

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

MINUTES

Meeting RBKC SACRE
Date 6th June 2024
Time of meeting 5:30-7pm
Venue Committee Room 5, Kensington Town Hall / Microsoft Teams (hybrid meeting)

Present:

Committee A (Faiths and Denominations):

- Laurence Julius (LJ), Board of Deputies of British Jews (Chair)
- Susan Jaff (SJ), Islamic Faith (*joined at 5:52pm*)
- Naif Sheikh (NS), Discover Islam (*joined at 6.12pm*)

Committee B (Church of England):

- Katrina Quinton (KQ)

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 (*joined at 5:42pm*)

Local Authority Servicing Officers:

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

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

Observer: Fr Evan McWilliams (EM)

Item Number	Minute Content
Item 1: Welcome and apologies	<p>Chair LJ welcomed everyone to the meeting.</p> <p>EM joined the meeting as an observer. EM is Associate Vicar at St Mary Abbots Parish Church in Kensington and he is interested in joining the SACRE as a Committee B member.</p> <p>Clerk NSo informed that apologies had been received from Claire Bruce-Lamblin (Committee A) and that Cllr Roberto Weeden-Sanz (Committee D) had advised of uncertainty with regards to being able to attend the meeting due to standing for Parliament.</p>

	<p>Clerk NSo confirmed that the meeting was not quorate as Committee D for the Local Authority was not represented.</p>
<p>Item 2: Membership Update</p> <p>-Recruiting new members -Succession planning for existing members</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JS advised that she had contacted the Council’s Governance Team to request for additional Councillors to be nominated to represent the LA on the SACRE to provide extra capacity for Committee D and assist with meeting quorum. JS had also queried whether non-Councillors could be nominated. It is hoped to have an update on this before the new term. • The members spoke positively of Cllr David Lindsay who had previously been on the SACRE and asked if it would be possible for him to return. • If the SACRE members would like to approach their local Councillors to interest them in the SACRE membership, they are welcome to do so. • Chair LJ highlighted again that the recruitment of teacher members remained a challenge. • CP informed that she would be going on maternity leave at the end of the academic year. She may still be able to join the SACRE meetings remotely. She has also spoken with the senior leadership team at her school to see if cover could be provided for her should she be unable to attend. • IN reminded that teachers as SACRE members represented their professional associations (traditionally, trade unions), not their schools. This means that teachers from all types of schools (i.e., not just community schools which fall under the SACRE’s remit) could be members. • Chair LJ pointed out the importance of the SACRE being an inclusive group and making sure that it was representative of the local communities. <p>Following the above discussion, the following actions were agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ JS to follow up regarding nominations for Committee D, including whether Cllr Lindsay could return and whether LA officers could represent the LA on the SACRE. ➔ JS to email headteachers of community schools regarding teacher members on the SACRE. This could also include Early Career Teachers with an interest in RE.
<p>Item 3: Minutes of the previous meeting and matters arising</p>	<p>The minutes of the previous two meetings could not be signed off as the meeting was inquorate.</p> <p>Clerk NSo confirmed that following the previous meeting, she had written to Cllr Weeden-Sanz several times to seek his approval of the autumn term meeting minutes. No response was received.</p> <p>Minutes of the previous SACRE meeting in February 2024 were reviewed and agreed as an accurate record of the meeting by those present.</p> <p>Chair LJ advised that there had been a request from one of the members for the minutes to be turned around more quickly to enable the members to pick up any inaccuracies. It was agreed for the minutes to be sent out within 10 working days of a meeting.</p>

	<p style="text-align: right;">→ Minutes from Autumn 2023 and Spring 2024 SACRE meetings to be signed off at the next quorate meeting.</p> <p><u>Westhill Awards</u></p> <p>Further to what had been agreed at the previous meeting, NSo contacted V&A Museum to ask if they would work with the SACRE, and they advised that they had no capacity within their schools team for any additional programming. However, they said that the SACRE members were welcome to visit and have a look at their collections, etc.</p> <p>Chair LJ suggested a group of SACRE members should go to the Museum to have a look at their objects to then identify a few to work with.</p> <p>EM mentioned that he had a background in Arts and would be happy to take part in this work.</p> <p>SJ advised V&A Museum had an Islamic section as well as sections from other faiths, all of which would serve to broaden children's horizons. Children could be taken to see those sections to look for common denominators to find unity across the different faiths.</p> <p>SJ agreed to be part of the Westhill Awards working group.</p> <p>The SACRE discussed that this project would be most suitable for 10-13 year olds. IN added that this would be a good transition module which would support Ofsted's requirement for learning to build on prior learning, and it could help to avoid a drop in standards between primary and secondary phases.</p> <p>JB pointed out the importance of being mindful of identifying the impact that the project would have on the children – something that the Westhill Awards panel would be looking at.</p> <p>Following the above discussion, the following actions were agreed:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">→ EM to go to V&A Museum to explore their collections to identify a selection of objects for the rest of the SACRE members to then jointly review and further narrow down from.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">→ LJ, JB, SJ, GB, EM and KQ to meet at V&A Museum at 10:30am on 9th July to look at the selected objects together.</p>
<p>Item 4: Locally Agreed Syllabus – due for renewal in June 2025</p>	<p>JB shared some of her feedback following a review of RBKC's <i>Living Difference III</i> (LD3) syllabus and Hampshire's revised parent syllabus <i>Living Difference IV</i> (LD4). Below are some points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Both syllabi offer interesting and dynamic approaches to RE aiming towards high quality RE.

