

Swindon Borough Council

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education

Tuesday, 24 November 2020

Public Virtual Meeting – Live Stream

At 6.00 p.m.

**Group A:
Christian Denominations and
Other Religions or Religious
Denominations**

Malkit Babbra, Sikh Community
Jo Backus, Buddhist Community
David Burbidge, Baptist Church
Claire-Marie Burchall, Roman Catholic Community
Atiff Ghafar, Muslim Community
Reverend David Howell, Swindon Evangelical Alliance
Michelle Howard, United Reformed Church
Dinesh Patel, Hindu Community

**Group B:
The Church of England**

Reverend Clive Deverell
Reverend Norma McKemey
Ruth Williams

**Group C:
Teacher Associations**

Tracy Mason, NEU
Helen Redhead NEU
Lottie O'Brien, NASUWT
Emma McCarthy, NASUWT

**Group D:
The Local Authority**

Councillor Matthew Courtliff
Councillor Fay Howard
Councillor Oladapo Ibitoye
Councillor Garry Perkins
Councillor Bazil Solomon

Co-Opted:

Jo Garton, Swindon Humanists
Fidelma Meehan, Baha'i Community

Support Officers:

Katy Staples, SACRE Advisor
Gareth Cheal, Education Place Planning and Admissions Manager
Steve Bogg, Commissioner for Education

Committee Officer: Rita Glen Gallo, 07980 752051; email: rglen-galo@swindon.gov.uk
Swindon Borough Council can be contacted at the Civic Offices, Euclid Street, Swindon,
SN1 2JH (Telephone 01793 445500)

AGENDA

1. Note:

The link for the public session of the meeting is here:

[SACRE Meeting – 24th November 2020](#)

This link will only work from 6.00 p.m. on 24th November 2020.

For help on viewing the meeting, please visit: [Support Office](#) Please note that if Members resolve to go in to a private and confidential discussion the public link will be closed.

2. Apologies for Absence

3. Declarations of Interest

Members are reminded that at the start of the meeting they should declare any known interests in any matter to be considered, and also during the meeting if it becomes apparent that they have an interest in the matters being discussed.

4. Public Question Time

See explanatory note below. Please phone the Committee Officer whose name and number appears at the top of this agenda if you need further guidance.

5. Chair's Announcements

6. Minutes (Pages 5 - 10)

To receive the minutes of the meeting held on 2nd July 2020.

7. Matters Arising

To review matters arising and matters not taken forward due to the coronavirus.

8. Agreed syllabus review process (Pages 11 - 12)

- a) Verbal report on initial conversations about the cost or renewing the license for the Agreed Syllabus with RE Today Services
- b) Update on where we are and a new proposed timeline for the Agreed Syllabus Review Process

9. Collective Worship/ Assemblies under current restrictions (Pages 13 - 18)

Suggested support paper to offer schools. Group to discuss.

10. National Updates for RE (Pages 19 - 22)

What are the issues for SACRE to consider?

11. Feedback from online RE Hub meeting held on 10th November 2020

Topic Agreed Syllabus, Black Lives Matter and Religious Education.

12. Date and Time of the Next Meeting

The next meeting of the SACRE is on 16th March 2021 at 6.00 p.m.

Date of Despatch: 15 November 2020

Public Question Time - Swindon Borough Council remains committed to increasing its accountability to the public and to promoting active citizenship. 15 minutes will be allowed at the start of all Council meetings for questions to the Chair from the public about the work of the Committee (except for confidential matters, and matters relating to planning and licensing applications). We will give priority to those who submit questions in writing at least two days before the meeting. Questions must be relevant, clear, and concise. You may not use Public Question Time as an opportunity to make speeches or statements.

The deadline for public questions is: 15:00 on Friday, 20th November 2020.

Questions in writing should be sent to the Committee Officer whose contact details appear on the agenda above or to the Chief Legal Officer, we will publish it, along with the answer, alongside the Minutes. The process associated with asking a public question is set out in the "[Public Question Time at Council Meetings Protocol and Guidance](#)", which is available on the Council website or from the Committee Officer named above.

A privacy note about how we record Public Questions is available here: [Publication of public questions and questioners.](#)

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STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2020

PRESENT:-

Group A: Christian Denominations and Other Religions or Religious Denominations	Jo Backus (Buddhist Community) David Burbidge (Baptist Church) Clare-Marie Burchall (Roman Catholic Community) Reverend David Howell (Swindon Evangelical Alliance)
Group B: Church of England	Ruth Williams
Group C: Teacher Organisations	Emma McCarthy Tracy Mason Helen Redhead
Group D: Councillors	Councillor Basil Solomon

Also in attendance: Katy Staples (SACRE Advisor), Gareth Cheal (Education Place Planning and Admissions Manager), Sarah Stewart (Head of Religious Education at the Deanery Academy).

