

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE)



DRAFT MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 1 October 2018

Present:

GROUP A

Christian Denominations

The Baptists

Chris Davis

The Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches

Ruth Gill

Other Religions

Baha'i

Elizabeth Jenkerson (Vice Chair)

Muslim

Anas Al-Korj

GROUP B

Diocesan Education Team

Richard J. Wharton

GROUP C

National Union of Teachers (NUT)

Jackie Meering (Chair)

GROUP D

Southampton City Council (Harefield ward)

Councillor Valerie Laurent

OTHERS (Non-voting)

Co-opted Members:

South Hampshire Humanists

Mary Wallbank

ASC Group (2016 – 2017):

Bitterne Park Secondary School

Suzanne Underwood

In attendance:

Professional Cross Phase Adviser – Southampton City Council

Alison Philpott

Meeting Support Officers:

Dyfan Rowlands

Stephanie Wickenkamp

1) **WELCOME, APOLOGIES AND CHANGES OF MEMBERSHIP**

The Chair welcomed delegates to the first meeting of the academic year and apologies were noted from:

Group A (Other)	David Vane	Buddhist
Group B	Rev Duncan Jennings Allan King Sam Jordan	The Church of England The Church of England The Church of England
Group D	Councillor James Baillie Kate Martin	Sholing Ward Group D Substitute

JM welcomed RG to the committee as a new, voting SACRE member and noted Councillor Kataria as a new member of Group D.

David Vane has officially stood down and JM sent thanks for all his work towards SACRE and hopes to be able to retain links for Southampton Faiths.

SR and Dyfan Rowlands were also welcomed to the meeting.

The meeting was confirmed as being quorate.

2) **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The Chair asked members to complete the Declaration of Interests forms provided and to return them to the next meeting.

There were no changes to declarations of interest when asked by the Chair.

3) **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING 4 JUNE 2018 AND MATTERS ARISING**

MW stated she had sent apologies for the previous meeting. EJ confirmed she had provided a named DfE representative and requested the minutes were amended to reflect.

The Chair reviewed the minutes which were agreed as a true record.

Actions: Meeting Support to amend the minutes with MW's apologies.

Meeting Support to amend EJ's action on page 4 from,
"NASACRE representative", to "DfE representative".

Matters Arising:

AP confirmed a hardcopy of the Collective Worship document had been circulated to Southampton schools. Additional hardcopies were distributed on 28/09 by AP. Digital copies are available via the SACRE website.

The SACRE website is still under construction. AP stated alongside a public SACRE page on the Young Southampton website, a secure section (requires a login) will also be made available for schools. A meeting has been scheduled to address what information should remain public and what should be made secure.

4) FORTHCOMING EVENTS TO NOTE

Councillor Laurent attended an event last year which involved Year 8 pupils spending 10 minutes with a representative of each faith group and asking them various questions. She concluded this was a very worthwhile activity, which was echoed by AA-K and CD who were also in attendance as faith group representatives. Pupils learned more about people's jobs and roles within different faith groups, and were able to broaden their perspectives.

AP reminded members this year's event is scheduled for 7th November at Richard Taunton College.

Actions: AP requested representatives for the next meeting are to be communicated outside of the meeting.

5) FEEDBACK ON ACCORD AWARD

AP raised SACRE had informed schools last year of the opportunity to be able to apply for the ACCORD Award. Feedback from the summer meeting relayed that Shirley Junior School was placed in the top 10 schools in the country. However, it was recently confirmed Fairisle Junior School had received an award for being the second best in the country. Fairisle Junior School reported they have found the process to be very worthwhile. SACRE, having not promoted schools doing this before, were grateful for the positive response concerning Southampton Schools' involvement in the process.

AP believed that Shirley Junior School carried out the activities around their Religious Education classes as part of a 'Cultural Week', which focussed on setting up activities around different cultures and faiths so that children could learn about their community. AP suggested inviting Fairisle Junior School's RE Lead to a future SACRE meeting to explain the content provided, as it would be beneficial to discover what activities and processes they undertook.

