

CALDERDALE METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL
CALDERDALE STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Minutes of SACRE Meeting (AGM)
Tuesday 25 June 2024
6.00 pm at Savile Park at Heath

Members in attendance:

Committee A

Representing Other Denominations & Faiths	Mr Dipan Mistry (DM)
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Committee B

Representing the Church of England	Ms Shelagh Hirst (SH) (Chair) Ms Helen Lever (HL) Janet Lapthorne (JL) (Virtual)
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Committee C

Teachers/Unions	Mr Mark Sharp (MS) Ms Ruth Walker (RW)
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Committee D

Representing Calderdale Council	Cllr Brenda Monteith (BM) Cllr Dot Foster (DF)
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In attendance

Mrs Debby Simpson – Clerk (DS)
Mr Ian Ross (IR)
Mr Paul Tinsley (PT)
Mr Sail Suleman (SS)

Quorum for the meeting is 1 representative from each of the 4 Committees

FORMAL BUSINESS

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Clerk welcomed everyone to the meeting. Introductions were made due to guests being invited to the meeting.

Apologies had been received from Robert Fox, Simon Bedford, James Allinson, Katie Jennings, Jake Wormack and Helen Crowther.

2. Election of Chair

SH had sent in a nomination to carry on as Chair. No other nominations had been received. Members were happy for SH to continue for a further year.

3. Election of Vice Chair

SH nominated MS to continue as Vice Chair. MS was happy to carry on for the next year. Members were happy to agree this.

4. Election of Group Chairs and Vice Chairs for groups, A, B, C and D

It was agreed as in previous years that these will be called upon only if needed as a Chair of Committees was only needed for 3 groups for the Agreed Syllabus.

5. Membership Review

Members had been provided with a list of attendance over the past year and this was discussed in detail. It was agreed that anyone who hadn't attended in the last year would be sent an email to see if they wished to continue. If there is no reply then it will be presumed that they do not wish to carry on. **ACTION: DAS to write to members.**

SH explained that Sail Suleman, Cohesion and Equality Officer who was present at this meeting was someone who could help with membership. He extended an invite to SH to the next meeting of the Interfaith Council in September to discuss this. A discussion had taken place regarding membership at Council.

SS had already spoken to a number of representatives from the Muslim community. He felt that it was good that both bodies could work together. **ACTION: SS to invite SH to next Interfaith Council meeting which should fall on 5 September 2024.**

Each member was discussed and it was understood that PB from the Baptist Churches, due to health reasons found it difficult to attend personally. The Clerk said that he had been offered attendance via Zoom but had also had technical issues and not been able to access this.

ACTION: DAS to write to ascertain whether PB wishes to continue and what the best method of attendance is for PB. DAS will also contact DH, Catholic Representative, because he had not attended a meeting since she had asked him to be part of SACRE.

DF informed members that AK was Mayor this year so it is unlikely that she will continue on SACRE. **ACTION: DF to contact Kirsty Smith to email all Councillors and see who her replacement will be.**

The fact that Rev Tom Daglish from Christ Church Sowerby Bridge was interested in becoming a member was discussed. SACRE did not want to discourage anyone from applying to be part of the membership. **ACTION: IR to check with Tommy at Christ Church SB and DAS to check with the Arch Deacon if TD still wanted to join.**

There was still only one secondary representative. **ACTION: DAS to ask JW to see if he can find any more representatives.**

Members wondered if it was worth asking other SACRE's if any of their members know anyone who would be interested in joining Calderdale. **ACTION: IR to investigate this.**

RW had an Imam in school last week and agreed to send details to DAS to see if either he was interested in becoming a member or alternatively knew someone who was. **ACTION: RW to send details. DF to also contact an Imam who she knows to see if he has any contacts.**

ACTION: DAS said she would contact the Halifax Academy.

Members asked if SACRE was highlighted in schools so that parents could be approached. IR explained that information does sometimes go out in school Newsletters. **ACTION: DAS to write to schools.**

6. Professional Advisor Report

Members had received a copy of the report that will form the foundation of the Annual Report. IR went briefly through the work that had been done this year with the following highlights being noted:

