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STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE)

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 18 November 2019

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Present:

Group A –

Christian Denominations

The Roman Catholic Church – Ruth Cunio

The Baptists – Chris Davies

The Religious Society of Friends – Vacancy

The Greek Orthodox Church – Vacancy

The Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches – Margaret Blake

The Methodist Church Vacancy

The United Reformed Church – Susanne Dawson

The Assemblies of God- Neil Maddock

The Salvation Army Vacancy

Other religions

Baha'i – Elizabeth Jenkerson

Buddhist – David Vane

Hindu – Priti Dave

Jewish- Dr Gil Dekel

Muslim – Anas Al-Korj

Sikh – Harmeet Singh Brar

Group B – Church of England

Rev Duncan Jennings

Allan King

Sam Jordan

From Diocesan education team

Richard Wharton

Group C – Teachers

National Union of Teachers – Jackie Meering

The National Association of Schoolmasters/Union of Women Teachers –

David Parrot

Voice – Dr R Palmer

The Association of Teachers and Lecturers – Julian Waterfield  
Association of School and College Leaders – Vacancy  
National Association of Head teachers - Vacancy

Group D – Members of the Council  
Councillors Baille, Laurent, Jordan, Payne  
Group D Substitute – Kate Martin

Also in attendance:

Jo Cassey

Others co-opted (Non-Voting)  
South Hampshire Humanists – Mary Wallbank  
ASC teacher representatives – Sussanah Woodman, Suzanne Dawson,  
Claire Belli

Apologies

1. **WELCOME AND APOLOGIES**

**Apologies:**

The United reform Church	Susanne Dawson
The Church of England	Alan King
The Church of England	Sam Jordan
National Association of Headteachers (NAHT)	Sian Carr
National Education Union	Jackie Meering
Southampton City Mission	Matt Gwyn
Bitterne Park Secondary School	Suzanne Underwood

2. **MINUTE FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING**

In regards to the previous minutes AP noted that Mary Wallbank needed to be stated in the co-opted members section and EJ observed that Rev Duncan Jennings should have been in the apologies.

3. **CONSTITUTION AND MEMBERSHIP**

EJ highlighted to the room that there are a lot of vacancies within Southampton SACRE from representatives of important religions, most notably Hindu, Buddhist and Sikh. EJ stated that previously there had been strong representation from these religions and queried if everything had been done to request a representative to attend. AP stated that all basis has been covered in regards to requesting attendees including email and through SCOFF. AP added that if anyone present in the committee knows of someone from a faith that is not currently being represented, make them aware that they are more than welcome to attend as an observer to find out more before committing through nomination by local faith group. (**ACTION all**).

**Actions arising:**

- Committee members to request the attendance of a currently unrepresented faith to gain a broader scope in discussions and decisions

**i. Humanist's application to Group A – Update**

In regards to the Humanist's application to Group A, AP confirmed that not all of the members have sent back information, to which EJ confirmed that she had not. EJ suggested to see what the council's views were, adding that no one on the committee would like to oppose the Local Authority. AP suggested emailing the application to all members of SACRE to which MW approved of this and highlighted a case in Greenwich where a Local Authority opinion had been overridden. It is agreed that MW is happy for the application to be circulated.

**Actions arising:**

- AP to circulate MW's application to SACRE members

**4. ACTION PLANNING GROUP MEETINGS****2018-2019 Films**

Two short film were shown to the committee. AP explained that the films were created by students at Southampton Solent University. AP highlighted that both films took a very broad approach to the brief. One approach looked at language from a faith perspective, the other looked at the development of collective worship.

AP confirmed that all measures were carried out to ensure that these videos could be published for public view. These measures included DBS checks for the students filming in the school and paperwork from the children's parents that agree for the video to be viewed publicly. EJ noted that if there are any complaints about the films, it can be agreed to remove them from public viewing.

In regards to organising more films to be produced in the future AP confirmed that there has been positive feedback from the schools and the pupils. AP credited a lot of the work done by Allan King, who gives a lot of his time to organising these videos being made. AP explained that a number of primary schools are interested in collaborating with SACRE and creating videos. AP also highlighted that there has been difficulty involving some schools due to the timeframe of the university student's projects. AP noted that time for pitching further videos would be approaching soon. AP reported that a discussion on what will be on the pitch needs to take place, although the students have their own approach on how to produce the films. AP suggested filming an RE lesson so that the model of an RE lesson in school could be observed. DJ queried if there was a maximum length for these videos to which AP confirmed that it is four and a half minutes but there may be room for negotiation.

**Action arising:**

- For the videos to be posted online for public view, granting Pauline Abbott is in agreement
- Discussion to take place regarding what the next pitches should include

### **Monitoring Group**

AP stated that the amount of schools to have received a Monitoring Group visit will be up to 74% by the end of year. AP reported that there are 13 schools awaiting a visit this year, with 11 of these agreeing dates. AP confirmed that these dates will be sent to the Monitoring Groups over the next couple of weeks and visits will be discussed. AP stated that it is on track for all local schools to have a monitoring visit, or at least be offered one. AP confirmed that two schools had asked for a deferment, which they are entitled to. EJ enquired as to whether there will be any new schools to be aware of. AP replied that there will be one new school in Shirley but it would not be open until 2022. It is discussed that anyone wanting to join a monitoring group has to agree to be subject to a DBS check. AP will organise over the next couple weeks for anyone wishing to join visits and will confirm dates in January, first visits are in March so will most likely be after Christmas.

