

PORTSMOUTH STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

MINUTES OF THE MEETING held on Thursday 13 July 2017 at
4.30 pm in Ground Floor Meeting Room 5, Portsmouth Civic Offices.

Present

Christian denominations and other religions and their denominations reflecting the principal religious traditions of the area

(Group A Representatives)

Elizabeth Jenkerson, Baha'i Faith

Ruth Guyer, Judaism

Peter Davies, The Fellowship of Independent
Evangelical Churches

Renuka Vyas, Hinduism

Syed Aminul Haque, Islam

Honorary Alderman Tom Blair, Roman Catholic

Representatives of the Church of England

(Group B Representatives)

Brian Hay, Anglican Diocese

Teachers representing the various key stages and an association recognised by the Authority for the purposes of consultation and negotiation

(Group C Representatives)

Sarah Sadler, Primary School Representative

Representatives of the Authority, at least two of whom shall be elected members of the Authority

(Group D Representatives)

Councillor Ryan Brent (Vice Chair, in the Chair)

Councillor Suzy Horton

Also in Attendance

Mike Stoneman, Deputy Director for Education

Patricia Hannam, Professional Advisor (Hampshire
Inspection and Advisory Service (HIAS))

Peter Smith-Parkyn, Clerk, Democratic Services, PCC

Observer: Dr Eugenio Echeverria

1 Welcome and Introduction

The Vice-Chair, Councillor Ryan Brent welcomed everybody to the meeting.

2 Moment for Quiet Reflection

Honorary Alderman Tom Blair led the moment of reflection, asking that
SACRE consider the atrocities in Manchester, Finsbury Park London mosque
and more recently the Grenfell Tower disaster. Imploring that people come

together to help one another, citing Cardinal Nichols', 'We must all be builders of understanding, compassion and peace'.

3 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Captain Teresa Everett, Geoff Wheeler, Reverend Jane Ball, Sue Bowen, Sarah Coote and Councillor David Tompkins.

4 Declaration of Interests

Elizabeth Jenkerson declared a non-prejudicial interest in that she is on the selection board for Westhill grants.

5 Minutes of the Previous Meeting held on 1 March 2017

Amendment to the minutes with regard to Minute 12, to add the inclusion of the word "University" after Winchester. Also, in the final sentence of Minute 15 that "troubled" be replaced by "young people".

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 1 March 2017 be confirmed and signed by the Chair as a correct record subject to the changes identified.

6 Matters Arising

It was requested that actions be bullet pointed, for ease of future reference.

Agreed.

7 Brief Updates or Notifications of items to be brought to a future meeting

There were none.

8 Monitoring Group Report

SACRE received a written report from the newly re-constituted monitoring group, including revised terms of reference.

It was recognised that it will be more than challenging for the monitoring group to compare the new 1 to 9 graded GCSE results, with the former A to F grading method. It was explained that the new grading method is based on a distribution curve and not criteria referencing. Meaning that only a certain percentage will receive the top marks in any given year.

It was agreed that

(1) SACRE endorses the Terms of Reference for the Monitoring sub-committee and;

(2) Notes the findings of this group's first Monitoring group meeting.

9 Report regarding the implementation of the Agreed Syllabus

Patricia Hannam presented her report, stating that a number of secondary headteachers had attended the briefing on the new syllabus. Patricia suggested another briefing next spring for teachers.

Mike Stoneman said he is aware that half the Portsmouth schools have been covered and have engaged with the new syllabus. Mike agreed to further highlight the matter at half term breakfast meetings.

Sarah Sadler agreed to report feedback from her Headteachers' meetings.

Patricia Hannam reported that in her experience, it is known that the teaching of Religious Education works best when schools' senior management are both aware and support the syllabus. Further to this, as Ofsted have regard to School Governors as part of the leadership team of a school, that the School Governor Forums be invited and included in future briefings.

It was agreed that Mike Stoneman and Patricia Hannam will liaise to ensure full coverage of the Living Difference III syllabus.

10 Report on "The Commission on RE"

Patricia Hannam presented her report on the work of the "Commission on RE".

Patricia further reported that based on previous reports, the legal framework could be revisited, this however could be quite complex.

The Commission's terms of reference are appended to the report, which SACRE members noted. It was further noted that such concepts as the "right to withdraw" (from attending a subject) have some strong and compelling reasons from the parent's point of view. Caution however was asked that withdrawal in all cases may not be in the best overall interests and may equally be for the wrong reasons.

The Commission is holding numerous evidence gathering hearings, in addition to the significant evidence already gathered. Patricia indicated that it would be her intention to present the final report for SACRE.

SACRE members discussed the matter of locally determined RE syllabus versus the concept of introduction of a national curriculum. It was pointed out that Academies would not be required to follow a national curriculum. SACRE members would like RE to have equal status with other subjects such as History.

