

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Minutes of the meeting held at 6.00 pm on 7 July 2021

Present:

Reverend Roger Bristow (Chairman)
Councillor Kevin Brooks (Vice-Chairman)
Councillors Kim Botting FRSA, Mike Botting,
Robert Evans, David Jefferys, Kate Lymer and
Pauline Tunnicliffe

Mrs Denise Angell, Ms Hannah Arnold, Mrs Donna Gold,
Mr Lee Kings, Mrs Dorothy Lampert, Mr Saiyed Mahmood,
Mrs Caroline Ringham, Dr Omar Taha, Ms Jan Thompson
and Mr Christopher Town

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 2021/2022 municipal year.

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Reverend Rachel Archer, Daniel Coleman, Arvinder Nandra and Jared Nehra – LBB Director of Education.

The Chairman welcomed Councillor Kim Botting, Councillor Mike Botting, Councillor Pauline Tunnicliffe and Dorothy Lampert, representative of the Orthodox Jewish faith, to the meeting.

The Chairman reminded Members that a discussion had taken place at the last meeting regarding an approach from Humanists UK asking if Bromley SACRE would be willing to have a Humanist representative join the

membership. The Chairman introduced Deborah Corcoran, representing a Humanist position, who had been invited to observe the meeting.

Ms Corcoran said she felt it was important that all beliefs were represented on the SACRE and that Religious Education was the area of the curriculum in which young people could explore identity, beliefs and values and it was crucial that children were able to learn about all religious and non-religious beliefs and worldviews. Humanists believe that in this one life they want to make the world a better place. The SACRE RE Adviser noted that the new Bromley Agreed Syllabus referred to both religions and non-religious worldviews as part of the curriculum. This had led to conversations taking place as to whether there was fair representation of other worldviews on the SACRE, and where any additional representation would sit within the Committee. Ms Corcoran said her understanding was that there was a human rights interpretation of religion as being inclusive of non-religious worldviews and therefore a Humanist representative could sit within the 'other faiths' group.

A Member considered that Ms Corcoran represented a body of belief and faith from a large section of the population. Young people should be learning about it in the same way that they learnt about other faiths, and therefore agreed that a Humanist representative should sit within the 'other faiths' group on the SACRE.

Another Member noted that it would be beneficial to hear Humanist views from Ms Corcoran but highlighted that the SACRE's name referenced Religious Education and suggested that she should be invited to attend meetings as an observer.

A teacher representative said that their view of Religious Education was what they taught in the Bromley Agreed Syllabus. Humanism as an example of non-religious worldview could form part of this, and it was considered essential to have Humanist representation on the Bromley SACRE. The SACRE RE Adviser informed Members that in the United Kingdom it was recognised that the study of Religious Education included religious and non-religious worldviews, of which Humanism was one example. As this was included in the Agreed Syllabus, and the SACRE was responsible for writing it, representation of non-religious worldviews should be incorporated.

A Member said that he had no issue with a Humanist representative joining the SACRE but noted that there were a large number of other faiths. It was queried what the strategy or eligibility would be if the SACRE was approached by representatives from any other recognised belief systems or religions wishing to join. The SACRE RE Adviser said that reference was usually made to census information, recognising that particular religious groups were represented – however there were occasions where organisations had written to the SACRE asking to have representation. In general, it was based on the six world religions and often the inclusion of a non-religious worldview, for example Humanism. Humanists UK had written to Bromley SACRE asking to

have representation as a reflection of the Bromley community having a Humanist population.

A vote was taken to appoint Ms Corcoran as a Humanist representative on the Bromley SACRE:

13 in favour
0 against
2 abstentions

RESOLVED that Ms Deborah Corcoran join the Bromley SACRE as a Humanist representative.

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 3RD MARCH 2021

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 3rd March 2021 be confirmed as a correct record.

B) MATTERS ARISING

Minute 19: 'REal' Resources

The Chairman noted the discussion at the last meeting regarding the 'REal' resources and the need to provide representative views from across the different faiths. As suggested, he had contacted Richard Martin but was awaiting a response.

Minute 21: SACRE Self-evaluation

The Chairman advised that he had contacted NASACRE and they were not aware of any specific advice and guidance being produced for schools with regards to them responding to the pandemic and commemorating the lives lost. It was noted that the various Diocesan Boards of Education had been asked to assist schools that sought their help – it was assumed that Church of England schools were linked with their local parish church and clergy.

A teacher representative informed Members that online support materials had been made available to schools regarding supporting children impacted by the pandemic. The teaching unions had also collaborated with some universities and theological schools to provide different avenues of support.

Minute 22: Draft Bromley SACRE Annual Report 2019-2020

The Chairman advised Members that the final version of the Bromley SACRE Annual Report 2019-2020 had been submitted to NASACRE, the Department for Education (DfE) and Full Council on 19th April 2021.

Minute 24: Any Other Business

The Chairman noted that this action related to Humanist representation on the SACRE, which had been discussed earlier in the meeting.

6 REVIEW DETERMINATIONS

No determinations had been received.