AA-K stated schools who had taken part in the awards should be thanked for their involvement and success. AP agreed, and stated Shirley Junior School had attended a SACRE meeting to present their practices of promoting cultural and faith learning. AA-K suggested it might be beneficial for the school to share their methods with other education establishments in order for these good practices to be diffused. AP agreed, however noted it would be best to begin discussions within SACRE initially.

Actions: AP to invite Fairisle Junior School's RE Lead to attend a future SACRE meeting.

6) DISCUSSION ON CORE REPORT

AP stated there are currently no plans to change the practice for monitoring schools and confirmed syllabus reviews would need follow the same processes. Although not a statutory requirement, MW stated it is important for SACRE to be aware of the content of the CORE report and take it into account when decision making is necessary.

AP clarified all pupils must study RE up until KS4; this has been discussed with multiple Secondary Schools during monitoring visits, with particular reference to non-examined groups.

EJ highlighted the report referred to the interests within independent schools. AP responded not all independent schools receive a formal invitation to have a monitoring visit, as opposed to Faith, Academies and Free Schools.

There was discussion on the explanation of World Views as described in the CORE report.

EJ stated a letter has been sent from NASACRE in response to the CORE report expressing thoughts towards the report's recommendations. It was confirmed this would be circulated with the minutes.

Actions: NASACRE letter to be circulated alongside the minutes of this meeting.

7) SACRE CONSTITUTION REVIEW

EJ raised concerns on the large size of this month's report pack and requested future warning. Meeting Support noted this.

AP stated the constitution has been in place for 4 years, however MW had raised a query as to why, as an active member, she cannot vote within SACRE. MW referenced the Welsh government's recently issued advice document, and posed to members what their thoughts would be on reviewing the current constitution, based off the referred document.

MW stated she wants to apply for full membership and noted recent changes to the law. AP responded the constitution would have to be addressed and explained this would be a decision for the Council to undertake, rather than SACRE's decision. MW suggested amending the constitution to reflect the introduction of the Humanists being lawful; the heading in Group A would need to be altered to accommodate this, considering the religions and world views expression.

SR provided an explanation around SACRE regulations and additional legal advice:

- The Welsh case law which has been referred to is not applicable in England. Wales has a completely different legal system to England as a devolved government, along with Scotland. SR acknowledged this membership issue as a widely recognised conflict with other legislation.
- Members of SACRE are bound by Regulations; only religious groups can be a part of Group A according to said Regulations. Other groups outside of Group A can be a part of SACRE, but as acting in co-opted member status.

- SACRE must comply with current legislation, unless any modification to the status of co-opted members occurs therein.
- Arguably, a risk based approach could be taken by SACRE members to include the Humanist Organisation in Group A; all voting members of Group A would need to collectively agree. The risk is that SACRE would be open to challenge (via decision making through democratic service processes) from any faith group represented within Group A.
- SR advised SACRE it would be unlawful if incorporating Humanists within Group A and reiterated the potential legal problems with a risk based approach.

JM queried the 5 vacancies within Group A. SR responded that these vacancies would need to be filled for the motion to be valid.

MW asked how the constitution would be changed if an agreement was reached. SR responded, Council's Cabinet would make the decision to agree the addition of the Humanists amendment to the constitution if they were satisfied it was lawful and appropriate.

EJ discussed the process another SACRE took to address this issue. Conclusively, legal advice dictated this change could not be realistically achieved.

SR stated she would likely be the legal advisor to Cabinet and would be required to provide a legal paragraph (outlining the risk of challenge to SACRE and consequently the risk of legal challenge to the Council) to the report. Additionally, SACRE are not legally entitled to make a decision on the members of Group A; this is the Council's responsibility and if decisions were challenged in any way, this could render all of SACRE's decisions unlawful.

