

MINUTES OF MEETING OF AGREED SYLLABUS CONFERENCE
30 October 2018
Alperton Community School

Start: 16:35

Attendees:

<p>GROUP A <i>(A committee of persons representing such Christian denominations and other religions and denominations of such religions as, in the opinion of the authority, will appropriately reflect the principal religious traditions in the area)</i></p>	<p>Basma ElShayyal (Chair, Sunni Islam) Manhar Mehta (Jainism) Farjad Farid (Bahá'í) Bhupinder Singh (Sikh) Sarah Lane – Cawte (Free Churches)</p>
<p>GROUP B <i>(A committee of persons representing the Church of England)</i></p>	<p>Laurence Hillel (Vice-Chair, Church of England) Ian Slade (Alperton Community School) Dawn Titus</p>
<p>GROUP C <i>(A committee of persons representing such associations representing teachers as, in the opinion of the authority, ought to be represented, having regard to the circumstances of the area)</i></p>	<p>Lea Murray (Barham Primary School) Florence Agbugba (St Marys CoE school) Helen Mooney</p>
<p>GROUP D <i>(A committee of persons representing the authority)</i></p>	<p>Cllr Neil Nerva Helen Tulloch John Frankis</p>

<p>In attendance:</p>	<p>Roger Butler – Adviser to SACRE Abraham Wilson (observer - Baha'i) Emily Barnes (observer-Jewish Museum) Nikoleta Nikolova (Brent Council – Governance Team)</p>
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<p>Apologies:</p>	<p>Gillian Crow Mark Newton Thamar Benett Malcolm Deboo Lesley Prior Rabab Alsafi Rupadevi Cllr Orleen Hylton Cllr Tariq Dar Graham Noyce Deva Samaroo (Hinduism)</p>
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1. Welcome and apologies:

- Apologies were noted as above
- The Chair welcomed everyone and thanked Alperton Community School for hosting the meeting.

2. Minutes of the last meeting:

- The minutes of the previous ASC meeting held on 5 July 2018 were approved as an accurate record.

3. Matters arising:

The Chair ran through the actions noted at the previous meeting and commented on the following:

- A Brent wide directory of time allocated to the study/teaching of religious education in schools as well as the syllabus content was still in progress, with input received from Roger Butler, Lesley Prior and Alan Hennes. The Chair noted that it was important to adopt a balanced view and look at the wider context of schools and consider factors which may prevent them from exercising certain duties and delivering the ASC.
- A member pointed out that a spelling mistake had been made on the ASC document published on the council website

4. Brent Schools Religious Education Curriculum Research

Discussions centered on the role and aim of the syllabus as well as concrete proposals for making progress on the revision of syllabus forward. Mr Butler reminded members that producing a syllabus was a statutory responsibility of each local authority and needed to be regularly revised. A point of clarification was also made that the role of the ASC was to develop a syllabus, not a scheme of work and as such it was important to focus on supporting teachers in its implementation rather than sidetrack by changing the entire RE curriculum. He continued to say that the curriculum should not be overcrowded and that any changes made must take into account differences and similarities to ensure that the syllabus is inclusive.

Mr Butler stated that religious policies of schools in Brent had been checked and categorized. Findings of the researched showed that 27 of the schools were without religious character, majority of which secondary and only 2 two were using the Agreed Syllabus. A suggestion was therefore made for the ASC to focus on the 27 schools without religious character as a priority.

While members noted that producing a syllabus was a time and resource heavy task, the overall view was that the current format of the syllabus was adequate enough with only minor changes required to certain sections. Members' attention was drawn to the growing pressure from schools on the ASC to a respond to the need for a change of the syllabus, present RE in a more comprehensive way, embedding it in day to day teaching practices, while at the same time considering what was actually feasible within the current context and available resources. It was also stated that support on RE within the existing curriculum was not sufficient enough to allow

teachers to have confidence and quality in their teaching. Furthermore, taking into account the diversity in Brent and the good opportunities to reach out to children it was stated that schools would welcome further guidance and outreach, especially in terms of raising awareness about the syllabus.

A suggestion was made for the ASC to focus on primary schools, update their RE curriculum and circulate to schools for trial and feedback. In supporting the idea, members stated that for the plan to succeed a mass distribution of information to school was required and queried whether a survey approach had been previously used and would be considered.

Mr Butler stated that he would be willing to take the lead on updating the syllabus but would require support in terms of teacher expertise. Lea Murray and other school representatives said they would be happy to share expertise and volunteer time but pointed out that consideration should be given on time and resources available and work around teacher's busy schedules. It was decided that the next RE coordinators meeting would propose that coordinators meeting be turned into consultation meetings, as these meetings were well attended by teachers and would form a good starting point. It was stated that the RE group needs clear on the aim of the curriculum and have a clear agenda to feedback on

(6.20pm – Cllr Nerva left the meeting)

ACTIONS:

- That a web link to the current Agreed Syllabus be shared with members
- That the next RE coordinators meeting explore teachers views and input on ASC
- That the Chair and SACRE advisors explore the possibility of setting up a clear structure for feedback by schools.
- That Roger Butler prepare suggestions for discussion for the next RE meeting
- That practitioners be asked to comment on ASC
- That the Chair and Roger Butler meet with Brent representatives to discuss availability of resources to carry out future work on the syllabus

End: 6.30pm

Notice of Next Meeting: Thursday, 7 March 2019 - 4.30pm - Alperton Community School

BASMA ELSHAYYAL

Chair