllabus Conference which had a statutory duty to produce it. He stated that there would be an opportunity to add Appendices to the syllabus and that this would be the time to make reference to Judaism and other religions.

Comments by members included:-

- A member stated that she had taught very well six major religions during her teaching career as indeed so had many more teachers. She had not responded to the recent request for comments on the syllabus because she had made her views known at the previous meeting, i.e. that Judaism should also continue be one of the religions that remained compulsory within the new Agreed Syllabus. She added that while she appreciated that Judaism would be included in the Appendices that it was important that these were written and published as soon as possible after the main document was published and made available to schools. She also added that she thought that the content in the new Agreed Syllabus was very well written indeed.

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- A member was of the view that most schools would retain Judaism and that there would be a need review the effects of the new syllabus in the future.

Wendy Harrison reminded members that it was the Agreed Syllabus Conference that had a statutory duty to produce the Agreed Syllabus and stated that the inclusion of Islam at Key Stage 1 had not been based on census statistics but because of the need to ensure that pupils had a good understanding of Islam. Christianity remained central to the Agreed Syllabus. Hinduism was included as a third compulsory religion so that dharmic traditions were represented, not just the three Abrahamic religions.

Gillian Georgiou explained the opportunities available to schools to learn about other religions, that it was not proposed to minimise the opportunities to teach about other religions and stated that all schools would be supported.

The Chairman welcomed the new Agreed Syllabus and thanked the Agreed Syllabus Conference and the Teachers' Panel for the work they had put in to produce the new syllabus. He stated that there would be an opportunity to review syllabus a year after its implementation.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

10 SUMMARY OF OFSTED INSPECTIONS OF LINCOLNSHIRE SCHOOLS WITH REFERENCE TO THE PROVISION FOR PUPILS' SPIRITUAL, MORAL, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT (SMSC)

SACRE received a report by Wendy Harrison, in connection with the summary of inspectors' judgements on schools' provision for pupils' development in those schools inspected since by OFSTED since the last report presented to SACRE on 11 July 2017.

Wendy Harrison stated that those schools which had received negative comments from the inspectors at the last meeting had been written to and most had taken up her offer of support.

Comments by SACRE and the responses of officers, where appropriate, included:-

- The comments made by inspectors in the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development were inconsistent in quality. This needed to be brought to the attention of Ofsted. Officers stated that this had happened on numerous occasions in the past with little success and to date there had not been any standardisation in their reporting methods.
- The monitorin inspection of The West Grantham Academy St John's, Grantham, had taken place over two days. The inspectors recognised that the school was taking action to overcome the problems detailed in their first inspection and that the major safeguarding issues were being addressed. Councillor Mark Whittington stated that the school was in his electoral Division and that he was

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prepared to offer the school his help if required. Wendy Harrison to offer further support to the school, following her first visit.

- A query was made in relation to the teaching of RE in Secure Units? Officers stated that there was no statutory duty to provide for the teaching of RE in Secure Units but they were prepared to offer any support if it was required. Officers stated that they were working with students at Hill Holt Wood (which took young people not engaged in mainstream education) on British Values. The meeting agreed that the work with young people at Hill Holt Wood should be discussed at the next meeting. Councillor Jackie Brockway stated that she would speak to Debbie Barnes, Executive for Children's Services, about the provision of RE in Secure Units.

RESOLVED

(a) That the comments made by SACRE together with the responses of officers, be noted.

(b) That the following schools receive a letter from the Chairman congratulating them on the positive remarks made by the inspectors:-

Waddingham Primary School, Gainsborough; Morton Trentside Primary School, Gainsborough; Bourne Elsea Park CE Primary Academy, Bourne; Waddington Redwood Primary School, Lincoln; St Peter and St Paul Catholic Voluntary Academy, Lincoln; The Barnes Wallis Academy, Lincoln; Caistor Yarborough Academy, Market Rasen; Ambergate Sports College, Grantham; The Ash Villa, South Rauceby, Sleaford.

(c) That the following schools receive a letter from the Chairman, expressing concern about various weaknesses identified by OFSTED:-

South View Community Primary School, Peterborough; Weston St Mary CE Primary School, Spalding; Skegness Academy, Skegness.

(d) That the following schools be visited by officers to discuss specific concerns identified by OFSTED:-

Weston St Mary CE Primary School, Spalding and the West Grantham Academy St John's, Grantham.

(e) That the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development at Hill Holt Wood be discussed at the next meeting.

11 DIOCESAN RE ADVISOR REPORT

SACRE received a report from Gillian Georgiou in connection with RE matters taking place in the Diocese and highlighted the following matters in her report:-

- The work being done to increase RE literacy in schools and academies in the Diocese on the nationally-accredited training for the Understanding Christianity

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resource and stated that approximately 65% of all church schools in the Diocese and a small number of non-church schools were now using the resource and that it was having a significant impact on pupils' religious literacy.

- The recently published book, "We Need to Talk about Religious Education" included a chapter co-written by Gillian. The book opened up a discussion about what was needed form a new model for RE and covered a range of current issues.
- She referred to the Commission on RE's interim report, "Religious Education for All", pointing out that it had a bias towards the secondary sector.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

12 NATIONAL REPORTS

12a The State of the Nation: A report on RE provision within secondary schools in England - REC/NATRE/RE Today

SACRE received a power point presentation from Wendy Harrison on "The State of the Nation: A report on "RE provision within secondary schools in England – REC/NATRE/RE Today". It was agreed that the presentation should be emailed to members.

