

CALDERDALE STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Minutes of SACRE Meeting (AGM)

Thursday 28 June 2023

6.00 pm at The Greetland Academy

Members in attendance:

Committee A

Representing Other Denominations & Faiths

Mr Dipan Mistry (DM)

Mr Robert Fox (RF)

Committee B

Representing the Church of England

Ms Shelagh Hirst (SH) (Chair)

Committee C

Teachers/Unions

Ms Katie Jennings (JK)

Mr Mark Sharp (MS)

Ms Helen Crowther (HC)

Committee D

Representing Calderdale Council

Cllr Brenda Monteith (BM)

Cllr Ann Kingstone (AK)

In attendance

Mrs Debby Simpson – Clerk (DS)

Mr Ian Ross (IR)

Quorum for the meeting is 1 representative from each of the 4 Committees

FORMAL BUSINESS

The meeting started with a short presentation from Helen Crowther, headteacher at The Greetland Academy and new member of SACRE on a day long deep dive in RE that was undertaken as part of research by a HMI inspector. HMI were looking for good practice in schools

The visit was also a benefit to the school because under an Ofsted inspection staff are not allowed in classrooms, however, because it wasn't HC was allowed in had made a note of the questions that were being asked which will be helpful in future. HC went through the questions with members.

HMI had been blown away by the syllabus that was being used and was impressed with the support that was going on for RE.

a. **Welcome and Apologies**

The Clerk welcomed everyone to the meeting. Introductions were made due to not everyone being together at the same meeting before.

Apologies had been received from Helen Lever and Dot Foster.

b. **Election of Chair**

SH had said she was happy to nominate herself as Chair. Members were happy for SH to continue for a further year.

c. **Election of Vice Chair**

SH nominated MS to continue as Vice Chair. MS was happy to carry on for the next year. Members were happy to agree this.

d. **Election of Group Chairs and Vice Chairs for groups, A, B, C and D**

It was agreed as in previous years that these will be called upon only if needed as a Chair of Committees was only needed for 3 groups for the Agreed Syllabus. It was understood that this would be happening in March 2024.

e. **Membership Review**

The clerk informed members that new members were Helen Crowther representing Teachers and Schools (Helen giving representation from a primary Academy), Helen Lever representing C of E and Maryam Siddiqa representing Islam.

Megan Stephenson had now resigned.

The clerk had also prepared an attendance list over the last year with 3 people not attending any meetings. It was agreed that the clerk write to anyone who had not attended in over a year to find out what their intentions are and if they do not reply within 2 weeks that they will be taken off SACRE.

There was still a vacancy in the C of E category and Helen Shelley from the Diocese was currently looking to fill this position.

There was good representation on the Teachers and Schools category, however, there was no representation for the secondary schools. The clerk agreed to ask Calderdale Association of Secondary Headteachers to see if they could get any representation.

SACRE now had someone representing Islam, however due to the number of Muslims within Calderdale it would be good if another representative could be found. No-one had been found to represent Judaism or the Catholic faith as yet.

SH had contacted the Interfaith Council but had not got a response as yet. AK also agreed to try as she sits on one of the Committees.

f. Feedback from National Organisations – SACRE Conference

IR had attended the conference face to face and SH had attended it virtually with both finding it interesting and useful. Members had all received a copy of the notes (Appendix A).

It was felt that the impact of the conference came from the presentation by David Hampshire and this needed to be discussed when members are looking at the SEF next term.

SH mentioned the Wire Award which was widening inclusivity in the RE Award and felt that this could dovetail some things currently done in Calderdale.

SH also pointed out to members of how grateful she was for the support from Pennine Learning and other SACRE's that Calderdale work with because she was working with someone who got no support whatsoever.

Members then discussed the takeaways from the conference.

Q: Why is it important to have the links with MATs? A: They choose which syllabus to use and can also choose their own curriculum. In Calderdale we are fortunate because most follow the local syllabus. **Q: Is work being done on the curriculum at the moment?** A: Most academies use the West Yorkshire syllabus so we are quite lucky.

Q: If MATs don't use the locally agreed syllabus – what do they use? A: They can make it up themselves and therefore isn't always quality assured.

Q: What about Church schools? A: VA schools are recommended to choose the Diocese syllabus but VC schools use the local agreed syllabus.

Q: With regard to community cohesion – what part does SACRE play in improving community cohesion when there are issues? A: Their main role is to ensure that pupils get a good education with a broad range of religions and faiths and an understanding of them. Barriers need to be broken down so that pupils can get on with an understanding of each other's faiths rather than falling out. A lot of our schools have this as their RE Intent.

