

AT A MEETING of the STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE) held in the Mitchell Room, The Castle, Winchester, on 23 February 2010.

PRESENT

Chairman

a Councillor Anna McNair Scott (Hampshire County Council)

Vice-Chairman

p Councillor P. Mutton (Hampshire County Council)

p Ms. Maggie Alder	-	Society of Friends (Quakers)
p Mr. Mohammed Ansar	-	Sunni Islam
p Councillor Mrs C. Bailey	-	Hampshire County Council
a Mrs. Maureen Barnes	-	Teachers Association
a Mrs. Elaine Bellchambers	-	Higher Education – Co-opted
a Mr. Hugh Benzie	-	Methodist Church
p Mr. Tony Blackshaw	-	Church of England
p Mrs. Dawn Casson	-	Teachers Association
p Mrs J. Chong	-	Roman Catholic
Ms. Rebecca Costambeys	-	Secondary Education – Co-opted
Mr. Ameet Singh Diggall	-	Sikhism
Ms. Rebecca Fletcher	-	Church of England
p Mrs Maeve Gordon-James	-	Buddhist
p Ms Patricia Hannam	-	Hampshire County Council
a Mr. Chris Hughes	-	Fellowship of Independent
p Mrs. Elizabeth Jenkerson	-	Baha’i
p Councillor Andrew Joy	-	Hampshire County Council
p Mrs. Julie Lemon	-	Special Education – Co-opted
p Mrs. Judith Lowndes	-	Hampshire County Council
a Ms Jackie McGregor	-	Salvation Army
Mr. Mahmood Nurmohammed	-	Shia Islam
a Mrs. Jean O’Reilly	-	Humanism – Co-opted
p Councillor Sam Payne	-	Hampshire County Council
p Mrs. Jane Pridmore	-	Teachers Association
p Mr. Paul Tipple	-	Baptist Union
a Canon John Turpin	-	Church of England
p Major Suryaparsad Upadhya	-	Hindu
a Mrs. Lillian Wetherley	-	Church of England

Cllr. Mrs. Pam Mutton was in the Chair for this meeting

25. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllr. Mrs. Anna McNair Scott, Mrs. Maureen Barnes, Mrs. E. Bellchambers, Hugh Benzie, Chris Hughes, Mrs. Jackie McGregor, Mrs. Jean O'Reilly, Canon John Turpin and Mrs Lillian Weatherley.

26. 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.

27. MINUTES

Item 7, Page 3 – SACRE report – At the last SACRE meeting it was questioned whether there had been no complaints received as specified or whether some had been missed. Judith Lowndes had since consulted with the Complaints Office who confirmed that there had been no complaints and the Annual Report was correct.

Item 12, Page 6 – Mohammed Ansar confirmed that he was on the Community Cohesion Project being lead by Hampshire County Council and had attended one of the meetings since the last SACRE meeting in November.

The Minutes of the meeting of the Standing Advisory Council held on 3 November 2009 were confirmed as a correct record and, subsequently signed by the Vice-Chairman.

28. CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS

The Vice-Chairman welcomed Jenny Zeffertt to her first meeting as the Jewish representative. It was also announced that it was Maggie Allder's last SACRE meeting as Quaker representative and she was thanked for her hard work and valuable contribution to SACRE. The Vice-Chairman also confirmed that Mandy Post, Teachers Association representative, had left SACRE due to changing schools.

Judith Lowndes talked about the Monitoring School visits and was pleased to confirm that Cllr. David Kirk, Executive Member for Children's Services,

had allocated a further 5 days to allow SACRE to continue the monitoring. The Vice-Chairman asked how new members take part in the visits. Judith explained that when the programme was set up, SACRE Members volunteered and took part in training, and as a result, those people have accompanied Judith to visits to Primary Schools and if new members were interested then they would need to contact Judith. Monitoring provision is an effective way of seeking out good practice to disseminate to other schools through the Primary News and on the website. It has proved very successful and has continued this term. Judith confirmed that Church *Aided* schools were not visited because they are not required, by law, to follow the locally agreed syllabus. Church *controlled* schools are visited as they do fall under the requirements of the agreed syllabus. Tony Blackshaw confirmed that SACRE are welcome to visit Church Aided schools.

