

PORTSMOUTH STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING held on Wednesday 12 November 2008 at 4.30pm in Meeting Room 2, 3rd Floor, The Guildhall, Portsmouth.

Present

Group A Representatives

Celia Axton, Roman Catholic Church
Geoff Wheeler, Baptist Union
David Lewis, The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)
Peter Davies, The Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches
Marilyn Leggett, The Salvation Army
The Reverend Jackie Case, Methodist Church
Christine McMillan, United Reformed Church
Mr Syed Aminul Haque, Islam
Mrs Ephrat Miller-Foroughi, Bahá'í Faith
John Lance, South Hampshire Humanists

Group B Representatives

Brian Hay, Church of England
The Venerable Trevor Reader, Church of England

Group C Representatives

Ros Griffiths, Teacher Representative
Roger Bentote, Teacher Liaison's Panel
Patrick Quirke, Secondary Teacher Representative
Gill Parmee, Junior Teacher Representative
Gemma Self, Early Years Representative
Sarah Hanley, Post-16 Representative
Beverley Millsom, Special School Representative
Alan Matthews, Primary Teacher Representative

Group D Representatives

Councillor Malcolm Hey
Councillor David Horne (in the Chair)
Councillor David Stephen Butler
Taki Jaffer, PCC Representative

Co-opted Representatives

Terry Carter, Retired RE Teacher/Deputy Head Teacher
Sue Ganter, Interfusion

Officers in Attendance

Georgina Mulhall, Local Authority Representative
Teresa Deasy, Democratic & Community Engagement, PCC

24 SACRE Members Networking

Commencing at 4:00pm, prior to the business of the meeting, the chair invited SACRE members to attend an informal networking session and drinks and nibbles were served. Members spent this time getting to know each other and discussing matters relating to RE teaching and learning.

25 Apologies for Absence (AI 1)

Apologies for absence were received from the following: Lilian Weatherley; Sue Vigar-Taylor; Emma Eacott, the new Interfusion representative and Ruth Guyer.

26 Minutes of the Meeting held on 18 June 2008 (AI 2)

The minutes of the meeting were agreed as a correct record subject to the following amendments:

- (a) Councillor Hey's name be added to the list of Group D representatives attending the meeting.
- (b) In minute No 18(c), page 13 third paragraph the second sentence should be amended to read as follows "He added that sometimes at this time of the year they had money left over which needed to be spent."
- (c) In minute No 21 on page 15 the reference to the "PCC Funding Adviser" should be amended to read "PCCS Funding Adviser" and the spelling of Esmé Fairburn should be amended to read Esmée Fairbairn.
- (d) In minute No 22(c) the reference to "Solent for Christ" should be amended to read "Solent Youth for Christ" and the reference to "Assemblies for God" should be amended to read "Assemblies of God".

27 Matters Arising (AI 3)

(a) Minute No 18(c) - RE Resources for Portsmouth Schools

Taki Jaffer mentioned that he had been in touch with Georgina Mulhall with details of contacts for funding streams as mentioned in the minutes.

ACTION

Taki Jaffer to email Georgina Mulhall with further details.

(b) Minute No 20 - Local Authority Representation on SACRE

Georgina Mulhall introduced the following new teacher representatives on the SACRE: Gill Parmee, Gemma Self, Sarah Hanley and Beverley Millsom. She added that Paula Withers, a secondary school representative, had also been invited to represent teachers on the SACRE but had been unable to attend this meeting.

At this point the Reverend Jackie Case introduced herself as the new Methodist Church representative, having taken over from the Reverend Beryl Wright.

Sue Ganter explained that Emma Eacott, the new Interfusion representative would be replacing Moses Tutsegensi and would be attending SACRE meetings but had been unable to attend on this occasion.

The Chair welcomed all new members to SACRE.

28 Teachers' TV (AI 4)

Georgina Mulhall showed a DVD recording of a programme made by Teachers' TV which was filmed at her school, Solent Junior School. The film showed Year 4 pupils role playing as archaeologists speculating about Hindu artefacts. The film also showed the children in role as devotees worshipping in a Hindu temple, and finally applying the concept of devotion to their own lives.

Georgina commented that this activity was fun and inclusive, and that it encouraged higher order thinking. She commented that this was a creative and concept-driven approach which promoted the use of role play with confidence.

Georgina advised that the video could also be seen online at the following website: <http://www.teachers.tv/video/27970>.

