

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Report

Committee/Panel:	Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education
Date:	1 November 2022
Title:	SACRE Monitoring Group Report
Report From:	Director of Children's Services

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Purpose of this Report

1. The purpose of this report is to update SACRE on the activities and considerations of the SACRE Monitoring Group.

Recommendation(s)

2. That SACRE notes this Monitoring Group report.

Executive Summary

3. This report seeks to inform SACRE of the matters discussed at the SACRE Monitoring Group meeting that took place virtually on 5 October 2022.

Contextual information

4. SACRE has a statutory responsibility to monitor the effectiveness of the locally agreed syllabus. This group meets about 6 weeks before each full SACRE meeting in order to support SACRE in fulfilling this responsibility.

5. **Those present were:**

Chris Hughes (chair)

Patricia Hannam

Cllr Elaine Still

Justine Ball

Elizabeth Jenkerson

(SACRE Support Officers)

Jeff Williams

Lydia Revett (minute taker)

Apologies

Cllr Chris Donnelley

Rhiannon Love

Alasdair Richardson

6. **Matters discussed:**

The situation following the retirement of County Inspector Adviser RE, History and Philosophy in November, was discussed. Justine Ball is being seconded into the County Inspector/Adviser role and a part time secondary secondee appointment is being made to support secondary RE especially.

SACRE Constitution review: this is in hand and discussion held with the Hampshire Legal team. There is a pause for reflecting now whilst awaiting results of data analysis from the 2021 Census for Hampshire. It is important that SACRE's constitution and membership of Group A takes into account and is informed by the census data, whilst not being exclusively determined by it.

Determinations application update: Correspondence has been received by the Chair of SACRE from the head of the applying school, and a response has been sent.

Hampshire 2022 GCSE Religious studies examinations: Since the full set of data is not available currently a full report on this will be brought to the February meeting of SACRE. However, data available from Ofqual (which includes Southampton and Portsmouth in the Hampshire Data) indicates that Hampshire results will have been above the national. Anecdotal reports from individual heads of RE would seem to show that schools are pleased overall with the results achieved by their students in 2022 examination series.

Living Difference IV update on implementation. Three launch events took place. Including two full day virtual events in November 2021, January 2022, with a further half day 'top-up' event being offered in the early summer of 2022. Altogether almost 400 schools attended over the three events.

All plans are now updated on the Hampshire RE Moodle and Hampshire RE Website which LA schools have access to. This as well as making the necessary adjustments to the Packs sold from the Hampshire RE Curriculum centre has been a huge amount of work.

Ongoing training is being offered to schools through network meetings and 1:1 visits from the inspector/Advisers.

Visits to primary schools from SACRE's primary adviser indicate that some particular aspects of Living Difference IV are requiring additional thought and engagement. For example:

Golden threads

Balance of Abrahamic and Dharmic faiths

Assessment (especially in light of Ofsted's focus on knowledge building blocks)

Conversations with secondary school contacts would indicate that more work is needed regarding the implementation of the golden threads in order to ensure secure progression from KS2 to KS3. Improving primary and secondary transition was the key reason for introducing this innovation into the Living Difference IV syllabus.

Given Ofsted's focus on knowledge, and Living Difference IV's more balanced approach, it was thought that a meeting with the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services could be helpful and SACRE Chair would look into enabling that.

SACRE Monitoring Visits: SACRE has the opportunity to make monitoring visits to schools accompanied by the professional adviser(s). These give an opportunity to SACRE members to see how RE works in action in school as well as for the school to gain professional advice from Advisers.

Reports from Primary and Secondary Ofsted Visits made since the last meeting were considered. Although a number of schools had been inspected in the time frame being considered in this meeting, RE is rarely mentioned. Only one secondary school during this period had had a deep dive for RE. Most Ofsted reports do not mention RE even when there has been discussions with the head of department or subject leader. This continues to be a frustration.

Information gathered from other inspector/Adviser visits.

13 primary schools had requested visits from the Primary Inspector/Adviser during the period covered by this report. All of these would have been funded through the schools Management Partnership arrangements with HIAS. Two very good secondary schools have requested an inspection visit for RE. 4 other secondary schools are receiving on-going support for RE through school improvement service arrangements with HIAS.

Update on teacher vacancies and ITE provision

There is a widely acknowledged crisis in recruitment into Secondary initial Teacher education courses, including RE PGCE courses. As mentioned earlier in this report AULRE are running a series of days to explore this and to ensure there is an increase in applications for 2023/4. In addition ITE institutions have had to apply for reaccreditation, a process which has led institutions to face a great deal of uncertainty. These two factors taken together are serving to make the future supply of teachers for RE and other subjects insufficient for need. This is having a knock-on impact in the capacity of Hampshire Secondary schools to recruit enough specialist RE teachers. There are unfilled vacancies in very good RE departments in Hampshire schools, for posts that were advertised in the summer. This is a cause for grave concern.

Withdrawal from RE survey and monitoring collective worship:

Monitoring Group were reminded that schools in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight are surveyed about their withdrawal statistics every year. This is shortly to be arranged for 2022. Likewise Collective Worship is in the process of being monitored for 2022.

National Project – collecting children’s voices talking about RE:

As highlighted at the 20 July 2022 SACRE meeting, Justine Ball is involved with a national project collecting children’s voices 7 – 11year olds, talking about RE. It was noted that these comments would be brought to the November SACRE meeting, and these are appended at Appendix 1 to this report.

REQUIRED CORPORATE AND LEGAL INFORMATION:

Links to the Strategic Plan

Hampshire maintains strong and sustainable economic growth and prosperity:	yes
People in Hampshire live safe, healthy and independent lives:	yes
People in Hampshire enjoy a rich and diverse environment:	yes
People in Hampshire enjoy being part of strong, inclusive communities:	yes

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.)

Document

Location

None

EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT:

1. Equality Duty

The County Council has a duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ('the Act') to have due regard in the exercise of its functions to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by or under the Act with regard to the protected characteristics as set out in section 4 of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation);
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (see above) and persons who do not share it.

Due regard in this context involves having due regard in particular to:

- The need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
- Take steps to meet the needs of persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- Encourage persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

2. Equalities Impact Assessment:

Living Difference IV, the locally agreed syllabus for religious education has an interest in equalities at its heart. A high-quality religious education taught according to Living Difference IV seeks to contribute to the elimination of discrimination, harassment and victimisation especially and directly with regard to the protected characteristics of race and religion. Further, through experiencing a high-quality religious education taught according to Living Difference IV there is the intention to mitigate xenophobia of all kinds thus fostering good relations.