

Minutes of the Meeting of the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education

Date: Tuesday, 23 February 2021

Time: 19:00

Venue: Virtual Meeting

Attendees:

EALING COUNCIL

Councillors Mahmood (Chair), Ball, Dhami, Midha, Raza, Rooney and Sahota

CHURCH OF ENGLAND GROUP

Rev. Canon Mark Poulson and Mr Mark Newton

TEACHERS' ASSOCIATIONS GROUP

Ms Emma Lauder (NASUWT) and Dr Elizabeth Day (NAHT/ASCL)

GROUPS REPRESENTING OTHER RELIGIOUS DENOMINATIONS

Ms Kim Burke (Roman Catholic), Ms Megan Dick (Liberal Jewish), Mr Luxman Dissanayake (Buddhist), Dr Marianne Izen (Jewish), Mrs Barjinder Lall (Ramgarhia Sabha), Rev. Susan McCoan (United Reformed Church), Ms Marion McNeill (Free Church Federal Council), Fatemah Moledina (Shi'a Islam), Mr Oliver Murphy (West London Humanists and Secularists), Reem Shaheed (Baha'i) and Mr Naif Sheikh Jahad Ahmed (Discover Islam)

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from:

Glenn Burchell (NASUWT)

Councillor Byrne

Lori Greenglass (NAHT)

Councillor Millican

The Chair, Councillor Mahmood, welcomed two new SACRE members to the meeting, Ms Megan Dick (Liberal Jewish) and Ms Fatemah Moledina (Shi'a Islam).

2 Urgent Matters

There were none.

3 Declarations of Interest

There were none.

4 Matters to be Considered in Private

There were none.

5 Minutes

The Committee considered the minutes of the meeting held on 12 November 2020.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as a true and accurate record of proceedings.

6 Determination Renewals

The Committee considered a determination renewal application submitted by Lady Margaret Primary School.

Helen Rai, Headteacher and Tracey Byrne, Deputy Headteacher from Lady Margaret Primary School provided a verbal presentation to the Committee on the school's determination renewal application and information on the worship that took place in the school. It was noted that:

- Lady Margaret Primary School served a culturally diverse population with children who followed different religions. Diversity was celebrated through a rich and varied assembly program which focused on themes and concepts which crossed over a range of cultures and religions
- The school followed Ealing's recommended Religious Education Agreed Syllabus.
- The school was very inclusive and had created a school thought which was read out in assemblies as a reflection point and was aligned with the school's core values which were about learning, motivation, progress and success. Alongside the core values there were four key themes which included legacy, morality, power and sustainability and these were embedded into the curriculum.
- The school's curriculum was designed around high quality texts which were chosen carefully to reflect the diverse community and it was felt that this work was more appropriate to meet the needs of the community than worship. This was why the school was applying to continue its determination to modify this collective reflection which incorporated a range of religious beliefs.
- The School promoted British values and ensured that all children knew the expectations of being a good British Citizen.

- Daily reflection time was encouraged at the school throughout the academic year and throughout lockdown.

Marianne Izen, who had met with the school virtually on behalf of Ealing SACRE, provided feedback on her experience and her thoughts on the application and confirmed that she fully supported and recommend that the determination be renewed.

The Committee considered a determination renewal application submitted by Featherstone Primary School.

Sabina Khurana, RE and Collective Worship Lead from Featherstone Primary School provided a verbal presentation to the Committee on the school's determination renewal application and information on the worship that took place in the school. It was noted that:

- Featherstone Primary School served a culturally diverse population with children who followed different religions. The school worked on a theme basis, with a different theme every week which covered all religions, but the main theme was spirituality.
- The school followed Ealing's recommended Religious Education Agreed Syllabus.
- The school had a weekly Religious Education lesson and every lesson ended with a reflection.
- When there was a religious celebration the school dedicated the whole week to that religious celebration.
- Pupils had their own reflection book and their own thought book. If they were ever worried about anything and they wanted to share it with the teacher, they were given the opportunity to leave it on the teacher's desk. There was also a virtual worry box which the pupils could post their reflection and their worries or anything to the teacher online.
- The school linked mindfulness and collective worship together, so when children started the school day calming music was played and then a mindfulness activity conducted where a quote or a saying from a different faith was read out and children were then given an opportunity to talk about that with the teacher.

