

HARROW SACRE
(STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION)
MINUTES OF THE MEETING ON 27 SEPTEMBER 2016

Attendance

Group A

* Mercedes Afnan
* Ven Sumana Sramaner
* Mike Bishop
A Neville Ransley
* Ciara O'Flaherty
* Vijay Hirani
* David Cryer
* Varsha Dodhia (until 8.30pm)
* Gill Ross
A Doreen Samuels
* Zafar Khalid
~ *Zia Baig*
A Asad Omar
* Paramjit Singh-Kohli
* Phiroza Gan-Kotwal

Religious traditions and Christian churches

Baha'i
Buddhist
Christian (Free Church Federal Council)
Christian (Catholic)
Christian (Catholic)
Hindu (Swaminarayan)
Humanist (Harrow Humanist Association)
Jain
Jewish
Jewish
Muslim (representing Harrow Muslim Council)
Muslim
Muslim
Sikh
Zoroastrian

Group B

* Mary Abbott
* Revd. Matthew Stone attending on behalf of Revd James Power
* Revd Kate Blake
A Revd James Power

Church of England

Group C

* Manju Radia
* Alison Stowe (Chair)
A Teri-Louise O'Brien

Teachers' Associations

Group D

* Cllr Camilla Bath Conservative (Vice Chair)
* Cllr Ghazanfar Ali Labour
A Cllr Kareema Marikar Labour

A Cllr Simon Brown Labour (reserve)
A Cllr Manji Kara Conservative (reserve)
A Cllr Chika Amadi Labour (reserve)

Local Authority

Advisor to the SACRE

* Lesley Prior (Advisor ASC)

For the presentation

Nina Will Head, Teacher Stag Lane Infants School

Clerk

* Vivian Wright (Clerk to SACRE)

* *denotes presence*

A denotes absence with apologies

~ *denotes absence without apologies*

Presentation: British Values

The meeting opened with a presentation from Nina Will, Head Teacher of Stag Lane Infant School. She described how British Values are promoted at her school.

British Values comprise:

- Respect and Tolerance
- Democracy and the rule of law
- Respect towards other religions

Nina is Head of a multicultural school where 32 languages are spoken. It already has a very inclusive ethos and it is a Rights Respecting school. It already has a culture of respect and tolerance for others. When the staff examined their curriculum, they found that the school already promotes Democracy and the Rule of Law in the following ways:

- The children vote for their school councillors
- Rights Respecting champions are also elected
- The Pupil Voice is encouraged and respected
- Each class has its own charter
- The behaviour policy ensures that children know the rules and are aware of the consequences of breaking them
- Black History Month celebrates champions of democracy and equal rights.
- The School Charter sets out rights and responsibilities
- The Playground Charter sets clear expectations
- There is also a Lunch Time Charter created by the children
- Representatives from the police are regular visitors to the school

The school promotes the rights of the individual through

- The Anti-bullying campaign
- Circle of Friends
- The e-Safety Policy

Respect and tolerance for different religions is demonstrated through

- The school's celebrations of major religions, whether or not they are represented in the school.
- Celebration of all major religious festivals
- Visits from priests, rabbis and other representatives of different religions
- Displays celebrating different festivals

Nina concluded by describing how the children show respect and tolerance for other religions, while celebrating their own cultural identity. On St George's Day, children came to school in their own national costumes. Mutual respect comes through circle time and assemblies.

The RE curriculum is taught in accordance with the Harrow Locally Agreed Syllabus and British Values are also demonstrated across the curriculum. The children see the relevance of British values for all cultures and creeds.

Recent initiatives at the school reflecting its commitment to British Values include a visit to the Houses of Parliament, setting up a Debating Club and the introduction of Playground Buddies.

The introduction of British Values has not only fulfilled the school's expectations, it has exceeded them.

Questions

- Do the children enjoy this aspect of the curriculum? Yes they are enthusiastic and engaged.
- Has the RRSa programme provided a significant push towards British Values, making them more explicit? Yes, the Rights of the Child are at the heart of the Rights Respecting programme and completely compatible with British Values. Children realize that knowledge is power and tolerance is deeply embedded in the school ethos.

- Are there concerns that these values are promoted as British? Do children realise that these are universal values? Yes, the children recognise that these are the values of this country but also values found in their own cultures.
- Does the broader remit of the Rights Respecting programme ever come into conflict with British values? No, Rights Respecting and British Values reinforce and complement each other.
- “Tolerance” is a word that can sometimes be used in pejorative sense: would “acceptance” be a better term? Nina agreed that “acceptance” has more positive connotations than “tolerance”.
- Could this programme be extended to other schools? Yes, other schools are already following this programme. All schools have to display on their websites how they are promoting British Values. It is important that this is not just a paper exercise but deeply embedded within the school ethos and curriculum. Nina felt that it is important that children value themselves; tolerance grows from this.

