

**MINUTES OF STANDING ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE)
MEETING - WEDNESDAY, 7 NOVEMBER 2018**

Present:

Tim Cox, Blackburn Church of England Diocese, Church of England Group (Chairman)
Councillor Kirkland
Rabbi Robert Ash, Judaism Representative
Paul Harrison, Bispham Endowed Church of England Primary School
Mr Chirag Khajuria, Hindu Representative
Iman Ashfaq Patel, Islamic Representative
Helen Sage and Jo Snape, Blackburn Church of England Diocese, Church of England Group
Margaret Wright, Lancaster Roman Catholic Diocese

In Attendance:

Chris Williams, Democratic Governance Adviser

1 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Singleton and Tammy Hackney, St George's Church of England Academy.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest on this occasion.

3 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 7 MARCH 2018

The SACRE considered the minutes of the last meeting held on 7 March 2018.

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 7 March 2018 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

4 MEMBERS ITEMS

Helen Sage reported that she had been advised by former Judaism representative Dr Sheila Gewolb that following work in conjunction with the Education Board of Deputies, Judaism materials intended for use in schools had been completed and would be circulated in due course.

The Committee agreed it would be desirable to invite Sandra Teacher, United Synagogue, Senior Faith Advisor to Government, to speak at a future meeting.

5 AGE RELATED STANDARDS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The Committee considered the interim document approved for use in Catholic Schools by The Department of Catholic Education and Formation of The Catholic Bishops' Conference

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of England and Wales on age related standards in Religious Education.

Margaret Wright explained the background to the report, namely that the new document entitled *Age-Related Standards (3-19) in Religious Education* was a response from the Catholic Education Service to identified needs from schools for a clear document that could be used as an assessment tool in the changing landscape of primary and secondary schools. The intention was to fully incorporate the guidance by 2020 nationally.

The Committee was informed that from a total of 85 schools within the diocese, 48 had been involved in the pilot scheme for age related standards. The system was similar to that used in mainstream subjects and allowed for more effective teaching, assessment and learning. It contained key language designed to improve learning such as, compare, understand, apply etc . However, no content recommendations were included within the document to allow greater flexibility for schools in terms of how they delivered the subject though glossaries of key religious language were included.

Members agreed that a reference in the document that referred to the use of levels in grading the quality of RE was unhelpful as it mainly applied to Secondary schools given that many Primary schools actually preferred levels as they offered clarity and consistency to teachers when grading pupils.

6 COMMISSION ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION FINAL REPORT

The Committee considered the report on the Commission on Religious Education entitled 'Religion and Worldviews: The Way Forward. A National Plan for RE'. Members discussed how they would compile a local response to the report through the Chairman.

The report contained 11 major recommendations, some of which were further broken down into sub-sections. On the whole the Committee acknowledged a gradual movement towards secularisation in society and therefore welcomed those recommendations which sought to raise the profile of Religious Education. However, they were less enthusiastic about any recommendations which sought to create a more nationalised curriculum and reduce local input into curriculum content. Also, the Committee felt that by adding worldviews, essentially the religious aspect could become less important and result in linkages to political views and debates, something that was deemed to be separate and undesirable. A focus on shared human experience was deemed to be preferable to a worldviews focus. Committee members also expressed concerns that some of the recommendations could lead to a reduced role for SACRE's nationwide.

Some of the key areas that were supported by the Committee related to proposals to increase recruitment and training opportunities for RE teachers and approval in principal for the statement of entitlement that would allow access to Religious Education for any school child if they so choose. The idea that the DfE could measure the impact of withdrawal of RE from the curriculum and review the right to withdraw were also welcomed given that figures contained within the report suggested that the uptake of RE at GCSE level had continued to decrease and on average, teachers only received three hours of subject based training for RE.

As such, the Committee broadly agreed with recommendations 6, 7, 9, 10 and 11 and

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were opposed or less supportive of recommendations 2, 3, 4, 5 and 8.

Both the Catholic and Church of England representatives additionally outlined their respective positions on the recommendations contained within the report.

Resolved:

1. That the Chairman liaise with Committee members via email and formulate a response statement on behalf of the SACRE to send to the relevant recipient in response to the recommendations outlined in the Commission on Religious Education report.
2. That the Clerk circulate the informal responses from the Catholic and Church of England representatives presented at the meeting related to the recommendations outlined in the report.

7 BLACKPOOL SACRE ANNUAL REPORT

Following on from discussions at previous meetings, the Committee considered the next steps in order to create the 2017/2018 annual report for the SACRE.

Resolved:

1. Jo Snape to liaise with Jean Martin on the content of the Draft Annual Report 2017/2018 and forward to the Chairman to add his comments and introduction.
2. Paul Harrison to provide relevant photographs for use in the final report.
3. To finalise and submit the Blackpool SACRE Annual Report by 31 December 2018.

8 AGREED SYLLABUS CONFERENCE

Resolved:

1. To hold the Annual Syllabus Conference immediately prior to the next SACRE meeting on Tuesday 12 February 2018 in Committee Room B, Town Hall, Blackpool at 6:30pm.
2. To seek clarification from Helen Sage of the Lancashire Agreed Syllabus representative and invite them to the Annual Conference.

9 DATE OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The following dates were agreed for future meetings:

- Tuesday 12 February at 6:30pm in Committee Room B, Town Hall, Blackpool
- Wednesday 12 June at 6:30pm (Venue TBC)

Chairman

(The meeting ended at 8:05pm)

Any queries regarding these minutes, please contact:
Lennox Beattie, Executive and Regulatory Manager