The Chairman informed Members that the Aquinas Trust had approached him regarding the use of the Bromley Agreed Syllabus by their primary schools. The Trust had an issue around Voluntary Controlled and Voluntary Aided schools, and what the requirements were for each. As the Medway Syllabus was in essence identical to the one produced by the Diocese, they wished to use this. It had been strongly stressed that this was not a reflection on the Bromley Agreed Syllabus, and it would just simplify things across the schools and allow the RE leads to be in sync. The Chairman highlighted that the law stated that schools use 'an' Agreed Syllabus, and therefore the Trust were not required to use the one produced by this Local Authority.

The SACRE RE Adviser noted that from February 2020 Church of England schools should follow their local Agreed Syllabus. However as the Medway Syllabus was so similar to Bromley's the Trust had not needed to apply to follow it.

7 NASACRE CONFERENCE AND AGM

SACRE Members had been provided with a summary of the conference and AGM, which had been provided by NASACRE.

The Chairman said it had been a very good conference, although as it was held virtually it had been missing the aspect of delegates actually being able to meet together. The seminar breakout rooms were very different from the usual round table discussions but had been very interesting and it had been a useful exercise.

Ms Thompson had also attended the conference and highlighted how professionally it had been run. As it had been held virtually a lot more had been packed into the day, with a very full agenda.

The SACRE RE Adviser highlighted that there had been a particular focus on teaching religions as a worldview, as opposed to teaching facts about religions. This would be discussed in more detail at the primary and secondary network meetings, and it was agreed that information could be

provided to Members at a future meeting of the SACRE.

ACTION: SACRE RE Adviser

8 'REAL' RESOURCES

The SACRE RE Adviser shared some examples of the 'REal' resources that had been received from SACRE Members.

The SACRE RE Adviser noted that she was hoping to receive more personal reflections of 'what I believe', and Members were asked to contribute if they were able to do so. There were four main questions to be addressed:

- "What do I believe about how the world began?" (Year 1);
- "What buildings/places are important to me/do I use for worship, and how do the features or items here show what I believe [about God] and value as important?" (Year 3 and 5);
- "What do I wear that shows my beliefs/values?" (Year 2); and
- "What do I believe happens when we die?" (Year 5).

It was noted that a page had been created on the Bromley Education Matters website, but 'live' access could not be made available until there was a fairer representation of more worldviews and religions. In response to a question the LBB Head of School Standards confirmed that resources had been collated. A statement had been added to the SACRE section of the website advising who to contact to obtain links whilst the package of resources was built up.

The SACRE RE Adviser noted that she had received requests from a couple of schools, which she had forwarded on to the relevant SACRE Members to arrange visits. A SACRE Member shared a request he had received from a policeman, who had been contacted by several schools, asking if faith representatives would be happy to visit.

At the last meeting conversations had taken place as to whether this could be a collaborative effort with Members going into schools and creating a discussion panel. Further to this idea, the SACRE RE Adviser had applied for funding, and had been successful, which would be used for creating inter-faith dialogues. An example of this would be to ask Members to discuss and compare aspects of their worship – the dialogue could be scripted and videoed and could be combined with some artefacts that pupils could see and feel to make it an interactive and immersive experience. Teacher representatives agreed that this was a good idea as they had missed welcoming visitors, and making visits to places of worship, during the pandemic. In response to a question the SACRE RE Adviser said that she would like to establish a list of artefacts that were linked to key concepts or key questions rather than under specific religions.

9 INTER-FAITH COMPETITION

The SACRE RE Adviser informed Members that the schools' calendar competition had been held and the final design of the calendar had been circulated. A primary RE network meeting would be taking place the following day, at which the winners would be revealed, and certificates would be sent on to the schools. As agreed previously, the calendar would not be printed, but it would be uploaded to the Bromley Education Matters website.

The SACRE RE Adviser asked Members if they would like the calendar competition to take place again the following year. A teacher representative said the calendar was a lovely idea but suggested adding in a video feature with links to the children celebrating their beliefs at home on various dates. This could be connected with the units of work and would bring it to life and make it more real. The SACRE RE Adviser agreed that this was a good idea and suggested that a starting point could be to invite the winners of this year's competition to make a short video describing what they had drawn and why. The teacher representative said she felt it would be useful to have this as an open invitation for anyone who wanted to create a video, and consent given to share them, as it would help to build a bank of resources. The SACRE RE Adviser said that she had organised a "video pen pal" event in another borough, for which pupils had a focused topic or question and created a short video or presentation to share with the linked school. It was proposed that the inter-faith competition remain for the next academic year, and consideration could then be given to this the following year.

Another teacher representative stated that she really liked the calendar and found it very useful to have the dates of celebrations listed. The idea of producing a calendar had initially be agreed to help promote Religious Education across the schools in Bromley and felt that this needed to be progressed in some way. It was suggested that with COVID-19 restrictions being lifted thought could be given in the future to events allowing pupils to display their RE projects. The SACRE RE Adviser considered that the pen pal idea could be replicated in future years by schools visiting each other, rather than virtually.

