MINUTES OF THE SPRING TERM MEETING OF THE STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE) HELD ON 27 FEBRUARY 2018 AT EASTBURY COMMUNITY SCHOOL

(10:00 am – 11:50 pm)

Present: Ms R K Sahota (Chair)
Mrs J Hoepelman
Ms S Khan
Rabbi I Shillor
Mr P Wallis (NUT Representative)

Also present: Ms S Pradhan, Head of RE, Eastbury Community School (Borough Consultant for RE)
Mr R Turner, Local Authority Representative
Miss J Day, Minute Clerk

MINUTES – PART 1

651 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor S Bright and Mr P Fing.

652 MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 November 2017 were confirmed as a true record.

Arising therefrom the members:

652.1 Membership of SACRE (Minute no. 647.2 refers)
   a) were informed that SP and RT would discuss the vacancies for primary and secondary headteacher representatives.
   b) welcomed Mr P Wallis who was attending for the first time as the NUT Representative

653 THE NEW AGREED SYLLABUS

Members were pleased to note that the first Agreed Syllabus Conference meeting on 21 November 2017 had been well attended by school representatives who gave their feedback on the current syllabus. Teachers had asked for more detailed work plans to help non-RE specialists. The syllabus should be reviewed every 5 years.

653.1 SP and RT had discussed buying in the syllabus produced by London Borough of Newham and adapting it as required to meet local needs. The Newham syllabus has been in use since 2016.

653.2 PW asked how much RE takes place in schools. He was informed that primary schools do a lot of work, and some secondary schools are applying for the RE Quality Mark to help raise the profile of RE. The Quality Mark process includes
self-assessment. Some schools offer RE as a GCSE option. The Annual Report includes GCSE and A Level results data. RE departments can also provide support for SMSC and Promoting British Values. PW was concerned that non-exam subjects can be side-lined in secondary schools. SP advised that Ofsted look at RE provision during inspections, and SACRE has a monitoring role.

653.3 Members received an extract from the Newham syllabus which listed units of work for different key stages. Buying in the syllabus would cost £5,000 and would save the work needed to write a syllabus from scratch. It meets the statutory requirements and could be adapted to make it distinctive for Barking and Dagenham use.

653.4 Members asked if the syllabus would cover the links between the Abrahamic faiths. They were informed that this would probably be included in Key Stage 3 when the origins of religions are covered.

653.5 Members agreed to recommend that the Newham syllabus be purchased, providing that it supports schools’ assessment systems (e.g. Target Tracker), and the electronic resources can be edited to meet Barking and Dagenham needs. RT agreed to approach the LA to request the funding to purchase the syllabus.

**Action:** RT to request LA funding

654 **MONITORING OF RE IN SCHOOLS**

Members noted that SACRE used to meet in schools where they had an opportunity to observe assemblies and gain an insight into RE provision. This has become more difficult to arrange, e.g. there has been an increase in the number of academies and the School Improvement Service has changed. SP had therefore produced a suggested checklist for monitoring RE provision in secondary schools. Members were asked to look at a school’s website for details of RE provision and complete a monitoring form to bring back to the next meeting. It was also agreed that copies of the current syllabus should be circulated to all members for information.

**Action:** circulate copies of current syllabus to SACRE members

655 **PRACTISING FAITH IN SCHOOLS**

SK presented a draft guidance document for teachers “Practising Faith in Schools”. This had been produced in response to enquiries from schools about handling issues arising from pupils practising their faith, e.g. fasting during Ramadan and the wearing of religious symbols. The borough has become much more diverse since the 2001 census and schools want to understand more about how different religions are practised. The document presents scenarios based on real events. It will be circulated to schools following consultation with faith leaders and SACRE.

Members commented that a lot of the scenarios were based on Muslim issues. They were informed that this reflected the number of queries raised by teachers, e.g. the wearing of hijabs in PE.

Members suggested that some more general queries could be included, e.g. any religious jewellery should be small and plain and should be removed before PE.
Members agreed that the document would provide useful guidelines which schools could refer to in their policies, e.g. “SACRE recommends that…”

656 SACRE ANNUAL REPORT 2017

Members approved the draft report for 2017. They particularly liked the quotes from teachers who had attended the INSET and networking events arranged by SP, and they hoped that these might encourage other teachers to take part.

657 DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Rabbi Shillor offered to host the next meeting on Wednesday 27 June 2018 at Harlow Synagogue, Harbuts Road, Harlow, CM19 4DT, 10:00 am – 12:00 pm.

PW advised that the unions’ conference room at Barking Town Hall was available for future meetings if required.

Members asked to be advised of parking facilities at meeting venues in future as some had found it difficult to park near the school today.