

HARROW SACRE
(STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION)
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD 20 OCTOBER 2022

Attendance

**Group A
churches**

~ Mercedes Afnan

* Ven Sumana Sramaner via video link

A Diana Ohene

* Ciara O'Flaherty

A Karen Collier

Council)

* Vijay Hirani

* David Cryer

~ Varsha Dodhia

~ Gill Ross

A Doreen Samuels

~ Zafar Khalid

A Asad Omar

~ Mohammed Amar

A Paramjit Singh-Kohli

A Phiroza Gan-Kotwal

Religious traditions and Christian

Baha'i

Buddhist

Christian (Catholic)

Christian (Catholic)

Christian (Free Church Federal

Hindu (Swaminarayan)

Humanist (Harrow Humanists)

Jain

Jewish

Jewish

Muslim (representing Harrow Central
Mosque)

Muslim

Muslim (representing Harrow Central
Mosque)

Sikh

Zoroastrian

Group B

* Mary Abbott

* Alison Stowe

* Revd James Power via video link

Church of England

Group C

A Fatema Rahemani

* Heena Mistry via video link

A Elizabeth Boulter

Teachers' Associations

NASUWT

NAHT

NEU

Group D

~ Cllr Salim Chowdhury Conservative

~ Cllr Janet Mote Conservative

A Cllr Sasi Suresh Labour

Local Authority

A Cllr David Ashton Conservative (reserve)

Cllr Hitesh Karia Conservative (reserve)

* Cllr Ghazanfar Ali Labour (reserve)

Advisor to the SACRE

* Lesley Prior (Advisor to Harrow SACRE)

Clerk

* Vivian Wright (Clerk to SACRE)

Observers

* Arvind Halai from the Swaminarayan temple on Kenton Road

** denotes presence*

A denotes absence with apologies

~ denotes absence without apologies

1. Welcome

Alison welcomed everyone to the first face-to-face meeting to be held since 2019. Karen Collier has joined Harrow SACRE as representative of the Free Church Federal Council but is unable to attend this evening. Councillor Ghazanfar Ali has replaced Councillor Antonio Weiss as labour reserve and is deputizing this evening for Councillor Sasi Suresh.

This is the last meeting to be held at the Civic Centre which is closing in November.

2. Election Vice Chair

Deferred pending Camilla's reappointment to the SACRE committee.

3. Apologies for absence

RESOLVED: To note apologies for absence from Diana Ohene, Karen Collier, Doreen Samuels, Asad Omar, Phiroza Gan-Kotwal, Fatema Rahemani, Elizabeth Boulter and Councillor David Ashton.

The following members were also absent:

Group A: Mercedes Afnan, Varsha Dodhia, Gill Ross, Zafar Khalid and Mohammed Amar.

Group D: Cllr Salim Chowdhury and Cllr Janet Mote.

No apologies had been received.

Quorum

The meeting was quorate.

4. Minutes of the last meeting held on 8th March 2022 (previously circulated)

1. Welcome: Arvind Halai is not a member of Brent SACRE but is a teacher and RE subject lead in Brent. With this amendment, the minutes were agreed as a true record.

5. Matters arising from the minutes

There were no matters arising that were not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

6. ASC update

Progress so far: all procedures have been followed to establish the ASC. The nominating bodies are content for their representatives on SACRE to serve on the ASC.

Alison Stowe and David Cryer were elected as Chair and Vice-Chair respectively.

Next steps: the ASC meetings will follow the SACRE meetings (which will be kept short) on 6 December and 1 March. They will have a separate agenda. The Primary RE network will be used as a sounding board for consultation on revisions to the ASC. The current syllabus will be maintained with some revisions to reflect changes in education. Alison and Lesley met earlier this evening to identify some areas where revision will be necessary. These are:

- EY Foundation Stage;
- Attainment targets;
- Assessment.

It is hoped to involve other strands of education in the revision process. Sumaner as the Head of RE in the only secondary school in the borough to remain under LA control will be involved. The ASC may also take account of Special School provision in the Borough.

A range of schemes of work is in preparation and these schemes will be added to the statutory document.

This will form the major piece of work for Harrow SACRE this year.

Vijay approved seeking feedback from teachers. Lesley explained that there are 33 teachers in the RE WhatsApp group so it should be possible to get feedback from a wide range of schools.

7. DRO (*Previously circulated*)

Vivian has completed the updating of the DRO and circulated it to members: their feedback has been incorporated in the document circulated with the papers for the meeting.

Heena asked if Muslim members could give guidance on the times when children need to pray. Ghazanfar explained that in congregations and Mosques, the time is 1.15 in November and December and 1.30 for the rest of the year. He explained that in educational settings there is some flexibility to accommodate the timetable and the prayer time can be adjusted to any time between 1.00 and 2.00pm.

Arvind pointed out one place where the dates have not been updated.

