

Telford & Wrekin Council
Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education
Thursday 9 November 2023
Minutes

Attendees

Jacquie Osmund-Smith (Chair), Tim Carter, Rebecca Carey, Mark Harrington, Jon Rawson, Dave Rolfe, Cllr Eileen Callear and Cllr Raj Mehta

In Attendance

Paige Starkey

Apologies

Angela Evans, Karl Downes, Diane Whiteley, Sajid Younis, Shaad Dhillon, Cllr Shirley Reynolds and Michelle Parker

1. Welcome and Introduction

- The Chair welcomed members of SACRE to the meeting and in particular introduced three new members - Cllr Eileen Callear, Ian Nicholson, RE Today (SACRE's new professional adviser), and Matthew Welton, Deputy Director of Lichfield Diocese Board of Education.

2. Minutes of the previous meeting

- The minutes of the previous meeting held on 1 March 2023 were agreed as a true representation.

3. Matters Arising – Annual Report for 2022/23 NASACRE Conference

- Members were updated on the latest NASACRE conference, which was attended by Jon Rawson on 22 May 2023 in London.
- The Chair informed members of annual RE debates taking place at primary schools in Telford & Wrekin and extended an invitation for SACRE members to attend. A list of dates would be circulated to members with the next sessions taking place on 15 & 16 November 2023.

4. RE Coordinators Group – Jon Rawson

- Jon Rawson provided members with an update on NATRE which supports those who teach RE subjects.
- A local NATRE group had been set up by Jon to provide a network for RE teachers in primary schools. Meetings are free to attend and provide good practice in RE, review units and resources, and update teachers on national issues from NATRE and SACRE.
- Members discussed the importance of RE coordinators meetings to share best practice and provide support to new coordinators.
- Members asked how good the take up of the group has been since implementation and Jon confirmed that 12 teachers currently attend the group meetings.

5. NASACRE Briefing 36 – September 2023

- The Chair provided an update on the latest information contained within the briefing around current news and support materials.
- NASACRE briefings are available each term and published online. The Chair informed members that they are able to set-up online access to receive a copy of the briefing notes direct.

6. Collective Worship

- Members agreed at the last meeting that an agenda item would be added to discuss support for children whose parents or carers had withdrawn them from collective worship.
- The Chair informed members that a free session on SACRE's monitoring RE and collective worship in schools would be taking place in December as noted in the NASACRE briefing.
- Members agreed to look at monitoring of collective worship in the New Year.

7. Religious Education Examination 2023 Results

- Rebecca Carey provided an update to members on this agenda item. Examination results were last reviewed during the Spring Term of the last academic year. Although the Department of Education had not yet released data for individual schools, Members were informed that the percentage of children taking RE at GCSE level was at 22%. Provisional figures show that nationally 72% were set to achieve a Grade 4 or above and 61% set to achieve a Grade 5 or above.
- Holy Trinity Academy and Burton Borough School located in Telford & Wrekin have submitted the school's full cohort for GCSE level in RE. Newport Girls School, Telford Langley, Madeley Academy, Wrekin College and Charlton School would not have pupils sitting RE at GCSE level. Members were advised that 512 children out of 2,300 were due to sit RE at GCSE level this academic year.
- Members asked if children have an option to take RE at GCSE level if they wish to do so and Rebecca advised that this would need to be explored, however many schools offer RE as an 'open bucket' subject. Members also considered that schools may have limited RE specialists who are able to run the qualification and those specific teaching staff may be required to run other subjects.
- Members requested that an update be brought back to the next meeting to include a breakdown of GCSE classes for RE and data for A Level studies.

8. Self-Evaluation Tool

- The Chair advised that members were circulated a copy of the self-evaluation tool provided by NASACRE to enable SACREs to monitor the effectiveness of the agreed syllabus. Members were informed that the tool kit highlights five key dimensions of SACRE's work and provides exemplification of good practice. A SACRE that uses this self-evaluation guidance should gain a clear picture of its strengths, identify areas for further development, and establish key priorities for action.
- Jon Rawson informed members that work had already started on a SACRE action plan and the completion of the self-evaluation tool would feed into this plan.
- Members discussed splitting the categories of the toolkit to be completed by each relevant committee group.
- Members suggested that the toolkit needs to be re-circulated to all SACRE members with a covering email from the Chair asking members to indicate which area they would be willing to work on.
- Jacquie, Ian, Jon and Rebecca to form a working group to report back at the next meeting.

9. Any other business

- Members discussed dates for the next meeting and agreed to move the next meeting scheduled on 11 January 2024 to take place on 1 February 2024 due to member availability. A further meeting was also confirmed in the diaries for 20 June 2024.
- Members also discussed attendance at meetings and contacting those Members who have been unable to attend meetings for a significant amount of time to confirm if they a representative could attend in their absence.

The meeting ended at 7.18pm