Wendy Harrison stated that the report showed differences in the provision of RE in different types of secondary schools. Overall, schools with a religious character provided more effective RE with academies performing worst. In many schools students were not receiving the education, in terms of RE, to which they were entitled. Members were asked about the implications for Lincolnshire schools and how the SACRE could respond to the findings. She stated that OFSTED used to report on individual subjects but this was no longer the case therefore it was difficult to know what provision was being made. Exam data would provide some information and needed to more carefully scrutinised.

Wendy Harrison stated that some of the recommendations were very generic and some impractical. There were no recommendations for local authorities. It remained to be seen how the findings of the report could be converted in actions.

Comments by members and the responses of officers, where appropriate, included:-

- The limited teaching of RE in some academies was acknowledged.
- Officers stated that the Diocese supported SACREs in North and North East Lincolnshire District Council areas and schools had been reminded of their statutory duty to teach RE. The schools had also been given an explanation of the role of SACREs and the Diocese and positive responses had been received from headteachers.
- Schools should be made aware that teaching about religion was fundamental to the teaching of British Values. Officers stated that this point had been made by

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schools in their submissions to the report. Gillian Georgiou stated she was prepared to share a letter on this matter subject to North East Lincolnshire giving their agreement to release the letter.

- In response to an enquiry about whether the County Council conducted an audit on the provision of RE in schools, officers stated that a general annual audit was undertaken. Councillor Jackie Brockway stated that the County Council gathered statistics from schools but obtaining data from academies was difficult because they reported direct to the Department for Education. Councillor Jackie Brockway stated that she would speak to Debbie Barnes, Executive Director for Children Services, about this matter.
- Gillian Georgiou stated that she had capacity issues in providing RE training courses to individual schools and stated that individual schools would be put on hold until it was possible to bring a number of schools together and then arrange training. Wendy Harrison stated that she now had more time to consider this matter following the completion of the new Agreed Syllabus.
- There was often little support from school leaders for RE to be taught and therefore it was sometimes a neglected subject.

12b Commission on RE: Interim Report

SACRE received a power point presentation by Wendy Harrison in connection with the "Commission on RE: Interim Report". It was agreed that the presentation should be emailed to members.

Wendy Harrison stated that there were four interim recommendations in the report covering a national entitlement for RE; holding schools to account for the provision of RE; the preparation of a national plan to improve the teaching and learning of RE and a new and expanded role for SACREs. She briefly explained what each recommendation meant, giving more details about the proposed new role for SACREs.

Wendy Harrison also referred to the right of withdrawal. It was a complex issue as it involved Human Rights legislation and a national entitlement that was not unduly influenced by particular faith groups.

Comments by members and the responses by officers, where appropriate, included:-

There was no reliable information on the withdrawal of pupils from RE in Lincolnshire but officers were aware of cases where parents had withdrawn their children from certain parts of the RE curriculum, e.g. visit to certain places of worship. Officers stated that the local authority was obliged to follow legislation on the withdrawal of pupils.

- Having bias was part of the human condition and was important in the teaching of RE. Children were switched on by passionate teaching and bias was not the same as intolerance.
- SACREs had a role in supporting schools to deliver the Agreed Syllabus.
- The funding of SACREs came from local authorities and resources were finite.
- Members were encouraged to engage with the Commission and the closing date for responses was 4.00pm on 4 December 2017.

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Gillian Georgiou stated that she could invite the Commission to visit this area and she noted that responses from teachers to the Commission's consultation had been few to date due to the relatively short consultation period.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted and that members be encouraged to respond to the Commission's consultation by 4 December 2017.

13 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE ACTION PLAN

SACRE received a report from Wendy Harrison in connection with SACRE's Action Plan. Wendy Harrison stated that as the Action Plan contained little detail at the moment, it was -

RESOLVED

(a) That consideration of the Action Plan be deferred to the next meeting of SACRE, when it will be the first item on the agenda.

(b) That, in the meantime, Wendy Harrison email all members to ask them for any suggestions for adding issues to the Action Plan.

**14 SPIRITUAL, MORAL, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT (SMSC)
NATIONAL QUALITY MARK**

SACRE received a verbal report from Wendy Harrison in connection with the Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development (SMSC) National Quality Mark, which was being piloted in schools and they could apply for on line. She stated that the award had been developed by a working group comprised of educational consultants, staff from the Citizenship Foundation, Headteachers and teachers and cost of obtaining the award was approximately £600. She stated that if members were aware of any school which had received the National Quality Mark it would be nice for SACRE to receive a presentation from them.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted and that SACRE welcomed a presentation from any school that had participated in the SMSC National Quality Mark.

**15 PRESENTATION OF DVD BY THE POLICE ON EXTREMISM IN
SCHOOLS**

RESOLVED

That the DVD by the Police on extremism in schools be deferred to the next meeting.

16 DATES AND TIMES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

RESOLVED

That dates and times of future meetings of SACRE be agreed as follows:-

Tuesday 13 March 2018

Tuesday 10 July 2018

Tuesday 6 November 2018

(all meetings to start at 2.00pm)

Mark Plater agreed to do reflections at the next meeting.

The meeting closed at 3.45 pm