

AT A MEETING of the  
 STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE)  
 held in the Ashburton Hall, Elizabeth II Court, Winchester  
 on 1 June 2015

**PRESENT**

**Chairman**

p Councillor Roz Chadd ( Hampshire County Council)

**Vice-Chairman**

p Councillor Charles Choudhary (Hampshire County Council)

- |                               |   |   |
|-------------------------------|---|---|
| p Councillor Mrs Fiona Mather | - | Hampshire County Council                        |
| p Councillor David Simpson    | - | Hampshire County Council                        |
|                               |   |   |
| p Mr Mohammed Ansar           | - | Muslim  |
| p Mr Harmeet Singh Brar       | - | Sikh  |
| p Rev Seishin Darren Clark    | - | Buddhist  |
| p Sheikh Fazle Abbas Dattoo   | - | Muslim  |
| a Mrs Pat Fry                 | - | United Reformed Church                          |
| Mrs Lisa Gilmour              | - | Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-day Saints |
| a Mr Colin How                | - | Methodist                                       |
| p Mr Chris Hughes             | - | Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches  |
| p Mrs Elizabeth Jenkerson     | - | Baha'i  |
| Mrs Jo May                    | - | Baptist Union                                   |
| a Mr Richard Moss             | - | Buddhist  |
| p Heather Thorpe-Tracey       | - | Society of Friends                              |
| p Mr. Michael Zeffertt        | - | Jewish  |
|                               |   |   |
| a Rev Jeff Williams           | - | Church of England                               |
| p Mrs Joyce Johnson           | - | Church of England                               |
| p Ms Caroline Welch           | - | Church of England                               |
| p Rev Howard Wright           | - | Church of England                               |
|                               |   |   |
| p Mrs Maureen Barnes          | - | Teachers' Association                           |
| p Mr James Dye                | - | Teachers' Association                           |
| p Mrs Jane Pridmore           | - | Teachers' Association                           |
| p Mrs Patrizia Timms Blanch   | - | Teachers' association                           |
|                               |   |   |
| Mrs Pam Brown                 | - | Special School – Co-opted                       |
| a Mrs Gill Heron              | - | Academy – Co-opted                              |
| p Miss Chris Robinson         | - | Humanist – Co-opted                             |
| p Mrs Rhiannon Love           | - | Higher Education Rep – Co-opted                 |
| p Dr Alasdair Richardson      | - | Higher Education Rep – Co-opted                 |
| a Ms Karen Smart              | - | Primary - Co-opted                              |

p Mrs Patricia Hannam - Support Officer  
p Mrs Justine Ball - Support Officer

Also present were Mrs Lisa Taylor as substitute for Mr Richard Moss and Mrs Cathryn Joiner from Calthorpe School.

Prior to the start of the meeting a presentation was given by the Rhiannon Love and Alasdair Richardson, SACRE's co-opted members for Higher Education. They gave Members an insight into the primary and secondary teacher training programmes for RE teachers at the University of Winchester, including post-graduate opportunities. They indicated that currently there are 11 secondary and 15 primary specialists.

## **88. BROADCASTING ANNOUNCEMENT**

The Chairman announced that the press and members of the public were permitted to film and broadcast the meeting. Those remaining at the meeting were consenting to being filmed and recorded, and to the possible use of those images and recording for broadcasting purposes.

## **89. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Colin How, Rev Jeff Williams, Gill Heron, Pat Fry, Kate Smart and Richard Moss

## **90. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members were mindful that where they believed they had a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in any matter considered at the meeting they must declare that interest at the time of the relevant debate and, having regard to the circumstances described in Part 3 Paragraph 1.5 of the County Council's Members' Code of Conduct, leave the meeting while the matter was discussed, save for exercising any right to speak in accordance with Paragraph 1.6 of the Code. Furthermore Members were mindful that where they believed they had a Non-Pecuniary interest in a matter being considered at the meeting they considered whether such interest should be declared, and having regard to Part 5, Paragraph 2 of the Code, considered whether it was appropriate to leave the meeting whilst the matter was discussed, save for exercising any right to speak in accordance with the Code.

No declarations of interest were made.

## **91. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 March 2015 were confirmed as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman subject to the following amendment:

Minute 83: 3<sup>rd</sup> paragraph – change 'a religious practice' to 'ritual circumcision in the Jewish tradition'.

## **91. MATTERS ARISING**

Item 82 – a response to Lord Nash’s letter had been sent and a reply received which had been included with the minutes of the meeting on 9 March 2015. The Chairman indicated that the Executive Member for Education had thanked her for SACRE’s response.

