

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Report

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| Committee: | Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education |
| Date: | 7 November 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 for Religious Education notes the 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 3 October 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)
Justine Ball
Chris May (SACRE Support Officers)
Rhiannon Love (SACRE Support Officers)
Alasdair Richardson (SACRE Support Officers)
Laura Blair (minute taker)

Apologies:
Cllr Elaine Still

Matters discussed:

Professional Education Opportunities:

6. In the summer term, both SACRE advisers led on RE at the Hampshire Schools' Climate Conference with Primary and Secondary children from Hampshire. There was a cross curricular focus on RE, Rights and Diversity, Art and Science at the conference and all children considered an RE focus on the environment and stewardship.
7. On the 10 June, a selection of Primary and Special teachers visited the Titchfield Al Mahdi Mosque and the visit was led by Sheikh Fazle from our Hampshire SACRE.
8. The Secondary steering group had a focus on Paganism as part of their CPD for RE and this was led by a guest speaker for the group.

SACRE Monitoring Visits:

9. The advisers reported that two primary visits had already been undertaken this year and two more planned for the second Autumn term. There were two to arrange in the Spring term. SACRE visits to two secondary schools to look at planning, delivery of teaching and RE assessment were in progress for the Spring term.

Reports from Primary and Secondary Ofsted Visits

10. The meeting was advised that a national report had been published about the number of Ofsted deep dives per subject and it could be seen that the numbers of deep dives for RE was very low – 5% for both primary and secondary schools. This made the subject one of the lowest for primary deep dives and the lowest for secondary schools ([Schools commentary: Deep dives in school inspections - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/674422/Schools_commentary_Deep_dives_in_school_inspections_-_GOV.UK.pdf)).
11. There were very few RE deep dives seen in the reports that had taken place. Where RE was mentioned, the comments were very positive with Inspectors highlighting the value of visits and visitors and the importance of the subject for promoting respect for different beliefs and traditions. Comments from some Ofsted reports also highlighted the links between RE and SMSC in schools, with a reference to RE helping children prepare for life in modern Britain.

Information gathered from other inspector/Adviser visits

12. 10 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. The visits were focused on planning a long term map for RE outlining the golden threads from the

syllabus and considering the range of religions and traditions being taught across the school.

Update on teacher vacancies and ITE provision

13. The group discussed the open letter published in the Telegraph in September 2023 which highlighted the crisis in recruiting specialist teachers of RS and called for the bursary for trainee teachers to be reinstated. This is referenced in the National and Local Matters report. The University of Winchester changed last year to offering training in Humanities rather than just RE alone and they commented upon how this had ensured that the course remained viable. It was mentioned that the situation nationally remains as worrying as last academic year and has not changed. This is still an area of real concern to the group.

Preliminary GCSE Results and Information

14. A secondary HIAS survey has been sent out to schools asking for further information on the GCSE results and the Secondary Adviser is waiting for data to return.
15. GCSE entries nationally have gone up 30% from 2010, but short course have gone down by 92%. When compared to the other Humanities subjects, the number of entries for RS are relatively similar but whereas the trend for RS is stable, the trend for History and Geography is upwards.
16. For GCSE, Hampshire has 15.9% of students opting for GCSE RS, which is low compared to the national figure of 25.7%. The percentage of students gaining a grade 4-9 is at 72.9%, which is slightly above the national average of 72.2%. For A-Level, the picture for uptake is worse and perhaps reflects the low GCSE uptake. The reports suggest a continuing trend of lower uptake noted in GCSE data analysis last year and is of concern.

REQUIRED CORPORATE AND LEGAL INFORMATION:

Links to the Strategic Plan

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| 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.