

AT A MEETING of the STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE) held in the Mitchell Room, Elizabeth II Court, Winchester, on 21 February 2012

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
Mrs R. Costambeys	-	Secondary - Co-opted
a Sheikh Fazle Abbas Dattoo	-	Muslim
p Councillor Sam Darragh	-	Hampshire County Council
p Councillor Mrs Liz Fairhurst	-	Hampshire County Council
a Mrs. Pat Fry	-	United Reformed Church
a Mrs Maeve Gordon-James	-	Buddhist
p Ms Patricia Hannam	-	Support Officer
a Mr Colin How	-	Methodist
p 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
p Ms Jackie McGregor	-	Salvation Army
p Miss Margaret Matthews	-	Society of Friends
p Mrs Linda Miatt	-	Teachers' Association
a Mrs Jean O'Reilly	-	Humanist – Co-opted
p Mrs Jane Pridmore	-	Teachers' Association
a Rev.Ganshin Rock	-	Buddhist
Mr Harjap Singh	-	Sikh
p Mr Paul Tipple	-	Baptist Union
p Major Suryaparsad Upadhya	-	Hindu
a Mrs J Warren	-	Higher Education – co-opted
p Ms Caroline Welch	-	Church of England
p Rev. Howard Wright	-	Church of England
p Mr. Michael Zeffertt	-	Jewish

Observer –Mrs Lisa Gilmour of the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints

Prior to the start of the meeting Tony Blackshaw, a Church of England representative gave a presentation about Christianity and the Church of England and answered questions raised by Members. He mentioned the main tenets of Christian belief and suggested that people should not be hidebound by religious rules. He also suggested that instead of, or as well as, the usual practice of giving up things for Lent, which was starting today, that people might think about what they could do to enhance their faith.

96. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Colin How, Pat Fry, Sheikh Fazle Abbas, Reverend Ganshin Rock, Maeve Gordon-James, Elaine Bellchambers, Jean O'Reilly and Jane Warren.

97. 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.

98. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 November 2011 were approved and signed by the Chairman.

Matters Arising

Item 89 – Monitoring Sub-group

Patricia Hannam confirmed the names of the 15 schools mentioned in the minutes of the last meeting that had converted to academies as Wildern School, Thornden School, The Mountbatten School, The Romsey School, The Arnewood School, Bohunt School, The Petersfield School, Priestlands School, Ringwood School, Perins School, The Burgate School and Sixth Form Centre, Hounslow School, Noadswood School, Testwood Sports College, and Havant Academy. Members' attention was drawn to the information received from Alan Brine, the chief Inspector for RE, (RE Status in Academies) and were informed that he recognised that the guidance from the Department for Education (DfE) was ambiguous but his interpretation of the present situation was that academies do not have to follow the locally agreed syllabus, just an agreed syllabus. It was reported that the letter relating to the status of RE and

SACRE's role in relation to monitoring RE in academies had not been sent yet as it required sanctioning from the Director of Children's Services and the Leader. It was suggested that in the light of advice received from Alan Brine, that the letter may no longer be required.

Item 92 – SACRE Annual Report

Members were shown a leaflet that had been received from the RE Council to promote GCSE RE and were informed that all schools and SACRE members would be provided with copies.

(Promoting RE' - <http://www.religiouseducationcouncil.org.uk/images/stories/pdf/releaflet.pdf>)

It was noted that the letter on the downgrading of RE had not been sent as it required sanctioning.

Item 93 – New Ofsted Framework

Patricia Hannam told Members that together with another inspector adviser she was producing guidance on the promotion of the Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) development of students, which was taking a higher profile in the new Ofsted framework for schools from January 2012. She will be co-facilitating a half day training for senior managers on SMSC in July. Members were also informed that the Subsidiary Guidance for Ofsted Inspections published in January 2012 instructs Ofsted Inspectors that: *'Where a school does not provide the National Curriculum and RE, inspectors will need to fully explore the school's reasons.'* (Subsidiary Guidance January 2012 p.19)

99. CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS

The Chairman welcomed Caroline Welch to her first meeting as a new representative for the Church of England.

