

## **STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

Minutes of the meeting held at 5.30 pm on 11 November 2020

### **Present:**

Reverend Roger Bristow (Chairman)

Councillors Kevin Brooks, Robert Evans, David Jefferys,  
Kate Lymer, Keith Onslow and Chris Pierce  
Mrs Denise Angell, Reverend Rachel Archer,  
Mrs Donna Gold, Mr Lee Kings, Mrs Caroline Ringham,  
Dr Omar Taha, Ms Jan Thompson, Mr Christopher Town  
and Mrs Edlene Whitman

### **Also Present:**

Julia Andrew, LBB Head of School Standards  
Carol Arnfield, LBB Head of Service for Early Years,  
Schools Standards and Adult Education  
Stacey Burman, SACRE RE Advisor

#### **1 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN AND VICE CHAIRMAN**

**RESOLVED** that Reverend Roger Bristow be elected as Chairman, and Councillor Kevin Brooks be elected as Vice-Chairman, of the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education for the 2020/2021 municipal year.

#### **2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

Apologies for absence had been received from Daniel Coleman and Arvinder Nandra.

Apologies for lateness were received from Councillor Kate Lymer and Dr Omar Taha.

#### **3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

#### **4 COMPLIANCE OF THE GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATION (GDPR)**

No breaches of the GDPR were reported.

## **5 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 4TH MARCH 2020**

**RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2020 be confirmed as a correct record.**

### **B) MATTERS ARISING**

Minute 30: SACRE Constitution

The SACRE Clerk confirmed that advice had been sought from the LBB Democratic Services Manager and the LBB Director of Corporate Services with regards to the wording used in the SACRE Terms of Reference. The finalised version of the document had been included in the agenda pack for the meeting.

The LBB Head of School Standards informed Members that due to the pandemic, Ofsted were not undertaking visits to schools, and therefore no Ofsted reports had been received since the spring term. A digest from Ofsted reports would be provided to the SACRE once visits and reports recommenced.

Minute 31: Draft Bromley SACRE Annual Report 2018-2019

The SACRE Clerk advised that, following the March meeting, the draft Bromley SACRE Annual Report 2018-2019 had been provided to SACRE Members for further comment. The document had since been finalised and provided to the Department for Education, NASACRE, schools, and had been presented to the Council meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> July 2020.

Minute 32: Revised Bromley Agreed Syllabus

The SACRE Clerk advised that further contact details had been received for faith representatives and guest speakers who would be willing to go into Bromley schools. These had been passed on to the SACRE RE Adviser.

Minute 34: Inter-Faith Competition

The Chairman confirmed that a draft PDF of the inter-faith calendar had been circulated to SACRE Members.

Minute 35: Any Other Business

The Chairman confirmed that the email from MindCare Dementia had been provided to SACRE Members.

## **6 REVIEW DETERMINATIONS**

No determinations had been received.

## 7 BROMLEY AGREED SYLLABUS

SACRE Members had been provided with a link to the Bromley Agreed Syllabus and accompanying documents, which were now available on the Bromley Education Matters website.

The SACRE RE Adviser informed Members that primary and secondary RE network meetings had been held, during which the teachers had gone through the Syllabus. The teachers who attended the primary RE network meetings were also working on draft materials, such as schemes of learning and unit plans, which were currently being trialled in schools. A meeting of the secondary RE network would be held on the 26<sup>th</sup> February 2021, and these teachers had already discussed their curriculum maps based on the Syllabus. It was noted that over the last year, consultation on the documents had been open to all schools, and those that attended the networks had a good understanding of the Syllabus, its aims, and its purpose.

A SACRE Member, who had attended the primary RE network meeting, said that the materials looked amazing, and that it was refreshing to see so much information being provided to teachers. It was noted that it may be a struggle for teachers to “get their heads around” everything provided, but this should be seen as an interim year – during which teachers gained greater subject knowledge and gathered resources. This was echoed by a primary teacher representative who advised that overall, the documents had been well received.

Another primary teacher representative advised that her school had made a positive start to planning the new curriculum. The Teaching Assistant (TA) delivering the lessons had produced very comprehensive plans, and it was noted that this would become easier going forward. It took lots of hard work, but the TA had enjoyed the challenge, and the depth and thought of the questions received from pupils.

