

**MINUTES OF THE STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION  
 (SACRE)**

**Held as an online virtual meeting on Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2020 at 4.30 pm**

**Attendees (in remote attendance):**

<p><b>GROUP A</b>  <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 (Sunni Islam, Chair)          Sheralyn Snaith (Baha'i)          Rupa Monerawela (Buddhism)</p>
<p><b>GROUP B</b>  <i>(A committee of persons representing the Church of England)</i></p>	<p>Steve Taylor (Church of England)</p>
<p><b>GROUP C</b>  <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>Helen Mooney          Lea Murray          Florence Quainoo          (Associations Representing Teachers)</p>
<p><b>GROUP D</b>  <i>(A committee of persons representing the authority)</i></p>	<p>Cllr Neil Nerva          Cllr Orleen Hylton          Cllr Tariq Dar</p>
<p><b>In attendance:</b></p>	<p>Lesley Prior (RE Adviser/Consultant to SACRE)          John Galligan (Head of Setting and School Effectiveness)          Brian Grady (OD, Safeguarding Performance and Strategy)          Helen Tulloch (Governor Support Coordinator)          Kim Wilson (Potential Teacher Representative)          James Kinsella (Governance Manager)          Fern Aldous (Governance Officer)</p>
<p><b>Apologies:</b></p>	<p>Bhupinder Singh (Sikhism)          Deva Samaroo (Hinduism)          Graham Mariner (Church of England)</p>

## **1. Welcome and Introductions**

Basma ElShayyal, Chair, welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced Kim Wilson, Potential Representative for Teachers.

## **2. Minutes and Matters Arising from the previous meeting**

### **RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the previous SACRE meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> June 2020 be approved as an accurate record.

## **3. Election of the Chair and Vice-Chair**

The Chair introduced the item, noting that the elections were being undertaken to align the terms of the Chair and Vice Chair to the election schedule agreed in the newly adopted constitution.

Nominations were invited for the position of Chair and one nomination for Basma ElShayyal was received and seconded. Members of the SACRE proceeded to vote on the nomination, and Basma ElShayyal was unanimously approved to continue in the role of Chair.

Nominations were then invited for the position of Vice-Chair and one nomination for Helen Mooney was received and seconded. Members of the SACRE proceeded to vote on the nomination, and Helen Mooney was unanimously approved to continue in the role of Vice-Chair.

### **RESOLVED:**

That Basma ElShayyal be appointed as the Chair of the Brent SACRE for a period of one year.

That Helen Mooney be appointed as Vice-Chair of Brent SACRE for a period of one year.

## **4. Membership**

Members noted that there had been two expressions of interest in joining the SACRE, the first from Kim Wilson, potential teacher representative, and the second from Roger Butler, as a representative for British Humanists. Officers were currently progressing their applications.

### **RESOLVED:**

That SACRE note the applications for membership.

## **5. Constitution (Including Code of Conduct)**

Helen Tulloch introduced the report which presented the recently approved constitution. The committee were reminded about the terms of the code of

conduct included in the constitution and were encouraged to ensure they were familiar with its tenants, and acted accordingly.

**RESOLVED:**

That SACRE note the Constitution and the terms of the code of conduct.

**6. Determinations**

Leslie Prior, advisor to SACRE, introduced the item and updated SACRE on the below schools with outstanding determinations:

- Barham Primary School
- Carlton Vale Infant School
- Lyon Park Schools
- Mora Primary School
- Roe Green Infant School
- Roe Green Junior School
- Uxendon Manor Primary School
- Wembley Primary School
- Malorees Infants School
- Harlesden Primary School
- Leopold Primary School

SACRE heard that whilst the Department of Education (DofE) had previously advised they would not challenge schools with pending renewals of determination during the pandemic period (allowing schools to focus on more immediate challenges), this advice had now been updated, and schools should begin to submit their applications. Due to the timing of the meeting in relation to the school term there had not yet been any new applications received to the Brent SACRE. The Local Authority were therefore advised to begin contacting schools with outstanding determinations and provide support to them to complete the required paperwork ahead of the February meeting of SACRE. Failure to submit an application for this meeting would result in the school being required to revert to holding collective worship broadly in a Christian character. Leslie Prior highlighted that she would be available to assist any schools requiring advice on the process.

It was noted that schools would require sufficient notice to conduct consultation with governing bodies and parents, and it was advised that this consultation be repeated at those schools that had begun the process prior to the pandemic due to potential changes in these groups. In response to a query from a teacher representative it was confirmed that the paperwork remained unchanged from previous years.

The Chair highlighted the positive work of the team involved in determinations and the support they had been providing to schools. Leslie Prior noted that Brent had an award winning package of support materials available for its model approach to collective worship and advised that the link to those materials be resent to schools.

## **RESOLVED:**

That SACRE note the schools with outstanding determinations, and the deadline for receipt of applications for renewal for schools with determinations currently outstanding as 11<sup>th</sup> February 2021.

