MINUTES OF THE AUTUMN TERM MEETING OF THE STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE) HELD ON
19 SEPTEMBER 2019 AT BARKING TOWN HALL
(10:00 am – 12:10 pm)

Present: Ms R K Sahota (Chair)  Ms F Jeens
Councillor D Akwaboah (Vice-chair) Ms S Khan
Ms E Anderton Reverend K Miller
Ms L Bird Councillor M Saleem
Reverend M Court Rabbi I Shillor
Mrs C D’Netto Mr P Wallis (NEU Representative)
Ms R Everett

Also present: Mrs A Carnelley, Local Authority Representative
Ms C Clinton, RE Consultant
Ms J Hazrati, Faith & Belief Forum
Ms S Koster, Faith & Belief Forum
Miss J Day, Minute Clerk

MINUTES – PART 1

694 WELCOME/APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received as follows:

Mr W Crossman
Reverend R Descombes

695 MEMBERSHIP OF SACRE

The members:

695.1 Appointment
welcomed Frances Jeens who had recently been appointed as a Jewish representative.

695.2 Resignations

a) received resignations from Mrs J Hoepelman and Reverend M Raithatha. It was agreed that the Chair should write to thank Mrs Hoepelman for her service as a Church of England Representative since 2012.

Action: letter from Chair to Mrs Hoepelman

b) noted that Rabbi Irit Shillor wished to resign from her position as a Jewish Representative now that a local member had been appointed. She would contact a SACRE closer to home in Harlow. Members thanked Rabbi Shillor for her contributions to Barking and Dagenham SACRE since joining in 2017.
MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 May 2019 were confirmed as a true record.

Arising therefrom the members:

696.1 SACRE Handbook (Minute no 683.2 refers)

were informed that the SACRE handbook had been circulated to members, together with a link and password for the NASACRE members’ website.

696.2 NASACRE Conference (Minute no. 683.3 refers)

were informed that the LA had been approached for funding to enable a SACRE representative to attend the annual NASACRE conference. Funding would be needed to cover booking a place, travel and supply cover if required – approximately £450 per year. No reply had been received to date.

Action: Avril Carnelley and Claire Clinton to follow up with the LA

696.3 Membership of SACRE (Minute no. 685 refers)

were informed that Claire Clinton had invited other faith and belief groups to nominate representatives, including the Humanists UK, but no replies had been received yet.

693.4 Practising Faith in Schools (Minute no. 687 refers)

were informed that the draft document Practising Faith in Schools would be discussed at the next meeting of the local Faith Forum for their endorsement before being circulated to schools.

694 REVISED AGREED SYLLABUS

Members received copies of the Newham Agreed Syllabus and Scheme of Work. This has been purchased for use in Barking and Dagenham and will be adapted as necessary so that it is relevant to the borough. At the next meeting, SACRE will be convened as the Agreed Syllabus Conference to approve the draft syllabus for use in Barking and Dagenham schools.

Members were asked to spend some time looking at the Newham materials to ensure that coverage is balanced and to identify any gaps. After looking at the documents the members made the following comments:

a) It would be difficult to please everyone, so some compromises would need to be made based on mutual respect.

b) The syllabus sets out clear expectations for children’s progress and learning in different year groups. RE is more than just storytelling.

c) Teachers, especially non-specialists, want lesson plans to guide them and give them confidence in the subject. It was confirmed that the new syllabus fits well with the new Ofsted inspection framework. Some of the new units are being trialled in primary schools.

d) It was important that there were clear differences between the key stages. It was suggested Key Stage 3 could be broken down further into year groups 7, 8 and 9.
as this was included in the current syllabus.

**Action: look at the structure for Key Stage 3**

e) Members agreed that the links to SMSC were helpful.

f) School websites should include information about their RE provision. Some schools may need support with this, but it would be sufficient for maintained schools to state that the school follows the local agreed syllabus. Academies can choose any syllabus and church schools follow diocesan guidance. Members asked why maintained schools have to follow the locally agreed syllabus. They were informed that the LA recommends a syllabus which is suitable for the local community.

g) It was noted that a school governor representative will be recruited to join SACRE.

**Action: CC to approach possible members at the annual governors’ conference on 21 September**

h) Members asked if the syllabus will be adapted to cover communities which are not represented in Newham. It was confirmed that local faith groups, e.g. Jains, will be included and any groups which are not relevant will be removed. The syllabus for secondary schools will look at minority religions outside the six major faith groups. Good RE departments already do this.

i) Members were informed that secondary schools were happy with the current syllabus, but it was only implemented sporadically. Members were informed that since the new syllabus was launched in Newham, more schools were offering RE at GCSE and the borough’s RE results increased to 9% above the national average. The syllabus needs to be updated in line with the new Ofsted framework as RE will be looked at during inspections as part of SMSC.

j) Members asked if there had been any difficulties using the syllabus in Voluntary Controlled schools in Newham and they were informed that no issues had arisen.

k) Members made the following requests:
   - Include a statement on topic work.
   - Keep the “opt out” statement which allows schools to design their own syllabus to meet their specific needs. Schools must apply to SACRE for approval for their alternative syllabus.
   - Copies of the draft materials to be sent to Councillor Akwaboah, Councillor Saleem, Ms Bird, Ms Jeens and Mr Wallis for comments.

