

## 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, 27 June 2018 at 4.30 pm at the Guildhall, Portsmouth

### Present

Councillor Suzy Horton (in the Chair, Group D)

Group A: Elizabeth Jenkerson,  
Ruth Guyer, Peter Davies, Sayed Haque,  
Sarah Coote & Christine McMillan

Group B Sam Duddles

Group C: Sarah Sadler & Sandra Gibb

Group D: Maria Cole & Taki Jaffer

Officers: Pat Hannam, Mike Stoneman & Joanne Wildsmith

### 17. Welcome and Introductions (and tour of venue) (AI 1)

Prior to the meeting members of SACRE were invited to join a tour of the school by Sandra Gibb, Headteacher of St. George's Beneficial Church of England School. Members were impressed by the modern facilities and were particularly interested in the application of Religious Education throughout the venue with the classrooms incorporating quiet, reflective areas suitable for prayer and were shown many of the resources by Amber McDermott the lead for RE in the school. Examples of the children's work and reference books were circulated and pupils' thoughts on RE were quoted.

Councillor Horton thanked Sandra and Amber for the tour of the school and for the talk on the application of RE throughout the school. It was reported that 'Understanding Christianity' is used as a main resource and 'Living Difference' frames the provision of RE at this Church of England school (which is a Voluntary Controlled school). Taki Jaffer who was familiar with the school reported that the school met the challenges of a multi-cultural in-take and he knew that many of the Saudi Arabian pupils had become more respectful of Christianity through the teaching.

Councillor Horton explained that she would be chairing the meeting in place of Councillor Brent (who had sent his apologies).

Before the introductions were made she asked Sam Duddles to share news of former SACRE member **Brian Hay** who had died peacefully the previously

day and details of his funeral would be circulated to members who were saddened by this news. A minute's silence was observed in memory of Brian.

**18. Moment for Quiet Reflection (AI 2)**

Elizabeth Jenkerson, explained some of the founding principles of the Baha'i faith, of unity, diversity and service. She quoted a letter from their current head on light and unity, and the importance of education for all in the face of persecution and prejudice.

**19. Apologies for Absence (AI 3)**

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillor Ryan Brent (Chair), Jane Ball, Teresa Everitt, Tom Blair, Fazle Abbas, Jane Kelly, Renuka Vyas, Kari Laing (plus Geoff Wheeler had hoped to attend but was delayed in traffic).

**20. Declaration of Members' Interest (AI 4)**

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

**21. Minutes of the Previous meeting held on 14th March 2018 (AI 5)**

**RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> March 2018 be agreed as a correct record.**

**22. Matters Arising from the minutes and Membership update (AI 6)**

**Membership update:** formal agreement was given and Christine McMillan was welcomed back as a representative from the United Reformed Church (URC) as nominated by the Wessex Synod of the URC. It was also reported having sought a Shia Muslim representative this role would be fulfilled by Fazle Abbas (who apologised for not being able to attend this meeting). There were also two new Portsmouth City Council (Group D) representatives in attendance - Maria Cole and Taki Jaffer - who were welcomed back to the Portsmouth SACRE.

**23. Chair's Communications (AI 7)**

Receipt of the Cardiff University advice document for primary schools was acknowledged. The circulated executive summary contained a link to the full document.

**24. Brief updates or notification of items to be brought to a future meeting (AI 8)**

Items raised for a future agenda were:

- Southampton guidance document (dealt with under minute 27)

- British Values - Sarah Sadler reported that one of her teachers had undertaken research and it was suggested that this would be suitable for a presentation to the SACRE, and therefore the next meeting could be hosted by Highbury Primary School.
- Pat reported that she would bring forward the next Annual Report and Action Plan

## 25. Monitoring Group Report (AI 9)

Patricia Hannam as Professional Adviser presented her report which summarised the discussions of the smaller group which had the opportunity to look at Ofsted reports to see if there were references to RE in their inspection reports.

The Local Authority had funded monitoring visits by Justine Ball from Hampshire County Council to primary schools to review the implementation of the agreed syllabus Living Difference III, its impact and how it raised the profile of RE in schools. It was also noted that of the 15 Portsmouth schools signed up to the Network, 12 were attending regularly.

