

## Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education

held on Monday, 12 October, 2020 at 6.00 p.m.

### Virtual Meeting via Microsoft Teams

*Held in accordance with the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus)(Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings)(England and Wales) Regulation 2020; and conducted according to the Council's Standing Orders for Remote Meetings and those set out in the Council's Constitution.*

#### Present

|                          |   |                                       |
|--------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|
| Mr. D. Lomax (Chair)     | - | United Reform Church                  |
| Mrs P. Lane (Vice Chair) | - | Lichfield Diocesan Board of Education |
| Mr. A. Orlik             | - | Lichfield Diocesan Board of Education |
| Mrs K. Donnellan         | - | Lichfield Diocesan Board of Education |
| Mrs M. Gibbons           | - | Methodist, Walsall                    |
| Mrs B. Groombridge       | - | Walsall Quakers                       |
| Dr. Gomez                | - | Roman Catholic                        |
| Mrs V. Heydon-Matterface | - | Methodist, Brownhills and Willenhall  |
| Mr. G. Headley           | - | National Union of Teachers            |
| Ms H. Leadley            | - | Teacher Representative                |
| Councillor Ali           | - | Local Authority                       |
| Councillor Bashir        | - | Local Authority                       |
| Councillor Johal         | - | Local Authority                       |
| Councillor Mazhar        | - | Local Authority                       |
| Councillor Nasreen       | - | Local Authority                       |
| Councillor Rasab         | - | Local Authority                       |
| Mr. W. Green             | - | Humanist / Co-opted Member            |

#### In Attendance:-

|                |   |                                      |
|----------------|---|--------------------------------------|
| Ms F. Moss     | - | RE Today Advisor                     |
| Ms S. Kelly    | - | Director - Access & Inclusion        |
| Mr. N. Perks   | - | Quality Assurance Team Manager       |
| Mrs. B. Mycock | - | Democratic Services / Clerk to SACRE |

#### 1. Welcome and Apologies

The Chair opened the meeting by welcoming everyone, and explaining the rules of procedure and legal context in which the meeting was being held. He also directed members of the public viewing the meeting to the papers, which could be found on the Council's Committee Management Information system (CMIS) webpage.

Members and officers confirmed that they could both see and hear the proceedings.

There were no apologies received.

**2. Late Items to be introduced by the Chair**

There were no late items.

**3. Local Government (Access to Information) Act, 1985 (as amended)**

There were no items for consideration in the private session.

**4. Minutes of the meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> March, 2020**

The Chair put the recommendation to the vote by way of a roll call of members.

**Resolved (unanimous)**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> March, 2020 be approved and signed as a true record.

**5. Walsall OFSTED reports (released between 26<sup>th</sup> February to 28<sup>th</sup> September 2020)**

*Mrs P. Lane arrived at this juncture of the meeting and confirmed she could see and hear the proceedings.*

A document had been submitted (see annexed)

The RE Today Advisor advised members of two Ofsted reports in particular that had been published under the new framework since SACRE's last meeting of 12<sup>th</sup> March 2020. The two schools highlighted were:-

- King Charles Primary School.  
The school had been rated 'good', with tolerance and respect teaching strong. RE had not been specifically mentioned within the Ofsted report.
- Palfrey Infant School.  
The school had been rated 'outstanding' for the past 11 years and therefore only a monitoring report had been required. The monitoring report had highlighted the school's well-planned and well-structured curriculum. RE had not been specifically mentioned within the Ofsted monitoring.

The RE Today Advisor reported that Ofsted inspections had been suspended over the summer term whilst schools had been operating, at times, with lower attendances of children. Ofsted had recently commenced visits as opposed to inspections, with the aim of determining how schools had been managing during the pandemic. It was anticipated that full Ofsted inspections would commence from January, 2021.

The RE Today Advisor advised that Ofsted had recently appointed a number of HMI Curriculum Experts to help improve the subject knowledge of its inspection teams under its new framework. The HMI Curriculum Expert appointed for religious education was Mr. Richard Kueh, who would work closely to train inspectors and support schools in understanding Ofsted's expectations with regard to what quality religious education should encompass. She added that she would be working closely with the inspectors.

A Member referred to SACRE's previous meeting and the inconsistent teaching of RE within secondary schools. He emphasised the need to continue strong community cohesion with the teaching of RE in both primary and secondary schools and that SACRE needed to ensure that happened. The Director, Access and Inclusion advised that Walsall had only two maintained secondary schools, both of which were Catholic schools and both of which covered a robust RE curriculum. The other secondary schools within Walsall were academies and the responsibility of their curricular monitoring lay with the Regional Schools Commission and with the Trusts overseeing the academies. The Director, Access and Inclusion stated that should the local authority receive any concerns from any of the partners involved in SACRE with regard to the potential lack of RE teaching within secondary academies, the local authority would raise the issue with the Regional Schools Commissioner and with the Trusts directly.

