

AT A MEETING of the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education of
HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL held at Ashburton Hall, Winchester on
Tuesday, 28th November, 2017

PRESENT

Chairman:
p Councillor Roz Chadd

Vice-Chairman:
p Councillor Charles Choudhary

a Councillor Anna McNair Scott
p Councillor Chris Carter (substitute)

a Councillor David Simpson
p Councillor David Harrison (substitute)

Members

- Mohammed Ansar, Muslim
- p Margaret Boyne, United Reformed Church
- Harmeet Singh Brar, Sikh
- a Amanda Cawood, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints
- a Rev Seishin Darren Clark, Buddhist
- a Sheikh Fazle Abbas Dato, Muslim
- a Yasmeen Hussain, Muslim
- p Elizabeth Jenkerson, Baha'i
- Rhian Jones, Salvation Army
- a Jo May, Baptist Union
- a Sushma Sahajpal, Hindu
- p Lisa-Marie Taylor, Buddhist
- a Heather Thorpe-Tracey, Society of Friends
- p Michael Zeffertt, Jewish

- p Caroline Welch, Church of England
- Richard Wharton, Church of England
- a Reverend Jeff Williams, Church of England
- p Rev Howard Wright, Church of England
- p Sue Bowen, Church of England (substitute)

- p Maureen Barnes, Teachers' Liaison Panel
- a Patrizia Timms Blanch, Teachers' Liaison Panel
- p James Dye, Teachers' Liaison Panel
- p Susannah Burns, Teachers' Liaison Panel

Co-opted members

- a Pam Brown, Special Education
- p Jon Hamer, Secondary Schools
- p Gill Heron, Academy Schools
- p Rhiannon Love, Higher Education
- p Alasdair Richardson, Higher Education
- p Chris Robinson, Humanists
- Antigone Storey, Private Schools

p Kate Stubbings, Primary Schools

Also present with the agreement of the Chairman: Mr Noel Thorpe-Tracey as substitute for Heather Thorpe-Tracey and Mr Dan Shiner, a PGCE student with James Dye.

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.

Prior to the start of the main meeting Lisa-Marie Taylor, one of SACRE's Buddhist representatives, gave a presentation providing an overview of Buddhist traditions, comparing Zen, Thervarden and Tibetan practices. She answered Members' questions.

14. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillors Anna McNair Scott and David Simpson, Jeff Williams, Patrizia Timms-Blanch, Darren Clark, Heather Thorpe-Tracey, Jo May, Amanda Cawood, Sushma Sahajpal, Pam Brown, Yasmeen Hussain, and Sheikh Fazle Abbas Datoo.

15. **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 Personal interest in a matter being considered at the meeting they considered whether such interest should be declared, and having regard to Part 5, Paragraph 4 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.

16. **MINUTES**

The minutes of the previous meeting on 19 June 2017 were agreed as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman.

17. **MATTERS ARISING**

Updates were given about a number of matters arising from the minutes of the last meeting.

Item 7 (page 7) – the training session on 19 September had been well attended and had included members on the religious visitor speakers' list.

Item 9 (page 8) – a correction was made; that the Interfaith Calendar was managed by the advisers, but the Interfaith lecture was organised by the Southern Interfaith Network. The Chairman informed Members that she had presented the prizes at the launch of the Calendar with Councillor Joy and was keen to continue the calendar.

Item 9 (page 8) – Members were told that the Hampshire Advice Document had been sent to schools and placed on the curriculum website and the RE Moodle; it had received a good response.

18. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman welcomed all those Members who were attending their first meeting of SACRE, Noel Thorpe-Tracey who was standing in for Heather and Dan Shiner, a PGCE student who had accompanied James Dye.

The Chairman informed Members that she had attended a hub meeting of SACRE chairs from the South East region on 9 October where they had discussed the interim report of the Commission for RE and good practice in RE. It had been a well attended meeting and she had come away feeling proud to be part of Hampshire SACRE as it was already doing things some of the other SACREs were just thinking of.

Members were encouraged to put their names forward for a place at the South West SACRE Conference on 5 March 2018 and the NASACRE AGM on 24 May 2018. It was indicated that she, Patricia Hannam and Justine Ball would be running a workshop at the March conference.

The Chairman asked for a volunteer for the pre-meeting presentation for the meeting on 6 March 2017.

