

Minutes of the Meeting of the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education held on 3 June 2020 at 6.00 pm

Committee A: Mr A Anderson, Mrs H Kaur, Mrs S Lawson, Mr A Kariyanawasm and Mr T Ojetola

Committee B: Rev.J Guest and Mrs L Fry

Committee C: Ms J Culloty and Mrs A Jellicoe

Committee D: Councillors Collins and Kerin

Apologies: Mrs R Saul, Ms Webster and Ms Perlmutter

In attendance: Deborah Weston, Associate Advisor for Religious Education
Deborah Weston, Associate Advisor for Religious Education
Andrea Winstone, Strategic Lead for School Effectiveness and SEND
Kenna-Victoria Healey, Senior Democratic Services Officer
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1. Minutes

The minutes of the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education held on 9 January 2019, 4 June 2019, 6 November 2019 and 4 March 2020 were approved as a correct record.

2. Items of Urgent Business

There were no items of Urgent Business.

3. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

4. Appointment of Chair and Vice-Chairs

Nominations were invited for the appointment of Chair of the Committee. It was proposed by Rev. Guest and seconded by Councillor Kerin, that Mr Anderson be appointed as Chair of the Committee.

Mr Anderson, commented that if he was to become Chair of SACRE he had big shoes to fill, following Rev. Guest. He continued by thanking Rev. Guest for all he had done for SACRE.

During discussions it was also agreed that Mr Anderson be moved from Committee A to Committee B.

Nominations were invited for the appointment of Vice Chair of Committees A, B, C and D.

The Associate Advisor for Religious Education sought if Members were still happy with the meeting date and time. It was agreed that a Wednesday was still the best day of the week to meet and further agreed to move the start time back to 6.30pm.

RESOLVED that:

That Mr P Anderson be appointed as Chair of Thurrock SACRE.

The following members be elected as Vice Chairs:

Committee A: Mr T Ojetola

Committee B: Mr P Anderson

Committee C: Ms J Culloty

Committee D: Councillor Collins

5. Collective Worship

The Associate Adviser for Religious Education presented the report to Members, and in doing so, outlined the report detailing that one of the duties of SACRE was to monitor the provision of Acts of Collective Worship in schools within the local authority.

Members heard how Thurrock SACRE had reviewed the policies of a number of schools in the summer term meeting 2019 and reported to schools on their findings. The report proposed that SACRE reviewed a second sample of policies on Acts of Collective Worship that appeared on school websites to determine if anything had changed in the last year and to identify good practice. The Associate Adviser for Religious Education commented that Collective Worship was a difficult topic as it was not a requirement of the relevant legislation.

It was raised as to the right of withdrawing children from participating in Religious Education and Collective Worship in schools. SACRE heard how the legislation stated that all registered pupils in state-funded schools should take part in a daily act of collective worship unless wholly or partly withdrawn by parents. The term 'registered pupils' included students up to and including the age of eighteen years in a school, sixth form or at a sixth form college but not pupils in nursery schools or classes.

The Teachers Representatives on SACRE commented they had not experienced children being withdrawn from Religious Education at either of their secondary schools. Both advised that students held assemblies on different faiths as well as other topics, and all students from year 7 to year 11 were involved.

During discussions it was identified that should a child be withdrawn from Collective Worship and Religious Education then there was a policy in place in Thurrock to monitor such decisions.

It was queried by Councillor Collins as to what clear acts of worship were, for example he commented teaching children to be good citizens and British values.

Mr Ojetola left at 6.55pm

The Associate Adviser for Religious Education was thanked for her report, Members commented the lists drawn up from the previous meeting at the end of 2019 were helpful when comparing with the schools policies.

It was further commented that it was felt there was no need to amend the current list as it expressed what Members of SACRE looking for.

Members went on to discuss the language to explain Collective Worship within school policies and it was felt that sometimes this was confusing for parents, phrases such as 'Let us pray' we're connected to the Christian faith. The Associate Adviser for Religious Education explained that the definition of Collective Worship hadn't been changed or amended since the 1944 Act.

It was queried as to whether it was possible to create a policy template with clearer language to make it easier for parents to understand when looking on schools websites.

