

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

19 March 2024

The meeting took place via Teams

Present:

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

Wendy Brice-Thompson, Roman Catholic
Peter Feinson, Baptist
Jenny Fox, Salvation Army
Tariq Mahmood, Muslim Community
Barry Smith, United Reformed Church
Pastor Aloysius Peter, Pentecostal Church
John Smailes, Evangelical Free Church

Representing the Church of England (Group B):

Ruth Everett
Stephanie Ellner

Representing teachers (Group C):

Karen Van Coevorden

Representing the Local Authority (Group D):

Councillor Jacqueline McArdle
Councillor David Taylor
Councillor Katharine Tumilty

Co-opted Member

Sidra Naeem

Professional adviser:

Julia Diamond-Conway (JDC)

Michelle Morgan – Clerk, Havering Governor Services

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been received from George Prinn, Dawn Ladbrook, Marlene Wylie, and Dr John Lester.

Absence from the following Members was noted: Om Dhir, Sansar Narwal, Kamal Siddiqui, Rabbi Lee Sunderland, Nasir Mubashar, Luthaneal Adams, Bal Degun, Kathryn Everitt, Terry Riches, Councillor Garrard, and Councillor Ruck.

2. NEW OR SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

There were no new or substitute Members in attendance.

3. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 21 JUNE 2023 AND 9 NOVEMBER 2023 AND MATTERS ARISING

3.1. The minutes of the meeting held on 21 June 2023 were received and agreed as a true record. The minutes had been discussed at the previous SACRE, however, were not approved as the meeting was inquorate.

3.2. The minutes of the meeting held on 9 November 2023 were received and agreed as a true record.

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

3.3.1. Minute amendments, minute 3.1 refers: The clerk confirmed that amendments were made to the Minutes as requested.

3.3.2. Collective Worship (Minute 3.2.2, refers): Training had been provided on 31 January 2024. JDC advised that following the session she had been invited into 2 schools to deliver a session on Collective Worship. The clerk would collate any feedback.

ACTION: HGS

3.3.3. Survey re specialist RE teachers (Minute 5, refers): SACRE Members did not discuss the proposed survey.

3.3.4. Annual Report 2022-2023 (Minute 6, refers): Approval had been received regarding the Annual Report.

3.3.5. Working group (Minute 8, refers): KVC reported that there had not yet been the opportunity to meet with MW and JL to discuss the determination process. JDC made the

recommendation that more SACRE Members could volunteer to join the working party; the Chair confirmed that she would be happy to support. A SACRE Member asked for some terms of reference for the working party. JDC agreed to draft a briefing document.

ACTION: JDC

3.3.6. Website monitoring (Minute 9, refers): The clerk confirmed that a reminder had been sent regarding the website audits.

3.3.7. Art competition (Minute 10, refers): As the meeting was being held virtually, it was agreed that example resources relating to the art competition/exhibition would be brought to the next meeting.

ACTION: JDC

3.3.8. Time of the next meeting (Minute 12, refers): The time and venue for this SACRE meeting had been amended to reflect Ramadan and enable colleagues to break fast at the appropriate time.

4. UPDATE ON SCHOOL ACTIVITY

SACRE Members received the report on the Local Activity.

JDC reported that excellent feedback had been received following the RE Subject Leader training that had been held earlier in the day.

SN referred SACRE Members to a BBC programme she had featured on where she had led a school assembly on Ramadan. A copy of the link would be shared.

ACTION: HGS

JDC advised that the BBC were in the process of uploading RE clips onto their website such as BBC Bite size and BBC Teach. It was noted that the ERA (Education Recording Agency) were normally able to source old clips if requested.

5. NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

SACRE Members received the report on national developments.

Referring to the Ofsted national findings listed in the report around the teaching of RE in schools, SACRE Members were disappointed to see that many schools were failing to meet the statutory requirement to teach RE to all pupils in all year groups and that pupils were not being taught enough

substance to prepare them to engage in a complex, multi-religious and multi-secular society. A SACRE Member highlighted that with the current conflicts ongoing around the world, the need to encourage discussion amongst young people about different faiths was needed more than ever. It was questioned if the lack of teaching of RE was related to the need for more resources. JDC responded that RE was a subject that was fitted in around the core subjects. At secondary level, even if not taken at GCSE level, pupils should still have Religious Studies, however again, it was often not seen as a priority subject or was referred to as 'life skills' and not explicit enough to be classed as RS.

JDC reported however that Havering did offer quality CPD for RE Subject Leaders and that she provided 1 full day and 6 twilight sessions per year. It was noted that local feedback had been given following Ofsted Inspections, where Subject Leaders had received a 'light dive' into RE and had been able to demonstrate how their pupils had made progress.

A SACRE Member questioned what could be done if schools were not fulfilling their statutory duty. JDC replied that a national contents standard document had been produced to ensure that there was a consistent standard in teaching nationally. Both leading political parties had also stated that education in general would be reviewed following the General Election.

A SACRE Member questioned if Havering was providing enough funding to support the teaching of RE in schools or whether there was a declining standard due to lack of resources. JDC responded that, in terms of CPD and revising the Agreed Syllabus, she felt that Havering was providing adequate funding. However, NASACRE had recently put out a FOI (Freedom of Information) to all Local Authorities and part of the reason was to ascertain the level of funding allocated to RE. It was noted that Havering SACRE did not have a specific budget, however money had always been provided in the past when requested, such as for training. It was anticipated that, once NASACRE had collated the information, Havering would be somewhere in the middle in terms of funding.