The SACRE RE Adviser highlighted that the general response she had received from teachers was that the pupils were much more engaged with the subject area. The teachers had been provided with a set of plans for autumn and spring, and at the primary RE network meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> February 2021, they would be looking at the spring and summer units. The SACRE RE Adviser noted that once the support materials for the Syllabus had been completed, she would send them to the SACRE faith representatives to check they were happy with the contents. **ACTION: SACRE RE Adviser**

The SACRE RE Adviser informed Members that the RE network meetings were open to all Bromley schools, free of charge, and the support materials would be provided to the teachers through them. The support materials would not be available via the Bromley Education Matters website, but a note would be included on it, asking teachers to get in touch with the SACRE RE Adviser directly.

A Member noted that the Syllabus was a very impressive document, and enquired if the teaching of relationships in RE would run parallel to the new statutory requirement to teach Relationships and Sex Education (RSE). The SACRE RE Adviser informed Members that she was also supporting schools in the Borough with regards to RSE, and free primary and secondary networks had been established. These had allowed discussions around the RSE requirements, in terms of both the curriculum and safeguarding. The networks would continue to look at, and clarify, the requirements of RSE and RE – as the SACRE RE Adviser was coordinating both, this would help avoid any “pit falls”. It was noted that there was clear guidance for faith schools, and for children that attended school of a certain faith. Where there were discussions that pupils were required to attend, the RSE guidance advised that it could be delivered within the ethos of the school. The SACRE RE Adviser was aware that Church of England schools were being supported in terms of how to deliver this. It was highlighted that faith schools could contact the SACRE RE Adviser and attend the network meetings – a policy guidance document had also been produced, which provided advice on how to address the issue of teaching RSE within a religious setting.

## **8 SACRE ACTION PLAN (INCLUDING RELATIONSHIPS WITH SCHOOLS)**

Members had been provided with a copy of the SACRE Action Plan, covering the last year, which had been produced by the SACRE RE Adviser.

The SACRE RE Adviser noted that, despite the pandemic, the majority of items included in the Action Plan were marked in ‘green’ as completed. As the inter-faith calendar had now been printed and sent out to schools and SACRE Members, this could also be marked as complete. This highlighted that they had achieved everything they had set out to do during the year.

The items marked as ‘amber’ related to the Agreed Syllabus support materials, discussed earlier in the meeting, and the secondary RE network meeting that had been scheduled for the summer term. This had not taken place; however, a meeting had taken place early in the autumn term.

Following a suggestion from a SACRE Member, consideration would be given to producing online learning resources for pupils during the current academic year. Schools had also commented that this would be beneficial due to the likelihood of them needing to develop their blended learning. It was highlighted that religion was different for every individual, and that everybody had a different understanding.

One of the things that the SACRE RE Adviser wanted to try and develop, together as a SACRE, was some real resources for pupils. There was huge diversity within religion, and in addition to building up teachers’ subject knowledge, it was hoped there would also be an appreciation of diversity and inclusivity. The suggestion was to produce some electronic resources that teachers could use in school, of religious practice by real people – such as

SACRE Members. An example of this was the production of video tours inside Bromley places of worship. It was noted that GCSE students would also benefit from copies of sermons, as they provided discussions of religious teachings, followed by the debate and understanding.

A Member stated that this sounded like a good idea. The initial suggestion had been sparked by an article in the latest NASACRE Briefing, which noted that funding (up to £4k) could be bid for through the Westhill / NASACRE Award for 2021-22. It was thought that, if successful, the funding could be used to buy-in the technology support to produce some high-quality videos. The SACRE RE Adviser highlighted that this also linked with a previous action of collecting contacts for visitors to go into schools. Due to the current situation, these visits would not be able to take place, and going forward people may be more comfortable recording a video than going into schools. The Chairman noted that a number of churches he was in contact with already put their sermons online, and since lockdown, he had uploaded all services onto YouTube.

A Councillor representative emphasised that he strongly supported the suggestion, and it was a great idea to make online resources available. It was noted that it may take a few years to build up a bank of materials, but this was something positive that should be welcomed.

The SACRE RE Adviser suggested that she would draft a strategy for collating these resources, which would then be put to SACRE Members.

**ACTION: SACRE RE Adviser**

## **9 INTER-FAITH COMPETITION**

The Chairman advised that the SACRE inter-faith calendar had now been printed and send out schools and SACRE Members. It was noted that positive feedback had been received from several schools. A Councillor representative noted that the calendar was excellent, however the colour scheme used made it difficult to make hand written notes on it.