## **92. CHAIRMAN’S COMMUNICATIONS**

The Chairman welcomed Justine Ball, the new primary adviser for RE, Mrs Lisa Taylor, substituting for the Buddhist representative Richard Moss, and Mrs Cathryn Joiner, a teacher from Calthorpe School.

The Chairman informed Members that a number of representatives had resigned from SACRE and new appointments were awaited. These were Jacky Chong from the Roman Catholic Church, Pat Fry from the United Reformed Church and Major Upadhya, the Hindu representative.

## **93. DEPUTATIONS**

There were no deputations.

## **94. RECENT CONFERENCES ATTENDED BY SACRE MEMBERS**

The Council received verbal reports on three conferences that had been attended by Members of SACRE.

Elizabeth Jenkerson informed Members that the South West Conference for SACREs offered great value for networking. She had been impressed by the keynote speaker, Joyce Miller, chair of the RE Council, who showed great commitment to RE and spoke eloquently about the amount of knowledge or lack of it of people who are in positions to make major decisions about RE. Joyce had also spoken at the most recent Hampshire secondary conference (autumn 2014) and the primary conference (May 2015) and suited her talks to the teachers attending - all with varying levels of training and experience in RE.

About the ‘Trojan Horse’ conference she reminded Members about the 21 Birmingham schools that had been investigated for allegedly plotting to introduce an Islamist ethos, which is where the term had arisen. The impact of this had been wide-reaching and totally out of proportion. She noted that partly as a response to this incident it seems accepted that collective worship is here to stay and is being appraised.

Heather Thorpe-Tracey reported on the NASACRE AGM and Conference. The keynote speaker had been Charles Clarke who indicated that change was coming and that SACREs will have a really important part to play. He had stressed that

children need a robust understanding of faiths so that they would be able to make their own minds up; he also noted the shortage of specialist teachers and the need for on-going professional development. He suggested that, with the wide variety of Locally Agreed Syllabus's, a national one should be introduced, and if it were that SACREs need to be heavily involved. He had posed a number of thought-provoking questions about the nature of Religious Education. He believed that community cohesion needed to be reinstated by Ofsted and again SACRE's should be proactive. He also felt RE should remain a required rather than statutory subject.

RESOLVED:

- That SACRE noted the reports.

## **95. MONITORING SUB-GROUP**

The Council received the report of the Monitoring Sub-group on its activities and discussions from Patricia Hannam, the County Inspector/Adviser for RE (Item 9 in the Minute Book). The County Inspector drew Members' attention to two issues in her report.

Firstly that although some further data had been accessed for short-course GCSE and was present in the appendix to her report on GCSE results for 2014, only a limited data has been released to Local Authorities in light of the changes to accountability measures and no more data would be forthcoming. She indicated that although there had been an increase in the numbers of students being entered for Full Course GCSE, there was a slight dip in achievement this year. However there was an increase in Short Course achievement in 2014. Also numbers taking the short course were still good. One implication of the expected demise of the short course, following the decision not to include it in schools' statistical data, was an opportunity for schools to give students a full GCSE. She suggested that an investigation of the full course GCSE data comparing students taking RE as a option with two or three lessons a week with those being taught on only one lesson a week would be useful. This is likely to reveal the challenge teachers are under when teaching full course GCSE in far less than the recommended time allocation.

It was noted that the new Religious Studies GCSE being introduced from 2016 would be more knowledge heavy and is likely to be harder to study and achieve well on only one lesson a week even over three years. The County Inspector suggested that future monitoring visits should look at what students are being taught in RE if they are not taking the GCSE. It was agreed that there was a difference between Religious Studies GCSE, that was knowledge-based and Religious Education that was interpretive. High quality Religious Education for all, with an option of Religious Studies was felt to be the best route.

Following a question raised concerning examination invigilators giving incorrect advice on GCSE papers Pat Hannam and Maureen Barnes agreed to ask their group contacts if this had arisen in Hampshire.

Secondly, since September 2014 it had been noticed that RE is mentioned quite frequently in Ofsted reports for both primary and secondary schools in support of British Values. A concern had arisen over two Ofsted reports mentioning 'Christian Values', which was not appropriate. Following talks with senior officers in Children's Services it was felt that it was appropriate for SACRE to write to Ofsted to express concerns about this.

Members were reminded that British Values had been defined in a government document brought to the November meeting entitled 'Promoting fundamental British Values through SMSC'. There was discussion about how religious education has a significant part to play in schools' preparation of children and young people to take their place in modern Britain, which is plural and diverse in many respects. SACREs could be in quite an influential position to promote these matters and support schools in their work with children and young people in these matters.