<p>Vote for a recommendation to the LA to establish an Agreed Syllabus Conference</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - LD3 offers an interesting take on concepts which are then differently applied in different contexts and different faiths. Is it the same in LD4? - LD4 uses the term of 'propositional knowledge/truth'. In Buddhism, the term for 'truth' (The Four Noble Truths) means true things about the universe, having an ontological element to it as opposed to just a proposition. It would be important to clarify this for teachers as it may cause confusion. - The term 'dukkha' (suffering) covers a wide range of experiences in Buddhism, from physical pain to subtle feelings that not all is well with the universe. It is, therefore, important to unpick the term and explain to children and young people the diversity and the implications of it so they are not put off thinking Buddhism is all about suffering. It would be useful to counter-balance this term with 'sukha' (bliss, happiness), the opposite to 'dukkha'. Unpicking such ideas would be in line with Ofsted's recommendations to look deeper. LD4 does teach what it is like to be a Buddhist in the contemporary society; however, 'dukkha' and 'sukha' should be in the conceptual structure as they do matter in Buddhism. - JB advised that she would agree to go ahead with LD4; however, it would be a good idea to encourage some CPD opportunities for teachers to specifically look at tricky concepts such as those above, and this would be something to be explored in any future versions of the syllabus. <p>The members discussed that this additional information could be included in a personalised Foreword or as an additional resource to go along with the syllabus.</p> <p>Other members contributed with the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CP advised that children responded well to Hampshire's LD3. Their engagement with RE lessons is much stronger now than it was under the previous syllabus. The syllabus offers a clear structure for how the circle of enquiry works, which meets Ofsted requirements. Teachers are provided with concepts which they can then build on. The main difference between LD3 and LD4 is in the introduction of golden threads; however, this would not be a major change for teachers to embrace as opposed to a completely different syllabus. - Hampshire will not accept any changes to the content of their LD4; however, anything additional that the SACRE would like teachers to be alerted to could either be inserted in the Foreword section or provided separately as a complementary document. - LJ advised LD4 covered Judaism well, so he would be happy to vote for it. He also reminded of the teachers' feedback that due to Covid they felt they had not had enough time to really embed LD3 and would like more time to build on it. - NS advised he would be happy to continue with LD4. Anything additional could be sent or provided to schools separately.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SJ advised that she would like to look at other syllabus options; however, she acknowledged the feedback from teachers. - KQ and CP both reminded that Westminster were using Hampshire's syllabus too, which made the termly Bi-borough RE Good Practice Network meetings much more effective and productive. <p>Due to the meeting being inquorate, it was not possible to vote for a recommendation to the LA to establish an Agreed Syllabus Conference. However, the SACRE felt collectively that if they could vote on the day, they would be happy to vote in favour of Hampshire's LD4.</p> <p>Following the above discussion, the following actions were agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ JB to write a piece for the Foreword to draw attention to the points that she mentioned above about diverse concepts such as 'dukkha' and 'sukha', for example, that would require additional unpicking. ➔ The SACRE to vote for a recommendation to the LA to establish an Agreed Syllabus Conference at the next quorate meeting.
<p>Item 5: RE Updates by RE Adviser – by IN</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ofsted published a subject report on RE <i>Deep and Meaningful?</i> in April 2024. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The report draws on evidence from visits to a sample of primary and secondary schools last year. - It provides examples of good practice for schools to follow as well as highlights gaps where RE does not meet legal requirements. - It also gives a list of recommendations to the DfE – for example, that more training is required for RE teachers. The report refers to 90% of teachers not having received professional development in RE to keep up to date with subject developments. This leads to Ofsted's recommendation to the DfE to look for new guidance in RE in terms of pedagogy and improving teachers' subject knowledge. - Another recommendation is that RE needs to be taught weekly at all key stages. The majority of schools were found not to teach RE at KS4. - The report also says it very strongly that RE needs to stand out as a separate subject rather than being embedded in others. It needs to be reflected in the curriculum accordingly. - The report also stresses the importance of depth vs breadth. • RE Council launched a new curriculum toolkit in May 2024. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The toolkit is designed to help schools to develop a high quality RE curriculum using a religion and worldviews approach. - This was launched along with a National Statement of Entitlement that sets out what all state school pupils up to the end of Year 11 are entitled to be taught. - It has been made very clear that schools cannot withdraw children from RE. Only parents can do so up to the age of 18.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘REady for Work’ Campaign was launched by Lord Bilimoria to call to action, highlighting the importance of high quality RE in schools. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This is an opportunity for employers and business leaders to support students interested in high quality RE as preparation for the future workforce. <p>Full details on the above, including some information on training opportunities, can be found in IN’s updates attached below:</p> <div data-bbox="488 483 542 544" data-label="Image"> </div> <p>RBKC SACRE Update Summer 2024.docx</p> <p>CP advised that her experience showed that RE was as strong in schools as their senior management teams allowed it to be. It is key for schools’ leadership to be on board.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">➔ JS to put some wording together for LJ to be sent out via the school comms from SACRE, reminding headteachers that pupils should not be taken out of RE lessons to go to other lessons or on school trips.</p>
<p>Item 6: Update from Chair</p>	<p><u>Proposed NASACRE Charitable Incorporated Organisation Constitution – feedback by 28th June</u></p> <p>Chair LJ referred to NASACRE’s intention to register as a CIO. The proposed constitution document had been shared with the SACRE members via email. NASACRE welcome any feedback by 28th June.</p> <p><u>Annual NASACRE Conference and AGM – 20th May 2024</u></p> <p>Resources from the Conference can be found on NASACRE’s website here: https://nasacre.org.uk/conference-and-agm/2024-how-can-sacres-support-high-quality-re-collective-worship/</p> <p>JB attended the Conference and found Lat Blaylock’s presentation of particular interest. This also includes his ideas on 35 things that a SACRE can do to become an active SACRE.</p> <p>IN reminded that one of the duties of a SACRE was to monitor the quality of RE in their local authority. This could be done through checking Ofsted inspection reports and challenging Ofsted around why RE is not mentioned. Ofsted’s <i>Deep and Meaningful?</i> report found RE to often be part of other sections (e.g., personal development or community cohesion), especially in secondary schools. However, it has been made clear that it is an academic discipline that needs to stand on its own. Ofsted need to comment on RE in their inspection reports to enable SACREs to monitor the quality of RE locally.</p>

