

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE)

RECORD OF DECISIONS of the meeting of the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) held on Wednesday, 14 March 2018 at 4.30 pm at the Guildhall, Portsmouth

Present

Councillor Ryan Brent (in the Chair)

Group A - Elizabeth Jenkerson, Peter Davies, Sarah Coote, Geoff Wheeler and Ruth Guyer

Group B - Sue Bowen and Sam Duddles

Group C - Sarah Sadler and Sandra Gibb

Group D - Councillors Ryan Brent and Suzy Horton

Also in attendance - Pat Hannam (Professional Adviser), Mike Stoneman Assitant Director of Education and Joanne Wildsmith, Clerk.

7. Welcome and Introductions (AI 1)

Councillor Ryan Brent welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked that introductions were made around the table, especially as there were some new members/officers at this meeting. Revd Duddles was the new Church of England representative, with the resignation of Brian Hay and Joanne Wildsmith was replacing Peter Smith-Parkyn as clerk to the SACRE.

8. Moment for Quiet Reflection (AI 2)

Sarah Coote, the Religious Society of Friends representative led the moment for quiet reflection. She explained about their diverse beliefs and encouraged joining in silence. Sarah read the Quaker text: Advice and Queries numbers 1 and 3, the latter encouraging inward stillness.

Councillor Brent, as Chair, thanked Sarah Coote for her opening reflection.

9. Apologies for Absence (AI 3)

These had been received from Capt.Teresa Everett, Renuka Vyas and Councillor Tompkins.

Joanne Wildsmith, as Clerk, passed on a message from former member Beverley Millsom who had enjoyed her time as Special Needs Group C Representative on SACRE, and thanked members and officers for their support, kindness and friendship.

10. Declaration of Members' Interest (AI 4)

Elizabeth Jenkerson reported that she is on the West Hill Panel that judges grants for SACREs.

11. Minutes of the Previous meetings - 21 February 2018 (and 8 November 2017) (AI 5)

It was further explained that the special meeting of 21 February had been called for the actions of the inquorate meeting of 8 November 2017 to be approved but that both sets of minutes were being brought to this meeting to allow all members the chance to raise any matters of accuracy or matters arising.

Elizabeth Jenkerson pointed out that within the minutes of the special meeting of 21 February 2018, within minute 4 there was reference to the need for the previous meeting to be submitted, and the reference to 8 November 2018 should in fact be 8 November 2017, which was correct within the rest of that minute.

RESOLVED that subject to the above amended date in minute 4, the minutes of both the meetings of 8 November 2017 and 21 February 2018 were approved as correct records of these meetings.

12. Matters Arising from the minutes of 8 November 2017 and 21 February 2018 (AI 6)

- (i) Minute 7 of 8 November 2017 & minute 4 of 21 February - Membership and Constitution

Pat Hannam reported that she was in the process of seeking the new Islamic Shi'a representative and would continue to progress this with the community. This led to discussion about the appointments process for representatives on the Portsmouth SACRE, and it was noted that the constitution was not explicit on this, with the practice being that Portsmouth City Council appoint the councillor Group D members only, and that the SACRE accept the nominations of the faith groups.

Action: The Chair asked that the Monitoring Group be tasked with looking at the Constitution to see where revisions are needed and for any amendments to be brought back to the full SACRE for approval. It was hoped that this could be brought back to the June meeting.

13. Brief updates or notification of items to be brought to a future meeting (AI 7)

As well as the constitution it was suggested that there be further discussion on encouraging representatives from a variety of faiths to attend the SACRE meetings to reflect Portsmouth as a multi-cultural society. When invitations

are extended it is for the organisations to ensure that these are suitable appointments to meet the aim of stressing the importance of RE in the city.

14. Monitoring Group Report (AI 8)

It was noted that the Monitoring Group had taken place on 21st February 2018 (not 22nd February).

Pat Hannam presented her report on the recent meeting of the new group, which meets a few weeks in advance of the full SACRE, to monitor the effectiveness and implementation of the Agreed Syllabus. The monitoring group also has access to detailed information of GCSE results. Ofsted no longer specifically look at RE, but makes references to its provision within their inspection reports. A Commission report on RE is expected to be published in September 2018.

