

# SACRE ANNUAL REPORT

Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education  
 Annual Report 2019/20

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## **CHAIR'S INTRODUCTION**

The year 2019-2020 has been perhaps one of the most unusual years Portsmouth SACRE has experienced. As the year began in the autumn of 2019, SACRE was anticipating the commencing the review of its Agreed Syllabus, Living Difference III. This syllabus is shared with neighbouring authorities, Isle of Wight, Southampton and Hampshire. However the rapidly changing situation with regard to Covid-19 in March 2020, meant that the SACRE and the Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC) planned for March could not take place. Although we were able to hold the Agreed Syllabus Conference in June SACRE was not able to meet in the summer.

Nevertheless SACRE has managed to continue with maintaining its responsibilities to monitor the effectiveness of its agreed syllabus. This is thanks to on-going contact with its professional adviser Patricia Hannam as well as Justine Ball, who as primary inspector/adviser in Hampshire has maintained contact with primary schools where possible. Continued monitoring reveals that despite the ongoing academisation of schools in Portsmouth, the syllabus is well used and respected as giving clear guidance to teachers about how to teach high quality RE.

We are especially grateful for the continued provision of excellent clerking support from within the Authority and valued working with Joanne Wildsmith during this period.

We have participated in regional and national RE meetings and events, including NASACRE AGM the South Central SACRE Hub and continue to follow with interest developments following the publishing of the report from the Commission on RE.

SACRE seeks to ensure all children in Portsmouth have access to high quality and challenging Religious Education. In the coming year we are looking forward to strengthening our partnership with Hampshire, Southampton, and the Isle of Wight as we review our agreed syllabus.

I offer my sincere thanks to members of Portsmouth SACRE and all others who work so hard to support RE in Portsmouth.

Cllr Suzy Horton  
Chair, Portsmouth SACRE

## **SECTION 1: INFORMATION ABOUT SACRE**

### **1.1 Duty to establish a SACRE**

Since the Education Reform Act of 1988, all Local Education Authorities (LAs) have been required by law to constitute a Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) within their local area.<sup>1</sup>

### **1.2 What does a SACRE do?**

SACRE is a unique body; it is set up by the LA but is independent of it, with the role to give advice to that LA. The law states that Religious Education must be taught in all maintained schools<sup>2</sup> and a SACRE's role is to advise what needs to be done to improve religious education (RE) and collective worship for schools in its area.

The main purpose of the annual report is to hold the LA to account, by informing the Secretary of State and key partners what advice SACRE gave the LA during the year and how the LA responded to that advice. This includes advice on Religious Education and Collective Worship in those schools for which the LA has responsibility.

### **1.3 Composition of SACRE**

There are four groups or committees, as below:

- A: The Christian denominations and other religious denominations, reflecting the principal religious traditions of the area.
- B: The Church of England
- C: Teacher and head teacher associations
- D: The Local Authority

The Local Authority has determined that the SACRE should comprise of:

- Representatives of Christian denominations and other religions and their denominations reflecting the principal religious traditions of the area.
- Four representatives of the Church of England.
- Six representatives of teachers' associations.
- Four elected members.

Other members may be co-opted from time to time as appropriate for all or part meetings

### **1.4 Membership of SACRE**

The names of the SACRE members and the religious denominations for Group A can be found at Appendix A.

### **1.5 SACRE Functions**

- To advise the LA on collective worship and the Religious Education to be given in accordance with the agreed syllabus including methods of teaching, advice on materials and the provision of training for teachers
- To consider whether to recommend to the LA that its current agreed syllabus should be reviewed by convening an Agreed Syllabus Conference.
- To consider whether the requirement that religious worship in a county school should be 'broadly Christian in nature' should be varied (determinations).

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<sup>1</sup> Education Act 1996 Section 390:1

<sup>2</sup> School and Standards Framework Act 1998 Section 69

- To report to the LA and the Department for Education (DfE) on its activities on an annual basis.

## 1.6 Meetings and attendance

SACRE met on three occasions during the academic year 2018-19:

20 November 2019

20 March 2020 (meeting cancelled due to Covid-19).

6 July 2020

Minutes of all SACRE meetings and the current membership are available from the Portsmouth City Council website:

<http://democracy.portsmouth.gov.uk/mgCommitteeDetails.aspx?ID=174>

SACRE is supported by a clerk from the Councils' Democratic Services, as well as a professional adviser Patricia Hannam.

