

**THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF KENSINGTON AND CHELSEA  
STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION - SACRE**

**MINUTES**

Meeting RBKC SACRE  
Date 29<sup>th</sup> February 2024  
Time of meeting 5:30-7pm  
Venue Committee Room 2, Kensington Town Hall / Microsoft Teams (hybrid meeting)

**Present:**

**Committee A** (Faiths and Denominations):

- Laurence Julius (LJ), Board of Deputies of British Jews (Chair)
- Alex Stacey (AS), Diocese of Westminster
- Claire Bruce-Lamblin (CBL), Diocese of Westminster

**Committee B** (Church of England):

- Kathryn Kane (KK), LDBS

**Committee C** (Teachers): Celia Platt (CP), National Education Union

**Committee D** (Local Education Authority): N/A

**Co-opted Members:**

- Jo Backus (JB), Network of Buddhist Organisations
- Gillian Berg (GB), Kensington and Chelsea Baha'i Community

**Local Authority Servicing Officers:**

- Natalija Sorokina (NS) (Clerk)
- Jackie Saddington (JS)


**RE Consultant Adviser:** Ian Nicholson (IN), RE Today

Item Number	Minute Content
<b>Item 1: Welcome and apologies</b>	<p>Chair LJ welcomed everyone to the meeting. Chair LJ gave a special welcome to IN, RE Adviser from RE Today.</p> <p>Clerk NS informed that apologies had been received from Katrina Quinton (Committee B).</p> <p>Clerk NS confirmed that the meeting was not quorate as Committee D for the Local Authority was not represented.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">***</p> <p>After the meeting, Clerk NS received retrospective apologies from Lady Singh and Susan Jaff (both Committee A).</p>

<b>Item 2: Membership Update</b>	<p>Chair LJ informed that this was KK's last meeting as she was about to go on a new career path. LJ thanked KK for her contribution to the work of the SACRE over the recent years and wished her all the best. KK said that she enjoyed her time on the SACRE.</p> <p>Clerk NS added that she had written to LDBS, the nominating body for KK, to ask for a replacement member.</p> <p>NS also informed that attempts to attract teacher members had been made via trade unions, albeit without success.</p>
<b>Item 3: Minutes of the previous meeting and matters arising</b>	<p>Minutes of the autumn term SACRE meeting in September 2023 were reviewed and agreed as an accurate record of the meeting by those present.</p> <p>As the meeting was not quorate with Committee D not represented, Chair LJ suggested Clerk NS should email the Committee D member to ask specifically whether they would be happy for the minutes to be agreed.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"> <b>→ Clerk NS to contact Committee D member to check if they had any feedback on the minutes of the previous meeting with a view to them being agreed.</b>  <b>→ To approve the minutes subject to agreement of Committee D member.</b>  <b>→ Once agreed, the minutes of the autumn term 2023 meeting to be uploaded to the RBKC SACRE <a href="#">website</a>.</b> </p> <p>Matters arising regarding Ramadan guidance, teachers' questionnaire about the LAS and Westhill Awards will be recorded against the relevant agenda items below.</p> <p><u>SACRE Annual Report 2022/23</u>  Clerk NS informed that no update on the KS4 and KS5 exam results data had been received, so the SACRE Annual Report was submitted/shared without this detail as agreed at the previous meeting. The Report was shared with NASACRE, schools and the DfE. It is also now available on the RBKC SACRE's <a href="#">webpage</a>.</p>
<b>Item 4: Ramadan Guidance 2024</b>	<p>Clerk NS advised that she had written to Naif Sheikh twice asking if any updates were needed to the Ramadan guidance, however, no response had been received.</p> <p>KK pointed out that the document by Discover Islam did not have advice around music and singing. As her experience of working in secondary schools showed, some Muslim students may feel uncomfortable about taking part in these activities over the course of Ramadan, and she felt schools needed to be aware of the restrictions.</p>

