

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

29 June 2021(6.00pm – 7.10pm)

The meeting took place via zoom (video-conferencing platform)

Present:

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

Wendy Brice-Thompson, Roman Catholic (Chair)
Mr Om Dhir, Hindu
Peter Feinson, Baptist
Jenny Fox, Salvation Army
Dawn Ladbrook, Evangelical Free Church
Dr John Lester, Baha'i faith
Tariq Mahmood, Sunni Muslim
Nasir Mubasher, Ahmadiyya Muslim
John Smailes, Evangelical Free Church

Representing the Church of England (Group B):

Ruth Everett
Marlene Wylie, Church of England

Representing teachers (Group C):

Clare Beech
Kathryn Everitt

Representing the Local Authority (Group D):

Councillor Philippa Crowder
Councillor Osman Dervis
Councillor Jason Frost
Councillor Robby Misir
Councillor Viddy Persaud

Professional advisers:

Julia Diamond-Conway (JDC)
Deborah Weston (DW)

Michelle Morgan – Clerk

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from the following; Barry Smith, Stephanie Ellner, Councillor Holt, Terry Riches and Rabbi Lee Sunderland

The absence of the following Members was noted; Luthaneal Adams, Sansar Narwal, Pastor Aloysius Peter, Kamal Siddiqui and Kirsty Fanning.

2. NEW OR SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

Councillor Robby Misir was welcomed to the meeting as a substitute for Councillor Judith Holt.

3. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 23 MARCH 2021 AND MATTERS ARISING

3.1. The notes of the meeting held on 23 March 2021 were received and agreed. It was however noted that Ruth Everett had technical issues accessing the meeting and therefore had not sent in her apologies in advance.

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

3.2.1. Minutes (Minute 3.1, refers):

The Minutes had been watermarked as approved.

3.2.2. National Developments in Religious Education (Minute 8, refers)

The Chair reported that she had not yet received a response from the Arts Council. Cllr Frost explained that he had raised the issue with the Havering Arts Council however that was some time ago acknowledging that many of their activities had been curtailed due to the pandemic.

4. AGREED SYLLABUS

Julia Diamond-Conway referred to the update provided in the local report with regards to the Agreed Syllabus. It was noted that the Lead Member for Education had authorised a Director to make the decision regarding the syllabus which had now been agreed. Formal written confirmation was awaited from Susan Sutton (Quality Assurance Manager) before work commenced.

It was hoped that 9 units of work and resources would be written and sourced by the end of the autumn term in readiness for sharing with staff in the spring term. A further 9 units would be prepared in readiness for the

summer term where staff would be consulted and feedback sought. It had not yet been decided how staff would give their feedback however as there would be an increase in Subject Leader meetings from September (2 per term) it was envisaged that these sessions could facilitate this work. The Agreed Syllabus would be launched in 2022.

Deborah Weston confirmed that Redbridge had given their approval to move forward with the work. The Chair had also written the foreward.

The Chair congratulated Julia Diamond-Conway and Deborah Weston for the great progress made.

5. UPDATE ON SCHOOL ACTIVITY

Questions and/or comments were invited from SACRE Members with regards to the Local Update report.

Members welcomed the more cross curricular approach to Religious Education. This was echoed by Julia Diamond-Conway who stated that student's understanding of the importance of faith in human society was integral to discussions in all subjects for example, English, Drama and History. A number of resources had been researched and example novels were provided where the main characters were from different faith backgrounds such as;

Planet Omar – Zanib Mian

The Proudest Blue – Ibtihaj Muhammad and S K Ali

Tale of Angelina Brown – David Almond

The Chair emphasised the importance that children were able to recognise themselves in the texts read at school. The diversity in texts was welcomed by all SACRE Members.

Marlene Wylie reported that the expectation within the New Ofsted Framework was for schools to make meaningful cross curricular links. It was noted that Hallmead School had arranged a session for secondary SLTs with Christine Council who had been the keynote speaker at NATRE.

6. NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

SACRE Members received the National Update (Summer 2021) report and noted the key outcomes of Ofsted's RE research review (published on 12 May 2021).

