

**STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION****16 SEPTEMBER 2009**Representatives of the Local Authority

Councillors: † Ms Nana Asante * Mrs Anjana Patel
 † Mrs Lurline Champagnie

Representatives of Christian and Other Religious Denominations and Faiths

* Mrs M Besser	† Councillor Asad Omar
Mr Z Baig	Miss F Rahemani
† Mr M Bishop	* Mr N Ransley
* Dr J Crow	* Mrs G Ross
* Mrs N Desai	† Mr S Saddik
* Mrs P Gan-Kotwal	* Mrs B Samuels
Ms S Gulamhussein	Mr P Singh-Kohli
† Mrs M Hale	Ms B Willson
Dr V Kapashi	
Mr D Liversedge	

Representatives of the Church of England

* Mrs M Abbott	† Reverend G Pinnock
Mrs G Mercer	* Reverend Matthew Stone

Representatives of Teachers

Ms G Capin	Mrs A Stowe (Chairman)
Ms B Pandya-Arepalli	† Ms N Parsons
	Rev'd Dr S Thompson

Co-opted Members

Mr J Dave	D Patel
Mr R Mistry	Ms P Stevens

Adviser to the Council, Nominated by the Corporate Director, Children's Services

Ms F Aldridge

* Denotes Member present
 † Denotes apologies received

PART I - RECOMMENDATIONS - NIL**PART II - MINUTES**

212. **Opening Reflection:**
 This was led by Dr Julie Crow, who offered quotations from works by Charles Darwin and Professor A.J.Aire.
213. **Apologies for Absence:**
RESOLVED: To note apologies for absence had been received from Councillor Nana Asante, Councillor Lurline Champagnie, Councillor Asad Omar, Mr Mike Bishop, Mrs Mary Hale, Mr Shaban Siddik, Rev. Giles Pinnock and Ms Nancy Parsons.
214. **Attendance by Reserve Members:**
RESOLVED: To note that there were no Reserve Members in attendance at this meeting.
215. **Declarations of Interest:**
RESOLVED: To note that there were no declarations of interest made by Members present in relation to the business to be transacted at this meeting.

216. **Minutes:**

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 2 June 2009 be taken and read as a correct record, subject to the following amendments:

- (i) The inclusion of apologies from Councillor Nana Asante and Mrs Mary Abbott;
- (ii) The deletion of Mrs G Mercer's name from the Church of England Group after her resignation;
- (iii) Councillor Anjana Patel being marked as present and the deletion of her name from minute 195 – Apologies for absence;
- (iv) Mrs Phiroza Gan-Kotwal's name being spelt correctly under minute 195 – Apologies for absence.

217. **Matters Arising:**

- (1) distribution of 'Faith Matters in Harrow: Guidance on Sensitivities that Impact on Schools'. (Alison Stowe confirmed that these had been circulated to schools and SACRE Members);
- (2) response to Qualifications and Curriculum Authority questionnaire: Pat Stevens reported that a working party had met to draft a response from Harrow SACRE. Following useful discussion on the primary curriculum review and updated non-statutory guidance on religious education, the draft response was shared with all SACRE Members and forwarded to Q.C.A. Mrs Gan-Kotwal requested an additional copy of the response. SACRE Members felt that the impact of the new curriculum arrangements relating to religious education (RE) would need to be monitored once the revised legislation was implemented.
- (3) The Handbook for SACRE Members: Copies of the Handbook were distributed to Members who had not received one previously. It was suggested that a special induction pack for Harrow SACRE Members might be developed, complementary to the Handbook, which explored ways in which RE could be monitored locally.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

218. **SACRE Maintenance Plan 2009 - 2012 with Objectives for 2009 - 2010:**

Rachel Bowerman explained the rationale behind the SACRE Maintenance Plan 2009-2010, which had been distributed to members previously. She stressed that schools' priorities for the coming year as follows: The implementation of the new OFSTED framework; development of the 'pupil voice'; and rigorous school self-evaluation. She added that SACRE would need to monitor the quality of religious education and its outcomes for pupils, and the Q.C.A primary curriculum review and non-statutory guidelines on religious education. Consideration would need to be given to how SACRE would collate information about the quality of RE in schools, and the possible piloting of a self-evaluating form (SEF) for RE.

