

**HARROW SACRE**  
**(STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS**  
**EDUCATION)**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING ON 9 MARCH 2010**

**Attendance:**

**GROUP A - Religious traditions and Christian Churches**

* Mr Zia Baig	~ <i>Miss Fatema Rahemani</i>
A <i>Mrs Martha Besser</i> (Vice Chair)	A Mr Neville Ransley
A Mr Mike Bishop	* Mrs Gill Ross
* Dr Julie Crow	A <i>Mr Shabban Saddik</i>
A <i>Mrs Niru Desai</i>	* Mrs Doreen Samuels
* Mrs Phiroza Gan-Kotwal	~ <i>Mr Paramjit Singh-Kohli</i>
* Mr Vijay Hirani	* <i>Ven Sumana Sramaner</i>
~ <i>Dr Vinod Kapashi</i>	~ <i>Ms Beverley Wilson</i>
* Councillor Asad Omar	

**GROUP B - Church of England**

A Mrs Mary Abbott	* Rev'd. Matthew Stone
A Rev'd. Giles Pinnock	

**GROUP C – Teachers' Associations**

A <i>Ms Heena Modi</i>	~ <i>Mrs Manju Radia</i>
A <i>Ms Bhavita Pandya</i>	* Mrs Alison Stowe (Chair)
A <i>Ms Nancy Parsons</i>	

**GROUP D – Local Authority**

Councillors:	* Anjana Patel
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\* Nana Asante  
A *Mrs Lurline Champagnie*,

Co-opted Members:

Seconded from the Harrow Student Advisory Board: vacancies

*Also attending:*

- \* Ms Rachel Bowerman (Senior School Improvement Professional & Adviser to SACRE, nominated by the Director of Education)
- \* Vivian Wright (Clerk to SACRE)

\* denotes *presence*

*A* denotes *absence with apologies*

~ denotes *absence without apologies*

Visitors from Park High School:

Sonal Shah, Curriculum Leader for Philosophy and Ethics

Chris Stump, Teacher

Diviya Devani, Yr 13 student

Senira Patel, Yr 12 student

#### **241. Welcome and Introductions**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, especially the visitors from Park High School, who were attending in order to make a presentation about attainment in RE at KS 3, 4, and 5 and the quality of provision for Religious Education. (*See 6a below*)

#### **242. Apologies for Absence**

**RESOLVED:** To note apologies for absence from Mrs Martha Besser, Mr Mike Bishop, Cllr Lurline Champagnie, Mrs Niru Desai, Mrs Mary Abbott, Rev'd Giles Pinnock, Ms Heena Modi, Mr Neville Ransley, Mr Shaban Saddak, Ms Nancy Parsons and Mrs Bhavita Pandya.

#### **243. Membership**

No new members or reserve members were in attendance.

#### **244. Minutes of the Meeting held on 1 December 2009**

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting held on 1 December 2009, having been circulated and taken as read, were signed as a correct record, subject to the following amendments:

- p.1. Attendance: Mrs Niru Desai was in attendance
- p.1. Attendance: "A denotes absence" should be "A denotes absence with apologies"
- p.4. Minutes 9, second bullet point: "take" *should be* "talk"
- p.4. Minute 10, first paragraph: "Julia" should be "Julie"

## **245. Matters Arising from the Minutes not included elsewhere on the Agenda**

### **a) Minute no. 9. SACRE Annual Report**

- Rachel Bowerman reported that the Annual Report is complete. The new SACRE website is almost ready and, when it is, the Annual Report will be uploaded.

**Action: Rachel Bowerman**

- The circulation list has been agreed with the Chair, but rather than send out paper copies to all representatives of places of worship, a letter will be sent, advising them of the website address and offering a paper copy of the report on request.