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Fay Howard, Matthew Courtliff, Carol Shelley, Roger Smith, Oladapo Ibitoye and Garry Perkins. Michelle Howard, Reverend Clive Deverell, Reverend Norma McKemey, Malkit Babbra, Dinesh Patel, Lottie O'Brien, Fidelma Meehan, Atiff Ghafar and Jo Garton.

22. The Chair's Announcements

In the absence of the Chair, the Vice-Chair (Emma McCarthy) took the Chair.

23. Declarations of Interest

The Chair reminded Members of the need to declare any known interest in any matters to be considered at the meeting. No declarations were made.

24. Public Question Time

There were no public questions.

25. Presentation from Sarah Stewart about RE at The Deanery CE Academy

The Chair welcomed members of SACRE to the Deanery Church of England Academy and advised this was the last meeting of this Municipal year. She introduced Ms Sarah Stewart, Head of Religious Education at The Deanery, Church of England Academy. Ms Stewart gave a presentation and drew attention to the

implementation of Key Stage 3 religious education at the Deanery. She advised that topics included a mixture of Christianity topics and exploring different world views.

She spoke about her experiences and challenges as the Head of RE at a new Academy. As the school had twenty five feeder schools, the pupils starting at the Deanery in Year 7 held a wide range of different religious views and understanding.

Ms Stewart confirmed that currently, part of her remit included teaching RE and English but with the next intake in September 2020, she would be leading solely on RE at the school. She circulated pupil's RE workbooks for members to review the work they were undertaking and advised that, as part of their "Enrichment" work, pupils also had to complete on-line knowledge organisers.

The Chair thanked Ms Stewart for her informative presentation.

26. Minutes

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 26th November 2019 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

27. Matters Arising not on the agenda

Mr David Howell confirmed that he was now representing Good News 4 Swindon. He advised that Good News 4 Swindon now represented 30 churches with a strong focus on working to serve the local community.

28. Draft SACRE Annual Report 2018/19

The SACRE received its draft Annual Report covering the period September 2018 to August 2019.

The Annual Report provided information in relation to the following areas:

- Introduction to SACRE
- Funding and administration issues
- Introduction to the SACRE Advisor including a synopsis of her work.
- Agreed Syllabus for RE in Swindon
- Support for schools
- Key events during the academic year 2018/19
- Support for schools through Governor training
- Monitoring of RE provision in Swindon schools
- Attendance by SACRE members at outside events
- Membership
- Funding and administration issues
- Meetings held
- Examination results data

In considering the Annual Report, the SACRE agreed to:

- a) Include further information regarding the monitoring of schools' website for RE content
- b) Include names of the schools that received the WIRE award during the 2018/19 scholastic year.
- c) Review membership list to reflect the departure of Norma McKenny from the SACRE after twenty four years of supporting the group and advise on work being undertaken to find her replacement.
- d) Review data statistics pertaining to St Joseph's Catholic College.

Resolved – 1) That the draft SACRE Annual Report is approved, subject to the amendments as stated above.

2) That the SACRE Advisor be authorised to finalise the report and to submit it to the National Association of SACREs (NASACRE).

3) That the draft Annual Report be forwarded to the Children's Health, Social Care and Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee and all schools and academies in Swindon to heighten the awareness within the Council of the work of Swindon SACRE.

29. Annual Report - Actions for the new Development Plan

The SACRE Advisor confirmed that the Swindon SACRE Development Plan 2020/21 was due to be updated to take into account the suggested vision statement and goals for Swindon SACRE. The points to be reviewed were:

- a) Improving standards in RE.
- b) Ensuring the effective management of the SACRE and partnership with the LA and other key stakeholders.
- c) Monitor schools' provision for the RE and Collective Worship as well as the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils.
- d) Encourage schools, academies and colleges to celebrate religious and cultural diversity found in Swindon.

The SACRE divided into groups and considered the vision statements and analysed each of the four goals in relation to the Key Performance Indicators and action required. The SACRE then received feedback from each Group. This included the following:

- Requesting members of the Senior Leadership Team to attend a SACRE meeting.
- Promotion of Governors training across schools.
- Improving the relationship with academies.
- The need to encourage take up of the WIRE award.
- Improve website scrutiny

The SACRE Advisor confirmed that the information provided would be collated into a workable draft Development Plan.

