

PORTSMOUTH STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

MINUTES OF THE MEETING held on Wednesday 13 November 2013 at 4.30 pm at the Ethnic Minority Achievement Service, Craneswater Junior School site, Southsea.

Present

Group A Representatives

Peter Davies, The Fellowship of Independent
Evangelical Churches (In the Chair)
Marilyn Leggett, The Salvation Army
Elizabeth Jenkerson, Baha'i Faith
Geoff Wheeler, Baptist Union
Mr Syed Aminul Haque, Islam

Group B Representatives

Emily Fletcher (for Tony Blackshaw), Church of England
Graham Stewart (for Brian Hay), Church of England

Group C Representatives

Beverley Millsom, Special School Representative

Group D Representatives

Maria Cole, Portsmouth City Council

Co-opted Representatives

Sue Ganter

Officers in Attendance

Sarah Long, Local Authority Representative
Peter Smith-Parkyn, Democratic Services
Patricia Hannan - County Inspector Adviser
RE/History from Hampshire

40 Welcome and Introduction (AI 1)

The chairman welcomed everybody to the meeting and introduced Peter Smith-Parkyn from Democratic Services who will be taking over from Teresa Deasy who recently retired.

41 Moment for Quiet Reflection (AI 2)

Beverly Millsom led the moment of reflection by sharing Redwood Park School's "thought of the week", which was with regard to Remembrance Sunday and read a poem on the subject.

42 Apologies for Absence (AI 3)

Apologies were received from Councillor David Horne and also from Taki Jaffer, Sarah Sadler, Sarah Hanley, Ruth Guyer, John Spiegehalter, Juliette Straw and Patrick Quirke.

43 Minutes of the Previous Meetings held on 19th June 2013 (AI 4)

(TAKE IN MINUTES)

The minutes of the SACRE meeting were reviewed, with minor amendments being made. Minute 31, paragraph 7, Sue Ganter added that the conference shouldn't interfere with the Year 9 pupils. Minute 35, paragraph 1, it was reported that SACRE had paid its dues to NASACRE and would get access to the website.

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 19 June 2013 be agreed as a correct record subject to the amendments referred to above.

44 Matters Arising (AI 5)

(a) Minute No 32 - SACRE classroom visits Guidelines and report template (draft)

Sarah Long reported that the protocol sub-committee has not met to consider this matter any further. It was suggested that schools should be asked about what they would want/need in place. It was also suggested that some schools may not be keen for a SACRE member visit.

It is hoped that the SACRE Protocol Sub-Committee, will be able to meet to look more closely at this matter and report back.

ACTION: the SACRE Protocol Sub-Committee meeting to discuss and report back.

(b) Minute No 33 - Website

Sue Ganter corrected the record, indicating that it was Michael Dawes suggestion to invite students at the conference to vote on the logo. It was agreed that it would be useful to place the catalogue of the RE boxes on the website. In addition it was suggested that Michael may be able to find a learning platform to be included on the SACRE website.

ACTION: Michael Dawes to send the SACRE website link to the SACRE clerk for forwarding to SACRE members.

(c) Minute No 34 - RE Twilights

Beverly Millsom reported that she had a very welcoming and productive meeting with the Imam and offered to pass on the details of her meeting to other members. She also advised of future network meetings which are;

- 10 December - RE Network meeting (at Redwood Park 3:30pm-5pm)
- 16 January - Synagogue (details to be confirmed)
- 13 May - Hindu Faith (at Redwood Park 3:30pm-5pm)

Maria Cole also informed SACRE members of training in Winchester in May and circulated the details.

45 RE Boxes

Faith groups were given documents showing the content of the RE Boxes so that they could assist by adding descriptions, to further use for schools.

Sarah Long reported that EMAS has over 60 boxes, that are well organised and were charging only £1 per box per week.

It was suggested that EMAS include a flier about the RE boxes when EMAS send out the festivals packs to raise awareness that they are available for hire.

Sue Ganter requested a description of all the boxes and artefacts once the description of the contents has been completed. Other SACRE members expressed an interest in also knowing what is being held. Sarah agreed that EMAS will pass on the link containing this information.

ACTION: EMAS to pass on to Sue Ganter the descriptions of the RE boxes and to the clerk to forward on to SACRE members.

Beverley Millsom offered to help with advice on whether there are any items missing or with handling instructions, which was welcomed.

Peter Davies extended the previous offer for members of SACRE to look at the boxes.

46 Financial Report (AI 8)

A summary of the SACRE accounts were reviewed and noted.

RESOLVED that the financial report be noted.

47 Finance Sub-Committee - Minutes of the meeting held on 19 June 2013

(TAKE IN MINUTES)

Beverley Millsom reported that the actions identified had taken place.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Finance Sub-Committee held on 19 June 2013 be noted.

48 Information Sharing from Patricia Hannan - County RE/History from Hampshire

Peter Davies introduced Patricia and welcomed her to the meeting.

Patricia started by reassuring the SACRE members that RE in schools is still considered to be important and will continue to be the case.

Despite Religious Education being removed from the National Curriculum in 2010, there is no change to teaching of RE, in terms of what needs to be done or the role and responsibilities of SACRE bodies. She confirmed that SACRE still operates a statutory function which is to provide oversight, advice and the provision of religious education.

Patricia explained that she would concentrate on the following points in her presentation; APPG (All Party Parliamentary Group; Academies; Review of syllabus; Ofsted review of RE and Wessex Hub.

