

HARROW SACRE
(STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION)
MINUTES OF THE MEETING ON 25th MARCH 2015

Attendance:

Group A: (Religious traditions and Christian Churches)

~ Mr Zia Baig	* Mr Neville Ransley
A Ms Mercedes Afnan	A Ms Ciara O'Flaherty
A Mr Mike Bishop	* Mrs Gill Ross
* Dr Julie Crow	A Mrs Doreen Samuels
A Mrs Phiroza Gan-Kotwal	A Mr Paramjit Singh-Kohli
* Mr Vijay Hirani	~ Ven Sumana Sramaner
A Ms Varsha Dodhia	* Mr Zafar Khalid
A Mr Asad Omar	
~ Ms Beverley Wilson	

Group B: (Church of England)

* Mrs Mary Abbott	* Rev'd Philip Barnes
	* Rev'd Matthew Stone

Group C: (Teachers' Associations)

* Mrs Manju Radia
* Mrs Alison Stowe (Chair)

Group D: (Local Authority)

Councillors:	Reserves:
* Ghazanfar Ali	A Kareema Marikar
A Sasi Suresh	A Margaret Davine
* Camilla Bath (Vice-Chair)	A Manjibhai Kara

Officer

*Patrick O'Dwyer (Education Professional Lead & Adviser to SACRE)

Clerk

*Vivian Wright (Clerk to SACRE)

Observers

Nadeem Hussain
David Cryer

** denotes presence*

A denotes absence with apologies

~ denotes absence without apologies

- 1. Welcome and introductions:** the Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting especially observers Nadeem Hussain and David Cryer. She introduced Paddy O'Dwyer to the meeting and members introduced themselves.
- 2. Changes to SACRE Advisory Support:** Paddy O'Dwyer explained that he has taken over from Rachel Bowerman who will no longer be the LA Advisor to SACRE. Rachel wished to be

remembered to the committee. Members expressed their regret that Rachel cannot continue and a card was passed round for members to sign.

Paddy O'Dwyer explained that he had previously been advisor to SACRE.

3. Apologies for absence:

RESOLVED: To note apologies for absence from Mrs Gill Ross, Mr Mike Bishop, Ms Mercedes Afnan, Ms Ciara O'Flaherty, Ms Varsha Dodhia, Mr Paramjit Singh-Kohli, Mrs Phiroza Gan Kotwal, Mr Asad Omar, Cllrs Sasi Suresh, Karimar Marikar, Margaret Davine and Manjibhai Kara.

Ciara O'Flaherty has had a baby boy. The Chair will send a card. **Action: Chair.**

Ananda Caitanya Das has resigned from the committee.

The following members were also absent:

Group A: Mr Zia Baig, Ven Sumana Sramaner and Ms Beverley Wilson

4. Minutes of the Meeting held on 25th June 2014 (*previously circulated and available at the meeting*)

The minutes were agreed and signed as a true record.

5. Matters arising from the minutes

There were no further matters arising not covered elsewhere on the agenda

6. Letter from Lord Nash (*previously circulated and available at the meeting*)

Paddy O'Dwyer explained that this letter had been published in January and forwarded to Harrow SACRE by NASACRE. It highlights the importance of high quality RE teaching and the role of SACRE in promoting this.

The member representing humanism expressed her disappointment that it does not mention non-religious philosophies.

Quality of RE Teaching

The letter reflects the broader expectations about the quality of teaching of RE. It stresses the importance of academic rigor: this is a pertinent consideration when formulating the Agreed Syllabus. The letter was written as a response to events at certain schools in Birmingham, but does not mention governance as a means of ensuring effective teaching of RE. This is somewhat surprising, given that the issues in Birmingham were largely connected to the governance of the schools concerned.

The letter is very positive about the role of SACRE and this is encouraging at a time when members might feel that SACRE's role has diminished.