Oliver Murphy, who had met with the school virtually on behalf of Ealing SACRE, provided feedback on his experience and his thoughts on the application and confirmed that he fully supported and recommend that the determination be renewed.

RESOLVED: That

1. The contents of the report and the supporting documentation are noted.
2. The Committee support the determination renewal submitted by Lady Margaret Primary School.
3. The Committee support the determination renewal submitted by Featherstone Primary School.

7 Collective Worship Guidance

Lesley Prior, Adviser for Religious Education in Community Schools and SACRE informed the Committee that she had been reviewing the reflection guidance for schools document with the assistance of Dr Marianne Izen (Jewish Community), Oliver Murphy (West London Humanists and Secularists) and Dr Elizabeth Day (NAHT/ASCL). The updated draft document was attached as an appendix to the report for the Committee's consideration.

Angela Doherty, Quality and Partnerships Lead, Ealing Learning Partnership, provided the Committee with an update on upcoming determination renewals and confirmed that Stanhope Primary School had deferred their application and would present it in the summer term. Three Bridges Primary School, Clifton Primary School and Durdan's Park Primary School were due to present their determinations in the summer term too and initial letters had been sent out with regards to this.

RESOLVED: That

1. The contents of the report and the supporting documentation are noted.

8 Agreed Syllabus for RE 2020-25 Update

Mirela Temo, NQT and Ethnic Minority Achievement Adviser, provided the Committee with a presentation which outlined the progress of the phases of the implementation of the new Agreed Syllabus 2020-25, the support that had been provided to schools and the next proposed steps moving forward.

The Committee was informed that due to school closures as a result of Covid-19, there had been a delay with the implementation of the agreed syllabus, however, schools had continued to work on and implement it. Further updates would be provided in due course.

The Agreed Syllabus documents were available to view on the following link: www.egfl.org.uk/religious-education

RESOLVED: That

1. The contents of the report and the supporting documentation are noted.

9 Review of the Ealing SACRE Constitution

The Committee considered a report which provided an update on the review of the Ealing SACRE Constitution. A draft version of the revised Ealing SACRE Constitution and a summary of changes were attached as appendices to the report. Angela Doherty provided the Committee with an update on the progress made to date.

Oliver Murphy (West London Humanists and Secularists) confirmed that he had submitted some comments in writing to Angela Doherty on the amendments to the Constitution.

The Committee was informed that the review was necessary to ensure that the Constitution included all recommended information from NASACRE, met legal requirements, was clear on roles and responsibilities and promoted effective practice. It was confirmed that a further update would be provided at the next SACRE meeting.

With regard to agreement of Membership, it was commented that it would be for the consideration of the Council and not that of the Cabinet, to which Angela Doherty confirmed that she would liaise with Democratic Services in order to establish the correct formal process and would update the Constitution once confirmed.

RESOLVED: That

1. The contents of the report and the supporting documentation are noted.

10 SACRE Membership Update

The Committee considered a report which provided an update on Ealing SACRE membership and the actions that had been taken to address vacancies and non-attendance. Appendices were attached to the report which provided information on SACRE membership and attendance 2018-2021, the Ealing SACRE member volunteer application form and a document which provided an introduction and information for new members.

Angela Doherty provided the Committee with an update on the number of vacancies on Ealing SACRE and the progress that had been made with filling vacancies and confirmed that a further update would be provided at the next SACRE meeting.

The Chair, Councillor Mahmood, informed the Committee that he had been actively seeking to fill vacancies and had been in contact with a number of local community groups.

RESOLVED: That

1. The contents of the report and the supporting documentation are noted.

11 National and Local Updates

The Committee considered a report and associated appendices which provided NASACRE updates for Spring 2021 and feedback on the NASACRE EGM.

