

AT A MEETING of the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education of
HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL held at Ashburton Hall, Ell Court, Winchester
on Wednesday, 20th July, 2022

PRESENT

Chairman:
Councillor Elaine Still

Vice-Chairman:
* Councillor Christopher Donnelly

* Councillor Wayne Irish

* Councillor Pal Hayre

***Present**

- Father John Chandler, Roman Catholic Church
- Sheikh Fazle Abbas Dato, Muslim
- * Danny Habel, Jewish Community
- * Chris Hughes, Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches
- * Elizabeth Jenkerson, Baha'i
- Rhian Jones, Salvation Army
- Charmian Harrison, Methodists
- Yasmeen Hussain, Muslim
- Sushma Sahajpal, Hindu
- * Lisa-Marie Taylor, Buddhist
- * Noel Thorpe-Tracey, Society of Friends
- * Harjinder Virdee, Sikh Representative

- Sue Bowen, Church of England
- Jeff Williams, Church of England
- * Rev Howard Wright, Church of England
- Maria Ackland, Church of England

- * Maureen Barnes, Teachers' Liaison Panel
- Graeme Rowe, Teachers' Liaison Panel
- Julie Kelly, Teachers' Liaison Panel
- * Carson Elday, Teachers' Liaison Panel - Special Schools
- Jon Hamer, Teachers' Liaison Panel - Secondary Schools

Co-opted Members

- * Gill Heron, Academy Schools
- Rhiannon Love, Higher Education
- * James Pitkin, Governors
- Alasdair Richardson, Higher Education
- * Chris Robinson, Humanists

Also present with the agreement of the Chairman:

27. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Elaine Still, Jeff Williams, Sue Bowen, Maria Ackland, Sheikh Fazle Abbas Dato, Charmian Harrison, Yasmeen Hussain, Sushma Sahajpal, Julie Kelly, Rhiannon Love, and Alasdair Richardson.

28. 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.

Elizabeth Jenkerson noted that she was a judge for the Westhill Awards which gives grants to SACREs.

29. MINUTES

The minutes of the previous meeting on 1 March 2022 were confirmed. It was noted that a draft revision of the determination procedure (item 21) was not being brought to this meeting.

30. DEPUTATIONS

Mr Joe Moorhouse, Vice-Chair of Governors of Poulner Infant School and Nursery and Mrs Michelle Buckler, the Chair of Governors spoke about the determination application that the school had made.

Mr Moorhouse expressed his concerns about the determination procedure. He told SACRE that theirs was a community school not a faith school and prospective parents were seeking an impartial and inclusive school. Two thirds of the school's parents consider themselves as not Christian and most are non-religious or other faith. The Governors unanimously agreed that collective worship should be less than half "wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character" and believe using the 'No Outsiders' programme, which promotes diversity and equality, is more relevant to the pupils. The governors believe that there is a benefit in lifting the requirement for collective worship to be broadly or mainly Christian in character and negative in retaining it. Mr Moorhouse highlighted that the UNCRC (United Nations Convention for the Rights of the

Child) had called on the government to remove this requirement and ten years ago NASACRE and AREIAC had said the Circular 1/94 guidance should be repealed. He believed that SACRE was taking too much notice of the 1/94 guidance and not the legislation, and were failing to consider the negative impact of equality on non-religious families of having Christian collective worship taking account of the family backgrounds of parents.

The Vice-Chairman thanked Mr Moorhouse and Mrs Buckler for their deputation.

31. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Vice-Chairman explained that he was chairing the meeting because the Chairman, Councillor Still, was unable to be present as she had Covid.

He announced that the presentation from the two Hampshire teachers on the national RE Leadership Programme which should have taken place at this meeting had been postponed due to the change in meeting date.

32. **MONITORING GROUP**

SACRE received a report from Patricia Hannam, County Inspector/Adviser, on the discussions of the Monitoring Group at its meeting on 17 May 2022 (item 6 in the Minute Book).

