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STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE)

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 7 June 2021

Present:

Group A –

Christian Denominations

The Roman Catholic Church - Steve Deadman

The Baptists – Chris Davies

The Religious Society of Friends – Vacancy

The Greek Orthodox Church – Vacancy

The Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches - Ruth Gill

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 – Vacancy

Hindu – Vacancy

Jewish- Dr Gil Dekel

Muslim – Anas Al-Korj

Sikh – Vacancy

Group B – Church of England

Rev Duncan Jennings

Liz Allen

From Diocesan Education Team

Richard Wharton

Group C – Teachers

National Union of Teachers - Amelia Day
The National Association of Schoolmasters/Union of Women
Teachers – Voice – Suzanne Underwood
The Association of Teachers and Lecturers Vacancy
Association of School and College Leaders – Vacancy
National Association of Head teachers – Sian Carr

Group D – Members of the Council

Councillors Baillie, Bunday, Kataria and Laurent

Group D Substitute – Kate Martin

Also, in attendance:

Others co-opted (Non-Voting)

South Hampshire Humanists – Mary Wallbank
Southampton City Council, Professional Advisor – Alison Philpott
ASC teacher representatives – Susannah Woodman, Suzanne
Dawson
Church of England – Sam Jordan
Southampton City Mission – Matt Gwyn

1. MEMBERSHIP

AP repeated a previous request for SACRE members to make nominations for the Faith Group Reps and asked to be informed of any nominees considered suitable to join any of the SACRE groups where there was a vacancy.

RESOLVED that the following changes to membership were noted:

- Liz Allen and Rev Tony Palmer were welcomed as C of E reps at the February meeting.
- Following Jackie Meering's step down from the role, Amelia Day was welcomed as the new NEU rep. AD was introduced as the RE Lead at Newlands Primary school.
- Suzanne Underwood, Head of RE at Bitterne Park, was appointed as the new NASUWT member. SU was previously a co-opted SACRE member and had worked in the Agreed Syllabus Group.
- Rev. Duncan Jennings informed members that he was retiring from full time ministry in September 2021 and was sadly leaving Southampton to move to Bristol. After 21 years on SACRE he said he had found it a privilege to be part of an active group and to see the relationship with schools grow and flourish. Rev Jennings thanked AP for all her support and AP expressed SACRE's gratitude for all that DJ had done over the years.
- The Diocese nominated a replacement rep Lucy Hepinstall, Foundation Governor at Highfield and the RE Lead at Bassett Green. LH was nominated to replace Rev DJ from September 2021.

2. ELECTION OF CHAIR

RESOLVED that as Group D member appointments would not be confirmed until the Cabinet meeting later in June, nominations were accepted but voting was re-scheduled for the September 2021 meeting.

RESOLVED that Ruth Gill was nominated to stand as Chair and Elizabeth Jenkerson was nominated as Vice Chair. No other nominations were received. SACRE members were reminded that there is one vote per group.

3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING INCLUDING MATTERS ARISING

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 1st February 2021 be approved and signed as a correct record.

4. FEEDBACK FROM LOCAL AND NATIONAL EVENTS

RE Quality Mark

Formerly, Regents Park school had applied for and won the Gold award. Other Southampton schools had used the App tools but not applied for the award. More recently however, Banister primary school had undertaken the assessment process and had achieved the Gold Quality Mark. Bannister primary school teachers KV and EB made a presentation to SACRE to raise the following points:

- The RE Quality Mark could be used to; benchmark RE, receive external validation, or to strengthen the RE subject area.
- Balancing religious and non-religious perspectives in class time, gave all views equal opportunity to be heard, and so met one of SACRE's targets.
- At Banister RE was used a way of understanding the world and the people around it. The school had worked hard using that as the driver for its ethos and culture.
- Banister was fortunate to be a diverse school. Children use fifty-six languages (the highest proportion being 46% English), and had a diverse range of experience and religions.
- A new concept had been introduced called 'RE in a Minute', where Year 5 & 6 children were set a question and given time to formulate answers. Children were encouraged to express themselves and explore religious and non-religious ideas and interpretations. This gave the school the confidence to explore the wider concepts of interpretation and to allow the children to guide what they wanted to learn. Children were found to make better connections with other religions after the lesson when given time to process using the 'Pondering' concept.
- There would be an opportunity at a future time for SACRE members to view a video of the children participating, which could not be shared at the public meeting.

