

AT A MEETING of the STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE) held in the Mitchell Room, Elizabeth II Court, Winchester, on 8 November 2011

PRESENT

Chairman

p Councillor P. Mutton (Hampshire County Council)

Vice-Chairman

p Councillor R Chadd (Hampshire County Council)

p Mr. Mohammed Ansar	-	Muslim
p Councillor Mrs C. Bailey	-	Hampshire County Council
p Mrs. Maureen Barnes	-	Teachers' Association
a Mrs. Elaine Bellchambers	-	Higher Education – Co-opted
p Mr. Tony Blackshaw	-	Church of England
p Mrs J. Chong	-	Roman Catholic
a Mrs R. Costambeys	-	Secondary - Co-opted
p Sheikh Fazle Abbas Dato	-	Muslim
a Councillor Sam Darragh	-	Hampshire County Council
p Councillor Mrs Liz Fairhurst	-	Hampshire County Council
a Ms. Emily Fletcher	-	Church of England
p Mrs. Pat Fry	-	United Reformed Church
p Mrs Maeve Gordon-James	-	Buddhist
p Ms Patricia Hannam	-	Support Officer
a Mr Colin How	-	Methodist
a Mr Chris Hughes	-	Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches
p Mrs Elizabeth Jenkerson	-	Baha'i
p Mrs Joyce Johnson	-	Church of England
p Mrs Julie Lemon	-	Special Education – Co-opted
p Mrs Judith Lowndes	-	Support Officer
Ms Jackie McGregor	-	Salvation Army
p Miss Margaret Matthews	-	Society of Friends
a Mrs Linda Miatt	-	Teachers' Association
p Mrs Jean O'Reilly	-	Humanist – Co-opted
p Mrs Jane Pridmore	-	Teachers' Association
p Mr. Ganshin Rock	-	Buddhist
p Mr Harjap Singh	-	Sikh
p Mr Paul Tipple	-	Baptist Union
a Major Suryaparsad Upadhya	-	Hindu
a Mrs J Warren	-	Higher Education – co-opted
p Rev. Howard Wright	-	Church of England
p Mr. Michael Zeffertt	-	Jewish

Observers – Mrs Lisa Gilmour and Mr Joel Matthews - Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-Day Saints; Mr B S Chahal - Sikh

Prior to the start of the meeting Mohammed Ansar gave a presentation about the Muslim faith. In his presentation he mentioned some common misconceptions about Islam and then expanded on his view that all religions should focus more on their common beliefs, of which there were many, rather than their differences. Mohammed answered questions raised by Members.

82. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Mrs Sam Darragh, Mrs J Warren, Mr C How, Mr C Hughes, Mrs L Miatt, Mrs E Bellchambers, Ms Emily Fletcher and Major S Upadhya

83. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were mindful that, where they believed that they had a personal or personal prejudicial interest in any matter to be considered at the meeting, they should normally, at the time of the debate, declare their interest, and having regard to the circumstances described in paragraphs 9, 10, 11 and 12 of the County Council's Code of Conduct, consider whether to leave the meeting whilst the matter was discussed save for exercising any right to speak in accordance with Paragraph 12 of the Code.

No declarations of interest were made.

84. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 June 2011 were approved and signed by the Vice-Chairman, as the Chairman had been absent from that meeting.

Matters Arising

Item 74 – The National RE Celebrations Month

Members were advised that a Cycle of Learning pack on the concept of 'Islamophobia' had not been devised yet.

Item 78 – NASACRE AGM – Youth SACRE

Members were informed that Elizabeth Jenkerson, Mohammed Ansar and Patricia Hannam had met to consider the possibility of starting a Youth SACRE following Elizabeth's attendance at the NASACRE AGM. It was agreed that this should be a group that would bring added value to SACRE by discussing similar issues to SACRE and feeding back to the Council. It was further agreed that another meeting would be held and a report would be presented to SACRE at a future meeting. Other Members who wished to become involved were invited to join them.

85. CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS

The Chairman congratulated Councillor Roz Chadd on her recent marriage.

The Chairman welcomed Mr Michael Zeffert, who was replacing his wife, Jenny, as the Jewish representative. Thanks were expressed on behalf of the Council for her work on SACRE.