The June SACRE meeting is always held at a school or place of worship and so SACRE are currently looking for a place of worship as a venue for the next meeting, as the 2009 meeting took place in a primary school. Suryaparsad Upadhya, Mohammed Ansar and Jenny Zeffertt all volunteered to look into hosting the meeting. It was agreed that this would be discussed with the Chairman outside of the meeting. SACRE also requested that they be informed of suitable dress ahead of the meeting once a venue had been decided.

29. DEPUTATIONS

There were no deputations

30. MONITORING SUB-GROUP

The Council received the report of the Director of Children's Services (Item 6 in the Minute Book) informing SACRE of the activities and findings of the Monitoring sub-group.

The group scrutinised some of the documentation produced by RE departments in secondary schools, which gave some indication about the provision of RE in those schools. It was discovered that the documentation was very different, some of which proving to be a lot more useful than others. It was decided that secondary heads of department should be encouraged to use the self evaluation framework, which relate closely to the OFSTED Self Evaluation Forms (SEFs) to help with consistency and help them identify areas in need of development.

The Monitoring sub group also looked closely at the GCSE results and were pleased to see that Hampshire GCSE results are better, overall, than those in the rest of the country. SACRE questioned the sudden increase in those taking RE and agreed that it would be useful to know whether there is a pattern, or correlation across schools and areas of the county. Patricia Hannam confirmed that there were cultural and ethnicity statistics, but no statistics according to students of different faiths. **Patricia Hannam agreed to look at the figures and see if there was any correlation and report**

back at the next SACRE meeting. It was also confirmed that the new Secondary RE News which is due out shortly, discusses the new GCSE's and what is going on in schools, featuring models of good practice and useful examples.

Despite the snow at the start of the year, a few very successful SACRE monitoring visits had taken place in primary schools and many showed very good methods of practice that would be shared with other schools as excellent examples. Many visits have been postponed to a later date due to adverse weather, but the monitoring sub group shall report back on these in due course.

RESOLVED:

- i) That SACRE notes the report
- ii) That SACRE approves the proposal to write to schools that demonstrate a positive performance for RE in GCSE and schools that have demonstrated excellent models of good practice in teaching RE following monitoring visits.

31. SACRES 5-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN

The Council considered the report of the Director of Children's Services (Item 7 in the Minute Book) which proposed to convene a meeting of representatives of SACRE to draft a five year strategic plan for its future activities and recommendations to the local authority.

The Agreed Syllabus is revised every five years, which we are currently in the process of doing, and SACRE's five year strategic plan runs concurrently with each agreed syllabus. It was proposed that the monitoring sub-group can be the group that put the five year plan together in consultation other members of SACRE. It was confirmed that the monitoring sub-group started as a group of volunteers from SACRE, but there may be an opportunity to change or extend the group. Membership of the group would be brought back to the next meeting when Cllr. McNair-Scott and Hugh Benzie, Chairman of the Monitoring Sub-Group, are in attendance. It was agreed that if SACRE has any issues they want included in the development plan, then they should contact Judith, Patricia or Hugh Benzie directly.

RESOLVED:

- i) That SACRE convenes a meeting of representatives, supported by the Hampshire Inspectors for RE, to produce a draft five year plan for SACREs approval at the next meeting.

32. RE IN ENGLISH SCHOOLS: NON STATUTORY GUIDANCE

The Council received the report of the Director of Children's Services (Item 8 in the Minute Book) which draws SACREs attention to a national guidance publication titled '*Religious Education in English Schools: Non Statutory Guidance 2009*', and the final document of 2010 produced by the DCSF in response to the Minister for Education's decision to revise the guidance of Circular 1/94.

It was confirmed that the old and new circulars are enormously different, and the changes are briefly summarised in paragraph 3.2 in the report. There is also a useful part relating to SACREs (Section 5), attached as an appendix to the report.

SACRE discussed how the Council reviews its effectiveness and performance and it was proposed that more group work should take place so everyone understood the cultures and faiths of everyone else in the group. It was agreed that it can be very daunting for new members of SACRE to come into the group and induction training sessions, like the one before Christmas, are incredibly helpful.

It was proposed that SACRE meetings start slightly earlier in future to give the group opportunity to do 'team building' exercises and learn about the backgrounds of others in the group.