#### RESOLVED:

- That SACRE noted the report
- That SACRE writes to Ofsted to "inform" them of the mis-interpretation of the framework on the part of this particular Lead Inspector, and request assurance that they will receive the necessary training to ensure they are able to implement the current guidance correctly and explain that SACRE will be monitoring this in future reports.

#### **96. SOUTH CENTRAL RE HUB**

The Council received a report from Patricia Hannam, the County Inspector/Adviser for RE on the meeting of the South Central RE Hub on 6 May 2015 (item 10 in the Minute Book).

The County Inspector informed Members that she had recently attended a national meeting of RE hub co-ordinators. The first meeting of the Reading and Research Group had been a success with twenty people attending, which it was felt affirmed the view that teachers have an appetite to learn and keep up-to-date. The next meeting would be on 8 July 2015. The intention was to have 2 meetings a term of this group, a formal one with a speaker and a more informal one with teachers presenting their own work. A funding bid had been made for teachers to be able access Master's level study through attending this group. In the future the meetings might be on webinar to enable those further afield to take part.

#### RESOLVED:

- That SACRE noted the report.

#### **97. YOUTH VOICE**

The Council received a report from Patricia Hannam, the County Inspector/Adviser for RE on the meeting of Youth Voice on 29 April 2015 (Item 11 in the Minute Book).

It was noted that a number of SACRE Members were taking part in the Youth Voice conference on 9 July 2015 and that the Leader of Hampshire County Council was to make the final speech and hand out certificates.

The County Inspector explained that half of the April meeting had been taken up with following up concerns that the students had raised during the year, point 3 in the report. Members were heartened to hear that the students were able to discuss serious issues freely and that they had the knowledge to do so.

RESOLVED:

- That SACRE noted the report.

## **98. RESPONSES TO THE REQUIREMENT OF SCHOOLS TO PROMOTE CHILDREN'S SPIRITUAL, MORAL, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL (SMSC) DEVELOPMENT**

The Council received a report from Patricia Hannam, the County Inspector/Adviser for RE regarding the responsibility of schools to promote children's development in SMSC (item 12 in the Minute Book).

The inspector informed Members that because of the introduction of another new Ofsted Framework in September 2015, for which the handbook was not yet available, she had not produced the promised SMSC document. She provided extracts from the document (the full version was at [http://www3.hants.gov.uk/self-evaluation\\_tool\\_for\\_smsc\\_development.pdf](http://www3.hants.gov.uk/self-evaluation_tool_for_smsc_development.pdf)) and explained that one of the new requirements would be for Ofsted to look at 'Personal development, behaviour and welfare'. It was still unknown what this would include, and how it would link with SMSC.

Members were also handed a letter that had been sent from the Director of Children's Services to all schools with an accompanying letter from the DfE relating to safeguarding pupils from extremism and radicalisation. One question for SACRE was to consider how can Religious Education contribute to promoting the plurality of what it means to live well in Britain today?

Members discussed some examples that reveal that prejudices and fears surrounding religion were being played out in schools. There was more than one incidence of parents refusing to allow children to visit religious buildings as they were 'unsafe'. Governors and head teachers have been seeking advice on how to respond and deal with this. It was noted that the issue of bullying for religious reasons was now being surveyed, and the results were awaited. Members were reminded that SACRE has a responsibility to advise the local authority on RE matters and it was suggested that SACRE could in some way advise and support what schools are doing. It was suggested that more communications to parents may be helpful to explain why things are being taught to their children. All agreed that no one solution would fit every problem, and that SACRE should be prepared to

give suggestions, advice, encouragement and the tools for teachers to be able to tackle the issues.

It was suggested that a time-limited sub-group should be set up to consider matters of concern regarding the place of religion in public life and then report back to SACRE with recommendations. The sub-group would have representatives from all groups, with probably three from group A. The meetings would probably be at a school in the north of Hampshire in September 2015. The sub-group would provide core questions which would be sent out to Members for comments. The meeting date would be emailed to all members for them to indicate whether they wished/were able to join the group.

RESOLVED:

- That SACRE recommended the report
- That SACRE agreed to convene a time-limited sub-group with the purpose of discussing several matters of shared concern and making recommendation to the next SACRE meeting in November 2015.

#### **99. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Elizabeth Jenkerson gave advance notice of a conference on 3 September 2015 on the role of faith in British schools at the University of Winchester. Application forms would be emailed shortly to Members.

The Chairman asked for volunteers to provide a presentation prior to the meetings in November 2015 and March 2016; Mohammed Ansar and Heather Thorpe-Tracey both offered.

Rhiannon and Alasdair were thanked for organising and hosting the meeting.

#### **100. DATE, TIME AND VENUE OF NEXT MEETING**

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as Tuesday 17 November 2015 at 13:30 in the Ashburton Hall, The Castle, Winchester.