**Action: Rachel Bowerman and Chair**

- Head Teachers will be advised of the report via the Gold Bulletin and an electronic copy of the report can be sent to them.
- The website address is expected to be [www.sacre.harrow.lgfl](http://www.sacre.harrow.lgfl). This will be confirmed. The format is transferable when lgfl is no longer available.
- Minutes and paperwork for meetings will also be available on the website.
- In response to a question about the school that entered only a minority of its students for RS GCSE, Rachel Bowerman explained that she would defer reporting on this until Bhavita Pandya, who is an AST (Advanced Skills Teacher) and teaches within that RS Department, was present to outline current provision for RS.
- In response to a question about the number of students studying optional RS GCSE modules specific to their own faith tradition, Ms Bowerman referred to items 6a and 6b on the agenda, saying that this was the kind of data that might be gathered through a SEF. Information about pupils studying an RS GCSE module through their place of worship, would be of interest to members in building up their picture of young people and faith in Harrow, but was beyond the statutory remit of SACRE. It was agreed that SACRE members might wish to provide such information from their faith communities.

### **b) Minute no.10. Youth on religion**

- Rachel Bowerman informed the Committee that a letter had been sent to Nicola Madge to inform her of Harrow SACRE's withdrawal from the project. Brent SACRE was considering joining the project. Rachel Bowerman had been asked for reasons for Harrow's withdrawal, but the email went to her home address and thus was overlooked.

**c) Minute no 12c) Circulation of minutes**

The Clerk had produced the minutes within two days of the meeting but Rachel Bowerman had been unable to check them immediately. Nonetheless, they went out well ahead of the meeting.

**246. SACRE Monitoring Standards and Quality of Provision for RE in Harrow Schools**

**a) Philosophy and Ethics Curriculum Review Report** (*Self Evaluation Form for Curriculum Leaders, p8-12 of documents previously circulated*)

Rachel Bowerman explained that each Curriculum Leader at Park High School produces a SEF and that the Philosophy and Ethics department had been enthusiastic in agreeing to present its RE SEF to SACRE. She welcomed Sonal Shah, Curriculum Leader for Philosophy and Ethics, Chris Stump, teacher and two students, Diviya Devani, from Yr 13 and Senira Patel, Yr 12. Ms Bowerman reminded members that the purpose of this presentation was to report evaluation of the quality of the teaching and the corresponding quality of the pupils' learning. This would assist SACRE in its monitoring.

- i Firstly Sonal Shah took members through parts 1 and 5 of the 2008 - 9 RE SEF (*previously circulated*). Part 1 includes an assessment of attainment on entry in Y8 and an analysis of progress pupils have made by the end of the year; part 5 evaluates quality of teaching and the curriculum. She recognized a need for a more evaluative and succinct SEF under the new Framework and explained that this RE SEF would be updated using 2009 - 2010 monitoring evidence.
- ii Ms Shah then explained that a Departmental Review had taken place earlier in the Spring Term 2010. Monitoring activities had included lesson observations by the Senior Leadership Team and an external RE specialist, scrutiny of pupils' books – with a focus on their learning and progress, and on teachers' marking and annotations – 'student voice' questionnaires and interviews with a focus group about preferred teaching styles and the effectiveness of teachers' feedback.
- iii Although the Review report had not yet been completed, Sonal Shah was able to summarise the findings:
  - Teaching and assessment would be judged "good". Three out of four lessons observed had been "outstanding. " Pupils reported that they regard listening to teachers' explanations as valuable, they also enjoy group discussions and role play.
  - Regarding pupils' achievement: at GCSE, RE results were amongst the highest in the school. KS3 outcomes were slightly lower than the school average, but this data should be seen within the context that RS is taught one period a week in 6

week blocks each term. The GCSE results show that students accelerate their progress and attain well in KS4.