Prior to the meeting on 6 March, at 12.00pm, there would be another information and training session for all members who had yet to attend one of these sessions and anyone who wanted a refresher. As this would include a light lunch, those who intended to come were asked to contact the clerk.

19. **DEPUTATIONS**

There were no deputations.

20. **MEMBERSHIP REPORT**

SACRE received a report from Patricia Hannam, the County Inspector/Advisor, on the membership of SACRE (item 7 in the Minute Book).

Members were informed that in addition to the new Muslim representative, Yasmeen Hussain, there were two further new Members, Susannah Burns who had replaced Paul Bristow as one of the Teachers' Association representatives and Rhian Jones, a new representative from the Salvation Army. The

recommendation to SACRE was amended to reflect these additions to the report.

RESOLVED:

- That SACRE recommended Yasmeen Hussain, Susannah Burns and Rhian Jones were confirmed as members of SACRE.
- That the officer supporting SACRE extended an invitation to the next SACRE training and offered to link them with an experienced member of SACRE as mentor for the first year of service on SACRE.

21. **MONITORING GROUP**

The Council received a report from Patricia Hannam, the County Inspector/Adviser on the discussions and findings of the Monitoring Group at their meeting on 16 October 2017 (Item 8 in the Minute Book).

The County Inspector/Adviser began by explaining the purpose of the monitoring group for new members. It was indicated that the main focus of monitoring visits over the next year would be on the implementation and effectiveness of the new Agreed Syllabus. It was also noted that reports from SACRE monitoring visits were private reports and not publicly available.

Members were invited to ask questions on the report.

RESOLVED:

- That SACRE thanked the monitoring group for their report
- That the Chair of SACRE would write to senior HIAS colleagues and to the Commission on RE, to follow up specific concerns raised by the monitoring group regarding the inspection of RE and also appropriately mentioned in OFSTED reports.

22. **THE INTERIM REPORT FROM THE COMMISSION ON RE**

The Council considered and discussed the Interim Report from The Commission on RE. (Item 9 in the Minute Book). An abridged version of the consultation questionnaire was provided to Members to aid discussion.

The County Inspector/Adviser began by reminding the Council that the Commission was a high profile independent commission with a remit to make recommendations to the government which would be designed to improve the quality and rigour of RE and its capacity to prepare pupils for life in modern Britain. She hoped that Members had had the opportunity to have read the Executive Summary to the Report prior to the meeting. It was indicated that the

Chairman would be sending a response on behalf of SACRE based on the meeting's presentation and subsequent discussions.

The Inspector/Adviser took each of the five key areas that were being consulted on in turn – a national entitlement for RE, strengthening schools' accountability for RE, a renewed and expanded role for SACREs, the right to withdraw and a National Plan for RE.

Members were reminded that RE had been locally determined since the 1970. Local determination gave the opportunity for a syllabus to be developed based on a region's individual demography. Some Members thought it would be difficult to get a national agreement on what should be included in this national entitlement. There would also be the question of how it would be monitored. It was suggested that it would be better to have a mechanism for recognising existing high quality agreed syllabi. A national entitlement for RE would possibly be unnecessary for authorities like Hampshire, that were already meeting their responsibilities for RE.

On strengthening schools' accountability for the provision and quality of RE it was put forward that Ofsted already has a mechanism to do this. However, recent investigation of Ofsted reports by the Monitoring Group had shown that the comments given varied and did not comment on how the provision met the requirements of the agreed syllabus.

A proposed renewed and expanded role for SACREs in supporting and resourcing RE was supported. The Inspector/Adviser suggested that an effective SACRE has certain characteristics, notably the provision of a clerk from the local authority to service the SACRE, a trained SACRE adviser who can also facilitate CPD for teachers, active participation from elected members of the local authority, and local authority support to ensure monitoring meetings and visits to schools happen.

On the question of securing funding for SACREs it was felt this would be very complex to arrange. It might be better to outline to local authorities a minimum requirement in terms of support for SACRE, such as those available in Hampshire.

It was felt that the recommendation that SACREs should have a role in promoting community relations needed further clarification. Hampshire SACRE's advice document to schools relating to dress and absence could be regarded as related to promoting community relations.

Justine Ball, one of the inspector/advisers, would be presenting the findings of the two withdrawal surveys that she has carried out to the Commissioners as they have no other information to look at. She reminded Members that both surveys had shown only a very small number of children had been withdrawn from part or all of RE. The commission report suggests that the withdrawal of 'the right to withdraw' is probably not straightforward.

