

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

28 February, 2019 (6.00pm – 8.00pm)

Present:

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

Dr John Lester, Baha'i faith
Om Dhir – Hindu
Sansar Narwal - Sikh
Mr Kamal Siddiqui, Sunni Muslim
Saddhabhaya, Buddhist
Mr John Smailes, Evangelical Free Church
Mr Barry Smith, United Reformed Church

Representing the Church of England (Group B):

Stephanie Ellner (Chair)

Representing teachers (Group C):

No representative in attendance

Representing the Local Authority (Group D):

Councillor Stephanie Nunn

Professional advisers:

Julia Diamond-Conway
Deborah Weston

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Chair, Stephanie Ellner welcomed everyone.

Apologies for absence were received from Jenny Fox, Dawn Ladbrook, Luthaneal Adams, Clare Beech and Councillor Judith Holt.

The following members had not sent apologies however were absent from the meeting: Tariq Mahmood, Rabbi Lee Sunderland, Pastor Aloysius Peter, Nasir Mubashar, Sue Freeman, Linda Munday, Kirsty Fanning, Louise Linton and Councillors Gillian Ford, Philippa Crowder and Tele Lawal.

**Chair's
Initials**

It was noted that the meeting was inquorate as there was no representative from Group C, Teacher Representatives, in attendance and that this was the second meeting in succession which had been inquorate. Members agreed to hold the meeting but recognised that any decisions would need to be ratified at the next meeting.

2. MEMBERSHIP OF SACRE

Concern was expressed at the level of attendance at SACRE meetings and it was noted that some members had not attended for more than a year. It was suggested that with such a length of absence perhaps there was a need to change the venue, day and time of the meeting to enable more people to attend. It was agreed that an email should be sent to all members of SACRE to seek their views on the meeting arrangements to determine whether it was possible to make it easier for more people to attend. It was also agreed that members needed to be reminded about the expectation that they send apologies in advance if they do not intend to attend the meeting.

ACTION: Clerk / Chair

It was highlighted that individuals could be encouraged to send a substitute representative, subject to the terms of the Constitution. It was suggested that if the Constitution doesn't allow substitutes perhaps a named reserve would be acceptable. It was agreed that the Constitution would be reviewed and members advised accordingly.

ACTION: Clerk / Chair

It was noted that a replacement for Mike Dean had not yet been appointed. It was agreed that Marlene Wylie would be a suitable person to approach as a potential member of SACRE. DW undertook to make an initial approach and advise the Clerk who would then contact the Diocese regarding the nomination.

ACTION: DW / Clerk

Following Kevin Walsh's resignation, there was also a vacancy for a Catholic Church representative. It was agreed that the Diocese should be approached for a nomination and the Clerk undertook to contact Robert Simpson, Director of Education.

ACTION: Clerk

The Chair advised that she had received, via the Clerk, an email from Luthaneal Adams, Pagan Federation representative, advising that he would be travelling abroad for 18 months but would very much like to remain a member of SACRE and requesting that his membership be

retained and his apologies accepted for the duration of his absence. Members agreed to the request but suggested that a substitute be nominated to attend in his absence. It was agreed that the Clerk would advise Mr Adams of this decision and seek the details of an identified person to attend the meetings in his absence.

ACTION: Clerk

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING

The minutes were noted as an accurate record of the previous meeting held on 25 September, 2018 subject to amending the spelling of Ruth Everett's name. It was acknowledged that due to fact that the meeting and the previous meeting were inquorate, the formal approval of the minutes of both the meeting held in September and on 12 July, 2018 could not be formally agreed and would need to be considered at the next meeting.

Mr Siddiqui wished to record that he did not consider the comment on page 2 of the minutes of the meeting held on 25 September, 2018 regarding the difference between Sunni and Shiite Muslims to be accurate. Members noted this concern but agreed that the minutes were agreed to be an accurate record of the last meeting even though it was not possible for them to be signed.

4. LOCAL UPDATES

The written paper circulated with the agenda was received and noted.