- iv **Provision for RE in Primary schools:** In response to a question about what the baseline assessment of Y8 pupils on entry to Park High in September 2009 had revealed about RE in primary schools, Sonal Shah replied that Philosophy for Children (P4C), included in the curriculum of the feeder primary schools, had equipped children with strategies for questioning and enquiry. As a result, Y8 pupils were able to contribute strongly to discussions in RE lessons. She observed however that there was a difference between P4C used as a pedagogical tool and the concepts and content of philosophy of religion.
- v **AS and A2 Levels:** in response to a question about the difference between AS and A2, the representatives from Park High informed members that AS level concerned specific topics such as medical ethics, while A2 level built on the understanding gained at AS level, going into philosophy in greater depth and looking at how philosophical considerations influenced all areas of life. Students studied some modern philosophers such as JS Mill as well as the Ancient Greeks. Chris Stump informed members that the curriculum examines such topics as life after death from the perspectives of different faiths. Part of the course focuses on religious ethics. Students are encouraged to look at philosophical questions through their wider reading.
- vi **Curriculum:** In response to a question, Ms Shah reported that evidence from students indicated that the Philosophy and Ethics curriculum meets the needs and interests of learners very well. Chris Stump confirmed that students enjoy studying responses to moral and ethical issues from both non-religious and religious perspectives. Rachel Bowerman brought to the attention of members a phrase that had been used by the teachers to describe the Philosophy and Ethics curriculum. She remarked that to describe the curriculum as “not overtly religious” might have been expected to dismay SACRE members and ventured to put this into contemporary context. She described traditional RE when she started as an advisory teacher: was often concerned with, for example, a chronological account of the life of Jesus and with assembling factual knowledge of the external phenomena of religions, a ‘naming of parts.’ She explained that the 2008 Harrow Agreed Syllabus was concerned with learning about religious beliefs, the sources of authority for those beliefs, and how these influence the ethical and moral choices of believers, their awareness of rights and responsibilities and their responses to social and global issues of justice, peace, sustainability and development.
- vii **Comments on the draft SEF** (*p13-16 of documents previously circulated*). The visitors felt that this document would not be difficult to complete, especially for a school already expected to

produce departmental SEFs. Analysis of a range of RE SEFs would give a very good indication of how RE was taught in Harrow schools. They felt that behaviour in RE would be difficult to quantify and might vary from year group to year group. The students felt that it depended very much on the teacher. They spoke highly of their own teachers.

viii **Student voice:** At this point, Diviya Devani and Senira Patel responded to a range of questions about the Philosophy and Ethics curriculum and pedagogy and its relevance to the needs and interests of young people.

- In response to a question about whether Philosophy and Ethics teaching included much discussion, Diviya Devani expressed the view that teaching at Park High uses various methods to encourage students to understand philosophies and religious points of view. Students developed skills in asking probing questions and in challenging their own perspectives and assumptions.
- In response to a question about whether students are encouraged to be critical of other religious points of view, Divya Devani gave a very mature and well-considered answer. She said that students were encouraged to ask for explanations and to endeavour to understand points of view different from their own, while at the same time sustaining a sensitive and respectful approach to conducting an argument. Rachel Bowerman pointed out how Diviya's answer illustrated the very skills and attitudes, which should underpin the RE curriculum.
- In response to a question about how RE was regarded, the students felt that RE enjoyed a high status at Park High because of the issues it covers. The key skills acquired in RE could be applied to other subjects, science for example. She affirmed that a knowledge of ethics was an essential for life. She regarded it as important that young people had an understanding of the many different religious faiths represented in school and in the wider community.
- Sonal Shah felt that the status of RE at Park High was improving: it is perceived as exciting and as a demanding, academic subject. Last year's A2 results showed that three students achieved marks in the high 90s and one had received an offer from Oxford University. Comments received on Open Evening revealed positive attitudes from pupils and parents.

Rachel Bowerman, the Chair and members thanked the students resoundingly for being such articulate ambassadors for their school. They had ably demonstrated the skills which they had described as central to Philosophy and Ethics. Cllr Anjana Patel suggested that they might include an account of this visit in their school newsletter.

Sonal Shah agreed to send SACRE a copy of the Department Review Report when it had been completed.

The visitors then left the meeting.