Lesley Prior informed the Committee that:

- NASACRE was currently preparing to upgrade its website. New features would include an opportunity for each SACRE to share links to its locally

agreed syllabus and associated materials as well as other documents and guidance it had produced.

- NASACRE was working with the Department for Education to draw up an agreed template for SACRE Annual Reports. The purpose of this was to make it easier to carry out an annual analysis of reports and would identify and share examples of good practice and help identify where SACREs may be struggling to fulfil their legal obligations.
- A document on Collective Worship was being produced by NASACRE with another RE professional organisation (AREIAC: www.arei.ac.org) which it was hoped would be of help to NASACRE and AREIAC members and to also inform and help others who may be interested in Collective Worship. After initial discussion three basic principles had been agreed which were that Collective Worship should be educational, inclusive and that flexibility in this area was desirable to accommodate the needs of different schools. It was considered that if possible, the document should contain some examples which reflect those three ideas. Initially the plan was to review past and existing literature about Collective Worship with the intention that this may well identify good practice.
- Some members of the NASACRE Executive were currently working on a small-scale project focusing on membership of SACREs. This would result in the production of some guidance materials for SACREs. These would enable them to offer more effective advice to their respective Local Authorities about how membership might be determined and managed, which groups should be represented and how the current legal obligations might be fulfilled

The Committee that NASACRE were holding a virtual AGM on 24 May 2021 and that it would be good for a member of SACRE to attend to represent Ealing. Mrs Barjinder Lall (Ramgarhia Sabha), confirmed that she would be happy to attend.

Dr Elizabeth Day (NAHT/ASCL) provided the Committee with some feedback on the NASACRE virtual Extraordinary General Meeting which she attended on 17 November 2020 on behalf of Ealing SACRE. A short summary of her feedback on the meeting was attached as appendix A to the report

The Committee's attention was drawn to a new document titled 'Hinduism in RE in UK Schools'. Lesley prior informed the Committee that an organisation called 'INSIGHT UK', which was an organisation that aimed to address the concerns of the British Hindu and British Indian communities, had produced the document which had focused on looking at Hinduism in Religious Education in UK Schools. SACRE members were encouraged to read the document which was available on the following link:

<https://insightuk.org/hinduism-in-re>

The Committee was informed that, in 2020, INSIGHT UK had conducted a project with a team comprised of highly experienced members of the Hindu community, amongst which were well-known academics, including professors and teachers. The project goal was to assess the current state of Hinduism in RE in UK schools as perceived by Hindus in Britain and recommend changes to improve it. Unfortunately, the findings were not very

positive and as a result the Hindu community were proposing to set up a Hindu Education Board which would have a multiplicity of different functions. One of the functions would be to find Hindu members for SACRE and to support them in their role with training and to work with the National Association of SACRE in order to do that. The Board would also look at how to provide better resources and various initiatives to really promote higher quality teaching and learning about Hinduism in schools and to ensure that teachers were properly equipped to deliver that.

The main findings had concluded that:

- 97% of survey respondents said it was important and paramount for their child to learn about Hinduism.
- 98% of survey respondents said the study of Hinduism in RE was low quality and deficient.
- 75% of respondents felt that Hinduism was not taught in a positive light.
- 86% of the respondents were either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the teaching of Hinduism in schools within the United Kingdom. 76% of primary school parents were unhappy about RE teachers' knowledge of Hinduism.
- 81% of Key Stage 3 and 87% of Key Stage 4 parents were discontented about RE teachers' knowledge of Hinduism.
- There was growing evidence of inaccurate resources used by classroom teachers for teaching Hinduism.
- Hindu parents and pupils felt they did not have a choice to study Hinduism at GCSE level.

The full report was available to view on the following link:

https://insightuk.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Hinduism-in-RE_Project-report.pdf

RESOLVED: That

1. The contents of the report and the supporting documentation are noted.

12 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting was scheduled to take place on Tuesday 8 June 2021.

The meeting concluded at 9:05pm