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NOTTINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE)

MINUTES of the meeting held at St Stephen's CofE Primary Academy - Sneinton on 27 November 2019 from 4.33 pm - 5.51 pm

ATTENDANCE (✓ indicates present)

Christian & other religions of Nottingham (Group A) - 13

✓	Bishop James Stapleton	African Caribbean Churches
	No representative	Baptist
✓	Krishna Dasi	Hindu
	Chris Richards	Humanism
	Mr M Muntazir	Islam
	Norman Randall	Jewish
✓	John Heard	Methodist
	Caroline Mackeith	Quaker
	No representative	Roman Catholic
✓	Martin Bennett	Salvation Army
	Rav Kalsi	Sikh
	No representative	United Reformed Church
	No representative	Other

Church of England (Group B) - 6

	Alison Rowe	Bluecoat (Wollaton)
	Debs Hunt	Crossteach
✓	Jill Edmonds	South Wilford
✓	Jane Lewis	Southwell & Nottingham
	Vacancy	
	Vacancy	

Teachers, including at least 1 primary (Group C) - 6

	Kirsty Lacey	Bluecoat Academy (both)
	Yasmin Khalique	Middleton Primary
	Ralph Surman	National Education Union
	David Wand	UNISON
	Caroline White	Victoria Academy
	Vacancy	

City Councillors (Group D) - 6

✓	Neghat Khan	Chair
✓	David Mellen	
✓	Angela Kandola	
	AJ Matsiko	
	Cheryl Barnard	
	Pavlos Kotsonis	

Also present

- Sarah Peek - Specialist Leader in Religious Education, Sneinton Primary School
John Dexter - Education Director, Nottingham City Council
Heidi Shewell-Cooper - Lead Officer for SACRE, Nottingham City Council
Catherine Ziane-Pryor - Governance Officer, Nottingham City Council

25 INQUORATE MEETING

With the absence of so many members (mainly due to illness) a quorum of the required balance of members in attendance was not achieved. However, the meeting continued on an informal basis.

a Apologies for Absence

Debs Hunt
Yasmin Khalique
Caroline White
Alison Rowe
Chris Richards
Norman Randall
Naomi Posner
Caroline MacKeith
David Wand
Rav Kalsi
AJ Matsiko

b Presentation from Sarah Peek, Specialist Leader for Religious Education at Sneinton Primary School

Sarah Peek, Specialist Leader for Religious Education at Sneinton Primary School, delivered a presentation on how she had engaged children at the school in RE. Last Christmas she had organised for the school's classroom televisions to be 'hacked into' with a secret service style message of how to find clues to fulfil their 'secret mission' of finding specific people who would provide a gift. This led each class (with guidance) to different external community venues, where the community figures were appropriately dressed as the 3 Kings, King Herod, shepherds, and angels were waiting for the children with a story and a gift. The children and volunteers thoroughly enjoyed the event

RE work is recorded for each year group in a scrap book which includes photos, written work and a record of cards made, books written, drawings and art work, and photos of the dressing up to re-create biblical and other religious scenes. Nature walks can also include a religious and environmental element with consideration of man-made and natural materials?

Children are encouraged to think broadly and independently, for example by completing the sentence 'If I ruled the world.....', being objective by working with the 'god is a woman' worship song, and celebrating all forms of prayer with a 'world map of prayers'.

For the Easter story each year, pupils are surprised by classroom transformations which told a different part of the Easter story in each year classroom.

Themed days have also proved popular and there is collective worship every day with all members of staff attending and different guest speakers from different religious venues and places of worship.

There isn't much in the way of RE resources available to schools who can't access Church of England (CoE) resources, so the Nottingham Schools Trust (NST) has been a very helpful route for sharing information, ideas and work streams.

Questions from members of the Advisory Council were responded to as follows:

- (1) Although a CoE School, religious teaching is proportionately 75% Christian and 25% other faith, so is inclusive in teaching about other faiths and religious topics in RE lessons. The main emphasis is on promoting strong Christian ethics;
- (2) The opportunity for teachers to contribute to setting the Agreed Syllabus would be welcomed. This is seen as a valuable element which can support the learning of all faiths and the contribution of teachers will ensure that it is a document that teachers can be confident applying;
- (3) Bought-in RE resources are limited and can be very rigid so a robust Agreed Syllabus would be very valuable.