Following further discussions, it was agreed that the RE Today Consultant would draft a letter in consultation with the Chair on behalf of SACRE, to send to all secondary schools with regard to their RE curriculum with a request for the schools to respond. The responses would be included as an item at the next meeting of SACRE.

Members requested that a representative from Walsall For All be invited to the next SACRE meeting to discuss primary and secondary RE education and community cohesion and whether there would be the potential for any funding. The teaching of RE within secondary schools was easier to monitor due to the availability of examination data but SACRE should also consider supporting primary schools and monitor their provision in the future.

**Actions:**

- i. The Clerk to send a letter of congratulations to both King Charles Primary School and Palfrey Infant School on behalf of SACRE in relation to their Ofsted reports;
- ii. A representative from Walsall For All to be invited to the next meeting.
- iii. A letter to be sent to all secondary schools within Walsall with regard to their RE curriculum. Responses to be reported back to the next meeting.

The item did not require a formal decision and therefore the item was taken as noted.

**Resolved (unanimously by assent)**

That Members noted the report.

## 6. National Update Autumn 2020

A number of SACRE National Updates for Autumn 2020 had been submitted by the RE Today Consultant to provide information relating to RE nationally (see annexed).

The RE Today Consultant presented the document and drew members' attention to the questions following each article within the document to enable members to reflect upon the items. She stated that the reason for sharing the national updates was to enable SACRE members to share the information within their represented community groups, faith groups, non-belief groups or schools to ensure that communities were made aware of SACRE and of its responsibilities. In particular, the RE Today Consultant drew members' attention to the following items within the updates:-

### Interfaith Week – 8<sup>th</sup> November to 15<sup>th</sup> November, 2020

The week would be an opportunity for pupils to explore inter faith issues and for schools to build relationships with faith, belief and inter faith groups within their community. Details of the Interfaith Week plus any other items of interest to be included within Walsall weekly schools bulletins/briefings.

### GCSE Results

The number of pupils taking GCSE Religious Studies nationally in 2020 had declined slightly from 2019. The RE Today Consultant advised that she would provide some School Workforce and historical data to the next meeting to provide a comparison between the national statistics and Walsall.

### Changes in RS Examinations for 2021

There would be no change to the content taught nor assessments in RS for GCSE, AS or A level for 2021. The RE Today Consultant advised that following a recent ministerial briefing, exams would be taken around three weeks later than previously scheduled, on or around 7<sup>th</sup> July. GCSE results would be available on 27<sup>th</sup> August, 2020 and A Level results available on 24<sup>th</sup> August, 2020. She further added that RS was a subject that must continue to be taught to all pupils from age 5 to 18 whether or not a pupil chose RS as an examination subject or not.

The Director, Access and Inclusion reiterated that Walsall had a duty to ensure all schools taught the full curriculum. Should there be concerns about maintained schools not providing RS, support would be offered and with regard to academies, the RS Commissioner and the Trusts would be notified. She further advised that Walsall had an active Primary Network. SACRE could make a request through the Primary Network for all primary schools to complete a self-evaluation of their RE delivery. The findings to be shared within the network meetings to provide school to school support for further development and reported back to SACRE to follow up with regard to content and quality.

The RE Today Advisor to liaise with primary schools and collate relevant data.

Reminder of the timing of SATs tests in 2021: Adaptions available for Muslim Pupils

In 2021, Eid may sit within the week of SATs tests. The DfE have advised that should any pupils be absent from school, the school is permitted to make rearrangements of the SATs tests.

Increase in the number of secondary teachers

More secondary trainee teachers for RE teachers have been recruited than the target set. Secondary school placements are required for the trainees from summer 2021.

Materials available for self isolating pupils, social distances RE and any further lockdowns.

Materials were available for teachers to download and use for free and to share with pupils and parents to support with home learning or if self isolating.

Anti-Racist RE

NATRE and Re Today working with the Free Churches Group and Methodist Schools to launch a project to help teachers tackle racism in RE lessons. The case studies, plans and lessons were available on the NATRE website to be shared with schools.

A member of SACRE reported that her school had downloaded and used the materials provided by RE Today for pupils who had been self-isolating and she thanked the RE Today Advisor.

**Resolved**

- i. That the local report be noted

**7. Date of next meeting:**

The next meeting had been agreed for 8<sup>th</sup> March, 2021

**Termination of meeting**

The meeting terminated at 6.43 p.m.

Chairman: .....

Date: .....