

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

Held as an online virtual meeting on Thursday 11 February 2020 at 4.30 pm

Attendees (in remote attendance):

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) Sheralyn Snaith (Baha'i) Rupa Monerawela (Buddhism) Bhupinder Singh (Sikhism)
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>	Helen Mooney Lea Murray Florence Quainoo Ian Slade Kimberley Wilson (Associations Representing Teachers)
GROUP D <i>(A committee of persons representing the authority)</i>	Cllr Neil Nerva Cllr Orleen Hylton Cllr Tariq Dar

In attendance:	Lesley Prior (RE Adviser/Consultant to SACRE) Brian Grady (OD, Safeguarding Partnership & Strategy) Helen Tulloch (Governor Support Coordinator) James Kinsella (Governance Manager) Rashella Rapley (Governance Officer) Stacey Burman (Consultant to ASC) Karen Thomas (School Effectiveness Lead Professional – London Borough of Brent) Adullah Mohamed (Census Engagement Manager) Harshil Shah (Census Engagement Manager)
-----------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Apologies:	None received.
-------------------	----------------

1. **Welcome and Introductions**

Basma ElShayyal, Chair, welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked members of SACRE for their attendance.

2. **Minutes of the previous meeting & Matters Arising**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the previous SACRE meeting held on 22 October 2020 be approved as an accurate record.

Matters Arising: In response to the request for an update on the new SACRE membership applications Brian Grady confirmed that the applications received from Kim Wilson (as a teacher representative) and Roger Butler (Humanist representative) had both been accepted by the Local Authority. The Chair therefore formally welcomed Kim Wilson as member of Brent SACRE. Following the update it was, however, reported that Roger Butler had subsequently decided to withdraw his application for membership and as a result a new nomination from the Humanists was currently being sought.

3. **Census 2021**

Harshil Shah supported by Abdullah Mohamed (Brent's Census Engagement Managers) were welcomed to the meeting. The Chair advised that they had been invited in order to provide an update on the plans for the census due to be undertaken on Sunday 21 March 2021, with a focus on engagement and the data that would be generated about religious and non-religious affiliation in the Borough.

In making their presentation the following key points were highlighted by Harshil Shah and Abdullah Mohamed

- The importance of the census and what the process involved including the different ways of completing the survey;
- The support that would be available in terms of translation to support those for whom English was not a first language;
- The way in which the information captured from the Census would be used to assist in planning and funding future local service provision;
- The data protection measures in place to ensure the safe and secure storage and use of the personal information provided;
- The inclusion of a question on religion within the census, which (for reasons of continuity) would be the same as that included in the 2001 and 2011 census and would include as an option the ability to self-identify. As before, the question would remain voluntary with the information provided used by a range of service providers to plan and deliver services. For reference, a summary was also provided on the breakdown of religions in Brent from the 2011 census;

- The way in which census data would be useful in assisting to highlight religious diversity within Brent and any changes in how certain groups wished to identify as part of the local service planning process including within an educational setting and in terms of the provision of RE;
- The levels of planned engagement within Brent to assist promoting the importance in completing the census within local communities. This included the use of community advisers working with Somali, Black African, Indian, Pakistani, Arab and the Black Caribbean communities, Brent Multi Faith Forum, engaging with the Council and different faith and community leaders. SACRE noted the specific challenges during the current lockdown restrictions in being able to engage with specific places of worship that were either closed or operating on a virtual basis.

In terms of support being sought through SACRE, members were advised they could assist by seeking to promote the importance of the census within their local communities, through the sharing of engagement resources and posters and by seeking the support of the census engagement managers in responding to any specific comments or queries raised as a result. Harshil Shah advised SACRE that it was estimated completing the survey digitally would take approximately 10 minutes but those who required support would be able to complete by phone over a longer period.

In terms of other comments raised it was noted that a national advertising and engagement campaign was due to commence on 12 February. As this would be a digital first census allowing completion online, letters with the relevant details and access codes were due to be sent to every household in early March. This would be supported by an increasing range of local engagement events, which Harshil Shah advised he would be able to extend on the basis of any further suggestions highlighted.

Basma ElShayyal (as Chair) thanked Harshil Shah and Abdullah Mohamed for their presentation and highlighted the importance of the census, from a SACRE perspective, in terms of the updated data that would be provided around demographic changes across the borough and in terms of the breakdown on religious diversity as a means of assisting to ensure the membership on SACRE remained as representative as possible. Members noted it would also provide a useful snapshot on the impact of the pandemic. In terms of further engagement, SACRE noted the proposals to include specific youth engagement workshops with the overall target for responses set at a minimum of 80% locally and 94% nationally in order to capture the most reliable and meaningful range of data, especially in relation to smaller community groups.

In concluding the discussion, Harshil Shah advised that presentation of the final census data would be expected in 2022, with Lesley Prior (SACRE consultant) outlining how the data produced on religious diversity could be used by SACRE to assist in reviewing the breakdown of current membership and in recommending any subsequent changes to the Local Authority in order to reflect any change in demographics. It was also highlighted how the data would be able to support delivery of the Agreed Syllabus and ongoing arrangements for the provision of religious education within the classroom.

