MINUTES OF THE SPRING TERM MEETING OF THE STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE) HELD ON 25 FEBRUARY 2019 AT SYDNEY RUSSELL SCHOOL

(4:00 pm – 5:30 pm)

Present: Ms R K Sahota (Chair)
Councillor D Akwaboah
Mrs C D’Netto
Councillor M Saleem
Mr P Wallis (NEU Representative)

Also present: Mrs A Carnelley, Local Authority Representative
Miss J Day, Minute Clerk

MINUTES – PART 1

674 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Rabbi I Shillor and Ms C Clinton, Borough Consultant for RE.

675 INTRODUCTIONS

Members welcomed Councillor Dorothy Akwaboah and Councillor Muhammad Saleem who had been appointed as Local Authority Representatives, and Mrs Clare D’Netto as the new Headteacher Representative for Primary Schools. Members also noted that Ms Claire Clinton had been appointed as the Advisory Teacher for RE in place of Ms Shareena Pradhan who was unable to continue in the role.

676 MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 27 November 2018 were confirmed as a true record.

Arising therefrom the members:

676.1 Membership of SACRE (Minute no. 667.1 refers)

were informed that secondary schools would be approached to nominate a representative. AC also agreed to ask Claire Clinton for advice on filling the vacancies for Church of England representatives and for other faiths, possibly through the local Faith Forum. The current shortage of Church of England representatives makes it difficult to achieve a quorum at meetings.

676.2 SACRE Handbook (Minute no 667.1 refers)

were informed that AC would circulate the SACRE handbook to members, together with a link and password for the NASACRE members’ website.
676.3 **Sikhism Advice for Schools** (Minute no 667.4 refers) noted that the Barking Gurdwara would not be recruiting a replacement advisor for schools, but schools can now obtain advice on Sikhism issues by email from a voluntary organisation (sikhschoolvisits@gmail.com).

676.4 **Draft Annual Report** (Minute no 670 refers) were informed that PW had made enquiries about figures showing that Sydney Russell School had not entered any pupils for RE exams in 2018. He reported that the school does offer RE as an option for GCSE but the take-up is very low. It is also difficult to recruit specialist RE teachers. The school does teach RE as part of its Civics programme.

676.5 **Academisation Proposal for Catholic Schools** were informed that the Diocese of Brentwood intends to set up a multi-academy trust which would take all its Catholic schools out of their LAs. The proposal has been made for various reasons such as protecting the uniqueness of the Catholic schools, and land ownership issues. The teachers’ professional associations have expressed concern that the Diocese representatives have been unwilling to meet any groups who wish to discuss the proposal.

677 **ELECTION OF CHAIR**

The election of the Chair for 2018/19 was deferred again until the next meeting due to the meeting being inquorate.

**Action:** Agenda item

678 **SACRE ANNUAL REPORT 2018**

Members received and noted the final version of the Annual Report 2018.

679 **ACTION PLAN**

AC presented a suggested action plan to set a framework for SACRE to fulfil its statutory duties and to undertake its monitoring role. Members discussed the action plan and made the following comments:

679.1 It was agreed that filling membership vacancies was a priority in order for SACRE to meet its statutory obligations.

679.2 Members asked if CC will be attending the annual NASACRE conference in May. This year’s theme is Cohesive Communities and members agreed that it was important to promote cohesion. PW offered to attend as a Barking and Dagenham representative.

679.3 CC and AC to set an action plan for revising the Locally Agreed Syllabus by summer 2020. An Agreed Syllabus Conference has already been held to discuss what schools would like to see in the new syllabus. Community Cohesion needs greater coverage. SACRE previously suggested buying in Newham’s syllabus which could be adapted to meet local schools' requirements, but funding was not available. The LA will need to commission
someone to produce a new syllabus if a ready-made syllabus is not bought in.

Members approved the action plan.

680  **UPDATES**

680.1 **Network meeting**

Members received a write up of the Barking and Dagenham Primary RE Network meeting held on 11 February 2019. AC and CC had attended with 19 teachers. The RE co-ordinators were enthusiastic and the meeting provided an opportunity for sharing good practise.

The discussion included schools’ needs and their suggestions will feed into the new Agreed Syllabus.

It is planned to hold a network meeting each term in future.

680.2 **Ofsted**

Members received and noted the current Ofsted guidance on Religious Education survey visits. RE will become more important as part of the wider curriculum in schools. Members were encouraged to respond to the consultation on the proposed new Ofsted framework.

680.3 **CoRE report**

Members received and noted the Religious Education Council’s statement in response to the proposals set out in the Commission on RE report.

680.4 **Monitoring of RE teaching and Collective Worship**

Members were informed that monitoring forms will be prepared to assist SACRE in evaluating the effectiveness of RE teaching in schools, e.g. data collection such as the number of pupils withdrawn from RE lessons.

681  **DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

It was provisionally agreed that the next meeting should be held on Thursday 23 May 2019 at 10:00 am at Barking Town Hall. This is the day after the NASACRE annual conference. AC to confirm that CC will be available.