

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 2 November 2022 at 4:00pm at the Portsmouth College, Tangier Road, Portsmouth.

Present

Group A Representatives - One representative of each of the religions and other bodies listed in the constitution

Baptist - Geoff Wheeler
Evangelical Church - Pastor Chris Thomas
Methodist Church – Revd Ray Goddess
Quaker - sarah coote
United Reformed Church - Christine McMillan

Group B Representatives - Church of England

Sue Bowen
Revd Sam Duddles (Chair)

Group C Representatives - Six teachers representing the various key stages and an association recognised by the Authority for the purposes of consultation and negotiation

Kari Laing - Post-16 Representative (Vice Chair)
Rachael Osborne - Primary Headteacher Representative
Beth Smith - Secondary School Representative

Group D Representatives - Four representatives of the Authority, at least two of whom shall be elected members of the Authority

Taki Jaffer
Councillor Benedict Swann
Councillor Asghar Shah

Also in attendance:

Justine Ball, Professional Advisor
Debbie Anderson, Head of School Improvement
Karen Martin, Local Democracy Officer, SACRE Clerk

24. Welcome and Introductions (AI 1)

The Revd Sam Duddles, SACRE Chair, welcomed everyone to the meeting.

25. Apologies for Absence (AI 2)

Apologies had been received from Elizabeth Jenkerson (Group A), Sheikh Fazle Abbas Dattoo (Group A), Jane Kelly (Group B), Rachel de la Rue (Group

C) and Jessi Wilson, CoPS (Co-opted). The following had offered apologies for lateness Taki Jaffer (Group D).

26. Moment for Quiet Reflection (AI 3)

The moment for quiet reflection was taken by Revd Sam Duddles which considered the cost-of-living crisis and the pressures on children in the community.

27. Declarations of Members' Interest (AI 4)

There were none.

28. Minutes of the Previous meeting held on 7 June 2022 (AI 5)

RESOLVED to agree the minutes of the meeting held on 7 June 2022 as an accurate record.

29. Matters Arising from the minutes (AI 6)

There were no matters arising from the Minutes of the meeting on 7 June 2022.

30. Chair's announcements (AI 7)

There were no announcements from the Chair.

31. Monitoring Group (AI 8)

Justine Ball, SACRE Professional Advisor, introduced the report which had been circulated with the agenda. She informed the SACRE that she would be holding a training session on 8 December (on Teams) for anyone wishing to know more about the SACRE and Living Difference IV, particularly new SACRE members.

Justine Ball informed those present that the Monitoring Group is a sub-committee of the SACRE and she asked if members of the SACRE would be interested in joining the group. It meets three times a year on Teams shortly before the main SACRE meeting.

Justine Ball highlighted the following from the report:

- A full analysis of GCSE RE results will be provided at the next SACRE meeting in March 2023.
- The Monitoring Group has been considering website monitoring, a template devised by the Head of School Improvement would be used and feedback will be provided at the next meeting.
- Primary RE Network meetings take place termly and are well established. It was suggested that additional RE teachers could be encouraged to join through RE News which is free for schools.
- It is hoped that a recent free of charge CPD offer for Portsmouth Primary schools at Portsmouth Anglican Cathedral on diversity in Christian traditions will be extended to other religions. It was noted however, that additional funding would need to be sought to repeat the event.
- NASACRE is holding a training event on 17 November on the 'Opportunities for all' White Paper (see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/opportunity-for-all-strong->

[schools-with-great-teachers-for-your-child](#)) and this is free to SACRE members to attend (contact Karen Martin, SACRE Clerk). It was also noted that a debate on this has been initiated and that back bench Members of Parliament had held an event at Westminster Hall earlier in the week.

- Ofsted reports are monitored for references to RE, but it is not often mentioned and it was noted that inspection reports are written for parents not schools.
- Monitoring Collective Worship is one of the responsibilities of the SACRE.
- The lack of recruitment of students into studying RE at secondary level was of concern and it was noted that Winchester University now only offers PGSEs in Humanities rather than RE as a separate subject.

Debbie Anderson, Head of School Improvement confirmed that:

- Detailed information on GCSE results was not yet available.
- Website monitoring would not add pressure to schools which was a positive benefit of this form of monitoring.
- Primary RE Network meetings are funded out of the School Improvement Budget which she manages.
- Collective Worship is not specifically assessed as part of Ofsted inspections, although Spiritual Moral Social and Cultural (SMSC) development is in the inspection framework and information about this is available online.
- It was not in the Ofsted framework to look for fundamental British Values in Collective Worship and she believed it was a fallacy that inspectors were unable to go into Collective Worship unless specifically invited by headteachers.