"British Values"

There was some discussion about the decline in the quality of teaching RE and its marginalisation in the curriculum. The teaching of "British values" is now emphasised but it is unclear exactly what is meant by this. A member of the Jewish community informed members that the Board of deputies has issued some excellent guidance on the subject. Many of the precepts of British Values already form part of the curriculum for Citizenship or SMSC (Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural) Education. A Church of England member commented that it is a question of making explicit what is already in place. Paddy O'Dwyer confirmed this explaining that schools are carrying out audits to show where British Values occur in different areas of the curriculum. He added that Ofsted is struggling with the inspection of British Values. It is important that the School Council and Pupil Voice reflect these values. A member from the Teaching Associations added that assemblies are another important way of covering some aspects, for instance, democracy, voting, respect and tolerance. Some schools in rural areas have been criticised for not promoting British values. British Values are also included in the standards used for assessing NQTs (Newly Qualified Teachers).

7. Harrow SACRE Annual Report *(previously circulated and available at the meeting)*

This report was written by Rachel Bowerman and reflects the thoroughness and high quality so typical of her work. The following actions were agreed.

Send SACRE SEF to Patrick O'Dwyer

Action: Chair

Correct typos and page numbers

Action: Paddy O'Dwyer

Write an introduction

Action: Chair

Include membership list

Action: Clerk and Paddy O'Dwyer

Check the figures in the examination results

Action: Paddy O'Dwyer

It was suggested that the report could be sent to RE leaders in schools. This was agreed.

Action: Paddy O'Dwyer and Chair

Members expressed their thanks to Rachel Bowerman for this report.

8. Receiving Schools' Self Evaluation reports and School presentations

Paddy O'Dwyer will continue the SACRE tradition of inviting schools to make presentations at SACRE meetings. SACRE has enjoyed a number of excellent presentations ranging from Infants to Sixth Formers.

Action: Paddy O'Dwyer

9. SACRE's commissioned programme of RE CPD to improve Quality of RE Teaching and Effectiveness of Subject Leadership

SACRE will continue to support teachers in building schemes of work and in training, monitoring and evaluation. There is a conference for RE Leaders in Reading (Berkshire) run by the St Gabriel's Group which is based in Oxford.

10. AOB

- **YOM Hashoah, 15th April 8-10pm, Pinner Synagogue:** details of this event have already been circulated by email. Gill Ross encouraged members to attend this important occasion. The date coincides with the anniversary of the Warsaw uprising and the event commemorates the 70th anniversary of the Liberation. The deadline for reply has been extended, but members who wish to attend should give advance warning to the organizers because of security
- **RE Conference in Birmingham:** Manju Radia has attended a conference in Birmingham. Her school was invited to present a workshop on how they worked towards the Gold Mark Award. She felt very privileged to represent Harrow in this context. Members congratulated Manju Radia on this achievement. Paddy O'Dwyer asked her if she would write a report for next year's annual report. Manju Radia agreed to do this.
Action: Manju Radia
- **Harrow Governors' Conference:** a member suggested that Harrow SACRE might approach the organisers of the Harrow Governors' Conference to see if they would agree to include a SACRE slot. The theme this year is Safeguarding. The Chair agreed to make an approach.
Action: Chair
- **Celebration of 80 years of Edgware Reformed Synagogue:** Matthew Stone reported that he had attended the 80th Anniversary Celebration of Edgware Reformed Synagogue.
- **Limmud:** Gill Ross reported that attendance at this Jewish festival of learning has doubled this year, when over 1000 people attended 80 different presentations.

- **Harrow Mosque:** Zafar Khalid reported on a successful session held at the Harrow Mosque. Called “I’m not ISIS” it was attended by 12-13 councillors and others. It was covered by the BBC and other media. Other events will be held at the Mosque. There is one on Islamophobia on 29th March. Zafar Khalid will keep the Chair informed of future events.

Action: Zafar Khalid

- **3FF:** Julie Crow has been contacted by an organisation called 3FF (Three Faiths Forum). This organisation works to build good relationships between people of different faiths, beliefs and cultures. Among its other activities it holds education workshops in schools. It is appealing for speakers from the Christian, Hindu and Buddhist faith traditions to take part. Further details can be found on its website: www.3FF.org.uk. Manju Karia has had experience of their workshops. She would recommend them but added that schools need to control how they manage the links.
- **Guidance on Religious Festivals:** this guidance and list of festivals is one of the most valued services that Harrow SACRE provides to schools. It helps Head Teachers to decide how much leave can be taken for different religious festivals. Paddy O’Dwyer would like to update the list for the next school year and appealed to members of the different faith communities to send him details of their major festivals. The Chair and the Clerk will look out the previous list and he will circulate this to provide a starting point.