AGREED to thank Sarah Peek for her presentation and her interesting, inspirational and creative work.

c Declarations of Interests

None.

d Minutes and Informal Meeting Notes

As the meeting was inquorate, the minutes could not be confirmed as a true record but were noted.

e Appointment of Vice-Chair

As the meeting was informal, it was not possible to appoint a Vice-Chair. With Bishop James Stapleton (Group A representative) having operated as Vice Chair for several years, it was suggested that a member from Group B should be considered for the appointment.

AGREED for Heidi Shewell-Cooper to invite expressions of interest for the role of Vice-Chair from members of Group B (Church of England Representatives).

f Membership Update

Norman Randall and substitute member Naomi Posner are welcomed as a representatives of the Jewish faith.

Although there is currently no vacancy on the Advisory Council within the relevant group, Dr Irfan Malik from Baitul Hafeez Mosque, Ahmadiyya Muslim community would like to attend future meetings. This was welcomed by those present.

AGREED

- (1) **that due to the difficulties achieving the required balanced quorum, where members are unable to attend on an ongoing basis, Lead Officer Heidi Shewell-Cooper to ask if they are able to nominate an alternative member or reconsider the commitment;**
- (2) **for Sarah Peek to be invited to join the Advisory Council as a member of Group C (Teachers).**

g Chair's Actions; Letter to Head Teachers, September 2019

The Chair, Councillor Neghat Khan, presented the letter which has been sent to all Head Teachers across the City, emphasising the requirement within the new inspection framework for all schools, maintained and Academies, to provide religious education and age-appropriate relationship and sex education to their pupils, and outlining the inspection framework guidelines.

The letter invites Head Teachers to contribute to the established Primary Network and to indicate the need and support for establishing a Secondary School Religious Education Network, where support in complying with the requirements is available.

To date no direct responses have been received but it is important that schools are aware of SACRE and the support available.

Members in attendance welcomed and commended the letter.

h Constitution

Governance Officer Catherine Ziane-Pryor presented the refreshed constitution which requires adoption at a quorate meeting.

In response to the on-going pressures of member availability resulting in inquorate meetings, a discussion took place as to how business could be formally considered via alternative routes, such as approvals by email or video conferencing, and also reconfiguration of the required quorum.

AGREED for Lead Officer Heidi Shewell-Cooper to examine the legislation by which SACREs were established alongside the operating guidelines, and report the findings with possible new operating formats initially to the Chair.

i Relationship and Sex Education Engagement Group : Update from 15 October 2019 Meeting

Councillor David Mellen, Chair of the Relationship and Sex Education Engagement Group (E&SEEG), introduced the proposed Terms of Reference for the group, which is established in response to community concerns following the Central Government revisions to the inspection framework for maintained schools, but also with the aim to support schools in delivering the required elements.

It is noted that there have been nationally reported protests outside some schools in Birmingham against the teaching of relationship and sex education in schools. However, the information on which many of the protestors were basing their action was incorrect and had been fuelled by misguided and misleading social media posts.

There had been a similar protest planned outside Fernwood School so Councillors, teachers and community faith leaders met to discuss the facts of what was required to be taught and dispel the myths. It was, in the main, agreed that protests outside of schools were not appropriate and as a result, there was a one-day, low-level presence of peaceful protestors outside the school.

Further to that initial meeting, the 'Relationship and Sex Education Engagement Group' was formed and its terms of reference drawn up as a sub-group operating within the remit of SACRE, which are presented to the meeting today.

There is already a good level of community cohesion within the City and whilst the new teaching requirements vary very little from the original, it is important that all faith and world view leaders within the City are engaged regarding the content of the relationship and sex education curriculum. There is no intention to take away family responsibilities or to erode the nuclear family.

Councillor Neghat Khan has worked hard within communities to dispel myths and concerns and ensure that parents and communities are correctly informed of the topics to be covered and how lessons are proposed to be structured.

Some schools already outlined to parents the topics which will be covered and how they will be presented. However, teachers cannot account for the questions and discussions raised by pupils.

AGREED

- (1) to note the Terms of Reference of the Relationships and Sex Education Engagement Group 2019/20;**
 - (2) for the Terms of Reference to be reviewed in the Autumn of 2020.**
- j Agreed Syllabus Revision; Update and Approval Request to Progress**

Further to the arrangements agreed at the last joint City and County SACRE, the notes of the first Joint Project meeting which was held on 7 October 2019, were presented.

RESOLVED

- (1) to support the process to date;**
- (2) for the invitation to participate in the future meetings to be specifically extended to teacher representatives;**
- (3) for the date of 11 March 2020, to be confirmed for the Agreed Syllabus Conference to enable the Agreed Syllabus to be adopted in line with the agreed schedule. This will take place immediately before the SACRE meeting.**

k Secondary Religious Education Outcomes From Summer 2019

John Dexter, Education Director, Nottingham City Council, delivered a brief verbal update on secondary religious education (RE) outcomes from the summer of 2019.