AP and EJ extended congratulations to Banister school on its achievement of the RE Quality Mark. It was agreed that AP would write to the school on behalf of SACRE to extend SACRE's congratulations.

NASACRE Conference

AP reported that the NASACRE conference had been a useful, rich experience with a broad spectrum. It was attended by 100 people, mainly professional advisers and country wide SACRE members, sharing useful practice at a very well-managed online event.

AP stated that other SACRES had shown interest in Southampton's Advice

document, which might lead to potential additions to the document from other SACRES. AP recommended attendance at future conferences.

World Views Workshop

AP explained that the World Views Issue and the Theos paper (Agenda item 6) were linked and anticipated that more papers would follow, which was welcomed. It had become clear, particularly while working on the Locally Agreed Syllabus Review, that clarity and definition were needed to ascertain a common countrywide understanding.

RE Network Event

AP explained that the Year 8/9 event would take place in the Autumn. As previously, this would be a fact-finding activity for pupils during the morning with cross-school group presentations in the afternoon. It was agreed that AP would confirm the date of the event once it had been scheduled and would add the item to the September SACRE agenda. Further, it was agreed that SACRE members would inform AP if they could take part in and support the event.

5. NASACRE REPORT ON SACRE BUDGET – PROFESSIONAL

- EJ apprised members about Deborah Weston, Religious Education Consultant, who had recently retired to Hampshire. SACRE members were likely to encounter Ms. Weston as she was active with NASACRE and had previously assisted the Department of Education, where she was highly respected.
- Regarding Southampton SACRE following the recommendations in the report, AP explained that SACRE was meeting its statutory requirements by reviewing the syllabus and monitoring at schools. Monitoring was instrumental in understanding strengths and areas that needed development.
- AP confirmed that Southampton is 2% below the recommended SACRE budget. The previous year, the budget was 1.3% below. AP explained that it varied from year to year but due to a request, in the current budget year, for teacher release time to carry out reviews, AP advised budget spending would be higher in the current fiscal year. AP had done more monitoring and review work in previous non-Covid years, which had not always been taken out of budget. It was noted that no monitoring visits had been carried out during the Covid related closures and that had reduced the budget spend. EJ added that because AP is professional advisor, there was no additional cost attached for her additional work. AP confirmed that the budget was around £25-26K budget per year, which roughly equated to 20 days of AP's time.
- Clerking time and work on the Advice document and other meeting attendance was also included in budget costs.
- The response rate for the report from local authorities was high (130 of 152 responded) meaning that the information was a reliable indication country wide.

6. DISCUSSION REGARDING PAPER PUBLISHED BY THEOS ON WORLDVIEWS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

- EJ clarified that the intention of the Commission on Religious Education's core document was to teach that other people are exposed to multiple influences in life. And, that any number of things might influence someone's world view, belief systems, behaviour, interests and interactions. Further, the aim was to understand how one's own views might be influenced and affected and the difference this might make in the way one perceives the world and its events.

- AP observed that this was central to the Theos report conclusions and also linked to the work at Banister primary school, in particular the change in use of the term 'All' to 'some, many, most, few' etc., in order to clarify that not all people think or believe the same thing. AP stated that contextualising this concept was central and would strengthen teaching.
- AP suggested that this was possibly the strongest issue to be promoted from a syllabus perspective, and it would be expected as a minimum in teaching, and, as such, Southampton's SACRE training would advocate that.

