

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

12 July 2018 (6.00 - 8.00 pm)

Present:

COUNCILLORS:

Judith Holt

CHURCH REPRESENTATIVES:

Mrs Stephanie Ellner (Chairman) and Mike Dean

COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES:

Dr John Lester, Mrs Pamela Coles, Mr Om Dhir, Mr Kevin Walsh, Mrs Jenny Fox, Mrs Dawn Ladbrook, Mr Luthaneal Adams and Barry Smith

TEACHERS:

Clare Beech

Apologies were received for the absence of Councillors Gillian Ford and Philippa Crowder.

All decisions were taken with no votes against.

The Chairman reminded Members of the action to be taken in an emergency.

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE - IF ANY, TO RECEIVE

Apologies for absence were received from Saddhabhaya, John Smailes, Nasir Mubashar, Councillor Philippa Crowder and Councillor Gillian Ford.

2 NEW OR SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

Dawn Ladbrook and Councillor Judith Holt were welcomed as new members.

It was noted that this was the last SACRE meeting for Pamela Coles and Mike Dean.

3 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING

The minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the previous meeting held on 13 March 2018. There were no matters arising.

4 UPDATE ON SCHOOL ACTIVITY

Members agreed to combine both agenda items 4 and 5.

5 LOCAL UPDATES

Members referred to the local update report which had been provided prior to the meeting. Clarification was sought regarding the spelling of God (G-d) in the report and the Professional Advisor, Julia Diamond-Conway explained that many Jewish people referred to God in this way so as to not take His name in vain.

The Professional Advisor reported that the National Holocaust Centre were starting an outreach programme for Key Stage 2 in four East London boroughs including Havering; it was anticipated that this would include an Anne Frank exhibition.

SACRE Members agreed to the Professional Advisor's request to send an email to John Vickers confirming that the film themed on the Baha'i faith through the eyes of children, was an excellent resource.

6 NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Members referred to the report and took a few minutes to discuss in small groups if there were any comments that they wished to raise to the wider group.

A Member stated that the report suggested that academies continued to ignore the statutory requirements in terms of the teaching of religious education. A Professional Advisor responded that academies were free to follow a religious education curriculum of their own choice or indeed write their own however that SACRE would continue to encourage academies to reflect on their teaching practices of religious education as demonstrated by the on-going website checks undertaken by the group. Members noted however that should an academy deliver their own curriculum, there were not set guidelines as to the required content however that the DfE had set out the expectation that there would need to be evidence of progress and that attendance at assemblies which include some religious teaching, was not adequate.

It was noted that more Ofsted Inspectors were now referring to Religious Education in their reports. Members were advised that HMI had increased the profile of Religious Education referring explicitly to the teaching of this subject at a recent Policy Exchange.

A Professional Advisor reported that those academies which had been highlighted as a concern during the website checks had been written to; a number had responded by updating their websites. Those academies who had not responded would be sent a reminder letter. Members noted that once the GCSE results were published in August, SACRE would have 3 comparative data sources; website, school

workforce data and GCSE outcomes to review in order to identify those academies not following the law in the respect of Religious Education teaching. It was agreed that website checks would be taken on an annual basis in the autumn term.

A Member sought clarification regarding a number of professional associations referred to within the report and were advised as follows:

NASACRE – National Association of Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education

AULRE – Association of University Lecturers of Religious Education

AREIAC - Association of Religious Inspection Advisors and Consultants

NATRE – National Association of Teachers of Religious Education

The Professional Advisor confirmed that these associations were not Trade Unions.

Members discussed the definition of ‘analagous’ with reference to the inclusion of Humanism representatives with a SACRE (referring to the Welsh Governments statement that it was for the Local Authority to decide upon the relevant composition of a SACRE) as the definition of how religions defined ‘analagous’ remained vague. A Professional Advisor explained that the guidance also stated that such definition was a matter for each local SACRE and that Havering SACRE, which already welcomed a Humanist representative, had been inclusive of all faiths for some years. A query was made as to whether, in that respect SACRE might need to invite a representative from the ‘Jedi’ religion, for example. The Professional Advisor responded that this would be a decision for the Local Authority to make, and not the SACRE however that this would be very unlikely as there would be the need to evidence that there was such an identifiable community within Havering.

