

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

9 November 2023

The hybrid meeting took place at the Romford Baptist Church 'Meeting Place
Café' and via Zoom.

Present:

**Representing Christian denominations and other religious dominations
and beliefs (Group A):**

Wendy Brice-Thompson, Roman Catholic*
Peter Feinson, Baptist
Tariq Mahmood, Muslim Community
Dr John Lester, Baha'i faith
Om Dhir, Hindu
Jenny Fox, Salvation Army
Dawn Ladbrook, Evangelical Free Church*
Barry Smith, United Reform Church*

Representing the Church of England (Group B):

Ruth Everett*
Stephanie Ellner*
Marlene Wylie*

Representing teachers (Group C):

Karen Van Coevorden

Representing the Local Authority (Group D):

Co-opted Member

Sidra Naeem

Professional adviser:

Julia Diamond-Conway (JDC)

Michelle Morgan – Clerk, Havering Governor Services

*via Zoom

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Thanks were passed on to Peter Feinson for welcoming SACRE Members to the Romford Baptist Church café.

As the Chair was not in attendance, the Vice Chair, Dr J Lester agreed to chair the meeting.

Apologies for absence had been received from John Smailes, Kathryn Everitt, Cllr Tumilty, Cllr Taylor, Cllr Garrard and Cllr Ruck, George Prinn and Luthaneal Adams.

Absence from the following Members was noted: Rabbi Lee Sunderland, Samsara Narwhal, Kamal Siddiqui, Nasir Bashar, Pastor Aloysius Peter, Bal Degun, Terry Riches and Cllr McArdle.

As there were no representatives from the Local Authority (Group D), the meeting was not quorate. Any decisions would need to be deferred to the next meeting.

2. NEW OR SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

There were no new or substitute Members.

3. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 21 JUNE 2023 AND MATTERS ARISING

3.1. The minutes of the meeting held on 21 June 2023 were received and agreed as a true record subject to the following amendments:

- Page 11 – remove the wording ‘contrary to law.’
- Page 19 – delete the repeated ‘has been.’

The minutes would be ratified at the next meeting.

ACTION: HGS

3.2. Matters arising from the minutes, not included elsewhere on the agenda, were as follows:

3.2.1. Minutes amendment (minute 3.1, refers): (minute 1, refers): The clerk confirmed that the minutes had been amended as requested.

3.2.2. Collective worship (minute 3.2.3, refers): The clerk advised that the Collective Worship training had been postponed due to low bookings from governors; no SACRE Members had also agreed to attend. It was anticipated that session would take place on 31

January 2024 however the date had yet to be confirmed by the trainer. The clerk would confirm once the date had been agreed.

ACTION: HGS

- 3.2.3. Faith Inspired Art (minute 5, refers): This had been included in the Havering SACRE Action Plan.
- 3.2.4. Meeting options (minute 9, refers): Thanks to Peter Feinson, who had organised the venue and technology, the meeting was taking place in a hybrid format.
- 3.2.5. SACRE training (minute 9.3, refers): The clerk confirmed that the training information had been circulated as requested.

4. UPDATE ON SCHOOL ACTIVITY

SACRE Members received the report on the Local Activity. SACRE Members agreed that the report was useful and interesting.

5. NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

SACRE Members received the report on national developments.

Concern was raised by SACRE Members regarding the Open Letter that was published on 18 September by the Daily Telegraph; more than 30 MPs and peers had written to the Education Secretary, highlighting that school pupils received tokenistic religious education or none. JDC responded that this had been raised as an issue, however it did not necessarily refer to schools within Havering.

Referring to the DfE guidance on allowing Humanists to be part of SACREs, Members were pleased to highlight that Havering SACRE had always welcomed Humanist Members.

It was questioned whether any schools within Havering were part of The Global Neighbours accreditation scheme. JDC responded that Christian Aid would be able to share that information.

JDC highlighted the RE Hubs which were now live. The website (www.re-hubs.uk) had a section where schools could look at options for school visits to places of worship and encouraged SACRE Members to join this platform. Further details were provided on the training that had to be undertaken in order to be included on the website, however this was online and not onerous and had been established to ensure pupils' safety. This kite mark would be valid for 2 years. JDC highlighted that it would be beneficial to register with the RE Hubs early as the project had only

recently been established and therefore schools would be looking to build relationships with places of worship.

JDC also referred to the current recruitment crisis as not enough people were applying to be secondary teachers of Religious Education. Some universities who had training courses were no longer running them due to low interest. JDC advised that, unlike other subjects RE students had not received any bursaries, however from next year, a £10K bursary would be available.

