

**OXFORDSHIRE
STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

**Minutes of the Oxfordshire SACRE Meeting
held at County Hall, Oxford,**

Wednesday 28th February 2024, 4.00 pm

Present:

Committee A: World Faiths, Christian Denominations & Other Worldviews

Jessica Edwards
Arzhia Habibi
Sarah Montagu
Sheikh Ramzy
Chandra Vadivale

Committee B: Church of England

Peter Foot
Elizabeth Pitkethly

Committee C: Teacher representatives

Giles Beck
Nigel Fancourt: Chair
Christian McGuinness
Helen Norman

Committee D: Local Authority

Councillor Bob Johnston

In attendance

Sam Bartholomew (Local Authority)
Helen Batten (Clerk)
Bill Moore (Advisor to SACRE)

Apologies

Steve Beegoo (A)
Shahin Bekhradnia (A)
Rae Hancock (C)
Christine Price-Smith (B)
Councillor Nigel Simpson (D)

1 Welcome & preliminary items

- Nigel Fancourt welcomed members to the meeting.
- Quorum was confirmed.
- Apologies received were accepted.
- No substantive items of AOB had been notified.

2 Approval of Minutes of 13th November 2023

- Minutes were approved as an accurate record.
- It was agreed that Committee A will be known as 'World Faiths, Christian Denominations & Other World Views'.

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3 Matters arising

3.1 SACRE Constitution 2023

The final version has been circulated and this matter is now complete.

3.2 Annual Report 2021-22

Distribution is complete, and the list of recipients has been circulated for information.

3.3 REFocus newsletter

Bill Moore advised that the November 2023 issue was delayed by distribution complexities within the local authority and the material is now being updated for issue during March.

3.4 Implementation of Agreed Syllabus & support

Bill Moore advised that syllabus support materials will be published on the schools' intranet and linked to the REFocus newsletter. A series of events for teachers, aimed at different stages and running until July, will provide discussion and support around the new syllabus. Information about support for secondary schools will also be distributed via academy trusts.

3.5 NASACRE training & support

Regular information is received from SACRE and distributed. SACRE members have attended NASACRE online workshops on monitoring and using data effectively.

4 National guidance: centralisation & local determination

4.1 RE National Content Standard

Nigel Fancourt explained that this agenda item had been prompted by questions raised by Steve Beegoo about some increasingly centralising tendencies within the RE world, notably towards a worldviews approach, and which were manifested in the National Content Standards as noted by the November SACRE meeting. The item could be readdressed once Steve Beegoo could attend. Bill Moore explained the purpose of the Standards, and the Chair pointed to a tension between the principle of local determination, in the current and preceding legislation, and centralisation by various softer policy documents, including this document as well as Ofsted guidance, or the RE Commission's 2018 report. SACRE was not averse to these documents and had drawn on some of these for the recent agreed syllabus. A short discussion ensued about the importance of being aware of both the principle of localism and the value of drawing on more central documents when appropriate.

4.2 Ofsted Annual Report 2022-23 [circulated]

The report was noted.

4.3 NASACRE Briefing January 2024 [circulated]

The briefing was noted.

4.4 SACRE Annual Report 2022-23 [circulated]

- Bill Moore advised that the report sets out the approach of this SACRE and needs to be clear as to which national views and potential changes have been taken on board. It will therefore be important to clarify the nature of the documents discussed under 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3 and how SACRE will be responding to them, recognising both that there is a range of views in the RE world and that Ofsted considers there is an issue to be resolved. It was agreed to return to this

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discussion when any governmental changes are known following the General Election.

- Use of the term “world views” in the report will be checked to ensure clarity and consistency.
- Any further comments on the draft report will be submitted to Bill Moore by 8th March.
- **Action: Bill Moore will circulate the final draft report.**

5 Operational planning

5.1 Review of SACRE activities 2023-24 & progress of 3-year plan

- The document was discussed. Highlighted progress was noted, showing that SACRE has successfully met most of its aims. It was agreed that the format of the document is clear and sufficient details has been provided. This document also provides a useful track record of how SACRE has made use of the funding provided.
- Sam Bartholomew emphasised the importance of ensuring that outcomes are specified as precisely as possible although some things are hard to measure. It will also be essential to ensure that the new plan shows how SACRE spending has impacted teaching of RE in Oxfordshire.

5.2 Draft plan 2024-25: The document was discussed.

- SACRE has a responsibility to monitor collective worship and to provide support and training. It has not yet been possible to obtain an overview of what is happening in schools and moving these activities forward will either require more RE Advisor time or discontinuation of something else.
- Regarding provision of support for the Agreed Syllabus, it will be useful to understand where schools are regarding implementation. Initial research can be completed using websites and followed up with questionnaires.
- Use of the newsletter as the best way of getting information to teachers was queried. Nigel Fancourt clarified that the newsletter is sent by email and not physical copy. Bill Moore explained that REFocus is a helpful way of providing a lot of different information at once, and it is supplemented by the teachers’ Facebook group. The schools’ intranet will be updated with various materials so that all documentation is in one place and easy for teachers to access.
- It will be necessary to examine the RE Advisor time allocation for the listed items and to add some further details, following which any additional time or other adjustments to complete the necessary work can be considered.
- More detail will be added to the outcomes section to show how completing these things will make a difference to children in schools.
- Once all required items are budgeted clearly and there is sufficient clarity about what they entail and the timeframe for completion, consideration can be given to a request for additional contingency funding to ensure that SACRE can meet its statutory obligations.
- **Action: Members will provide any further comments to Bill Moore and Nigel Fancourt by 21st March.**
- **Action: Sam Bartholomew and Bill Moore will examine the outcomes and adjust where appropriate.**
- **Action: Bill Moore will circulate an updated document in advance of the June SACRE meeting, for approval at the meeting.**

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6 AOB & updates from members

- SACRE noted with regret the end of the Interfaith Network following withdrawal of government funding.
- It was agreed that Helen Norman will attend the NASACRE Conference and report to the June meeting.
- Dr Ramzy introduced the work of ,Stop Human Trafficking Worldwide, and asked that the organisation's work be brought to the attention of schools. Bill Moore advised that RE at secondary level will include these concerns and schools can be sign-posted to useful supporting information if weblinks are provided.

8 Next meeting

- The next meeting will take place at 4.00 pm on Monday 10th June.
It was agreed that whilst it is desirable to ensure the visible presence of SACRE within the local authority, there is also value in visiting other establishments and areas, and it was agreed to look at a suitable school or worship venue with hybrid meeting facilities.
- **Action: Bill Moore will complete some enquiries and advise meeting arrangements.**

Nigel Fancourt thanked everyone for their attendance and input and closed the meeting at 5:45 pm.