

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, 26 June 2019 at 4.30 pm at the King's Church.

Present

Councillor Suzy Horton (in the Chair)

Group A Geoff Wheeler, Sarah Coote, Christine McMillan, Elizabeth Jenkerson, Syed Haque, Ruth Guyer, Renka Vyas accompanied by Akshat Mehta

Group B Revd Sam Duddles & Jane Kelly

Group C Sandra Gibb, Aasha Small & Debbie Lucas

Group D Cllr Suzy Horton, Cllr Tom Coles & Maria Cole

Officers Patricia Hannam, Mike Stoneman & Joanne Wildsmith

30. Welcome and Introductions (AI 1)

The meeting was preceded by a very interesting tour of the King's Church buildings (which incorporated meeting rooms, foodbank and the main worship area for the Pentecostal group) by Kate Ayliffe who emphasised the community nature of their church.

Councillor Suzy Horton chaired the start of the meeting as Vice-Chair (Ryan Brent was no longer Chair, as reported under the membership update), and welcomed all members and introductions were made.

31. Apologies for Absence (AI 2)

Apologies for absence were reported from John Mills, Chris Thomas, Taki Jaffer, Kari Laing, Sheikh Fazle Abbas Dattoo, Tom Blair and Revd Jane Ball.

32. Moment for Quiet Reflection (AI 3)

Reverend Sam Duddles led the moment for quiet reflection and used the example of the development of a fir cone that she used in school chaplaincy to promote thoughts treating others with kindness so they flourish, as well as giving a reading from the Bible.

33. Membership update (AI 4)

The resignation of Major Teresa Everett (Group A) was noted who had been unable to attend Wednesday meetings.

It was also noted that Sarah Sadler (Group C and monitoring group) was resigning from July, and her regular attendance and participation had been welcomed at these meetings.

The Chair welcomed new members Councillor Tom Coles (appointed by Portsmouth City Council's Cabinet to Group D) and Debbie Lucas as a new Group C Secondary Representative.

It was noted that former Councillor Ryan Brent, the previous Chair, was no longer eligible to be a Group D representative but there was the opportunity for the SACRE to invite him to join in a different capacity. It was AGREED that Ryan Brent be either co-opted or invited to join as a teacher representative to Group C (if this was appropriate) as a teacher in further education.

Due to the number of recent membership changes Patricia Hannam suggested that she ran a training session, open to all members, to take place locally for the Portsmouth SACRE to cover the agreed syllabus. An afternoon session at the Civic Offices would be planned in the first half of September.

34. Declaration of Members' Interests (AI 5)

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

35. Minutes of the Previous meeting held on 20 March 2019 (AI 6)

It was noted that the attendance list should have reflected Elizabeth Jenkerson, and resolution (1) of minute 24 should refer to school leaders, not school leavers.

Subject to the above corrections the minutes of the meeting held on 20 March 2019 were approved.

36. Matters Arising from the minutes (AI 7)

There were no matters arising that were not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

Ruth Guyer raised the issue of pressures on teachers' time (minute 26) and Sandra Gibb reiterated that it is a challenge to get teacher representatives to extra meetings and she was pleased to see the increase in the number of Group C members for SACRE.

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

Maria Cole requested that there be an update on the use of the resource boxes in schools at the next meeting.

38. Monitoring Group Report (AI 9)

Patricia Hannam, Professional Adviser, introduced this report following the meeting of the sub group held on 20 May (not February) to consider Ofsted reports in private and GCSE data.

Whilst academies are not obliged to follow the agreed syllabus they are able to choose to do so. The Chair of NASACRE had written to the Department of Education on this subject, and the letter would be circulated to SACRE members. This asked what they expect SACREs to do where they find a school non-compliant, with the expectation that local SACREs and Local Authorities will take follow-up action. There was also reference in the letter to the Secretary of State for Schools having an expectation that all schools teach RE properly. Mike Stoneman had sent a letter to all secondary heads as there is a particular concern here, with approximately only 200 GCSE RE entries now (although those taking the exam usually do well). It was pleasing that there is a new secondary representative on SACRE. However some academies will not say what provision they are making at Key Stage 4.

