Minutes of the meeting of the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) held in Conference Room 2 - Herefordshire Council, Plough Lane Offices, Hereford, HR4 0LE on Friday 28 March 2025 at 2.00 pm

Chairperson:

Geoff Sallis Humanism representative

Voting members present in person:

Carolyn Ault Bahá'í faith representative

Louise Barker Secondary school teacher representative

Jonathan Nicholas Church of England representative

Councillor Rob Owens
Councillor Justine Peberdy
Ruth Stanier
Councillor John Stone
Herefordshire Council
Quaker faith representative
Herefordshire Council

In attendance:

Kevin Devaney Cheltenham Inter Faith
Raoul Smith Jewish faith representative

Support officers:

Ben Baugh Herefordshire Council Stephen Pett Consultant to SACRE

14. WELCOME AND THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

The Chairperson welcomed attendees to the meeting. With reference made to a visit to South Africa to speak to political groups during its transition from apartheid, the Chairperson recited a verse by Archbishop Desmond Tutu which reflected on the importance of forgiveness.

15. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been received from Mark Harrington (a Church of England representative) and Tracey Westlake (Primary school teacher representative). Apologies were also noted from Pam Howell (School Improvement Advisor, Herefordshire Council).

16. NAMED SUBSTITUTES

There were no substitutes present.

17. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting were received.

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 15 November 2024 be confirmed as a correct record and be signed by the Chairperson.

18. WRITTEN PUBLIC QUESTIONS

No written questions had been received.

19. UPDATE ON THE AGREED SYLLABUS

Stephen Pett noted that a draft model had been considered at the previous meeting (minute 6 of 15 November 2024 refers) and outlined the amendments being made; including additional places to visit in the locality and the incorporation of examples of 'ways of knowing' / multi-disciplinary approaches. The working draft was displayed at the meeting and the key changes were explained.

Participants discussed the relevancy of encouraging critical awareness, particularly given the spread of misinformation.

Stephen Pett also highlighted: the additional units on religious and non-religious worldviews (such as the celebration of key festivals), anti-racism, and care for the Earth; and the practical guidance for teachers on building long-term plans for progression.

In response to a question from the Chairperson, Stephen Pett confirmed that work was being undertaken with a neighbouring authority to develop a new syllabus to embed fully the religion and worldviews, and ways of knowing approaches.

There was a brief discussion about opportunities to draw attention to diversity within belief systems.

20. AGREED SYLLABUS LAUNCH: PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Stephen Pett reported that the Primary Conference would take place at The Bishop of Hereford's Bluecoat School and outlined the programme for the event.

Link to the flyer 'Launching the revised Herefordshire RE Syllabus - Primary, Thursday 10 July 2025'.

21. AGREED SYLLABUS LAUNCH: SECONDARY SCHOOLS (To Follow)

Stephen Pett reported that the Secondary Conference would take place at the University of Worcester, with the joint launch of the Herefordshire and the Worcestershire syllabuses, and outlined the programme for the event.

Link to the flyer 'Launching the revised Worcestershire and Herefordshire RE Agreed Syllabuses - Secondary, Wednesday 25 June 2025'.

22. NATIONAL RE UPDATES (SPRING 2025)

It was reported that, following the Department for Education's call for evidence for the Curriculum Review, an interim report had been published.

Link to the 'Curriculum and Assessment Review: Interim Report, March 2025'.

Stephen Pett advised the meeting that, in terms of RE, under the heading 'Subjects not on the national curriculum' (page 29), the interim report recognised that '...evidence suggests that a lack of national agreed content standards has led to national disparities in the quality of provision' and that the Review was to consider related points before publishing its final report.

23. 2025 HEREFORDSHIRE SCHOOL WORKFORCE DATA AND RESULTS

A spreadsheet document, '2025 Herefordshire School Workforce Data and GCSE results', was circulated to SACRE members in advance of the meeting.

It was reported that data was collected by the Department for Education (DfE) through the school workforce census but inconsistencies in subject titles and submissions by schools could distort the statistics.

There was a discussion about the robustness of the information presented for Herefordshire and the potential role of SACRE to seek clarifications from the schools.

The Chairperson commented on the need to explore how and why the data was being produced, and how it should be utilised, before undertaking any follow-up activity.

24. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as Friday 11 July 2025, 2.00 pm.

It was requested that the suggested dates of subsequent meetings be reviewed to facilitate attendance by more participants, perhaps by scheduling meetings on different weekdays and times.

The meeting ended at 3.05 pm

Chairperson