In response to Members questions relating to the work of the RE Consultant following her retirement, Rachel Bowerman confirmed that in-service training (INSET) for RE, led by Advanced Skills Teachers (who were SACRE members), was in place for the academic year 2009-2010. She added that additional support by national specialists could be brought in by both schools and the Achievement and Inclusion Service.

Members pointed out that SACRE and Harrow Inter-Faith Council personnel frequently worked with teachers in schools with a view to sharing knowledge and understanding the experiences of pupils. It was suggested that a register of people with known expertise in this area could be created and distributed to schools. It was agreed training sessions for visitors to classrooms to demonstrate good practice in RE learning and teaching and how RE contributes to the curriculum would be arranged.

It was noted that the Professional Council for Religious Education (PCfRE) had a model contract that could be used to draw up one between schools and visitors and collective worship. Members pointed out that national faith associations, such as the Board of Deputies of British Jews, provided excellent support and INSET. Members suggested a quality mark for places of worship that provided an excellent experience for visiting pupils.

Heena Modi was concerned that in some cases RE was taught by unqualified teachers during times given to teachers for planning, preparation and assessment (PPA).

That the SACRE Maintenance Plan 2009-2010, be accepted and worked on, with a special focus on building a framework of evaluation with the help of subject leaders.

RESOLVED: That (1) the SACRE Maintenance Plan 2009-2010 be noted.

(2) the SACRE Maintenance Plan 2009-2010 be developed, with a special focus on building a framework of evaluation for the use of SACRE Members in monitoring the enjoyment and achievement in RE in Harrow schools.

219. **The A - Z of Collective Worship, Collective Worship Experiences at Priestmead Middle School and National Inter Faith Week:**

Alison Stowe affirmed that the document was being revised, with a view to placing information on relevant websites. It was agreed that Alison would continue working on this document and that a draft would be provided for discussion with SACRE prior to publication.

RESOLVED: That the update be noted.

220. **Guidance on Authorised Absence for Pupils to Fulfil Religious Obligations:**

Following agreement of the introduction to the 2009-2010 document at the last meeting, Pat Stevens presented an overall list of religious festivals where schools may receive a request for absence. A list containing the dates during the 2009-2010 academic year, when such festivals fell on weekdays during term time, was also presented.

It was accepted that the Zoroastrian festivals in the general list should read Zartuscht-No-Diso, Jamshedi and Khordad Sal.

Heena Modi pointed out that not all pupils took time out on the recommended day for religious observance, as faith communities made different arrangements concerning observance times.

SACRE Members agreed that consideration would be given to provisions based on local faith needs, and the possibility for a general school closure at the time of major religious festivals.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

221. **Young People's Projects:**

Youth SACRE Members:

The retiring youth SACRE Members, Dheemal Patel and Ravi Mistry, stated that on 19 October 2009 the Student Advisory Group would elect two new youths delegates to SACRE. They would accompany them to their early meetings to help them settle into their roles. Unanimous and sincere thanks were passed to Dheemal and Ravi for their contribution to SACRE deliberations, and their outstanding achievement in their recent GCSE.

Brunel University:

Rachel Bowerman and Councillor Anjana Patel gave a detailed account of a recent meeting with Professor Nicola Madge of Brunel University, her colleagues in the Youth and Religion project, and Hillingdon colleagues who were participating in the project. She advised that a progress report had been provided and plans implemented for contacts to set up a questionnaire for pupils. It was felt that the project had great potential for the 'pupil voice' concerning religion and RE in Harrow, and of our young 'champions' working in partnership with students from Brunel University. The importance of clarity in the questionnaire was emphasised. It was felt that the need for its purpose should be explained to pupils to secure their commitment, enthusiasm and participation.

Members agreed that in going ahead with the project, Harrow SACRE would insist on clarity in the questionnaire and full involvement of our young people. Members also noted that Harrow SACRE would withdraw if representatives become dissatisfied with the projects aims and modus operandi.

