

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE LONDON BOROUGH OF WALTHAM  
FOREST STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION  
(SACRE)**

**HELD AT WALTHAM FOREST TOWN HALL  
ON TUESDAY 22<sup>ND</sup> MARCH 2016 AT 5.15PM**

<b>Present:</b> Ted Cooke	Chair/Member
Peter Dawe	Member
Pc Mohamed Elhossainy	Member
Reverend Femi Cole-Njie	Member
Keith Piling	Member
Hilda Jackson	Member
Cllr Paul Braham	Member
Ruth Kaufman	Member
Richard Sweden	Member
Rosalind Turner	LB Waltham Forest
Connie Grant	Clerk

**1. Welcome and Apologies for Absence**

- 1.1. All members present were welcomed to the meeting and the Chair thanked them for attending. All present at the meeting introduced themselves.
- 1.2. We noted that the meeting was quorate.
- 1.3. Apologies were received from Cllr. Shammeen Highfield, Mari Chivers, Mike Stygal, Tara Khare and Anne Bard.

**2. Minutes of previous meeting held on the 28<sup>th</sup> January 2016**

- 2.1. The minutes were agreed with the following amendments;
  - Page 1 (1.3.) – Rosalind Turner had tendered her apologies for the meeting but it was not noted on the minutes.
  - Page 2 (2.2.) - should read 'Reverend Femi Cole-Njie'.
  - Page 2 (2.2.) The Chair apologised for not having amended the draft minutes to redraft the following 'Femi had been quite vocal in saying she did not think it was appropriate for a Humanist to be included in the Group A list'. It was agreed that the minute should read '**Reverend Femi Cole-Njie stated that she did not think it was appropriate for a Humanist to be included in the Group A list**'. The Chair apologised to Rev Femi Cole-Njie for this error.

- Page 2 (2.2.) - delete the word 'faith' after Humanist. It was clarified that Humanist was not a faith.

## 2.2. Matters Arising

- Ramadan guidance – teachers had been consulted and this had been moved to the next term, to launch event for the syllabus. Ramadan guidance was raised as a concern as fasting could affect pupils performance in exams.
- Floor targets – the Chair explained that this term meant the 'minimum acceptable standards' for Ofsted and if figures fell below floor targets it triggered action to be taken.

## 3. Prevent Agenda and how this is managed in Waltham Forest Schools

- 3.1. This item was deferred to the next meeting – apologies sent from Sean Thompson for not being able to attend.

## 4. Items to include Preparation of the Annual Report 2014/15

4.1. A guidance paper was circulated entitled "SACRE Annual Reports – what is necessary and what is desirable". SACRE went through the draft guidance and the following were highlighted; Governor Services have shared guidance and some helpful suggestions has been received from NASACRE on items to be included in the report. The guidance contained a number of points with suggested structure to the annual report which SACRE agreed should be the model to be followed. In particular the following proposals were made by point in the guidance:

Point 2 – Advice to statutory bodies - The report will need to include the Ramadan guidance that the Local Authority had issued to schools last year as part of the development of the agreed syllabus.

Point 3 - Standards and quality of provision for RE (with examples of good practice if appropriate) - The Chair advised SACRE that Waltham Forest regularly receive "Freedom of Information" requests generally pertaining to Christmas and Easter festival and alternative practices held by the boroughs schools. Since the Authority does not collect this kind of information from schools it was usual for the response to indicate this but then go on to affirm the authorities commitment to social inclusion and community harmony by providing an Agreed Syllabus for its schools which expects schools to celebrated all of our communities festivals and practices/beliefs.

The public exam results for RE should be reported on and SACRE will obtain this information from the Local Authority.

Quality of RE revision – there had been no information provided this year so there is no requirement to report on this.

Point 4 – Agreed syllabus – a paragraph should be included on the agreed syllabus.

Point 5 – Collaborative Worship – no work has been carried out on this.

Point 6 – Management of SACRE – a short paragraph on management of SACRE should be included.

Point 7 – Contribution of SACRE to the wider Local Authority agenda – SACRE to prepare a brief paragraph on this.

Point 9 – Membership of SACRE – membership and constitution should be included. The Chair clarified that the membership of SACRE will also list who they represent and what group they come under.

**Action: It was agreed that the Chair, in consultation with Rosalind Turner, prepare a draft taking all the above into consideration and sent to Peter Dawe for checking and the final version e-mailed to SACRE members.**

## **5. Update on the agreed Syllabus publication**

5.1. Rosalind Turner updated the SACRE Group on the status of the Syllabus. She said the Syllabus was ready and has been published on Waltham Forest website via the Hub. Information on SACRE and related guidance is up to date and the revised constitution will be uploaded. A newsletter will be despatched to schools which will include links to the Agreed Syllabus. All schools will be using the Hub. The Agreed Syllabus Conference launch is scheduled for 7<sup>th</sup> July. The Mayor and relevant Cabinet Member will be invited to be there and the Chair is trying to include a guest with specialism in RE. The suggestion of inviting councillors who were no longer serving was raised. Rosalind stated that the conference will be a lively event and there was lots of enthusiasm about it. She said it was important for a good practitioner to speak at the conference.

