

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Report

Committee/Panel:	SACRE
Date:	4 March 2013
Title:	SACRE monitoring sub group
Reference:	4729
Report From:	Director of Children's Services

Contact name: Patricia Hannam

Tel: 023892 441521

Email: Patricia.hannam@hants.gov.uk

1. Summary

- 1.1. The purpose of this paper is to inform SACRE of the findings and discussions that have taken place during the meeting of the SACRE monitoring sub-group.
- 1.2. The group viewed and discussed Monitoring sub-group membership, reports of SACRE monitoring visits and GCSE results data of children from vulnerable backgrounds.

2. Contextual information

- 2.1. This paper supports the Corporate Strategy (maximising well being) by ensuring children's provision in religious education is secure.
- 2.2. The monitoring sub-group met on 4 February 2013.

3. Other key issues

3.1. SACRE monitoring sub-group Membership.

Membership of the groups was discussed and new members are being sought in order to ensure representation of all SACRE groups.

3.2. Children and Young People Select Committee (CYPSC) presentation

A presentation to CYPSC in February had been made by the County Inspector Adviser. This was well received and raised the profile of RE in the county.

3.3. GCSE results.

Congratulatory letters have been sent to the top achieving schools for success in RS GCSE examinations.

3.4. Hampshire RS GCSE data was further examined with a focus on the GCSE RS achievement of vulnerable students, in particular those in receipt of Free School Meals (FSM) and for Looked After Children (LAC). Raising the academic achievement of vulnerable groups of young people is a county priority, and impacting on narrowing the gap for these students in RE will be a focus for the coming year. Concern was expressed that those receiving FSM over the past 5 years have consistently achieved less well than students not in receipt of Free School Meals. This is consistent with other county data. The Monitoring Group discussed information from The Sutton Trust¹, regarding research findings on the most effective intervention strategies for these students. It was noted that these include *effective feedback* and *meta-cognition and self-regulation strategies*. *Ability grouping* has near zero impact on most students' learning; however, for vulnerable students research reveals ability grouping to have a negative impact. Information enabling all RE departments to embed effective strategies to improve outcomes for these children will be given at RE networks meetings in the coming year and will become a focus for the work of the County Steering Group. They will also feature in the 9 July workshop to be run at the RE Centre entitled *Leading your RE department to outstanding*. Many aspects of the County Agreed Syllabus recommend ways of teaching RE which embeds strategies for *meta-cognition* and higher order thinking.

This data, in relation to effective strategies, also relates to primary aged pupils.

3.5. Reports of SACRE monitoring visits. Members of the SACRE have carried out monitoring visits alongside the two RE inspectors. Reports were provided following these visits to: - 2 Infant schools, 2 Primary schools and 5 Secondary schools. One further primary visit was anticipated following the meeting.

3.6. The group scrutinised the reports of visits and a summary of the findings is provided below:

Summary of findings of primary school monitoring visits and additional discussions with teachers at training sessions.

- Overall, the standards of teaching RE according to the Agreed Syllabus have improved.

¹ <http://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/toolkit/>

- Where RE managers have attended training sessions and when they have the full support of the senior team in the school the RE is well implemented and has been observed to be very successful.
- Senior managers can be supportive in terms of enabling RE managers to attend training, but in situations where this has not been followed up with time allocated for managers to disseminate the training and plans to all staff, RE has not been successfully implemented.
- In a large proportion of primary phase schools the role of RE manager is frequently for a relatively short period of time (one or two years). As a result, there is a constant need for RE managers to be trained in basics such as familiarity with the requirements of the Agreed Syllabus, developing knowledge and confidence with how to address religious material, how to implement assessment strategies and make accurate judgements about pupils' achievement. In the schools where RE managers are long standing and well trained there is a greater sense of development and progression of the subject and it maintains a higher profile within the curriculum.
- There are still concerns for some RE managers that RE is not always taught as a blocked unit of time and is sometimes taken by teaching assistants rather than qualified teachers in some year groups. This continues to be a focus for attention.

Summary of findings of secondary school monitoring visits and discussions with teachers at various Continuing Professional Development events.

- In this series of secondary SACRE monitoring visits a wider variety of schools were visited, not only high achieving ones.
- Judgement that RE provision was outstanding was made regarding two schools visited in this round of monitoring visits. The Monitoring sub-group noted that it continues to be the case that where there is outstanding leadership in the RE department and where this is also well supported by the senior team in a school young people access an excellent quality of Religious Education.
- Achievement of boys remains an issue in all but one of the schools visited. However some innovative interventions are being put in place; for example in one school a separate GCSE group has been set up deliberately to attract underachieving boys. A slightly different GCSE curriculum has been chosen with their interests in mind, and the class is being taught by a male teacher. From this small study, the key intervention in RS which seems to have most impact in raising boys' engagement and achievement is for a high level of challenging oral work prior to undertaking written work.
- Quality of teaching and curriculum planning – in four out of five of the schools the requirements of *Living Difference revised 2011*, including the skills of enquiry, are in place. In four schools RS GCSE results are improving to good or outstanding. In one school where the GCSE results are not satisfactory, planning and schemes of work were not securely in place. The recommendations to the school are for that to be amended.

3.7 OFSTED reports. Since the last Monitoring sub group met one Secondary School Ofsted report has mentioned RE. Since this school is an Academy it was decided after some discussion, that a letter to the school, noticing the mention of RE in their recent Ofsted report, would be written by our Inspector /Advisor.

3.8 Questionnaire – beginning review of agreed syllabus

So far analysis has revealed there was a lower response from primary schools compared to the last questionnaire (which was hard copy), and they were prompted again to complete the survey. Initial findings on compliance are approximately the same as the last review indicating the sustained impact of the Agreed Syllabus over time. It is important to note that since survey monkey is anonymous it provides no details to follow up with individual schools

4. Recommendation

4.1. That SACRE notes the report

CORPORATE OR LEGAL INFORMATION:**Links to the Corporate Strategy**

Hampshire safer and more secure for all:	no
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	
Maximising well-being:	yes
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	
Enhancing our quality of place:	no
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents

The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)

DocumentLocation

None

IMPACT ASSESSMENTS:

1. Equalities Impact Assessment:

- 1.1. Monitoring sub group has the intention to positively impact equality in terms of achievement in Religious Education.

2. Impact on Crime and Disorder:

- 2.1. No impact on crime and disorder as a result of this report has been identified.

3. Climate Change:

- 3.1. How does what is being proposed impact on our carbon footprint / energy consumption?

No impact on climate change as a result of this report has been identified

- 3.2. How does what is being proposed consider the need to adapt to climate change, and be resilient to its longer term impacts?

No necessity for consideration of the need to adapt to climate change, and be resilient to its longer term impacts as a result of this report has been identified.