

**PORTSMOUTH STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING held on Wednesday 14 March 2012 at
4.00 pm in St Edmund's Catholic School, Arundel Street, Portsmouth.

Present

GROUP A REPRESENTATIVES

Peter Davies, The Fellowship of Independent Evangelical
Churches (In the Chair)
Mrs Ephrat Miller-Foroughi, Baha'i Faith (Vice Chair)
Ruth Guyer, Judaism
Jane Lewis, Quakers
Marilyn Leggett, The Salvation Army
Sue Vigar-Taylor, Buddhism
Mr Syed Aminul Haque, Islam
Michael Dawes, Humanists

GROUP B REPRESENTATIVES

Emily Fletcher, Church of England
Brian Hay, Church of England

GROUP C REPRESENTATIVES

Siôn Reynolds, Teachers' Liaison Panel
Patrick Quirke, Secondary Teacher Representative
Gemma Self, Early Years Representative
Beverley Millsom, Special School Representative

GROUP D REPRESENTATIVES

Councillor Lynne Stagg, Portsmouth City Council
Taki Jaffer, Portsmouth City Council
Maria Cole, Portsmouth City Council

CO-OPTED REPRESENTATIVES

Sue Ganter

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

David Picton-Jones, Local Authority Representative
Teresa Deasy, Democratic Services

1 Moment for Quiet Reflection (AI 1)

Ruth Guyer recited Psalm 1:21 entitled "I will lift up mine eyes unto the mountain". She then sang the Psalm in Hebrew while the SACRE members meditated privately.

2 Apologies for Absence (AI 2)

Apologies for absence were received from Geoff Wheeler, Baptist Union; Sandra Gibb, Primary School Teacher Representative; Sarah Handley, Post-16 Representative and Councillor David Horne.

Teresa Deasy reported that Christine McMillan had offered her apologies for this meeting due to health reasons. Christine had also advised that she wished to resign as the United Reform Church Representative on the SACRE. She would be contacting the church to ask them to nominate a new representative.

RESOLVED that the Clerk be requested to write a letter of thanks to Christine McMillan for her service as a representative on the SACRE.

3 Introductions (AI 3)

The Chair introduced Mrs Patricia Hannam, Hampshire County Inspector/Advisor for RE; Mrs Jane Lewis, the new Quaker representative and two representatives from the Isle of Wight SACRE: Mr David Cave, Chair and Mr Harry Kirby, Clerk, who had been invited to attend this meeting as a networking exercise.

4 Minutes – 16 November 2011 (AI 4)

(TAKE IN MINUTES)

Patrick Quirke referred to minute number 39 on page 19. He stated that the second sentence in paragraph 3 “however, there was a problem with concept based teaching” explaining that this sentence did not accurately reflect what he had said. It was agreed that the sentence be amended to read “however, there were difficulties with the implementation of a concept based teaching approach”.

RESOLVED that, subject to the above amendment, the minutes of the meeting held on 16 November 2011 be approved as a correct record.

5 Matters arriving (AI 5)

(a) Minute No 38 -School Visits and how they are carried out

Some school visits had taken place since the last meeting and would be reported later at the meeting. David Picton-Jones advised that he had obtained the original school visits pack and was looking at it but had decided to delay revising the pack until he had consulted Patricia Hannam.

(a) Minute No 40 - SACRE Networking Meetings

The Chair advised that he had written to the Chairs of the other SACREs, as requested at the last meeting. The Isle of Wight Chair had responded and for this reason he and the Clerk had been invited to attend this meeting.

David Picton-Jones reported that he had a contact with Hampshire County Council and they had indicated a willingness to network with neighbouring SACREs. Coincidentally, the June meeting of the Hampshire SACRE would be taking place in the Southsea synagogue and this presented an opportunity to meet with them to discuss future networking. Patricia Hannam added that she was aware that the Hampshire SACRE was planning to arrange a joint meeting to re-establish the networking groups.

(b) Teaching Strategies for RE at GCSE

Ruth Guyer expressed her thanks to Patrick for arranging the conference on Teaching Strategies for RE at GCSE and for inviting some SACRE members to attend. She commented that she had found the course very interesting and beneficial.

Beverley Millsom expressed her thanks to the SACRE for financing her attendance at the course and for paying for a supply teacher to cover her classes to enable her to attend.

Patricia Hannam explained that Hampshire County Council organises training sessions from time to time when they had new SACRE members. It was possible that they could open these courses to Portsmouth SACRE new members.

