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(SACRE) STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION  
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 3 March 2014

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Present:

Group A – Christian Denominations

David Walford

Group A – Other religions

Anas Al-Korj, Priti Dave, Elizabeth Jenkerson and David Vane

Group B – Church of England

Allan King, Chris Pritchard and Richard Wharton

Group C – Teachers

Jackie Meering, Dr Richard Palmer, Mr D Parrott

Group D – Members of the Council

Councillors Daunt (Chair) and Parnell, Kate Martin

Others (Non-Voting) Co-opted Members

Liz Mizon (Humanists), Chris Davis (Southampton City Mission)

Also in attendance:

Graham Talbot, Head of Education – SCC

27. **WELCOME, APOLOGIES AND CHANGES OF MEMBERSHIP**

Apologies were received from:

Group A - Nicola Peckham

Group C - Fiona Plummer

Group D - Councillors Kaur and Paffey

28. **ELECTION OF CHAIR**

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

COUNCILLOR DAUNT IN THE CHAIR

29. **STATEMENT FROM THE CHAIR**

The retirement of Anne Steele-Arnett was confirmed and it was agreed that a letter of thanks be sent from the Chair on behalf of the SACRE.

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

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> November 2013 be approved and signed as a correct record. (Copy of the Minutes circulated with the Agenda and appended to the signed Minutes).

31. **ANNUAL REPORT**

Councillor Daunt tabled a draft Annual Report for consideration and comment.

Graham Talbot, Head of Education SCC was present and with the consent of the Chair addressed the meeting.

Councillor Daunt acknowledged that an Annual Report had not been produced for some time but that the Southampton SACRE was not alone in this and also referred to those reports available on the NASACRE web site which varied from brief two page overviews to 80 page detailed tomes. It was also recognized that the draft was basic but the inclusion of more detailed evidence would be the aim for future reports.

Jackie Meering highlighted that whilst some SACREs did not post their reports to the NASACRE web site – they did make them available on their local authority web pages.

Following discussion, amendments to the wording in the report were agreed regarding the following main points:-

- references to the provision of training by SACRE which was established at the meeting as not being within its resources but that the SACRE should more suitably signpost training provision; and
- references to the monitoring of RE provision in schools which was felt to be outside the remit of the SACRE; however observation and feedback to the local authority was felt to be a more appropriate function.

Graham Talbot agreed to provide additional data for inclusion in the report and to amend the wording in line with the outcome of the discussion for appropriate circulation.

The SACRE AGREED the draft of the report subject to these modifications.

32. **THE WAY FORWARD**

Councillor Daunt introduced this item which had been the main focus of his covering letter distributed with the agenda for this meeting and in the body of the draft Annual Report.

Councillor Daunt highlighted his proposal that each of the areas he had outlined under a plan of action be lead by members of the SACRE in order to give purpose and direction on the task and sought volunteers. Jackie Meering volunteered to lead on the review of educational attainment in RE and standards of RE teaching across the City.

There was a detailed discussion which included the need for professional support to the SACRE from the local authority in order to carry out its responsibilities and what these responsibilities were.

It was reported that a meeting had taken place with Graham Talbot, Head of Education, following the last meeting's resolution (Minute 26) at which professional and budget support for the SACRE had been discussed.

Graham Talbot reported on the current position regarding support from the School Improvement Team from where future professional support would be made available undertaking to provide this himself in the meantime. He clarified at the request of members, that the responsibility of the SACRE was broadly to ensure the local authority was assisting schools with the delivery of RE in line with and to the standard of, the Agreed Syllabus. It was also suggested that effective SACREs organised meetings with a clear focus, requesting relevant information from the local authority to inform their discussion / action.

It was recognised at the meeting that members had restrictions on the time they could commit outside the three scheduled meetings per year and the limitations of the skills / resources within the group. Following discussion it was concluded that as an advisory body the SACRE could commission reports from the local authority and debate these at its meetings, request data and information to inform its actions and use the local authority to provide the mechanism for contact with schools such as the proposed questionnaires; but should not be attempting to sort out or directly monitor the management of RE provision in schools. Graham Talbot offered to arrange visits to schools as a learning experience for SACRE members

The group discussed the content of the questionnaires drafted by Jackie Meering and Elizabeth Jenkerson for distribution to primary and secondary schools which could inform the SACRE regarding the RE teaching provision in schools.

Graham Talbot agreed to take charge of the administration of the questionnaires to schools – including its distribution and the collation of responses into a report to be brought to a future meeting for discussion. This was welcomed by the SACRE.

33. **FEEDBACK ON EVENTS**

This item was deferred until the next meeting.

34. **DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS.**

It was noted that the next meeting was scheduled for 4.00 pm on 9<sup>th</sup> June 2014 at St Mark's Primary School.