

MINUTES
OF THE STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE)
Thursday 17 October 2019 | 4.30 pm | Brent Civic Centre

Attendees:

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>	Basma ElShayyal (Sunni Islam, Chair) Farjad Farid (Baha'i) Manhar Mehta (Jainism) Sheralyn Snaith (Baha'i)
GROUP B <i>(A committee of persons representing the Church of England)</i>	Steve Taylor (Church of England)
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>	Shaun Cremin Helen Mooney Lea Murray (Associations Representing Teachers)
GROUP D <i>(A committee of persons representing the authority)</i>	Cllr Orleen Hylton (Representing The Authority)

In attendance:	Lesley Prior (RE Adviser/Consultant to SACRE) Roger Butler (RE Adviser/Consultant to SACRE) Brian Grady (OD, Safeguarding Performance and Strategy) John Frankis (Systems and Partnerships Manager, School Effectiveness Service) Helen Tulloch (SACRE Lead, School Effectiveness Service) Kunwar Khan (Governance Officer)
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Apologies:	Deva Samaroo (Hinduism) Bhupinder Singh (Sikhism) Cllr Tariq Dar (Representing The Authority) Cllr Neil Nerva (Representing The Authority)
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1. Welcome and Introductions

Acting Chair, Reverend Steve Taylor, welcomed everyone to the meeting.

He explained that Brent Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) needed to appoint a Chair and Vice Chair each academic year. He added that, as requested, he would be chairing this meeting until SACRE made the appointments under the agenda item 5.

Pending the arrival of a Member representing the Authority (Group D) to fulfil the quorum obligation from all represented groups, Steve Taylor asked SACRE to proceed to the agenda item 12 - SACRE self-evaluation, as it did not require any decision making.

John Frankis suggested that he would like to take agenda item 12 - SACRE self-evaluation together with the agenda item 6 - SACRE priorities for 2019-20 academic year, as both these items were closely linked together. Following the Chair's approval, SACRE agreed to consider agenda items 6 and 12 at this point.

6. SACRE priorities 2019-20 academic year and SACRE self-evaluation

John Frankis introduced the report highlighting RETool: Reporting and Evaluating Toolkit developed by NASACRE which focused on the following five aspects of the work of SACREs:

- promoting improvement in the standards, quality of teaching, and provision;
- evaluating the effectiveness of the agreed syllabus;
- promoting improvement in the provision and quality of collective worship;
- managing the SACRE and building partnerships; and
- contributing to cohesion across the community.

Reflecting on the previous work and the direction of travel moving forward, John Frankis tabled worksheets with priority stickers and requested members to work in pairs and come up with their top three priorities for SACRE. Basma EIShayyal added that SACRE needed to reflect and then plan strategically as to which areas to consider for the next year. During the discussion, the following points were highlighted:

- What could SACRE do to make its work more effective?
- Schools should be made aware that SACRE was there to support effective and impactful teaching of RE
- SACRE should seek to engage more fully with a range of stakeholders in Brent, including young people through things such as the Brent Youth Parliament and Young Ambassadors
- A SACRE communication plan should be considered, including making use of the fortnightly bulletin issued to schools SACRE should build closer relationships with teaching staff and RE co-ordinators
- SACRE could consider issuing guidance on issues, such as climate change/environment - etc.

- SACRE members should be familiar with the national policy, guidelines and briefing papers.
- The results of the self-assessment exercise would be summarised in a report to the 30 January 2020 meeting of SACRE and used to identify priorities, areas for development and an action plan setting out the key actions for 2019/20 and beyond. Members of SACRE were asked to note that the completed self-assessments and any feedback would be treated in the strictest confidence and all results and comments would be anonymised.

Action:

- John Frankis undertook to capture the key areas of interest and circulate a draft report before the next meeting.