Resolved - That the SACRE Advisor collates the points raised and responses received in relation to the draft Development Plan 2020-21 and produce a workable draft document for further consideration at the next meeting in June 2020.

30. Agreed Syllabus Review 2021 - Suggested timeframe

The SACRE Advisor stated that since it was five years since the adoption of the Agreed RE Syllabus, this would have to be reviewed by July 2021. She set out details of how the Agreed Syllabus should be reviewed.

The SACRE Advisor highlighted the proposed procedure and timetable for the review and explained that the new Syllabus should be complete and ready for use in schools by September 2021. She referred to the process to be undertaken over the next five school terms that included:

- Securing a budget for the legal obligation and to fund the process of an Agreed Syllabus review.
- Circulate a survey regarding the current Agreed Syllabus to schools.
- After June 2020 SACRE meeting, convene an Agreed Syllabus Committee (ASC).
- ASC to review responses.
- Determine level of support needed by schools.

The SACRE Advisor confirmed that the review would include the establishment of a Steering Group that would analyse the current Agreed Syllabus in relation to national, regional and local developments, consultation and development of appropriate materials for Swindon. Once the appropriate approvals had been agreed, any new materials would be uploaded to a suitable website with publicity and training for teachers.

Resolved – 1) That the proposed procedure and timetable for the review of the Agreed Syllabus be agreed.

2) That a Steering Group be established at the next SACRE meeting.

3) That the results of the Agreed Syllabus survey of schools in Swindon be considered at the next meeting.

31. Website Reviews - Round 2

The SACRE Advisor referenced to the annual review of website to be undertaken and proposed that the Red, Amber, Green (RAG) system was utilised to determine the amount of RE content on schools' website, with "Green" sites having comprehensive information. She thanked those SACRE members who reviewed schools' websites last year to determine RE content and referred to the feedback she received from schools and how the RE profile was enhanced.

The SACRE Advisor asked for volunteers to review the schools and rate them using the RAG system (guidance and criteria attached to minutes). The Committee discussed the criteria and content of the letters pertaining to each criteria as reviewed utilising the RAG system and agreed that they should be sent out to Headteachers with the Chair of Governors also being made aware of the review.

Resolved – That, at the next meeting of the SACRE, the SACRE Advisor be requested to update members on the proposed timeline for undertaking the website reviews.

32.

Verbal Feedback

The SACRE Advisor referred to the agenda that included written feedback from the Bristol and Gloucestershire SACRE Teachers Conference that was held on the 31st January 2020. Members at the meeting who attended the conference all agreed that it was a positive and very informative experience providing them with ideas to adopt at their schools.

Jo Backus gave verbal feedback on the Dillington Conference. She confirmed that it was a constructive session that included discussions on how the curriculum was monitored, tracking student learning trajectories and the implementation of the Ofsted framework and its inspection regime.

The Chair confirmed that a high number of primary and secondary teachers had signed up to attend the Hub meeting on 19th March 2020. It was noted that due to the Covid-19 outbreak, the meeting might be postponed. It was further noted that all those confirming attendance would be advised if the meeting was to be postponed. Topics to be discussed included the Ofsted framework – implementation and impact. Members noted that this years' Learn, Teach, Lead RE (LTLRE) conference was to be held on 26th June 2020.

33.

Training Offers

The SACRE Advisor confirmed that a training sessions entitled, "Making Assemblies Work: Character Development at the Centre" would be held at the Deanery CE Academy on the 5th May. (Poster attached to minutes).

34.

Date and Time of the Next Meeting

Resolved - That the timetable of meetings of the SACRE in 2020/21 would be:

- 21st July 2020
- 24th November 2020
- 16th March 2021

Members of the SACRE were asked to suggest venues or indicate where this and future meetings of the Panel should be held.

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Agreed Syllabus Review Process

SACRE has an obligation to review its Agreed Syllabus and to convene an Agreed Syllabus Working Party every 5 years.