The SACRE RE Adviser informed Members that she was already thinking ahead with regards to the running of a competition next year. It was noted that they may consider producing just a PDF of the calendar, and not getting them printed – this would reduce the cost of the project, and allow schools flexibility if they wanted more than one copy. As discussed earlier in the meeting, it was suggested that the focus of the competition could be on the diversity of religion. Themes that could be considered included ‘what does religion look like in my home’ and ‘how does my house show my beliefs’ – Members were asked to offer any further suggestions.

A teacher representative asked whether photographs taken by pupils could be included in the calendar, alongside the drawings. The SACRE RE Adviser said that the issue with this, was that the competition would need to be set to request either photographs, or drawings – not a combination of both. It was

noted that the “beauty” of the competition was the pupils’ artwork, which made it even more engaging.

Another teacher representative advised Members that inter-faith week was currently taking place, for which she had run a themed idea which aimed to bringing inclusivity for all pupils at the school – both those of faith, and non-faith. Pupils had been set a challenge to give examples from their own lives of an ‘act of faith’. It was suggested that this could also be contemplated as an idea for a calendar theme.

A Councillor representative emphasised that there had been some fantastic inter-faith support around COVID-19, and considered that some of this work could be built in. Some examples of what had happened in practice would be extremely positive – how faith communities had come together, supported each other and the learning gained from it.

A Member highlighted the importance that the theme chosen should be inclusive. It was a Religious Education calendar, not just religions, and they should not select themes that were limited to pupils that practised religion.

## **10 SACRE ANNUAL REPORT**

The SACRE RE Adviser informed Members that the exam results included in the SACRE Annual Report 2019-2020 would be impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The LBB Head of Service for Early Years, School Standards and Adult Education advised Members that some RE exam/assessment data may be available, but this would not be received until after it was verified in January 2021. The LBB Head of School Standards highlighted that the data was likely to look different to usual.

The Chairman noted that this would have an effect on when it would be possible to submit the SACRE Annual Report 2019-2020, however nearly all SACREs would be in the same position.

*Following the meeting, it was confirmed that the SACRE Annual Report presented to Council on the 20<sup>th</sup> July 2020 was for the 2018-2019 academic year.*

## **11 SACRE SELF-EVALUATION**

The self-evaluation of the SACRE was a continuous process, which informed the development of the Committee and the Annual Report to the Department for Education each year. The Chairman requested, that following the meeting, Members look at the self-evaluation document provided, with the results from the previous year, and revisit the effectiveness of Bromley SACRE.

It was suggested that:

- Group A members (representatives of other faiths and Christian denominations) look at section 5;
- Group B members (the Church of England) look at section 3;
- Group C members (teachers) look at section 2; and
- Group D members (Councillors) look at section 4.

The Chairman suggested that Members could confer with other representatives from their respective groups, via email or phone, which they had done in previous years. The SACRE RE Adviser reminded Members that they should refer to the SACRE Action Plan when carrying out their evaluation.

It was agreed that the following SACRE Members would collate the feedback from their group:

Group A (other faiths and Christian denominations) – Dr Omar Taha  
Group B (Church of England) – Reverend Rachel Archer  
Group C (teachers) – Denise Angell  
Group D (Councillors) – Councillor David Jefferys

**ACTION: SACRE MEMBERS**

Members present agreed that they would be happy for the SACRE Clerk to share their email addresses with the other representative in their group.

**ACTION: Clerk**

Members were requested to email the SACRE clerk their thoughts by 12.00pm on Friday 11<sup>th</sup> December 2020, after which time the responses would be collated and provided to the SACRE RE Adviser.

## **12 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The Chairman informed Members that he had received an email from the Spinnaker Trust, a Christian charity which delivered Collective Worship in schools, asking if they could have a representative sit on the SACRE. The Chairman noted that the group structure of the SACRE was for the representation of faiths, teachers and Councillors – not representatives of organisations.

Members agreed that, as the SACRE Constitution did not allow for organisations to be appointed, this request should be refused. It was considered that if this organisation was accepted, they would open themselves up to receiving all kinds of requests. The Chairman said he intended to suggest that if an individual from the organisation were to be nominated by their respective faith group to sit on the SACRE, these requests could be considered.

*Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education*  
*11 November 2020*

**13            DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

5.30pm, Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2021

The Meeting ended at 6.28 pm

Chairman