

Minutes of the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE)

26/03/2025 – MS Teams

Present

Name	Role/Representative	Initials
Bev Petch (Chair)	Chair	BP
Donna Grosvenor (Vice-Chair)	Teacher, St Mary & St Margaret's CE Primary School	DG
Alison Badger	Teacher, Alderbrook School	AB
Ian Carnell	Birmingham Diocese and United Reformed Church	IC
Selina Giles	Teacher, Castle Bromwich Junior School	SG
David Harris	Education adviser – Catholic schools	DH
Cecil Knight	Methodist Church representative	CK
Michael Lancashire	Humanist representative	ML
Cllr Sardul Marwa	Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council	Cllr SM
Cllr Annette Mackenzie	Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council	Cllr AM
Claire Potts	School Adviser Solihull MBC (Observer)	CP
Afifa Tufail	Solihull Muslim Association	AT

Apologies

Cllr Heather Delaney	Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council	Cllr HD
Anne Hollis	Teacher, Dorridge Primary School	AH

Consent was sought and given by attendees for today's meeting to be recorded.

Welcome and introductions

BP welcomed everyone and reviewed the actions from the previous meeting. She apologised for not being able to address all of them but confirmed that she had

completed the annual report and would be submitting it by 31/03/2025 deadline to the DfE.

Minutes of the last meeting held on 05/02/2025 and actions

Amendment, ML was present at the last meeting.

Online research found that 59 out of 153 local authorities have used RE Today to write their agreed syllabus. KES was tasked with sending out figures to members regarding the number of licences to be purchased in advance of this meeting. The figure is 25, which are for the schools required to teach the agreed syllabus.

A face-to-face meeting with Donna and Michael was arranged and completed, which was very helpful. It was crucial to get the list accurate to avoid buying licences for the wrong schools.

BP was to contact Deborah Western about benchmarking for schools and the national figures for GCSE and A levels. She asked the Data and Performance team for this information, but the data has not yet been released by the DfE.

There was a conversation about the review process for the agreed syllabus. BP suggested it needed a year to embed before seeking feedback from schools on its progress and ensure RE subject leaders and other teachers who teach RE have access to a licence.

ML is currently working on a draft set of slides for SACRE, which he plans to send to BP by tomorrow lunchtime.

There was a question raised about a Hindu representative, and how SACRE should get somebody from the Hindi faith to join the group. This needs to be addressed.

Update on the progress as we work towards the new agreed syllabus

BP expressed concerns about the agreed syllabus launch, which is just two weeks away on 9th April. So far, the only material she had received from RE Today was the draft front cover, with no access to the content. However, she had emailed the company today to raise her concerns.

BP had met with Ian Nicholson from RE Today on 7th February to plan the launch and he explained that they were moving away from using the Model A agreed syllabus, which focuses on thematic learning, to a Model B + 1 approach, which is more systematic and includes substantive elements. This approach helps children make better progress and deepen their learning.

Members are all invited to the launch event on April 9th, but as mentioned, this event is only two weeks from today, and BP still hadn't received the link for the event.

Action: BP would ensure that members received the link prior to the launch on 9th April.

DG asked how teachers were being informed about the launch. She also informed the members that she will be attending the launch in her capacity as a RE teacher. BP explained that notice would go out in Monday's headlines and hoped schools would pass the information onto subject leaders. Each school could send only one representative.

BP said the focus is on ensuring the right people attend. Unfortunately, only 15 schools had responded to the RE survey, which was an even lower response rate than previous surveys. She felt this reflected a concerning level of disengagement with RE across schools. She also said that some schools were expecting resource provisions (e.g., handling objects, demonstration lessons, schemes of work) without recognising their responsibility to develop their own curriculum in line with the agreed syllabus. There were several schools, including some large academies, who do not appear to be teaching RE, making them legally non-compliant.

A face-to-face meeting had taken place with BP, DG and ML to ensure accurate school licence purchases. 25 licences had been purchased for maintained schools at a cost of £2,950 (down from an initial quote of £9,000). Academies may opt in for £65 per licence. The launch event will cover syllabus planning, intent, pedagogy, assessment, and knowledge and schools will be strongly encouraged to adopt the syllabus, and those with no RE provision will receive targeted support and challenge. The next steps will be finalising the attendee list and ensuring RE subject leaders receive the course materials, following up with non-compliant schools to address gaps and strengthening communication and support for curriculum planning and assessment.

BP said she would be speaking with her manager around the process for the local authority formally adopting the new agreed syllabus, as she needed to be clear on which cabinet members it must go to, to make that decision.

She had also written the RE annual report which she shared with members. The report is a statutory requirement that is compulsory for SACRE and needs to be submitted to ministers at the Department for Education by the 31st of March.

Action: KES to send out the annual report and self-evaluation to all members.

There was talk around articles of faith resources and artefacts and DG said there are artefact websites available, including the TTS Group. BP suggested information could

be made available in the future on the Council website page to include links to videos that are featured on the RE hubs website.

BP said that one of the problems had been the amount of work around the agreed syllabus and gathering artwork from the children and young people to send onto RE Today. BP said that moving forward, she needs to ask members for help if there is a piece of work that has a specific deadline. ML suggested BP should set up a calendar so the group could plan more effectively.

DH wanted to thank BP for all her hard work on the annual report and acknowledged the amount of effort she had gone to in producing the document. He said it was very accurate and honest, particularly around the funding for RE. BP appreciated DH's words and said she just wanted to be clear that the Council was still not meeting its statutory duties around providing the resource that is needed by SACRE to fulfil its functions.

BP had attended an online NASACRE evening workshop which focused on the role of Group D (councillor colleagues). The person leading was Claire Clinton, who developed the idea of the RE hubs.

Date and time of next meeting

Wednesday 4th June 2025 4:30pm – 6:15pm via Teams.

I confirm that these minutes are a true and accurate representation of the SACRE meeting.



Bev Petch, Chair of Solihull SACRE, 26/03/2025