We have to review our agreed syllabus for 2021

Revised Timeline due to Covid

Dates	Actions	Person Responsible	RAG
Term 2 2020/21	Secure sufficient budget to allow for the legal obligation and to fund the process of an Agreed Syllabus Review	Katy Staples Steve Bogg	
November 2020	At SACRE meeting agree who would like to sit on an Agreed Syllabus Working Party (ASWP) establish dates	Katy Staples Volunteers	
Term 2 2020/21	Send a Survey (using Google) to all school in the Swindon area - asking for responses to the current Agreed Syllabus	Person responsible Katy Staples - please e-mail katy.staples@bristoldiocese.org if you do not have a copy of the current agreed syllabus	
Term 3 2020/21	ASWP meets To review responses from Survey Ascertain what needs to be done within budget Talk through the possible actions	Katy Staples and ASWP Make recommendations for ASC	

Term 4 2020/21 Following March SACRE meeting an ASC meets	Make final decisions and decide whether any further support is needed for schools (ASC meeting after a shorter SACRE meeting)	ASC	
Terms 5 and 6 2021 Term 1 and 2 2021/22	Offer any training needed to schools	through hubs and Conference	



Guidance for Community Primary Schools about Assembly / Collective Worship for Schools during the Coronavirus

'Groups should be kept apart, meaning that schools should avoid large gatherings such as Collective Worship or Assemblies with more than one group.'

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools#A>

The paramount responsibility for all schools at this time must be the health and wellbeing of pupils, staff and families so avoiding whole school or large group Assemblies and Collective Worship is important.

Why still hold Assemblies/ Collective Worship?

One of the main tools for creating the common purpose of school has been through Assemblies/ Collective Worship. To totally abandon that vehicle for communicating expectation, hope and values due to a prohibition on large gatherings would seem a folly.

Some of the purposes of assemblies are so pupils can be given

- *a daily collective activity which can recognise and emphasise common values, aspirations and commitments*
- *give time to breathe, offering space and stillness before, during or at the end of a hectic and pressured day to be oneself, to reflect or just to sit at rest;*
- *help to feel part of a spirit of community in a school, year group or class;*
- *ways to navigate the joys and sorrows of those present, those local to the school, and the joys and sorrows of national and international news, to be reflected upon and shared in a way which is otherwise not possible in school;*

Surely all of these are of important to pupils in school during this pandemic.

So what can schools do to still hold Assembly/ Collective Worship during this time?

How can they ensure that pupils still feel part of the school family; having time to be inspired, to reflect, pray and understand expectations of behaviour and achievement to help them re-settle?

Groupings for Collective Worship

Statutory legal guidance about Collective Worship states that any groupings already in place within a school can be used for Collective Worship – traditionally, this has been interpreted to mean the whole school, key stage groups, year groups and individual class groups. In the present circumstances, other groupings such as ‘bubbles’/ ‘pods’ formed by schools to manage appropriate social distancing could also be included in this list.

This is in accordance with the legislation (Schedule 20 of the School Standards & Framework Act 1998) which states that:

(2) The arrangements for the required collective worship may, in respect of each school day, provide for a single act of worship for all pupils or for separate acts of worship for pupils in different age groups or in different school groups.

(3) For the purposes of sub-paragraph (2) a “school group” is any group in which pupils are taught or take part in other school activities.

The DfE view is that this gives schools a lot of flexibility to conduct CW in any grouping that they think appropriate, including ‘bubbles’ or ‘pods’.

One suggested model - which schools can adapt or pick from:

Monday – All bubbles participate at the same time, in a pre-recorded/ live streamed service led by the Headteacher or a member of SLT to establish the theme or message for the week. This will include an inspirational story, a time to reflect and draw meaning, and a challenge to take into the week.

Tuesday - This may be a music focussed worship that echoes the value or theme, and a discussion about the meaning of the chosen style, the lyrics, any accompanying pictures and what difference it might make to someone’s life if they believed and lived-out the lyrics. If the school is not holding a music focussed assembly - then this may be a teacher/TA led class assembly exploring the theme / value started the day before by a member of SLT. Pupils can re-cap and discuss the story thinking about what this means for them and reflecting on how they could live it out. Having an assembly focus area with a candle and some stones / elements of nature can aid pupils’ concentration for the reflection aspect of assembly.

Wednesday - This could be an in-class assembly if there was a music based assembly the day before - or again it might be a continuation of the assembly from the day before with an activity to help explore the theme and reflect. Many ideas can be found here:

https://www.prayerspacesinschools.com/search/resources?name=&theme_id=4&tags=0

Or it might be a day where you practise a class meditation or a group examen. You can adapt these materials easily (examen at end of resources list):

<https://www.bristol.anglican.org/content/pages/documents/15891870491060333105.pdf>

Thursday – This could be a service offered by a local member of the community - it could be live streamed or filmed beforehand. If your local church or religious community is not in a position to offer this sort of support, you are welcome to use those below if they seem appropriate.

They are YouTube clips of worship made by Father Malcolm Strange and his wife Jo who serve in Winterbourne and Frampton Cotterell. They have been kindly filming these for their local schools and will continue to do so until it seems no longer necessary.