RESOLVED: That SACRE Members would receive minutes of the meetings concerning the Brunel University.

Youth Inter Faith Forum:

Pat Stevens reported that a working party of pupils would be commissioned at the Student Advisory Group meeting on the 19 October 2009. She added that the working party would plan the inaugural activity of the newly formed Harrow Youth Inter-Faith Forum, which consisted of making a film, 'This is Harrow – the UK's most religiously diverse borough'. To date, £7,000 had been secured to make the film, together with an offer from St.Dominic's Sixth Form College to assist with technical support. Interested Members of SACRE and Harrow Inter-Faith Council were invited to support the newly formed working party. Niru Desai indicated her wish to be involved.

SACRE Members expressed their support of the Harrow Youth Inter Faith Forum. It was agreed that Members interested in being further involved would e-mail Alison Stowe to indicate their interest.

RESOLVED: That the updates be noted.

222. **Determinations:**

There were no determinations for consideration at this meeting. Pat Stevens informed Members that Headteachers and Chairs of governors of the schools whose determinations were due for renewal, had been invited to reapply for a determination if they wished to do so.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

223. **Resource Packs:**

Paramjit Singh Kohli was not present to give an update on the Sikh pack. Phiroza Gan-Kotwol reported that Malcolm Deboo, Secretary of the Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe, was in contact with Pat Stevens concerning the Zoroastrian pack.

RESOLVED: That the update be noted.

224. **Harrow Hate Crime Forum:**

It was reported that Pat Stevens had resigned from this group on her retirement. In future, Alison Stowe would represent SACRE. Martha Besser, in her role as secretary of Harrow Inter-Faith Council, indicated that the group would also nominate a representative.

SACRE Members were aware that the Harrow Hate Crime Forum, together with the Trustees of Harrow Central Mosque, the police and Members of Harrow Inter-Faith Council, had supported Harrow Central Mosque in light of a protest against their organisation on 11 September 2009. Following a request by Reverend Matthew Stone, it was agreed that a letter should be written to the Trustees of Harrow Central Mosque, pledging SACRE's support for the community.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

225. **News from Harrow Inter Faith Council:**

Martha Besser reported that Harrow Inter-Faith Council had worked alongside the Harrow Council Community Development Group to organise an 'Open Door' event in Harrow on the 21 and 22 November 2009 as a contribution to Inter-Faith Week. All faith communities would be encouraged to take part and programmes would be distributed widely. It was intended to produce leaflets entitled, 'Our Faiths – Fact and Fiction'. Martha Besser undertook to report SACRE's comments to the Harrow Inter Faith Council.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

226. **News from Faith Communities:**

The following events were highlighted:

(1) Ven Sumana Sravaner invited members to the International Buddhist Centre in Kingsbury to celebrate the UK Buddhist Day at 4:00pm on the 20 September 2009, and to participate in a Kathina Day Robe Offering ceremony at 4:00pm on 4 October 2009;

(2) Councillor Patel reminded Members of the following Hindu festivals:

- Navaratri, 19 – 27 September 2009;
- Durga Puja, 26 September 2009;
- Diwali, 17 October 2009;
- Hindu New Year, 18 October 2009.

SACRE Members were advised that they were welcome to attend these events, held at various Hindu temples. They were also invited to the celebration of Durga Puja at the Arts Centre from 24–28 September 2009. Members were advised to contact Councillor Patel for further details and invitations if they wished to attend;

(3) The Jain New Year would be celebrated on Monday 19 October 2009;

(4) Phiroza Gan-Kotwol explained that the National Trust Open Weekend, 19–20 September 2009, would include visits to the Zoroastrian Centre between 10.00am and 1.00pm on both days. SACRE Members were welcome to attend.

227. **Dates of next meetings:**

RESOLVED: To note that the date of the next meetings would be held on:

- Tuesday 1 December 2009
- Tuesday 9 March 2010

(Note: The meeting having commenced at 7.30 pm, closed at 9.50 pm)

(Signed) MRS A STOWE
Chairman