The following points were highlighted and responses given to questions:

- (a) Last academic year, 2,720 pupils were at the end of Key Stage 4, and 923 took GCSEs in religious education;
- (b) 4 city schools enter all pupils to sit for GCSEs, one school enters almost all pupils, and seven schools don't teach RE at GCSE level;
- (c) Uptake of RE at qualification level has reduced, possibly partly due to the reduced availability of the half GCSE system (two subjects with half a GCSE credit each) which many schools no longer credit. Latest figures suggest 251,140 pupils took GCSE in 2019, a decline of 9,160 from the previous year;
- (d) In addition there had been issues within the City with recruiting RE teachers;
- (e) Teaching of religious education is not always currently mentioned in Ofsted reports. In light of the new inspection framework this point will be raised by the Director when meeting the new East Midlands Ofsted Lead Officer. He will share the SACRE view that welcomes at least an acknowledgement of RE teaching in Ofsted reports.

Members of the Advisory Council requested attainment levels of RE at GCSE level are included in future updates, if possible.

AGREED

- (1) to note the update and thank John Dexter for his attendance;**
- (2) for John Dexter, on behalf of the Chair, to query with the Regional Ofsted Officer, how schools which do not comply to the statutory requirement of providing religious education, can be graded as outstanding.**

I Annual Report 2018/19

Lead Officer, Heidi Shewell-Cooper, presented the Annual Report for the academic year 2018/19 which outlines the activity of the Advisory Council.

The Annual Report will be submitted to the National SACRE and also shared with National Association of Teachers of Religious Education (NATRE).

AGREED to note the Annual Report and for the Lead Officer to request that a link to its publication within this agenda, is included on the Schools website to help raise the profile of SACRE.

m NATRE/NASACRE Updates

Heidi Shewell-Cooper, Lead Officer, presented the update on the National Association Standing Council Advisory Council on Religious Education (NASACRE).

In addition to the information provided, Heidi informed the Advisory Council that NATRE Primary 1000 scheme is offering a very good deal on membership to Primary Schools at one third of the normal cost.

<https://www.natre.org.uk/membership/primary-RE-1000/>

So far, nine City Schools have accepted the offer which enables them to access support for RE teaching, including resource funding.

There is also the opportunity for schools to apply to be formally recognised as an 'inclusive school' and enter the 2020 'inclusivity award' with a deadline for applications of February 2020. This is run by the Accord Coalition – more information here <http://accordcoalition.org.uk/inclusivity-award-2020/>

Heidi Shewell-Cooper will ensure that information on the NATRE membership offer and benefits is highlighted to all City Primary Schools, in addition to providing the links and information above.

AGREED to note the updates and for members to encourage any Primary Schools which have not yet joined NATRE, to do so.

n Next Meeting

AGREED to next meet on Wednesday 11 March 2020 at 4pm at a venue to be confirmed.

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PRIMARY 1000

I'm writing to you to seek your help, but also I think with an offer of help that may meet a need in your own work. NATRE has received funding for a very significant project called Primary RE 1000. The aim of the project is to benefit 'hard to reach' schools so that they are more engaged with RE, and get very significant support for the subject over a two year period. We have a list of project activities that will help primary schools to improve their RE, wherever they are at the moment.

The project has been designed to challenge, support and inspire primary schools where RE provision needs to change, so as to improve the RE opportunities they give to pupils.

The schools accepted to join the project will receive:

- A digital starter pack to kick start better RE in their schools
- Access to over 1000 free-to-use classroom resources
- Links with a local group of RE teachers to share best practice
- NATRE membership at a discounted price (£55 for two years, instead of £150!)
- Opportunities to attend high quality training at a discounted rate

And much more...

Can you help us to contact schools that will benefit? What we hope you will do:

Would you be able to send us your recommendations of schools that you think will benefit from Primary RE 1000? Once you give your recommendations, we will check which schools qualify for Primary RE 1000 and get back to you with a personal invite you can send to them or I can send the invites out for you if you prefer. NATRE is very eager to work in partnership with lecturers, advisers SACREs and other networks in this shared aim for better RE.

Please fill out the form and if you can please give 10 recommendations (or 20 – or more!) of primary schools you think will benefit from Primary RE 1000 that would be great. If you have any questions or queries, please email me on insya@retoday.org.uk or you can call me on 0121 458 3313

Insya Abdulhussein

Communications Executive / RE Today Services

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