MINUTES OF THE SPRING TERM MEETING OF THE STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE) HELD ON 15 MARCH 2016 AT EASTBURY COMMUNITY SCHOOL

(10:00 am – 11:30 am)

Present: Reverend Y Gooljary (Chair)
Ms R K Sahota (Vice-chair)
Mr M Goodyear

Also present: Ms S Pradhan, Head of RE, Eastbury Community School (Borough Consultant for RE)
Ms O Brown, Interim Principal Primary Adviser (Director’s Representative)
Miss J Day, (Minute Clerk)

MINUTES – PART 1

601 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received and accepted as follows:

Dr Beheshti
Mr P Fing
Reverend L Hillier
Mrs J Hoepelman
Ms S Khan

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

Councillor S Ashraf
Mr J Sowerby
Councillor J White

It was agreed that the Chair should draft a letter which would be sent to absent members to ask why they could not attend and if they wished to continue as members of SACRE. Jo Atkinson to co-ordinate the replies which would be reported to the next meeting.

602 MEMBERSHIP OF SACRE

Alderman F C Jones MBE

Members noted that Alderman Jones had passed away in January 2016. They placed on record their thanks for his contribution to the Borough and his long service on this committee.
MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 October 2015 were confirmed as a true record. Arising therefrom the members:

603.1 Reverend Gayler (Minute no. 595.1 refers)
were informed that the Chair had written to Reverend Roger Gayler to thank him for his service as the previous Chair of SACRE.

603.2 Collective Worship (Minute no. 596.1 b refers)
a) received copies of the “Collective worship – SACRE Guidelines for schools in Newham” which were provided for information.
b) described how collective worship is delivered in their schools (Northbury Primary, Thomas Arnold Primary, Dagenham Park Church of England School and Eastbury Community School.) It was suggested that in future SACRE members could arrange to observe a school assembly.
c) clarified that the purpose of SACRE was to oversee the local delivery of RE because it is not in the National Curriculum.
d) asked if the low attendance at this meeting reflected the state of RE in schools. They were informed that a lot is being done by schools. It was suggested that RE teachers be invited to future meetings to give a short presentation on what is happening in their schools.
e) asked how RE compared to other humanities subjects. They were informed that is a very strong department at Eastbury School, and an Eastbury teacher has become the curriculum lead in the sixth form consortium. The school also has achieved the gold award for RE provision (RE Quality Mark). All pupils take RE at GCSE and 50 – 60% get A*-C grades. Some other schools may only enter one or two classes for GCSE.
f) noted that there is so much focus on literacy and numeracy in the primary schools' curriculum that it can be difficult to provide RE. RE can be linked to literacy and other foundation subjects. Schools need to plan opportunities to do this. Also, there are fewer specialist RE teachers in primary schools. Ms Pradhan has prepared a document to help schools plan the delivery of RE which is based on the current locally agreed syllabus. She has also given a presentation on how schools can apply for the RE Quality Mark.
g) asked if “mindfulness” is being raised in schools yet. Buddhist, Christian and secular approaches are available. They noted that schools might include mindfulness to help promote wellbeing in the school community, e.g. by providing opportunities for reflective though.
h) suggested that minutes of SACRE meetings should be circulated to RE co-ordinators so that they know what is being discussed and can give their feedback. The Minutes could also be presented at RE network meetings.

603.3 Terms of Reference/Membership update (Minute no. 596.3 refers)
a) were informed that Ms Brown had approached Gants Hill Synagogue to invite a nomination to fill the vacancy for a Jewish representative but there had been no reply. Ms Sahota agreed to approach a Jewish colleague who
teaches at her school.

b) noted that Mr Matt Goodyear had take the place of Mr Martin Nicholson as Primary Headteacher representative instead of Ms Jo Preston.

c) were informed that there was another vacancy for a Local Authority Representative following the death of Alderman Jones. The Lead Member for Education would be asked to nominate new representatives to fill the vacancies.

d) noted that Mr Dickson had decided not to continue as Secondary Headteacher representative. The local Secondary Headteachers’ Association would be asked to nominate a new representative.

604 ANALYSIS OF GCSE AND A LEVEL RESULTS

Members received a summary of the Religious Studies GCSE and A Level results for 2015 taken from the draft SACRE Annual Report for 2015. It was agreed that this should be provided as an appendix to the minutes for circulation at RE network meetings. Arising from the report the members noted:

604.1 the variable patterns of entry for public examinations across the borough’s secondary schools. Some schools enter small groups while others enter whole cohorts.