- The Syllabus has now been launched and had been well received across schools and across the Diocese.
- All units of work had now been uploaded. Fifty Calderdale schools had already bought into these. Calderdale will receive money back from this which will pay for the cost of the Syllabus being produced. IR explained how this worked.
- The Chair wanted to send thanks to Julie Jenkins, Director for CYPs who had attended the launch of the Syllabus as she understood how busy Julie was but managed to fit SACRE in as she knew how important the work was and this was something that she stressed during her speech.
- Support this year had been with the East Calderdale Cluster with Pennine Learning helping with RE Awards, SMSC audits and deep dives in RE. Congratulations were given to Greetland Academy who had achieved their RE Award and would receive their certificate during the RE Network. He explained that this Award was a stepping stone to the REQM Award. Congratulations were also given to Todmorden High School who had become the first secondary school to obtain Gold in the Country for this Award.
- Pennine Learning still had 2 more schools to visit this term – Carr Green and Withinfields.
- Information regarding support etc. is given to Calderdale's Partnership Board.
- Members asked that thanks from SACRE be passed to these schools. **ACTION: IR to send thanks.**
- The Clerk was also thanked for sending the newsletters and relevant information to SACRE members so they could keep up to date.
- Helen had been involved in the Educational Faith Project in her work with Kirklees. Faith walks had been undertaken in Bradford and she had also been carrying out work in Huddersfield and Dewsbury. This is something that she is wanting to expand to Calderdale but this would come at a cost.
- Pennine Learning are also looking at reinventing an on-line Interfaith Conference where schools are able to get resources.

- Both primary and secondary networks have taken place with the primary sector being oversubscribed and the secondary networks increasing to 25 attendees from 3 LA's which is a big difference from previous years where there were only 2 or 3 people attending. Pennine Learning are now looking at running the networks in the afternoon rather than twilights. This will show the commitment of schools to RE. Seven attendees were from Calderdale.
- There haven't been as many courses offered this year as these have been limited. The RE Co-ordinators is one of the courses on offer. Subject knowledge webinars have also been offered over the year including humanism. Each webinar is a whistle stop tour of a belief, some teaching and learning activities and resources, but also includes a member of that belief to answer questions.
- Networks are free of charge to schools and MS felt that they would definitely be full this year due to the launch of the Syllabus. Teachers will be wanting to look at the content so that it fits with their long term plans.
- All advice and guidance has now been updated.

The Chair thanked the Pennine Learning Team for all their hard work.

7. NASACRE Conference Update

Members had received a brief outline of what was discussed at the conference. IR/SH went through briefly with members with the following points being noted:

The NASACRE constitution proposals had been discussed at the conference. IR gave background into NASACRE being a charitable incorporated organisation with SACRE being a charity. They were now wanting a Trust Board in order to apply for other grants.

IR explained that this did not affect how SACRE's work now but in order to achieve this all SACRE's have to agree to this happening. Members discussed and it was agreed unanimously that this should go ahead.

GENERAL SACRE BUSINESS

a. Minutes of Meeting held 4 December 2023 and 12 March 2024

Both sets of minutes were agreed as a true and accurate record.

b. Matters Arising

Annual Report: The Annual Report had now been sent off. SH/IR did a short presentation at Scrutiny via Zoom. The next Annual Report is now being prepared.

c. Presentation by Paul Tinsley, Interim Assistant Director for Education and Inclusion

PT thanked members for inviting him to the meeting and passed on regards from Julie Jenkins, Director for CYPS. He thanked members for their hard work that had been carried out with limited funding. PT had read the Annual Report and felt that it evidenced the amount of work that had been put in by members and Pennine Learning.

He felt that SACRE was on the front line in helping young people with one of their roles being preparing them for adult life. They also help people to be able to communicate well with each other.

He gave members a quick update on the work he had been carrying out with schools over the last year. The following points were noted:

The role of LA's are changing. There is no money for School Effectiveness as there had been in the past apart from funding that is given from Schools Forum. This has allowed School Effectiveness Officer to be effective and over the last year 24 schools have had an "outstanding" or "good" allocated to them from Ofsted. The School Effectiveness team now consisted of an Interim Service Manager for Education Quality and Strategy, A part time School Effectiveness Officer and a number of associates who are current or previous headteachers.

There are a lot of challenges in schools around budgets which is compounded by falling rolls with some schools having less than 25% of their published admissions.

Behaviour has become an issue post covid with an explosion of SEMH pupils and not enough specialist places available. Schools are having to hold pupils who normally would have been in a specialist school.

The number of pupils with an EHCP has risen from 1360 in 2020 to 2287 in 2023 and the latest figures are currently over 2500. However Calderdale are over the National Average for processing the EHCPs.

SEN case Officers are carrying close to 300 cases which isn't manageable.

Suspensions and permanent exclusions have risen from 30/40 in 2021 to 96 last year. The LA's only statutory duty is to provide alternative provision for pupils with SEN needs and not for behaviour.

This has led to the number of children being home educated increasing from 150 4 years ago to now over 500. Some of these children are those who have been permanently excluded.

The good news is that schools have been allowed to send in expressions of interest to get funding to provide specialist classrooms and SEN Hubs. Seventeen schools responded to this and should help in the short term. In the long term the LA are looking at building an additional special school in North Halifax. This will be a through school with the capacity to grow.