APPG (All Party Parliamentary Group)

The RE Council, chaired by John Keast, was a large umbrella organisation. and Patricia suggested that members of SACRE visit their website for more information. Patricia explained that approximately two years ago the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) was set up which attracted more than 20 Members of Parliament to sign up. It was suggested, that members write to their local MPs to encourage them to join the APPG if they had not already done so.

The APPG published a report on the shortage of RE teachers, adding concerns that fewer were opting to undertake the training to become RE teachers. The MPs concluded along with their key recommendations that "RE is too important in a civil society" to ignore perhaps.

Patricia added that it is important to share information and knowledge and said that approximately 50 secondary school teachers will be going to conference and details are available on request.

Academies

Patricia reported that there are three main types of academies which are not obliged to follow the National Curriculum and are not under the control of the local authority, or indeed SACRE. The three types are those initially setup under the Blair Labour government in 2000. Converter Academies and Sponsored Academies.

Converter academies are high achieving schools (Good or Outstanding Ofsted results) that have chosen to convert to academies in order to benefit from the increased autonomy academy status brings.

Sponsored academies (academy groups) are usually set up to replace under-

performing schools with the aim of improving educational standards.

Patricia commented that as part of their funding agreement, academies have to teach RE but SACRE has no oversight of them.

Peter Davies commented that whilst SACRE has no statutory power to work with academies, he feels it is important to develop and maintain a good relationship with academies and work with them on the teaching of RE.

Review of Syllabus

Patricia informed members that following a poor Ofsted review of children's services, the Isle of Wight (IOW) had joined with Hampshire. Patricia noted that IOW still operates its own Council and SACRE. It is hoped that Portsmouth would join for the review starting in September 2014, to be published in the autumn of 2015.

Patricia commented that she will be being paid by Hampshire to do the review which should therefore mean there should be no cost to Portsmouth if they wish to be involved. However, there would be no money for supply teachers for teachers taking part in the review. Patricia confirmed that the review would be following the same process as in 2009 and it would be a revision and not a re-write.

Beverly Millsom suggested the use of an online questionnaire platform, such as SurveyMonkey and offered to liaise with Patricia to review to accommodate Portsmouth.

ACTION Beverley to liaise with Patricia with regard to the review questionnaire.

Patricia highlighted the three threats to Religious Education

- the Education Baccalaureate and new accountability measures;
- Academies and
- supply of new, well qualified RE teachers.

It was noted the Michael Gove MP, Secretary of State for Education admitted his mistake in excluding RE in the English Baccalaureate on 3 July, Peter Davies mentioned that he had personally written to the MP about this.

Ofsted review of RE

Patricia commented that Ofsted's subject specialist adviser for RE, Alan Brine, had reported that teaching of RE was not good enough and that RE matters and is important to young lives.

Patricia asked whether SACRE have access to the GCSE results for Religious Education in Portsmouth?

ACTION the clerk to contact the Local Authority for these details and report back.

Patricia stressed the importance of Ofsted agreeing that the "Enquiry"

approach is the best method of teaching RE. The process was explained as;

- Establishing clearer rationale
- Clarifying breadth and balance
- Appropriate knowledge
- Clarifying sequence
- Building focus

An overview of the Enquiry approach was given to the SACRE members with basic premises of encouraging debate with examples and developing connections.

Wessex Hub

Patricia explained that the RE council is reviewing RE and that it is important the SACRE bodies work together and that there will be a joint SACRE meeting in a few weeks.

ACTION that Hubs of SACRE be included on the agenda of a future meeting to explore this further.

Peter Davies concluded the presentation with thanks from the Portsmouth SACRE for an interesting and informative presentation, which has given SACRE members much to think about. Patricia agreed to send copies of all relevant links and reports to Sarah Long.

RESOLVED that Patricia Hannan be thanked for her time and her presentation to the Portsmouth SACRE.

49 Student Enrichment Day, Thursday 27 June 2013 (AI 10)

Sue Ganter reported to SACRE that overall feedback on the event had been very positive. Sue reported that a total of seven schools and 142 children took part in the 10 workshops of various faiths during the day. Whilst one presenter was unfortunately unable to attend on the day due to illness, fortunately Peter Davies was able to help out at short notice for which he was thanked.

Sue confirmed that she is in discussions with Portsmouth College with regard to the 2014 Conference.

It was felt that the conference could be improved with more teachers being involved. Also the students could be better prepared as they were not asking many questions on the day.. Sue mentioned that she has a few ideas, such as making the workshops more interactive and engaging with the students.

Beverley commented that despite "ice-breaker" sessions at the beginning of the day, it might more helpful to keep students from the same school together. A number of suggestions were mentioned such as larger groups; other "ice-breaker" suggestions and advance contact among schools through the SACRE website or social media.

Sue concluded by giving her thanks to all members of SACRE, particularly Peter Davies, Elizabeth Jenkerson, Sarah Long and EMAS for their support

and assistance.

Peter Davies thanked Sue for her report which was not as detailed as she would have liked as she had been unwell recently. It was agreed that Sue should have another opportunity at the next meeting to provide a more comprehensive report.

ACTION Student Enrichment Day to be included on the agenda at the next meeting.

50 Dates for the meetings

The following dates were proposed and agreed, the venues being subject to confirmation

Wednesday 12 March 2014 at 4:30pm at Admiral Lord Nelson School
Wednesday 25 June 2014 at 4:30pm at Portsmouth Civic Offices

ACTION: the SACRE clerk to confirm venues

51 Date of Next Meeting (AI 17)

It was noted that the next meeting would be held Wednesday 12 March 2014 at Admiral Lord Nelson School.

The meeting concluded at 6.20 pm.

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