

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

Tuesday 22 July 2025 at 5pm
Online

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>	Saghar Forouhi (Baha'i) Bhupinder Singh (Sikhism) Sally Strauss (Judaism)
GROUP B <i>(A committee of persons representing the Church of England)</i>	Kyriacos Papasavva (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>	
GROUP D <i>(A committee of persons representing the authority)</i>	Cllr Robert Johnson Cllr Arshad Mahmood Cllr Neil Nerva
In attendance:	Nadia Nadeem (SACRE/RE Advisor) Shirley Parks (Brent Council – Director Education Partnerships and Strategy) Jen Haskew (Brent Council - Head of Setting and School Effectiveness Service) Helen Tulloch (Brent Council - School Effectiveness Service) Abby Shinhmar & James Kinsella (Brent Council - Governance Team)

Given the number of members and Membership Groups in attendance, it was confirmed that the meeting was not quorate. It was, however, agreed by those

members present that the meeting should continue on the basis that any formal decisions made would be subject to formal ratification at the next quorate meeting.

1. **Election of Chair and Vice Chair**

AGREED to appoint Bhupinder Bhasin as the new Chair of BRENT SACRE, subject to formal ratification at the next available meeting. It was agreed that the appointment of a Vice-Chair be considered at the next meeting.

2. **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

It was **AGREED** to approve the minutes of the previous SACRE meeting held on Thursday 6 February 2025.

3. **Determinations**

The Chair advised that there were six determinations to be considered at the meeting as follows:

- (a) Fryent Primary School
- (b) Kingsbury Green Primary School
- (c) Leopold Primary School
- (d) Park Lane School
- (e) Roe Green Junior School
- (f) Wykeham Primary School

In considering the determination applications members of SACRE noted that all of the schools had previously applied for a determination. As part of the application, minutes from the Governing Body were awaited from Fryent Primary School in support of their application and Leopold Primary School.

Having considered the application submitted, it was **AGREED** that the determinations be granted pending:

- a. submission of the outstanding supporting information from the schools identified; and
- b. in light of the meeting not being quorate, representatives of the Membership Group C (Teaching Association) confirming their approval following the meeting

It was **AGREED** that schools will be informed of the decision by the beginning of the school term dependent upon receipt of the outstanding minutes.

Members queried if the schools listed above were grant maintained schools. It was clarified that the schools were all grant maintained and that academies did not require determinations.

Clarification was sought on whether this would change following the Children's Wellbeing Bill. Nadia Nadeem, SACRE Advisor explained that it was unclear currently whether RE subject would be part of the National Curriculum. Changes were unlikely to affect the role of SACRE, however this was bespoke to each Local Authority.

Clarification was sought on the basis of the determinations being applied for with details sought on the number of schools in the borough that did not apply for a determination. **ACTION:** Nadia Nadeem agreed to gain this data and report back at the next SACRE meeting.

4. **General RE Update**

SACRE received an update from Nadia Nadeem, SACRE Advisor which covered the following issues:

- teaching a decolonised RE curriculum, as well as world views on looking after the planet on which additional clarification was provided around definitions and meaning.

SACRE noted that decolonising the curriculum involved re-evaluating educational content to address colonial biases, promote diverse perspectives and ensure representation of marginalized voices in knowledge production. Members agreed the importance of children being able to discuss their views. It was important to present a religion as it was and not alter this for fear of social disharmony.

- The use of AI in the RE curriculum and impact in relation to questions around ethics, empathy and compassion, as key aspects of RE.

With no further issues raised SACRE **AGREED** to note the update provided.

5. **NASACRE Update**

SACRE received an update from Nadia Nadeem, SACRE Advisor which covered the following issues:

- NASACRE had now gained charity status.
- The SACRE Advisor referenced Lord Khan of Burnley who had recently spoken on the way knowledge and understanding of religion changed people, encouraged social cohesion and equipped pupils with an ability to interact with all. Religious education celebrated diversity and created connection, rather than suspicion and an opportunity to explore shared values.
- The Chair mentioned the partition of India and later Bangladesh and of the community affected by this. The Chair was involved in the making of a film called *Children of Partition: An Oral History of Pothoharis*, which can be viewed at <https://youtu.be/lrCee1d0CUM?si=j9D-KHowlAQKMref> and shared with schools in the borough. The Chair was the president of a group called Pothohar Association UK, which brought all faiths together to discuss issues relating to the Partition.
- Concerns were highlighted about the rise in racism and hatred and impact on local communities. It was crucial to be proactive about what was taught at

schools, social inclusion and to respect one another and added that there was a lot of misinformation out there.

The SACRE Advisor stressed the importance of differentiating politics and religion when speaking to children as well as teaching them about kindness, compassion and empathy, which were considered basic human and social skills and the need to ensure this continued to be reflected within the way RE was being taught.

The SACRE Advisor emphasised that RE was not just about learning about different religions but to give children the tools to make sense of the world around them and be able to separate this from politics.

Councillor Johnson added that all SACRE's worked to the government's agenda and added that there were many different faiths and religions that all had something to offer and it was best to work together.

6. Any Other Business

The SACRE Advisor suggested revisiting the 30 Things a SACRE Can Do in order to be a more proactive and effective SACRE.

Members sent their thanks and best wishes to the outgoing Chair, Basma El Shayyal for her work in support of SACRE and hoped she would remain as faith representation.

The Chair advised that the SACRE in Kensington and Chelsea were holding a faith trail that will form part of a Teacher's Pack allowing pupils to visit the V&A Museum and view artefacts. The pack will be a resource to be used at schools.

The Chair advised of an event being organised for Inter-Faith Week, which will take place in November 2025. The Chair suggested putting Inter-Faith Week on the SACRE agenda for next year to encourage schools to do activities with it **AGREED** that an outline of SACRE's core role and responsibilities should be presented for consideration at the next meeting.

In addition, consideration would be given to the way in which the role and activities of SACRE and the Multi-Faith Forum could be better aligned and co-ordinated, including work with school. It would be positive for a representative of the Multi-Faith Forum to attend the next SACRE meeting as an extension of the work SACRE did. The Chair agreed and added that he had presented at many schools. **ACTION:** Jen Haskew to invite a representative from the Multi-Faith Forum to the next SACRE meeting.

Work was underway in seeking to recruit an additional faith representative from the Hindu community.

7. Dates of Future Meetings

SACRE **NOTED** the remaining programme of dates identified for meetings during the 2025-26 academic year, as follows:

- Thursday 9 October 2025 at 5pm to be undertaken online
- Thursday 5 February 2025 at 5pm to be undertaken online

The meeting closed at 6:06pm

Bhupinder Bhasin
Chair