<https://www.youtube.com/user/DioceseofBristol/videos>

<https://bristol.anglican.org/coronavirus-covid19-resources-for-schools/>

Friday - This could be the Celebration assembly as it is in many Primary Schools in 'normal time'. This can be done within classes with certificates / awards for achievement/ effort and living out the value or theme. It might be a combination of Headteacher/ SLT streaming / filming and the physical giving out of awards by the class teacher. There should be a story and a reflection as well and a thanksgiving and celebration for the week and all that has happened.

<https://bristolsacre.org.uk/site/collective-worship-2/collective-worship-documents/>

has further ideas and support for Assemblies - a full list of helpful websites is at the back of the full guidance document

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Words for Class Assembly -

Greeting

Leader/ Teacher: Peace be with you

Children: And also with you

Leader: We light the candle as we think about

Children: How we can all let our lights shine

Leader: We look at the flowers

Children: To remind us of the beauty of the world

Leader: We gaze on the shells and the driftwood

Children: To remind us of the power of the sea

Leader : We remember our story of the week as we look at this picture/object

Children: To help us think about our lives and the lives of others

Engagement

Leader/ Teacher: What can you remember from the main assembly this week?

What were the themes? What was the story? What happened?

Why do you think we had *that* story if this is our focus this term?

What lessons can we learn from the story?

Were there any questions you had about the story?

What advice might you give (a certain character) in the story ?

Scribe / collect any wise comments in a Class assemblies and spiritual development book.



Response

Reflection time

Time of quiet to think how you can live out the message from the story in the next day and week

Can use extra prompt questions or just gong / bell... and silence (depending on class capacity).

How would you feel if you were In the story

Have you ever

Imagine someoneasking you....doing to yousaying to you ...how would you feel ...how would you respond. What might you do now having heard and thought about that story?

SENDING OUT

Leader:

Our reflective time today is over

Children

Our living out what we have learnt now begins.

(Ring the chime Blow out the candle and pack everything away)



National Updates for RE for November 2020 SACRE Meeting



The central concern for all involved in Religious Education at a National Level at this time is the implementation of the recommendations found in the CoRE report.

Especially a working out of a shared understanding of the term “worldviews” and what that means for the teaching of “Religion and Worldviews” in the classroom.

You can find the report and its summary [here](#)



The Religious Education Council (REC) which commissioned the CoRE report has also commissioned a multidisciplinary academic literature review on the worldview concept it is available [here](#)

A follow-up project to provide guidance for syllabus writers in SACREs has been tendered and RE Today services have been selected to write that guidance.

The REC also reports that GCSE Religious Studies has proven its relevance as entries hold firm in 2020

The A-Level entries compared well against other humanities in 2020

There is a new Welsh RE Curriculum proposed that has finished its consultation and is to be called “Religion Values and Ethics” (RVE) and may become the legal requirement to be taught in all Welsh schools from 2022.

The REC’s response to the proposals can be found [here](#)

Support for teachers and those interested in the teaching of Religious Education (Religion and Worldviews)



Culham St Gabriel are a charitable organisation that funds projects and programmes to support teachers of RE , both in boosting subject knowledge and pedagogical expertise and also in supporting research projects and provides some bursaries details of their projects and programmes can be found [here](#)



Farmington Fellowship Scholarships also offer awards for teachers and headteachers to undertake a research project that will release them from teaching for the equivalent of 30 days and offer them a University tutor to support them in their studies. The closing date for applications is the 31st January 2021 and details of how to apply can be found [here](#)

New Materials for schools from Free Churches and NATRE (National Association of Teachers of RE)



The Free Churches of UK funded NATRE to write materials for all schools to have access to Anti-Racist RE. There are a suite of 6 lessons for Primary Schools (UKS2) and Secondary Schools. All these materials can be found [here](#)



Don't forget to check out the titles of themes for the 2021 Spirited Arts Competition when they go live in January. In the meantime you can check out the quality of the winning entries from previous years [here](#)



Another great resource available from NATRE which has been written through a NASACRE Westhill Project by Newham SACRE is an anti-religious bullying toolkit. This tackles an issue sometimes neglected by schools in their anti-bullying work. That is bullying on the grounds of religion or apparent religion. These materials can be found [here](#)



NASACRE (National association of SACRES) has written a statement about Black Lives Matter and Religious Education which is worth considering for our future support for schools and in our decisions regarding our new agreed syllabus. This can be found [here](#)

Katy Staples

November 2020

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