

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, 20 March 2019 at 4.00 pm at the Civic Offices, Portsmouth

Present

Councillor Ryan Brent (in the Chair - Group D)

Group A - Ruth Jenkerson,
Peter Davies with Chris Thomas
Geoff Wheeler,
Syed Aminul Haque
Sarah Coote,
Sheikh Fazle Abbas Datoo &
Christine McMillan

Group B - Jane Kelly & Revd Sam Duddles

Group C - Sandra Gibb

Group D - Councillor Suzy Horton (Vice-Chair) &
Maria Cole

16. Welcome and Introductions (AI 1)

Councillor Brent, as Chair, welcomed everyone and introductions were made by all present.

17. Apologies for Absence (AI 2)

Apologies for absence were received from Helen Reeder, Teresa Everett, Taki Jaffer, Aasha Small, Mike Stoneman, Sue Bowen and Ruth Guyer.

18. Moment for Quiet Reflection (AI 3)

Peter Davies was attending his last meeting, representing the Evangelical Church, and it was fitting that he had been asked to lead the moment for quiet reflection. Peter spoke of the recent attacks on mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand, and offered thoughts and prayers to all our Muslim friends and colleagues in its aftermath. He lamented the lack of peace in the world and in this country and quoted from Horatio Spafford's poetry from 1880s America (on the tragic loss of his family) and from the Bible, on the search for finding inner peace.

Councillor Brent, on behalf of everyone, thanked Peter for all of his input over the many years of service to SACRE, which had been greatly valued.

19. Declaration of Members' Interests (AI 4)

Elizabeth Jenkerson made her standard declaration that she is on the West Hill Panel that judges grants for SACREs.

20. Minutes of the Previous meeting held on 14 November 2018 (AI 5)

It was noticed that the venue for the last meeting should have stated Highbury Primary School (as referred to in the welcome and introductions). Other than this correction, the minutes of Portsmouth SACRE held on 14 November 2018 were approved as a correct record.

21. Matters Arising from the minutes (AI 6)

None.

22. Membership Update (AI 7)

New members were welcomed - Chris Thomas was attending as the replacement representative for the Evangelical churches and Sheikh Fazle Abbas Datoo was attending his first meeting as a Shia Muslim representative.

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

Patricia Hannam suggested that a member of Portsmouth SACRE attend the NASACRE meeting in Manchester on 22nd May at Manchester and invited volunteers. **Rev Sam Duddles was interested and would check her diary.** Patricia would be going for Hampshire SACRE and whoever attended could help report back.

24. Monitoring Group Report (AI 9)

Patricia Hannam, Professional Adviser, presented her report which set out the monitoring work being undertaken and she reported that there was still an unsatisfactory response from secondary head-teachers regarding their Key Stage 4 provision. The group had looked at the monitoring visit to one school, which could not be named in the public meeting.

With regard to the 2018 GCSE results, the number of entries had stabilised and where Portsmouth pupils entered they were achieving higher than the national average. With 345 entrants, there remained concern regarding what the remaining 14-16 year olds were accessing, as all schools are meant to have RE provision at Key Stage 4, and the majority of pupils were from the 2 church schools (St.Edmunds and Charter/Ark). In response to questions it was reported that it was not mainly the academies that were unfulfilling this responsibility. Sandra Gibb reported that she was aware that secondary schools had tutor times that could potentially be used. Patricia Hannam was keen to find a secondary representative for the SACRE.

Only 2 of 10 secondary heads had so far responded, and members were mindful of the local authority maintaining general responsibility for academies.

RESOLVED

(1) that SACRE writes to all Secondary Head Teachers and that this is followed up by direct contact from the SACRE Professional Adviser to remind them that where GCSE is not taught at KS4, students should have access to a rich religious education curriculum. Further, to offer advice to school leavers on the requirements for RE in LA and Academy Schools, and to invite teachers to attend the Secondary RE Network meetings.

(2) That efforts are made to find a secondary school representative for Portsmouth SACRE.

25. Report from South West AREIAC conference for SACREs (AI 10)

Rev Sam Duddles reported on her attendance at the conference in Somerset on behalf of the SACRE, and had been surprised to be the only member of the clergy there. The day had been to update participants on developments and changes for RE and how this would look and how 'World Views' would be taught. Patricia Hannam had led a session on Religious Literacy, considering what it is expected from what children are being asked to explore and they lived out experiences.