The report evidenced a dramatic fall in the number of pupils entered for the new GCSE on the full course and asked what RE provision are other teenagers able to access? The short course still exists which is of benefit to pupils who gain a certificate, however it does not count in terms of key performance indicators for schools, such as Attainment and Progress 8. It was noted that there is a high turnover of RE lead teachers. Secondary head teachers had been written to since the last SACRE meeting and there had been a poor response which Mike Stoneman would take up at the Secondary Heads meeting. The monitoring sub group will then look at these responses. Mike Stoneman was noted that pupils who were entered for the GCSE in 2016/17 did well compared to the national results.

(The review of the constitution was due to be a separate agenda item but legal advice was still necessary before this came back to SACRE.)

Mike Stoneman referred to recent Ofsted inspections including the recent inspection of Trafalgar School which had resulted in a 'good' rating. He had invited Pat Hannam to meet with the Secondary Heads in the Autumn Term.

The report was noted and it was **AGREED that the professional education course for the new subject leaders of RE at KS1 and KS2 be made available to Portsmouth teachers in the autumn of 2018.**

## 26. Amendments to the Portsmouth SACRE Constitution (AI 10)

This report had not been finalised for circulation as was legal comments were needed; this would be brought to the next meeting.

## **27. Portsmouth version of the Southampton Guidance Document (AI 11)**

Pat Hannam, as Professional Adviser, reported that Justine Ball had been pleased with the outcome of the Task and Finish meeting held in Portsmouth with some of the SACRE members. The intention was to create a document which would be made available to the schools in Portsmouth covering issues such as dress, jewellery, school absence due to religious holidays, school meals etc. Whilst each case should always be looked at on its own merit this document would provide overall guidance. The Portsmouth SACRE members who had been able to attend reported on some of the subjects raised such as the need for non-Muslim pupils and families to understand more about Halal food, and the importance of holy days and pilgrimage within faiths which could lead to school absences. Mike Stoneman confirmed that the Local Authority did receive linked queries on school attendance. It was hoped that this would be a useful reference tool for headteachers, such as for the wearing of religious symbols, and the need to help find solutions was raised at the meeting.

There would be one more meeting of the group before a draft document would be brought to the next meeting. It was also noted that the document produced by EMAS in Portsmouth (which had been circulated) had been useful and they offered support to schools (Karen Thomas EMAS Manager is a member of the Task and Finish Group).

The verbal update on progress was noted, with a further report to be brought back to SACRE.

## **28. South Central HUB (AI 12)**

Pat Hannam and Elizabeth Jenkerson reported back on this regional meeting held on 12th June. The Hub raised common areas of interest and concern. The Portsmouth, Hampshire, Southampton and Isle of Wight SACREs use Living Difference, whereas others were using different syllabi. The next meeting of the South Central Hub would be looking at action plans.

Minutes of the meeting held on 12 June would be circulated.

## **29. National update (AI 13)**

- i) Commission on Religious Education - the final report would be made on 12<sup>th</sup> September on the findings of the independent commission chaired by the Dean of Westminster. SACREs were not working well in all parts of the country. The report will refer to national entitlement for Religious Education (which is being contested by some members). There is however agreement on the need for better teacher training for RE teachers and that the right to withdraw from RE lessons should be maintained.

The main points from the final report will be brought to the next meeting and a link to the full report would be provided. It is thought

that there would be more strength given to the SACREs for monitoring.

ii) NASACRE AGM 24 May feedback

Elizabeth Jenkerson reported on the 25 year celebrations to which all former chairs had been invited to the meeting held at Merchant Taylors in London. The evaluation by participants had indicated the importance of networking with other SACRE members at these national events to share instances of both good and bad practice. Elizabeth had made a presentation at the AGM on Youth Voice in Hampshire. Councillor Horton thanked her for the feedback.

**30. Date and venue of the next meeting (AI 14)**

The dates of meetings were agreed as 14<sup>th</sup> November, 20<sup>th</sup> March and 26<sup>th</sup> June for the next academic year. The next meeting would be hosted at Highbury Primary School to enable the presentation to take place by the Farmington Scholar. Future meetings would then be hosted at a faith group and the rotation of venues continue.

Councillor Suzy Horton thanked Sandra Gibb and St.George's C of E Beneficial School for hosting this meeting.

The meeting concluded at 6.10 pm.

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Chair of SACRE