Q: Is there no specific module? A: There are some on how we work together but there is more community cohesion in the secondary modules.

g. Professional Advisor Report

IR went through the work that had been done this year:

Syllabus

PL have started the review of the syllabus including a questionnaire to all schools, discussions at SACRE meetings and a working party to support the process of writing the new syllabus. They will be basing the new syllabus on The Big Ideas by Barbara Wintersgill and have already started a draft of the syllabus and will continue to update this in line with changes that are being made to the units of work.

School Support

PL have updated audits and review documents to support schools e.g., RE Award, SMSC audit and Deep Dive in RE. IR attends the Calderdale Strategic Partnership Board where he shares the work carried out in terms of RE and SMSC. As a result of questionnaires sent to schools and working with Billie Farrell (cluster officer for Elland) PL have been invited to support a number of primary and secondary schools including:

- Greetland
- Cross Lane
- Old Earth
- Holywell Green
- Bowling Green
- All Saints
- Siddal
- Sacred Heart
- Bolton Brow
- Ryburn Valley
- North Halifax Grammar
- Trinity Sowerby Bridge
- Brooksbank

Next year another cluster will be offered either professional conversations or RE reviews.

PL produce a half termly newsletter and this supports schools in news, resources and updates. They are very pleased with the video project looking at Judaism and Sikhi. The Sikhi videos will be published soon.

Education and Faith

Helen has been very busy this year working on interfaith and Schools Welcome!. A number of training sessions have taken place and she is now carrying out more QA sessions with places of worship. The visits and visitors list have been updated and these have been uploaded to the PL website and sent to schools.

Two interfaith conferences have taken place this year both on the theme of home. The interfaith week event also included refugees. The summer term event was specifically for y2 – 4 children. Both events reached at least 1000 children across a number of authorities. Helen's latest programme is looking at interfaith walks and interfaith dialogue in schools.

CPD

There have been three primary networks over the year with a good level of attendance. PL have offered the primary RE network for free and this has been oversubscribed with 35 coordinators on the list. All people who are booked on the sessions have access to a shared folder of resources which people in schools share ideas and documents, e.g., knowledge organisers, provision maps and SMSC audits.

The secondary network shared with Leeds and Kirklees is growing strong with about 25 regular attendees. Jake supports this network and has looked at themes like moderation and syllabus review.

Courses have been offered this year, but the only one to run was the primary coordinator training as this was shared with Kirklees. We need to look at this for next year when the most appropriate time would be.

A collective worship course online was delivered in June and each delegate attending will also receive a follow up in school visit.

Subject knowledge webinars are being offered over the next year including humanism. This has been offered fairly cheaply for schools. Each webinar is a whistle stop tour of a religion, some teaching and learning activities and resources, but also includes a member of that faith to answer questions.

Advice and Guidance

A series of advice and guidance for schools has been updated/published this year and uploaded to the PL website and shared with schools.

- RE Template Policy
- RE and Collective Worship withdrawal advice
- Collective Worship template policy
- Faith and Sensitivity advice to schools (Sharing the Journey)

Members acknowledged their gratitude for the work carried out by Pennine Learning and colleagues.

GENERAL SACRE BUSINESS

1. Minutes of Meeting held 28 February 2023

The minutes were agreed as a true and accurate record.

2. Matters Arising

Review of Collective Worship: This had now been sent out.

SACRE Mark for RE: This is due to be discussed this weekend.

There were no further items other than what was on the Agenda.

3. Progress on the Agreed Syllabus

This was due to be renewed in March 2024 and PL had consulted with schools etc. to ask what they wanted. PL had produced a first draft copy and explained how it would work with there being 6 pathways and each pathway being taught through six units per key stage. Each core unit will include study of all six main world faiths. The core units will then be supported by can do units so allowing some flexibility in schools.

The main focus in KS1 will be on Christianity and Islam, whereas KS2 will have equal weighting. This was discussed in detail because concern was raised as to why these 2 faiths were the focus. It was explained that Christianity has to be as this is the Law and then LA's have to be mindful of the make-up of the locality. It was also explained that in KS1 children would not be able to concentrate on more than 2 at a time.

IR said that as this is a draft the wording will be changed. The pathways all have equal status but they will be offering digging deeper units for Christianity and Islam. This could be extended to include other digging deeper units for non-religious worldviews and maybe dharmic faiths. This could be looked at during the next working party.

4. Monitoring of Provision

IR said that SACRE had already sent questionnaires to schools regarding RE provision and the syllabus and needed to know what needed to be looked at next. He suggested that collective worship had not been done for some time if this was something that SACRE would want to look at next.