A SACRE Member asked if schools in Havering had specialist RE teachers. JDC explained that this was an area for SACRE to monitor. It was suggested that SACRE Members may wish to consider sending out a questionnaire to schools to seek some clarification regarding this. It was noted that the National Association of Teachers had decided not to fight the issue about HLTAs teaching RE as it had been evidenced that many HLTAs were very committed to and enthusiastic about teaching RE. It would be interesting to find out the profile within Havering regarding the percentage of HLTAs teaching RE; this could also be ascertained within a questionnaire.

Referring to the option of sending out a questionnaire, a SACRE Member asked what SACRE would do with the information received. JDC advised that this would be something that SACRE would need to discuss. It was agreed that potential questions for the survey would need to be agreed at the next meeting so that the survey could be distributed in the summer term. The Local Authority would need to be advised that SACRE would be running this survey.

ACTION: HGS

6. ANNUAL REPORT 2022-2023

The draft Annual Report 2022-2023 was received. Thanks were passed on to JDC for putting together the report. The Chair would be asked to complete the foreword. It was noted that the report needed to be signed off by 31 December 2023 and therefore approval would need to be sought from Group D (Local Authority).

ACTION: JDC/HGS

7. SACRE ACTION PLAN

JDC reported that the draft SACRE action plan had been written with the Chair over the summer.

- **Objective 1: Support and monitor quality and standards of Religious Education in Schools**

Website monitoring would be discussed later in the meeting. The findings of the website monitoring would be discussed in the spring term. It was hoped that workforce and exam data would also be available in the spring term.

- **Objective 2: Monitor Collective Worship and develop protocols**

Training had been tentatively booked for 31 January 2024.

- **Objective 3: Improve SACRE impact and effectiveness. A formal determination process would also need to be agreed.**

JDC suggested that mentors could be established to support any new SACRE Members. R Everett, S Naeem and T Mahmood agreed to take on the role.

It was agreed that the SACRE Self Evaluation would be on the agenda for the spring term so that SACRE Members could continue to 'deep dive' into a particular aspects of the SEF at each meeting.

ACTION: HGS

8. DETERMINATION FORM PLAN

It was noted that SACRE needed to advise the Local Authority that Havering needed to have a determination process in place. SACRE would offer to design the form for schools to complete.

ACTION: HGS/JDC

JDC advised that a working group would need to be established to work on the form and the technical side of distribution. K Van Coevorden, M Wylie and J Lester agreed to meet to discuss.

ACTION: K Van Coevorden / J Lester / M Wylie

9. SCHOOL WEBSITE MONITORING 2023-2024

SACRE Members were linked to specific schools; website audits would be returned to the clerk by 29 February 2024. The clerk would also resend out the template.

ACTION: HGS / SACRE Members

10. ART COMPETITION

The Chair referred to a previous art competition that had been held in 2019 and suggested that another competition/event could be established to run in conjunction with Havering's aim to become the London Borough of Culture.

JDC welcomed the idea although stressed that the previous competition had a significant lead in time and RE Subject Leaders had discussed at length. Despite Subject Leaders being very keen to participate, due to time limitations, only 4 schools had sent in pictures. Therefore, it might be more beneficial to provide some resources for the Subject Leaders to complete as part of their normal lessons.

SACRE Members split into 2 groups (those online and those attending in person) to discuss potential options. Options shared were noted as follows:

- Having an exhibition instead of a competition
- SACRE Members could offer a piece of art/poetry linked to their religious world view for pupils to discuss/share their observations. Pupils could then send back how they have been inspired by the object in any form (pictures/poems/art work). It was agreed that the 'Picture in Christianity' resource would be brought to the next meeting as an example.

ACTION: JDC

- Designs could be drawn around poems.
- Examples were given regarding Arabic calligraphy and Islamic Art resources that could be used.
- A different approach would be used according to different year groups.

It was agreed that it would be preferable to take time to discuss this further with the view to launch from September 2024. The competition/exhibition would be discussed again in the spring term.

ACTION: HGS

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

S Naeem invited SACRE Members to the Inter Faith Quiz Night which was taking place the following week.

12. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the date of the next meeting had been set as Tuesday 19 March 2024 however this was during Ramadan. Consideration would be given regarding the potential to change the date or the time of the meeting.

ACTION: JDC / Chair

In terms of venue, Hylands School would likely be available on Wednesdays and The Salvation Army on a Monday or Thursday.

The meeting closed at 8pm.

Chair.....

Date.....

**Chair's
Initials**