## **7. Annual Report 2018/19**

SACRE received the annual report. In discussing its composition Members highlighted the inclusion of the Ofsted comments and the thoroughness of the data presented, and thanked Officers for their work in compiling it.

## **RESOLVED:**

That SACRE note the annual report for 2018/2019

## **8. RE Updates (Local and National)**

SACRE received an update from Leslie Prior, advisor to SACRE on Local RE matters, with the following points noted:

- A meeting had been held on 20<sup>th</sup> October with representatives from 25 schools where the relationship between collective worship and RE had been explored. The meeting had also discussed equality and diversity in religious education which was felt to be timely to tie together black history month and interfaith week.
- Positive feedback had been received from teachers about the proposed enquiry led approach to RE teaching set out in the draft syllabus (still to be formally agreed by the Agreed Syllabus Conference), and a working party had been convened to consider the material that would support teachers in this approach.
- In September a session had been held for teachers new to teaching RE. Those present had highlighted the need for a timescale for the adoption of the new syllabus. It was noted that the AS had been discussed and a foreword submitted by the Chair in June 2020 prior to the final ASC meeting of 2019/20 and was now awaiting consideration and approval at a full Council meeting.
- Recent discussions with schools had highlighted the need for the syllabus to include more consideration for special schools RE teaching.

In discussing other local RE concerns, Councillor Dar highlighted a recent event that had taken place where multiple faith organisations had participated in a joint prayer session, and queried whether a similar event could be organised within Brent schools. Members felt this was a positive suggestion.

There was a further discussion on whether schools would be the appropriate environment to distribute leaflets in relation to new coronavirus regulations. It was felt that this was outside of the remit of SACRE to determine.

Leslie Prior proceeded to provide an on national RE issues.

SACRE heard that a report was due to be published by a think-tank, THEOS, on the subject of world views in religious education. This article tied into the recommendations of an extensive research document published in 2018 from the RE Council of England and Wales (known as the CORE report). The report explored whether RE teaching should reflect different types of relationship with faith, for example those that were non-practicing but had a cultural link to religion. This report would be shared with SACRE following publication.

The Chair also highlighted another recent report by THEOS on the religious feelings of those in London, titled “Religious London” which had been surprising in showing the importance those of all ages and political inclination gave to faith, regardless of their religion. It was further noted that 62% of Brent residents belonged to a faith group compared to 32% of people across the UK.

## **9. NASACRE Briefing**

SACRE heard that the most recent NASACRE briefing had been published. One of the focuses of the briefing was how SACREs nationally required support in finding appropriate people to serve on the Council and identifying what might be appropriate nominating bodies. The current law stated that members from the teachers group needed to represent the Teachers Association which had previously been understood to be restricted to the unions. However the briefing outlined that advice had now been received that other associations could be considered, for example Schools Networks or Heads Groups. Whilst it was recognised that this would make it easier to get wider representation, it was noted that Brent currently held a longstanding relationship with the unions and there was currently no concerns in securing teacher representatives through the unions at this stage.

The Chair queried whether it would be possible to create a shared email for SACRE members to more easily access the NASACRE briefings in the future. It was noted that the governance team were the current contacts and had recently received the briefing, which would be circulated to all members, along with future briefings as they were released. The governance team further undertook to ensure that the contact details held by NASACRE were sufficient and up to date.

## **10. Any Other Business**

### **Interfaith Week**

SACRE discussed ideas for the upcoming Interfaith week. Kim Wilson, prospective teacher representative, drew SACRE’s attention to a number of planned event, including a virtual Q&A where school children submitted questions to representatives of different faiths.

The Chair also informed SACRE of an initiative at Culham St. Gabriel's Trust, a Christian educational and training foundation that seeks to promote

education for all and encourage excellence in religious education in. The trust had awarded a grant to RE teachers to work in collaborating with the Muslim Council of Britain to showcase five mosques virtually (360 degree tours, interactive info etc.) so that teachers could use these as a useful substitute for in-person visits / school trips, especially during COVID restrictions. The initiative could be seen as a model for other religious venues.

The Chair asked that members circulate by email any examples they had of good practice or other existing initiatives following the meetings.

#### **Next meeting of SACRE and the ASC**

Leslie Prior noted that the next meeting of SACRE was due to be held jointly with the Advanced Syllabus Conference. In addition to the length of time required for consideration of the anticipated number of determination applications, SACRE members also heard that there were two meetings scheduled for the day including a teacher training session. It was unanimously agreed that to schedule a further ASC meeting on the same day would be unreasonable and counter-productive, given that the training session was expected to last for half a day. It was therefore determined that the next SACRE meeting would be held on the 11<sup>th</sup> February as previously scheduled, with the date of the next ASC to be determined and circulated.

The meeting closed at 18:40

Basma ElShayyal  
Chair