**b) Draft Religious Education Self-Evaluation Form (RE SEF) (p13-16 of documents previously circulated)**

Rachel Bowerman introduced this item by recommending that in order to fulfil its statutory remit and to advise the LA on standards and provision in RE in Harrow Schools, SACRE should develop “an independent mechanism to gather data about performance”. Ms Bowerman used the following questions and answers to explain her rationale for an RE SEF and principles for its usage:

- i) **Why would this be a sensible format to use for school reports?** The document uses headings similar to those used in the whole school SEF.
- ii) **What are the benefits to schools?** Involving RE subject leaders (primary and secondary) in completing an RE SEF would contribute to building their leadership capacity. A training programme in conjunction with the launch of the document would develop their monitoring skills and knowledge of the Ofsted criteria against which to make judgements. If SACRE monitored provision and standards in schools and was informed by schools about their priorities in RE, then SACRE should be well-placed to advise the LA on how to improve RE and establish its own strategies for this improvement.
- iii) **Who would SACRE need to consult before introducing this document?** If the draft document were agreed by SACRE, the next stage would be to pilot it in a small group of schools. Following this, there should be consultation with RE subject leaders in primary and secondary schools, head teachers, governors and the Local Authority. This consultation would include reporting on the experiences of those schools which had piloted the RE SEF for SACRE. Rachel Bowerman informed SACRE that a number of subject leaders had already expressed an interest in being involved in a pilot project.
- iv) **Would every school have to submit an RE SEF to SACRE?** SACRE did not have the authority to require schools to complete a SEF, indeed Ofsted could not in law compel schools to use its SEF. However, if SACRE had consulted the LA, head teachers and governors, and reached a shared understanding of SACRE’s rationale for and the benefits of requiring schools to report their self-evaluation of RE to SACRE, SACRE might expect the LA to encourage schools to submit a report. A committee member commented that if the RE SEF were widely accepted, this should raise the status of RE in schools. SACRE should celebrate SEFs received and this, in turn, would

encourage other schools. Another committee member commented that it would be very helpful to have a key to the abbreviations and acronyms commonly used.

- v) **What are the next steps for SACRE?** Rachel Bowerman suggested that SACRE develop some principles and protocols for the use of the RE SEF and develop a rolling programme so that no school would be asked to report more than once every five years. In addition, Rachel Bowerman suggested that SACRE members are trained so that RE SEFs would be scrutinised by a small group which would then produce summary reports for the full SACRE.

#### **Comments and discussion**

**In response to the draft proposed document, members commented that:**

- they did not share the view, expressed by Park High representatives earlier in the meeting, that evaluation of the contribution of RE to promoting equality and to community cohesion could be combined in one section of the RE SEF. Though connected, they were two different aspects of a school's effectiveness and accountability, would be evidenced differently and should both be of high status in a school's self-evaluation.
- The RE SEF would be a useful audit tool without appearing too onerous.
- This draft was a primary school version but there should also be a secondary school draft
- Training for RE subject leaders was essential to overcome reservations and develop capacity. Guidance notes for the completion of the SEF should be developed.

**The Chair proposed that SACRE move on with the SEF to the consultation stage. This was agreed unanimously**

Action: Rachel Bowerman will take this forward.

## **247. SACRE Leadership and Management**

### **SACRE Chairs' Group:**

In accordance with a proposal made at the last meeting (Minute 12.b.) Chairs were elected for each of the SACRE groups. Rachel Bowerman explained that there was no intention to by-pass the democratic processes of SACRE. The Chairs would be able to progress the work of SACRE between meetings and scrutinise evidence from schools. They could be among the first members to be trained to analyse RE SEFs and produce summary reports.

### **Chairs were elected as follows:**

**Group A: Mike Bishop and Gill Ross**

**Group B: Rev'd Giles Pinnock**

**Group C: Bhavita Pandya nominated in her absence**



## Group D: Cllr Nana Asante

### 248. Determinations

To receive an application for a determination “for a variation in the requirement of the Education Reform Act 1988 and Education Act 1993, that collective worship is wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character” from

**Vaughan Nursery, First and Middle School** (*p 17-25 of documents previously circulated*)

In the light of discussion at the last meeting (minute 11, paragraph 3) it was agreed that the religious categories were inconsistent and could give a misleading impression of the proportions of religious faith in a school.

*At this point (9.15) Ven Sumana Sramaner left the meeting*

Rachel Bowerman reaffirmed that she was not inclined to encourage schools to reapply for determinations. She explained that schools whose determinations were due to expire had already been sent renewal application before she took up her post. Ms Bowerman’s professional advice was that Collective worship should be relevant to the age and abilities of pupils and inclusive of all pupils and staff, whatever their faith background. Collective Worship usually took place within the context of an assembly, but there was no legal requirement for an assembly.