7. AGREED SYLLABUS CONFERENCE UPDATE - PROFESSIONAL ADVISER

- AP explained that teachers and schools' input into the latest review was dealt with slightly differently in view of Covid. One aspect of the review, which was in addition to the Cycle of Inquiry, was to question whether the concept of 'Pondering time' (title to be discussed), would be beneficial for children's learning. 'Pondering time' provided children with the opportunity to explore a concept they had been learning about, beyond the Cycle of Inquiry, and beyond the minimum requirement for the school delivery of the locally agreed RE syllabus. It would facilitate children to explore, think critically, and expand upon a subject they were interested in knowing more about.
- AP explained that there would be a remote meeting on Wednesday 14 July 2021, for teachers and Heads across Southampton, Portsmouth, Hants and IOW to be involved in finalising the cycle and assessment part of the review. SACRE members were invited to attend. It was agreed that SACRE Members who wished to join would email AP.

8. ACTION PLAN FOR 2021-2022 - PROFESSIONAL ADVISER

- The development the new Action Plan, (due in January 2021), was delayed because of the Coronavirus pandemic.
- Due to falling numbers in the Monitoring Group, AP stated it would be helpful to have a broader number of members established at the start of the 5-year cycle and invited SACRE members to volunteer for monitoring visits. AP hoped to negotiate release time for teachers new to SACRE to go into other schools.
- Rev DJ encouraged members to volunteer explaining that monitoring was generally a very interesting and positive experience for everyone involved. Schools appreciated the interest and the honest feedback of observations linked with the Agreed Syllabus.
- Further, having two reviewers allowed consideration of a wider scope of materials. Schools had previously welcomed the reviews as a positive experience. For the reviewers it was useful to see excellent examples of RE work going on in the city and in Collective Worship. SACRE members therefore

RESOLVED that:

- Any SACRE member who would like to join the monitoring group would inform AP as soon as possible.
- AP and RG would consult with RG's Head Teacher regarding teaching release time for RG.

RESOLVED that all proposed points for the Action Plan be approved and that SACRE take the following action: -

- SACRE would work on a 2-year Action Plan.
- The Plan would include the launch of Locally Agreed Syllabus in November 2021, and training for primary and secondary school teachers would be the top

priority for subsequent 12 months.

RESOLVED that in addition to the proposed points, the following be added to the Action Plan: -

- Monitoring group decisions
- Decisions about how to prioritise the visits
- RE Quality Mark
- SACRE training and induction: Following SACRE member training on 27 September 2021, SACRE would ensure annual training for SACRE members.
- Places of worship mapping: MG to coordinate a group (to include SU and AD). And to include information needed before a visit. MG felt that this was one of the projects that Solent Film could do at some point in the future. AP noted secondary and primary leads would be interested.
- CPD for Agreed Syllabus for both primary and secondary colleagues.
- Visits to schools from Faith Groups: CD, MG and SJ to work on this.
- SACRE annual reports: template to be developed for all reports.
- Advice Document Review: AP advised that a review was due in 2022 Spring term, of the statutory guidance advice document (1) General, and (2) Relationships and Sex Education, from a faith perspective. It was hoped that the reviews would form a broader piece of work for others to draw upon. It was agreed that the proposal to add the reviews to the Action Plan on an annual basis was approved.

The Following was noted for action:

- SACRE members would inform AP of any other awards that schools could use as external markers.
- AP would confirm the ASC Launch meeting date. Potentially, Monday 8 November 2021.
- AP would send out a schedule of work with a request that members join where other members had left.

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING AND NOTIFIED AOB (NOTIFIED TO PROFESSIONAL ADVISER OR ACTING CHAIR AT LEAST THREE WORKING DAYS PRIOR TO THE MEETING)

- EJ informed members that it was essential that SACRE was quorate for the September meeting. Members were asked to inform AP or MM if they were unable to attend.
- The Chair thanked the Reverend Duncan Jennings and wished him the very best for the future.

Monday 27 September 2021

4pm – 6pm

Venue: Virtual Teleconference