

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

Held as an online virtual meeting on Thursday 22 June 2021 at 4:30pm

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 (Chair, Sunni Islam) Sheralyn Snaith (Baha'i) Manhar Mehta (Jainism) Bhupinder Singh (Sikhism) Michelle Goldsmith (Humanism)
GROUP B <i>(A committee of persons representing the Church of England)</i>	Steve Taylor
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>	Lea Murray Helen Mooney (Vice-Chair) Ian Slade Florence Quainoo Kim Wilson
GROUP D <i>(A committee of persons representing the authority)</i>	Councillor Tariq Dar Councillor Orleen Hylton Councillor Neil Nerva

In attendance:	Lesley Prior (RE Advisor/Consultant to SACRE) Brian Grady (Brent Council OD Safeguarding, Partnership & Strategy) Helen Tulloch (Brent Council Governor Support Coordinator) Andrew Phillips (Brent Council – Governance Team) James Kinsella (Brent Council- Governance Team) Shaun Cremin (Associate Member) Suzan Tokcan (Humanism – alternate member attending as an observer)
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1. Welcome and apologies:

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

It was reported that apologies for absence had been received from Kim Wilson (Teachers representative – Group C)

2. Minutes of the last meeting:

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the previous SACRE meeting held on Thursday 11 February 2021 be approved as an accurate record.

The group were also advised that new representatives from the Hindu and Judaism faiths were currently being sought to fill the existing vacancies in Membership Group A.

3. Determinations

Lesley Prior (RE Advisor and SACRE consultant) introduced the item, with SACRE being asked to consider the application for a determination received from Elsley Primary School.

Prior to consideration of the application, SACRE were advised of the current DfE guidance relating to schools with outstanding determination renewal applications during the pandemic. SACRE noted:

- In normal circumstances, determinations would last for a period of 5 years, and if a school wanted to continue it would need to reapply to SACRE at the end of this period. Whilst the DfE had allowed existing determinations due for renewal to continue during the pandemic, Lesley Prior advised this guidance had now been updated as the recovery had progressed and schools had reopened. As a result, the updated guidance from the DfE was that any initial extension should now come to an end requiring schools whose determinations had lapsed but been allowed to continue during the pandemic to now have to submit new applications.
- As a result a number of new determinations had been agreed by SACRE at the last meeting in February with members advised that these had needed to be backdated to the original date they had been due for renewal, rather than the new date on which the applications had been agreed.
- In the case of schools with a lapsed determination who had still to submit a new application (of which there were currently two within Brent) the advice from the DfE had been that they would be required to revert to providing collective worship that was broadly Christian in character pending any new determination application being agreed. In these cases SACRE would be expected to contact the school in order to confirm the position.

In response to comments raised in respect of the update provided SACRE were advised:

- That in terms of the monitoring of collective worship in schools whose determinations had lapsed this would be a matter for Ofsted to pick up as part of their inspection process. The role of SACRE remained to advise and support schools in terms of encouraging further applications within the necessary timescales.
- Clarification was provided that it was not the role of SACRE to advise Ofsted when determinations had lapsed and members were reminded of the approach adopted within Brent SACRE in terms of the process followed and proactive work with schools in this area, which had often been shared as best practice.
- In response to a query relating to Academy Schools, Lesley Prior outlined the process they would follow in terms of seeking the equivalent determinations relating to their collective worship, which were dealt with direct via the DfE.

Having noted the update provided at the meeting SACRE then moved on to consider the application received for a determination from Elsley Primary School. Lesley Prior outlined the process and considerations members would need to take into account when reviewing the application including the supporting data provided, level of consultation with governors, pupils and parents and each schools supporting policy in relation to collective worship. In considering the application members commended the high standard and comprehensive nature of the application.

It was therefore unanimously **RESOLVED** (with each of the four membership groups voting in favour) to approve and grant the renewal of the determination for Elsley Primary School. Whilst praising the quality of the application the need was also identified for the school to be advised that the RE Scheme of Learning they had submitted as part of the application had not been required or considered as part of the decision making process as this was separate to the collective worship strategy.

In terms of the expired determinations it was noted that these related to the following schools – Uxendon Manor & Roe Green Junior School. Having noted the advice provided by Lesley Prior at the meeting it as **RESOLVED** that further contact be made with the schools to support and encourage the submission of their applications. Lesley Prior agreed to liaise with Helen Tulloch regarding the nature of the advice guidance and specific wording to be used when contacting each school.

4. Religious Education Updates (Local and National):

SACRE received an update from Lesley Prior on recent national and local issues in relation to the provision of RE and collective worship within schools. As part

of the update SACRE were advised of the publication of a significant review by Ofsted relating to the provision of RE within schools, the details of which had been included as part of the agenda papers. The review had been led by Dr Richard Kueh who had been appointed as the new Ofsted subject lead for RE

As part of his role, Dr Kueh had recently posted two short updates on YouTube relating to the review which covered the factors that can influence the quality of RE in schools and the substance of the RE curriculum highlighting a number of key issues relating to the review. In considering the Ofsted review, SACRE were advised that this included an outline of the national context in relation to the provision of RE, along with the successes and struggles that the subject experienced in order to encourage schools to reflect on the context within their own setting.

