
(SACRE) STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 26 JANUARY 2015

Present:

Group A –

Christian Denominations

None present

Other religions

Anas Al-Korj, Harmeet Singh-Brar and Elizabeth Jenkerson

Group B – Church of England

Richard Wharton

Group C – Teachers

David Parrott - NASUWT

Julian Waterfield - ATL

Group D – Members of the Council

Councillors Daunt, Kaur, Paffey and Parnell

Others (Non-Voting)

Group D Substitute – Kate Martin

Suzanne Underwood – Secondary Schoolteacher – Co-opted

Also in attendance:

Chris Davis – Southampton City Mission

Alison Philpott – Professional Adviser, SCC

35. **ELECTION OF CHAIR**

RESOLVED that Councillor Daunt be appointed as Chair and Elizabeth Jenkerson as Vice-Chair for the remainder of the municipal year.

COUNCILLOR DAUNT IN THE CHAIR

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

Apologies were received from:

Group A – Margaret Blake, Priti Dave,

Group B - Rev Duncan Jennings and David Walford.

Group C – Jackie Meering,

Group D - Councillors Denness and Paffey

The Chair welcomed Harmeet Singh-Brar as the new Sikh representative to Group A and noted that he also served on the Hampshire SACRE.

Having welcomed Suzanne Underwood and Julian Waterfield to the meeting, it was agreed that they join the SACRE as co-optees, in particular for the purpose of input to the upcoming review of the Agreed Syllabus. However, the Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL) had put Julian forward as a representative and therefore he was a member of Group C. It was noted that Suzanne was a secondary teacher from Bitterne Park School and Julian from St Anne's Catholic School.

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

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 3rd March 2014 and the notes of the informal meeting held on 24th November 2014, be agreed as a correct record.

38. **RE AUDIT OF SOUTHAMPTON SCHOOLS**

The SACRE considered the Audit Tool as sent out on their behalf to all local authority controlled City schools. Alison Philpott reported that the Tool had been based on a previous model and developed with input from Elizabeth Jenkerson and Jackie Meering.

There was a discussion around widening the circulation of the Tool to include all schools in the City and it was agreed that this could be done to include faith schools. It was recognised that there was no obligation for schools to participate.

It was explained that the Tool was a self-evaluation tool for schools to rate themselves. It was highlighted that there were five target areas sub-divided into a number of aspects for grading (Beginning / Developing / Established / Advanced) to best describe practice within the school. The deadline for return was 26 March.

There followed a discussion around possible training that the SACRE might offer – especially in view of anticipated needs around National Curriculum changes and following the introduction of a revised Agreed Syllabus. Alison Philpott emphasised that her role within SACRE did not include any training remit and the training role was probably best fulfilled by the South Central SACRE HUB and by accessing training offered by the Hants SACRE.

39. **FEEDBACK FROM HAMPSHIRE SACRE TRAINING EVENT**

It was reported that Alison Philpott, Elizabeth Jenkerson, Harmeet Singh-Brar, Neil Maddock and Mr Parrott had attended the recent training event held by Hampshire SACRE which had been aimed at new SACRE members.

The training, provided by Pat Hannam, County Inspector Adviser RE / History who was in attendance for the agenda item on the Agreed Syllabus, had covered a brief history of SACREs and various education acts and provided a good opportunity to network with other newer SACRE members across the County. It was cited as an example of training provision at a level not possible for the local SACRE to provide.

40. **OFSTED UPDATE / LOCAL OFSTED REPORTS**

Elizabeth Jenkerson gave a verbal update regarding recent Ofsted reports relating to the provision of RE in schools in the City.

It was noted that there had been 17 reports over an 18 month period all of which had something positive to say. Of the 17 reports one had been judged “outstanding”, eight “good” and one “requiring improvement”. It was noted that the category level of “satisfactory” had been removed since previous reports leaving the categories of:

- Outstanding
- Good
- Requires improvement
- Inadequate

The reports appeared to refer to “provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils” under the inspection judgement heading of “Leadership and management”. It was hard to distinguish in some cases between spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and religious education.

Alison Philpott was able to report that overall the City had gone up in the league tables.

The main features of the inspection process were outlined and included that:

- very little notice given to the school - no more than half a day.
- The aspects considered for the report included the “Parents View” feedback to the Ofsted website from parents on the school and items about the school in the media.

It was agreed that the detail behind Elizabeth’s verbal update be circulated to SACRE members for information.

41. **RE ATTAINMENT REPORT**

Alison Philpott gave a verbal update regarding RE attainment in schools in the City providing a table of relevant data. Overall this provided a reasonable picture for the City.

Data was broken down under the headings of:

- Comparison by gender of attainment for RE at GCSE full course level and comparison figures for the City against national data.
- Data overview for RE attainment from 2011-14 for both GCSE full and short courses and AS level, again with comparison figures for the City against national data.
- Entry data for both full and short courses.

The main points highlighted by the data included that:

- last year more pupils than ever had taken the RE long course.
- nearly all who had taken that course attained the qualification.
- early entry was possible in some schools.
- the trend was for the City becoming more in line with national statistics.
- It was recognised that whilst non-specialist teachers might be suitably motivated for the subject they may well not have the skills, experience and/or awareness and that the time they had available was often a problem.

There was discussion around the reasons for schools not having specialist teachers for RE – whether this was due to a shortage of RE teachers or a reluctance to recruit for example. It was confirmed that agencies reported there was no shortage and the SACRE felt it was more due to budget pressures not to recruit.

42. **LOCAL DIRECTORY TO SUPPORT RE IN SCHOOLS**

It was reported that this initiative to produce a directory of support for teaching RE in schools had come out of the informal meeting held in November. At that meeting there had been a discussion around producing a list of faith contacts in SACRE and of what members could offer to support faith teaching in schools.

It was stated that some schools in the City were already accessing (and presumably paying for) resources from Hampshire and despite having restricted budgets, schools were having to fund activities and resources from those budgets.

It was agreed that Alison would check with David Vane regarding the existence of a Southampton Council of Faiths directory but it was confirmed that Hampshire did have one.

Members were supplied with and requested to complete a standard form which would be used to compile the directory.

43. **LIVING DIFFERENCE - AGREED RE SYLLABUS**

Pat Hannam, Hampshire County Inspector/Adviser RE (Hants SACRE Professional Advisor) was in attendance and gave a presentation on the Hampshire Agreed RE Syllabus - Living Difference as used in the City. It was noted that this was not about *what* was taught but about *how* i.e. the best process to be used. It was highlighted that what also made Living Difference different to other agreed syllabuses, was having one single attainment target of “Interpreting religion in relation to human experience”.

Members discussed options to adopting the Hampshire Agreed Syllabus (AS) but agreed that due to issues regarding resources and economies of scale, this was indeed currently the best option. It was also noted that the South Central Hub supported the Hampshire AS.

Members noted the timescales involved for the review of the Syllabus and that there were no cost implications for participating. The review process was scheduled to entail two half day meetings and three full days for any re-writing as necessary. Members also noted the probable areas of focus for the review.

Alison Philpott outlined the work she had been doing to establish a working group for the Agreed Syllabus of teachers at various levels from the City and members noted that it would be necessary to convene an Agreed Syllabus Conference at the next meeting. It was reiterated that the next meeting therefore needed to be quorate, with at least one representative from each voting group.

44. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS - DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Following discussion regarding potential days, venues and dates it was agreed that the date of the next meeting would be Monday, 20 April at 4pm – venue to be arranged as it was expected that there would be no rooms available in the Civic Centre due to elections administration.

It was agreed that members should ensure that at least two members of each of the membership groups would be present for the next meeting as the intention was to instigate working groups to undertake responsibility for tasks such as: reviewing the SACRE Constitution, agreeing protocols for working with schools, Agreed Syllabus review. It was thus particularly important to ensure the meeting was quorate.

Members noted that the next meeting of the South Central SACRE Hub was to be on 9th February and that Alison Philpott, Elizabeth Jenkerson and Richard Wharton expected attend.