The Strategic Lead for School Effectiveness and SEND referred to the question on British Values, and in doing so, explained that British values were be taught within schools; however these were taught within different subjects other than Religious Education such as PSHE. She further stated that Collective Worship within Schools would be covered in other curriculum areas such as year or group assemblies.

The Teacher Representatives stated that teaching British values went hand-in-hand with Collective Worship. All of the teachers agreed that they were at the core of the curriculum. It was further stated that British values were within all faiths such as Sikhism, with children being taught to be kind and honest. The Teacher Representatives further agreed with the point made by the Strategic Lead for School Effectiveness and SEND in that these were also at the core of school assemblies

The Associate Adviser for Religious Education replied to the suggestion of having a template for SACRE to produce to schools, in that although this was a good idea in principal, schools were not required to have a policy on Collect Worship. However if SACRE wished the Associate Adviser for Religious Education was happy to write to the schools and share their lists with them, which they could use to create their own policy amend their policy if they wished.

The Chair of the Committee stated that all schools were different when it came to teaching Collective Worship for example Faith schools such as Catholic or Church of England schools within the borough would aim their teachings toward their faiths.

Stella Lawson left the committee at 7 PM.

RESOLVED that SACRE:

Consider a sample of policies from Thurrock schools to determine how Collective Worship is offered in local schools in the light of the legal requirements set out in section 3 below.

- A. Harris Academy Ockendon**
- B. Grays Convent**
- C. Kenningtons Primary**
- D. Bulham Primary**

The policies reviewed in 2019 were as follows:

- 1. Harris Academies – new policy attached (Harris Ockendon 2019)**
- 2. Bonneygate – 2015 policy on the website**
- 3. Horndon on the Hill – due for review November 2020**
- 4. Kenningtons Dec 2016 policy on website**
- 5. St Clere’s Sept 2018 policy on website**

Exclusion of the Public and Press

Members of SACRE agreed that, in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act, 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business, on the grounds that they could involve the possible disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 1 of Schedule 12A of that Act.

6. Supplementary Guidance on Progression within the Agreed Syllabus

The Associate Adviser for Religious Education introduced the report explaining that in order to discharge its legal duties, SACRE monitored provision for Religious Education in its local area where Religious Education was delivered in accordance with the local Agreed Syllabus.

Members heard how Thurrock introduced a new Agreed Syllabus in 2016 and had conducted regular monitoring exercises to establish how effective the new syllabus had been in meeting its aim to raise standards of Religious Education. The publication, by Ofsted of a revised inspection framework with a renewed focus on curriculum planning and design, had encouraged many

schools to conduct a review of their curricula. Some of these Schools had asked SACRE for guidance on progression within the Agreed Syllabus.

The Associate Adviser for Religious Education advised that RE Today had published guidance which, if approved by SACRE, could be distributed to schools as a supplement to the Agreed Syllabus.

During discussions it was mentioned that according to the Department for Education Guidance, Religious Education in English schools, a SACRE must advise the Local Authority on RE in accordance with the agreed syllabus, and on matters related to its functions, whether in response to a referral from the Local Authority or as it sees fit. A SACRE should also provide advice and support on the effective teaching of RE in accordance with the locally agreed syllabus; provide advice to the Local Authority and its schools on methods of teaching, the choice of teaching material and the provision of teacher training.

The Teacher Representatives sitting on SACRE confirmed the agreed syllabus for Thurrock was used in both of their schools, along with the guidance document. Mrs Jellicoe advised that Thurrock's agreed syllabus was up for renewal next year (2021).

Members were further advised by Ms Culloty that although the agreed syllabus was not perhaps used in topic order at her school they did use the agreed syllabus and incorporated other life topics.

RESOLVED that SACRE:

Consider the following:

- **the document, “Building progressions through your RE Agreed Syllabus’**
- **directing the RE Adviser to write an article for the bulletin to commend the document to schools**
- **request that the web-team, upload the document to the password protected areas of the website**
- **resources known to them from a faith perspective that could be added to the resources section of the website.**

Any Other Business

The Chair of the SACRE advised that the next meeting was to be held in November 2020.

Members of SACRE offered their thanks to Rev. Guest as this was this last meeting on SACRE. He was further congratulated for his award of Freedom of Borough.

The meeting finished at 7.17pm

Approved as a true and correct record

CHAIR

DATE

**Any queries regarding these Minutes, please contact
Democratic Services at Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk**