

# STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

## NETWORK MEETING OF LOCAL SACREs

NOTES OF THE MEETING held on Monday 11 March 2013 at 10.00 am in the  
Chute Room, Winchester

### **Present:**

#### Bournemouth

Stephen Chappell (Chairman)  
Lynda Ford-Horne (Vice-chairman)  
Rubina Nassar (support officer)

#### Hampshire

Councillor Anna McNair Scott (Chairman) - in the Chair  
Councillor Roz Chadd (Vice-chairman)  
Patricia Hannam (support officer)  
Sue Butler (clerk)

#### Isle of Wight

Ralph Hodd (SACRE member)  
Harry Kirby (clerk)

#### Poole

Derek Holloway (Chairman)

#### Portsmouth

Peter Davies (Chairman)

#### Surrey

Peter Ward (SACRE member)

#### West Sussex

Nigel Bloodworth (support officer)

#### Wiltshire

Simone Kermode (clerk)  
Jan Lever (adviser)

### **Apologies:**

Apologies for absence were received from David Cave (Isle of Wight), Margaret Hicks (Surrey), Derek James (West Sussex), Judith Lowndes (Hampshire), Pat Wood (Southampton), Sarah Long (Portsmouth), Sandra Wylie (West Berkshire), Zvi Solomons (Reading), Sarah Lawrence (Swindon)

Councillor Anna McNair Scott welcomed everyone to the meeting, particularly to the new representatives from Wiltshire and Surrey.

### **1. Notes of the Last Meeting**

The notes of the meeting held on 5 October 2012 were agreed, subject to the following amendments:

- Item 1 – Derek Holloway corrected the assertion the Poole has 3 support officers for RE; this should have been 3 support officers for education in general.
- Councillor Daunt had asked for an addition to his update - that he had also mentioned that Southampton SACRE had focussed on Living Difference and close links with Southampton Council of Faiths, and aimed in the future to focus on collective worship and working closely with a Christian Mission who run workshops in schools. He also asked for it to be clarified that whereas he had previously felt that networking could be adequately done remotely by email or phone, he now felt that there was a value in meeting in person.

## **2. Updates from each local authority's SACRE**

Each local representative gave a short update on their SACRE and its work.

### **West Sussex**

Nigel Bloodworth informed the group that SACRE was currently in limbo pending the forthcoming County Council elections in May and that Derek James was stepping down as Chairman. The revision of their Agreed Syllabus was on hold until the national picture for RE was clearer. They are still concerned about the lack of any subject support to schools from the County Council; however, RE, including Key Stage 4, is still doing well.

### **Surrey**

Peter Ward had not been given an update to present, but noted that Surrey had not replaced their support officer yet.

### **Portsmouth**

Peter Davies clarified that of the £6,500 budget he had mentioned at the previous meeting, £4,500 goes to pay for a member of staff. Another student enrichment conference was being held on 27 June 2013. Work is progressing on improving liaison with secondary schools, although only one of ten schools had replied to a recent questionnaire. Three or four secondary schools were planning to become academies. His view was that the picture was challenging, but not all negative.

### **Wiltshire**

Simone Kermode told the group that Wiltshire SACRE was a strong one with about 20 members and they worked closely with the Salisbury diocese. They had introduced a new Agreed Syllabus in 2011. They did not have a set budget, but were usually successful in funding requests. Currently the Local Authority provided one day a week for RE support and for Jan Lever to support SACRE; but it was uncertain what the outcome for RE would be of a restructuring.

### **Poole/Dorset**

Derek Holloway told the group that there was nothing to update them on for Poole. As part of his work for Dorset SACRE he mentioned a successful Holocaust Memorial event that had been held and highlighted a cross-phase RE conference that was being held on 24 June 2013.

## **Isle of Wight**

Harry Kirby explained that there was some turmoil in the Local Authority at present; also that there was not consistent officer support at meetings. SACRE was now being pro-active in commissioning training since they had discovered that they have this role; a questionnaire to schools to identify training requirements had produced only a 25% response. They were aiming to hold events in the summer and autumn 2013. It was noted that the island is not very multi-cultural and to improve this links had been made with the Islamic School in Southampton.

## **Bournemouth**

Lynda Ford-Horne indicated that Bournemouth SACRE was reasonably healthy. They had held a very positive RE conference on how art, poetry and literacy can be used to teach RE and were hoping to run another. She highlighted two very successful Holocaust Memorial Day events, which had seen over 800 people listening to a survivor's experiences. They had been given a Westhill Award of £2,000 in 2012 to enable Year 6 students to visit a variety of religious establishments, primarily in Southampton, and were putting in a similar bid this year. One spin off from this was that Southampton had approached them to visit a synagogue. All except 2 secondary schools were now academies; 6 primary schools had become academies, with a further 6 in the process; there are academy representatives on SACRE. Currently the Local Authority allocates one and a half days of officer time for RE and there is £5,000 set aside for SACRE activities. To keep all councillors informed of SACRE and its activities, they send their annual report to them. Members agreed that councillors needed to be reminded of their statutory duty to RE.

## **Hampshire**

Patricia Hannam informed the group that RE was still thriving in Hampshire. She had presented Hampshire SACRE's annual report to the Children and Young People's Select Committee. The Local Authority was still providing good CPD and there were 3 providers of new RE teachers in the area. GCSE uptake was being maintained, with the boys' gap narrowing; the county's focus and priority for 2013/14 in GCSE RE was on vulnerable groups and children of military personnel, looking at the numbers opting for the subject and their achievement compared with other groups. The revision of Hampshire's Agreed Syllabus would begin in late 2014 and a mid-term questionnaire about it had been well responded to. The third meeting of Hampshire SACRE's Youth Voice had seen 27 students from 6 schools attending. A primary conference was being held on 24 May with Mark Chater as the main speaker. There was a close relationship with the Winchester and Portsmouth Dioceses and a successful meeting had taken place between the new Bishop of Winchester and the Hampshire Chairman, Patricia Hannam and Tony Blackshaw, a Church of England representative on SACRE.

Hampshire had recently set up a procedure for new admissions following the application of the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-day Saints to join Group A and asked for comments from the group. There had been concerns that the Church saw membership of SACRE as a means of raising their profile; not all the SACREs present had representatives from the Church, but Jan Lever indicated that Reading SACRE had a very supportive co-opted member from the Church. Members discussed their experiences and their approaches to the admission of new groups either as members of Group A or as co-opted

members – Poole have an interview and presentation; West Sussex and Surrey do not have a procedure, but invite groups to join dependent on the proportion of numbers belonging to the faith in the area. It was agreed that the proportion criteria was not applicable in all cases. It was noted that Humanists were present as co-opted members on most SACREs, although they, and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, only attended Wiltshire SACRE as observers.

### **3. Meeting SACRE Members' training needs**

There was discussion about whether the group should provide regional training since NASACRE had no capacity for training now. Derek Holloway told the group about the South West SACRE annual training conference, due to be held on 14 March, which was self-financing and provided good networking opportunities. It was generally agreed that the group could duplicate the format of the conference, and should cover a 'Wessex' region. It was felt that non-teaching members of SACREs would be the main target for the training, although it was commented that the role of an RE teacher is different from that of a SACRE member. It was agreed that the organisation of a joint training event should be on the agenda of the next meeting.

### **4. NASACRE matters**

It was noted that the agenda for the AGM on 23 May was a challenging one.

### **5. Update and discussion on other national matters:**

#### **- APPG Group – Teaching Schools and supply of RE teachers**

The APPG Group was due to publish its report by the end of March 2013. Concerns were raised about the long term vision for RE teacher training; provisions were being closed if there were less than 10 students and the government did not recognise that there was a shortage as their figures included non-specialist teachers who only taught one lesson a week. It was noted that of the 5 Teaching Schools in Hampshire, none had plans to take on a RE trainee as they had to be able to guarantee them a job. It was generally felt that there was a risk of a lack of consistency in the standards looked for in trainees as well as variation in the quality of training in the Teaching Schools. It was agreed that the withdrawal of bursaries for the RE PGCE would have a negative effect on recruitment; Derek Holloway mentioned that the Salisbury diocese had money to give for bursaries, but there was no institution in the diocese providing RE teacher training.

#### **- Impact of Academy programme and amendments to English Baccalaureate in Secondary Schools on the role and responsibilities of SACREs**

Patricia Hannam indicated that very few Hampshire primary schools had become academies, less than half of secondary schools had converted, and good contacts were currently being maintained with RE departments in those that had. The meeting was informed that the Roman Catholic Bishop of Portsmouth had expressed the view that catholic schools should seriously consider converting to academies; it was noted that this was not the national Roman Catholic view. The Catholic primary schools on the Isle of Wight

were considering becoming a federated academy. Members agreed that SACREs needed to find a way of working effectively with academies to enable them to continue their statutory duty. It was suggested that SACREs should look at the funding agreements with academies to determine the legal requirements for them to provide RE. Members were concerned that the compulsory nature of RE at Key Stage 4 and the single Locally Agreed Syllabus would be lost. There were also concerns about the loss of short course GCSE and that there was no RE review similar to that being undertaken for History and Geography. It was noted that Secondary School Accountability Consultation <https://www.education.gov.uk/consultations/index.cfm?action=consultationDetails&consultationId=1882&external=no&menu=1> was ongoing, and that the future position of RE, as a consequence of changing the way Secondary schools will be judged, was complicated and unclear.

#### **- RE Review by RE Council**

Derek Holloway, a member of the RE Council steering group, told members about the three groups tasked to provide recommendations following on from the Phase 1 report, including the curriculum (core knowledge, teaching and assessment), structuring and sustaining the future of RE (building links with the DfE, influencing examination bodies to provide coherence, and lobbying for RE), and the possibility of writing of a document to replace the current non-statutory guidance and including updated guidance on pedagogy and the principles of good practice. The Phase 1 report and the Phase 2 group tasks would be circulated to members.

It was noted that the new national curriculum still required RE to be taught in all Key Stages, but does not specify how much. There were worries that RE could become centralised, most around the table preferring that RE remains locally determined and with a locally Agreed Syllabus. It was intended that the RE review would be completed at the same time as the National Curriculum review.

### **6. Plans for future meetings including dates, venues and matters for discussion**

Councillor Anna McNair Scott indicated that Hampshire would be happy to continue to host the Joint meetings if this suited everyone and others did not feel they were being denied the opportunity to host. Members agreed to this as Hampshire was the most central place.

It was agreed that the group should meet at least twice a year, preferably once a term.

The date of the next meeting was set as **Wednesday 12 June 2013 at 10.00 am** in the Wellington Room, Elizabeth II Court South.

### **7. Any Other Business**

Simone Kermode asked whether other SACREs were encouraging schools to apply for the National Quality Mark for RE; West Sussex reported that they were doing this, the Isle of Wight has an assessor, however, one school in Hampshire, which was encouraged to apply had found the application process too daunting.