

Public Document Pack

Nottingham City Council

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE)

Minutes of the meeting held at

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCt4VuYp8JJvXCLRmSRJ1mw/featured> - To be held remotely and streamed on 20 July 2023 from 4.36 pm - 5.24 pm

ATTENDANCE (✓ indicates present)

GROUP A - Representatives of Christian denominations and other religions/faith

	Martin Bennett	Salvation Army
	Mark Bennett	Methodist Church
	Moira Dales	Roman Catholic
	Krishna Dasi	Director of Hinduism Education Services
✓	Chris Richards	Humanist
	Deb Martin	Quaker
	Hafiz M Muntazir	Islam
	Bishop James Stapleton	African Caribbean Churches
	Pvail Singh	Sikhism
✓	Norman Randall	Jewish
	Ioakeim Oureilidis	Greek Orthodox
	Dr Ifran Malik	Ahmadiyya Muslim Association

GROUP B - Church of England representatives (6)

✓	Andrea Burrows	Lowdham Primary
	Allison Milbank	University of Nottingham - Theology & Religious Studies
	Anne Lumb	Southwell and Nottingham Diocese
		Vacancy
		Vacancy

GROUP C - Teacher representatives (6)

✓	Sarah Peek	St Stephen's Primary
✓	Louise Regan	National Education Union
	Jonathan Rodriguez	Bluecoat Aspley
✓	David Wand	UNISON
		Vacancy
		Vacancy

GROUP D - Elected City Council representatives

✓	Councillor Cheryl Barnard	Bulwell Forest Ward
✓	Councillor David Mellen	Dales Ward
✓	Councillor Angela Kandola	Berridge Ward
	Councillor Neghat Khan	Dales Ward
✓	<i>Cllr Farzanna Mahmood</i>	<i>to be formally confirmed</i>
✓	<i>Cllr Sajid Mohammed</i>	<i>to be formally confirmed</i>

Others in Attendance

Heidi Shewell-Cooper	- SACRE Lead Officer
Nick Lee	- Director of Education
Catherine Ziane-Pryor	- Governance Officer

1 Apologies for absence

Martyn Bennett,
Anne Lumb,
Alison Milbank,
Father Ioakeim Oureilidis,
Pvail Singh.

2 Declarations of Interest

None.

3 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 28 January 2021 and 16 June 2021 (as an informal meeting), were agreed as a true record.

4 The Role of SACRE

Councillor Cheryl Barnard, Chair of the Advisory Council and Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People and Education, was accompanied by SACRE Lead Officer Heidi Shewell-Cooper, and delivered a brief training presentation by the National Association of Standing Advisory Councils for Religious Education (NASACRE) about SACRE and outlining the role of members.

A copy of the presentation is issued with the initial publication of the minutes.

Points highlighted and questions from those in attendance were responded to as follows:

- a) SACRE is part of local government and advises the Local Authority (LA) on matters related to Religious Education (RE) and collective worship (CW) in schools;
- b) Every LA must have a SACRE which meets sufficiently often to fulfil its statutory duties. There has been a gap in meetings which are now fully reinstated to ensure that the Council does meet these statutory duties;
- c) Most SACREs meet three times year, which fits well with the academic terms;
- d) The statutory duties of SACRE include:
 - i. Advising the LA on matters related to the agreed syllabus, RE and CW;
 - ii. Publishing an annual report of the work of the SACRE, which is also submitted to the Secretary of State;
 - iii. With the exception of confidential material, the SACRE meets in public and the minutes of those meetings are made publicly available. It is proposed that this SACRE revert to meeting in person, rather than virtually, and at religious and educational sites across the City;