MW raised English legislation does not explicitly block membership of the Humanists into Group A. SR responded that it does – the Regulations are clear in this regard and could not be overcome by 'guidance' issued in another jurisdiction.

SR clarified the membership of SACRE is set out in Secondary Legislation; it is unlikely the DfE will look to make any changes in the near future. There was discussion regarding SACREs writing to the DfE to request legislation changes, which SR highlighted as a possibility.

In response to JM's query on NASACRE's perspective, EJ confirmed this issue has been raised however no pressure has been applied for multiple reasons. This included, time, energy and also potential risks in NASACRE being discredited if in support or involved. EJ commented there are multiple SACREs which are co-opted and stated it is unlikely for a change in legislation to allow a fifth Group to be introduced.

EJ posed a question to SR concerning outside religious groups; should a religious group which does not have a SACRE representative wish to be considered for SACRE (noting the modified constitution) and choose to oppose the inclusion of the Humanists, what would be the legal advice concerning this. SR answered the same risk would apply; the outside group would have as much right to challenge this inclusion as any existing member of SACRE.

MW thanked SR for her attendance and for providing legal background to her request.

Next steps:

SR advised SACRE members seek advice on including the Humanists within Group A; a separate meeting must be held with Group A members to ascertain views and seek agreement. AP reaffirmed having a Humanist member as opposed to a co-opted member would not differ SACRE's working processes. SR clarified for EJ, the Council's Constitution states the Council are to appoint a SACRE which abides by the legislation. CD requested Group B are invited to the Group A meeting. AP noted Group A would only be able to vote on the matter. It was agreed it would be unfair to ask present members of Group A whether they were against the issue at hand.

SR recommended either a voting SACRE member proposes accepting the constitution as it stands, or proposes with the recommendation of amending Group A. EJ queried whether SACRE would be without a constitution if voting on the recommendation to amend. SR responded no, the recommendation of the report would go to Council and whilst awaiting a decision to adjust the constitution, the current Constitution would remain in place.

EJ posed the question of whether MW would be willing to serve on Group A under the heading of a religion; this needs to be agreed prior to consulting all of Group A. MW responded she would need to consult with her group. JM queried whether MW's organisation was challenging the DfE on this issue. MW confirmed this and added an education campaign group is also challenging this matter. Discussion on applying pressure continued and there was further discussion regarding Southampton SACRE vacancies. SR clarified a new Group cannot be added.

JM proposed to adopt the Constitution with the recommendation of beginning processes to include the Humanists within Group A. Councillor Laurent seconded this.

Agreed: 6
Objections: 0
Abstentions: 0

JM proposed a separate meeting with Group A members to retrieve consensus on including the Humanists within Group A.

Agreed: All
Objections: 0
Abstentions: 0

AA-K requested information relating to the issue at hand be sent ahead of the Group A meeting. EJ suggested inviting SR to attend the Group A meeting. SR noted if she was able to attend it would be as an observer; she could not provide legal advice to each religion, however could provide legal advice on behalf of the Council. Members thanked SR for her assistance.

Actions: MW to liaise with her organisation regarding Humanists being included under a Religious title in Group A. MW to feedback to AP.

Following completion of the above, AP to schedule a meeting with Group A to address the Humanists inclusion, inviting SR and Group B members as observers.

AP to provide information ahead of the Group A meeting.

AP and attendees of Group A meeting to feedback to a future SACRE meeting.

8) **ACTION PLANNING FOR SEPTEMBER 2018 – JULY 2019**

Plan for Film Project 2018-19

AP raised the focus for the film project centred on the use of prejudicial language. Work has been undertaken by AP, the Police Crime and Commissioners Unit and AP's counterpart from Portsmouth City Council, concerning incidents of prejudicial language within schools. The language is principally relating to faiths, however AP added this also encompasses a lot of non-faith based language. There has been a 21% rise in the use of prejudicial language (based on national statistics from police and local authority reports from last year). EJ queried whether this was due to increased incidents or improved reporting. AP answered that she was unsure. However, a proposal has been moved forward on how SACRE are able to share information with schools if a certain offending pupil crossed boundaries in other schools they might attend. The provision of a toolkit has been addressed for some schools, lasting over a 12-18 month period, with AP advising that the result of this will not be visible for some time.

