

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Report

Committee/Panel:	Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE)
Date:	3 March 2020
Title:	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 recent activities of the SACRE Monitoring Group, including the meeting that took place on 21 January 2020

Recommendation(s)

2. That SACRE thanks the Monitoring Group for their report,
3. That SACRE notes the withdrawal survey and recommends that the survey is conducted annually to monitor withdrawal from RE and collective worship.

Executive Summary

4. This report seeks to inform SACRE of significant matters discussed in the recent Monitoring Group meeting and highlight key issues regarding religious education in Hampshire.

Contextual information

5. Attendees at this meeting: Chris Hughes (Chair), Cllr Roy Perry, Cllr Anna McNair-Scott, Rob Sanders, Justine Ball, Patricia Hannam
6. In order to monitor the effectiveness of Living Difference III, SACRE Monitoring Group discussed the following issues:

7. **Hampshire 2019 RS GCSE results.** 2019 GCSE RS (unverified data) reached the local authority in December. Concern was expressed in the monitoring meeting regarding the GCSE data arriving so late (for all subjects) from the DfE. This restricts the Council's ability to analyse it and make action plans effectively, in a timely manner to make a difference for subsequent years.
8. This is the second year of the new RS GCSE, which has the grading system: 9-1, where 9 represented the highest grade. Percent of 7-9 grades nationally, in terms of numbers, are intended to be in similar proportion to the old A* and A grades and 4-9 more or less similar in proportion as formerly A*-C.
9. The number of entries for the RS GCSE in Hampshire stabilised at around just above 28% of the cohort, which was similar to 2018 entry numbers. It is, however, still below the national figure of 30% of the cohort.
10. The monitoring group noted that fewer schools now enter the full cohort for the GCSE Full Course.
11. Gender: In some schools a large gender gap was noted. The widening gender gap was noted nationally. Three-year data following 2020 examinational analysis will reveal whether this is a trend.
12. FSM6: Young people in this group do less well in Hampshire than nationally. This is a recognised concern across other subjects and is a focus for HIAS. However, several Hampshire schools were noted as ensuring young people in this group do achieve well in RE and two LA schools, where the full cohort is entered, have received congratulatory letters in light of this.
13. Other congratulatory letters have been sent to schools achieving well generally in RS GCSE in 2019. As usual these letters acknowledge the several ways in which schools teach RS GCSE. Some schools teaching to the full cohort, some schools teach to larger numbers of 'option' groups and other schools teach RS GCSE to just one group of students.
14. **Professional development:** SACRE-funded *hard to reach* primary and secondary courses have been successfully initiated to ensure more teachers are able to access high quality professional education opportunities with regard to the Locally Agreed Syllabus. Two cross-phase courses on *RE and the 2019 Ofsted framework* have run to ensure teachers and senior leaders are prepared to give account to Ofsted for RE.
15. Primary RE network meetings have continued to attract good attendance, however secondary RE network meetings have been slower to recruit. There continues to be good uptake on the LA run courses regarding Living

Difference III and the resource for teaching Christianity in Church Schools: Understanding Christianity.

16. Review of the Locally Agreed Syllabus: Living Difference III

Preliminary surveys to analyse the provision for RE across Hampshire to discover the extent to which the agreed syllabus is used effectively have been communicated to primary and secondary schools via school communication and are being analysed alongside uptake on courses. An initial meeting of teachers, advisers and academics has taken place to begin to identify the areas of theory in relation to education and religion that need re-examination in the revised syllabus.

17. SACRE monitoring visits – primary

Six monitoring visits had taken place and were discussed during the meeting. The reports are now being put into the general school improvement system, allowing other HIAS staff to see RE as part of the whole picture of a school.

Typical action points after these visits included:

- ensuring school websites include all the necessary information on RE
- assessment and progression in RE using age-related expectations
- increasing children's vocabulary.

18. Ofsted reports – primary

In the period between monitoring group meetings 45 Ofsted inspections of Hampshire primary schools had taken place; however, very few mentioned RE, SMSC and / or British values. One had had a 'deep dive' in RE as part of the inspection's consideration of the broad balanced curriculum. In this case RE had received a positive comment. One other school had one comment on RE/British values; in another SMSC was identified as not being well developed. This was disappointing since many in the RE world nationally had hoped Ofsted would mention RE more often and that the new Ofsted framework for school inspections, with their interest more on the whole school curriculum would be picking up RE more often. However, the Ofsted published reports are shorter than before.

19. Ofsted reports – secondary

During this period very few secondary Ofsted inspection visits have taken place. None mentioned RE, even in schools where we know RE is weak.

20. Information from other inspection/advisory visits

In the primary phase of education there is a renewed interest in the foundation subjects and RE, meaning there has been a rise in interest for in-school support. Most of these visits have been to look at assessment and progression, using age-related expectations, rather than curriculum development alone.

In the secondary phase, where the head teacher already appreciates the contribution of RE to the whole school curriculum there has continued to be interest in bringing in support for RE.

21. Withdrawal Survey

The results of the latest withdrawal survey undertaken at the end of the Autumn term 2019 were discussed and showed very low figures again for withdrawal from all of or parts of RE (below 0.15% of children) and from all of or parts of collective worship (below 0.2% of children). There was a very slight increase in the numbers withdrawn from all of taught RE and decreases in the numbers withdrawn in other categories compared to 2018. The majority of withdrawals were from Jehovah's Witness and Plymouth Brethren families. The survey will be carried out annually to continue to monitor these figures.

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

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:

- (a) SACRE's core business is to ensure high quality religious education in Hampshire which, it is intended, will make a positive difference to the way young people 'think speak and act in the world' (See purpose statement of Living Difference III 2016, the agreed syllabus for religious education in Hampshire).