

**OXFORDSHIRE  
STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

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**Minutes of the Oxfordshire SACRE Meeting  
held online, Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> June 2022 at 4:00 pm**

**Present:** [SD = standing deputy]

**Committee A: World Faiths, Christian Denominations**  
Sheikh Ramzy

**Committee B: Church of England**  
Helen Norman

**Committee C: Teacher representatives**  
Nigel Fancourt [Chair]  
Rae Hancock

**Committee D: Local Authority**  
Councillor Bob Johnston  
Councillor Nigel Simpson

**Co-opted Members**  
Margaret Godden  
Arzhia Habibi

**In attendance:**  
Helen Batten (Clerk)  
Bill Moore (RE Advisor)  
Jane Ratcliffe (Local Authority)

**Apologies:**  
Giles Beck (A-SD)  
Steve Beegoo (A)  
Christian McGuinness (C)  
Christine Price-Smith (B)

## **1 Introduction**

- NF welcomed everyone to the meeting and quorum was confirmed.
- Apologies received were accepted.
- No substantive items of AOB had been notified.

## **2 Chairman's comments**

On behalf of SACRE, NF noted with sadness the recent death of Carol Worthington, Church of England representative, which had been announced since the March meeting. Carol enjoyed a varied career in science and education, and was still engaged in various professional projects up until her death. She had been a valued and active member of SACRE for approximately six years.

### **3 Minutes of 3<sup>rd</sup> March & matters arising**

- Minutes were approved without amendment.
- Agreed actions were complete, or would be covered by the current agenda.

### **4 SACRE strategic planning**

#### **4.1 Self-evaluation exercise**

BM presented the introduction, NASACRE guidance and self-evaluation framework that had been circulated. The meeting then split into groups to consider the self-evaluation questions. Following discussion covered some specific issues and general points arising:

- The disruption of the pandemic has been profound, most obviously in the delay of the new agreed syllabus, but it has also reduced the progress SACRE has made in other areas.
- Many areas are weak, and it will be essential to have a clear vision for SACRE, supported by a costed development plan to achieve what it needs to do.
- To increase SACRE effectiveness, further consideration of its membership, structure and meeting arrangements will be required.
- Meetings are most effective when other work such as information gathering is taking place in between, and for SACRE to make progress it will be helpful to also consider whether more use should be made of committees or working groups.
- Further consideration should be given to clarifying the expectations of the SACRE voluntary role, and provision of appropriate training.
- Effective engagement with schools presents a number of challenges due to increasing academisation, lack of capacity both in schools and in SACRE, and lack of clarity around channels of communication. Fundamental to improving engagement will be increasing the visibility of SACRE in schools, so that its role is understood and seen to be important.
- As well as RE provision, SACRE also needs to have a better understanding of collective worship in schools – what it looks like currently and how SACRE can support delivery of an inclusive and valuable experience for all children.

Post-meeting all groups will complete the section they discussed, based on whether the criteria are being met, and including identified barriers and successes and ideas for development. It is anticipated that the self-evaluation will be quite poor overall, but this will give a clear view of what needs to be done.

**4.2 SACRE development plan:** NF, BM and JR will use the completed self-evaluation exercise to create a costed development plan. This will need to be presented to OCC so support a request for funding, and will be brought to the autumn meeting for formal approval by SACRE.

**Action: BM and JR will liaise to move forward the production of the costed SACRE plan.**

**4.3 OCC strategic plan:** The OCC Strategic Plan 2022-25 and Learning & School Improvement Team Vision Statement had been circulated. BM confirmed that the SACRE plan will link into these strategic priorities and show how SACRE activities

support delivery of the Authority's aims. This aspect is also included in the self-assessment.

## **5 Monitoring school websites**

BM thanked members who have completed website monitoring, adding that SACRE does not yet know enough about schools to comment on the strength of RE or collective worship and this work is an important part of gathering that information.

**Action: BM will contact members individually as required to complete website monitoring.**

## **6 Supporting schools to teach RE**

BM explained that SACRE will be linking to the Oxfordshire Teaching Schools Alliance (OTSA) to help provide appropriate professional development for Oxfordshire teachers. This will also be a useful way of raising the profile of RE with head teachers and governing bodies, the aim being that all schools understand the importance of RE and want to teach it well. This will also link effectively to the introduction of the new Agreed Syllabus.

## **7 2022 Schools White Paper**

The summary provided by the National Governance Association had been circulated for information. NF advised that SACRE needs to be aware of the direction of travel set out in the government document, and consider the implications of some anticipated changes. Implementation may also provide an opportunity to consider some statutory changes in the provision of RE.

## **8 RETHink Report Card**

The Report Card had been circulated. BM commented that it provides a useful context to help SACRE to set its vision, and well-illustrates some of the issues that have been discussed. How to share this information most usefully will require further consideration, but in the meantime members were encouraged to forward the document informally as appropriate.

## **9 AOB**

A member suggested that in view of current concerns since about children's mental health, and since RE can be helpful in framing some concerns and opening up discussions, it would be good to promote this aspect more. NF confirmed that this can be considered further in the new syllabus.

## **10 SACRE meeting dates 2022-23**

- The next meeting will take place on Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> November, at 4.00 pm, at County Hall.

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- Subsequent meetings will be scheduled for weeks commencing 20<sup>th</sup> February and 5<sup>th</sup> June, dates and venues to be confirmed.

NF thanked everyone for their attendance and input and closed the meeting at 5:40 pm.