### **Action arising:**

- Anyone wanting to join the Monitoring Groups to confirm their interest over the next coming weeks
- All monitoring group members to ensure that their SACRE id cards are up to date

## **5. OFSTED FINDINGS RELEVANT TO RE AND COLLECTIVE WORSHIP**

AP stated that as of yet she has not picked up any reports whereby a focus on RE has been in the OFSTED framework. AP added that only the first three weeks of reports are currently available.

AP highlighting that OFSTED have adopted a new methodology surrounding how they will rate the quality of education in schools. AP stated that the term 'Deep Dive' has been used to refer to this new methodology. AP explained that OFSTED inspectors will spend more time communicating with the pupils and teachers, rather than the previous approach of predominantly talking to leaders. One shift in how OFSTED will gather information will be to have more conversations with the children regarding what they have been learning, books to see what has been taught. AP stated that the Monitoring Group visits that SACRE attend are similar to the 'Deep Dive' concept and collective worships are always observed on their visits.

AP also stated that OFSTED will review certain areas with more emphasis than others. EJ added that Paul Smalley, the chair of NASACRE, explained that there can be communication between OFSTED and the head teachers of schools to decide which areas are focussed on. These decisions can be based on the school believing that it is performing well in a particular subject, which they would like to highlight; however it can also be to gain feedback on subjects that they believe that they are underperforming on. AP said that RE will be the focus of an OFSTED visit eventually but it would be interesting to know if any schools suggest for it to be examined.

EJ noted that OFSTED are showing concern in the correlation between the teachings of RE in schools and the ethos of the school as a whole. EJ added that there have been instances wherein schools have been positive that they would score high with OFSTED, only for RE to bring the score down.

## **6. OTHER EVENTS AND LINKED WORK**

AP noted that the SACRE advice document was still a work in progress and gave the committee a moment to read and reflect on the content. AP explained that a lot of the difficulty in completing the document was due to the very specific wording required in the questions and answers that are being proposed. AP highlighted that there are issues being discussed in the document that individuals will view differently. AP also stated that it is the school's responsibility to choose how they will deliver the material. In regards to whether this material is directed towards primary or secondary school, AP confirmed that it is aimed at both and set out in the DFE statutory guidance but with secondary schools getting more emphasis on sexual education, in primary statutory content is relationships education and cannot be withdrawn from.

AP noted that if schools want to teach beyond the curriculum, parents have the right to withdraw their child from the lessons. AP suggests that schools have to make it clear to parents what is statutory in a child's education. Cllr VL queried which schools would be subject to this document, to which AP replied that maintained, academy and free schools will be subject to it, however independent schools will teach their own curriculum. KM asked whether puberty is a statutory subject in sex education and AP responded that it is in the statutory national science curriculum.

AP stated that the plan is to get the document finalised and distributed by January (**ACTION**), which would allow schools to plan their curriculum for the long term. AP explained that the parents will be the key for the success of this. AP noted that she had received comments from parents regarding the current teachings at their children's school and asking for her opinion. AP stated that she referred the parents to talk to the schools and emphasised the importance of parent group discussions.

AP highlighted that she had tried to communicate a suggestion for a half term plan as well as a long term plan, which will give schools the opportunity to react to current events and issues that may be arisen in their specific communities.

It is discussed that some faith communities may not want their children to be taught certain aspects of the curriculum due to it contradicting their beliefs. AP suggested that schools have to agree on a policy on how they will handle withdrawal requests. RW recommended that if schools are aware of particular families with specific beliefs, it could be appropriate for the schools to contact them beforehand. AP added that if children are not able to receive the correct teachings in school there is the fact that they may go to less reliable sources for education, such as the internet independently of their parents.

In regards to progressing with the document AP stated that she will liaise with RG and look to get it finished in a fortnight. After completion, AP stated that it would have to be reviewed by legal then circulated to SACRE for approval, finally, upon approval, it will then be sent to a publishing team.

#### **Actions arising:**

- Document to be completed by the 6<sup>th</sup> December. AP to circulate but not to anyone outside of the SACRE committee. EJ to proof read upon completion

#### **7. DATE OF NEXT MEETING AND AOB**

EJ highlighted that there will be a NASACRE conference and AGM in London Blackfriars on the 18<sup>th</sup> of May. EJ stated that previously the workshops during the event were offered on a first-come first-serve basis and attendees arriving later did not get a chance to take part in the activity they wanted. EJ explained that now attendees can sign up beforehand making it much fairer.

EJ emphasised the importance of an individual from Southampton SACRE to be present in the event. AP explained that funding should be available for one person to go and if two people were to attend perhaps it could be payed for on a 50/50 basis. AP queried if a booking could be made but without a name, meaning that it can be decided on who attends at a later date. EJ highlighted that it is likely that the booking will ask for a name and email address. AP stated that she would seek out the possibility of someone from Southampton SACRE attending **(ACTION)**.

**Actions arising:**

- AP to arrange a representative from Southampton SACRE to attend the NASACRE conference

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

**Next Meeting: 20<sup>th</sup> January 2020**  
**4pm – 6pm**  
**Venue: Committee Room 1**