

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education

21 November 2022 – At a hybrid meeting of the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education held at 10.30 am at County Hall, Chichester PO19 1RQ and via Microsoft Teams.

Virtual participants are indicated with an asterisk below.

Committee A

Mrs Bell – Jewish
Mr Edmondson – Humanist Society
*Mrs Flood – Roman Catholic
Mrs Ghundale - Sikh
Mrs Hock - Quaker
Mrs Jones – Baha'i
Rev Pitkeathly – Free Churches
Mr Soni - Hindu
Major Warner – Salvation Army

Committee B

Rev Higgins – Church of England
Mr Simpson – Church of England

Committee C

*Ms Barker – Teacher Representative
Mr Cornford – NASUWT, The Teachers' Union
Ms Elphick – Teacher Representative (Special)
Rev Millwood – Teacher Representative (Secondary)

Committee D

Cllr Ali – Local Education Authority
Cllr Burgess - Local Education Authority
Cllr Burrett (Chairman) - Local Education Authority
Cllr N Jupp - Local Education Authority
Cllr Lord - Local Education Authority
Cllr Nagel - Local Education Authority
Cllr Pendleton - Local Education Authority

Apologies for Absence:

Mr Sheldon (Baptist Union), Mr Syed (Muslim), Rev Higgin-Botham (United Reformed Church), Mrs Black (Church of England), Mrs Smith – Vice Chairman (Church of England).

Absent:

Rev Carn (Methodist)

Part I

14. Chairman's Welcome and Introductions

- 14.1 The Chairman welcomed all members of SACRE to the hybrid meeting being held in the Council Chamber and online.
- 14.2 The Chairman informed the Council that Item 12 would be deferred to a future meeting at Dr Hemming's request.

15. Membership Updates

- 15.1 Members of the Council noted that Cllr Quinn and Mr Bird have stood down from Committee D and Committee C respectively.

16. Members' Interests

- 16.1 Cllr Lord declared an interest in relation to Item 8 due to her children being pupils at Downlands Community School in Hassocks.

17. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

- 17.1 In respect of the action under 4.3, Mrs Hammond reported that a meeting with Ms Tulloch has yet to be arranged.
- 17.2 In respect of the action under 4.4, Mrs Hammond confirmed that she would be engaging the West Sussex Youth Cabinet once the self-evaluation form and development plan had been completed.
- 17.3 Resolved – that the minutes of the meeting held on 20 June 2022 be approved as a correct record and that they be signed by the Chairman.

18. Inclusive Assemblies and Collective Worship

- 18.1 Mr Wagstaff informed the Council that the Item 11 report should not be discussed as planned, but noted instead, following advice from the County Council's Director of Law and Assurance. It was explained that SACRE does not have a remit to make local arrangements and deviate from national guidance (Religious Education and Collective Worship, Circular 1/94) in relation to collective worship. The role of SACRE is to provide advice and guidance to schools on collective worship and to consider any requests from schools who wish to opt out. The matter was therefore determined to fall outside the terms of reference of SACRE and therefore the report would not be opened to discussion.
- 18.2 Mr Wagstaff also advised members that the report's supporting documents were intended to be proposed guidance, supplied by the

report author, and should not have included West Sussex County Council branding due to not being agreed policy. He added that County Council branding will be removed from the report and asked Mr Edmondson to remove all documents from published websites which reference WSCC.

- 18.3 Mr Wagstaff welcomed a member's proposal that SACRE should provide schools with the option to feed back on the delivery of collective worship and clearly communicate the flexibilities around this. Mr Wagstaff suggested that the Council could include this as part of the annual survey to schools. Schools would be approached as part of the development plan and syllabus review and therefore collective worship could form part of this.

Action: Mrs Hammond to lead on drafting the survey.

- 18.4 Members commented that there is room for improvement to support and resource the provision of collective worship in schools. It was also mentioned that collective worship had not been raised as an issue by union representatives.

- 18.5 Mr Edmondson felt that collective worship is within SACRE's remit given its inclusion within the draft development plan and therefore his report should have been opened to member discussion.

- 18.6 Resolved – the Council noted the report.

19. Agreed Syllabus Update

- 19.1 Mrs Hammond reported a low response rate from the survey issued regarding a review of school websites (10 respondents). The findings included the following:

- Statements of intent included on some sites but not consistent across the board.
- Unsure who is responsible for updating primary schools' sites
- Lack of information about faith schools.
- Faith reports are published on Church of England and Roman Catholic schools' websites.
- Unclear about the delivery of curriculum entitlement.
- Light on information about collective worship.

- 19.2 Mrs Hammond invited members to provide feedback on school websites as part of the discussions on the draft West Sussex SACRE development plan during the working lunch.