**Action: The Chair will communicate with the Chair of NASACRE to ask if they could suggest someone a speaker at the conference. He will update SACRE Group at the 7<sup>th</sup> July meeting with a definitive.**

## **6. Establishment of a Places of Worship document**

6.1. The Chair relayed thanks to Donna Miller, Governor Services who has started the process of preparing a list that she has inputted into a database. The Chair will go through the list with Mo and add places of worship that people can access. It was agreed that we would develop our work on this list with the Metropolitan Police Service, Faith Officer for information on contacts and places.

**Action: This item to be updated at the next meeting.**

## **7. Review of Ramadan Guidance**

7.1. The guidance is now with all schools to consider the difficulties for children taking exams around the time of Ramadan.

**Action: The Local Authority will send a reminder e-mail to schools prior to Ramadan to bring their attention to the Guidance again. Rosalind Turner will progress.**

## **8. KS3, 4 & 5 Syllabus**

8.1. The Chair reported that as part of the Chancellor's budget announcement all schools will become Academies by 2020. This will have a consequence for Local Authorities who will see a reduction in education funding. KS3 has not been reviewed and the context of KS4 has not been thought about. In the last two years two further schools has added a 6<sup>th</sup> form to their school. This means a third of secondary schools in the borough now have 6<sup>th</sup> forms. KS5 consequently will now need addressing by our ASC and the Chair and Rosalind Turner will investigate this in relation to time and resources. The Chair asked Rosalind if she can obtain the following information;

- Which of the existing Academies continue to use the agreed syllabus?
- Are Academies still using other source in relation to RE content?

The Chair continued that because Academies are not specifically required to teach RE from our Agreed Syllabus this will be an issue and suggested that an investigation should be conducted with the Academies Commission to establish what they are doing about this.

It was highlighted that Waltham Forest RE issues were different to surrounding boroughs in relation to different faiths. It was noted that SACRE were happy for Waltham Forest secondary schools to use the existing document for KS3 but KS4 and 5 will change when reviewed by the ASC. However it was questioned if this was still relevant if all schools converted to Academies. The Chair report that he was aware that a number of our primary and secondary schools have been considering the option of whether to convert to Academies now rather than waiting until they had no choice.

Rosalind Turner explained that before all schools are converted to Academies Central Government has to go through a process. She said the national funding formula for schools is still being used and the government's plan for converting schools to academies was still at the white paper stage.

Following discussion the following comments/suggestions were noted;

- Will SACREs still exist and if so how will they be co-ordinated under the potential new arrangement. **Amendment 26/4/16, attached document received by NASACRE**
- The government ruling cannot be challenged but members of the public and organisations can express their concerns and views which would be included as part of the consultation to the White Paper.
- A few campaigns have already started as a result of the decision by central government.

- Pride in local education, particular in rural areas will see opposition against schools becoming Academies.
- Objections from SACRE on a national level will be more effective.
- Schools and Local Authorities were justifiably concerned.
- Some schools already experienced difficulties recruiting teachers and this new government policy will make this more difficult.
- The Buddhist community are concerned about their faith getting lost or left out as a result of this proposed change. The Buddhist SACRE member said he was in talks with other Buddhist organisations to come up with an agreed syllabus.
- The Church of England is working on agreed syllabus content.
- Work in local communities around RE could be lost.
- Concern about SACRE's role after the new changes. By removing the Local Authority aspect what will be their purpose and who will support them.
- The Chair will be chairing the Forum on behalf of SACRE.
- The suggestion that it will be sensible not to spend the allocated resources yet, bearing in mind reduction of Local Authority funding. A research needs to be conducted on whether Academies were using local agreed syllabus and if so will they be able to continue.
- Suggestion of consulting with schools on whether they were interested in adopting the SACRE syllabus.
- It was suggested that SACRE's located in surrounding boroughs be consulted with the view of potentials for a planned merger if it can be deemed beneficial, and to establish if this will be profitable.

In conclusion the Chair encouraged SACRE Group members to monitor their organisations and keep abreast of any changes in relation to this new government policy.

## 9. Any Other Business

9.1. Paul invited SACRE members to attend the Feast of Lots which was taking place tomorrow. This was a happy celebration and part of the Jewish religion. The celebration will be held at 2 Fillebrooke Road, Leytonstone E11 and will start at 2.00pm. Cakes will be provided and there will be a reading of the Story of Esther. Fancy dress which tied in with the story was optional.

9.2. The Chair thanked all present for attending and wished them an enjoyable Easter weekend.

## 6. Dates of Future Meetings and Agenda Items

6.1.

<b>Spring Term 2016</b>		
	<b>Time</b>	<b>Venue</b>
<b>Summer Term 2016</b>		
Wednesday 27 <sup>th</sup> April 2016	5.15pm	TBC
Wednesday 13 <sup>th</sup> July 2016	5.15pm	TBC

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Future agenda items

- 27<sup>th</sup> April 2016 - Prevent agenda and how this is managed in Waltham Forest Schools

**The meeting closed at 6.30pm**