

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Report

Committee:	Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education
Date:	6 June 2023
Title:	Monitoring Group
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 the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education 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 face to face on 23 May 2023.

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)
Cllr Chris Donnelly
Alasdair Richardson
Rhiannon Love

Justine Ball
(SACRE Support Officers)
Lydia Revett (minute taker)

Apologies:
Cllr Elaine Still
Jeff Williams
Elizabeth Jenkerson

Matters discussed:

Professional Education Opportunities:

6. RE and SEND:
7. The monitoring group were advised that one of the teachers on the National Leadership Programme for RE had led a very successful training session with RE leaders on RE and SEND and this would take place twice a year going forward with specific topics being chosen for each meeting, such as assessment, visits and concepts for teaching.
8. RE CPD:
9. The advisers reported that five Primary RE networks had run each term and one secondary RE network across the County. The usual offer of courses for RE leaders had taken place, including Leading RE, RE and Ofsted and RE and Assessment. It was noted that a common query from schools related to advice on mapping the golden threads throughout the curriculum and it was suggested that an online meeting of primary and secondary teachers to look at golden threads and transition would be useful for providing advice. It was agreed that the advisers would arrange this in the Autumn term.
10. SACRE Monitoring Visits:
11. The advisers reported that there had been one SACRE visit to a primary school and one SACRE visit to a secondary school to look at planning, delivery of teaching and RE assessment. Common areas of RE focus with schools included:
 - How to update their curriculum to *LDIV*, in particular using golden thread concepts to shape progression right across the school and
 - ways to assess RE across all year groups from Reception to GCSE classes.

Reports from Primary and Secondary Ofsted Visits made since the last meeting were considered.

12. The meeting was advised about a large number of primary Ofsted reports which had mentioned RE. The reports were positive regarding RE but there was a number of reports which contained comments about SMSC, British Values, inclusion, tolerance and equality rather than RE as an academic subject. Some reports celebrated visits beyond the classroom for RE, but it has been seen on school visits that such visits will be less frequent in many schools in the next academic year due to financial constraints. Concern was therefore expressed about this in the group. There were very few RE deep dives seen in the reports that had taken place. The County Inspector was asked to conduct research on comparing deep dives in history with those in RE to see what similarities and differences could be noted between the subjects and to report back to the group in the Autumn term.

13. The group were also advised about some Ofsted reports nationally where concerns were raised by Inspectors about the failure to teach RE and where this had resulted in a downgrading for the school. It was noted that action was being taken on this and that it was viewed seriously.

Information gathered from other inspector/Adviser visits.

14. 14 primary schools had requested visits from the Advisers during the period covered by this report. All of these would have been funded through the schools Management Partnership arrangements with HIAS. It was noted that further training had been requested on Dharmic religions by some of the schools and both advisers have provided training on this for primary schools recently. SACRE members are asked to contact the advisers if they know of Dharmic faith representatives who would be interested in joining the SACRE to help provide further advice and support to schools going forward.

Update on teacher vacancies and ITE provision

15. The group were advised that the national picture for RE teacher training recruitment is very bleak, compounded by the lack of a bursary for RE PGCE's. The information was shared that teacher vacancies are higher this year than last year, with RE predicted to meet just 61% of its target nationally (taken from the National Foundation for Educational Research). It was noted though that Hampshire has largely retained its teachers, so there are relatively few vacancies in Hampshire compared to London, for example. Members also added that Hampshire is a very good Local Authority to work for, with high quality support offered for RE teachers from the SACRE, two Advisers and the RE centre.

Survey into KS 4 Provision

16. The survey was sent out in the Spring term to gain a clearer overview of secondary school provision and to attempt to identify some of the reasons for the drop in RE entry numbers this year. 42 schools responded across Hampshire and Portsmouth. The key findings were that:
 - 88% of the sample will be entering students for GSCE this year, with the majority of schools following AQA as their specification.
17. GCSE entries have remained relatively stable for 45% of the schools since 2019, but have dropped for 42% of the schools surveyed. Where numbers had dropped, the main reason given for this was that the subject is not part of the Ebacc. Ebacc is a set of subjects that is one of the performance measures for schools. Currently this requires students to take Geography or History, but not RE. Key findings were that:
 - Most schools expect numbers for next year to be similar to the current cohort.
 - Some schools highlighted the difficulty in recruiting specialist teachers and consistency of provision.

- Only 54% of schools offered core KS4 provision for RE with distinct lessons and 40% offered provision that combines it with another subject. This leaves 3% where the provision will need to be checked in more detail to see that RE is actually being taught.
- The group asked the Adviser to monitor this further and to identify schools who did not respond to the survey and contact them about their provision, reporting back to the group in the Autumn term.

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.