The Chair commented on the recent CPD event at the Cathedral, stating that the event had unpacked different perspectives of Christianity and that RE teachers attending the event had realised this could be a template for all faiths. As a result of the event, she had been invited into several Portsmouth schools.

Pastor Chris Thomas (Group A) asked if the SACRE could ask NASACRE for support in monitoring Collective Worship. Sue Bowen noted that Collective Worship policies were included on school websites and could be monitored this way.

In relation to RE specific PGCEs, Beth Smith (Group C) noted that she had completed her PGCE in RE at Winchester (before the change to Humanities) and it was very beneficial for her to do it in RE only, especially as it attracted a bursary which has now been removed. She added the bursary had made a big difference to her personally and noted that an umbrella title of 'humanities' would inevitably mean less time being given to RE in schools.

The Chair reported on progress made with the Portsmouth Places of Worship Directory, stating that it is now on the Portsmouth Education Partnership website and had been shared with Hampshire. She added that it aimed to provide teachers with easy access to places of worship, highlighted the golden threads set out in Living Difference IV and informs places of worship what kind

of visits school expect. Justine Ball reported that it had been welcomed as a useful resource at the recent CPD event held at the Cathedral.

Taki Jaffer (Group D) arrived 5.12pm

SACRE members had been asked to read pages 105-107 of the syllabus at <https://documents.hants.gov.uk/childrens-services/HIAS/living-difference-IV-2021.pdf> before the meeting to inform the discussion around the approach to religion in Living Difference IV. Justine Ball noted that what makes high quality RE is clearly defined in the syllabus and the Appendix draws attention to what is important in teaching RE and emphasises that there are many different views on what it means to be religious and non religious.

Kari Lang (Group C) noted that the Portsmouth College, following a re-branding of RE as Philosophy RE and Ethics, had seen the numbers of students enrolling on the subject increase by 300% and parental resistance to what was previously considered a 'non-academic' subject had reduced even though the syllabus was unchanged. She explained that some pupils who had studied RE at GCSE did not want to go on to further RE studies until the re-branding. Beth Smith (Group C) agreed that there was a need to change perceptions and that parents of Year 6 pupils (for Year 7 next year) asked 'what is the point of RE?' Justine Ball noted that the Cullum St Gabriel Trust features several films on 'Why study RE?' on its website at [Homepage - Culham St Gabriel's \(cstg.org.uk\)](http://Homepage - Culham St Gabriel's (cstg.org.uk).).

Geoff Wheeler (Group A) enquired about parent and pupil rights to opt out of RE and Collective Worship. Justine Ball explained that there is a parental right to withdraw their child from all of or parts of RE and/ or Collective Worship until age 16, when the right to withdraw becomes the child's right. Taki Jaffer (Group D) noted that breaking down perceptions about religious differences can help reduce the number of withdrawals.

As SACRE Professional Advisor for Hampshire and IoW SACRE's, Justine Ball noted that she had used a survey form to help monitor withdrawals which could be adapted for use in Portsmouth.

ACTIONS:

- i) Encourage RE teachers in primary schools to attend Primary Network meetings through RE News.**
- ii) SACRE members wishing to join the Monitoring Group should contact Karen Martin, SACRE Clerk.**
- iii) Website monitoring will be actioned and feedback provided at the next SACRE meeting (28 March 2023).**
- iv) Professional Advisor to consider survey to monitor withdrawals in Portsmouth.**

32. Membership report (AI 9)

The Chair welcomed Justine Ball as SACRE's new Professional Advisor and Revd Ray Goddess (Group A), Beth Smith (Group C) and Councillors Ashgar Shah and Benedict Swann (Group D) to their first SACRE meeting.

Justine Ball reported that the SACRE was looking for Roman Catholic, Buddhist and Hindu representatives to join Group A and an additional Church of England member to join Group B of the SACRE. There is also a vacancy in Group C for an Early Years representative. Councillor Benedict Swann reported that he was aware that efforts were being made to recruit a Catholic representative.

The Chair reported that she had recently met with Jessie Wilson (Council of Portsmouth Students) about the role of a young person from CoPS to work with SACRE. This will be developed further but was likely to be as a diversity advisor for CoPS and schools with the aim of developing an inter faith event, enhance student voice and tackle topics such as how to articulate faith. The Chair reported that there would be a follow-up meeting in January. Taki Jaffer (Group D) stated that he would like to support the young person as the role was developed.

Justine Ball highlighted training opportunities for SACRE members organised by NASACRE (see flyer circulated for the meeting), noting that these are free for Portsmouth members. She also reminded members that there would be a training session on 8 December 2022 and this would include a briefing on Living Difference IV.