It was suggested that Rachel Bowerman should write to the remaining schools who had received renewal forms for their determinations, suggesting that there was no need for them to reapply as SACRE was rethinking its policy on collective worship.

This suggestion raised concerns that SACRE would then be deprived of one means of obtaining information from schools about their provision for collective worship.

It was proposed that a more valuable way of gaining such information would be a programme of visits for SACRE members to observe collective worship in schools. Members could then report back. It was agreed that this could prove extremely useful and valuable. Rachel Bowerman agreed to introduce such a programme.

It was agreed that Collective Worship should be a major agenda item for a future meeting. The Chair informed members that her Farmington Fellowship report was entitled ‘Using Qur’anic Stories in Collective Worship.’ This can be accessed on the internet by googling “Alison Stowe”.

After this discussion the following proposals were made:

**Vaughan Nursery, First and Middle School should be granted its determination. Agreed with one abstention and one vote against.**

**Action: Rachel Bowerman to write and inform the school of this decision**

**That determinations for schools should be discontinued on the strict understanding that a programme of visits to schools is implemented as**

**a process for SACRE to monitor and evaluate the quality of Collective Worship. Agreed unanimously**

**Action: Rachel Bowerman will take this forward.**

## **249. Reports from SACRE Partners**

### **a) Harrow Inter Faith Council**

With regard to the proposal for a Harrow Interfaith Youth Forum and DVD project, the Chair reminded SACRE of the chronology of this proposal. Pat Stevens had applied for a NASACRE/West Hill Award in 2008 – 2009 but her bid had been unsuccessful. Pat had sought match funding for the project by the Achievement and Inclusion Service and Harrow Inter Faith Council; the LA required a clear outline of the project aim and intended outcomes. SACRE and HIFC could apply again for a NASACRE/West Hill Award, but the deadline for applications was 31 March 2010. The bid would need to map the role of project leader, experienced both in media and with RE expertise. The Chair also emphasised that SACRE must be clear about its role and that of the Harrow Inter Faith Council. Mrs Phiroza Gan-Kotwal described her experience of working with Age Concern in developing DVDs.

The Chair asked members to contact her if they were interested in developing the SACRE project plan.

**Action: Chair/SACRE members**

### **b) Faith Communities**

- **Yom Ha-Shoah:** Mrs Doreen Samuels informed the meeting that Yom Ha-Shoah is the day of remembrance in the Jewish calendar for victims of the Nazi Holocaust. A service of commemoration would take place at Pinner Synagogue on Sunday 11 April. Posters advertising this event were circulated amongst members.
- **Maundy Thursday:** Cllr Nana Asante informed the meeting that a Maundy Thursday celebration would take place on Thursday 1 April between 12.30 and 1.45 at the Civic Centre.
- **Induction at St Anselm's, Belmont:** The Rev'd Mathew Stone informed the meeting that a new vicar, Rev'd Christine Robinson would be inducted at St Anselm's in Belmont on Monday 24 May.
- **Pesach:** Mrs Doreen Samuels informed the meeting that Moriah School was holding a model Seder on 24 March. She could obtain invitations for any SACRE members who were interested in attending.
- **International Humanist Day:** Julie Crow informed the meeting that International Humanist Day will be celebrated on 21 June.

**c) Harrow Hate Crime Forum**

The Chair was unable to attend the last meeting of the Harrow Hate Crime Forum, so had nothing to report.

**250. Any Other Business**

**a) Park High Visitors:**

The Chair would write a letter of thanks to the Park High visitors for their presentation.

**Action: Chair**

**251. Dates of Future SACRE Meetings**

Summer Term 2010:	Tuesday 22 June 2010
Autumn Term 2010:	Wednesday 15 September
	Tuesday 23 November (Clerk to confirm with Mark Doherty)

(Note: The Meeting closed at 9.50 pm).

(Signed) MRS A STOWE Chairman