29 GCSE Results (AI 5)

Georgina Mulhall referred to the GCSE examination results for 2008 set out on page 5 of the draft annual report, which was circulated with the agenda.

(TAKE IN GCSE RESULTS SECTION OF THE DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT)

Georgina reported that for 2008 the overall number of pupils in Portsmouth entering for an RE qualification had risen. However, it should be pointed out that the numbers entering for the full course had fallen whilst the numbers opting for the short course had risen. She added that the success rate at A-C grades was very good in the city. The national average pass rate for RE had increased by 1% whereas Portsmouth had improved by 6%.

Celia Axton commented that more pupils at St Edmund's School had entered for the short course this year and this might account for the increase in numbers.

Patrick Quirke informed members that 198 pupils at Miltoncross were currently studying the full RE course for next year's GCSE examinations. Thirty-one pupils had opted for the full course last year. The pass rate for the short course was 71% last year and 40% of those taking the course obtained grades A*-C.

Christine McMillan enquired whether other year groups were included in the short course results. Patrick Quirke explained that this would depend on the GCSE course taken by pupils in a particular school. In some schools one part of the course is taken at the end of Year 10 with the second part being taken in year 11 whilst other schools undertook both parts in Year 11. Christine then asked whether it was possible to indicate in the statistics produced which year groups were involved. However, she was advised that it was not possible to obtain this information from the data available.

Sue Ganter commented that closing of the gender gap for boys was a welcome improvement.

It was suggested by Peter Davies that a letter should be written on behalf of SACRE congratulating all schools.

ACTION

The Chair to write to all schools congratulating them on the good performance at RE in the GCSEs in 2008.

30 SACRE Area Networking Meeting (AI 6)

Peter Davies reported that the last meeting of the SACRE networking meetings had taken place on 3 July. The group involved representatives from Portsmouth, Southampton, Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. The Westminster SACRE had also been invited to attend as they had adopted the same agreed syllabus. The Bournemouth SACRE had also been invited to send a representative.

Among the items discussed at the July meeting was the subject of how SACREs elected their chairs and ran meetings. It was very interesting to note the differences. For example, the Isle of Wight SACRE has adopted the practice of rotating the chair.

It was noted that Hampshire County Council would provide funding for the training of SACRE members to assist with the teaching of RE in schools. Portsmouth's launching of the RE resources project at the City Museum had attracted much interest among the networking members.

Annual reports were also discussed and members questioned the usage of these reports by QCA. Members were concerned that the annual reports might be simply filed away and forgotten. It was suggested that annual reports should contain more information regarding monitoring, social cohesion and the agreed syllabus.

It was agreed that Portsmouth would host the next meeting, which would be held on 2 December at 2.00 pm in the Executive Meeting Room in the Guildhall, Portsmouth.

31 Annual Report Update (AI 7)

(TAKE IN DRAFT REPORT)

Georgina Mulhall referred to the draft report. She drew members' attention to page 16, the section on the development action plan. Some years ago the SACRE self-evaluation group identified a need for an action plan, which had not yet been produced. She asked for members' opinion on the need for an action plan. Members discussed the matter and in particular the need to raise SACRE's profile within the community and also to monitor support to RE teaching and learning. It was agreed that the first sentence of the comments on the SACRE development action plan should read as follows "The SACRE has a current action plan and has identified five areas that will form the basis of an action plan for 2008/09."

Members discussed key areas 5b and 5c on pages 25 and 26 of the draft report. Ros Griffiths suggested that the last sentence of paragraph 2 in key area 5b should read "In addition, SACRE also has other less formal links with both adult and youth based interfaith organisations."

Taki Jaffer mentioned that much of this information in this section had been obtained from the PRENO website. Some of the groups were no longer in existence and the information needed updating.

ACTION

- (1) Georgina Mulhall to email Taki Jaffer to request an information update on faith groups listed on the PRENO website.**
- (2) Georgina Mulhall to add South Hampshire Humanists to the list.**
- (3) SACRE members to email Georgina Mulhall with the names of any links which they would like included.**

With reference to key area 5d, 'Links to Local Authority Initiatives Promoting Diversity', Taki Jaffer announced that the Community Safety Unit would shortly be introducing a new agenda entitled "Prevent". Under this new agenda, they were very keen to work with schools and colleges in order to look at preventing violent extremism.