Ruth Guyer asked whether it would be appropriate for Portsmouth SACRE members to take part in the Hampshire County Council training for SACRE members. Patricia Hannam agreed to invite Portsmouth SACRE members to the next training course.

ACTION

Patricia Hannam to invite Portsmouth SACRE members to attend the next Hampshire training course for SACRE members.

(c) Minute No 44(a) – Portsmouth Music Services

Beverley Millsom reported that that was a very successful event and that some SACRE members had attended.

6 RE and the agreed syllabus including the new Ofsted Framework, the role of RE in spiritual, moral and cultural education (SMCE) and RE in relation to the English Baccalaureate (AI 6)

Patricia Hannam gave a PowerPoint presentation entitled “Introduction to Living Difference Revised 2011”. She tabled handouts covering the presentation and a document explaining the brief history of RE and the duties of the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education.

(TAKE IN HANDOUTS)

During her presentation Patricia explained that the English Baccalaureate was not a qualification but it involved the study of a group of subjects. One of the subject groups was Humanities which did not cover RE. The issue is that RE was not mentioned in the list of Humanities subjects but that did not mean that it could not be one of the subjects studied.

With regard to academies, Patricia pointed out that the funding agreements for academies included a requirement that RE is taught. If it is found that RE is not being taught at an academy, this should be reported to the Department for Education or to the Academy Funding Agency. SACREs have no responsibility for overseeing the teaching of RE in academies but they can report to the DfE or the Academy Funding Agency if they find that this subject is not being taught in academy schools. Patricia urged local SACREs to work with academies in a supporting and information sharing role. David Picton-Jones added that the Charter Academy was taking part in the RE Artefacts Loan Scheme.

Patricia gave a brief explanation of the effect of the new Ofsted Framework on RE teaching in schools. The national guidance stated that a school had to provide the national curriculum including RE. If RE is not being taught in a school the Headteacher has to explain why this is so.

The Chair thanked Patricia Hannam for attending the meeting and for her interesting talk and presentation. It was suggested that SACRE members address any questions to Patricia at the end of the meeting.

7 Teaching RE at Key Stages 3 to 5 and Proposed GCSE Conference (AI 7)

The Chair reported that it had become apparent during previous SACRE meetings that whilst the SACRE had developed an involvement in monitoring RE teaching in primary schools, they had found it more difficult to perform this role with regard to secondary schools. Members recognised the need to develop links with the secondary schools in the city and that the SACRE needed help in developing these links.

The links with the primary schools had been developed when Georgina Mulhall, the Advance Skills Teacher specialising in RE, had represented the Local Authority on the SACRE. This link was continuing with the help of Beverley Millsom. However, the SACRE did not have similar links with secondary schools. In consultation with the Local Authority representative and the Clerk, the chair had suggested that it might be helpful to involve Sue Ganter, as an ex-head of RE in a secondary school. He had approached Sue on behalf of the SACRE and she had agreed to take on this role. Sue Ganter explained that this role would involve developing links with the secondary schools in the city, monitoring RE provision, gathering quantitative and qualitative information about the study of RE and how schools were using the "Living Difference".

Sue also hoped to obtain specific information about how many hours were devoted to RE in a school, how many students were taking RE at GCSE and finding out whether teachers need support from SACRE. It was hoped to set up a dialogue between secondary RE teachers and the SACRE.

David Picton-Jones explained the financial implications. He explained that SACRE's budget was currently in a reasonably healthy position as it would be able to use an amount from this year's budget and there was the understanding that a similar sum would be allocated for next year's budget.

Beverley Millsom brought up the point about Redwood Park and Mary Rose schools as they provided special education for both primary and secondary school pupils. She asked where they would fit in the system with regard to SACRE's monitoring role. It was agreed that special schools should belong in both camps.

Patrick Quirke mentioned that SACRE members had commented at the last meeting on the lack of knowledge amongst its members about the teaching of RE at secondary level. Therefore, the suggestion to employ a former head of RE in a secondary school would be very appropriate.

SACRE members then took a vote in their representative groups as set out in the SACRE constitution, on the matter of the appointment of Sue Ganter in the role of monitor of RE teaching in secondary schools on behalf of the SACRE.

RESOLVED unanimously that Sue Ganter be appointed to undertake the role of SACRE's monitor of RE teaching in secondary schools.

Patrick Quirke referred to his research on teaching RE at Key Stages 3 to 5 stating that as part of the research he has started setting up joint meetings with the Welsh Joint Examining Board and RE teachers. The meeting was arranged and 24 teachers had attended with some senior examination markers.