Patricia Hannam drew Members' attention to the 3 Year Action Plan, paying particular attention to those sections rated as amber. In Section 1.2 she highlighted that there are a number of representative vacancies that need to be filled, including Baptist, URC and Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. At 1.6 it was indicated that a review of SACRE's constitution had been started as the last review was in 2009. Under Section 2.2 the close communication links with the four local authorities sharing the Agreed Syllabus needed to be strengthened. With the collation of research data on the implementation of Living Difference IV at 2.6 was too early to show anything. An audit of current training provision, 4.2, was highlighted as something to be undertaken. An additional section, 4.9, had been added as it was felt to be important to find and engage with those primary schools who were not taking advantage of training opportunities. There had been a lot of interest in and attendance at training by schools and an increased amount of freely available guidance, plans and resources on the RE Moodle, which the primary steering groups have been involved with.

In relation to the audit of the RE packs for Living Difference IV (Section 5) Patricia Hannam wanted her thanks and appreciation expressed to Lydia Revett, the manager of the RE Centre, who had spent a large amount of time updating them.

It was noted with regret that SACRE Youth Voice, Section 6.1 and 6.2 on the Action Plan, had been a casualty of Covid. It was hoped to restart in the next academic year and hold a conference in the summer 2023.

Some of the teachers present told of clusters of secondary schools and their feeder primary schools that were networking in their areas, but noted that the main problem is that there was no money in primary schools for teachers to be released during school hours.

Justine Ball indicated that she was involved with a national project collecting children's voices, 7 – 11year olds, talking about RE and would bring the comments to the November meeting of SACRE.

Members were informed of a cross-phase RE conference being held on 12 October which would provide another opportunity for primary, secondary and special education teachers to meet together.

In relation to Ofsted Inspections it was noted with disappointment that there had been few 'deep dives' into RE and it was a concern about where the data would come from for the next subject report as the published reports were brief and written for parents and the general public in mind. It was noted that of the twelve Ofsted inspections that one of the Members had been involved with at Church of England schools there had been no 'deep dives' into RE. 'Deep dives' were intended to provide a more in depth view of the curriculum and were part of Ofsted's current inspection methodology.

There was concern nationally about Initial Teacher Education and RE as fewer people were applying PGCE courses in general including RE. There was concern that the reduction in RE PGCE applications was in a large part due to the withdrawal of the bursary. Winchester University had changed its PGCE to mixed humanities, so RE was an option with History or Geography, which had secured its future at the moment. There were also problems filling all the secondary RE teacher vacancies across Hampshire.

Members were informed about the RExChange Conference, a free online conference on 7 and 8 October. Both professional advisers and several Hampshire secondary teachers were taking part in and SACRE Members were encouraged to attend. . Further details and booking link here: [RExChange 2022 - RE:ONLINE \(reonline.org.uk\)](https://reonline.org.uk)

Mention was made about the Schools White Paper and potential changes to education in England; the Monitoring Group would report to SACRE about its impact on RE in Hampshire.

Resolved:

That SACRE noted the Monitoring Group report.

33. **KEY NATIONAL AND LOCAL RE MATTERS**

SACRE received a report from Justine Ball, the Primary Inspector/Advisor, on national matters and a report from Members who had attended the NASACRE conference in May (item 7 in the Minute Book).

Chris Hughes and Elizabeth Jenkerson presented their report on the NASACRE conference. They both encouraged members to attend if they could to get a different view of RE and network with people from other SACREs. It was noted that NASACRE was considering changing the annual conference from May to July and opinions were being canvassed.

Members were encouraged to have a look at the new draft handbook for Religion and World Views published by the RE Council; it was being discussed nationally and getting ongoing amendments.

Members' attention was drawn to Appendix 2, the Report Card for RE, which was a review of the data available on RE collated by the REC, NATRE and RE Today Education Services. It had produced some interesting findings which were highlighted in the report and it was recommended for SACRE members to read it.

Resolved:

That SACRE noted the report.

