

MINUTES OF THE AGREED SYLLABUS CONFERENCE & STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE)

Held as an online virtual meeting on Wednesday 6 July 2022 at 5:00pm

Attendees (in remote attendance):

<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 (Sunni Islam, Chair) Michelle Goldsmith (Humanism) Manhar Mehta (Jainism) Bhupinder Singh (Sikhism) Sheralyn Snaith (Baha'i)</p>
<p>GROUP B <i>(A committee of persons representing the Church of England)</i></p>	<p>Graham Marriner Mark Newton</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>Helen Mooney (Vice-Chair) Ian Slade Kim Wilson</p>
<p>GROUP D <i>(A committee of persons representing the authority)</i></p>	<p>Cllr Neil Nerva Cllr Tazi Smith</p>

<p>In attendance:</p>	<p>Lesley Prior (RE Adviser/Consultant to SACRE) Stacey Burman (Adviser to the ASC) Shirley Parks (Brent Council - Operational Director Safeguarding Performance and Strategy) Jen Haskew (Brent Council - Head of Setting and School Effectiveness Service) Shawn Cremin (Associate Member) James Kinsella (Governance Manager) Andrew Phillips (Governance Officer)</p>
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<p>Apologies:</p>	<p>Sally Strauss (Judaism)</p>
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Agreed Syllabus Conference

1. **Draft Religious Education Syllabus**

Lesley Prior, RE Consultant to SACRE, welcomed everyone to the first part of the meeting which had been scheduled as the Agreed Syllabus Conference for the purpose of considering the final draft of the Religious Education Syllabus in advance of its referral on to SACRE.

Lesley Prior introduced the Draft Religious Education Syllabus, which it was noted had been through a rigorous drafting and consultation process as well as being evaluated by primary and secondary school teachers and networks following its previous consideration in June 2020 and subsequent revisions. It was noted that schools were eager to have the syllabus in place to begin curriculum planning for the new academic year and had already been trialing the syllabus, which would also be supported by a range of accompanying resources, guidance and training.

In order to clarify the process, Basma ElShayyal (as Chair) advised members that they were being asked to consider and agreed on the following options. Either that the syllabus be endorsed as presented; that minor, non-fundamental revisions be made, or that further revisions be requested. It was noted that the voting would proceed with one vote per membership group, and that all groups must be in agreement.

Prior to the above options being formally considered comments were invited on the syllabus presented to the meeting, with the following issues noted:

- Pedagogically and academically it was highlighted that the syllabus had been ahead of the curve in terms of the current requirements for Religious Education and in terms of recognised good practice for offering a broad and balanced curriculum that was able to promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils and in terms of fulfilling OFSTED requirements. Teaching Groups were therefore keen, having been trialing the syllabus, for final approval to be provided with feedback from schools having been overwhelmingly positive.
- The need identified, subject to the final syllabus being approved, to ensure the document included a forward by the Chair with a final proofreading also undertaken in order to make any minor corrections. It was confirmed this process would be undertaken once the final syllabus had been agreed.
- Confirmation was provided that the language used within the syllabus had been designed to reflect and incorporate the current religious and world view approach towards Religious Education.
- The need to ensure, subject to final approval of the syllabus, that the introduction to the Baha'i faith was updated along with the ASC & SACRE membership contact details. Whilst confirming that these amendments would be made, the ASC was advised that the section identified formed part of the supporting supplementary materials to the syllabus rather than the syllabus document itself. Confirmation was also provided regarding the suggested inclusion of visits to places of worship as part of the supplementary materials being provided to support the syllabus, although it was only the main syllabus document on which a decision needed to be made by ASC,

As no further issues or comments were raised the ASC then broke into their respective membership groups in order to consider how they each wished to proceed in terms of the available options regarding approval of the syllabus presented to the meeting, with the following feedback provided once the Conference had reconvened:

GROUP A: AGREED to endorse and support the syllabus for adoption also highlighting the need for the details provided in relation to different faith groups to be reviewed and updated as part of the supplementary package of supporting materials.

GROUP B: AGREED to endorse and support the syllabus for adoption praising the design of the document and particularly welcoming the reception from teachers.

