

Meeting SACRE (Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education)

Date 3 February 2025

Present Karen Vincent (Faith/Catholic)
Penny Coppin-Siddall (Faith/ The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints)
Ben Rich (Vice Chair) (Faith/Jewish)

Group C

Taco Michiels (Joseph Rowntree School)
Andy Tod (Ralph Butterfield Primary School)
Diane Norton (York St John University)

Group D

A group of persons representing the City of York Council. In this case of Elected Members appointment to this group should ensure political balance and state which political group they represent. As an alternative, the Council may appoint representatives such as a governors association.

Cllr Robert Webb (Chair) (City of York Council)
Cllr Emilie Knight (City of York Council)
Cllr Martin Rowley BEM (City of York Council)
Cllr Sarah Wilson (City of York Council)

In Attendance Fleur Kennedy (Faith/Bahai'i)-
Mark Jones (Faith/Buddhist)
Colin Lewisohn (Faith/Humanist)
Dee Boyle (Faith/Unitarian, Buddhist, Pagan)
Tony Lawton (Faith/Catholic)

LA Officer

Maxine Squire (Assistant Director Education and Skills, City of York Council)

Apologies Councillor Webb, Imam Amar, Sue Bland, Joseph Hepplestone and Andy Tod

Ben Rich (Vice Chair) chaired the meeting in the absence of Cllr Webb (Chair) who had given apologies for the meeting. The meeting was inquorate.

86. Membership Update (6.01pm)

The Chair welcomed Fleur Kennedy, daughter of former SACRE Member Daryoush Mazloun as the representative of the Bahai'i faith. He noted that SACRE was sorry for the loss of her father and noted his work for SACRE. New Members Mark Jones (Buddhist), Colin Lewisohn (Humanist), and Dee Boyle (Unitarian, Buddhist, Pagan) were also welcomed. Potential new Member Tony Lawton (Catholic, retired Solicitor for the Diocese of Leeds and Middlesbrough) was also welcomed to the meeting. It was noted that the appointments would be formally made at Council.

87. Apologies for Absence and Declarations of Interest (6.05pm)

Apologies for absence were received and noted for Cllr Webb, Imam Amar, Sue Bland, Joseph Everdell and Andy Tod. There were no declarations of interest.

88. Minutes and matters arising from the minutes (6.06pm)

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 October 2024 be approved at a future meeting and would be amended to include apologies from Cllr Rowley.

There were no matters arising. As the meeting was inquorate Maxine Squire noted that there would need to be a separate meeting to approve the Annual Report.

89. Annual Report 2023-24 (6.08pm)

Maxine Squire explained that the Annual Report followed a set template.

[Mark Jones joined the meeting at 6.09pm]

Maxine Squire explained that she would circulate the report with the exam results included. She reported that RE in York schools remained a strong subject and there wasn't a disadvantage gap at A Level, which was showing the subject to be very well taught. She added that there were high levels of take up in York secondary schools and the percentage of good passes remained strong. She noted the findings of the 2024 Ofsted subject review and noted that two Members from Groups B and C had attended the

NASACRE conference. She explained that 2026 would mark the review of the Agreed Syllabus. Members were asked for comments on the report.

A Member asked whether there was any scope for understanding why boys were doing better than girls and Maxine Squire undertook to contact subject leaders about it. A Member noted the difference between GCSE and A Level syllabuses. A Member noted that at her school, more girls than boys took RE and Maxine Squire noted that it would be useful to see the difference in take up at faith schools with sixth forms and other sixth form colleges. Members noted that it would be interesting to see if there was a three year trend in results.

A Member noted that at their school there was two girls and four boys doing RE and Philosophy A Level and he explained how students were encouraged to take up the A Level through taster sessions. He noted that the GCSE and A Level were completely different courses. A Member noted her son attended a school where the GCSE was not compulsory.

A Member asked if there was a reason why GCSE RE was Christianity focussed and Maxine Squire explained that this was related to the Education Act. The Annual Report would be approved an extra meeting.

90. School Survey (6.24pm)

Maxine Squire reported that the school survey had gone out in November and was a different format to previous survey and that it had produced more responses. She noted that 17 schools had completed the survey, and of this 14 were primary and 3 were secondary. She noted examples of good practice from different schools and primary schools development priorities, adding that a SACRE development priority was the development of a resource bank. She detailed examples of good practice in secondary schools and noted that the Agreed Syllabus helped with the delivery of RE. She noted secondary schools priorities for development.

From the results of the school survey, Maxine Squire asked Members to consider the SACRE development plan. The Chair suggested that Members focus first on what schools were doing, and then the development plan. A Member was encouraged by the results of the school survey and the mix of schools that had responded and noted that he would encourage different groups to visit schools. Regarding the results, a Member noted that it was useful to have in depth answers. A Member advised that York Interfaith did not see schools approaching them and she added that they would be visiting Woldgate School in Pocklington. Members gave different examples of contact from schools.

It was suggested that as part of the development plan, individual schools could have visits from all faiths. It was suggested that the presentation on the school survey results could be sent to all schools and Maxine Squire undertook to send it to all schools. A Member asked if York Interfaith could be mentioned in the SACRE newsletter and Cllr Knight noted that it would be included in the newsletter.

91. Monitoring of Standards (6.46pm)

This agenda item was an error on the agenda.

92. Review of SACRE development plan (6.46pm)

Maxine Squire advised that the development plan would be on the agenda for every meeting and that it would be sent to Members. Members discussed the development plan and a Member asked if SACRE could have a city wide meeting for RE teachers. It was suggested there could be a focus on CPD and the using schools as examples of good practice. Maxine Squire noted the five key functions of SACRE. It was noted that there was a need to focus on priority 2 and that priorities 3 and 4 had been met. It was noted that the review of Agreed Syllabus would form part of the 2025-27 development plan. Maxine Squire was asked and confirmed that the syllabus was agreed at the syllabus conference. It was noted that it had been agreed that consideration would be given to the Humanist part of the syllabus.

It was suggested that work on the agreed syllabus could begin through subject leaders and that teachers could be invited to an event with SACRE on the agreed syllabus. Maxine Squire was asked and confirmed that resources were signposted through the RE Hub.

93. Correspondence on complaints/determinations (7.00pm)

It was noted that there had been no complaints to SACRE.

94. Any other business (7.00pm)

School visits

Maxine Squire noted that she would arrange a SACRE visit to Fulford. Taco Michiels agreed there could be a SACRE visit to Jospeh Rowntree School.

New Member induction

The Democracy Officer undertook to send the Constitution, Development Plan and NASACRE documents to new Members.

SACRE membership to York Interfaith

A Member asked if SACRE was a member of York Interfaith. Maxine Squire advised that it would need consideration.

95. Future meeting dates (7.05pm)

Additional meeting to be arranged for approval of Annual Report

11 March 2025 at 5.00pm at West Offices

15 July 2025 at 6.00pm at West Offices

Cllr Webb, Chair

[The meeting started at 6.00pm and finished at 7.06pm].

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