The AERA Group are to be consulted regarding possible support on broader Film Project plans, along with the Young People's Forum, who already have school representatives across Hampshire. AP stated she would be keen to reflect on these young people's views and glean information from their experiences as to what kind of prejudicial language they might be hearing on a daily basis. This year's film focuses on identifying methods to try and address this issue, seeking to offer guidance to students on how to cope with exposure to this language and reporting.

JM stated that principally, primary schools had been involved for the last three years, however due to long-term sickness a secondary school was not involved as intended. JM raised this time secondary schools should be brought together in order to discuss this matter further; another meeting is required in order for desires and outcomes to be established.

Events – with Secondary RE network

AP raised given the successful event last year for Year 8 classes, introducing the same to Year 9 classes would build on the number of students being exposed to this kind of cultural learning. Sam Jordan had confirmed implementation of the 6 Chair Challenge over the RE network. However, there was uncertainty as to how far this has progressed. AP requested SU to research and feedback to members at the next SACRE meeting. SU agreed, noting the next network meeting takes place after the next SACRE meeting.

All SACRE members offered SACRE member training

AP noted previous new members have received training from Pat Wood; this has been continued and an opportunity for refresher training is also available. Councillor Laurent put herself forward and requested a date be circulated.

Review and re-issue audit of RE/Collective Worship

AP advised the review and re-issue audit is being refreshed in terms of the syllabus change and agreed to circulate a draft audit to members.

Actions: SU to research and feedback on Secondary School responses to Year 9 event.

AP to circulate new member training and refresher training dates to SACRE members.

AP to circulate a draft Review and Re-issue Audit to members.

8i Monitoring Group update

September 2018

To date the following proportions of schools have received a SACRE monitoring visit:

40% of Primary schools

25% of Special schools/ Alternative provision academy/ PRU

50% of Secondary schools

Total: 40%

By the end of July 2019 the aim is to reach:

53% Primaries

58% Secondary Schools

38% of Special schools/ Alternative provision academy/ PRU

Total: 54%

AP explained to members that SACRE is continuing to build on their knowledge of schools with a particular focus on RE and worship as part of statutory duties. This would include discussions with leaders, teachers and pupils, and to collect observations on collective worship. The advice document was formulated based on this, as it became apparent that schools needed guidance on how to approach monitoring visits. AP stated children at schools are spoken to first about learning, followed by RE lesson observations. Schools are initially written to regarding monitoring visits, with any head teacher requests being sent out as a priority. AP commented on the prospect of a random cycle to be adopted in future. AP stated monitoring visits have improved the focus on RE and recommended follow up visits.

AP underlined all schools which have received a monitoring visit follow the locally agreed syllabus, with one exception. The exception is allowed due to the status of a particular academic school; whilst academies are obliged to follow a syllabus, it does not require to be the locally agreed one. AP disclosed the intended cycle of 5 years for the monitoring visits to be completed has increased to 6 years, in order that all schools are able to be visited. SACRE protocol dictates that schools are able to defer a year for a monitoring visit, however affirmed that all schools, bar one exceptional circumstance, who have opted to do so have received a visit within that period. AP concluded the system is working well in principle, adding also that this is a voluntary process.

JM declared that two people are required in order for a broader perspective to be added to the monitoring group. She posed to the room that if anyone would like to join this group, they should contact her directly, with a voluntary DBS check to be completed upon selection.

9) DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Date: **Monday 12 November 2018**

Time: **4:00pm – 6:00pm**

Venue: **Committee Room 2, Ground Floor, Civic Centre, SO14 7LY**