

STANDING ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

WEDNESDAY, 12TH NOVEMBER, 2025

Present: Vincent Saunders in the Chair

Councillors L Ford-Horne (Vice-Chair), R Lawton, Knight, B Joshi, P Thomson, J Kelly, Cllr R Burton and Cllr M Le Poidevin

45 Apologies

Apologies for absence had been received from Claire Jones.

46 Declarations of Interests

There were no declarations of interest made on this occasion.

47 Welcome and introductions if necessary

48 Opening reflection

The Chair advised that they had recently spoken with a pupil about body image. This conversation had led to the realisation that a pupil of 12 years old, with SEND, could see beyond the external body image and that what is important is on the inside.

49 Confirmation of Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 June 2025 were agreed as a true and correct record. Following a request for clarification, it was advised that Vince Saunders is the Chair, Councillor Burton was considered as a Vice Chair to assist the Chair on a particular matter, and following the meeting Linda Ford-Horne had agreed to be the Vice Chair for the remainder of this year.

Voting: Unanimous

50 SACRE's Role in Supporting Cohesion and Calm Amid National Tensions linked to Planning for next conference (GP, DR, VS)

It was advised that the Chair and Vice Chair had been considering a list of people to approach to speak at the next conference. It has been felt that inviting guest speakers could be expensive and there was a wealth of knowledge in the local community that could be called upon. A meeting would be held soon with Georgie Pender to progress this. It was explained that they head of Community Involvement would be invited to this meeting to advise how to link with the wider community and consider mutual issues with such bodies as the Police and voluntary sector. This meeting would be held on 6 February 2026. A suggested working title for this work was 'Preventing Tensions'. It was suggested that Interfaith Network Dorset could be contacted, regarding their recent work on removing barriers, for a further area of consideration.

51 Update on checking R.E teachers list (VS)

The Chair advised that schools had been contacted, requesting contact details for the lead RE teachers. Whilst feedback was being waited for the lack of corrections being requested was

hopeful. It was suggested that this exercise of reviewing lists of RE teachers should be carried out twice a year.

52 Update on reaching out to schools (DR, VS)

The committee received an update on the work regarding reaching out to schools and how best to support them. However, as only about 12 out of the 96 local schools fell under the local authority, it was difficult to know how best to support these schools with religious education needs. It was hoped to expand these visits and maintain progress.

Those on the committee whose job role included visiting schools, offered to talk to the schools about the work of the SACRE, as it was agreed that repeating the message about the work carried out by this SACRE would be helpful. It was agreed to circulate a summary of what SACRE does for this purpose. It was advised that all schools still have the onus on them to follow locally agreed syllabus', unless they consciously decided not to. It was agreed that it be asked if schools were aware of this.

53 Action plan update (DR)

It was recognised that the action plan was a rolling update of activities.
It was agreed that updates from school visits be included.

54 Hub report

It was explained that there was an ambition to increase the number of hubs in Dorset, as geographically it was a large area, which can hamper meeting attendance. Work was being done to set up the infrastructure for establishing new hubs.

Learn Teach Read Area three – there was a desire for all schools to access this, which supported providing excellent religious education, this would provide a consistency across the area.

55 AOB to be notified to Chair before the meeting

It was advised that an interfaith network event would be held on Saturday 15 November, between 2 - 4:00pm, at Bournemouth library. The event would be an opportunity for various world religions to be represented, providing information and signposting.

It was advised that a grant application had been successful in relation to project roots. Work had been continuing with primary school teachers to help them recognise anti-Semitism. Further work was to include the creation of a toolkit to allocate to schools to help with awareness. Consideration was given as to whether other faith groups may find such a toolkit useful. The committee were advised about the Dora Love project which enabled year 8 pupils and above to look at projects against prejudice.

1654 Councillors Le Poidevin and Burton left the meeting.

56 Dates of future meetings

It was advised that the national SACRE Conference would be held on 6 February 2026.
The next meeting of this Committee would be held on 11 March 2026.

Duration of the meeting: 4.00 - 5.00 pm

Chairman at the meeting on
Wednesday, 12 November 2025