- iv. To consider determinations (appeals) by schools which wish to modify the legal requirement for the majority of acts of CW to be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character. Nottingham City is yet to receive an appeal for determination;
- e) An effective SACRE should:
- i. Monitor the delivery and quality of the agreed syllabus and CW, and provide advice to schools where necessary;
 - ii. Advise the LA on the provision of training of religious education teachers;
 - iii. Consider complaints referred by the LA regarding RE and CW;
 - iv. Consider if changes need to be made to the agreed syllabus and provide advice to the LA with regard to the agreed syllabus and its implementation;
- f) A SACRE may:
- i. Require the LA to review its agreed syllabus. It is noted that the City and County SACRE has jointly reviewed and established the agreed syllabus, which is not now due for scheduled review until 2026;
 - ii. Co-opt individuals to provide educational expertise, gather the views of young people and children, or religious and non-religious views that reflect a diverse multi-cultural society;
- g) SACREs consist of four groupings of representatives:
- i. GROUP A - Christian (but not Church of England) and other faiths as reflect the principal religious traditions in Nottingham;
 - ii. GROUP B - Church of England;
 - iii. GROUP C - Teachers, including two teachers of religious education, at least one being a primary school teacher;
 - iv. GROUP D - Elected members of Nottingham City Council.

5 Training Video

Nottingham City Council has previously been a member of the National Association of Standing Advisory Councils for Religious Education (NASACRE) which is a fabulous source of information and advice and provides some interesting training opportunities. The LA will rejoin to support the work of SACRE. Members of SACRE are encouraged to take advantage of the resources available. The training film, with further detail, and membership access details to the NASACRE website will be circulated to SACRE members separately.

Confirmation will be sought as to whether LA schools are eligible for access to the site and training.

6 Future meeting dates and Work Plan

Comments from members included:

- a) SACRE and its constitution were determined more than 25 years ago. It is questionable whether the Church of England should have a separate category whilst all other non-Church of England Christians and other faith, non-faith groups have to share a category. Central government revision of these categories would be welcome. It is important that the local constitution aligns with the up-to-date city demographic to properly reflect our communities;
- b) It seems unusual to have a religious education curriculum which all school is must agree when they have a national curriculum for other subjects which they can then interpret. The time of the LA telling schools what to do is long gone, so this committee should be used for the widest possible discussion, not just for religious education, but the broader issues for a city of such diversity, specifically guarding against hate, for which religious education is vitally important;
- c) This SACRE need to focus on community cohesion and how to assist schools;
- d) Members of this forum could decide how active they want to be in the national discussion and dialogue on these issues, particularly if there are members who would be willing to take part in additional work in this area, it would be the best way of effecting change;
- e) The reconvening of the City SACRE after a gap is very much welcomed, and a revitalisation to include representation through the SACRE of the broad diversity of the City's population is supported, including those with no religious views;
- f) It is appreciated that the structure of SACREs is set in legislation and that a revision by Central Government is unlikely, so we must work with what we have;
- g) We need to work with and around the legislative requirements, but as a local SACRE, ensure that there is appropriate representation for the different voices. This could be included in the future work plan;
- h) Meeting 3 times a year is a good approach, but we must ensure that meeting dates don't clash with any religious festivals, as this has previously caused issues;
- i) Due to an increase in anti-Semitic and religiously motivated attacks, there is a need for additional security if the Synagogue is to host a future meeting. This is a broader issue for places of worship and education, particularly when religious organisations are opening up their areas of sanctuary. Further investigation of security mechanisms need to be examined and determined prior to the next in-person meeting;
- j) Many city schools and multi-academy trusts are seeking to further diversify their teaching staff to better represent the diversity of children in their communities, through promotion through community groups. For example, for any opportunities with the Archway Learning Trust (a Trust supporting several academies with the Church of

England ethos) contact Head of HR or CEO) Home - Archway Learning Trust (archwaytrust.co.uk);

- k) The department of Education is supporting some teacher recruitment work in the City facilitated by Nottingham Citizens with the Karima Institute and the Majority Black Led Churches/God's Vineyard Ministries. It is anticipated that some teacher recruitment sessions will run in the autumn term. This is supported by all the Local Initial Teacher Training Providers, working collaboratively on grass-roots led recruitment. Members welcomed these actions.