The Chairman brought three events to Members' attention - the South West Conference for SACREs entitled 'Effective SACREs Effective Learning' on 27 March 2012, the 'Gardens of the Heart' day on 28 April 2012 organised by the Quiet Garden Trust and a conference entitled 'Peaceful Primary Schools' on 18 May 2012.

100. DEPUTATIONS

There were no deputations.

101. SACRE – MEMBERSHIP OF GROUP A

The Council received the report of the Sub-group on membership of SACRE Group A (item 7 in the Minute Book).

Members were given a brief overview of the background to this Sub-group and its discussions. Judith Lowndes explained that there had been thorough and fair discussion of the issues and some creative suggestions had been considered. Following advice from Hampshire Legal Services it has been confirmed that the current law did not allow non-theistic groups to be members of Group A and that if SACRE decided to change its constitution to allow full membership to non-theistic groups, then it could be in a vulnerable position. If SACRE was challenged about any issues and it was not properly constituted, the Local Authority might not be able to support SACRE. There was a general consensus that any legal change had to come from central government. One Member suggested that the following statement should be included: 'that this council calls on the government to include non-theistic membership in Group A of the constitution'.

The Sub-group's discussions had also included looking for some general criteria that could be applied to any group seeking to join Group A and a procedure to follow. Members agreed that membership of Group A should only be open to those groups who believed that RE should be taught in schools and would support the work of SACRE

After discussion of the issues voting took place on the two proposals; all four groups agreed to both proposals.

RESOLVED:

- That the following procedure be used in the event of a new group asking to join SACRE - that the Chairman of SACRE would convene an ad hoc group from among SACRE members to interview representatives of the group and to determine whether that group should be represented; a recommendation would then be brought to SACRE, and finally SACRE's recommendation would be sent for ratification by the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services.
- That following final legal advice (appendix 1) SACRE would maintain the status quo within the SACRE constitution regarding the inclusion of non-theistic members on Group A.

102. SACRE MONITORING SUB-GROUP

The Council received the report of the Monitoring Sub-group about their findings and discussions in relation to GCSE RE results, reports on RE provision from Ofsted and the SACRE monitoring visits (item 8 in the Minute Book).

Members were informed that the Sub-group had scrutinised the GCSE RE results to identify and congratulate schools that had done well. Patricia Hannam told Members that the Local Authority now had access to all GCSE data, including academies and that it had been asked to monitor RE all over the county. She explained that under new guidelines only full course GCSEs would be included in schools data in the future and that the short courses, which had

become popular over the last few years, would not count. She felt that this was likely to lead to the demise of the short course. She drew Members' attention to the continuing rise in the number of children taking the full course GCSE in Hampshire. She explained that one move that should help improve the profile of RE was the new 'Value Added' (VA) measure, in addition to the 5 A* -C measure, included in the published data for all secondary schools. The VA takes into account the 'best 8' GCSEs attained by students and for many Hampshire Schools where RE is taught well the full course RE is contributing positively to the overall success of the school. She had seen at least one Hampshire Secondary School reinstate the Full Course GCSE for all students for teaching in September 2012 in light of the introduction of this measure.

Patricia Hannam told Members that work was being undertaken with teachers to devise a secure and rigorous RE programme for 14-16 years olds, planned according to the County Agreed Syllabus '*Living Difference Revised 2011*', that was not restricted by an examination syllabus and which had opportunities to explore ideas and issues in more depth. This would support the schools' work on SMSC and link in with the new Ofsted framework that placed a higher profile on Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development.

Patricia explained that the group would use future monitoring visits to secondary schools to look at the gender gap in GCSE performance and do more analysis on the results in terms of ethnicity and children entitled to free school meals. Data on these would be useful to schools to show the value of RE in the school curriculum and its contribution to the well-being of all young people. It was suggested by a SACRE Member that for schools with 'issues and challenges' outside the school gates RE could be a transformative subject and that SACRE should consider what it could do to ensure good RE in these schools.

It was stated that SACRE's monitoring visits to schools were significant in raising the profile of RE in schools and it was hoped that the current five allocated days would remain in 2012/13. Members were informed that monitoring visits to both primary and secondary schools had demonstrated that in schools where the RE manager was supported by the senior management team then RE was a very effective subject, and that where good planning, monitoring and assessment were in place this led to the best teaching and learning as well as high achievement.

RESOLVED:

- That SACRE notes the report.

103. YOUTH VOICE

The Council received a report from the three Members that had met to discuss the setting up of a 'Youth Voice' group (item 9 in the Minute Book).

The report noted that there was currently no channel within Hampshire for young people to discuss current issues in RE. The Council agreed that SACRE

should take account of what young people think about RE and that this would link well with UNICEF's 'Rights, Respecting and Responsibilities' work.

Two comments had been received prior to the meeting about this item. The first was concerned with the proposed timing of the meeting at the end on the Summer term 2012 if Year 11 pupils were to attend as they would be in the middle of exams and that the venue of the meetings was unimportant if the meeting was well-constructed. It was explained that Year 9 pupils would be targeted as they would have more time before becoming too entrenched with examinations and that the venue had only been a suggestion. Members did express the opinion that a room in the older County Council buildings would make for a more interesting venue. The second comment raised concerns about the wording in 3.1 of the report, that the group would only be for 'young people of faiths'. Council Members agreed that the last sentence of 3.1 should be deleted, as it was the intention that a representative group of young people would be drawn together.

It was stressed that this group would not be an interfaith group, nor would it have the same format as SACRE. It was agreed that initially the group would be called Youth Voice, but that the group itself would be asked to decide on the name and how they wanted the group to operate and report to SACRE.

RESOLVED:

- That SACRE notes the report and endorses the proposals identified in the Process (3.3 in the report), with a change made to the name from Youth SACRE to Youth Voice.

104. RE IN THE NEW CURRICULUM

The Council considered the Government report on the framework for the new curriculum and the potential implications for RE (item 10 in the Minute Book).

Judith Lowndes introduced this report by explaining that the draft framework for the new curriculum had been published in December 2011 and there were concerns among RE specialists across the country about the numerous errors regarding RE and SACREs that had been picked up by Roger Butler, the RE inspector for Westminster SACRE. (appendix 1). Some of the proposals would impact on RE provision and schools would need to be informed how best to implement RE effectively under the new proposals. An additional paper was circulated to Members; this was a press release from 17 February 2012 indicating that an All Party Parliamentary Group was being set up to highlight the importance of RE in schools. A typographical error on the press release was noted – in the last but one paragraph it should have read – 'Academies have an obligation to teach it...' The Chairman urged all SACRE Members to write to their MPs asking them to support the Group, and to encourage others to do so.

RESOLVED:

That SACRE notes the report.

105. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Members were informed that the officers were looking to hold a 'one-off' Joint SACRE meeting with SACRE officers from neighbouring areas to share ideas and common issues and to promote their services, the RE Centre and Living Difference. This would be a revival of meetings that had previously taken place. It was agreed that this would be a good idea, but that, to make the best use of officer time, the agenda would need to be well-thought out and planned.

106. DATE, TIME AND VENUE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as Tuesday 19 June 2012 at 1.30pm at The Synagogue, The Thicket, Elm Grove, Southsea, PO5 2AR.

Prior to the main meeting there would be a tour and talk by Mr Michael Zeffertt the Jewish Member. Dress code for the meeting would be covered heads for gentlemen (this would be provided) and for ladies to have covered arms.