In relation to the proposed National Plan to improve teaching and learning in RE it was noted that this might be similar to the national plan for PE and, therefore, money may be available. The recommendation that all teachers should have a statutory number of hours for RE on primary and secondary training courses was welcomed, since on some primary courses teachers may have only one or even none. On the question of whether RE should be compulsory until the age of 16 or remain at 18, it was noted that it was difficult, on a practical level, to have compulsory RE in sixth form colleges. Because of this Hampshire SACRE would

suggest it should be compulsory until 16. It was put forward that engagement with parents, to convince them of the value and importance of religious education, was vital.

One member speaking about the report in general felt that it was full of buzz words and political correctness and that if the Commission recommended following the paths proposed it would end up in a minefield for the teaching profession and with a subject that doesn't have the word 'religion' in it.

The Inspector/Advisor informed Members that originally the Commission was a two year piece of work reporting at the end of 2018 in time for the government to take action before the next election, but due to the 2017 election this might now change. However, she felt that it was recognised within the DfE that changes need to be made.

The Inspector/Advisor said the intention of her presentation and subsequent discussion had been to ensure Members were able to make their own response in a measured way and to show the response that the Chairman would make on SACRE's behalf.

All Members were again encouraged to make their own personal response to the Interim report to the Commission.

RESOLVED:

- That SACRE noted the report.
- That SACRE members were encouraged to make a personal response to the Commission on RE Interim Report before the deadline.
- That SACRE approved that the Chair of SACRE should write to the Commission on RE in response to the matters open for consultation on behalf of Hampshire SACRE.

23. **SACRE ANNUAL REPORT 2016-17**

The Council considered the SACRE Annual Report for 2016/17 prepared and presented by Patricia Hannam, the County Inspector/Advisor. (Item 10 in the Minute Book). Members were invited to make comments and ask questions.

It was noted, for amendment, on page 39 that the Church of England was not listed among the religious faiths represented on SACRE.

Clarification was requested regarding NQT recruitment (page 43). It was agreed to add 'Secondary' as the figures only referred to them, not to primary teachers. Members were informed that there are far fewer RE teachers being trained, with only two in 2016/17; although there were five in the current year, 2017/18. It was noted that in 2017 there was a 30% shortfall, against government targets, of people applying to secondary post-graduate specialist RE teacher training courses.

RESOLVED:

- That SACRE approved the Annual Report and its distribution as specified in 3.1 of the report subject to the requested amendments.

24. **SOUTH CENTRAL SACRE HUB**

The Council received a report from Patricia Hannam, the County Inspector/Adviser on the activities of the South Central Hub and future plans (Item 11 in the Minute Book).

Members were informed that a meeting of the South Central Hub had taken place on 13 November with representatives from seven SACREs present. All felt it was important for SACREs to work collaboratively and that the meetings were worthwhile for sharing issues and concerns.

Members were encouraged to attend one of the Reading and Research Group meetings which were free and open to everyone. The current list of speakers was attached as an appendix to the report. It was noted that the speaker for the March meeting had been confirmed as Denise Cush who would speak on her research relating to what religion means and the implications of this for teachers.

RESOLVED:

- That SACRE noted the report.

25. **SACRE YOUTH VOICE**

The Council received a report from Patricia Hannam, the County Inspector/Adviser on the activities of the Youth Voice since the last SACRE meeting on 19 June 2017 (Item 12 in the Minute Book).

Members were shown a short video clip of the Youth Voice conference on 13 July which had been made by students from Wildern School. Thanks were given to the Chairman, Elizabeth Jenkerson, Gill Heron, Maureen Barnes and Howard Wright for helping with this very successful event.

The next meeting of Youth voice would be 29 November, where they would be discussing the Interim Report of the Commission on RE and planning the Summer 2018 Conference.

RESOLVED:

- That SACRE noted the report.

26. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The Chairman stated that she would like the Interfaith Calendar to continue and asked Members to consider whether they would like to be involved with a task and finish group that would produce the 2019 Interfaith Calendar, taking on the

work put in by the two advisers for the 2018 one. She felt it was really worthwhile venture and hoped that she would be able to enlist SACRE members to help with producing next year's.

She reminded Members to buy this year's Interfaith Calendar before they left.

27. **DATE, TIME AND VENUE OF NEXT MEETING**

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as Tuesday 6 March 2018 at 2.00 pm in the Ashburton Hall, Winchester.

Chairman,