The Chairman brought to Members' attention to the 5th Annual Hampshire Interfaith Network Lecture entitled 'Ancient Wisdom for the Modern World' being held on 22 November 2011 and to the 2012 Interfaith Calendar.

Members were informed that there would be a training session for new members to SACRE and any others that wished to attend on January 13 2012.

86. DEPUTATIONS

There were no deputations.

87. THE COUNTY RE CENTRE

Judith Lowndes introduced Lydia Revett, the manager of the County RE Centre, and thanked her for all the time, effort and support that she gave, saying that she was highly valued by the county's schools. It was particularly noted that Lydia's outstanding work has a direct impact on the high quality of RE in subscribing schools. Lydia gave an overview of the services that the Centre offered to its over 400 subscribers and what her job entailed; this included the topic boxes, books, DVDs and artefacts that could be borrowed and the booklets that could be bought to support the teaching of Living Difference Revised, assisting with courses and maintaining the RE websites. She told Members that she was passionate about RE and providing an excellent service for schools, and that she was the Chairman of the National RE Centres Council. The Chairman thanked Lydia for an excellent presentation.

88. SACRE MEMBERSHIP: A REPORT FROM THE SUB GROUP

The Council received the report of the Sub group convened to discuss criteria for membership of SACRE (item 8 in the Minute Book).

Judith Lowndes explained the background to the report, drawing attention to the two suggestions made to resolve the debate (3.5 in the report) which had been rejected and that the meeting's conclusion had been that one final meeting was needed. It was stressed that the meeting had been a very sincere and productive one which had got to the heart of the matter. She highlighted to Members point 1, in Appendix 1, of the legal adviser's comments

about the Constitution. An initial proposal was made to invite Keri Tayler, the legal adviser, to attend the next SACRE meeting in February to answer questions from Members about membership. After discussion by the Council this was rejected in favour of an alternative one, proposed by Judith Lowndes and seconded by Mohammed Ansar, that she should be invited instead to the next Sub group meeting in January to answer questions and aid in the formulation of a set of words that could be added to the Constitution. Members were in agreement that the membership issue would have consequences for any group seeking to join SACRE, but that it needed to be resolved. It was agreed that a constitution from a SACRE that has voting Humanists should be sought before the Sub group meeting. Members were asked to submit any questions they wanted raised to the officers.

RESOLVED:

- That SACRE notes the report.
- That the Sub group reports to the February meeting.
- That the legal adviser, Keri Tayler be invited to a meeting of the Sub group.

89. MONITORING SUB GROUP

The Council received the report of the Monitoring Sub group about their findings and discussions in relation to GCSE RE results and reports on RE provision from Ofsted and the county RE Inspector (item 9 in the Minute Book).

Patricia Hannam drew Members' attention to the unverified GCSE figures for 2011 which appeared to be disappointing, with a downturn of around 35% for both the short and full course RE. She explained that data from 15 of the 70 Hampshire secondary schools was not included as these had converted to academies over the summer, and therefore, there was no access to their results; she also noted that these schools were some of the most outstanding and had very good RE. The 15 schools that had converted to academy status by 25th August 2011 were Wildern, Thornden, Mountbatten, Romsey, Arnewood, Bohunt, Petersfield, Priestlands, Ringwood, Perins, Burgate, Hounslow, Noadswood, Testwood and Havant Academy. In order to make a more accurate comparison of GCSE figures for 2010 and 2011, it was intended to extract the converted schools from the 2010 data, once the 2011 figures had been verified. During discussion Members expressed their concerns that this data was unavailable and that SACRE was losing its responsibility for monitoring RE in schools. It was noted that academies were obliged to follow the agreed syllabus as part of their funding agreement, unless they were faith schools, but that the monitoring of RE would in future be up to the Secretary of State.

Patricia Hannam reported on the common elements that had arisen from inspections of RE in secondary schools. She acknowledged that it was unclear in the report that these findings related to only six schools and were not a view

of the state of RE in all the county's schools. It was emphasised that while the findings appeared negative, the schools that had been visited were ones which had invited inspectors in to make a report because they were aware that they needed support .