The report set out the results of primary school visits, which indicate that RE teaching is going well, especially where staff have attended training provided by Justine Ball (HIAS primary RE Inspector/Adviser). However 2 of the school visits had raised questions/concerns; one local authority school had already been contacted by the Professional Adviser to offer help. However another converter academy trust school raised concerns because it was only using parts of the Living Difference III syllabus. Living Difference III should be used only in its entirety to ensure a coherent curriculum is planned that enables children to make progress in RE.

It was also noted that all Church of England schools should be using Living Difference III in its entirety (with a choice of concepts within it) including for the teaching of Christianity. Discussion took place regarding the Diocesan expectation of use of the 'Understanding Christianity' resource to augment the teaching of Christianity units in Church of England primary Schools. The cycle of enquiry should be planned as usual with Understanding Christianity resource providing materials especially for the 'enquire', 'contextualise' and occasionally 'evaluate' steps. Understanding Christianity should not be used alone but as to complement the Agreed Syllabus Living Difference III. Considerable work has been undertaken by HIAS advisers Justine Ball and Pat Hannam to ensure this can work well. They can be contacted for further advice. There followed a further discussion exploring some critiques that are emerging nationally regarding Understanding Christianity and it is recognised that there is a particular theological perspective prevalent in the resource and that it does not represent all Christian theological perspectives. It was noted the Free Church Federal Council has also produced a resource in relation to the Reformation. It is hoped that a national evaluation would take place soon.

The GCSE results for 2017 would be the last year of A*-G grading before the introduction of 9-1 grading from this summer. There had been a halving of the number taking the full GCSE course in Portsmouth from 2016 to 2017, although those taking the course were achieving well against the national results. It did raise the question of what the rest of the 14-16 year old students were doing? Part of the lower take up could be attributed to RE not forming

part of the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) and the national shortage of specialist RE teachers.

SACRE members felt that the recommendation could be adjusted to not only praise the achievement levels (compared to the national average) but also to praise the levels of progress made. The letter to teachers should ask that the congratulations be shared with the pupils.

RESOLVED that:

- (1) SACRE's professional adviser writes to school leaders, including Academy Trusts, where there is concern about their primary RE
- (2) SACRE congratulates Portsmouth Schools that are progressing as well and those which are achieving above the national average in RS GCSE in 2017.
- (3) SACRE's professional adviser writes to all Portsmouth secondary head teachers to make enquiries as to what is happening for all students at KS4 in current years 10 and 11. Where there is evidence that GCSE has not been sat by all or most students they should be reminded that if students are not studying for RS GCSE that the Agreed Syllabus, Living Difference III, is available and should be followed at KS4 to ensure the right approach to religious education at this stage of a young person's school career and to ensure an appropriate level of challenge.

15. South Central HUB (AI 9)

Pat Hannam presented her report on the recent meeting of the South Central SACRE RE Hub, which has grown to include 12 local SACREs and university members. Discussion there had centred on how to support teachers and details of the Research and Reading Group was attached to the report, which included dates of future meetings.

A copy of the interfaith calendar produced by the Hub was circulated at the meeting which included impressive artwork by RE pupils.

Regarding attendance at the Hub meetings the Chair wished to widen participation, so that those who were interested and could attend could be invited, with reporting back to the full SACRE. Elizabeth Jenkerson had previously attended and stressed these meetings are open to SACRE members.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the report be received;
- (2) That dates of South Central SACRE RE Hub meetings be circulated to members for volunteers to attend on behalf of the Portsmouth SACRE.

16. Date and venue of the next meeting (AI 10)

Before the close of the meeting Pat Hannam reminded members that inter-authority training was available, especially for new members at Winchester.

The date of the June meeting needed to be revised and the following dates were agreed:

Weds 27th June - to be hosted by St George's Beneficial School (volunteered by Sandra Gibb)

Weds 14th November 2018

Weds 20th March 2019

(all at 4.30pm)

The meeting concluded at 5.40 pm.

Councillor Ryan Brent
Chair of SACRE