604.2 that the results may be a reflection of the amount of curriculum time allocated to RE compared to other humanities subjects. It was suggested that this could be raised at RE network meetings, but secondary schools’ attendance at meetings is not very high. Ms Pradhan suggested starting with the heads of RE in the sixth form consortium. SACRE would encourage secondary school RE co-ordinators to attend the network meetings. The Chair would also like to attend meetings if possible.

604.3 the prompts for governing bodies to discuss their school’s RE results.

605 SACRE ANNUAL REPORT 2015

Members received copies of the draft Annual Report for 2015.

605.1 It was suggested that the report could include any mentions of RE/SMSC in recent Ofsted reports. However, it may be difficult to isolate any comments in reports, and schools which remain “good” only receive a letter of confirmation rather than a more detailed report.

605.2 Training for teachers is mentioned in the report. Mr Goodyear reported that governors are also keen to receive training because RE is a statutory subject. More schools are forming partnerships and they are buying in training for staff and governors within their groups. Members asked if RE could also be included in the LA’s governors’ training programme?

Action: Request inclusion of RE in governors’ training programme

605.3 Ms Brown to circulate final draft of the report for members’ approval before it is presented to elected members.

Action: Final report to be circulated for members’ approval
606 PROPOSED BUDGET EXPENDITURE

Members noted that a budget of approximately £15,000 had been allocated for SACRE. The LA would like a breakdown of the expenditure for delivering SACRE’s responsibilities. It was noted that costs would vary depending on the cycle for reviewing the syllabus. Some funding is used to pay Eastbury School for Ms Pradhan’s time spent working as the LA’s RE Consultant. Other costs include administrative support, production of the annual report, and subscriptions and membership fees. It was agreed that Ms Brown would confirm with the LA how much was available, before preparing a draft statement for discussion at the next meeting.

**Action:** O Brown to prepare outline of costs; Agenda item at next meeting

607 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

**SACRE Development Plan**

Ms Pradhan recommended that SACRE should have a development plan to cover the next 2-3 years’ work. Examples are available from other LAs.

Members

a) were asked to suggest anything which they would like to include, and some priorities should be identified. Progress can be reviewed against the plan each year.

b) suggested that mindfulness should be included, with suggestions on how schools can approach this.

c) agreed that a three year plan should be produced for the lead up to the next review of the syllabus

**Action:** Agenda item

608 DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Members agreed to hold their Summer Term meeting on Tuesday 7 June 2016 at 10:00 am at Northbury Primary School. Ms Sahota was asked to give a report on RE provision at Northbury School, and members asked to see some examples of work.

**Action:** Agenda item
Extract from the SACRE Annual Report 2015

2.2. Religious Studies examination results 2015 (See Appendix C for summary of results)

Analysis of GCSE and A level results for 2015

School entry policies for GCSE RE differ, depending on the arrangements for statutory RE within the Key Stage 4 curriculum and the availability of RE within the school’s Key Stage 4 option choices. Patterns of entry vary considerably between schools. All schools entered pupils for GCSE RE with cohort numbers ranging from 12 (4.4%) at Jo Richardson to 260 (96.7%) at Eastbury. The comments on achievement that follow will clearly be affected by the overall patterns of entry.

Achievement at GCSE Religious Studies (RS)

50% of Barking and Dagenham students sat a GCSE course in Religious Studies which is above the national figure of 44%. Overall 63.8% of those pupils achieved A*-C grades GCSE, which is below the national figure of 72.4%. Two schools, Barking Abbey (93.9%) and Robert Clack (93.2%) exceeded this national picture significantly. All Saints School (72.0%) matched the national picture. Achievement at the higher grades (A*/A) for GCSE RS, at 21.3%, is below the national figure of 30.2%. This is exceeded significantly at Barking Abbey with 53.0% and Robert Clack with 51.4%.

Governors will generally want to satisfy themselves that:
• the statutory requirements for schools to provide RE for all students are being met at Key Stage 4
• the overall proportion of pupils being entered for any accreditation in RS at GCSE is appropriate
• the achievement of pupils in GCSE RS at A*-C and A*/A is sufficiently good.

Achievement at Advanced Level in Religious Studies

Eight schools entered students for A level RS, a total of 83 students. Barking Abbey entered 35 students, Robert Clack 14 and All Saints, Eastbury and Jo Richardson each entered 9 students. In other schools only 1 or 2 students were entered. At Eastbury 67% of the cohort achieved A*-A, significantly above the national figure of 24.7%. A*-C grades were in line with or exceeded national figures in seven of the schools. In all 8 schools 100% of students achieved A*-E.