Members were provided with the following contact details for queries or requests about the census:

harshil.shah26@field.census.gov.uk abdillahi.mohamed11@field.census.gov.uk or advised to visit www.census.gov.uk

The Chair once again thanked the team for their presentation and it was **RESOLVED**

That once available, the results of the 2021 census be presented to Brent SACRE in order to undertake a review of the data and any changes needing to be considered as a result of the update provided on religious diversity within the Borough.

4. **Determinations**

4.1 Determinations for Consideration: Basma ElShayyal (as Chair) introduced the item with SACRE being asked to consider the applications received for determination from the following schools:

- Barham Primary School
- Carlton Vale Infant School
- Harlesden Primary School
- Malorees Infant School
- Lyon Park Primary School
- Mora Primary & Nursery School
- Roe Green and Strathcona Infant School
- Wembley Primary School

Lesley Prior (advisor to SACRE) outlined the process and considerations members would need to take into account when reviewing each application including the supporting data provided, level of consultation with governors, pupils and parents and each schools supporting policy in relation to collective worship.

Prior to their detailed consideration, the Chair, supported by Lesley Prior and other members of SACRE commended all of the schools for the submission of their detailed applications during such challenging times, given the competing priorities as a result of the current pandemic. Members representing schools also commended the support provided by the local authority in terms of the information provided and efficiency of the process for completing and submitting their determination applications. In reviewing the applications, Lesley Prior advised that any decisions made would need to be on the basis of a block vote from each of the four membership groups. Rather than breakout virtually to meet in their individual groups it was agreed that these votes would be allocated following a general discussion in the main meeting.

Having considered each application it was unanimously **RESOLVED** (with each of the four membership group voting in favour) to approve and grant the renewal of the determinations received from the following schools:

- Barham Primary School
- Carlton Vale Infant School
- Harlesden Primary School
- Malorees Infant School
- Lyon Park Primary School
- Mora Primary & Nursery School
- Roe Green and Strathcona Infant School
- Wembley Primary School

4.2 **Expired Determinations:** Having considered the determinations listed above, SACRE were then asked to note the following schools whose determinations had now expired – Uxendon Manor, Roe Green Junior along with Elsley Primary (who had not been listed on the agenda). Confirmation was sought from Lesley Prior (adviser to SACRE) on the position regarding these determinations, with SACRE advised that the Department for Education (DfE) had confirmed it would be possible for schools whose determinations had expired to extend their current determinations pending their renewal in light of the response to the pandemic. The DfE had, however, advised that these extensions, whilst reflecting the current circumstances and challenges experienced by schools in managing the response to the pandemic, would not be indefinite. The schools concerned would still be expected to submit applications for renewal of their determinations, which were anticipated in the summer term (unless challenges of the pandemic increased) and, subject to approval, these would be backdated to the Spring term.

Lesley Prior also highlighted a need, when confirming the determination renewals which had been agreed at the meeting to not only commend those schools who had submitted applications during such a challenging time but also to highlight that the determinations only applied to collective worship and not Religious Education (RE). This was in order to clarify the position, as some applications had referred to RE rather than collective worship, which was governed by a separate syllabus.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That SACRE note the extension that would need to be applied to the expired determinations for Uxendon Manor, Roe Green Junior and Elsley Primary Schools, pending submission of their renewal applications expected during the summer term.
- (2) That the Chair liaise with Helen Tulloch over the content of the determination renewal letters in order to reflect the comments made during the meeting and commendation which SACRE wished to express for the standard of applications received.

5. **Agreed Syllabus Conference - Update**

SACRE noted the verbal update provided by Stacey Burman (adviser to Agreed Syllabus Conference) on the progress being made in finalising the review and update of the RE syllabus. Following further consultation with teaching

representatives and members of the Agreed Syllabus Conference a revised syllabus document was now being finalised for final consultation and review.

Once this process had been completed a meeting of the Agreed Syllabus Conference would need to be arranged in order to agree the final Syllabus for approval.

Having noted the update provided, the Chair thanked all those involved for their efforts in the progress being made.

6. Religious Education Updates (Local & National)

SACRE received an update from Lesley Prior (advisor to SACRE) on recent issues highlighted in relation to the provision of RE and collective worship within schools. As part of the update SACRE noted the content of the RE Newsletter produced by Lesley Prior for Community Schools, which had included a focus on resources available to support the remote teaching of RE during lockdown.