	<p>IN clarified that during Ramadan, many Muslims would only be allowed to listen to the sound of the drum. Many of them will not listen to music. It would be good to alert schools to this so they know not to organise concerts or any other music activities during Ramadan as many Muslim students would then be unable to access the curriculum.</p> <p>The members present agreed for the Ramadan guidance from the previous years to remain in place and for an additional point to be added regarding music and singing. As the meeting was not quorate with Committee D not represented, Chair LJ suggested Clerk NS should check with its member outside of the meeting if they would be agreeable to the proposal. Clerk NS should also check this with the two Muslim members, who were not present at the meeting. It was agreed for this to be done via email due to the tight timeframe with Ramadan's estimated start date on 10<sup>th</sup> March.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"> <b>→ Clerk NS to contact Cllr Weeden-Sanz, Naif Sheikh and Susan Jaff to seek their approval of the above.</b>  <b>→ To approve the Ramadan Guidance subject to agreement of above.</b>  <b>→ If approved, NS to arrange the necessary communications to schools as well as updates to the RBKC SACRE website.</b> </p>
<p><b>Item 5: Locally Agreed Syllabus</b></p>	<p>CP confirmed that following the previous meeting, she received a copy of the questionnaire for teachers shared by RE Adviser Lat Blaylock. The plan was for this questionnaire to be taken to the RE Good Practice Network meeting for teachers to complete to share their views about the current <i>Living Difference III</i> syllabus. Unfortunately, the questionnaire was not discussed at the Network meeting but it was shared with the teachers via email afterwards. Only three responses were received, including one by CP herself. All three responses were positive about Hampshire's syllabus, and the teachers' preference was to continue with it.</p> <p>IN advised that he led the autumn term's RE Good Practice Network meeting where the syllabus was discussed. In addition to what CP mentioned above, it was also highlighted that, in RBKC, the <i>Living Difference III</i> syllabus was taught over the Covid-19 pandemic where most of the teaching was online. Teachers felt they had not had enough time to properly embed the syllabus in their lessons, and so they would like a further 5 years to do so. If a completely new syllabus were to be introduced, this would require a higher level of training for teachers and a significant change to their lesson planning. In view of this and CP's feedback, IN would advise the ASC to consider staying with Hampshire's syllabus, which would have to be their new <i>Living Difference IV</i> version.</p> <p>Both IN and JS informed that the ASC in Westminster voted to continue the arrangement with Hampshire and would be adopting <i>Living Difference IV</i>.</p> <p>CP noted that the RE Good Practice Network meetings were for teachers in the Bi-borough, so if both boroughs were following the same syllabus, it would</p>

	<p>mean that these meetings would be much more productive, effective and useful for RE teachers.</p> <p>Chair LJ reminded of the challenges that the SACRE faced during the previous syllabus review from the Muslim and Buddhist members. He felt strongly that it would be important to ensure that those representatives would be content with the proposed syllabus, and it would be important to seek their views early.</p> <p>JB agreed to have a look at the existing syllabus with a particular focus on the Buddhism-related content and offer her reflections. The members recalled that the issue previously raised was in relation to not all Buddhist communities being represented in the syllabus.</p> <p>KK recalled that the Muslim member at the time had found that one of the Muslim concepts in the syllabus had an incorrect definition. This was taken back to Hampshire by Lesley Prior, RE Adviser at the time, which was eventually rectified.</p> <p>JS reminded that Hampshire would not agree to any changes to their <i>Living Difference IV</i> syllabus, so it would need to be adopted as it was.</p> <p>IN confirmed, based on the discussion and in particular the feedback from the teachers, that if the SACRE were satisfied that the Hampshire <i>Living Difference</i> syllabus was appropriate, there was no need for the syllabus conference to review any alternative syllabi.</p> <p>IN advised that the SACRE would be able to add a personalised Foreword in which they could emphasise and be precise about anything they felt was important to mention in addition to the rest of the content.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>→ JB to review the current syllabus <i>Living Difference III</i> from the Buddhist perspective and share her reflections with the group.</b></p>
<p><b>Item 6: Westhill Awards 2024 – application progress update</b></p>	<p>Chair LJ informed that the Westhill Awards working group set up at the previous meeting needed a new chair to lead its work. It was acknowledged that this work would not be completed by the application deadline of 31<sup>st</sup> March; however, all present agreed that the SACRE should still attempt to take it forward with a view to meeting the following year's submission deadline.</p> <p>KK who originally volunteered to be part of the working group advised she would not be able to be part of it due to her resignation from the SACRE mentioned above.</p> <p>Chair LJ suggested for the group to meet at the V&amp;A Museum before the summer term meeting. KK suggested speaking with the Museum's education officer about possible options for a project.</p>