7 ANNUAL REPORT

Members agreed to adopt the report subject to the inclusion of the responses received by academies as a result of the website audits.

8 FEEDBACK FROM THE NASACRE CONFERENCE

Luthaneal Adams was invited to present his feedback following his attendance at the NASACRE Conference held on 24 May 2018, which celebrated the association’s 25th Anniversary. The theme of the conference had been predominantly focused on reflecting the purpose of SACRE especially in the face of current issues around anti-Semitism and Islamophobia, in working together to increase community cohesion.

Details were provided regarding the various speakers and their chosen discussions themes which included the effect of the technological revolution on children and the subsequent generation divide, the role of schools in supporting children's education on coping with the negative elements of social media, and the development of interfaith dialogue.

Members were invited to contact Luthaneal Adams directly if they wished to hear recordings of the discussions undertaken.

It was noted that the recommendation to have a SACRE general email had already been set up with the clerk as its administrator (sacre@haverling.gov.uk). The clerk confirmed that she was happy to forward on emails received, via this inbox to the relevant SACRE Members.

Various materials produced by other SACREs had been brought along for Members to use for ideas which were passed around the group.

The Chairman thanked Luthaneal Adams for the informative report.

9 IDEAS FOR THE YEAR OF BELIEFS

For the benefit of new Members, the Professional Advisor stated that the BBC had named 2019 as the 'Year of Belief's and therefore the SACRE had agreed to celebrate this also, with the specific remit around education, and invited ideas from Members.

Members agreed to setting up stalls which represented a number of different religions including a 'What does Faith taste like' event. Schools would also be invited to submit work for the displays as part of their Religious Education curriculum, which would also encourage parents to attend.

Members agreed that consideration should be given to re-establishing the Michael Edwards Awards (15 years since he had died).

Discussions were held regarding potential venues for the exhibition/stalls including the Queen's Theatre and Romford Market Place. Members noted that security and public liability insurance would need to be considered when looking at venues. It was agreed that transferring the pupils' work to the Central Library after the event would be a great opportunity to extend the event and might also attract further school visits. The Professional Advisor agreed to contact Councillor Gillian Ford to ascertain if there were any Havering events that SACRE could join in with which might avoid the need for additional public liability insurance costs. Luthaneal Adams agreed to speak with potential venues regarding costs and availability for the end of June 2019. The Professional Advisor highlighted that schools would

need to know about the event early in the autumn term in order to provide adequate time for planning. It was anticipated that the event would be advertised via Facebook, Havering Living Magazine and the Havering newsletter. Time FM would also be approached.

It was agreed to have a places of worship directory set up. A template would be distributed by the Professional Advisor for Members to update with their own places of worship details and forward onto colleagues of other faiths to do the same. Members suggested that other places, such as the Swaminarayan Temple in Neasden, should also be included in the directory, as although outside of the borough, were wonderful places to visit.

10 NATRE SEF SUMMARY

It was agreed to defer the discussion around the NATRE SEF Summary to the next meeting.

11 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Members were invited to contact Maureen Smith, Head of Havering Governor Services should they be, or know colleagues who were, interested in becoming school governors as the service was keen to welcome volunteers from diverse groups. Contact could be made via the SACRE email or via the Havering website.

Kevin Walsh reported that the Hornchurch Passion Play would next take place in 2020 however that this September the group were hosting the National Passion Play Trust Conference, which was a great honour.

Members passed on their thanks and gave a fond farewell to both Pamela Coles and Mike Dean as it was their last SACRE meeting. It was noted that there was not currently a replacement representative for the Methodist Church.

12 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The following dates were agreed for future meetings:

Tuesday 25 September 2018: Champion School (to include a website audit exercise)

Thursday 28 February 2019: Venue tbc.

Thursday 16 May 2019: Venue tbc.

All meetings to start at 6pm.

Meeting closed at 8pm.

Chairman