MINUTES OF THE SUMMER TERM MEETING OF THE STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE) HELD ON 9 JUNE 2015 AT EASTBURY COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL

(2:00 pm – 3:10 pm)

Present: Ms R K Sahota (Vice-chair) Reverend Y Gooljary
Mr P Fing Mr J Sowerby
Alderman F Jones Mrs B Stanley-Hunt

Also present: Ms J Dyson, Director’s Representative
Ms O Brown, Interim Principal Primary Adviser
Mr I Starling, Head of School Improvement
Ms S Pradhan, Head of RE, Eastbury Comprehensive School (Borough Adviser for RE)
Miss J Day, (Minute Clerk)

MINUTES – PART 1

561 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received and accepted as follows:

Councillor S Ashraf
Reverend L Hillier
Mrs J Hoepelman
Ms S Khan

The following members were absent and apologies had not been received:

Mr M Nicholson
Councillor J White

562 ELECTION OF CHAIR

There were no nominations for the post of Chair of SACRE, and it was agreed that this should be deferred until the next meeting. Members agreed that Mr Starling should chair this meeting.

563 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR

The members appointed Ms R K Sahota as Vice Chair of SACRE.

564 INTRODUCTION OF DIRECTOR’S REPRESENTATIVE

Members were informed that Opal Brown would be taking over from Janet Dyson as the Director’s Representative. They had held a handover meeting with Shareena Pradhan. This would be Janet’s final meeting.
565  MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 January 2015 were confirmed as a true record.

566  MATTERS ARISING NOT ON THE AGENDA

Arising from the minutes of the last meeting:

566.1 Members noted that Reverend Roger Gayler had stood down from SACRE after many years as Chair. Also Reverend Stewart Myers had resigned from his position as a representative of the Jewish community. It was agreed that letters should be sent to thank them for their service. (Minute no. 552 refers).

566.2 Members were informed that Heads of RE had not been invited to complete a questionnaire yet because the Junior SACRE meeting was postponed (Minute no. 555.5 refers).

566.3 It was confirmed that schools were invited to take part in the national religious art competition (Minute no. 555.7 refers).

566.4 Members noted that the SACRE annual report had been circulated to schools and governors, and it was published on the Local Authority website. (Minute no. 557 refers).

566.5 It was noted that there had been a further increase in emphasis on the promotion of fundamental British values since the last meeting and it was likely that there would be more explicit information in the new Ofsted framework which takes effect in September 2015. The National Association of Teachers of RE is providing training for teachers on British values. Locally, Shreena Pradhan has produced a document to support SMSC in the curriculum. Reverend Gooljary reported that Dagenham Park School has drafted its own scheme of work. (Minute no. 558.1 refers).

567  MEMBERSHIP: REPRESENTATION OF GROUPS ON SACRE

Members noted that in addition to Church of England representatives there were representatives of Baha’i, Hindu and Sikh faiths. They were concerned that Mr Martin Nicholson, Primary Headteachers’ Representative, had not attended recent meetings. Members asked for him to be contacted to ask if he wishes to continue. If he does not, Primary Headteachers will be asked to nominate a new representative.

568  REPORT ON WORK WITH SCHOOLS

Shareena Pradhan gave the following update on work which had been done with schools since the last meeting:

568.1 INSET has been delivered half-terminly to offer support and guidance on implementing the Agreed Syllabus, e.g. ensuring effective differentiation for Key Stages 1 and 2, and how to apply for the RE Quality Mark award.

a) Members asked about the take up of INSET and were informed that about 12 people attend each twilight session. Good feedback has been received.

b) Members received copies of the suggested lessons for the whole summer
term for Key Stages 1 and 2. RE teachers are free to choose their topics. Non-specialist RE teachers find the specific examples helpful.

c) Members asked if the Creation story referred to in Key Stage 1 lesson 2 was the Christian story or other faiths. They were informed that these are suggestions and schools can add the details. This ties in with what is set out in the Agreed Syllabus.

d) A member reported that a secondary school had struggled to fit RE into the timetable in the past. How much RE was required? They were informed that there should be at least one hour per week. The LA suggests that there should be an annual report on RE provision to assure governors that what is being delivered meets the requirements of the current Ofsted framework. The member agreed to raise this at a governing body meeting.

e) Members asked if there was guidance on assessment in RE. They were informed that levels are no longer used and schools are advised to follow their new assessment policy. It was suggested that the sample lessons document should be available on the internet with photographs of examples of work at the expected standard. Members were advised that the suggested lessons document was intended to support, not replace, the Agreed Syllabus. The assessment portfolio will be added gradually.

f) Members asked if the new syllabus was still relevant for GCSE preparation. They were informed that it was because it includes "I can" statements and it contains a lot philosophical/ethical development.

g) Members were informed that the RE Quality Mark was being promoted, but not many schools feel confident enough to apply yet. Eastbury Comprehensive School will be re-assessed this year to maintain its gold award.

h) Ian Starling asked if the strengths in primary schools were known so they could be used as an example for new teachers. Shareena replied that schools would need to invite her to visit, and it was too soon to know from teachers attending RE INSET. However, it would be possible to discuss schools’ strategies at future INSET sessions.

i) Members asked what communication between primary and secondary schools was like. They were informed that the Agreed Syllabus has a transition unit which should get all Year 7s up to the same level of understanding.

j) Members were reminded that the new syllabus was launched two years ago. New members of SACRE were encouraged to look at the Agreed Syllabus online.

568.2 Members asked what arrangements were in place for cover during Shareena’s maternity leave. They were informed that she will be returning in March 2016 and support materials have been provided for colleagues.

569 NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Members received the NATRE Summer Term newsletter and information about the new GCSE /A Level requirements. Arising therefrom the members:
569.1 were informed that philosophical and ethical issues are being introduced in Key Stage 3 in preparation for GCSE.

591.2 noted that there are training sessions on key beliefs for delivering GCSE content.

591.3 were informed that NATRE was strongly in favour of the GCSE changes, e.g. study of two religions. Members asked which religions schools can choose and they were informed that there is freedom of choice. Also, the two religions don’t have to be split 50/50.

591.4 asked if expectations were being raised as they are in other subjects. They were informed that they were, e.g. more use of sacred texts (not previously required) more philosophy and ethics, and more in depth study of religious practices. The course will be more demanding.

591.5 were informed that changes at A Level include more theological content, and deeper knowledge and understanding. This will be more challenging for teachers too.

591.6 noted that the full definitions and details of the new framework had not been published yet.

591.7 were pleased to note that the uptake of RE has been good recently. Pupils particularly enjoy discussion philosophical and ethical matters. SMSC promotes RE too, encouraging respect and tolerance for other faiths.

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

Members agreed to hold future meetings as follows:

- **Autumn Term 2015**  
  Tuesday 6 October 2015 at Dagenham Park School

- **Spring Term 2016**  
  Tuesday 15 March 2016 at Eastbury School

- **Summer Term 2016**  
  Tuesday 7 June 2016 at a place of worship if possible, or Northbury Primary School

Members agreed that there had been no improvement in attendance since switching to afternoon meetings, therefore they would return to morning meetings starting at 10:00 am.