SACRE also noted the focus within the review on progression and teaching within the curriculum along with the assessment process and pedagogical approaches and models. The review also referenced what it felt to be the three different types of knowledge or pillars of progression within RE, which were identified as:

- First: substantive knowledge – knowledge about various religious and non-religious traditions;
- Second: ways of knowing – pupils learn how to know about religion and non-religion; and
- Third: personal knowledge – pupils build an awareness of their own presuppositions and values about the religious and non-religious traditions they study

Finally, SACRE noted the review moved on to highlight features of high quality RE.

In welcoming the review, SACRE were pleased to note that much of the approach and thinking outlined had already formed the basis for the ongoing work and development of the agreed syllabus curriculum within Brent and been embedded within the supplementary schemes of learning and materials being prepared to accompany the curriculum once completed. Basma El Shayyal (as Chair) also felt it important to recognise the way this reflected the excellent practice and professional approach within Brent led by academic rigour.

As a final issue highlighted, Lesley Prior also drew attention to the efforts being made within Ofsted to ensure their inspectors received appropriate levels of training in relation to RE and the practice and requirements of collective worship, which was also welcomed by members of SACRE.

SACRE **RESOLVED** to note and welcome the update provided which Lesley Prior advised would also be summarised in her next SACRE newsletter.

5. SACRE Annual Report 2019-20 and 2020-21:

Lesley Prior provided SACRE with an update on progress in finalising the Annual Report 2019-20. Members were advised that a draft had been prepared, which was currently subject to review by the Chair and other officers. Once comments had been received the report would be finalised for submission to the next SACRE meeting in order for formal approval and sign off.

In terms of the 2020-21 Annual Report, Lesley Prior advised of the work being undertaken by NASACRE to develop a standard template for SACRE Annual Reports as a means of providing a more consistent approach and reflecting and sharing best practice. As a result, it was proposed that drafting of the 2020-21 Annual Report should be based on the standard NASACRE template with a draft to be prepared and provided for a future meeting, once the new template was available.

It was therefore **RESOLVED** that a final draft of the 2019-20 Annual Report be provided for the next SACRE meeting with the 2020-21 Annual Report to be prepared and presented to a future meeting for sign off on the basis of the standard template, once available.

6. NASCRE Briefing (Including feedback from Annual Conference):

SACRE noted the update provided with the agenda in relation to NASACRE, with feedback provided on the NASACRE Annual Conference & AGM held on 24 May 2021. Members noted that the theme of the Conference had been the flexibility, commitment and support shown to maintaining the provision of RE within schools throughout the pandemic. Members noted the event had also contained a number of useful workshops for delegates.

Basma El Shayyal (as Chair) advised that she had attended on behalf of Brent SACRE and had found the event to be very positive. As a result of it being hosted online it had also generated a higher level of attendance and participation, which had been much welcomed. Feedback provided following the event from delegates had also been very positive, with members pleased to note the focus and support provided from across the academic sector and more generally in terms of the development and arrangements for delivery of RE and the harnessing of this learning and research.

As no further issues were raised SACRE **RESOLVED** to note the update provided and positive feedback received from the NASACRE Annual Conference.

7. Any other business:

The following issues were raised as matters under Any Other Business:

- In terms of an update on the status of the work being undertaken to complete the agreed syllabus review the Chair advised that progress continue to be made with the current proposal to schedule an Agreed Syllabus Conference during the Autumn term. Brian Grady (OD Safeguarding, Partnership & Strategy) advised that in advance of the ASC being scheduled further updates would continue to be provided through the groups who had been involved in the development and consultation on the syllabus undertaken to date, in order to ensure a consistency of approach.
- A question was raised regarding the use of RE as a means of facilitating the provision of information and encouraging the take up of the Covid vaccine amongst different faith groups and young people across the borough. Whilst this was not felt to be an issue which fell directly within the remit of SACRE or RE and collective worship, members noted the efforts being made to tackle the issue through PHSE discussions within schools and also through a series of specific events and seminars aimed at different faith and age groups across the borough along with the role of the Multi Faith Forum in this respect.
- Members received a brief update on progress in developing the content of the website aimed at supporting the new agreed syllabus once approved. It was noted that a significant amount of content had been developed and would be available for teachers to access with the suggestion that this was demonstrated to support the next Agreed Syllabus Conference, once scheduled.

8. Date of Next Meeting

It was noted that future SACRE meetings had been scheduled as follows:

- Thursday, 14 October 2021 - 4.30pm (to be held as an online meeting)
- Thursday 10 February 2022 – 4:30pm (to be held as an online meeting)

The meeting closed at 5.51pm

BASMA ELSHAYYAL

Chair