[Cllr Hylton joined the meeting around 4:45 pm. SACRE agreed to proceed to agenda item 5, at this juncture]

5. Appointment/Election of Chair and Vice Chair

- Basma ElShayyal was elected as the Chair.
- There were no nominations received for the position of Vice Chair. The Chair undertook to have conversations with members to progress the matter.

2. Minutes of the last meeting

- The Chair, Basma ElShayyal, highlighted positive comments made by Gail Tolley (Strategic Director, Children and Young People, Brent Council) regarding the work of SACRE at the last meeting. The Chair added SACRE needed to continue to build further on its positive work in Brent.
- Dates of the agreed future meeting dates on page 3 should state 30th April 2020 instead of 31st April, which was noted.
- Following the aforementioned observations, the minutes of the previous SACRE meeting held on 27 June 2019 were approved as an accurate record.

3. Brent SACRE constitution and terms of reference

Helen Tulloch introduced the report providing details of Brent SACRE constitution and terms of reference as circulated with the agenda pack.

In considering the report, the following key areas were referenced and discussed:

- Roles, responsibilities and code of conduct.
- Locally agreed syllabus and Agreed Syllabus Conference.
- The statutory responsibilities of SACRE and the Agreed Syllabus Conference
- The process of appointing SACRE members in relation to the four groups.
- Quorum (9 members with each of the four stipulated groups represented).
- It was noted that comments were awaited from the Council's Legal Team.

- SACRE agreed that the term of office for all SACRE members started from today for four years.
- National SACRE exemplar letter - substitutes could be sent subject to the approval of the nominating body. Concerning Group C, teachers – teacher representatives needed to be employed within a Brent school. Noted that Shaun Cremin was not currently employed within a Brent School, the meeting agreed to co-opt Shaun.
- SACRE should be representative of the borough.
- LA should continue to establish the key religious groups in the borough and ensure that appointees to SACRE were representative of faith groups.
- In response to a question asking why a constitution was required, Brian Grady informed the meeting that as SACRE included elected members and was in effect a body external to the Council, it was necessary to have a constitution.

Action:

- The Chair invited all members to read the circulated draft and provide feedback to Helen Tulloch in advance of the next meeting

4. Membership

- Helen Tulloch gave a verbal update on the membership process which was covered under the previous item 3. Members were informed that the process was an organised approach to secure expertise to assist in driving forward the RE agenda. She added that nomination would be the responsibility of each organisation and encouraged members to forward nominations to her. She explained that it was the responsibility of the Strategic Director, Children and Young People to make formal nominations to the Board and reported that she was in the process of establishing a formal nomination process.
- SACRE noted the circulated membership list.

7. 2018/19 GCSE and A Level results for RE

John Frankis informed the meeting that the 2018/19 GCSE and A Level results had not been published and were due towards the end of October – a report to be provided to SACRE at the next meeting.

Action:

- 2018/19 GCSE and A Level results for RE report to be scheduled for January 2020.

8. 2018/19 Annual Report

SACRE was required to provide an annual report. Preparation of the 2018/19 Annual Report was awaiting publication of the 2018/19 GCSE and A level results.

Members were invited to submit items that they wished to be included. It was noted that Lesley Prior would lead the drafting of the Annual Report.

During the discussion, the following key points were noted:

- The document would be circulated in advance of the next meeting, for members' approval and then posted to the Council's website and sent to NASACRE for publication on its webpage.
- The Chair undertook to contribute the foreword prior to its publication.
- SACRE was obliged to provide an annual report to Secretary of State for Education.
- The SACRE Annual Report should also be sent to the schools in Brent.
- A draft foreword to be provided to/by the Chair.
- Determinations and collective worship details as an Appendix.
- SACRE thanked Helen Tulloch and John Frankis for their work.

Action:

- Lesley Prior to circulate a draft report to all at the next meeting.

9. Determinations under The Education Act 1996:

The Chair introduced the item and stated that several applications for determinations had been received from schools in Brent since the last SACRE meeting, as set out in the agenda pack and welcomed members' comments.

