

**Barnet**

**Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE)**

**Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 25th June 2024 at 5pm**

**Ashmole Academy**

**Cecil Rd, London N14 5RJ**

**MINUTES**

**Constitution and Attendance**

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| **GROUP A:**  **Christian denominations other than the Church of England and principal religions represented in Great Britain** | **Present/Apologies/Absent** | **GROUP B:**  **Church of England** | **Present/Apologies/Absent** |
| Mrs Vicky Golestaneh (Baha’i) | Present | Ms Sue Watts (London Diocese) | Present |
| Ajantha Tennakoon (Buddhist) | Absent | Rev Robin Sims-Williams (London Diocese) | Absent |
| Mrs Catherine Salinger (Free Churches) | Apologies | Maria Constantinou (Diocese of St Albans) | Present |
| Mrs Mary Karaolis (attending on behalf of Very Revd AC Damiano: Greek Orthodox Church) | Present | Anthony David (Diocese of London) | Absent |
| Mr Sury Khatri (Hindu) | Present | Lisa Bonfield | Apologies |
| Mrs Veena Bedi (Hindu) | Absent |  |  |
| Dr Mukal Shah (Jain) | Absent |  |  |
| Vacancy (Jain) |  |  |  |
| Rabbi Mark Goldsmith (Jewish) | Absent |  |  |
| Vacancy (Jewish) |  |  |  |
| Vacancy (Sikh) |  |  |  |
| Vacancy (Sikh) |  |  |  |
| Nicola Santamaria (Roman Catholic) | Present |  |  |
| Norah Flatley (Roman Catholic) | Apologies |  |  |
| Vacancy (Salvation Army) |  |  |  |
| Vacancy (Salvation Army) |  |  |  |
| Mr Mark Leach (Methodist) | Absent |  |  |
| Mr Martin Wellings (Methodist) | Apologies |  |  |
| Nuzhat Akhtar (Muslim) | Absent |  |  |
| Gohar Akhtar (Muslim) | Absent |  |  |
| Panos Fellas (Humanist) | Present |  |  |
| **GROUP C:**  **Teachers Associations, including representation from Academy Schools** | **Present/Apologies/Absent** | **GROUP D:**  **Local Authority, including elected Councillors LA** | **Present/Apologies/Absent** |
| Mr Kevin McSharry (Chairman & ASCL) | Present | Agnes Slocombe (L.A.) | Present |
| Vacancy |  | Cllr Humayune. Khalick | Absent |
| Vacancy |  | Cllr Danny Rich | Absent |
| Dr Alan Shaw (NAHT) | Present | Cllr Lachhya Bahadur Gurung | Absent |
| Ms Sandra Teacher | Apologies | Cllr.Linda Lusingu | Absent |
| Sally Giovanelli (Danegrove Primary School) | Present | Cllr.Nagus Narenthira | Absent |
| Jack Robertson (NEU) | Present | Cllr Ella Rose | Absent |
|  |  | Cllr Joshua Conway | Absent |
| **Other** |  | **Co-opted non-voting members** |  |
| Maria Gabrielczyk – **Clerk** | In attendance | Jan McGuire  Independent RE Advisor to Barnet SACRE | Present |
| Tim Sanders | Present | Mr Neil Marlow  Chief Executive and Director of Education and Learning | Present |
| Ruth Marx | Absent | Jennifer Brodkin | Present |
| Sophie Taparis | Present | Reuben Thompstone | Absent |

This was the Barnet SACRE Religious Education Celebration event.

All SACRE Members were invited to attend. The event started with light refreshments and networking. At 5pm guests were asked to be seated.

The Chair of SACRE welcomed everyone present, all the pupils, teachers, Head Teachers, and guests. He spoke of the event honouring all of the members from the community that volunteer to serve on the SACRE to help support excellent RE in schools and to promote community cohesion and working together to serve the community of Barnet. There was a special mention for the Ann Taves writing team, who have worked very hard on creating a new and bespoke RE syllabus for the Barnet schools.

The welcome was followed by the SACRE Interfaith Choir directed by Dr. Alan Shaw.

The Chair of SACRE welcomed the worshipful Mayor of Barnet, who would be giving out the awards. The Mayor of Barnet (Cllr.Tony Vourou) gave a short address.

The Mayor of Barnet presented the Kevin McSharry Religious Education award 20024 to the following primary and secondary RE teachers for outstanding RE teachers/subject leaders:

1. Emily Julian: St Vincent’s Primary School.
2. John Falconer: Ashmole Academy (Secondary)
3. Caroline Goringe, St Mary's CE Primary School
4. Mariam Farah: Summerside Primary Academy
5. Mrs Debbie Juggler, JCoSS (Secondary)

Jan McGuire, Independent RE Advisor to Barnet SACRE, shared a short presentation on the new syllabus created by the Ann Taves writing team: consisting of academics, education specialists, RE teachers and members of SACRE. It was decided to adopt the Ann Taves Six Big Questions for the new syllabus as it allows for the development of an inclusive curriculum ideal for a diverse community like Barnet. Ann Taves is a respected academic in the Religious Education community around the world. It is a great honour that Ann Taves generously worked alongside and advised the Barnet writing team. The new Agreed Syllabus is based on a rigorous academic approach. The new Agreed Syllabus provides a sequential curriculum from age 4-19, based on the same six Big Questions posed in Ann Taves theoretical work. It is planned that the launch of the new RE syllabus with teachers and schools throughout Barnet will take place in 2025.

Jan introduced SACRE to members of the writing team: The primary teachers – Sally Giovanelli and Sophia Tsiaparis, both of whom won the Farmington Scholarship Award from Oxford University where they were studying the academic work of Professor Ann Taves on Worldviews and religion. The secondary teachers – Jack Robertson and Tim Sanders.