Actions:

Heidi Shewell-Cooper:

- To contact NASCRE to;
 - i. determine if NASCRE RE training material and access to the website can be shared with member Authority schools;
 - ii. identify what provision may be available to expand the membership groupings to more broadly incorporate the diversity of the City's populations and religions following;
- In advance of the next meeting, to facilitate a meeting of the Chair, David Wand, Chris Richards and any other interested members, to consider the constitution and membership scope, ensuring that there is equity for our communities.
- To identify and liaise with appropriate representatives to contribute to future agenda items as listed for the forward plan.

Norman Randall:

- To liaise with Heidi and Catherine to finalise a date and arrangements to potentially hold the next meeting at the Sherwood Synagogue;

Sarah Peek:

- To liaise with Heidi and Catherine to finalise a date and arrangements to potentially hold the March 2024 meeting at St Stephen's CofE Primary School;

Andrea Burrows:

- To liaise with Trinity Church, Heidi and Catherine to finalise a date to potentially and arrangements for holding the July 2024 meeting at a Trinity Church property;

Catherine Ziane-Pryor:

- Determine the legislative public access requirements of SACRE to facilitate meetings being held in places of worship and sanctuary.

Resolved

- 1) for future meetings to be held in person at varying religious and educational establishments;**
- 2) subject to confirmation, for future meeting to be held at 4.30pm as follows, with introductions invited from the host organisations:**

- **23 November 2023 at the Sherwood Liberal Synagogue (at the invitation of Norman Randall);**
- **14 March 2024 at Sneinton St Stephen's CofE Primary School (at the invitation of Sarah Peek);**
- **4 July 2024 at Trinity Church (at the suggestion of Andrea Burrows);**

3) Topics for the forward plan include:

Meeting	Item	
23 November 2023	A review of the constitution and membership	The Chair, David Wand and Chris Richards, with the support of Heidi Shewell-Cooper, to consider the constitution, including membership (if/how there needs to be broader representation). Build in opportunities at meetings to discuss what type of activity members would like to see of/from this committee;
14 March 2024	Young people's wellbeing and emotional development	To support an understanding of children and young people's mental health and well-being post-Covid. This would also include the impact of trauma, such as the recent violent city events on children and young people. This could cover the recovery measures Huntingdon School have implemented following the brutal murder of Ian Coates, the school caretaker, and the broader support available to schools to respond to loss through the critical incident team.
4 July 2024	Welcoming refugees to the City	To focus on the 'welcome' experiences of refugees and asylum seekers in the city and the support and co-ordination offered by schools, Sanctuary organisations, religious groups and refugee organisations. To host at an appropriate venue.



Joining your local SACRE

- **supporting**
- **strengthening**
- **promoting**

Aims for tonight's training

This training presentation looks at these four questions:

- What is a SACRE?
- How is it composed?
- What is its role?
- What are the Local Authority's responsibilities?
- Your relationship to your sponsoring group as their SACRE representative

What is a SACRE?

SACRE stands for:

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education

A SACRE is part of local government.

Its main function is to advise the local authority (LA) on matters related to Religious Education and collective worship in schools.

What is a SACRE?

- In 1944, Local Education Authorities (LEAs) were empowered by law to set up a Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE)
- In 1988, the Law changed and LEAs had to do so
- Today every local authority must have a SACRE and it must meet sufficient times to fulfil its statutory duties
- Most SACREs meet at least three times a year

SACRE: Statutory responsibilities (1)

A SACRE must:

- Advise the local authority (LA) on matters related to agreed syllabus religion education (RE) and
- Collective worship (CW) either in response to a referral from the LA or as it sees fit
- Publish an Annual Report on its work and on actions taken by its representative groups
- Email a copy of the Annual report to the Secretary of State – these reports from September 2021/2022 have been analysed by the DfE and NASACRE – you can find a link to Dr David Hampshire’s conference presentation on 2023 conference page on Nasacre website

SACRE: statutory responsibilities (2)

A SACRE must also:

- Meet in public, unless confidential information is to be disclosed
- Make minutes of its meetings available for inspection at LA offices
- Consider appeal from schools wishing to modify the legal requirement for the majority of acts of collective worship to be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character; this procedure is called a 'determination' as SACRE determines whether or not to agree the appeal

