

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

Held as an online virtual meeting on Thursday 6 October 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) Manhar Mehta (Jainism) Rupa Monerawela (Buddhism) Bhupinder Singh (Sikhism) Sheralyn Snaith (Baha'i) Sally Strauss (Judaism)</p>
<p>GROUP B <i>(A committee of persons representing the Church of England)</i></p>	<p>Steve Taylor (Church of England)</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>Ian Slade</p>
<p>GROUP D <i>(A committee of persons representing the authority)</i></p>	<p>Cllr Tazi Smith</p>
<p>In attendance:</p>	<p>Lesley Prior (RE Adviser/Consultant to SACRE) Jen Haskew (Brent Council - Head of Setting and School Effectiveness Service) Helen Tulloch (Brent Council – School Effectiveness Service) James Kinsella & Andrew Phillips (Brent Council - Governance Team)</p>

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Chair noted apologies had been received from Michelle Goldsmith (Membership Group A – Humanism), Mark Newton (Membership Group B), Helen Mooney & Kim Wilson (Membership Group C) and Shirley Parks (Brent Council – Director Safeguarding Performance and Strategy).

Before moving on, the Chair advised that Florence Quainoo (Teachers Representative, Group C) had advised she would be standing down as a member on SACRE as a result of a new role she had been appointed to. Florence was thanked for her contribution as both a member of the Primary RE Network and also on SACRE with members taking the opportunity to wish her all the best in her new role.

2. Minutes of the previous meeting and Matters Arising

It was AGREED to approve the minutes of the previous Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC) & SACRE meeting held on Wednesday 6 July 2022.

3. Determinations (if any)

Basma ElShayyal, Chair, advised that there were no determinations to be considered at the meeting.

It was confirmed that contact would be made with those schools who determinations had expired or were due for renewal with a reminder prior to the next meeting of SACRE.

4. The Agreed Syllabus and supporting resources

Jen Haskew provided SACRE with an update on the progress in finalising the Agreed Religious Education Syllabus along with its supporting resources, which had been approved for adoption at the previous ASC & SACRE meeting in July 22.

SACRE noted that since the last meeting, the syllabus had been subject to final editing in order to ensure consistency in all areas. Additionally, an introduction had also been added by the Chair of SACRE with the document and content now being finalised to share and launch at the RE co-ordinators meeting during the Autumn term.

SACRE welcomed the progress being made and support expressed by the RE co-ordinator networks towards the new syllabus and supporting documents, which they were keen to see continuing to be progressed and developed through the provision of additional resources and schemes of learning, led through the RE teaching networks to support delivery.

In terms of the existing information already available on the Best Brent Portal regarding the background and beliefs of different faith groups, concerns were raised that some of the information provided was no longer representative or reflective of the world views of the faiths covered, with specific reference highlighted in relation to the materials available relating to the Baha'i faith. These concerns had been formally raised with a request that the material causing concern was removed as part of any information linked to the new syllabus as soon as possible, which Jen Haskew advised she would address with the representatives concerned after the meeting. It was also suggested that representatives from each faith group review the content currently online in relation their faith to ensure there were no other issues or concerns to be addressed.

On this basis it was **AGREED** that SACRE note the update and next steps being progressed in delivery and launch of the RE Agreed Syllabus and supporting resources.

5. **Annual Report 21/22**

Lesley Prior (RE Advisor and SACRE Consultant) introduced the item providing SACRE with an update on the progress in preparing the 2021-22 Annual Report, which members noted had been based on the newly introduced template provided by NASACRE.

In considering the draft report, members noted that once finalised a forward was due to be added by the Chair, with updates also required to reflect the most up to date information provided through the 2021 census (once available) in relation to religion and belief within Brent. The Annual Report also included links to key documents, details regarding the Primary & Secondary RE subject lead networks and determinations as well as membership changes and progress in relation to development and adoption of the RE Agreed Syllabus.

In terms of the potential inclusion of data relating to GCSE and A Level assessments and results SACRE were advised of the difference in approach taken by SACREs on this issue, recognising that many secondary schools were now operating as Academies. The Chair reminded members of the previous advice received with regard to national guidance from the DfE which had been clear that data regarding assessments should not be published. The approach previously adopted in Brent had therefore been to follow the guidance and not include those details for publication. As an alternative, it had been agreed that the report should refer instead to the success of Religious Education more generally as part of the curriculum, which SACRE confirmed their support to continue.

Members thanked everyone involved in preparing the draft and as no additional comments were highlighted it was **RESOLVED** to note the progress in preparing the 2021-22 Annual Report which it was agreed, subject to the comments identified above, should be finalised for approval at the next meeting.

6. **General RE Update**

In terms of a general update, Lesley Prior (RE Advisor and SACRE Consultant) advised SACRE of the ongoing work and support being provided to the Primary & Secondary RE networks in Brent, including their role in supporting the development of supplementary materials for the new RE syllabus.

7. **NASACRE Update**

SACRE then moved on to consider the most recent bulletin provided by NASACRE, which was introduced by Lesley Prior (RE Advisor and SACRE Consultant).

As one of the main issues highlighted, Members attention was drawn to the ongoing work being undertaken to assess the potential impact of the Government's White Paper on Education in relation to RE and Collective Worship and subsequent Schools Bill currently being progressed through Parliament. Of particular concern

was the aim to encourage all schools to move towards seeking academy status given the impact this would have in terms of the local determination of how subjects such as RE continued to be taught. As part of NASACREs regular programme of meetings with the DfE and with other partner associations, lobbying was continuing around this issue, with the appointment of a new Secretary of State for Education also noted in order to highlight the important role of SACREs and wider issues connected with the place of religion and worldviews in schools.

Members were also advised of the ongoing programme of training being offered through NASACRE.

As no further issues were raised SACRE **RESOLVED** to note the update provided

8. **Any Other Business**

School Workforce Census: Teaching Hours for RE

Prior to closing the meeting, the Chair drew members attention to the update which had been circulated prior to the meeting summarising the release of school level data from the 2021 DfE School Workforce Census relating to the provision of RE from those schools sampled in Brent. In considering the update SACRE was advised, as in previous years:

- Of the need to recognise that SACRE would have no direct remit over any of the schools included on the sample list which were outside the control of the Local Authority i.e. Voluntary Aided, Academies or Free Schools.
- The data provided was on hours taught in subjects RE & Philosophy in years 7 -13. Whilst a useful starting point, SACRE noted that the data should not be treated as a definitive indicator of provision being offered within schools with, for example, not all schools having reported RE or classifying it under a different subject heading such as Philosophy and Ethics, making the collection of data more difficult.
- The aim in providing the data had been to enable SACRE to consider the position locally and what, if any, further action it was felt needed to be taken in reminding schools of their obligations in relation to the offer of RE on the curriculum.

Whilst noting the limited remit in terms of schools outside the direct control of the Local Authority, SACRE remained keen (as in previous years) to remind all schools of the position regarding their legal obligations in relation to the offer of RE, which would also be included as part of the funding arrangements for Academies. Members were supportive of this approach, with the preference for a reminder to be issued on behalf of SACRE reminding all schools of the need to ensure these obligations were being reflected in terms of the offer provided for RE. SACRE were also keen to ensure that the details were shared with the secondary RE network for more detailed consideration and review.

As no further issues were raised it was **RESOLVED** to note the update provided.

Date of Next Meeting – Thursday 7 February 2023 at 5:00pm

The meeting closed at 6:20pm

Basma ElShayyal
Chair