**Action: Clerk, Chair and Paddy O’Dwyer
Members from the religious traditions**

Mary Abbott added that the advice from SACRE and the PE advisors on jewellery is also very useful.

- **Vote of thanks to Rachel Bowerman:** Camilla Bath proposed a vote of thanks to Rachel who had been such a great help and support to SACRE. She also thanked Paddy O’Dwyer for taking over.

11. Dates of Future SACRE Meetings:

Thursday 25th June
Thursday 22nd October
Wednesday 2nd December
Thursday 3rd March 2016

The Meeting closed at 8.40

Signed:

(Chair)

(Date)

HARROW AGREED SYLLABUS CONFERENCE

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Ananda Caitanya Das has resigned from the committee.

The following members were also absent:

Group A: Mr Zia Baig, Ven Sumana Sramaner and Ms Beverley Wilson

4. Minutes of the Meeting held on 11th September 2014 (*previously circulated and available at the meeting*)

The minutes were agreed and signed as a true record.

5. Matters arising from the minutes

p. 2. Item 4. The Role and Responsibility of an Agreed Syllabus Conference:

Review

"The vote is very formal and all members of each group should be present": in answer to a question from the Chair, Paddy O'Dwyer explained that it is an expectation that all members of each group should be present for the vote, but not compulsory. Groups must agree separately and then come together for the vote.

Another member asked if there is separate quorum for each group. Paddy O'Dwyer will check this.

Action: Paddy O'Dwyer

p.3. Item 4. The Role and responsibility of an Agreed Syllabus Conference:

Statutory Requirements

The Chair of SACRE will circulate the previous agreed syllabus to members, together with the schemes of work.

Action: Alison Stowe, Chair of SACRE

p.3. Item 6. Religious Education: a National Curriculum Framework

The Chair pointed out that the page numbers correspond to the papers circulated for the meeting but do not correspond to the page numbers in the RE Council report. **This was noted.**

p. 4. Item 6. Religious Education: a National Curriculum Framework

Subject content – requirements and examples

After the exercise in small groups, the committee had given feedback and suggestions for the Agreed Syllabus. Paddy O'Dwyer agreed that these would be taken forward. He would like to set up a small group to work on the administration and time scale for the Agreed Syllabus.

It was agreed that the Chair's group with the addition of Julie Crowe and Mary Abbott as the Chair and Vice-Chair of the ASC would be able to take this forward. The Chair's group comprises representatives from each group as follows:

Group A: Mike Bishop and Vijay Hirani

Group B: Matthew Stone

Group C: Manju Radia

Group D: Camilla Bath

The Chair of SACRE will email contact details of the Chair's group to Paddy O'Dwyer and Julie Crowe.

Action: Alison Stowe, Chair of SACRE

It was agreed that the ASC conference might be expanded to include additional faith representatives and teachers.

6. Update on the Harrow Agreed Syllabus Conference

Funding

The Chair reported that she has met with Paddy O'Dwyer. She is pleased to inform the committee that the £12,000 allocated for the ASC can be carried over into the next financial year. Members are very grateful to Paddy O'Dwyer for his good offices both in allocating the money (a generous allowance compared with many LAs) and in allowing it to be carried over.

Outside agencies and teachers

This funding will allow SACRE to bring in professional expertise as well as covering the other costs associated with writing and printing the Agreed Syllabus.

Rachel Bowerman had started work on extending the exemplars discussed at the last ASC meeting to cover other faiths and stages, but expert help will be needed to take this forward.

Rachel Bowerman had a list of interested teachers who can be contacted.

Academies

In response to a question about involving the academies, Paddy O'Dwyer undertook to contact them and seek their input. Members felt that it was important to ensure that academies were included in the process. At present, they all follow the agreed syllabus.

CPD (Continuing Professional Development)

As well as drawing in teachers through its programme of CPD, SACRE will be in a position to seek out teachers and pay their school to release them, so that they can contribute to the Agreed Syllabus. SACRE can approach teachers from a range of faiths.

Quality of Teaching and Learning in RE

Teaching of RE is highly regarded in Harrow, as is SACRE. It is important to deliver a high quality syllabus.

7. Dates of Future Meetings of the ASC: to be confirmed.

The Meeting closed at 8.40 pm

Signed:

(Chair)

(Date)