SACRE: statutory responsibilities (3)

An effective SACRE should:

- Monitor the provision and quality of agreed syllabus RE and of CW in order to provide targeted advice and support on teaching agreed syllabus RE
- Advise the LA on the provision of training of teachers
- Consider complaints about RE and CW referred to them by their LA
- Consider whether changes need to be made to the agreed syllabus, in partnership with the LA
- Offer advice to the LA in respect of the agreed syllabus and its implementation

SACRE: statutory responsibilities (4)

A SACRE may:

- Require the LA to review its Agreed Syllabus
- Decide to advise the LA on matters to do with RE and CW
- Co-opt individuals who are not members of any of the groups, for example to provide educational expertise, the views of young people and children, or religious and non-religious views that reflect a diverse multi-cultural society

How is SACRE composed?

Group A	Christian denominations other than the Church of England and other religions and their denominations, reflecting the principal religions of the area
Group B	The Church of England
Group C	Teacher and head teacher associations and often others representing education interests
Group D	The Local Authority

Questions



Representation on a SACRE

- All four groups must be represented on the SACRE
- The numbers of members in each group will be determined by the individual SACRE's constitution
- The composition of Group A should be broadly proportionate to the religions and worldviews (denominations) represented in the local area

Decision making

After discussions many SACREs come to agreement about issues without the need for a vote except in very rare circumstances.

However when votes need to be taken:

- Each of the four groups has equal voting rights: one vote per group
- Decision within a group about how that vote is to be cast do not require unanimity
- Each group has to regulate its own proceedings, including provision for resolving deadlock
- Co-opted members do not have a vote

SACRE annual reports

- The Annual Report should include details of the SACRE's activities, including advice given to the LA and top schools and any monitoring that has been undertaken in the past year
- The Report explains how the SACRE has fulfilled its responsibilities, evaluated its practice and used the resources at its disposal effectively
- In the best practice, SACRE's work would be linked to a development plan
- The Report can be used to publicise the work of SACRE with schools, governors, elected members and the general public

The role of SACRE

SACREs are responsible for oversight of the religious education and collective worship in their local schools. Levels of responsibility vary.

For example:

- In voluntary aided schools, RE is determined by the governors and taught according to the school's trust deed, not necessarily the Agreed Syllabus
- In all schools with a religious character, collective worship can be reflective of that religion
- In academies (even those which follow the LA agreed syllabus)

Questions



Schools and RE:

Type of school	Religious education is
Community and Voluntary controlled (VC) schools	taught according to the local authority's agreed syllabus and comes within SACRE's remit.
Voluntary aided (VA) schools	determined by the governors in accordance with the trust deed and reflects the religious character of the school.
Foundation schools with or without a religious character	taught according to the local authority's agreed syllabus.
Trust schools	taught according to the local authority's agreed syllabus.
Academies	Is part of the curriculum, but is taught according to the school's funding agreement.

Type of school	Collective worship
Community	follows the 1996 Education Act and the majority is 'wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character'.
Voluntary controlled (VC) and Voluntary aided (VA) schools	reflects the Christian character of the school.
Foundation schools without a religious character	follows the 1996 Education Act and the majority is 'wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character'.
Academies	Collective worship is determined by the academy's funding agreement but must be every day for pupils not withdrawn in whole or in part by their parent.

Local Authority responsibilities

- Ensure there is a SACRE
- Ensure all four groups are represented on the SACRE
- Establish an occasional body called an Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC) and appoint members to it
- Ensure there is an Agreed Syllabus, reviewed every five years
- Ensure funds and support are in place to enable SACRE to fulfil its duties
- Take note of and respond to advice from the SACRE

Local Authority responsibilities

Appointing members

It is the LA's responsibility to appoint members of the SACRE and the ASC.

