MINUTES OF THE SUMMER TERM MEETING OF THE STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE) HELD ON 23 MAY 2019 AT BARKING TOWN HALL
(10:00 am – 12:10 pm)

Present: Ms R K Sahota (Chair) 
Councillor D Akwaboah (Vice-chair) 
Pastor A Adesina 
Ms E Anderton 
Ms L Bird 
Reverend R Descombes 

Also present: Mrs A Carnelley, Local Authority Representative 
Ms C Clinton, RE Consultant 
Miss J Day, Minute Clerk 

MINUTES – PART 1

682 INTRODUCTIONS/APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
A short activity was held to introduce new members. 

Apologies for absence were received as follows:

Mr W Crossman 
Reverend M Court 
Ms R Everett 
Mrs J Hoepelman 
Reverend M Raithatha 
Rabbi I Shillor 
Mr P Wallis (NEU Representative) 

683 MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 25 February 2019 were confirmed as a true record. 

Arising therefrom the members:

683.1 Membership of SACRE (Minute no. 676.1 refers) 
were informed that Ms L Bird had been appointed as the Secondary Schools’ representative. 

683.2 SACRE Handbook (Minute no 676.2 refers) 
requested that the SACRE handbook be circulated to new to members, together with a link and password for the NASACRE members’ website. 

683.3 NASACRE Conference (Minute no. 679.2 refers) 
noted that Claire Clinton had attended the NASACRE conference on 22 May as the organiser. A report on the conference would be presented later in the meeting. Members agreed that a representative should attend the next conference. This would require a budget for booking a place, travel and supply
It was estimated that approximately £450 would be required. 

**Action: Randip, Avril and Claire to flag this need up to the LA**

### NASACRE CONFERENCE 2019

CC presented notes on the NASACRE conference which was held on 22 May 2019 in Manchester.

- In the first keynote speech schools were encouraged to invite more guest speakers into their schools from their local communities or nationally well-known people. Liverpool SACRE started with a small group of schools and this has been expanded over the years to get more and more people involved with building local partnerships and inspirational stories being told to young people. Barking and Dagenham could follow a similar model. Sessions could also be held for parents like in Liverpool at schools on all sorts of issues, as schools locally are still hubs where community members gather.

- The second keynote speaker spoke about the uncertainty of RE and the discussion of knowns and unknowns. More learning takes place when the unknowns are discussed in RE – children and young people like to explore the unknowns rather than just learning facts in RE. B&D syllabus needs to think about this when designing our new Agreed Syllabus.

- The handouts from the day will be available on the NASACRE website.

- CC offered to present her workshop from the conference at a future SACRE meeting.

### MEMBERSHIP OF SACRE

Members were pleased to note that the following new appointments had been confirmed:

**Group A: representing the Church of England**

  - Ruth Everett, Reverend Martin Court, Reverend Ray Descombes, Emma Anderton, Reverend Katie Miller

**Group B: representing other Christian denominations and other religions/belief systems**

  - Himanshu Jain (Jain community), Pastor Ade Adesina (Pentecostal Christian community), Reverend Manoj Raithatha (Barking Baptist Church)

**Group C: representing teachers**

  - Lizzie Bird, Secondary School representative (Dagenham Park School)

**Group D: representing the Local Authority**

  - Billy Crossman

Further appointments were still being explored, e.g. a Humanist representative.

Members were pleased to see more ambition and aspiration in the borough. SACRE can help to promote community cohesion and common understandings between faiths. RE gives children an opportunity to discuss some sensitive issues and to express their views.
ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR

The election of the Chair for 2018/19 was deferred from the previous meeting due to the meeting being inquorate. The following appointments were made:

Chair  Ms R K Sahota
Vice-chair  Councillor D Akwaboah

PRACTISING FAITH IN SCHOOLS

Members received a draft copy of the document Practising Faith in Schools. Shaheena Khan had co-ordinated this in response to requests from schools in supporting young people during the Ramadan fast. The guidance has been expanded to cover advice on handling scenarios in schools which may arise from different religious beliefs, e.g. modesty and swimming. Schools need to feel supported and able to deal with situations in a consistent manner.

The four membership groups approved the document and agreed that additional scenarios could be included, such as the teaching of sex and relationships education in primary schools. The document will be presented to the Barking and Dagenham Faith Forum for endorsement before being circulated to schools. It was agreed that endorsement by the LA, SACRE and the Faith Forum would give schools confidence in the guidance.

ACTION PLAN

Members noted the action plan which had been produced to set a framework for SACRE to fulfil its statutory duties and its monitoring role.

- Good progress had been made in filling membership vacancies in all four groups.
- The annual report was due for completion in the Autumn Term and has now been sent to NASACRE and DfE.
- Monitoring standards in the quality and provision of RE will be included in the new Agreed Syllabus. Data will be collected from schools to monitor RE and CW provision going forward.
- The NASACRE self-evaluation tool will be used at the Autumn Term meeting to identify SACRE’s strengths and weaknesses.

