

**THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF KENSINGTON AND CHELSEA
STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION - SACRE**

MINUTES

Meeting RBKC SACRE
Date 8th June 2023
Time of meeting 5:30-7pm
Venue Committee Room 2, Kensington Town Hall / Microsoft Teams (hybrid meeting)

Present:

Committee A (Faiths and Denominations):

- Laurence Julius (LJ), Board of Deputies of British Jews (Chair)
- Naif Sheikh (NSh), Discover Islam
- Alex Stacey (AS), Diocese of Westminster
- Claire Bruce-Lamblin (CBL), Diocese of Westminster

Committee B (Church of England):

- Katrina Quinton (KQ)
- Kathryn Kane (KK), LDBS

Committee C (Teachers): Celia Platt (CP), National Education Union (*joined virtually at 5:58pm*)

Committee D (Local Education Authority): Cllr Roberto Weeden-Sanz (RWS) (*arrived at 5:40pm*)

Co-opted Members:

- Jo Backus (JB), Network of Buddhist Organisations
- Mariano Marcigaglia (MM), Network of Buddhist Organisations (Deputy for JB)

Local Authority Servicing Officers:

- Natalija Sorokina (NS) (Clerk)
- Jackie Saddington (JS)

RE Consultant Adviser: Julia Diamond-Conway (JDC)


Item Number	Minute Content
Item 1: Welcome and apologies	<p>Chair LJ welcomed everyone to the meeting, and everyone introduced themselves.</p> <p>Chair LJ gave a special welcome to CBL and JB, new members on the SACRE. MM advised that he was present at the meeting to be introduced as JB's deputy and that he would attend in future should JB be unavailable for any reason.</p> <p>Chair LJ also gave a special welcome to JDC, RE Adviser, who kindly stepped in to cover for Lesley Prior, the SACRE's long standing RE Adviser of the previous few years.</p>

	<p>Clerk NS informed that, prior to the meeting, formal apologies had been received from Rev Ken Persaud (Group A), Mo O’Donoghue (Group A) and Gillian Berg (co-opted member).</p> <p>Clerk NS confirmed that the meeting would be quorate once CP and Cllr RWS joined the meeting. CP had informed ahead of the meeting that she would join at 6pm due to an overlapping training session, and Cllr RWS had written before the meeting to advise he was running late.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">***</p> <p><i>Post-meeting note:</i> Subsequent to the meeting, Susan Jaff, Group A member/Vice-Chair, explained to Clerk NS she had been waiting in the lobby. NS explained that no notification of this had been received.</p>
<p>Item 2: Membership Update</p>	<p><u>New Members</u></p> <p>CBL and JB were introduced as new members on the SACRE and MM as JB’s deputy under Item 1 above.</p> <p>CBL, JB and MM gave a brief overview of their backgrounds and experiences.</p> <p>JB informed that she had recently been elected as a member of the NASACRE Executive Committee. Both JB and MM are also SACRE members in a couple of other local authorities.</p> <p><u>RE Adviser Update</u></p> <p>JS advised that she had contacted LDBS that day to find out more about Lesley Prior. She was told that Lesley’s situation remained stable albeit challenging. If JS receives any further news, she will share with the SACRE accordingly.</p> <p>JS thanked JDC who kindly agreed to step in to provide cover for the SACRE’s summer term meeting, and JDC thanked everyone for welcoming her.</p>
<p>Item 3: Minutes of the previous meeting and matters arising</p>	<p>Minutes of the spring term SACRE meeting in March 2023 were reviewed and agreed as an accurate record of the meeting. <i>(NB: This was confirmed after both Cllr RWS and CP had joined the meeting, which made the meeting quorate.)</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">→ Clerk NS to upload the minutes of the spring term meeting to the RBKC SACRE website.</p> <p><u>Ramadan Guidance 2023</u></p> <p>NSh apologised for the delay in providing the 2023 guidance document and advised that a draft guidance for the new year would soon be shared with the</p>