	<p>JB spoke about the idea of partners for a SACRE. For example, in RBKC, V&A Museum could be invited to become the SACRE's partner. This would link well with Lord Bilimoria's campaign about RE in the world of work.</p> <p><u>NASACRE Training Programme</u></p> <p>Members were reminded to check the training offer by NASACRE.</p>
Item 7: SACRE Self-Evaluation and Evaluation of Annual Work Plan	<p>In evaluating the work of the SACRE, Chair LJ felt the same as last year – that the SACRE in RBKC was established with the support of the Clerk, LA Adviser and RE Adviser, and that the gap between 'established' and 'enhanced' was too big with some unrealistic expectations and could not be justified from a cost-benefit perspective. The members present supported this view.</p>
Item 8: Freedom of Information Requests	<p>Clerk NSo informed that none had been received since the previous meeting in February 2024.</p>
Item 9: RE Adviser Update	<p>Chair LJ asked IN to leave the meeting at this point. He thanked IN for all the contributions earlier, and IN left. SJ also left at this point.</p> <p>JS updated with the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - RE Today would be able to support the SACRE in 2024/25 by virtually attending the termly meetings and virtually running the termly RE Good Practice Network meetings. IN would continue as the SACRE's RE Adviser; however, it was yet to be confirmed whether he could also continue with the network meetings. Generally, the feedback from this year's support by IN seemed positive. - Another RE Adviser is willing to support the SACRE in 2024/25. The difference would be that this adviser would be available in-person and she would be able to assist with annual report writing and any projects such as a Westhill Awards application, for example. - It is for the SACRE to decide how they would like to proceed. <p>CP felt that the termly RE Good Practice Network meetings run by IN were going well. She pointed out that it would be important for both SACRE and network meetings to be supported by the same adviser. It would be good to restore the community of RE teachers which was in place when late Lesley Prior, previous RE Adviser, was supporting both meetings in person. It is more difficult to recreate that community through online meetings. CP felt that if it was possible for IN to run the network meetings online but for all the teachers to be physically present in a room, it could work.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">→ JS to confirm with RE Today whether IN would be available to run the termly network meetings too and update accordingly.</p>
Item 10: Dates and Venues of	<p>The members agreed for Clerk NSo to set new meeting dates to mirror the 2023/24 dates. They also agreed for the meetings to continue as hybrid meetings run from Kensington Town Hall.</p>

2024/25 Meetings	
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