The Chair thanked Nina for her presentation: an appropriate way to start the first SACRE meeting of the autumn term.

There is a link on Stag Lane Infants’ School website showing how the School promotes British Values:

[Click here to view document](#)

Nina then left the meeting.

Jewish New Year

Before the formal part of the meeting began, Gill Ross announced that the Jewish New Year is almost here. Members exchanged Jewish New Year greetings and enjoyed delicious halva which Gill had brought in to share.

1. Welcome and introductions

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting especially, David Cryer who has taken over from Julie Crow as the Humanist representative and Matthew Stone who is attending on behalf of James Power. This is Matthew’s last meeting.

2. Apologies for absence:

RESOLVED: To note apologies for absence from Neville Ransley, Revd James Power, Doreen Samuels, Asad Omar, and Cllr Kareema Marikar.

The following member was also absent:

Group A: Mr Zia Baig

Beverley Wilson, the Rastafarian representative, is no longer a member of this committee.

3. Minutes of the last meeting held on 30th June 2016 (previously circulated and available at the meeting)

The minutes were agreed and signed as a true record.

4. Matters arising from the minutes

There were no matters arising from the minutes that are not already included on this evening’s agenda.

5. Information and discussion about the NASACRE website

Lesley Prior introduced this item.

- **Members’ area:** members have been sent the new username and password for the members’ area of the website.
- **RE and Ofsted:** two new officers have been appointed to succeed Alan Brine who was responsible for RE at Ofsted. One will be responsible for primary education, the other for secondary. Whereas Alan’s sole responsibility was for RE, the new officers will have to combine RE with other responsibilities.

- **Broad and balanced curriculum:** Ofsted is now focusing on the broad and balanced curriculum and moving away from its previous narrow concentration on English and Maths. It is hoped that Ofsted will provide guidance for schools to ensure that other subjects including RE are represented. This is an encouraging trend.
- **Justine Greening letter:** the RE world has been concerned by incidents of racial hatred, anti-Semitism and Islamophobia which have taken place since the EU Referendum. Although these incidents cannot be directly attributed to the Brexit vote, there has been an undeniable increase in such incidents since 23rd June. Paul Smalley, Chair of NASACRE, has signed a letter to Justine Greening asking her to take these concerns seriously and consider the implications for schools. The RE curriculum can contribute to community cohesion but needs to be properly resourced.
- **RE Commission and RE Council:** the RE Council has set up a Commission to consider taking forward the proposals regarding RE arising from the report by Charles Clarke and Linda Woodhead and those in other recent reports.
- **Proposed changes to RE education:** there is a link on the agenda where members can see the implications for SACREs if recommendations put forward by the commission are implemented. One proposal is that there should be a national curriculum for RE which would put in question the Agreed Local Syllabus which is such an essential part of SACRE's work. The RE Council website lists the commissioners: the Chair is Canon Dr John Hall; other members include religious broadcaster, Samira Ahmed and educationalist, Professor Denise Cush. The RE Council is a voluntary body; it has no statutory powers: any changes would need to go before parliament to effect change in the law before they could be implemented.
- **NASACRE constitution:** the NASACRE constitution has been revised and local SACREs have been asked to vote to accept or reject the constitution. The new constitution makes no major changes. The constitution was considered at the NASACRE AGM at the annual conference this year but, in view of the fact that not all SACREs are represented at the Conference, it had been agreed to defer a decision until the autumn.
Alison Stowe seconded by Mike Bishop proposed that the new NASACRE constitution should be adopted. This was agreed unanimously.
This decision will be communicated to NASACRE

Action: Clerk
- **NASACRE Annual Conference:** the conference this year is on 16th May in York. Ciara O'Flaherty and Marry Abbott expressed an interest in attending the conference. Their interest will be considered when formal registration opens.

6. Agreed Syllabus Update

The Agreed Syllabus is now almost complete.

Faith Descriptions: there are still some outstanding sections to come in from the faith communities. If any representatives of faith communities present have not yet submitted their faith description, they should do so without delay. These should be sent to the Chair and the Clerk. Faith communities that are not represented on SACRE will not be included.

Action: members of the faith communities who have not yet submitted their contribution to the Agreed Syllabus

The Chair will contact Julie Crowe in order to identify the missing sections. Julie, although no longer a member of this committee, was the Chair of the ASC and has agreed to see the Agreed Syllabus through to publication.

Action: Chair

Distribution: it has been agreed that the Agreed Syllabus will be available electronically and a limited number of hard copies will also be available.

Launch: it has been agreed that the Agreed Syllabus will be launched with a small event linked to training. Varsha Dodhia, Jain representative, indicated that the Interfaith Council would be willing to contribute to the costs of this event in a joint celebration linked to Interfaith Week in November. The Chair agreed that this would be a good way forward.