Julia Diamond-Conway highlighted the high quality video resources referred to in the report.

7. NATRE RESEARCH REVIEW

Deborah Weston advised that the 7 areas of the NATRE Research Review (which had included a comprehensive appendix explaining the legal context of RE and inspection arrangements) had been identified for further discussion in break out rooms.

SACRE Members were given 10 minutes to discuss before feeding back to the group.

A summary of the feedback is provided below:

- **Prioritising RE in the curriculum;**
 - Inevitably, the prioritisation of RE in schools would depend on the management of each school and the enthusiasm of the Subject Leader.
 - Teachers had to ensure a full coverage of the RE curriculum. Teaching of different Faiths had to be balanced. Although it was challenging to cover the number of religions, adequate time had to be allocated to each in order to have enough depth of knowledge to understand a particular Faith.
- **The importance of CPD and subject knowledge;**
 - CPD for staff was paramount however it also had to be appropriate for each different member of staff as some teachers would not have received specialist teaching in RE. It was also important to make connections with religious establishments who could support this understanding and even offer support by coming into school. Tariq Mahmood shared his experience of going into schools to talk about his Faith and work with the Islamic Centre.
 - Other methods of teaching could be impactful for pupils such as looking at different types of food to being a certain faith to life.
- **Three types of knowledge;**
 - The importance of clarifying what was meant by each of the terms; 'substantive', 'ways of knowing' and 'personal knowledge' was noted.
- **Collectively enough;**

- It was not possible at primary level to ‘dig deep’ into all religions; this would be undertaken at secondary level on the basis that as pupils move through year groups, their understanding would develop.
 - A group highlighted that none of them had been confident in having a true knowledge of the secondary landscape within Havering in terms of the RE CPD offer.
 - What is connective enough? A group had explored how much time could be spent on each religion? There were 9 recognised world religions; do you cover them all on a more superficial level or take a few at a deeper level? Would this also depend on the context of each school and its community? It was felt that it would be beneficial to explore common aspects of belief and to give students time to acquire knowledge and then challenge assumptions. The concern was also raised about how to best introduce more minority religions.
- **Balance;**
 - Thanks were passed onto teachers for the amazing job they do in ensuring good quality RE in Havering schools. Going out to visit religious buildings/places of worship was another way to give greater context to different faiths.
 - **Weak Framing;**
 - **School decisions that limit high quality RE;**

SACRE Members were thanked for their contribution to the discussion.

Clarification was given as to the meaning of ‘world view’ which referred to both religious and non-religious world views. There ARE 2 different types of ‘world view’ – personal world view which might be shaped by experiences learnt from parents, friends and life experiences and the other type was institutional; the view of lots of people such as the ‘Christian world view’ or the ‘Humanist’ for example.

It was agreed that at the next meeting a video would be shown to SACRE Members to give further clarification.

ACTION: HGS

8. VIRTUAL VISITORS AND VISITS PROJECT

SACRE Members were advised that although unfortunately Havering SACRE had not secured the Westhill/NASACRE grant, there were still

some places of worship working on producing some virtual resources; the Synagogue and Islamic Centre. It was noted that the tour of St Andrew's Church had been finalised.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The following additional business was discussed:

- Information from RE Today with regards to anti-racist materials would be shared by Ruth Everett. All secondary colleagues were encouraged to make use of these free resources.

ACTION: R Everett

- The suggestion was made to have a regular article in the HSIS termly update in order to ensure colleagues kept up to date with current RE research. Julia Diamond-Conway responded that she had contributed in the past with updates from SACRE however agreed that an article could be written referring to the RE research.
- The following free resource webpage was shared:
www.reonline.org.uk/research
- SACRE Members were advised that this would be Deborah Weston's last Havering SACRE due to a house move out of the area. The Chair thanked Deborah for her support and guidance which was echoed by all those present.

10. DATES OF MEETINGS IN THE NEXT ACADEMIC YEAR

The following date was noted for the next meeting:

Monday 8 November 2021

The meeting closed at 7.10pm.

Chair.....

Date.....