Members were interested to hear of the session run by a team from Bristol who had organised school visits to local mosques, giving out certificates for attendance by a member of their SACRE, and who had challenged excuses given for non-attendance.

Patricia Hannam had enjoyed the day and had taken 4 others with her from different faiths and different SACREs. Elizabeth Jenkerson had attended to represent Hants SACRE and had been impressed by the speakers who had included Rudi Eliot (Chief Executive Officer REC) and Paul Smalley (Chairman NASACRE). **Patricia would request a copy of Paul's presentation to circulate to the SACRE.**

Concerns raised about the future of SACREs included what bodies may replace them, the balance between teaching RE and world view and the possible disconnect from councillors at local authorities. It was however thought that the changes would be delayed as there was not currently sufficient parliamentary time available for them to be implemented. Joyce Miler (Chair of REC and CoRE Commissioner) had stressed that they did not want to damage good practice already in place, such as good council engagement at Portsmouth SACRE.

Patricia Hannam expanded on her Religious Literacy talk at the conference, based on the work of 3 researchers via Brunel University, and the official findings would be launched on 4 June in Winchester, and **she would invite SACRE members to this.**

26. Update regarding the implementation of the Agreed Syllabus (AI 11)

Patricia Hannam, Professional Adviser, reported that she runs the Secondary Schools' network in Hampshire and her colleague Justine runs the Primary network. These sessions are held at the Training Centre and would like more schools to attend and invited comments on how this could be achieved, such as changes to the timing. Sandra Gibb reported that whilst the English Network was well attended, the Science Network was also dwindling, with teachers having pressure on their time and it was difficult to release staff, but if it was outside of school hours the teachers lost out on their family time.

Patricia would continue to monitor attendance.

27. Final report of the Commission on RE (AI 12)

Patricia Hannam, Professional Adviser, explained that the sub group had not met since the last meeting but that in the interim the Secretary of State for Education had written to the Chair of the Commission Reverend J Hall to inform him that there was no way that there would be legislative change in the life of this parliament. There were still issues to be raised to raise the profile of RE and feed back to NASACRE.

Elizabeth Jenkerson reported that the RE bursary had been reinstated and more time was being given for teacher training. Patricia further reported that there was also funding for subject knowledge regarding the PGCE in RE.

It was still the intention to convene the sub group and report back to the next meeting, to be hosted by Sam Duddles in early May, and members should contact the clerk if they wished to be involved.

28. Revised Framework and Handbook for Ofsted inspections of Schools (AI 13)

Patricia Hannam, Professional Adviser, presented her report regarding the new inspection framework from September and the handbook of inspection for maintained schools (all non-independent schools). The 4 areas included inspecting the quality of education which Patricia highlighted was missing specifying Religious Education. It was therefore proposed that a formal response would be sent by Councillor Brent on behalf of Portsmouth SACRE.

All members were encouraged to make individual responses too, using the consultation web link provided in the report and agenda.

There was some good news in that there is mention of Religious Education in the revised handbook (under Curriculum Flexibility pages 41 paragraph 159) "All pupils in maintained schools are expected to study the national curriculum subjects, religious education and age-appropriate sex education". The guidance also goes on to allow schools to take "radically different approaches to the curriculum" although Sandra Gibb pointed out that in Early Years this can include teaching through play, and for teachers the splitting of behaviour and personal development was welcomed.

The Professional Adviser's concern was at page 49 of the inspection handbook "Good/Intent" 4th paragraph regarding pupils studying the full curriculum did not specify inclusion of RE.

Patricia would be running training sessions for Portsmouth schools regarding the new inspection regime when it came into place in the summer. Each 2 day inspection would have 2 subject specialists attending, which may include RE as the foundation subject. She favoured the reinstating of the clear explanation of what is expected of collective worship.

Councillor Brent reiterated that as well as the formal response going from him, all members should read the consultation and make their own responses too by 5th April.

RESOLVED that Portsmouth SACRE submits a response to the consultation and that individual SACRE members make a response raising concerns about the omission of Religious Education in the grade descriptor for 'Good' under 'Quality of Education'.

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

The dates for the next meetings were agreed at 4.30pm venues to be advised:

- Wednesday 26th June
- Wednesday 20th November
- Wednesday 18th March 2020

The meeting concluded at 5.45 pm.

Councillor Ryan Brent
Chair of SACRE