
(SACRE) STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 10 JUNE 2013

Present:

Group A –

Christian Denominations

David Walford (Minutes 1-5) and Peter Howard

Other religions

Elizabeth Jenkerson, Anas Al-Korj and Liz Mizon

Group B – Church of England

Anne Steele-Arnett (Minutes 6-9)

Group C – Teachers

Jackie Meering and Mr D Parrott (Minutes 6-9)

Group D – Members of the Council

Councillors Daunt, Kaur, Paffey, Parnell and Kate Martin

Also in attendance:

Varina Emblen, Children's Services and

Neil Maddock

1. **ELECTION OF CHAIR**

RESOLVED that Councillor Daunt be appointed as Chair for the purposes of the meeting.

2. **WELCOME AND APOLOGIES**

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting.

Apologies were received from:-

Group A – Margaret Blake

Group B – Tony Blackshaw

3. **STATEMENT FROM THE CHAIR**

The Chair informed the meeting that Peter Howard was moving out of the area and would therefore be leaving SACRE and that Neil Maddock was in attendance as an Observer to see if he would like to take up the position of representative for The Assemblies of God.

The Chair stated that he would write an Annual Report which would be submitted to the next meeting.

4. **MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING INCLUDING MATTERS ARISING**

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 4th March 2013 be approved and signed as a correct record. (Copy of the Minutes circulated with the Agenda and appended to the signed Minutes).

Matters Arising

Page 2 – Feedback on Events - Jackie Meering reported that the training would need to be for primary as well as secondary teachers. Funding for training was currently unallocated and the Chair agreed to identify what budget, if any, could be available to SACRE. This would tie in with the general desire of the group to rejoin NASACRE which would require payment of a subscription.

Page 3 – Anas Al Korj reported that Fitrah Sips should be spelt with one “p”.

5. **MEMBERSHIP OF SACRE**

It was noted that there had been an enquiry regarding being the representative for ATL which would require endorsement by the Union, and this endorsement would be sought by the Clerk. There had also been an enquiry regarding being the Jewish representative and an invitation would be issued for the next meeting.

The Chair reported that Chris Robinson had left the SACRE and that Liz Mizon had agreed to be the Co-Opted Humanist representative. This was agreed by the meeting.

The Clerk explained that four Councillors would be appointed to SACRE at the Cabinet meeting to be held on 18 June 2013.

The Chair reported that he was continuing to seek representatives for the SACRE vacancies.

6. **FEEDBACK ON EVENTS**

NASACRE Annual General Meeting

Anas Al-Korj reported that he had attended the NASACRE Annual General meeting on the 23 May 2013. He had written a report of events on the day which had been circulated via email to Members. He reported that Ofsted had stated that 60% of RE teaching was “less than good” and that various issues had been identified such as changes in the new Inspection framework, which had created uncertainty. Concerns expressed at the meeting regarding SACREs had included a lack of funding, a lack of Councillors at meetings, and SACREs no longer being fit for purpose.

He reported that discussions had taken place regarding (a) working closer with Academies and mitigating the effects of a general reduction in Local Authority consultancy support for schools, (b) how SACREs locally and NASACRE can persuade Local Authorities to comply with their statutory duty to support SACREs and (c) the agreed focus of Agreed Syllabus reviews in the context of the national curriculum and the current stage of the RE Subject Review.

A discussion ensued amongst Members and it was agreed that it was difficult for SACRE to go into schools to monitor RE as it had no legal status to do so.

It was agreed that:

- A strategic approach would be beneficial as it was currently difficult to see the overall situation regarding RE teaching and collective worship in schools;
- It would be useful to know how Academies were teaching RE and how they engage with SACREs;
- It could be possible for SACREs to become a solution for the problems experienced in teaching RE in schools, thus enabling schools to move forward, although it was acknowledged that it was difficult to know how best to communicate this to schools;
- It would be useful if a team could be sent into schools to see current RE activities, although this would require prior notification at the Primary Heads Conference and the need to seek their approval;
- If it was possible to identify very effective SACREs in the UK, Southampton could learn from their best practice and identify which areas had been targeted and the reasons behind those decisions;
- The teaching of RE in schools and the way Collective Worship was carried out were two entirely different matters;
- If suitable teachers could be identified to attend the Secondary RE Teachers Conference they could explore what is happening within Hampshire. The next conference was scheduled to be held on 18 October 2013; and
- To have membership of NASACRE would be beneficial although it was acknowledged that there were funding constraints. It was suggested that income from Living Difference sales of CDs may be channelled into the subscription charge.