RESOLVED:

- That SACRE notes the report.
- That SACRE writes a letter to the Secretary of State, Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister enquiring about the status of RE and SACRE's monitoring of the provision of RE within academies.

90. THE ENGLISH BACCALAUREATE AWARD – AN UPDATE

The Council considered the report of the Director of Children's Services on the potential implications for RE in Hampshire secondary schools (item 10 in the Minute Book).

Patricia Hannam introduced her report by explaining that although there had been a strong campaign by many agencies for RE to be included in the E Bacc the Secretary of State had decided not to.

She advised Members that there was a mixed picture for RE GCSE across the county; some schools were changing their curriculum and advice to students on their GCSE options, but many were still offering the full or short courses.

The officer indicated that she was quite positive about RE, because there was a high level of expertise and competence among RE teachers in Hampshire schools. Discussion focussed on how to promote the contribution that RE can make to children's thinking and how this impacts on other subjects, and how there was a need to inform parents of its value. There was a consensus among members that lobbying had to be continued to combat the secular pressure on the government against RE.

RESOLVED:

- That SACRE notes the report.

91. COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

The Council received a report from Judith Lowndes on recent research relating to English schools' level of compliance with the legal requirement for a daily act of worship for all pupils (item 11 in the Minute Book).

Members were directed to the appendix to the report which listed some of the findings of a survey by Comres on the suitability of the current legislation on

collective worship. Two comments on page 2 of the appendix were highlighted and endorsed by the Council – ‘ It provides an important chance for the school to focus on promoting the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of its pupils’ and ‘Collective worship is when pupils of all faiths and none come together to reflect, - it should not be confused with corporate worship when everyone is of the same belief’. The officer informed Members that there had not been any research on assemblies in Hampshire Schools recently, that a course for primary assemblies was run annually and there were plans for a secondary one, and that they had republished their Collective Worship booklet for schools.

RESOLVED:

- That SACRE notes the report .

92. SACRE ANNUAL REPORT

The Council received the Annual Report about the activities of Hampshire SACRE during the last academic year (September 2010 – July 2011) (item 12 in the Minute Book). Officers were complemented on the fullness of the report.

A number of amendments to the Report and Action Plan were made and agreed by Members, including, in the Action Plan, the deletion of section 6C and the change of wording in 12 from governor training for ‘community cohesion’ to ‘spiritual, moral, social and cultural’ responsibilities. It was explained to Members that links were to be developed between Hampshire and Camden schools (7 in the Action Plan) because Camden had bought and officially adopted Living Difference Revised. There was discussion about what SACRE could do to promote RE and whether this could be included in the report. It was felt that ‘the community’ needed to be educated about what the subject has to offer and officers were asked to bring a draft publication to the February 2012 meeting of SACRE which would explain to parents the value of opting for GCSE RE.

RESOLVED:

- That SACRE approves the report, subject to the agreed amendments being made.
- That copies of the report be sent to the Executive Lead Member for Children’s Services, the Assistant Executive Member for Education, the Director of Children’s Services, NASACRE and Ofsted, and that it be made available for public inspection on appropriate websites.
- That the Chairman would write to both the Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister expressing Hampshire SACRE’s disapproval of the downgrading of RE to be a second tier GCSE subject and that local MPs should be invited to a SACRE meeting to inform them what SACRE does.

93. NEW OFSTED FRAMEWORK

The Council received a report on the revised framework for Ofsted inspections which would come into force at the beginning of 2012.

It was highlighted that although RE was not specifically mentioned, it could make a contribution in the spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects referred to in items (ii) and (xi) in appendix 1. It was also noted that Ofsted would no longer check whether schools were fulfilling their statutory obligations regarding any subjects, including RE. It was felt RE subject leaders in schools should be encouraged to stress the value of the Living Difference Revised syllabus to cover the elements of communication and good questioning that were looked for by Ofsted.

RESOLVED:

- That SACRE notes the report.

94. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Tony Blackshaw complemented the Hampshire Record Office on their presentation about Hampshire's Church of England Schools

95. DATE, TIME AND VENUE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as Tuesday 21 February 2012 at 1.30pm at Elizabeth II Court, Winchester.

Prior to the main meeting there would be a presentation by Mr Tony Blackshaw about the Church of England.