ACTION

Taki Jaffer to email further details to Georgina Mulhall.

Christine McMillan mentioned that she was a member of a group which was working with Portsmouth City Council on community initiatives. She referred to the One World Faith Week, which was held on 19 October and also to an event held on 26 October at Friendship House involving the Portsmouth Multi-Cultural Group. She suggested that it should be mentioned in key area 5d that the local authority supported community initiatives.

Members referred to the information given on page 18 in relation to the 24 days allocated by the local authority to provide specialist RE support to RE/collective worship within the local authority. It was pointed out that, according to the minutes of the last meeting, the part time RE specialist time allocated was 20 days and not 24 days as stated in the draft report. Georgina explained that the additional time was allocated to include her involvement in the agreed syllabus review.

ACTION

Georgina Mulhall to complete the draft annual report taking in the comments made at this meeting and to send it to Teresa Deasy. Teresa will then email the draft report to all members of the SACRE asking for their comments within one week. The report would then be finalised and sent to QCA before the end of term.

32 Interfusion (AI 8)

Sue Ganter reported that this group was still in hibernation due to lack of funds. The executive met a month ago in order to put in two final bids, as mentioned in the minutes of the last meeting.

Sue was pleased to announce that Interfusion has got through to stage 1 of their big lottery bid. If they were successful in their bid they would be able to obtain five years funding.

If the group did not achieve success with either of their bids they would have no alternative but to cease operations with an event to celebrate the excellent work achieved.

There were currently seven members of the executive but three or four of them would be going to university in September. Despite the fact that they would shortly be leaving the group, this three or four were very keen to continue working with Interfusion and wanted others to benefit from their efforts, as they had achieved a lot from the group.

Incidentally, the group had put in a bid for funding from “Young Money”, which was a local funding source which stipulated that bids had to be written by young people. The group had been advised that they stood a good chance of being successful with their bid and were therefore very surprised to be turned down. When they asked the reason for their failure to obtain funding they were told that one reason was that the panel organisers did not believe that the bid had been written by young people. Sue commented that Interfusion members were extremely upset as the young people who had written the bid had spent a lot of time and effort on it which had resulted in a very professional looking bid.

SACRE members discussed how they might be able to help Interfusion to obtain funding to enable them to continue operating.

One of the suggestions made by Ros Griffiths was that perhaps money could be obtained from the “Prevent” agenda. Taki explained that this funding had only be recently allocated and a manager was currently being recruited. Furthermore, the funding stream, which was limited, was projected to end by March 2009.

33 Resources Box Update (AI 9)

Georgina Mulhall referred to this agenda item. She added that she had updated the catalogue and distributed it to schools.

Beverley Millsom added that Redwood Park School have obtained box No 25 entitled “The Magi” and she would be using it with Year 10 pupils.

Georgina Mulhall mentioned that the allocated money had all been spent. A total of 48 boxes had been produced with the average content value of £45 for each box. She expressed her thanks to SACRE members for their donations. She added that the feedback from Court Lane School regarding the box they had borrowed had been very good and teachers had been very impressed with the service.

Christine McMillan asked whether the usage of this resource could be widened to include other groups. She explained she had been asked to give a talk on Judaism to her church’s Girls Brigade and suggested that it would be extremely useful if she could obtain the box on Judaism. She enquired as to whether she could hire a box.

ACTION

- (1) Georgina Mulhall to investigate.**
- (2) Georgina Mulhall to check that details are on the City Museum website.**

Alan Matthews commented that he had not received any information about the boxes at his school, St Jude’s Primary School. He suggested that it might be appropriate for Georgina to present an item on the resource boxes to the primary headteacher meetings.

ACTION

Georgina Mulhall to contact Alison Spittles or Claire Stephens.

34 Agreed Syllabus Review (AI 10)

Georgina Mulhall reported that she had recently met with Clive Erricker and Judith Lowndes to discuss the agreed syllabus and to outline the process. They aimed to complete the review by the end of summer 2010.

Georgina stated that she received a suggestion from Ephrat Miller-Foroughi, the Bahá'í representative on the SACRE, to include teaching on the Bahá'í faith in the agreed syllabus. She had discussed the matter with Clive and Judith, who had agreed that this proposal would be possible. However, agreement from this SACRE and the Southampton and Hampshire SACREs would be required before the proposal could be adopted. Inclusion of the Bahá'í faith would simply be a matter of inserting a page into the document; a rewrite would not be necessary.

Ephrat Miller-Foroughi explained that Bahá'í was a world religion and was recognised as one of the religions in the United Kingdom. It had already been included in the Surrey syllabus and had been trialled in Brent. Teaching about the Bahá'í faith could contribute to discussions in RE on God and peace and could help children to understand the importance of religion in society. Ephrat added that it was a very inclusive religion incorporating a rich and heroic history and that there were Bahá'í holy places and many socio-economic projects around the world.

Ephrat commented that the Bahá'í faith in the UK had an equivalent to SACRE and she reported to the UK group. Teaching material was already available which could be photocopied and DVDs were available for teachers. Finally Ephrat offered to support teaching about the Bahá'í faith in local schools.

Taki Jaffer commented that he believed it would be remiss of the Portsmouth SACRE not to have this faith included in the agreed syllabus. Alan Matthews added that he had some pupils whose parents practised the Bahá'í faith in his school. Sue Ganter added her support, commenting that, in her experience, teenagers were very interested in this faith and had a very positive attitude towards it.

The Chair asked the SACRE members to take a vote on whether to include the Bahá'í faith in the agreed syllabus. As the meeting was quorate, with all four groups A, B, C and D being represented, the matter was put to the vote and unanimously approved by all members.

RESOLVED that the Portsmouth SACRE supports the inclusion of the Bahá'í faith in the agreed syllabus.

35 Attendance/Membership (AI 11)

The Chair commented that because of the voting system adopted by the SACRE, it was important that groups A, B, C and D should be represented at all meetings. There had been instances in the past when the SACRE had been required to make a decision but had been unable to do so because it was not quorate. He suggested that members might wish to report back on this to their faith groups. He also suggested that if a representative was unable to attend a meeting they could send a deputy to represent their faith group. Teresa Deasy added that it would be helpful if representatives unable to attend could submit their apologies to her together with the name of a deputy.

ACTION

Teresa Deasy to email the draft minutes to all members as soon as they are finalised.

36 SACRE School Visits (AI 12)

Georgina Mulhall advised that school visits by SACRE members had been a practice in the past, but it had lapsed. She was keen for the practice to be resumed. In reply to a question from Councillor David Stephen Butler regarding the need for CRB checks, Georgina explained that such checks were not necessary unless visitors were required to work alone with a child.

The following school visits by SACRE members were agreed:

Redwood Park Special School - Ephrat Miller-Foroughi
Somerspark Nursery Unit - Marilyn Leggett
Priory School - Christine McMillan
Portsmouth College - Celia Axton and the Reverend Jackie Case
Newbridge Junior School - Ephrat Miller-Foroughi
Miltoncross School - Peter Davies
St Jude's Primary School - Brian Hay
St Edmund's School - Taki Jaffer

Patrick Quirke mentioned that there was a group of pupils at Miltoncross in Year 10 who were working very enthusiastically and some had expressed an interest in becoming RE teachers. He suggested that it would be very interesting to look at what this group were doing in school.

ACTION

Georgina Mulhall to contact Patrick Quirke to discuss the matter further.

Peter Davies advised members to contact him for school visit packs produced by Georgina Mulhall for distribution to members who would be visiting schools.

ACTION

- (1) SACRE members volunteering to visit the schools to contact the teachers concerned to arrange a visit.**
- (2) Teresa Deasy to include this as an agenda item for the next meeting.**

37 Any Other Business (AI 13)

- (a) SACRE Constitution - Inclusion of Humanist Representative in Group A**

Teresa Deasy explained that since the SACRE had voted at its March meeting to include the Humanist representative in Group A the wording of the constitution might need to be amended. In Group A it stated "other religions represented include" and in the list Humanism had been added. However, she asked for advice on whether Humanism was actually a religion and therefore whether this sentence needed to be reworded. Members discussed this briefly and Taki Jaffer advised that Humanism was recognised by the government as a religion. Therefore, there was no need to amend that sentence.

38 Proposed Dates of Meetings for 2009 (AI 14)

4:00pm Wednesday, 25 March at Moorings Way Infant School
4:00pm Wednesday, 10 June at St Cuthbert's Centre, Baffins
4:00pm Wednesday, 18 November in Conference Room A, Civic Offices, Portsmouth

The meeting concluded at 6.25 pm.

TMD/DMF
17 November 2008
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