	<p>CP's view was that children would enjoy going to the Museum as it would cover lots of different faiths.</p> <p>CBL advised that it was important for a Muslim member to be part of this working group too, which everyone agreed with.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>→ Clerk NS to contact V&amp;A Museum to ask for a meeting opportunity between the SACRE's working group members and their education officers, with a view to this happening before the summer term meeting.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>→ Clerk NS to email the two Muslim members of the SACRE to ask if they would join the working group.</b></p>
<p><b>Item 7: RE Updates by RE Adviser</b></p>	<p>IN provided RE updates as summarised in the document attached below:</p> <p style="text-align: center;"> RBKC Spring Update 2024.docx</p> <p>The updates included the following highlights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- RE in <a href="#">Ofsted Annual Report</a> published in November 2023. The report recognised the challenges faced by RE teachers and the impact on children. For example, secondary schools are not meeting the legal requirement for RE delivery. There is acknowledgement that children leave schools unequipped for the diverse context, which highlights that the RE curriculum needs to be deeper rather than broader. Ofsted asked for a new framework for RE. The current one has been in place since 2010. The report also points out the need for quality CPD for RE teachers. RE teachers in RBKC can take part in termly RE good practice network meetings, something that many local authorities do not offer.</li> <li>- Results of the NATRE secondary survey on RE</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;">JB shared her experience of being asked by a secondary school to cover the whole of Buddhism in a drop down day, which supported the statements of poor quality RE in secondary schools. Children need to not only learn the content but also understand the framework through which that content is delivered so there is an outcome for understanding.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">IN further added that RE being taught by non-specialist staff in secondary schools was a common issue.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Launch of national content standard for RE by the RE Council of England</li> <li>- Parliamentary question on supporting and funding RE</li> <li>- House of Lords short debate on the quality of RE in schools. The Government's efforts to transform teacher training and recruit specialists in RE includes introducing a £10,000 bursary for RE trainee teachers in the 2024-25 academic year as well as continuing to offer subject knowledge enhancement courses.</li> <li>- RE Featured in Radio 4's Beyond Belief</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Key Findings from National Jewish Identity Survey by Institute for Jewish Policy Research</li> </ul> <p>Chair LJ felt the survey while indicative of the views of the community, should not be regarded as fully representative due to under representation of orthodox groups in the sample.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- DfE consultation on the Advanced British Standard, a potential new qualification framework for 16-19 year olds. This does not seem to have included RE, which has been pointed out to the DfE by NATRE.</li> </ul> <p>Please see the document attached for full details of the above points. It also offers some information on training opportunities.</p> <p>Following the above updates, the SACRE talked about whether there would be enough pressure for the necessary changes in RE to happen. IN advised that there were signs for the wind of change coming. There will be a review of the whole curriculum happening, which will also drive the quality of RE. There also seems a change in the position of RE in academies, which was evident from the increase in RE teacher job vacancies advertised in academies.</p>
<b>Item 8: Update from Chair</b>	<p><u><a href="#">Annual NASACRE Conference and AGM – 20<sup>th</sup> May 2024 at Hilton York Hotel, York</a></u></p> <p>The Local Authority has traditionally funded for two SACRE members to attend this Conference in person. Interested members should let Clerk NS know if they would like to attend. Priority should be given to new members or those who have not gone to the Conference before. The Conference can be attended via Zoom too.</p> <p>JS confirmed that the Local Authority would pay for return tickets to York, but it would not be able to pay for a hotel if a member were to choose to stay overnight.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>➔ Clerk NS to email everyone to invite expressions of interest.</b></p> <p><u>NASACRE Training Programme</u></p> <p>Members are reminded to check <u><a href="#">the training offer by NASACRE</a></u>.</p> <p><u>Visits to Holland Park Synagogue</u></p> <p>The SACRE members had been previously invited by Chair LJ to Holland Park Synagogue for a Havdala and evening service on 24<sup>th</sup> February. LJ said the event was well attended, including by a number of councillors.</p> <p>LJ reminded that everyone was welcome to attend the Synagogue any Saturday from 8:45am. Schools are also welcome to visit during the week.</p>

<b>Item 9: Freedom of Information Requests</b>	Clerk NS informed that none had been received since the previous meeting in September 2023.
<b>Item 10: Dates and Venues of Future Meetings</b>	<p>The date for the summer term meeting was confirmed as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 6 June 2024 (5:30-7pm)</li> </ul> <p>Kensington Town Hall was agreed as a suitable venue.</p>
<b>Item 11: AOB</b>	<p><u>Inter Faith Network</u></p> <p>JB shared the sad news that the Inter Faith Network would be closing.</p>