A SACRE Member questioned if there was a youth equivalent for the Havering Inter Faith Forum. JDC replied that Newham, for example, had 2 ongoing projects where they had a Youth SACRE and another was Young Ambassadors. It was noted that the roles differed with Youth Ambassadors visiting primary schools to talk about their faiths. Havering SACRE Members might decide to visit Newham to see these projects in action. JDC suggested that establishing a youth project might be an alternative to the previously discussed art competition. This would be considered further at the next meeting.

ACTION: HGS (to include on the agenda)

6. EXAM AND SCHOOL WORKFORCE DATA

A SACRE Member sought clarification on whether the data showed an improvement compared with the previous year however comparative data was not available to scrutinise.

JDC described the triangulation process where SACRE Members would look to compare the number of workforce data hours against the number of pupils taking RE at GCSE level alongside feedback from the website audits; if the evidence suggested low engagement, then SACRE could write to the school to offer support in how to improve. At times, different terminology used by schools meant that it might look as though RE was not covered whereas it may actually be included under 'philosophy and ethics, for example. The Chair and JDC would look at the content of the letters outside of the meeting.

ACTION: JDC / Chair

7. HAVERING SACRE ACTION PLAN

SACRE Members reviewed progress against the Havering SACRE Action Plan noting the 3 key objectives:

- Objective 1: Support and monitor quality and standards of Religious Education in Schools
- Objective 2: Monitor Collective Worship and develop protocols
- Objective 3: Improve SACRE impact and effectiveness

SACRE Members acknowledged that although good progress had been made, there remained a number of outstanding website audits that had yet to be completed. A copy of the template, alongside the list of allocated schools to specific members, would be resent out for reference.

ACTION: HGS

It was noted that plans were in place to establish a formal determination process for Havering schools.

SACRE Members were encouraged to attend the free training that was shared via email and included in the papers for the meeting.

JDC also encouraged SACRE Members to volunteer their time to come along to Subject Leader meetings as this would help inform teachers and also raise the profile of Havering SACRE.

It was noted that the Collective Worship training had been delivered to which governors had been invited; feedback from discussions at Governing Board meetings would be shared once collated.

JDC suggested that SACRE could look to add more teachers onto its membership; new members could be offered a mentor to give them some additional support.

The Chair advised that she had attended a new SACRE Member webinar led by NASACRE, which had been very useful. It was agreed to have training as a standing item on agendas to give Members the chance to feedback on any sessions attended.

ACTION: HGS (for the agenda)

It was agreed that Havering SACRE were making good progress on the action plan.

JDC highlighted that the NASACRE Conference this year had been scheduled for 20 May 2024. JDC encouraged a SACRE Member to come forward and attend the conference on behalf of Havering, and to feedback what they had experienced at the next meeting. Interested parties were asked to advise the clerk by 15 April 2024 if they would like to attend.

8. SACRE SELF EVALUATION

A copy of the review document completed in June 2022 had been included within the pack, however it was agreed that it was time to review again to see where progress had been made. It was agreed to complete this at the summer term meeting. The outcomes would be used to drive the Havering SACRE Action Plan for 2024-2025.

ACTION: HGS (for the agenda)

9. DETERMINATION PROCESS

Those interested in the joining the Working Party would advise the clerk by 15 April 2024.

10. SCHOOL WEBSITE MONITORING 2023-2024

SACRE Members were thanked for completing the website audits; a reminder would be sent out regarding those which remained outstanding.

11. ART COMPETITION/EXHIBITION

As discussed at the previous meeting, although the art competition previously led by SACRE had produced some outstanding work from local schools, feedback was that it was challenging fitting it into an already full curriculum. It had therefore been suggested that a future event would need to be built into the curriculum so that it was not additional work. SACRE Members had agreed that the event could include artwork, poetry or indeed any item of reflection relating to a particular theme. JDC added that another activity could be for schools to have a big display of a particular unit of work which would show off what had already been done; this might also increase the profile of RE in schools. Schools could then be asked to send in a photo of their displays.

A SACRE Member referred back to the idea of establishing a Youth SACRE or Youth Ambassadors, especially as the demographic within Havering had changed significantly; it was important for young people to be able to discuss issues from an educated and informed perspective. It was however acknowledged that this would be a longer-term project. JDC was encouraged to hear enthusiasm for these roles however reiterated that training would need to be put in place for these roles.

It was agreed that SACRE would look to start a creative initiative from September 2024 and that JDC would start to communicate the display focus with Subject Leaders. At the end of the year, it would be possible to make an anthology of the work completed and share as good practice. A prize for the best displays could also be considered.

With regards to the Youth SACRE/Ambassadors, the first step would be to arrange to visit Newham to get a real understanding of the roles. This would be discussed at the next meeting.

Pastor Aloysius Peter and Councillor David Taylor left the meeting at 6.30pm due to other commitments.

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

NS thanked SACRE colleagues for changing the meeting venue and time to accommodate Ramadan; all SACRE Members had been supportive of this change.

13. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as Tuesday 2 July at 6pm. The clerk welcomed SACRE Members to come forward with any offers of venues for future meetings.

The meeting closed at 6.40pm.

Chair.....

Date.....

**Chair's
Initials**