SACRE is currently seeking representatives from the following local communities: Roman Catholic, Jewish Sikh, Humanist & Buddhist.

The percentages attendance 2019/2020 per group is as follows:

NB there are vacancies being carried in Group A for Sikhism, Humanist, Buddhism, Roman Catholic & Judaism

Key

Group A = Religious/Faith Groups

Group B = Church of England

Group C = Teachers

Group D = Local authority appointed, including councillors

Autumn (at Medina Primary School)

Group A = 78% 7/9

Group B = 50% 2/4

Group C = 25% 2/8

Group D = 50% 2/4

Spring (Civic Offices) -18 March 2020 meeting **cancelled** due to Coronavirus restrictions after publication of papers

Summer - meeting did not take place due to Coronavirus restrictions\*

\*Whilst SACRE was cancelled an Agreed Syllabus Conference with SACRE members took place on 6<sup>th</sup> July 2020 with reduced membership as a virtual meeting with all 4 groups represented.

Summer – 6 July 2020 (ASC)

Group A - 22% 2/9

Group B - 67% 2/3

Group C - 38% 3/8

Group D - 25% 1/4

## 1.7 Circulation of Annual Report

A list of the organisations receiving this report can be found in Appendix D.

## **SECTION 2: SUMMARY OF SACRE'S WORK in 2019/20**

This has been an extraordinary year for Portsmouth SACRE with two of its three anticipated meetings cancelled due to Covid-19. Despite this, SACRE has continued to undertake its responsibilities especially with regard to monitoring the effectiveness of the Locally Agreed Syllabus: Living Difference III. In addition, the Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC) has met in July. The Agreed Syllabus is now under review, in a timely fashion, together with neighbouring authorities (Hampshire, Southampton and the Isle of Wight) who share the same syllabus. A joint SACRE meeting was held virtually in July 2020 as part of the review process.

### **2.1 Agreed Syllabus implementation**

- Following the reviewed and revised agreed syllabus *Living Difference III* being adopted by the Agreed Syllabus Conference in October 2016, SACRE together with the Local Authority continue to support the implementation of the Agreed Syllabus.

### **2.2 Meeting Training Needs**

- The duties on schools regarding religious education is raised regularly at head teachers' meetings. Academies are not obliged to follow the Agreed Syllabus, however, SACRE is keen for all schools in the Authority to use the syllabus to ensure consistency of educational experience for children across the Authority regardless of where they go to school. However, it is vital schools use Living Difference III with integrity. Primary network meetings have not been held in this year. Secondary RE Subject leaders have the opportunity to attend Secondary RE Networks as well as the annual conference offered in Hampshire, as Living Difference III is shared across the authorities.

### **2.3 Resourcing Living Difference III**

- Primary RE News on-line publication, produced by Hampshire Inspectors is available for Portsmouth schools to subscribe to. Teachers are also aware of the other published resources available to support the teaching of Living Difference III through the Hampshire RE Centre in Winchester.
- SACRE's artefact loan collection continues to be available to schools and is maintained by the Ethnic Minority Achievement Service (EMAS) and the Authority's despatch team deliver/collect boxes without charge.

### **2.4 Monitoring the effectiveness of the Agreed Syllabus**

- A representative group, comprised of at least one representative of each of the 4 SACRE groups, including the Chair and vice Chair has continued to meet at a suitable time before each full SACRE meeting. This is in order to monitor the effectiveness of the Agreed Syllabus. Through regular examination of Ofsted reports from Portsmouth schools, together with other data such as KS4 GCSE results, SACRE is able to take a systematic approach ensuring it has an overview of religious education across the authority.