RESOLVED:

- i) To discuss the report and note any implications for SACREs five year plan.
- ii) That SACRE meetings start earlier to allow the group to work together more closely, and to learn about and discuss SACREs aims and objectives in relation to members' faiths, beliefs, backgrounds and experiences.

33. COMMUNITY COHESION PROJECT AND PREVENT STRATEGY

The Council received the report of the Director of Children's Services (Item 9 in the Minute Book) updating them on the progress of the work towards supporting teachers to contribute to their schools' duty to promote community cohesion. Schools now need to note the religious and faith makeup of the school community in the opening narrative of their Self Evaluation Forms (SEFs). This has to be seen also in the wider context of the local community the school is in and also the national community and the global community. Community cohesion is now inspected and it is a very important judgement. In January, OFSTED published guidance for

inspectors on community cohesion so they know what they are looking for. The framework has raised awareness. Faith is on the top of people's agendas and it makes the work as a SACRE more important. Some Governors have training on community cohesion and it is important they fully understand the initiative as part of the school governing body.

The Hampshire Museum Service has made a successful bid for funding that will enable the Community Cohesion project to continue into 2011. They are planning to work closely with a partnership between an infant school, a junior and a secondary school and the Aldershot museum. Due to illness this project has been deferred to a later date. The Hampshire RE team will continue to work with the project in an advisory capacity .

The Prevent Strategy is a Government initiative and a cross agency approach involving, amongst others, education, the police and the youth service. The Strategy is aimed at preventing violent extremism and covers all sorts of violent extremism including right wing and animal rights.

Patricia reminded SACRE of the Annual Secondary RE Leadership conference which takes place in October each year. In 2010 this will be on October 22nd. The theme this year is Community Cohesion and one of the key speakers will be from the DCSF Community Cohesion Unit. SACRE members are encouraged to attend. Mohammed Ansar also advised that GOSE are having an invited conference on a similar theme in the first week of March in Guildford. Mohammed Ansar offered to forward information onto SACRE members that were interested.

SACRE agreed that it may be useful to put together a leaflet on something relating to community cohesion and why faith is important. **Judith and Patricia agreed to put something together for the next meeting.**

Useful Information:

'Strong Schools for Strong Communities'. Study on CoE Schools, Looks at OFSTED ratings and it appears that the results are better:

www.cofe.anglican.org/info/education/cocoresearch.pdf

'Every Faith Matters' – also features community cohesion and can be found at:

http://www.cofe-worcester.org.uk/work_of_the_diocese/EveryFaithMatters.php

RESOLVED:

- i) That SACRE notes the report and endorses the continued developments of the Community Cohesion project led by the Hampshire Museum Service.
- ii) That SACRE recommends that guidance to governors and senior leaders in school is produced regarding the contribution of RE to Community Cohesion.

- iii) SACRE recommends that training is offered on the faith and religious dimension of community cohesion to senior management and governors in schools.
- iv) SACRE recommends that training for Heads of Department and governors in the north of the county is offered as soon as possible, regarding the religious diversity of the Nepalese community present in Hampshire.

34. BI-NATIONAL RE CELEBRATION 2011

The Council received the report of the Director of Children's Services (Item 10 in the Minute Book) which provided a brief summary of the proposal from the RE Council of England and Wales to launch a national celebration of RE in March 2011.

SACRE agreed that this is something the group should get involved in and that it would raise the profile of RE. It was proposed that it may be helpful to link it with other events going on across Hampshire, e.g. with the Southampton and/or Portsmouth celebrations, to help promote the events going on and attract more visitors. Next year is also the 400th anniversary of the King James Bible, which could be linked to the event and the 200th anniversary of the National Society. It was suggested that Winchester Cathedral could host a multi-faith event, but there are issues with funding for the event as no money is being provided by the RE Council. SCOF (Southampton Council of Faiths) has funding for RE and schools, so there is chance that SACRE may be able to link in or share part of the funding.

Mohammed Ansar agreed to investigate possible SCOF funding and report back at the next meeting in June.

RESOLVED:

- i) That SACRE considers the contribution that it can make to the Celebration year event in Hampshire.

At the end of the meeting, Patricia Hannam presented a 'Brief history of RE and duties of the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education', which covered the origins of RE in schools and how this has developed and changed over the years.