The team spoke about taking pupils through a journey of exploring the six questions covered throughout the inclusive curriculum, listening to everyone’s views and accepting differences in views.

Jan informed that SACRE members would be voting on the draft syllabus, so that it can be approved and taken to Cabinet in September/ October 2024 for approval. Once accepted by the LA the Agreed Syllabus is sent to the Secretary of State .At this stage, once confirmed, the Agreed Syllabus becomes law.

The Chair of SACRE thanked the SACRE writing team for their work on the new curriculum covering from Early Years, through primary and secondary and to Higher Education to age 19. The Chair thanked Dr Alan Shaw and the Interfaith Choir for their singing. London Borough of Barnet is one of the most diverse boroughs in England and Wales. It The new Agreed Syllabus promotes empathy, understanding and cohesion. All faiths are represented on the Barnet SACRE and no faiths – Humanists. The Chair also thanked Neil Marlow from the Local Authority for his support and knowledge about the SACRE work, and how proud he was of the provision offered across Barnet for the pupils. The syllabus is of great quality and enables the curriculum to be the same, benefitting 63,000 pupils in the borough. All subjects are taught very well in Barnet, because of the quality of teaching.

Neil Marlow, the Chief Executive and Director of Education and Learning, Barnet Education and Learning Services gave the closing thanks and statement about the importance of RE.

The choir ended the evening with a final song from their repertoire.

SACRE Members remained to vote on the Agreed Syllabus for Barnet. Jan went through the draft syllabus, section by section.

Jan went through p3-8, the key statements, the 6 Big Questions which are woven throughout the syllabus and the importance of RE for all pupils, which is a legal requirement.

Groups A, B and C unanimously **agreed** the contents of p3-8.

The next section p9-13 covered the legalities. *A locally Agreed Syllabus must reflect the fact “that the religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian, while taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religions represent in Great Britain”. [1996 Act, Ch56 S375].*

The legal teaching time for RE is approx. 5% of curriculum time and pupils must receive a report for RE. Pupils will cover the 6 questions of Ann Taves.

A SACRE member raised a question around point 2 on p11 requesting further clarity. *In schools where an Agreed Syllabus applies, RE* ***must*** *be non-denominational, but teaching about denominational difference is permitted. [Education Act 1944 S26].*

Jan offered to look into the document further. Dr. Alan Shaw offered to help Jan with wording to provide further clarity of point 2. **ACTION: JMcG/AS**

Subject to this minor amendment Groups A, B and C unanimously **agreed** the contents of p9-13.

Jan went through P14-19.

There was a brief discussion about the terms “must” and “should”. Jan clarified that “must” is law, and “should” is ideally, preferably – so best practice.

The curriculum focus on the Six Big Questions provides scope for discussion and can develop pupils’ world views. P16-17 breakdown more depth of understanding. The Six Big Questions always end on reflection, so that pupils can think about it. The schools have autonomy on how they will divide the units in their teaching, providing flexibility on how RE is delivered. There are different questions for 4-19 pupils and they allow for reflection on the pupils’ own personal views. The Ann Taves approach enables listening to others and allow others to express themselves.

An issue was raised around the lack of paperwork and more was needed. The idea of having broken down boxes with stories or tables as an appendix to supplement the learning and provide teachers with something further to refer to. Jan added that schools must provide annual reports in RE for pupils.

It was also raised that teachers need to have prior knowledge and understanding. A suggestion was to have building blocks to make progress. Jan informed that training will be rolled out a year beforehand and teachers will be building on what the ASC teachers have written to help bridge the gap. The appendix will flesh out the content and help with the bridging.

Subject to receiving an appendix to supplement the learning, Groups A, B and C unanimously **agreed** the contents of p14-19.

The final pages 20-25 were discussed. Pages 20-21 provide the definition of the world view from the RE Council *“Worldview describes the way in which a person encounters, interprets, understands and engages with the world”.*

The legal facts are repeated and that religious and worldviews should offer reflection for pupils. Page 21 states how content is put in around RE and worldviews, so that it is explored at each key stage. Christianity is built into the lesson planning and content. There is flexibility to reflect on what is happening in individual schools.

SACRE members picked up on the word “significant” as used on p21. *“The census from 2021 indicates that Barnet has a high percentage of Jewish, Christian and Muslim families and these three significant religion or worldviews will be taught throughout a child’s Religious Education to reflect the local context”.*  There followed a brief discussion. Jan informed that this is important in the local context used by the RE Council, but teachers had autonomy. This will be explained at the training. After a brief discussion SACRE members agreed to changing *“significant”* to *“other”.*

Pages 22-23 are about pedagogy and helping to order work teachers are doing in school with a focus on artefacts and texts. The final page lists the bibliographies, reading and resource material, with relevant working links.

Subject to the above amendment to the wording, Groups A, B and C unanimously **agreed** the contents of P20-25.

Jan thanked all the SACRE members for voting.

The ASC has agreed on the amendments and has commissioned this work: The agreed amendments will be made to the documents and new appendix templates will be created to support the AS and these will be shared with SACRE to complete. Jan has been formally asked to do this work. **ACTION: JMcG**

**FUTURE DATES**

**Meeting dates for 2024-2025**

* Wednesday – 6th November 2024 at 5-7pm (virtual meeting
* Wednesday – 5th March 2025 at 5-7pm (virtual meeting)
* Wednesday – 11th June 2025 at 5-7pm (in person – venue TBC)

The event closed at 7.20pm.

Chair of Barnet SACRE: ………………………………………………………………………………

Date: …………………………………………………………………………………………………….