	<p>SACRE members. He also informed that, in 2024, Ramadan would start on 10th March and last for 30 days until 8th April.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">→ Discover Islam to provide a revised copy of their Ramadan Guide for Schools 2024 ahead of the SACRE’s autumn term meeting.</p>
<p>Item 4: Update from Chair</p>	<p><u>Feedback from 2023 NASACRE Conference and AGM, including NASACRE Awards for Celia Platt</u></p> <p>Chair LJ invited the members who attended the NASACRE Conference in May to share their feedback.</p> <p>Cllr RWS advised that he found all the conversations from the various SACREs across the country very interesting, and he felt there was a lot to learn from NASACRE. Some of the discussions were about ways in which the SACREs could engage with more schools, including schools which did not necessarily fall in their legal remit.</p> <p>JB advised that work with academies was one of the discussion points. Some SACREs engage with academies in a monitoring capacity.</p> <p>JB further added that the funding of SACREs was also discussed in groups. Some SACREs continue being insufficiently resourced. There is a lot of discrepancy in the support different SACREs are receiving from their local authorities, with some SACREs really struggling. Local authorities need to fulfil their statutory duties by providing adequate funding so it is enough for the SACREs to bring about changes in the curriculum and to be able to involve trained RE professionals in this work.</p> <p>Chair LJ advised that the RBKC SACRE were lucky to have resources such as Clerk, LA Adviser as well as RE Adviser.</p> <p>Chair LJ also congratulated CP on getting the NASACRE Award at the Conference as a result of his nomination. NASACRE issued a certificate which LJ had ready in a frame for CP. LJ and the SACRE members congratulated CP on this well-deserved achievement, and CP thanked everyone for the honour and recognition. She also advised that following the award, she had been added to the Bi-borough good practice register, which meant that if a school in either of the LAs needed support or advice with regards to RE, they would be signposted to CP.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">→ Clerk NS to arrange for the NASACRE Awards Certificate to be passed to CP outside of the meeting.</p> <p><u>NASACRE Training Programme</u></p>

	<p>Chair LJ reminded the SACRE members of the training offer by NASACRE. With the member log-in details, it is also possible to view recordings of the previous sessions held earlier in the year.</p> <p>→ Clerk NS to circulate the link to the training schedule to the members.</p>
<p>Item 5: Locally Agreed Syllabus (LAS)</p>	<p>Below are key points made by RE Adviser JDC:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - As RBKC’s current LAS was adopted in 2020, legally a review of the Syllabus would need to start in 2025. Some SACREs choose to start it a year early. - Some SACREs put together a bespoke syllabus; however, in times of austerity and SACRE funding issues, many choose to adopt an existing syllabus. Some syllabus providers allow adopting SACREs to make more changes to their parent syllabus than others. - It would be good to start the process with some investigations around the wishes of teachers, e.g., whether they would like to continue using the same syllabus, whether they would like something different, or whether they would prefer the same syllabus but with some tweaks, etc. It is acknowledged that teachers have invested time into planning, so a completely new syllabus may cause inconvenience and disruption. - Where JDC supports the work of an Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC), she ensures that there is at least one ASC meeting and vote before the end of the initial 5 years. The vote does not need to be the final decision on which syllabus to go with. It could be to agree to do some research into the different syllabi available, to work with other SACREs, etc. It would be helpful for members to look at a couple of syllabi from other local authorities and bring a shortlist to the meeting. It could then be arranged for those LAs to attend to pitch, which is often a good opportunity to find out additional information to what they have available online. <p>In reviewing the Syllabus, MM suggested taking into account the following report released by the DfE in 2021: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/research-review-series-religious-education</p> <p>Cllr RWS mentioned that he spoke with the Chair of the Westminster SACRE at the NASACRE Conference, who informed that their LAS was in the process of being reviewed. The members spoke about both boroughs having a lot in common and there being some scope in joining the efforts in the syllabus review process. Both LAs previously adopted Hampshire’s <i>Living Difference III</i>, which, as both JS and CP mentioned, also had a positive impact on the effectiveness of the termly Bi-borough RE Good Practice Network meetings.</p> <p>JS mentioned that Ofsted may soon update their inspection framework, which might have an impact on the syllabus choices. JDC advised that while it was important to take into account what Ofsted were saying, they were not to take the lead in the process, and consideration needed to be given to the local context. She said there was not yet a syllabus that had been written for the sole purpose of meeting all the recommendations in the Ofsted Research Review (2021).</p>