- 19.3 Mrs Hammond reported that 12 teachers attended a Judaism training session at the synagogue in Brighton, facilitated by Mrs Bell, and it received positive feedback. Members welcomed this introduction of training sessions for teachers in specific faiths as it enabled them to gain knowledge that they can pass on to young people. More teachers should be encouraged to attend training sessions in all faith areas.

- 19.4 Members' comments included an opinion that school children should be encouraged to receive a world view of all aspects of religious

education in addition to teachers. Mrs Hammond confirmed that the draft development plan addresses this matter and can therefore develop proposals to put to the local authority on this.

- 19.5 It was suggested that a statement of intent is drafted by SACRE for publication on schools' websites, recognising the pressures on schools and that SACRE is able to assist with this.

Action: Mr Wagstaff to take the lead on this with his Education and Skills Team.

- 19.6 Members' comments concluded that it was important to understand where knowledge gaps were so that details and training could be targeted to those areas. Teachers' needs and subject knowledge need to be supported to enable children to have the knowledge to make informed choices.

20. Results in Public Examinations

- 20.1 The Council considered unvalidated data on Religious Education exam results for West Sussex this year.

21. Update from Assistant Director of Education and Skills

- 21.1 Mr Wagstaff reported that WSCC is currently carrying out a major recruitment drive for roles at teacher, teaching assistant and learning support assistant level, in addition to specialist teachers.
- 21.2 Mr Wagstaff said that there was a focus on achievement and a broad curriculum offer for the most vulnerable children to ensure they are not disadvantaged.
- 21.3 Mr Wagstaff reflected on the work of SACRE this year and emphasised his team's willingness to continue working together and to take forward any issues raised by SACRE.
- 21.4 SACRE noted the update.

22. SACRE Annual Report

- 22.1 Mrs Hammond reiterated that the draft development plan required members' contribution through their working groups and reminded members of their group responsibilities.
- 22.2 Members' attention was drawn to the additional papers provided, which included two NASACRE presentations on collective worship and effective SACREs.

- 22.3 Mrs Hammond informed the Council that the deadline to submit SACRE's annual report was at the end of December and she requested each working group to email her detailed feedback following the meeting.
- 22.4 The meeting was adjourned for the working lunch at 11.50am.
- 22.5 The meeting re-convened at 1.00pm.
- 22.6 Several members expressed their desire for induction sessions to be provided for the benefit of new members of SACRE.
Action: Mrs Hammond agreed to deliver the induction sessions.
- 22.7 A summary of the brief feedback offered by the leads for each working group were as follows:

1. Management of the SACRE and partnership with the LA and other key stakeholders

- The importance of funding for teacher training and development.
- SACRE members required training on their roles and responsibilities (this was identified in the development plan).

2. Standards and quality of provision of Religious Education

- Good-quality learning and teaching.
- Links with academies requiring improvement, and consideration of having an academy rep on SACRE.
- Mrs Hammond included the consideration to appoint a SACRE representative from academies in the draft development plan.
- Recognise the budget, time and resources constraints on schools and that this can impact on how schools interact with SACRE.

3. The effectiveness of the locally Agreed Syllabus

- The Agreed Syllabus is good and detailed with regards to theory.
- A lot of work is required in terms of supporting non-qualified teachers.

4. Collective Worship

- SACRE could be more engaged with schools and suggested that SACRE members should visit schools to gain a better understanding of their provision.

5. Contribution of SACRE to promoting cohesion across the community

- SACRE's membership is a work in progress but has a broad membership that represents the community.
- It was important to be aware of local diversities and understand what community cohesion means. It was suggested that a video to explain community cohesion and where to go for support on

different faiths could be explored. A contact list for different faith groups was also suggested.

- It was important that SACRE's work was for schools and to help show the value of SACRE for teachers and therefore make them more able to engage with SACRE.
- Suggested that Mrs Smith looks to arrange the youth conference.

22.8 Mrs Hammond asked for members' support to finalise the development plan and invited members to consider volunteering to form a Development Working Group to take this forward. SACRE highlighted the value of working in informal groups and agreed to explore using more breakout sessions at future meetings.

22.9 The Chairman suggested that future meetings of SACRE take place in Committee Room 3 at County Hall, Chichester.

23. Dates of Future Meetings

23.1 It was agreed for Mrs Hammond to deliver an induction session to members explaining their role and responsibilities at the next meeting of the Council.

23.2 SACRE noted that the next meeting would be held on 27 February 2023 at County Hall, Chichester, with the hybrid option for joining being available to those who required it.

The meeting ended at 1.44 pm

Chairman