### **2.5 Maintaining SACRE Effectiveness**

- SACRE has met twice times during this period. The spring 2020 meeting had to be cancelled due to Covid-19. The summer 2020 meeting, held immediately after the Portsmouth Agreed Syllabus Conference, was held virtually in July.
- SACRE seeks to ensure that all four groups are well represented at all meetings. Recruitment from some faith groups in Portsmouth has been difficult. A replacement for the longstanding Jewish representative who stood down earlier in 2019 has yet to be found.
- Teacher representatives from primary schools and secondary schools have attended SACRE during this period.
- Training was offered to SACRE members in September 2019 and ran in Winchester, bringing together SACRE members from the 4 local authorities who use Living Difference III locally.
- Reports have been regularly presented to SACRE to ensure that SACRE is well informed about local and national matters in relation to religious education.
- Where members have been able to attend local, regional or national events this has been facilitated.
- In this period the NASACRE AGM had to be postponed due to Covid-19.
- A pre SACRE meeting with the Chair or Vice Chair, SACRE Clerk and SACRE Adviser has taken place prior SACRE meetings during this period.

## **SECTION 3: STANDARDS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

### **3.1 Commentary on GCSE examination results in Religious Studies**

This report offers an overview and brief analysis of the 2019 GCSE data available regarding full course GCSE Religious Studies (RS) in Portsmouth.

#### **Background information**

- This is the second year of data from a new RS GCSE specification that first became available for examination in the summer of 2018.
- Grades are awarded in the form of 9 (highest) to 1 (lowest); grade 4 regarded as a 'standard pass' and grade 5 as a 'good pass'.
- The GCSE RS full course is intended to be taught over 2 years, sat at the end of year 11 and to be taught in 120 hours of teaching time.
- Schools which have the best results for GCSE RS are those which enable students to access the full amount of time recommended and taught by specialist teachers.
- RS GCSE tests not only knowledge but the capacity to *analyse* and *to use evidence and logical chains of reasoned argument to evaluate*. Teaching must enable students to do this as well as remember subject knowledge. RS GCSE success has a high demand in terms thinking as well as writing. Where young people are given the opportunity to analyse, evaluate and in other ways reason well at KS3 standards are higher at GCSE.

#### **GCSE Religious Studies examination results 2019: overall findings**

- In 2019, from LA maintained schools in Portsmouth out of a cohort of 1647, 300 young people were entered for GCSE RS full course. This compares to 2016 when out of a cohort in of 1729, 670 students sat full course GCSE and in 2017 when there

were 332 entries out of a cohort of 1633 and in 2018 out of cohort of 1687 345 young people were entered.

- 2019 therefore marked another small decline in the percent of the cohort being entered for GCSE. This is considerably lower as compared to the national where around 30% of the cohort sitting GCSE RS in England.
- A large reduction in the percentage of Portsmouth young people being entered for the full course RS GCSE was observed in 2017 as compared to 2016 and earlier years although there is some stability over the last 3 years.
- Achievement in this small cohort continues to be very good. Portsmouth 4+ GCSE result in 2019 was 78.8% (up from 76% 4+ in 2018 and 75% A\*-C in 2017). The 2019 result was well above the national for 2019 ( at 71.4).
- SACRE has therefore been pleased to note that despite the low percentage of young people undertaking full course RS GCSE in Portsmouth, achievement for those who do sit RS GCSE is strong compared to the national.
- There is a wide variation between schools hidden in that data. Although those who sit GCSE Full Course in Portsmouth overall in some schools achieve well, there is still concern about the number of young people who do not have the opportunity to study religious education at all at KS4. The professional adviser runs a secondary network meeting once each term in the Havant area to which Portsmouth schools are welcome to attend.
- One reason for not making the RS GCSE available in a school can be because there is not a suitably qualified teacher to lead the course, and funds are not available for such an appointment.
- SACRE continues to be concerned about how schools are ensuring all young people can access their entitlement to religious education (RE) during key stage 4.

### **3.3 Quality of Teaching and Leadership in Religious Education**

In addition to monitoring GCSE Full Course results, Portsmouth SACRE seeks to fulfil its duty to monitoring the effectiveness of the Agreed Syllabus in a number of additional ways.

Specific reporting about RE in Ofsted reports is extremely rare however for its November meeting Portsmouth SACRE Monitoring Group examined reports where RE had been noted for example in relation to the promotion of pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development (SMSC). In addition, reports have also revealed RE is being evidenced to support the way a school is preparing children for life in modern Britain. Although it is not possible to be certain that there is a definite link between these judgements and the quality of religious education, reports can give an indication that there is some provision. Since March 2020 there have been not further Ofsted reports to examine in relation to RE because of Covid-19 and Ofsted not visiting schools during the summer term in 2020

## **SECTION 4: COMPLAINTS ABOUT RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

SACRE has received no formal complaints about religious education in the past year.