The Chair agreed to take the following action and present a report to the next meeting:

- Write to NASACRE seeking good examples of SACREs;
- Write to the Secondary RE Teachers Conference enquiring if some teachers from SACRE could attend;
- Enquire if access could be given to Southampton Moodle; and
- Enquire if the NASACRE subscription could be paid.

Jackie Meering agreed to ask her Soft Federation of Schools if it would be possible for SACRE Members to go into schools and stated that she would report back to the next meeting.

Other events

The Southampton Council of Faiths had held their Annual Peace Walk on 9th June, visiting many places of worship within the city, and this had been well attended.

Elizabeth Jenkerson reported that a free training session about SACRE held in Winchester recently had been very good and that she had also attended a worthwhile conference in Somerset, details of which could be found on the R E Council website.

Councillor Parnell stated that School Pastors scheme had been launched although they had subsequently changed their name to Street Pastors. The participating schools had welcomed the new arrangement.

Councillor Parnell stated that the Gideons organisation gave out New Testaments to Year 7s in local schools.

7. **REVIEW OF SACRE CONSTITUTION**

A discussion took place regarding substitutes for meetings, should the nominated member not be able to attend from Groups A, B and C. Group D already had a nominated substitute.

This matter was discussed amongst the members as to how it might work and it was thought to be too complicated to work satisfactorily.

Paragraph 2.1 – Varina Emblen asked that the words “the Qualifications and National Curriculum Authority (QCA) and to such other” be deleted, as this Authority no longer existed.

Paragraph 9.2 – Jackie Meering stated that there had been an increase in the number of Academies since the Constitution was last ratified and therefore it did not seem appropriate that Oasis was specifically mentioned in the Constitution. The Chair stated that he would draft some new wording and bring this matter back to the next meeting for ratification.

Paragraph 9.9 – Varina Emblen asked that the phrase “School Inspectors” be replaced by “Local Authority School Improvement Officers”.

Paragraph 13.3 – Councillor Parnell enquired whether this clause was currently being actioned. The Chair stated that as Members were busy, it seemed inappropriate to discontinue their membership if they did not attend for three consecutive meetings. It was agreed that if Members were absent for a number of meetings then appropriate action would be to remind them that it was important that each Faith group was represented at meetings but that it was unhelpful to be too prescriptive about the action to be taken.

RESOLVED that the SACRE Constitution be brought to the next meeting in order to finalise the Recommendations.

8. **EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT 2013 - FOCUS ON RE**

Varina Emblen gave a verbal update regarding the educational attainment for Religious Education in Schools and explained that she was unable to give statistics about specific schools as this was not in the public domain.

She stated that for short courses, there had been a decline in number of pupils entering over the last five years and that the GCSE results had shown a steady increase in grades A*-C and that in 2012 Southampton had been 1.3% above the National Average. However for grades A-G there had been an overall decline in Southampton (91.6%) against the National Average of 94.7%.

She stated that for full courses, there had been variable entry levels over the last five years and that the GCSE results had shown an upward trend for grades A*-C and that in 2012 Southampton had been 0.6% above the National Average.

Jackie Meering asked for a breakdown of numbers taking GCSE RE exams in Faith and Maintained schools. Varina Emblen stated that whilst these statistics could be given as groups of schools, the request for information would need to be clearly defined. She stated that she was unable to give information on individual schools. The Chair stated that he would visit a selection of school websites and bring some information to the next meeting.

Anne Steele-Arnett stated that it would be useful to have a breakdown of school religions and other items of interest to SACRE, which were in the public domain, from the Children's Services database and Varina Emblen agreed to bring this information to the next meeting.

9. **DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

The following dates were agreed:

Monday 7th October 2013, 4.00pm

Monday 3rd March 2014, 4.00pm

Monday 9th June 2014, 4.00pm

Members stated that they preferred a venue with plenty of parking and it was agreed that Cantell Maths and Computing College was a convenient venue. The Clerk was asked to book the College for the next three meetings.