34. **DETERMINATION OF APPLICATION FOR AN EXEMPTION FROM REQUIREMENT FOR CHRISTIAN COLLECTIVE WORSHIP**

SACRE considered a report of the Director of Children's Services requesting the determination of an application for an exemption from the requirement for Christian Collective Worship (Item 8 in the Minute Book).

Referring to the report the County Inspector/Adviser, explained the background to this item and highlighted the salient points in the report which SACRE needed to consider. As per the agreed process a small working group of SACRE members had discussed in detail the application in the context of the legislation and guidance and the documents provided by the school, together with additional legal guidance, and had come to the conclusion to recommend refusing the application.

Following legal advice, it was recognised that the key question that SACRE had to answer in making the determination was whether it was appropriate for the requirement for Christian collective worship to apply to Poulner Infant School having due regard to the circumstances of the family backgrounds (paragraph 7 in the report). It was noted that, according to the application, 34% of parents at Poulner Infant School identified themselves as Christian, the largest religious group. Furthermore, that any parent had a right to withdraw their child from collective worship but no withdrawals had been recorded by the school.

The legislation and guidance surrounding collective worship was explained and, in particular, the statutory requirement for children to take part in a daily act of collective worship and the lack of definition of collective worship in the legislation was discussed. In this case the common and natural meaning of collective worship was used as stated in the guidance (paragraph 57). It was again noted that parents can withdraw their child from collective worship.

The legal advisers to SACRE reiterated the legal question to be considered by SACRE “whether it is appropriate for the requirement imposed by paragraph 3(2) of Schedule 20 to the 1998 Act (requirement for Christian collective worship) to apply in the case of the school”. Attention was drawn to the information provided by the school on the question asked of parents “What religion do you belong to?”. The legal adviser stressed that SACRE would want to consider the impact on each group (Christian and other groups) of the decision as identified in the evidence .

Members discussed the application and acknowledged that an outcome to remove the requirement for collective worship was not within SACRE’s authority according to the legislation. The legal advisers explained that from the research that they had carried out, which had been based on Brent and not everywhere, there was no record of any other council making a determination for no faith or to remove the requirement for collective worship. Amongst SACRE Members there was some sympathy for the school’s request, but the need to adhere to the legislation was stressed and it was accepted that any change to this could only be made by parliament.

Members divided into their four groups for further discussion and to agree on their position on whether to grant the determination for an exemption from the requirement for collective worship to be “wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character”.

The groups voted unanimously to refuse the application.

Resolved:

That SACRE refuse the application for an exemption from the requirement for collective worship to be of a “wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character” in respect of Poulner Infant School.

35. SOUTH CENTRAL SACRE HUB

The Council received a brief verbal report from Justine Ball, Primary Inspector/Adviser on the discussions of the South Central Hub (Item 9 in the Minute Book).

At their last meeting the members had discussed diversity and equality in their curriculum and what training and support was being given in their various areas. East Sussex members explained their Key Stage 4 provision and those from

Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole talked about their recent conference. All had very little to report on any RE 'deep dives' by Ofsted.

The next meeting was scheduled for September and was open for any SACRE member to attend.

36. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Dr Patricia Hannam announced that she would be retiring as SACRE's professional adviser after the November meeting, although not giving up here professional activities for RE altogether. She said told Members that it had been a privilege to have worked with SACRE and the RE teachers in Hampshire and was glad to be handing over to excellent colleagues; Justine Ball would be taking over as the professional adviser following the November meeting.

Thanks and gratitude were extended to the clerk, Sue Butler, who was retiring in the summer, for her support and behind the scenes work for the last eleven years. The advisers and individual members also expressed their appreciation for her help and support.

37. DATE, TIME AND VENUE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as Tuesday 1 November 2022 at 2.00pm in the Ashburton Hall, Hampshire County Council, Winchester.

A presentation would be made before the main meeting at 13.30pm by two secondary teachers who have been undertaking the national RE Leadership programme in 2021/22. This presentation was postponed from June 2022.

Chairman,