After discussion it was felt that collective worship did tie in with quality of education and it was agreed that this should be looked at next.

HC said that herself and MS would bring this up at CPHA to ensure that everyone completes the questionnaire when it is ready to go out.

5. Setting Dates for SEF Working Party

It was agreed that this would be held at Cross Lane and should be held sometime w/c 18 September 2023. MS will send a date suitable to the school to the clerk so she can invite members of the working party (SH, JA, and DF and himself) and also ask if anyone else wants to be part of this working party.

6. Dates of Future Meetings

The Date for the Local Agreed Syllabus Conference will be 12 March 2024 in the evening. IR/DAS will decide on the other dates for meetings and pass them onto members.

APPENDIX A

NASACRE conference 2023

Summary of keynote presentations

An education in religion and worldviews – the next 30 years?

Dr Kathryn Wright, CEO Culham St Gabriel's Trust

SACREs have four key roles

1. **Strengthening** partnerships in the RE world: for example, working with multi-academy trusts.
Does your SACRE have a MAT link member?
2. **Supporting** understanding within communities
3. **Developing** a worldviews approach in the curriculum.
A pedagogical approach draws together hermeneutic, intellectual, critical interpretation, reflectivity and positionality.
A curriculum framework that includes:
 - Recognition of diversity
 - Lived experience
 - Context
 - Ways of knowing/disciplinary knowledge
 - Change and continuity
4. **Representing** the Religion and Worldviews community
 - Lobbying
 - Advocating
 - Recruitment (extreme shortage of RE specialists)
 - Importance of Freedom of religion and beliefs (FoRBs)
 - Supporting calls for a national plan for RE.
5. **Celebrating** a generally positive approach to RE from parents and pupils (1/4m GCSE entries)

The role of SACREs in an emerging educational landscape

The Rt Hon Charles Clark: NASACRE patron & former Home Sec and Education Secretary

There has been a period of great uncertainty and instability since 2015, with extremism from both Labour and Conservative parties. He feels this may be coming to an end with both main party (leaders) willing to challenge this.

Positive features of SACREs (of course they do vary)

- A force for good, nurturing value-based education and understanding for pupils
- A forum for community cohesion that is unique
- And it is locally based
- *Can we do this community cohesion better?*

Weaknesses of SACREs

- Can be marginalised

- Lack of resources
- Capacity varies
- A manifesto

Survey of SACRE reports 2022

Dr David Hampshire

Some issues coming out of the analysis of 2022 reports

1. Effect of COVID
 - Still limiting some work in 2022
 - developing use of digital opportunities – e.g., online meetings
2. Support
 - 97% returns said they had some professional support from the LA, mostly an adviser
 - 73% said they had some financial support from the LA
 - Only 42% said what the budget was; this may be an undefined needs led budget
3. Relationship between LA and SACRE
 - The more the LA sees SACRE as a positive contributor, the better it functions.
 - Some SACREs have many vacancies and sometimes the LA does not fulfil its responsibilities to fill these.
 - 42% SACREs said they gave advice to LA re. RE, but only 7% for Collective worship.
 - But 56% are advising schools on RE and 65% on CW.
 - SACRE should hold the LA to account for the advice it has given, i.e., ask the following year what has been done.
 - Be careful not to conflate the role of SACRE and the adviser.
4. Monitoring data
 - 65% monitor GCSE, less KS3 and less Collective Worship.
 - Some SACREs scrutinise Ofsted reports but value of this questioned.
 - School Workface data is also a useful source of information.
5. Training
 - 92% reports mention training but only 32% monitor quality
 - A small number mentioned resources for RE.

The full report will be out later this year.

Summary

- a. Covid has affected SACREs working and continued to do so in 2022
- b. SACREs have done a tremendous job in bouncing back, including building on some of the pandemic products such as online availability
- c. The LA's support is crucial if SACREs are to reach their potential but will struggle to be effective without this
- d. SACREs would do well to report on the impact of their work. What advice have they given? How has this been acted on?
- e. How does the DfE hold LAs to account? 53 SACREs have not sent any annual report in the last 3 years.

Some takeaways for SACRE from these keynotes (AR)

- How can we make better links with MATs – a MAT rep on SACRE (but would they represent more than their own MAT?) [Kathryn Wright]
- Could we actively promote community cohesion better? [Charles Clark]
- How can we lobby and advocate for RE over key issues, e.g., the recruitment crisis in RE specialists? [Charles Clark]
- Does SACRE hold the LA to account? Could it do this better? [David Hampshire]