JDC advised that local primary RE teachers were interested in the proposed art competition to celebrate the Year of Beliefs but needed to know where to send artwork and whether the size of the artwork was to be capped. It was agreed that the maximum size of an individual piece of work should be no larger than A3 (including 3D items). John Smailes suggested that the work could be displayed at the Evangelical Free Church.

It was agreed that the closing date for the receipt of work would be 31 July, 2019 and it would be the responsibility of each school to seek parental permission for the display of their child's work.

After some discussion and consideration of options, it was decided that members of SACRE would judge the art work at the September meeting.

It was noted that the Locally Agreed Syllabus runs until 2020 and therefore the syllabus needs to be reviewed. A teacher survey will run until 31 March, 2019. So far, 5 responses have been received. Four

responses were that the current syllabus is either very or sufficiently useful. The fifth response was from a governor and therefore from a different perspective. The responses had highlighted, that teachers are very positive about the units in the syllabus which focus on particular beliefs. Teachers would like more information on assessment. It is hoped that there would be more responses to share by the next meeting.

It was acknowledged that the syllabus was devised in collaboration with Redbridge. The view was expressed that if parties are generally happy with the current syllabus then there may not be any necessity to make any changes. It was noted that it might be helpful to ask questions of schools regarding budget provision for RE.

5. NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The written paper circulated with the agenda was received and noted.

NATRE's view was that the proposed new Ofsted framework and handbook will result in schools being held to account in RE. The framework is still out for consultation and SACRE members were encouraged to respond. DW agreed to provide details for the Clerk to circulate of the appropriate link for members to access the consultation.

ACTION: DW / Clerk

There was a discussion about the level of RE training given to trainee teachers which was considered to be minimal. It was agreed that teacher training should be an agenda item for the next meeting.

ACTION: Clerk

SN advised that he would be happy to arrange visits to the Sikh temple for groups of teachers.

JDC advised that Claire Clinton, the RE adviser in Newham, was the London Ambassador for the National Infrastructure Project. Subject leaders meetings in each LA would be reviewed. It was noted that there was a need to consider how useful meetings could be held for secondary colleagues.

JDC advised SACRE members of the Primary 1000 national project to help primary schools who recognise the need to improve their RE provision. Any primary school which hasn't engaged with NATRE for three years will be offered two year membership for £50. Membership will enable the school to receive 6 books for teachers, access to online RE resources and access to training. JDC undertook to contact NATRE for a list of schools in Havering which would be eligible for the reduced

membership offer so that the schools could be advised of the offer available to them.

ACTION: JDC

6. THE YEAR OF BELIEFS

There was a discussion about the allocation of tasks for the proposed activities to celebrate the Year of Beliefs. It was acknowledged that the paid advisers didn't have the time or capacity to lead and it was for the membership to take ownership of any event.

BS advised that the United Reformed Church was willing to run a stall.

It was highlighted that a Humanist UK representative was needed and JL undertook to seek a nomination from the Humanist Inter Faith Group.

ACTION: JL

Om Dhir left the meeting

The offer of JL and JS to explore the necessary arrangements for an event to be held at the Queen's Theatre was gratefully accepted. It was suggested that Tuesday 25 or Wednesday 26 September or the Tuesday or Wednesday the following week would be suitable dates.

ACTION: JL and JS

Councillor Nunn offered to support JL and JS in discussions at the Queen's Theatre. It was also suggested that Councillor Ford may be able to assist with arrangements.

7. EXAM DATA

Members were advised that schools with above national average data in relation to RE examination results had received a letter of congratulations from the Chair of SACRE.

Those schools which had performed particularly poorly would be offered support.

JDC and DW would review the context of individual schools and follow up where there are gaps in provision.

ACTION: JDC / DW

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

John Lester advised that it was the 200th anniversary of the Bab, the Herald of the Baha'i Faith.

9. DATE OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The following date was noted for the next meeting:

Thursday 16 May 2019 at 6.00 pm: Venue tbc.