The LA are working with Delta MAT who run an alternative provision academy in Doncaster who can hopefully provide a new alternative provision free school for Calderdale.

There are issues with the age of some of the school buildings and at the last audit £20 million would be needed to repair these schools. Unfortunately the LA only have £4 million to do this.

The Chair pointed out that SACRE is a statutory duty for the LA and asked if there was anyway more money could be provided for SACRE. NASACRE recommend that 2% is paid from the LA's budget. At the moment Calderdale provide 1.5% - which is good compared to a lot of SACRE's but the more funding SACRE has the more it can do for schools. PT said that there was currently £120K underspend on the money allocated to schools. He suggested look at school priorities then arrange for a member of SACRE to go to Schools Forum to request additional funding.

DF was concerned about the number of schools with small numbers and questioned how many were linked to a church and what the impact would be on these schools. She wanted to know if there was anything SACRE could do to help these schools.

PT had met with Calderdale Primary Headteachers Association to look at supporting schools at risk. He had also discussed this with the Diocese. There was talk about sharing teachers

but there was room to talk about sharing resources. These schools could also look at the option of putting in an expression of interest to use a spare classroom.

PT explained that there were no easy answers and there is a presumption in Law of closing rural schools. The LA do have to fund any maintained school if it goes into deficit or fails an Ofsted.

Members questioned where the children will go when new houses are being built. PT said that the jury was out on this. Discussion had taken place but further discussion is needed to get the balance right.

The Chair thanked PT for attending the meeting and asked if this could happen as a regular occurrence. PT said as he was leaving the Authority, he would pass this information onto Jemima Flintoff who was the person who would be replacing him. He suggested that this be split between Jemima and Connie Beirne to attend meetings alternatively. **ACTION: PT to inform Jemima and Connie.**

d. Letter to Schools re Prayer

Members had received and read the letter that was to be sent to schools regarding provision of inclusive prayer spaces within schools. MS and IR had met with Sail Suleman to discuss the content before the letter was sent. The main point of the letter was that prayer space should be provided but this should be inclusive for both adults and children. Members were happy with the letter. **ACTION: The letter to be sent to schools before the end of term together with the Sharing the Journey document and once again when schools return as a reminder – DAS/IR.**

e. Joint Working with SACRE and Sail Suleman

SS had been invited to the meeting to discuss joint working which was something that was welcomed by both parties.

SS gave an overview of the Interfaith Council and Council of Mosques. The Interfaith Council was set up in 2001 to bring people of faith communities together and have one voice. The work of members is done voluntarily and is not paid. The Interfaith Council try and build up common knowledge and make visits to schools that SS co-ordinates. The work is particularly important during times of challenge such as the 9/11 incident – where the Council try to bring people together.

The Interfaith Council have 3-4 events a year as well as an Annual event taking place.

The Council of Mosques were set up 10 years ago. A case was made to bring all Mosques together to answers questions together rather than each Mosque answering questions separately. This was central during covid – and the Council of Mosques set up a number of covid centres etc.

If there are challenges in school the Council of Mosques is often contacted to assist. It can be used as a listening mechanism as well as a support for headteachers.

Training is also provided.

Discussion took place on how all parties could work together as all parties had the same goal. Members suggested that there be a formal arrangement for a SACRE member to be on the Interfaith Council and a member of the Interfaith Council be a member of SACRE. All thought this was a good idea. **ACTION: SS/SH to look into a formal agreement put together.**

SS said he would be in touch with both organisations to see if any of them wished to be part of SACRE. **ACTION: SS to contact the Interfaith Council and Council of Mosques to try to attract membership to SACRE.**

e. **Syllabus Update**

Already discussed.

f. **Any Other Business - Ofsted Reports**

Members had received a report prepared by RF looking at the comments from Ofsted reports. The comments were looked at and it was felt that even though there weren't as many comments with regard to PSHE/RE or ethics due to the change in format of Ofsted reports it was good that there were a lot more positive comments than negative from our schools.

It was agreed that IR would contact any schools where there were concerns to offer support.

ACTION: IR to contact schools with concerns.

Members asked that thanks be give to RF for his work on the report.

g. **Dates, Venues and Key Themes for SACRE 2024/25**

The following dates were given to members.

Wednesday 9 October 2024 – **ACTION: Date to be changed as clerk cannot make this – DAS**

Monday 2 December 2024 – Cross Lane – **ACTION: Theme to be decided – All**

Tuesday 11 March 2025 – Theme possibly Collective Worship or Community Cohesion.
ACTION: Venue TBD – All.

Tuesday 17 June 2025. **ACTION: Theme and Venue TBD – All.**

ACTION: Members to decide whether the joint meeting goes back to being a West Yorkshire Joint Meeting – All.