RESOLVED to:

- a) **Note that Debbie Lucas, Secondary School representative (Group C) resigned on 10 October 2022 and thank her for her significant contribution to the Portsmouth SACRE in recent years.**
- b) **Appoint Beth Smith (Mayfield School) as Secondary School representative (Group C).**
- c) **Appoint Rachel De La Rue (Cottage Grove School) as Primary Teacher Representative.**
- d) **Welcomed Justine Ball, SACRE's new Professional Advisor.**
- a) **Welcomed Councillors Abdul Kadir, Ashgar Shah and Benedict Swann to the Portsmouth SACRE following their appointment to Group D by the Cabinet (21 June 2022).**
- b) **Noted Taki Jaffer was reappointed to Group D as a Local Authority representative by the Cabinet on 21 June 2022.**

ACTIONS:

- i) **Training opportunities offered by NASACRE are free to SACRE members and anyone wishing to attend should contact Karen Martin, Clerk.**
- ii) **Training will be added to the agenda as a standing item for future SACRE meetings.**
- iii) **SACRE members wishing to attend the event being organised for 8 December 2022 by Justine Ball should contact Karen Martin, Clerk.**

33. SACRE Annual Report 2021-22 (AI 10)

Justine Ball introduced the SACRE Annual Report 2021-22 which she stated covers the last academic year and the summer 2021 exam results.

The Chair enquired if a recess would be necessary for the Groups to confer before a vote on whether to agree the Annual Report. After brief consultation it was noted that this would not be necessary, and members of each Group present indicated their agreement to accept the Report as an accurate reflection of the work undertaken during the academic year 2021-22.

RESOLVED to agree the Portsmouth SACRE Annual Report 2021-22 subject to the correction of typographical errors.

ACTIONS:

- i) **SACRE Clerk to arrange for publication on the SACRE page of the PCC website at [Browse meetings - Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education \(SACRE\) Portsmouth City Council](#)**
- ii) **Head of School Improvement to arrange for the Annual Report to be published on the Portsmouth Education Partnership website at [Home - Portsmouth Education Partnership](#)**
- iii) **SACRE Professional Advisor to arrange circulation to the distribution list set out in Appendix C of the Annual Report.**

34. National RE matters (AI 11)

Justine Ball introduced the item highlighting recent debates about Worldviews and Religious Education in National Training events including:

- REXchange, a teaching RE conference and the research behind it, had taken place recently and would be run again in two years.
- The annual National RE leadership programme by Cullum St Gabriel which helps fund places for people to be trained as RE leaders and advisor. Recruitment opens in January. Kari Lang and Beth Smith (Group C) expressed an interest in the programme. It was agreed that the link would be shared, and the Head of School Improvement would also share it through the Portsmouth Education Partnership website and Justine Ball will promote to the Primary Network. See link at: [Blog - Culham St Gabriel's \(cstg.org.uk\)](#)
- Farmington Scholarships are available to headteachers and UK secondary and primary school RE teachers, teachers of RE to children with Special Educational Needs for funded time to research an aspect of RE to impact children in the classroom. Further information available at [Farmington Scholarships – Farmington Institute](#)
- The NASACRE Conference will take place in London on 22 May 2023. SACRE members interested in attending should contact the Clerk initially. SACRE will refund reasonable expenses (discussed in advance) relating to the conference.

ACTIONS:

- i) **Members wishing to attend the NASACRE Conference on May 2023 should contact the Clerk with an expression of interest.**

35. South Central SACRE Hub (AI 12)

Justine Ball introduced the item, stating that the South-Central SACRE RE Hub met termly as an informal online gathering to share ideas, resources and to discuss matters of interest. She added that at the last meeting topics had included:

- Ideas for RE monitoring including sharing templates for monitoring.
- The White paper and the future of RE and SACREs
- Monitoring questions for undertaking visits in schools relating to RE and Collective Worship
- Diversity in RE

Justine Ball noted that the next meeting will take place in January 2023 and that everyone from the SACRE would be welcome to join.

ACTIONS:

- SACRE members wishing to attend the South Central SACRE Hub meeting to contact Justine Ball for the link.**

36. Date and venue of the next meeting (AI 13)

It was agreed that the opportunity to meet face to face was very welcome. Possible venues for future meetings included the Wessex Jamaat Al Mahdi Centre in Fareham and St Jude's CE Primary School. Kari Lang informed the SACRE that it was welcome to return to the Portsmouth College in the future.

SACRE noted the following meeting dates:

- South Central SACRE Hub - January 2023 (virtual)**
- Monitoring Group meeting - 4.00pm on 22 February (on Teams)**
- SACRE Meeting - 4.30pm on 28 March 2023 (venue to be confirmed)**

The meeting concluded at 5.57pm: