

Public Document Pack

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
Computer Suite LT1, Coopers Company and Coborn School, St Mary's Lane,
Upminster, Essex, RM14 3HS
19 October 2017 (6.00 - 7.40 pm)**

Present:

**Representing Christian denominations and other religions and beliefs
(Group A)**

Mrs Christine Seymour
Dr John Lester
Mr Kevin Walsh
Mr Nasir Mubashar
Mrs Jenny Fox
Mr John Smailes
Mr Lutheneal Adams

Representing the Church of England (Group B)

Mrs Stephanie Ellner (Chairman)
Mr Mike Dean

Representing Teacher & Head Teacher Associations (Group C)

Ms Kirsty Fanning

Representing the Local Authority (Group D)

Councillor Gillian Ford
Councillor Jason Frost
Councillor Dilip Patel

Also present:

Louise Linton
Julia Diamond-Conway, SACRE Professional Adviser
Deborah Weston, SACRE Professional Adviser
Anthony Clements, Clerk to SACRE

All decisions were taken with no votes against.

11 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE - IF ANY, TO RECEIVE

Apologies were received from Pamela Coles, Reverend Lee Sunderland, Kamal Siddiqui, Saddhabaya, Dawn Ladbrook, Barry Smith, Linda Munday, Councillor Joshua Chapman and Councillor Wendy Brice-Thompson.

12 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING

It was noted that Mike Dean was present at the meeting. The minutes of the meeting of SACRE held on 19 July 2017 were otherwise agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

It was noted that monitoring questionnaires were in the process of being developed.

13 ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR

Stephanie Ellner was elected unanimously as Chairman of Havering SACRE.

It was agreed that a decision on the appointment of the Vice-Chairman of Havering SACRE would be deferred until the next meeting.

14 LOCAL DEVELOPMENTS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The recent meeting of primary subject leads had been very positive, focussing on raising the profile of RE in schools. Local initiatives were discussed as was the NATRE 'Strictly RE' conference. Links with the Inter-Faith Forum were considered and it had also been noted that a series of free films on religion topics aimed at primary school children had been produced by the BBC.

The next meeting on 30 January would be focussing on how RE visitors to schools were welcomed and on a new resource covering places of worship. Thanks were recorded to Saddhabaya for his input into the Buddhism resource.

There were not currently any multi-faith assemblies in Havering although this was being worked towards.

15 NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

There had been a decrease of 4% in RE A-level entries although this had been mainly due to demographic changes. AS-level entries had fallen by

54% but there were now fewer entries for all AS-level subjects. It was noted that Religious Studies A-level was often seen as suitable preparation for university subjects.

GCSE entrants had fallen by 4.6%, the first fall in 10 years. It was noted that entries had in fact risen in Wales with the fall being confined to England. It was felt this may be due to the introduction of the E-Bacc exam in England.

The BBC-produced films were also discussed as was a series of 26 short films that had been made for RE pupils at Key Stage 3.

The State of the Nation Report had found that around 25% of schools were not providing weekly RE lessons and for Academies and Free Schools, this rose to 34%. Some 28% of secondary schools also had no dedicated RE lessons. 21% of Agreed Syllabus schools had admitted they provided zero hours RE which meant they were not complying with the law. At Key Stage 4, 20% of agreed syllabus schools and 43% of Academies were not offering RE.

NATRE had made a complaint to a school about the lack of RE being offered and this was now with the Secretary of State. Data for Havering schools could be looked at by SACRE including websites. Schools not apparently offering RE could then be written to and asked for comments.

A member felt that RE as it was currently taught did not have any impact on the behaviour of children. It was pointed out however that the Havering curriculum did focus on ideas that could be learnt from religions. Values should be taught across all subjects however. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development was important in OFSTED inspections and a member added that Physical, Social and Health Education (PHSE) could become a statutory subject.

The report of the Commission on Religious Education had been published and comments could be made on the report until December 2017. Recommendations of the report covered having a national entitlement to RE for all schools, holding schools to account for their provision and quality of RE, a potential new Key Stage 4 qualification for RE, a national plan to improve the teaching and learning of RE and a renewed and expanded role for SACRE. SACRE members were encouraged to submit comments on the report and the clerk would forward the report to the group.

16 MONITORING AND EVALUATION: SCHOOL WEBSITES

The group viewed various school websites and found that many schools gave only very little information on the RE curriculum that they offered. Schools such as Frances Bardsley and Sacred Heart did give extensive information but there appeared for example to be no information concerning RE on the Royal Liberty School website. The website of Harrow Lodge Primary School was also found to have a comprehensive section on RE.

It was agreed that the professional advisers would write on behalf of SACRE to those schools identified as giving cause for concern. The remainder of Havering schools would have their website RE information reviewed at a future SACRE meeting.

17 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Thanks were recorded to Dr Lester for circulating the Bahai faith video which was felt to be of very high quality.

It was agreed that activities regarding how to be an effective SACRE would be undertaken at the next meeting.

18 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would be held on Tuesday 13 March at 6 pm, venue to be confirmed.

Chairman