NEW AGREED SYLLABUS ARRANGEMENTS

Members were informed that Barking and Dagenham has agreed to purchase the Newham Agreed Syllabus which will be adapted as appropriate. The syllabus includes units of work for RE teaching in primary and secondary schools. This is what teachers have asked for, especially non-RE specialists teaching RE in our primary schools.

The launch of the new syllabus will be discussed with the LA. The suggested launch date was January 2020, but the medium-term teaching plans could be issued to schools in July 2019 to give time to prepare for use in September. All non-faith schools should be using the new syllabus by September 2020 would be the plan – but all subject to the LA’s agreement.

Schools will be informed about the new syllabus at RE network meetings. The document will need to be redesigned for Barking and Dagenham schools, and
arrangements will be put in place for schools to access the materials – this will probably be on-line. Members suggested that hard copies should be provided for each school if the budget is enough. Parents will also be able to refer to the syllabus on-line, as the LA will need to publish the document so anyone can have access legally.

Members were pleased to note the progress being made and teachers were looking forward to receiving the new guidance. The syllabus fits the new Ofsted framework, e.g. deeper learning. A short questionnaire will be sent to schools to enable SACRE to monitor RE provision.

Claire Clinton added that using a modified version of the Newham syllabus would enable joint training to be offered across the two boroughs, which in the current financial situation for councils might be sensible for the future.

690 DIE LETTER

Members received copies of the DfE letter to the Chair of NASACRE on compliance with the duty to teach Religious Education. The funding arrangements for SACRE’s work are clearly part of the CSSB fund for each LA, but the DfE will not put a % on what LA’s should be giving SACRE as their budget. So NASACRE have spoken to DfE about this and the DfE will refer all SACRE’s that ask them about budget % to refer to NASACRE’s suggested % of 2% of the LA’s CSSB funding in order to cover the work done by SACRE, e.g. RE consultant support, development of the Agreed Syllabus and clerking of SACRE meetings, network meetings and SACRE projects. The DfE cannot tell LAs how much to spend on RE, but they can refer to the NASACRE suggested figures.

691 RE NETWORK MEETINGS

Members were informed that the first primary schools’ network meeting had taken place, the 2nd one takes place on 6th June. Invitations had been sent for the first secondary schools’ meeting. Newham schools have also been invited because there are fewer secondary schools, so Claire felt it was sensible to bring both groups together. The first meeting will be held at Plashet School in East Ham as it is near transport links on the District line on 18th June from 4-6pm.

692 CoRE REPORT UPDATE

Members noted that the Commission on RE Report had been published in Autumn 2018. A national reduction in RE at GCSE and A Level was identified as a concern for the RE community. It was suggested that this was linked to the end of bursaries for RE teacher training which led to universities closing courses, therefore there not being enough RE specialists being trained at secondary, therefore schools have cut back on RE provision. Members were informed that the bursaries have been reinstated, but it will take time to increase the number of newly qualified RE teachers into secondary schools.

CC suggested that information on RE teacher training could be gathered from Barking and Dagenham School-Centred Initial Teacher Training providers. The new DfE suggested minimum coverage of RE on a primary Initial Teacher Training course (ITT) per course is 12 hours. A toolkit for RE teacher training is being produced for universities and SCITTs and CC is leading a conference to train people in these new DfE approved materials on 13th July at Middlesex university. It would be great for all
B&D SCITTS to be invited to attend.

**ACTION: CC and Avril to speak to Stephen Noon.**

It was suggested that SACREs write to the Secretary of State for Education to express their concern that only 2 of the 9 recommendations in the CoRE report were being addressed.

**Action: CC agreed to prepare a draft letter for the Chair to send on behalf of SACRE.**

### ANY OTHER BUSINESS

#### 693 Resources

CC tabled posters and other RE materials from Newham and Redbridge for information, e.g. places of worship to visit for members to see what we could do in the future.

#### 693.2 Minister for Faith

Clare D’Netto informed members of her recent meeting with the Minister for Faith, Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth and other community leaders. This was at an event arranged following the Easter attacks on worshippers in Sri Lanka.

#### 693.3 Eid Celebrations

Members were invited to join the Faith Forum’s Eid celebrations which would be held at Eastbury Community School.

### DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Members agreed to hold future meetings as follows:

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<tr>
<th>Term</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Autumn Term 2019</td>
<td>Thursday 19 September 2019</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Thursday 14 November 2019</td>
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<td>Spring Term 2020</td>
<td>Thursday 6 February 2020</td>
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<td>Summer Term 2020</td>
<td>Thursday 7 May 2020</td>
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All meetings 10:00am at Barking Town Hall. The meeting ended at 12pm.