Heena pointed out that in some denominations of Hinduism, New Year's Day will be held on the Wednesday rather than the Tuesday, because of an

eclipse. It was agreed to include a general disclaimer in the document to alert head teachers to local variations.

Lesley stressed that it is a guidance document only. The starting point is the SHAP calendar. SHAP has now been disbanded apart from continuing to produce the calendar: this is compiled after quite wide consultation and further input is sought from the faith representatives on Harrow SACRE. There are notes in the document asking Head teachers to be sympathetic to local needs.

Vivian will incorporate these amendments and send the document to Paddy for circulation and posting on the website.

Action: Vivian

Members agreed that overall this is a very useful document.

8. Harrow Workforce data 2020

The data applies to secondary schools only. In theory it shows the number of hours RE (sometimes rebranded as Philosophy, Ethics, etc.) is taught in years 9-13. It does not include GCSE.

Apart from Whitmore, the schools on the list are all academies so beyond the remit of SACRE. Also the data is a starting point and not necessarily completely accurate.

It should be used as a starting point for a conversation rather than a definitive indicator. It gives SACRE an opportunity to write to schools asking them to clarify their position if the data appears to suggest that the schools are not complying with the law. SACRE can remind schools of their statutory duties in relation to RE.

There is no data for primary schools: it would be difficult to harvest such data because of the way timetables are organized in primary schools.

At the next meeting, SACRE will be looking at the Annual Report. Previously Annual Reports included the local exam results but during the pandemic, results were based on teacher assessments and some SACREs decided not to include this data. Harrow SACRE will need to make a decision on this.

Sumaner asked if an exam paper on Christian thought included in the Philosophy course would count as RE. Lesley and James agreed that it would but that some parts of the curriculum, with more tenuous links to RE (such as PHSE for instance) should not be included.

9. 2021 Census data on religion (previously circulated)

Lesley had hoped that the RE data from the 2021 census would be available but it is not out yet. The SACRE has included data from the 2011 census in the Annual Reports and Agreed Syllabus as a demographic indicator so it will be appropriate to consider the 2021 data when it becomes available. It can be included in the new syllabus and the Annual Report.

The LA determines the bodies that appoint SACRE representatives but SACREs can make recommendations to the LA if, for instance, a particular group has grown substantially.

In the census, the question about religious affiliations is non-specific, giving no space for denominations. Some groups are reluctant to reveal their religion.

Harrow is one of the most religiously diverse boroughs in the country and this is reflected in the syllabus. Ghazanfar will see if some information is available from the council.

National trends indicate that while there is an increasing number of people who have no religious affiliation, there is also a rise in the diversity of religious affiliations.

10. Local and National updates

Lesley reported on local and national events.

Local

- **RE Network for Primary Subject Leaders:** the primary subject leaders group continues to meet each term. Members keep in touch between meetings via the Newsletter and the WhatsApp group.

National

- **Government White Paper on education:** as mentioned in the last meeting the White paper introduced to parliament in the Queens speech outlines the government's plans for education. It is the government's plan that all schools should become academies by 2030. Lesley is part of a group of NASACRE members who are meeting with officers from the Department of Education. During Liz Truss's administration, the Education Bill was paused but officers are of the view that the general direction of travel is towards academisation. The implication for SACREs is that they will cease to have any perceived function but NASACRE members have pointed out to the DfE that they will still have a role:
 - RE is affected by locality;
 - RE is weakest in academies that are not religious schools;
 - SACRE members play an important role as volunteers;
 - SACRE plays an important role when issues arise in the interface between religious practices and educational policy.

SACREs are in the business of protecting and nurturing RE whatever system of school funding is in place.

- **Online training:** NASACRE also offers a number of well-regarded online training courses. These are listed in the NASACRE briefing. If a number of members wished to attend these, it might be worth taking out a subscription.

11. NASACRE AGM and Conference

The 2023 NASACRE AGM and Conference will be held in London on 22 May.

12. RE Report Card *(previously circulated)*

<https://www.rethinkre.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Report-Card-2022-WEB-FINAL-ALL-PAGES.pdf>

This was considered at the last meeting. It might be useful for teachers as a tool for providing a summary of the state of RE and commenting on issues in the subject.

13. News from Faith Groups relating to schools

Nothing to report

14. Any Other Business

- Arvind who is an observer at this meeting would like to become a member of the Harrow SACRE. Alison explained that the committee needed to wait for a vacancy but it would be a good idea for SACRE to review its membership when the census information is available (see also 9 above). Membership always has to be referred back to the nominating bodies. Not all SACREs have the same constitution or terms of reference.

Alison will speak to Paddy about the census data and the possibility of updating the SACRE membership.

Action: Alison

15. Future Dates:

- **Tuesday 6 December 2022: it was agreed to hold this meeting at The Hub in Forward Drive. It would be a hybrid meeting. Vivian will confirm with the Civic centre.**
- **Wednesday 1 March**

The meeting closed at 9.00pm

Signed:

(Chair)

(Date)