GROUP C: AGREED to endorse and support the Syllabus for adoption with a view to it being formally launched and introduced within schools for the start of the next academic year. The work in producing the syllabus was also acknowledged in terms of all those involved.

GROUP D: AGREED to endorse and support the syllabus for adoption, subject to a final proofread being undertaken prior to its formal launch.

*As a result of the above the Chair confirmed that the Agreed Syllabus Conference had unanimously **RESOLVED** to approve the syllabus presented to the meeting for adoption, subject to the final amendments identified as required at the meeting in relation to the syllabus document and supplementary materials.*

*On this basis, it was therefore **AGREED** to refer the syllabus on to SACRE for final consideration and approval.*

The Chair thanked all those involved for their ongoing efforts in developing the syllabus and advised that on the basis of the above decision, she would now move on close the Agreed Syllabus Conference and start the SACRE meeting.

SACRE Meeting

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Chair noted apologies had been received from Sally Strauss (Judaism).

2. Minutes of the previous meeting and Matters Arising

It was AGREED to approve the minutes of the previous SACRE meeting held on Thursday 10 February 2022.

3. Membership Update

Basma ElShayyal, Chair, advised that in accordance with section 4 of the Brent SACRE constitution, there was a requirement after every full Local Government Election to review the current SACRE Membership. As the last local elections were held on 5 May 2022, members were advised that the current membership list had been circulated for review as part of the agenda for the meeting.

In considering the current membership, Lesley Prior (RE Consultant to SACRE) felt it would also be useful to take account of the current census data (once available) as it related to the current breakdown of ethnicity and religion across the borough in order to ensure membership remained representative of the area as a whole. It was noted that should any membership changes be proposed these would be subject to recommendation to the Local Authority for final confirmation and approval.

SACRE supported this approach and whilst not recommending any change in its current membership at this stage **AGREED** that a further review should be undertaken based on final census data once available.

4. **Draft Religious Education Syllabus**

Having noted the discussion and recommendation made by the Agreed Syllabus Conference the Chair advised there would now be a need for SACRE to formally consider the final syllabus being recommended for adoption.

On the basis of the discussions and agreement reached at the Agreed Syllabus Conference, each membership Group was asked to confirm their formal approval of the recommended syllabus, with feedback provided as follows:

GROUP A: Confirmed their agreement of the syllabus for adoption

GROUP B: Confirmed their agreement of the syllabus for adoption

GROUP C: Confirmed their agreement of the syllabus for adoption

GROUP D: Confirmed their agreement of the syllabus for adoption

*As a result of the above the Chair confirmed that SACRE had also unanimously **RESOLVED** to approve the syllabus for adoption, subject to the final amendments identified at the preceding Agreed Syllabus Conference in relation to the syllabus document and supplementary materials.*

On this basis it was **AGREED** that the syllabus be referred on to the Local Authority for formal adoption and launch alongside the package of supporting materials.

5. **NASACRE / RE Updates**

Lesley Prior, RE Consultant to SACRE, introduced the item, which provided the latest updates from NASACRE, as well as national and local Religious Education updates. Having welcomed approval of the Religious Education syllabus, members were advised of the extensive work being undertaken with teaching staff and school RE networks to develop a cascade model that could be used once the new syllabus had been formally launched.

Members also congratulated Kim Wilson, who they were advised had been successful in securing a Farmington Fellowship for RE, on which it was hoped further updates could be provided for future meetings.

Nationally, it was reported that the NASACRE AGM and Conference had taken place once again virtually with a range of keynote speakers at the event. SACRE noted the summary circulated as part of the agenda on the contents of the keynote speeches and issues raised during the Conference.

Additionally, it was confirmed that the Schools White Paper Bill passing through Parliament was being evaluated by NASACRE, particularly in relation to the expansion of Academy status for schools and the impact this could potentially have on the delivery of Religious Education. It was reported that the evaluation process being undertaken also involved discussion with the Department for Education (DfE).

Members also noted the report card provided as part of the agenda in terms of the review of the performance of Religious Education.

6. Dates of Future Meetings

The following dates were AGREED for future SACRE meetings during 2022/23, with if confirmed that meetings would continue to be held online:

- 6 October 2022 at 5pm
- 9 February 2023 at 5pm

7. Any Other Business

None.

The meeting closed at 6:20pm

Basma ElShayyal
Chair