

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
The Evangelical Free Church, 180 Brentwood Road, RM1 2RT
3 December 2019 (Times Not Specified)**

Present:

COUNCILLORS:

Gillian Ford (The Local Authority), Stephanie Nunn and Judith Holt

CHURCH REPRESENTATIVES:

Mrs Stephanie Ellner, Ruth Everett, Marlene Wylie and Wendy Brice-Thompson

COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES:

Feinson, Dr John Lester, Mr Om Dhir, Mr Kamal Siddiqui, Mrs Jenny Fox,
Mrs Dawn Ladbrook, Mr John Smailes and Mr Luthaneal Adams

TEACHERS:

Clare Beech

Apologies were received for the absence of Councillors .

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

Mrs S Ellner (Chair) welcomed all to the meeting and for the benefit of those new to the group, introductions were made. It was noted that Ms M Wylie had sent her apologies that she would be arriving to the meeting late.

Apologies for absence were received from Saddhabhaya, Mr N Mubashar, Mr B Smith and Mrs K Fanning.

It was noted that Mr S Narwal, Mr T Mahmood, Rabbi L Sunderland, Pastor A Peter, Mrs S Freeman, Mrs L Linton, Cllr P Crowder and Cllr T Lewal were not in attendance but no apologies for absence had been received.

2 NEW OR SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

The Chair welcomed Ms K Everitt and Ms T Riches, both RE subject leaders who were observing the meeting. Members also welcomed Mr

Atta Ullah-Issah who was representing the Ahmadiyya Muslim faith in the absence of Mr N Mubashar.

3 **ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR**

4 **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING**

1.1. The notes of the meeting held on 16 May 2019, were agreed as a true record subject to the amendment that Mrs J Fox had sent her apologies in advance of the meeting and that the Commission for RE report had been, rather than would be, published (page 4).

1.2. Matters arising from the minutes (not included elsewhere on the agenda) were noted as follows:

1.2.1. Letter of congratulations (minute 4.2, refers): Mrs J Diamond-Conway reported that to the best of her knowledge there had been no letters sent to schools congratulating them on their results when they had achieved higher than the national average. Members agreed to refer back to this when next reviewing school outcomes.

1.2.2. Year of Beliefs Art display (minute 5, refers): It was noted that Frances Bardsley Academy for Girls had been approached to facilitate a session for parents to view the exhibition.

1.2.3. HSIS Termly update (minute 5, refers): It was noted that not all Members had received the termly HSIS report and therefore the clerk agreed to redistribute.

Action: HGS

1.2.4. Resource catalogue (minute 6, refers): Mrs D Weston agreed to share the link to the resource catalogue via GoogleDocs.

Action: Mrs D Weston

1.2.5. NASACRE Conference (minute 7, refers): Mrs J Diamond-Conway agreed to share any resources from the NASACRE Conference.

Action: Mrs J Diamond-Conway

1.2.6. Membership (minute 11.1, refers): Members noted that approval had been received from the Diocese for Mrs W Brice-Thompson to become the Roman Catholic representative on SACRE.

Mrs J Diamond-Conway reported that she had attempted to contact Rabbi L Sunderland to discuss his representation however had not been successful. Members agreed that it was important to ensure that the Jewish Community were represented and as the Rabbi had not attended, nor sent apologies for over 3 meetings, it was agreed that Mrs J Diamond-Conway would contact the Board of Deputies to request a new representative.

Action: Mrs J Diamond-Conway

5 LOCAL UPDATES

Members acknowledged receipt of the local updates report. There were no questions raised.

6 AGREED SYLLABUS

Mrs J Diamond-Conway referred to the previous meeting, where Members had agreed not to make a decision regarding the future syllabus as more guidance was required regarding available resources and assessment. Members acknowledged that significant focus within the New Ofsted Framework regarding the need to demonstrate a broad and balanced curriculum and that inspections would now include a 'deep dive' into foundation subjects which might include RE. As a result, subject leaders would need to be able to articulate effectively the intent, implementation and impact of their curriculum. In the most recent survey, teachers had therefore requested to retain the current curriculum which, although fairly complex, was now embedded. Alternatively, Members were advised that the decision could be made to look at a new, simpler curriculum which might be easier to explain however would mean that teachers would have to start afresh.

Teachers present urged caution, explaining that staff were currently confident with the current curriculum in place and that although minor changes would be welcomed by staff it would be an incredible amount of work to put in place a whole new curriculum at a time when there were already a significant number of changes being introduced as a result of the new framework. Teachers reiterated that the aims and intent within the current syllabus were strong. Members agreed therefore to wait to gain more feedback following Ofsted Inspections and review next actions in the spring term.

Action: HGS

Mrs J Diamond-Conway reported that the RE training scheduled by HSIS over the autumn term had been welcomed; other boroughs had not been so proactive in supporting subject leaders. Training dates for the spring term were available on the portal and teachers were encouraged to attend.

7 NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Members noted that the National Updates document had been circulated with the agenda. Mrs J Diamond-Conway reported that she would welcome any response with regards to the following areas:

- How SACRE could improve the recruitment of trainee teachers of RE;
- What response SACRE Members had with regards to the Welsh consultation; and
- How could SACRE members use and promote the new online resource – Discovering Sacred Texts.

Mrs D Weston reported that one of the greatest challenges was to increase the number of secondary RE teachers who were specialists in the subject as currently 53% of RE was taught by teachers with no postgraduate level qualification in the subject; this ultimately would impact on the quality of teaching and pupils' learning and understanding. However Mrs D Weston was pleased to report, that partially helped by the introduction of a bursary, the recruitment of RE teachers had improved significantly over the previous year. In response to a question, Mrs D Weston confirmed that a number of these trainee teachers were based in London and therefore would possibly look to teach in Havering.

Cllr Judith Holt arrived.

Members agreed that it would be beneficial to put together a document which encouraged trainee teachers to come and work in Havering.

Action: Mrs D Weston/Mrs J Diamond-Conway / Chair

Members asked if secondary RE teachers had access to a termly meeting like their primary colleagues. It was noted that it was often more complex to cover classes in secondary schools however that having an annual session might be more accessible if appropriate notice was given. Mrs D Weston explained that in the past, she had held a Youth SACRE Conference which had enabled staff in attendance to have their own sessions; this might be an option for secondary and primary

colleagues. Mrs R Everett explained that she might be able to support with contacting secondary colleagues as a result of contacts in her role.

8 ANNUAL REPORT

Members received and agreed the annual report; there were no questions.

9 YEAR OF BELIEFS

Members were invited to look at the top 42 entries from the school competition in order to identify the top three.

First prize – Arwen

Second prize – Nevada

Joint third prize – Olivia Scarlett and Niyah

It was noted that there had been over 150 entries in total which had been deemed a great success. Moving forward, Members acknowledged that schools required more notice to contribute to and attend such events as numerous risk assessments and other reports had to be completed in advance. Thanks were passed onto the Frances Bardsley Academy for Girls and Havering Library for exhibiting the work.

10 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Mr K Siddiqui agreed to send his identified errors within the syllabus with regards to the Sunni Muslim faith to the Chair and Mrs J Diamond-Conway.

Action: Mr K Siddiqui

Dr J Lester provided all members with a leaflet on 'The Shrine of the Báb in Haifa' and on the 'Week of Prayer for World Peace 2019-2020.'

11 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Chair agreed to circulate dates of the remaining meetings of the 2019-20 academic year.

Action: Chair

The meeting closed at 7.30pm.

**Standing Advisory Council on Religious
Education, 3 December 2019**

Chairman