	<p>CP, as before, said that Hampshire’s syllabus worked for her school, and they were happy using it. However, the major change in <i>Living Difference IV</i> was in relation to the golden thread concepts which needed to be taught twice per key stage. Repeating them would not work for children, so she would like to know if more support could be provided by Hampshire with the delivery of the golden thread concepts, to ensure that the information felt fresh to children and that they were engaged with it.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">→ Members agreed to have a shortlist of 3-4 syllabi from different LAs with short summaries on each of them ready by Spring 2025. Examples from Hampshire, Hounslow, Norfolk and Newham were mentioned.</p>
<p>Item 6: NASACRE/RE Updates</p>	<p>RE Adviser JDC provided the following updates (including updates from the spring term too):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In November 2022, a Westminster Hall debate took place on Religious Education in Modern Britain. It was good to see RE on the Government’s agenda. - The National Association of Teachers of RE (NATRE) carried out a survey in 2022 on what primary teachers said about RE in their schools. The results were published and can be found here. Some of the highlights included the fact that more primary schools experienced withdrawal from RE; the lack of CPD opportunities for RE teachers and some stats on RE delivery (e.g., RE being delivered by other professionals in schools other than RE teachers), etc. - Census 2021 data was released, and the SACRE discussed this at the spring term meeting. - NATRE’s Spirited Arts Competition is now open for 2023 entries. They need to be submitted by 31st July. - NATRE is conducting a secondary survey to obtain information about the current state of RE in all types of secondary schools. More can be found here. Responses are to be submitted by 31st July. - The previously appointed Ofsted national subject lead for Religious Education has now temporarily moved on, and there is currently an interim lead – Hazel Henson HMI - in place. - The RE Hubs is a new platform dedicated to supporting RE, Religion, Values and Ethics (RVE), and Religion & Worldviews (R&W) teachers and practitioners in the UK. Their mission is to connect those who can provide resources with those who need them. There is a separate London hub. - NATRE are offering a couple of free webinars for ECTs for RE. More can be found here.
<p>Item 7: Westhill Awards 2024 – identifying a theme for</p>	<p>Chair LJ advised that it would be good to think of a project that would create a buzz around RE, involve every faith and lead to creating useful resources for schools.</p>

<p>application and SACRE members to oversee and complete application form</p>	<p>CP informed that one of the applications spoken about at the NASACRE Conference involved storytelling across religion. A series of workshops on this theme would work well for schools.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">→ CP, as requested by Chair LJ, to write a short paragraph about submitting an application on the purpose of storytelling across faiths for the autumn term meeting.</p> <p>JDC gave an example of a project which involved Sixth Form students visiting primary pupils to speak about their religions.</p> <p>JDC further advised that the Awards would require a thoroughly prepared and detailed bid application with all the finances carefully thought through. Somebody would need to commit to doing it properly.</p>
<p>Item 8: SACRE Self-Evaluation and Evaluation of Annual Work Plan</p>	<p><u>Self-Evaluation</u></p> <p>Chair LJ felt that the SACRE in RBKC was established with the support of the Clerk, LA Adviser and RE Adviser. He also felt that, looking at the NASACRE’s self-evaluation tool, the gap between ‘established’ and ‘enhanced’ was too big with some unrealistic expectations and could not be justified from a cost-benefit perspective.</p> <p>JB said that she would pass this feedback to the NASACRE Executive Committee that the measures should be more achievable.</p> <p>The members also spoke about engaging academies in the work of the SACRE and in the agreed syllabus review. CP advised that it was mentioned at the NASACRE Conference that some MATs had a link person attending their local SACREs.</p> <p><u>Annual Work Plan 2023/24</u></p> <p>A draft annual work plan for 2023/24 attached below had been shared with the SACRE members as part of the meeting papers.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"> Annual Work Plan - SACRE - June 2023.doc</p> <p>The SACRE members had no feedback on the work plan, and so it was agreed.</p>
<p>Item 9: Freedom of Information Requests</p>	<p>Clerk NS informed that none had been received since the previous meeting in March 2023.</p>
<p>Item 10: Dates and Venues of 2023/24 Meetings</p>	<p>The SACRE agreed for Clerk NS to email through proposed dates once there was some clarity regarding the RE Adviser situation for the new academic year.</p>

	<p>The members agreed for the future meetings to continue to be hybrid to maximise attendance.</p>
<p>Item 11: AOB</p>	<p><u>Emails</u></p> <p>Clerk NS asked if the SACRE members had any objections to their email addresses being shown (as opposed to blind copied in) in group emails. This may be helpful should they ever wish to respond to anything for all members to see.</p> <p>The SACRE members gave their permission to NS not to hide their email addresses from each other in group communications.</p> <p><u>Teacher representatives</u></p> <p>Chair LJ mentioned the lack of teacher members on the SACRE, which had been a long-standing issue despite the attempts to recruit new members, including via the termly RE Good Practice Network meetings.</p> <p>The members discussed that it would also be beneficial to have RE teachers from academies or even independent schools, although it was acknowledged that they would be unlikely to use the Locally Agreed Syllabus in their schools.</p> <p><u>Collective Worship</u></p> <p>MM informed that the SACRE in Southwark had been working on collective worship guidelines for their schools. It might be worth thinking about a similar project in RBKC to minimise determination applications. NASACRE have a course on collective worship which would be a helpful starting point.</p>