The LA should:

- Seek nominations from the organisations to be represented
- Ensure those appointed are representative of the religion, worldview, denomination or sponsoring group in question

It is good practice for the SACRE to review its constitution periodically to ensure membership is appropriately representative and to advise the LA of any necessary amendments

In summary

SACREs:

- Are statutory bodies which all local authorities have to have and support
- Are representative of the local community
- Are responsible for RE and CW in most schools
- Are instrumental in ensuring quality experiences for all pupils in RE and CW
- Have to report annually to the DfE and NASACRE
- Have the potential to contribute to social harmony and community cohesion

Questions



Activity



What makes an effective SACRE?

Look at the grid overleaf.

In pairs or groups discuss how you would rate each of the characteristics of an effective SACRE.

Agree on a ranking for them, the most important first and the least significant last, discarding any that you think are inappropriate.

An effective SACRE ...

... plans and evaluates its work rigorously.	
... is representative of the variety of beliefs within the local community.	
... has members who understand the difference between RE and religious indoctrination and focuses its work appropriately.	
... promotes inclusivity and social cohesion.	
... is well attended by committee members and consistently quorate.	
... is well chaired.	
... is one that works strategically.	
... is able to secure adequate funding from its LA.	
... has a good partnership with the LA.	
... is one that uses its resources wisely and efficiently.	
... has professional RE advice and support from the LA.	
... demonstrates a hands-on approach with schools and their staff.	
... is committed to making RE relevant, interesting, appropriate, exciting and thoroughly enjoyable.	
... is one where there is good listening and communicating.	
... gives information in plain English.	
... has a committed membership.	
... is able to offer schools advice and support through well informed members.	
... is generally aware of issues related to pupils' progress in RE.	
... is representative of the interests of the local community.	
... constantly seeks to self-evaluate and improve.	
... is proactive not passive.	
... provides or secures relevant training for RE teachers.	
... monitors its schools' RE provision and offers them support in self-review.	
... works to develop strong partnerships between SACRE members in order to model the cohesion they believe that should develop in their community.	
... advises its LA on RE, CW and the promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and social cohesion.	
... encourages and values the contribution of all its members and ensures they all know that they are appreciated.	
... responds readily to national or international issues relating to its sphere of interest.	

Activity



What makes a good SACRE member?

Look at the grid overleaf.

In pairs or groups consider how you would rate each of these characteristics of a good SACRE member and agree on a ranking for them, the most important first and the least significant last, discarding any that you think are inappropriate.

A good SACRE member ...

... listens to all views and ideas.	
... seeks to understand the views of other members, rather than simply promoting his/her own agenda.	
... is willing to contribute to discussions.	
... understands his or her role as a SACRE member.	
... thinks his or her point of view is important.	
... is committed to SACRE meetings.	
... is well informed about the work of their SACRE.	
... works harmoniously with other members.	
... has time to spend in school.	
... listens more than he or she speaks.	
... wants to build good partnerships with other SACRE members.	
... is keen and able to communicate with teachers and pupils.	
... takes an active participative approach, following lines of enquiry of personal interest.	
... supports and encourages local schools to aspire to high standards in RE and collective worship.	
... is prepared to bring issues to SACRE from their faith, belief or other sponsoring group.	
... cares about pupils' learning and their personal development.	
... is confident about everything to do with RE and CW in schools.	
... takes an active part in meetings.	
... is able to offer relevant experiences.	
... understands and believes in the positive value of RE and CW in schools.	
... keeps in touch with national issues in RE and CW.	
... knows about local faith communities.	
... has the ability and confidence to question perceived wisdom.	
... takes an interest in key RE and CW issues facing schools.	
... works to create a bridge between SACRE, local communities and local schools.	

Questions



Links from the chat

- Here is a link to the non-statutory guidance for SACRE and RE <https://nasacre.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/2010-RE-Guidance-DCSF.pdf>
- Here is the link to useful documents including analysis of previous reports etc <https://nasacre.org.uk/useful-documents/>
- This is where you can find examples of good practice of policies, guidance and terms of reference from various SACRE <https://nasacre.org.uk/shared-space/>

This page is intentionally left blank