A SACRE Member suggested that the calendar artwork could be made into an interactive PDF, allowing a link on the picture to be clicked on to take the viewer to another page of content as to why the picture was drawn and the meaning behind it. It was also considered that work undertaken by schools relating to particular events and celebrations could be collected for use the following year. The SACRE RE Adviser agreed that this was a lovely idea however there were several issues that would need to be taken into account, including the work being quality assured and having the relevant GDPR permissions. The SACRE RE Adviser said that she was working on some unit outlines with a group of primary teachers and schools would be encouraged to share their work within the network.

10 SACRE SELF-EVALUATION

The Chairman advised that 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 informed Members that the bulk of the December 2021 meeting would be devoted to undertaking the SACRE self-evaluation. It was suggested that the self-evaluation documents be circulated to Members in the coming weeks. **ACTION: Clerk**

11 REPORTS

SACRE Members had been provided with a copy of the NASACRE funding report, and links to the Ofsted RE research review and Insight UK report on the state of Hinduism in Religious Education in UK schools.

NASACRE funding report

Councillor Kim Botting provided a statement on behalf of Councillor Kate Lymer, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Children, Education and Families regarding the NASACRE funding report:

“I have spoken with Jared Nehra, LBB Director of Education, today and he feels confident that we hold up well against the survey and the recommended 2% of the Central School Services Block (CSSB). It was not 2% in terms of direct expenditure but if you add up the significant time spent by the School Standards team, as well as Democratic Services, on many different tasks and activities it is reasonable to assume that the total expenditure is more or less 2% of the CSSB.”

The Chairman advised Members that with regards to the expected level of funding that a SACRE should receive from their Local Authority, Bromley was at the level it should be. The SACRE RE Adviser highlighted that the report only referenced funding, however she considered that the London Borough of Bromley also provided real support in terms of time given and expertise. This had allowed Bromley SACRE to achieve much more than just its statutory requirements. The Chairman agreed and thanked the Local Authority for the support provided.

Ofsted RE research review

The SACRE RE Adviser delivered a presentation which is appended to the minutes at Appendix A.

Ofsted had visited a variety of schools to look at what and how RE was being studied in order to publish a review of what good RE looked like.

There were three types of knowledge which were important in RE, which were all components in the Bromley Agreed Syllabus:

- 'substantive' knowledge: key knowledge about various religious and non-religious traditions;
- 'ways of knowing': pupils learn 'how to know' about religion and non-religion; and
- 'personal knowledge': pupils build an awareness of their own presuppositions and values about the religious and non-religious traditions they study.

'Substantive' knowledge was the diverse lived experience, which linked to the SACRE RE Adviser's request for 'REal' resources, and also included information about religions and worldviews being linked to key concepts and questions. Ofsted had raised concerns about schools studying one religion or worldview at a time, as that information was often forgotten when the pupils moved on to another. Diversity within religions also needed to be reflected and the context of how religions had come to be and how they had changed over time.

'Personal knowledge' was included in the Bromley Agreed Syllabus and was referenced as 'reflecting' within the pedagogical model. The Ofsted review had emphasised that this must be specifically in relation to key concepts of RE, if not it was considered to be Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) knowledge.

There were two main aspects related to 'ways of knowing' – 'tools' and 'conversation'. An example of 'tools' was pupils understanding different interpretations and the way in which they were investigating and learning about religions. 'Conversations' referred to the use of thoughtful dialogue in the classroom and within the pupils learning, which was linked to the 'REal' resources.

With regards to monitoring progression, the Ofsted review had criticised the use of GCSE-style questions being used at Key Stage 3, and as the only form of assessment, as they did not consider context or the diversity of a religion. All the elements of the three types of knowledge were included in the spectrum of skills for the Bromley Agreed Syllabus.

The SACRE RE Adviser emphasised that the Bromley Agreed Syllabus reflected the Ofsted review, and was on target. If Ofsted visited a school, the school would need to explain why they were studying what they were and how the learning had developed over time.

Insight UK report on the state of Hinduism in Religious Education in UK schools

The SACRE RE Adviser noted that this report, which highlighted some of the key misrepresentations of Hinduism often found in schools, had been mentioned at the previous SACRE meeting. The SACRE RE Adviser was

working with the primary school network to ensure that Hinduism was accurately represented. SACRE Members were informed that a secondary school had received a complaint from a Hindu parent, who had contacted the SACRE RE Adviser via the SACRE. The parent was happy with how the issue had been managed and the outcome had been positive.

12 SACRE ACTION PLAN (INCLUDING RELATIONSHIPS WITH SCHOOLS)

Members had been provided with a copy of the SACRE Action Plan covering September 2020 to September 2021 which had been produced by the SACRE RE Adviser.

The SACRE RE Adviser noted that as the funding had been applied for, and received, to expand the inter-faith dialogue resources the action listed could now proceed during the next academic year. Nearly all actions were marked in green as 'complete', except the primary network meeting which would take place the following day.

RESOLVED that the SACRE Action Plan be noted.

13 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

6.00pm, Wednesday 1st December 2021
6.00pm, Wednesday 23rd February 2022

The Meeting ended at 7.42 pm

Chairman