



Title of meeting: Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education

Date of meeting: 1 November 2023

Subject: Annual Review of the SACRE Constitution

Report by: Justine Ball, Portsmouth SACRE Advisor

1. Purpose of report:

This report provides the SACRE with the opportunity to review its constitution with a view to ensuring that it fulfils its functions and reflects the Portsmouth area. The SACRE constitution was approved on 20 November 2019.

2. Background:

SACRE's membership is comprised of 4 groups as set out in the SACRE's constitution:

Group A: Christian denominations and other religions and their denominations, reflecting the principal religious traditions of the area.

Group B: The Church of England with representatives nominated by the diocese.

Group C: Teacher and Head teacher representation.

Group D: The Local Authority: appointed by the Local Authority.

Each group has one vote in the case of a voting matter. In addition, SACRE can co-opt members, who do not have voting rights.

The Constitution was last reviewed at the SACRE meeting of 20 November 2019 (minute no. 51). The minutes of the meeting of 20 November 2019 state that the SACRE previously asked that further consideration be given to amending part 6 of the constitution to allow for a mechanism for deciding membership requests that are not straightforward replacements by established member organisations. The Portsmouth SACRE Constitution was previously updated at the meeting of 14 November 2018.

At its meeting in November 2019, the SACRE was informed that legal advice had been sought and that it was recommended that the constitution be amended to reflect that:

- The SACRE has the power to appoint members to a sub-group/working party to consider such matters (including membership and pre-appointment issues) as and when it sees fit.
- The sub-group can then make recommendations to the full SACRE.
- The terms of reference and membership of such sub-groups will be set by the SACRE as and when required.
- The sub-group would ordinarily be an advisory body, not a decision making body so that the final decision is still made in accordance with the Act's required voting/quorum provisions.

This process was agreed on 20 November 2019 with other minor updates to the constitution.



The SACRE may be interested to note that at the SACRE meeting in 2019, there was a further discussion regarding whether membership should be extended to parent governors and young people. It was felt however that the responsibility for teaching RE lay with the schools.

3. Recommended that SACRE:

- a) Considers whether the SACRE Constitution requires amendment or updating and, if so, appoints a Sub-Committee to oversee the work before making recommendations to the SACRE and thereafter the Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education.**

OR

- b) Confirms the SACRE Constitution (previously agreed on 20 November 2019) subject to the words "stated in 4.1" in paragraphs 6.1 and 6.2 being changed to read "stated in 3.1" and to further review in the Autumn term of 2024.**

4. Matters for possible review

The SACRE will want to note that there is an incorrect paragraph number given in paragraphs 6.1 and 6.2. These should refer to paragraphs 3.1 rather than 4.1 and it is proposed that this typographical error is corrected.

Matters the SACRE may wish to consider in reviewing its constitution:

Section 2 - Membership

- a) Consider whether a review of Census 2021 and pupil data could be helpful in establishing the membership of Group A (see paragraph 2.1(a)). Group A comprises representatives of Christian denominations and other religions and their denominations and should reflect the principal religious traditions and the wider 'belief' systems of the area.
- b) Consider whether it would be helpful to further define the membership of Group B (set out in paragraph 2.1(b)) to clarify that the relevant nominating body for Group B is the Diocese/ Diocesan Board of Education for the area and that representatives could include: local clergy; teachers (including teachers from Church of England schools); governors; and members of local Anglican congregations.
- c) Consider a review of the membership of Group C (see paragraph 2.1(c)) to ensure that it reflects the education community in the city. Traditionally, membership of this Group has been interpreted to mean teachers from the different teaching unions, but it might also mean those who come from local head teacher groups or networks of RE teachers in the authority. Some SACREs include teachers from academies in Group C, particularly where those academies have chosen to adopt the locally agreed syllabus. Although it is not a legal requirement to do so, many



LAs have a policy of ensuring that all strands of education are represented on their SACRE, appointing teachers to Group C who come from EYFS, Primary, Secondary and Special Schools, including alternative provision. Group C might also include a representative of a local university department leading on Theology and Religious Studies or involved in training RE teachers. Qualified teachers working as education officers in major places of worship, galleries, museums and other relevant sites locally where learning in RE takes place might also serve on this group.

- d) Consider whether the SACRE would benefit from co-opting additional representatives from local organisations (see paragraph 2.2) and whether it is appropriate to specifically include mention of Interfusion as an example of a local organisation.

5. Next steps

Legal advice on any changes to the current constitution should be sought. In law it is the responsibility of the Local Authority to decide which communities and organisations should have representation on its SACRE and it is the responsibility of the LA to approve the nominees of the relevant sponsoring bodies.