On the previous night, the first RE committee on religious education had been held. Heads of RE in community schools had been invited to the meeting in addition to specialist speakers. At the meeting it was agreed that teachers would support each other, share good practice and information etc. They agreed that it would be very useful if SACRE members could come to the meetings. The meeting had been open not only to community schools but also voluntary controlled, voluntary aided, foundation and independent schools.

Patrick mentioned that Patricia Hannam was establishing a group of teachers who have an interest in higher educational research. This group would involve collaboration between Portsmouth and Hampshire teachers.

Patrick Quirke then moved on to talk about the proposed RE conference. He gave some background information explaining that Portsmouth used to organise a GCSE Conference at Portsmouth College every year involving about 10 to 20 pupils. SACRE members had been involved in the workshops for the conference and representatives of the different faith groups had participated in the conference. In recent years the conference venue had been switched to South Downs College and Portsmouth had played only a background role in the organisation. Last year the conference had failed to go ahead.

SACRE members had expressed the desire to restart the conference in Portsmouth. Patrick explained that he had been involved in some preliminary meetings and discussions about resurrecting the conference. It was decided not to limit the conference to GCSE students but to open it to pupils in years 9 and 10. It would be called the RE Enrichment Conference. The programme for the conference had been agreed at the teachers' meeting held the previous evening. The conference venue would be Portsmouth College and they were awaiting confirmation from Sarah Handley at Portsmouth College on a suitable date for the conference. It was expected that the conference would be held sometime in June. Sue Ganter would also be involved in the organisation of the conference on behalf of SACRE. The plan was to get in touch with SACRE members as soon as the date for the conference was confirmed with a view to inviting them to take part in the conference. Sue Ganter advised all SACRE members wishing to take part in the conference to get in touch with her.

RESOLVED (1) that a report on the conference be brought to the next meeting of the SACRE;

(2) information on the conference to be provided to the SACRE Clerk for circulation to members.

8 NASACRE Annual General Meeting on Wednesday, 23 May at 10 am (AI 8)

Patrick Quirke mentioned that the keynote speaker, Bob Jackson, was an excellent speaker and was well known for his knowledge of religious education.

RESOLVED that Jane Lewis be authorised to attend the NASACRE AGM on behalf of the Portsmouth SACRE.

9 Local Reports (AI 9)

(a) School Visits

Beverley Millsom reported that she had visited College Park Infant School on 30 October. She had observed a year 1 class covering the topic of 'belonging'.

Ruth Guyer reported that she had visited both Somers Park Primary School and Arundel Court Primary School to lead sessions about the synagogue.

(b) RE Twilights

Beverley Millsom reported that the primary network had met in January. The intention had been to visit the Mosque but, for various reasons, the visit had to be postponed. They would be doing a round robin phoning those faith groups listed in the RE directory to ensure that they were up to date.

A cross-faith meeting would be held at the beginning of July for the purpose of calling primary and secondary headteachers together to discuss pupils transferring from the primary to the secondary sector.

(c) RE Boxes

Sue Vigar-Taylor reported that one of the boxes was missing and she, together with the artefacts administrator, was trying to track down its whereabouts. She would be compiling a list of articles needing to be replaced.

Initially, the use of the RE boxes had been disappointing but once the word had got around regarding their availability, usage had increased. Sue wondered whether the charge was an issue but, as it was only £25, this was not expected to be the case.

ACTION

Sue Vigar-Taylor to inform David Picton-Jones regarding what needs to be replaced so that replacements could be purchased before the end of the financial year.

Members noted the need to advise secondary schools of the availability of these artefacts for rent. This was something that Sue Ganter would be able to do.

10 Any Other Business (AI 10)

(a) Potential possible conflict of interest

Taki Jaffer advised members that he was no longer working for PRENO as it had ceased to exist in its previous form due to withdrawal of funding. He was now working at St Paul's Catholic Primary School but not in a teaching role. Therefore, he doubted whether there would be a conflict of interest but simply wanted to flag it up for future reference.

(b) Exhibition at Southsea Library and Havant Art Centre

SACRE members were advised that RE exhibitions were taking place at Southsea Library on 28 to 29 April and at Havant Art Centre on 30 April to 1 May.

11 Dates for future meetings (AI 11)

The SACRE noted that the next meeting would be held on Wednesday 20 June 2012 at the Southsea Synagogue.

The Autumn meeting will be held on Wednesday 14 November 2012 in the Executive Meeting Room, in the Guildhall.

The meeting concluded at 6.15pm.

TMD/CB
20 March 2012
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