Patricia Hannam, through Mike Stoneman, would write again to the secondary heads as only 4 had responded, and he would remind them again at his meeting with secondary heads on 4th July.

To ensure that the monitoring group had representation from each group a teacher representative was needed.

The network meeting of secondary teachers had previously been held locally in Horndean and a venue was requested for a primary school to host; Aasha Small suggested her school Medina Primary School. Timings of meetings would depend on availability of teachers. Whilst there was no budget to cover with supply teachers (costing approx. £180 a day or £80 for an afternoon session) but Patricia Hannam would investigate contacting a charitable trust to see if the course attendance would be subsidised.

The monitoring report was noted.

39. National Issues impacting Portsmouth Schools:, developments regarding Commission on RE, Ofsted new Framework for school inspections and NASACRE verbal update (AI 10)

The report set out the discussions of a small sub group which had met on 13 June hosted by Revd Sam Duddles, who had looked at the decline in the provision of RE teaching and they had looked at the recommendations of the national report. Ruth Guyer brought up their concern in the change of subject title to "Religion and World Views" as the SACRE members wanted a focus on religious education, with this teaching help promote better understanding of other faiths. Maria Cole saw the value of not only focusing on Christianity to increase acceptance of others. The group members had raised the question - what are the boundaries of world views?

Debbie Lucas raised the impact of the EBacc (which is an accountability measure not a qualification) and the new GCSE which had led to smaller groups for RE. Mike Stoneman reiterated the value to schools of taking RE GCSE when results were good locally. There is pressure on RE teachers who are within Humanities faculties, with competition with other subjects. With the new Ofsted curriculum Patricia Hannam hoped that the inspectors will ask questions where RE is not being delivered properly. RE is still a valid A Level for university entry.

There was also concern regarding the future of SACREs and the governance of RE in a local community; in Portsmouth the SACRE had a wide representation of different faiths. It was also a responsibility to monitor the number of RE teachers coming through the system.

Councillor Horton asked if there was the opportunity for pupils to take RE GCSE early; this was not being actively pursued in Portsmouth and the DfE advice was that even where entered early there should still be RE provision in Year 11.

Patricia Hannam reported that the Religious Education Council had commissioned the report on RE and were not taking this forward and seeing what could be implemented without legislative changes (as no legislative changes were expected during the life of this parliament), which were detailed in the report at 6(i-iii). She was pleased to report that Reading University had recommenced its RE PGCE course (the Chichester course had closed locally). The aspects that could be implemented also included discussion of the "right to withdraw" from RE and aspects of the CoRE report, such as the issue of world views.

The next NASACRE meeting would be held in London, which the Portsmouth SACRE should be represented at. Further details would be in the NASACRE e-newsletter, which would be forwarded by the clerk to the SACRE. Elizabeth Jenkerson encouraged more members to submit articles for this publication.

Geoff Wheeler raised the need to prepare pupils for GCSEs and asked how closely this linked to the syllabus? Patricia Hannam responded that whilst there had been concern regarding the introduction of the new CGSE the transition had not been as difficult as envisaged

The SACRE received the report.

(The need to consider a mechanism for co-opting a Governor and ITE representative to SACRE would need to be raised at a future meeting.)

40. Election of Chair (AI 11)

Councillor Horton had apologised that she needed to leave the meeting during the previous agenda item, due to another commitment.

Sam Duddles was elected to chair the remainder of the meeting, and asked for nominations for both Chair and Vice-Chair as these positions were due for re-election:

- Councillor Suzy Horton was nominated by Elizabeth Jenkerson and seconded by Maria Cole and duly elected as Chair for a 2 year period
- Sam Duddles was proposed by Maria Cole and seconded by Ruth Guyer and duly elected as Vice-Chair for a 2 year period.

41. Date and venue of the next meeting (AI 12)

The next meeting would be held on 20th November and the venue would be Medina School, Cosham, at 4.30pm.

Members thanked King's Church for hosting this meeting.

The Spring meeting would be held on 18th March at the Civic Offices.

The meeting concluded at 6.00 pm.

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Chair of SACRE