ACTION:

- Patricia Hannam with Mike Stoneman are to invite the RE commissioner to Portsmouth, with a view of also attending a future SACRE meeting.

Resolved that

(1) the report be noted and;

(2) "The Commission on RE" Terms of Reference are noted

11 Verbal Report on the Southampton Guidance Document

Patricia Hannam reported that Hampshire had taken a slightly difference approach to that of Southampton, which the Clerk will circulate to members of SACRE. Broadly, the advice is simple and encourages a common sense, sensitive and open dialogue approach, as matters must be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Patricia shared a number of examples she had come across, demonstrating sensitivities, such as wearing a veil in school, or separating boys and girls swimming lessons.

SACRE felt that a Portsmouth document would be advantageous to be drafted to aid in city wide consistent approach to dealing with such sensitive matters. It was further suggested that added value would be given to the drafting of a Portsmouth guidance document by consulting with Head Teachers.

Elizabeth added that with the Southampton guidance document (previously circulated), the emphasis was also placed on being mindful of both parents' and child's wishes and always err on the side of respect and sincerity.

Resolved that

- (1) the Clerk circulate to all members of SACRE the Hampshire guidance document and;**
- (2) Mike Stoneman to prepare with Patricia Hannam a draft document for SACRE to consider.**

12 Appointment of a SACRE member to serve as our Representative on the South Central HUB

Patricia Hannam explained that approximately 5 years ago the South Central HUB became much larger, with 12 SACREs attending. There focus on CPD, advance Networks for teachers and the establishment of the reading & research group (in Winchester).

The South Central HUB is keen to meet at least once a term and in addition to an appointed representative, encourages other members of SACREs to also attend.

Elizabeth Jenkerson agreed to be Portsmouth SACRE representative.

Patricia Hannam to provide the clerk with dates of their meetings for circulation.

Resolved that Elizabeth Jenkerson is appointed as the Portsmouth SACRE representative to the South Central HUB.

13 Hallmarks of a successful SACRE

Patricia Hannam presented her overview report on NASACRE's chair, Paul Smalley's report. The importance of being well represented at meetings by the four constituent groups and be representative of area in which the SACRE operates Portsmouth SACRE currently achieves these aims.

SACRE considered the concept of creating a youth SACRE to consider the same SACRE matters by young people, it was felt important that the views from local schools be considered before progressing. Councillor Brent suggested the representative groups on SACRE could ask their own young people to be involved, should this be progressed. The premise is to help encourage both participation, understanding and importantly engagement with the SACRE's role and functions. It was further felt that young people need to be worked with any proposals and not have concepts imposed on them.

Patricia Hannam shared that in Hampshire 5 to 7 schools bring young people to a once a term event. Patricia provides the materials and leads on appropriate workshops and mixing children from different schools. An example of a previous event posed the question "Reality verses Religion?" encouraging the safe place that primarily exists within RE teaching to discuss such matters.

Peter Davies reminded SACRE members that we previous ran a Student Enrichment Conference which was last held on 3rd July 2014 at Portsmouth College.

SACRE welcomed the suggestion by Mike Stoneman that he will bring the matter to the attention of headteachers through the new Network meetings.

ACTION : Would await feedback from headteachers on whether a youth SACRE would be welcomed.

Resolved that SACRE noted the report.

14 Election of Chair and Vice-Chair

Following the re-appointment of the City Council representatives on SACRE a vacancy has arisen for the position of Chair.

Nominations of Councillor Ryan Brent for Chair and Councillor Suzy Horton for Vice-Chair were received.

Resolved that

- (1) Councillor Ryan Brent is elected Chair of SACRE for the period of 2 years and;**
- (2) Councillor Suzy Horton is elected as Vice-Chair of SACRE for the period of 2 years.**

15 Date and venue of the next meeting

The next SACRE meeting will be on Wednesday 8 November 2017, starting at 4:30pm, venue to be confirmed by the clerk.

Before concluding the meeting, Councillor Ryan Brent welcomed Dr Eugenio Echeverria (Latin American Centre for Philosophy for Children) who observed the meeting to address SACRE.

Dr Eugenio Echeverria from Mexico, who had recently attended the International Conference For Philosophy for Children in Madrid, thanked SACRE for the opportunity to observe the meeting. Dr Echeverria expressed his appreciation and admiration for the work of SACRE in promoting tolerance and respect through supporting good RE teaching.

Dr Echeverria further expressed his approval that RE embraces philosophical enquiry, enhancing children young people's ability to think clearly, to construct good arguments and as well as express them thoughtfully with others. Dr Echeverria also conveyed his appreciation of the Agreed Syllabus, *Living Difference III* which is reaching the International audience.

The meeting concluded at 5:52pm.

Chair