Members who work in schools will sound out their schools about willingness to host the event; the Interfaith Council also has links with Park High School.

Vardsha Dodhia left the meeting

Glossary: the Chair has received an excellent glossary and this has been sent to Patrick O'Dwyer.

Agreement by Harrow Council: it was thought that the Agreed Syllabus has been agreed by the Council. The Chair will verify this.

Action: Chair

7. Harrow SACRE Constitution (*previously circulated*)

Mike Bishop explained that the constitution circulated to members needs to include more detail on, for example the procedures governing the election of the Chair and the protocols for appointing representatives of the faith communities.

It was agreed that Mike Bishop and Alison Stowe would meet to draft this additional text which they would bring to the next meeting.

Action: Alison Stowe and Mike Bishop
Item for next agenda

8. The role of the SEF for RE Leaders

Teri-Louise O'Brien has agreed to talk members through the RE SEF for Norbury Primary School. The SEF examines the RE curriculum following Ofsted criteria. Teri-Louise is unable to attend this evening, so this item is deferred to the next meeting.

When it is discussed, members will be able to focus on how the SEF can make a difference to how RE is taught in school and what changes are made as a result of completing the SEF.

Item for next agenda

9. Annual report (*previously circulated*)

Lesley Prior has almost completed the Annual Report. She is awaiting the GSCE results which will be sent to her by Patrick O'Dwyer when available. Now that most high schools in Harrow are academies, they are under no obligation to provide their results, but most schools will do so.

Alison Stowe will draft the Foreword to the report.

Lesley Prior will insert some links to helpful publications.

All SACREs are required to file their annual reports to the DfE and NASACRE.

NASACRE holds copies of reports on its website. As SACREs are publically funded bodies, their reports are public documents as are their agendas and minutes of meetings.

Lesley Prior thanked the Clerk for her clear minute taking which made writing the report easier.

The Chair thanked Lesley Prior for drafting of the report.

The text of the report was approved: any amendments should be sent to the Chair.

10. Publications

• **Days of religious Observance – guidance for schools**

The Clerk has circulated dates of religious festivals 2016/17 (taken from the SHAP calendar) for comment and amendment. She thanked members who have sent in amendments. It was agreed that the text does not need updating.

One further amendment was put forward by Gill Ross, the Jewish representative. She will confirm this by email.

Action: Gill Ross

Any further amendments should reach the clerk no later than Friday 30 September.

The Clerk will then update the Guidance and send to Patrick O'Dwyer for distribution and posting on the SACRE website.

Action: Clerk

11. News from Faith Groups

- **GCSE results:** Vijay Hirani reported that the RE GCSE results for the students studying at the Hindu Centre are particularly good. Some of these results are included in the school statistics as the students sit the exam at their high schools; however the published results may not give an accurate reflection of the numbers of candidates. Lesley Prior commented that it is encouraging that so many young people are taking these public examinations and doing so well.
- **Friday Night experience:** Gill Ross reported that Doreen Samuels was unable to attend this evening because she is hosting a Friday Night Experience for Jewish and Muslim women.
- **A new incumbent at St Edmund the King:** Matthew Stone reported that the Revd Michael Miller is being inducted at St Edmund the King tomorrow. He succeeds the Revd Philip Barnes.
- **Unity in Diversity:** Mercedes Afnan informed members of this talk taking place at the **Harrow Arts Centre on Thursday 20th October at 7.45pm**. The speaker will be a member of the Baha'i faith community but the talk is open to all and will allow for questions and discussion reflecting different points of view. Members should contact Mercedes if they would like to attend.

12. Any other business

- **Directory of Places of Worship:** the Chair asked members to send her details of places of worship: they should include its name, the website address and how to arrange a visit. Mike Bishop reminded members that teachers, when arranging a school visit, like to find a place of worship that is typical of the religion it represents and offers a traditional form of worship that reflects the students' studies. Members should send details to the Chair.

Action: Members of the committee

- **Termly co-ordinators' meeting:** it is hoped to continue the termly co-ordinators' meetings but this will depend on the budget. Patrick O'Dwyer will have details of the budget.
- **Revd Matthew Stone** is leaving. He has been a member of SACRE for eight years and will be much missed. The Chair presented him with a card and wished him well for the future. Mathew told the committee that James Power is a very worthy successor. He is the Vicar of St Mary's and has been the Chaplain at Harrow School since the 1980s. Matthew felt that his work on the SACRE committee has informed his work as a school governor and vice versa. Everything is connected.

13. Dates of Future SACRE Meetings:

Wednesday 7 December

Thursday 9 March

NASACRE Conference: Tuesday 16 May 2017

The Meeting closed at 9. 00pm

Signed:

(Chair)

(Date)