In terms of wider national issues of interest, SACREs attention was also drawn to the recent publication by Insight UK in relation to the state of Hinduism in RE within UK Schools. In terms of key issues highlighted SACRE noted:

- INSIGHT UK was an organisation that aimed to address the concerns of the British Hindu and British Indian communities. In 2020, INSIGHT UK had conducted a project with a team of highly experienced members of the Hindu community, which included well-known academics, including professors and teachers;
- The main findings identified from the research, which had included:
 - 97% of survey respondents had felt it was important for their child to learn about Hinduism;
 - 98% of survey respondents had felt the study of Hinduism in RE was low quality and deficient;
 - 75% of respondents had felt that Hinduism was not taught in a positive light;
 - 86% of the respondents were either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the teaching of Hinduism in schools within the United Kingdom. 76% of primary school parents were unhappy about RE teachers' knowledge of Hinduism;
 - 81% of Key Stage 3 and 87% of Key Stage 4 parents were discontented about RE teachers' knowledge of Hinduism;
 - There being growing evidence of inaccurate resources used by classroom teachers for teaching Hinduism;
 - Hindu parents and pupils feeling they did not have a choice to study Hinduism at GCSE level.

Whilst noting the concerns raised as an outcome of the research, Lesley Prior felt it important to remind SACRE that this had been undertaken on a national rather than local basis but felt it was important to highlight the findings given the size of the Hindu community nationally and locally and nature of the issues which had been identified.

SACRE were advised that the issues raised were due to be addressed through the establishment of a Hindu Education Board who would be working to assist with the review and development of appropriate teaching materials and support in order to enhance delivery in relation to the teaching of Hinduism and to ensure appropriate Hindu representation on SACREs. In terms of the concerns highlighted regarding the option to study Hinduism at GCSE, members noted that whilst the RE syllabus was subject to review and approval through SACRE most secondary schools at KS4 opted to follow the national curriculum and that if operating under Academy Status SACRE only had the option to recommend and could not compel them to follow this advice.

The offer identified through the Hindu Education Board was welcomed by SACRE as a means of assisting to improve the support and teaching resources, recognising the constraints on the level of time and resources available. The existing products and support already available in Brent were, however, noted although the Chair felt it would be helpful to consider this issue in more detail at a future meeting.

As an outcome of the discussion it was **RESOLVED** that a summary of the key findings from the Insight UK research should be provided for all members of SACRE.

Members were advised that the link to the full report was also via:

https://insightuk.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Hinduism-in-RE_Project-report.pdf

7. NASCRE Briefing

SACRE noted the update provided with the agenda in relation to NASACRE, with the following issues highlighted:

- The work ongoing to upgrade the NASACRE website, which would include new features such the opportunity for each SACRE to share links to locally agreed syllabus and associated materials as well as other documents and/or guidance produced.
- The work being undertaken with the DfE to draw up an agreed template for SACRE's Annual Reports, which it was felt would assist in identifying and sharing example of good practice and in addressing areas where SACREs may be struggling to fulfil their legal obligations.
- The work underway to produce a document focussed on Collective Worship.

In addition SACRE were advised about the NASACRE AGM, which was due to be held as an online event this year on 24 May 2021. In terms of attendance the Chair advised she would be willing to represent Brent SACRE at the event, which was **AGREED** by all present.

As a final update, members noted the work being undertaken by a small group from the NASACRE Executive around the membership of SACREs. This was designed to produce guidance materials for SACREs that would enable them to offer more effective advice to their respective Local Authorities about how membership could best be determined and managed in terms of representation and in ensuring current legal obligations were fulfilled. Referring back to the importance of the census,

Lesley Prior (adviser to SACRE) advised that given the data provided would include details of any change in demographics relating to religion and belief within individual areas, some SACREs had already indicated they would be looking to build consideration of this information into any subsequent review of membership, which it was **AGREED** would also be an approach supported by Brent SACRE.

As no further issue were raised the Chair thanked Lesley Prior for the update.

8. **SACRE Annual Report 2019/20 - Update**

SACRE noted the verbal update provided by Lesley Prior (adviser to SACRE) regarding the progress in finalising the 2019/20 Annual Report, which it was anticipated would be available for the next meeting.

In terms of issues raised, SACRE were advised that the Annual report would not include data relating to examination results as these had been replaced by teacher led assessments during the pandemic. Brain Grady (Operational Director of Safeguarding Performance and Strategy – London Borough of Brent) confirmed that this data (in accordance with national advice) would not be available to include for publication.

Having noted the update provided it was **RESOLVED**:

That a further update and (subject to availability) final draft of the 2019/20 Annual Report be provided for consideration at the next meeting.

9. **Any Other Business**

9.1 **Date of Future Meetings**

SACRE noted the proposed dates listed for future meetings during 2021/22.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the date for the next meeting be agreed as Tuesday 22 June 2021 at 4:30pm with meetings (subject to any further guidance received from the DfE) continuing to be held virtually.
- (2) That James Kinsella (SACRE Administrator) circulate the proposed dates for further meetings to all members of SACRE in order to agree and confirm the final programme of meetings for 2021/22.

9.2 **Death of former SACRE member – Fajid Farad**

Sheralyn Snaith sadly informed members of the passing of Fajid Farad a former Baha'i representative on SACRE. The Chair expressed her condolences on behalf of SACRE and requested that details of the funeral arrangements be forwarded to all members of SACRE.

The meeting closed at 6.00 pm

Basma ElShayyal
Chair