## **SECTION 5: COLLECTIVE WORSHIP**

### **5.1 Monitoring Collective Worship**

Ofsted reports sometime mentioned collective worship in relation to evidencing that a school is promoting children's SMSC development and preparing children for life in modern Britain.

## **5.2 Complaints**

There have been no complaints about Collective Worship in schools.

## **5.3 Determinations**

No requests for determination have been submitted to SACRE and there are no current determinations for review.

# **SECTION 6: LINKS WITH OTHER BODIES**

## **6.1 Links with other Authorities and SACREs**

Portsmouth retains links with the Hampshire SACRE through members who are on both bodies. Portsmouth SACRE is also represented at the South Central SACRE Hub meetings in Winchester.

## **6.2 NASACRE**

Portsmouth SACRE is a member of NASACRE and NASACRE bulletins are regularly circulated to all SACRE members by the Clerk.

## **6.3 South Central RE/SACRE Hub**

Portsmouth SACRE members are invited to the South-Central Hub meetings during the period of this report. In the summer of 2020 the SACRE hub meeting was held virtually and this enabled more SACRE members to attend.

## **APPENDIX A - SACRE MEMBERS 2019/20**

**Group A Representatives** - One representative of each of the religions and other bodies listed in the constitution

**Baha'i** - Elizabeth Jenkerson  
**Baptist** - Geoff Wheeler  
**Evangelical** - Pastor Chris Thomas  
**Hinduism** – Akshat Mehta  
**Islam** - Sheikh Fazle Abbas Datto (from June 2018)  
**Methodist** - John Mills  
**Quakers** - Sarah Coote  
**United Reformed Church** - Christine McMillan

**Group B Representatives** - Church of England

Sue Bowen  
Revd Sam Duddles  
Jane Kelly

**Group C Representatives** - Six teachers representing the various key stages and an association recognised by the Authority for the purposes of consultation and negotiation.

**Kari Laing** Post-16 Representative (from April 2018 with Sarah Hanley Post 16 Rep until March 2018)  
**Sandra Gibb** Primary School Representatives  
**Aasha Small** Primary Representative  
**Gemma Self** Early Years Representative  
**Helen Reeder** Teacher Liaison Panel  
**Debbie Lucas** Secondary Rep from June 2019  
**Paula Withers** Secondary Rep  
**Ali Beechurst**, Primary School Rep

**Group D Representatives** - Four representatives of the Authority, at least two of whom shall be elected members of the Authority.

**Maria Cole** (appointed as of 19 June 2018 by Portsmouth City Council)  
**Taki Jaffer** (appointed as of 19 June 2018 by Portsmouth City Council)  
**Councillor Suzy Horton** (reappointed by Portsmouth City Council June 2018) (Vice Chair from July 2017) - Appointed Chair June 2019  
**Councillor Tom Coles** - (appointed by PCC June 2019)  
Councillor Ryan Brent (reappointed by Portsmouth City Council June 2018) (Chair from July 2017)

**Officers in Attendance:**

**Patricia Hannam** (HIAS), Professional Adviser (from Jan 2017)  
**Debbie Anderson**, PCC - Head of School Improvement

**Lisa Gallacher**, PCC - Democratic Services (clerk from August 2020)

## **APPENDIX B: LIST OF ORGANISATIONS RECEIVING THIS REPORT**

Copies will be sent electronically to the relevant bodies. This report will be available on the Local Authority and NASACRE websites for interested parties to download.

Director of Children's Services, Portsmouth City Council

Deputy Director of Deputy Director of Children's Services - Education, Portsmouth City Council

Cllr Suzy Horton, Cabinet Member for Education, Portsmouth City Council

The Department for Education (Central Government)

NASACRE (National Association of Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education)

Headteachers and Governing Bodies of all Portsmouth Schools

All members of SACRE

The Anglican Diocese of Portsmouth

The Catholic Diocese of Portsmouth