Claire Clinton agreed to compile the syllabus for consideration by the Agreed Syllabus Conference at the next meeting. The syllabus will then be presented to the Council for final approval, subject to checks by the legal department and the Equalities Team. The final version of the syllabus will be formatted by the borough’s design team, aiming for publication in the Summer Term 2020 ready for the September 2020 launch.

**FAITH AND BELIEF FORUM PRESENTATION**

Jess Hazrati and Sarah Koster gave a presentation on the work of the Faith and Belief Forum.

a) The Faith and belief Forum is a charitable organisation which has been working for
over 20 years to build good relationships between people of all faiths and beliefs.

b) In 2018 a project was launched with funding from Barking and Dagenham Council to deliver training and events aimed at building good interfaith relationships in the community. The project celebrates diversity and includes workshops in six schools using trained volunteers. The workshops will provide opportunities for pupils to encounter people from a range of traditions and beliefs. Teachers will be trained to facilitate intercultural meetings to help pupils develop deeper understanding and empathy.

c) An interfaith week is planned for November 2019 with competitions for primary and secondary schools.

d) On-line resources are being launched, including lesson plans and video clips. Members asked if there will be a fee for the resources. They were informed that the forum has received funding to develop the resources, but there may be a charge for training sessions.

e) Key Stage 3 schools are needed for pilot projects in the borough.

f) “Amplify” will work with sixth forms and further education colleges to look at issues in their communities.

g) Jess will continue to act as a link between the Faith and Belief Forum and SACRE at future meetings.

h) Members asked how the forum worked with LGBT groups as mentioned on the website. They were informed that the forum provides training for LGBT organisations to work with faith groups to promote inclusivity.

Action: copy of presentation to be circulated with minutes of this meeting

696 RE ADVISOR’S UPDATE

Claire Clinton gave a verbal update:

696.1 SACRE Newsletter

The latest newsletter included the CoRE report proposal that SACREs be updated as they had not changed since being introduced in 1988. CC is leading a national pilot project and would like Newham and Barking & Dagenham to be part of the project. Suggested changes include ring fenced funding for SACREs and wider membership, e.g. include a school governor representative.

696.2 SACRE funding

Members received copies of the Secretary of State for Education’s response to the Chair of NASACRE’s letter about funding for SACREs. The Secretary of State agreed that SACREs need proper funding to operate but had no plans to recommend the level of funding which LAs should offer.

Action: CC and AC to contact the LA to set out the work which SACRE does which requires funding

696.3 Primary 1000

It was noted that membership of Primary 1000 gives access to RE Today with newsletters and webinars for a small cost. This is aimed at weaker schools
which may be struggling with RE. Each LA can nominate up to 6 schools.

Action: CC and AC and SN to identify possible schools

696.4 RE Quality Mark

Members were pleased to note that Eastbury Primary School had recently achieved the silver award in the RE Quality Mark. CC has advised on what needs to be done to progress to the gold award.

Action: CC and Chair to send letter of congratulations on behalf of SACRE, and invite the school’s RE lead onto SACRE

696.5 NASACRE Development Plan

CC invited comments on the draft NASACRE development plan.

a) It was suggested that Section 2 should include recommendations for actions against non-compliant schools. It was also suggested that the various organisations which support RE should mention each other on their websites.

b) It was pleasing that Section 3 included induction for new SACRE members as well as training for established members.

c) Section 4 (communication) to include development of websites, Twitter accounts, etc.

d) Section 5 invited suggestions for other actions. Members suggested that there should be flexibility to meet different needs, and the plan should keep up to date with Ofsted requirements.

Members agreed that the development plan was helpful and purposeful, and CC agreed to give their feedback to NASACRE.

697 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

697.1 Clare D’Netto recommended “The Wonderbird”, an illustrated book by David Lucas, a children’s author who is training to be a teacher at her school.

698 DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Members noted that future meetings had been arranged as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Autumn Term 2019</td>
<td>Thursday 14 November 2019 – includes Agreed Syllabus Conference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring Term 2020</td>
<td>Thursday 6 February 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer Term 2020</td>
<td>Thursday 7 May 2020</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All meetings 10:00am at Barking Town Hall.