- The Chair praised the overall approach taken by schools towards religious education, in particular, the clear distinction made by schools between religious education and collective worship policies as well as the usefulness of the application criteria/instructions circulated to schools.
- The Chair noted that pupil voice was a proactive suggestion by students with mindfulness and quiet time being a good practice as highlighted in one of the applications.
- Lesley Prior advised that despite varying quality of applications before SACRE all legal criteria had been met with clear evidence.
- When school dispensations were being applied for renewal - there should be an adoptive form of some kind to demonstrate the evidence of any change/status quo in terms of demographic make-up by the school.
- A member asked for more clarity about what the legal or procedural requirements were for such determinations. It was suggested that a checklist form to be developed and attached to this item each time so SACRE members knew what was required by law and to focus their attention on the relevant areas of importance.
- If interested, a SACRE member could request to visit a Brent school and observe the act of worship - currently Westminster, Camden and Ealing undertake such activity.

As no further comments were raised, it was unanimously agreed that determinations for the listed schools, i.e. Wykeham Primary, Leopold Primary, and Park Lane schools be granted.

Action:

- That Helen Tulloch undertake to write to the schools listed above and confirm that their determinations had been granted.
- Headteachers Bulletin to contain a reminder and clear message about determination along with a criteria/check list that could be used by SACRE and schools for this item.

10 Best Brent (verbal update)

John Frankis gave a verbal update. It was noted that Best Brent was an on-line system that provided a useful vehicle for SACRE to disseminate information.

During the discussion, the following key points were noted:

- Some communication/website work was already in progress about SACRE and Agreed Syllabus but was not yet publicly available as it was incomplete.
- A tester page was shared with all - SACRE was asked to consider how best this tool could be utilised. It was possible to have a mini SACRE website but this must be sustainable and up to date with useful information, videos, twitter feeds and school-to-school collaboration. Prominent search button and FAQs sections would be very useful.
- Appropriate links for Agreed Syllabus/RE online, introduction for teachers and information about various religions etc. could also be considered. Useful forum areas could be added e.g. RE Coordinators area, sharing intelligence, best practice and information as appropriate.
- The Chair stated that this initiative would be very useful for SACRE. She added that there was a need to make sure that there were clear guidelines around GDPR/data protection etc. as this would not have moderators.
- There was an opportunity to launch this with schools at some point. Must be mindful of not getting it out of hand but this could be showcased in schools and to sign post teachers.
- Annual Programme of awards like the 2020 programme. ‘Best Progress Award’ for schools who demonstrated the most willingness to embrace and improve RE was suggested.
- To create a desire in an enabling environment for children to explore RE. This should be picked up in the proposed action plan.

Action:

- The content was appreciated and noted.
- Suggestions made to be taken on board for SACRE action plan.

11 Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural comments from Ofsted reports

John Frankis introduced the report highlighting key comments made by Ofsted following school inspections undertaken in the 2018/19 academic year.

In considering the report, the following key points were noted:

- 18 schools (of all types) were inspected by Ofsted during the 2018/19 academic year.

- SACRE to convey its formal congratulations and start working with their RE coordinators.
- Possibly a networking opportunity for a school to host the curriculum launch.
- The Chair thanked John Frankis in collating this report.

Action:

- After consideration it was agreed that members of SACRE note the comments made relating to religious education and/or spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and a congratulatory email with acknowledgement be sent to the schools by the Chair.

12 SACRE self-evaluation

Discussed as part of agenda item 6 above.

13 Adviser to SACRE/ASC (verbal)

The Chair formally welcomed back Lesley Prior in her roles as advisor to SACRE.

Noting that Roger Butler was attending the meeting for the last time in the role as RE advisor, the Chair thanked Roger for his many years of service and support to Brent SACRE and wished him well. A presentation was handed to Roger and those attending applauded Roger to show their appreciation.

Notice of Next Meeting: 30 January 2020 at 4.30 pm at Brent Civic Centre.

BASMA ELSHAYYAL

Chair

18:35