

**Minutes of the meeting held on 3 November 2015 (7.15 – 9.30pm)**

**Present: Group A – Christian, Other Faiths & Beliefs**

Peter Kendrick (PK) – Chair

Ajaib Singh Bahra (ASB)

William Doris (WD)

Mike Freedman (MF)

Audrey King (AK)

Gita Maheshwaran (GM)

Saleem Sheikh (SS)

**Group B – Church of England**

Colin Powell (CP)

**Group C – Teacher Associations**

Maria Keenan (MK)

Neil McManus (NM)

**Group D – Local Authority**

Cllr Laxmi Attawar (LA)

Cllr Abdul Latif (AL)

Cllr Imran Uddin (IU)

**Co-opted**

Asad Malik (AM)

**LA Adviser**

Keith Shipman (KS) – Merton Education Inclusion Manager

**Others**

Elizabeth Fitzpatrick – Head of School Improvement, Merton Local Authority

Sarah Willis (SW) - South London Legal Partnership (Item 3)

Leo Hanmer (Clerk)

ITEM	ACTION
<p><b>1 Apologies for absence</b>                      Received from:                          Joanne Powell                          Rev Kate Tuckett</p>	
<p><b>2 Introductions and welcome</b>                      PK welcomed Sarah Willis (South London Legal Partnership) and Elizabeth Fitzpartick (Merton’s new Head of School Improvement – replacing Kate Saksena) to the meeting.</p> <p>SACRE members then introduced themselves round the table. Maria Keenan was welcomed to her first meeting since joining SACRE.</p>	
<p><b>3 Presentation: Holding an Agreed Syllabus Conference</b>                      Sarah Willis summarised the following statutory requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The agreed syllabus for RE must be reviewed every 5 years or on request.</li> <li>• It is the Local Authority’s responsibility to convene an Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC) to review the agreed syllabus.</li> <li>• The ASC must unanimously recommend an agreed syllabus to the Local Authority.</li> <li>• The ASC must be made up of representatives from the same interest groups as the SACRE, but the representatives for each group don’t have to be the same people.</li> <li>• The ASC must be composed of 4 Committees as follows:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Christian, Other Faiths and Beliefs</li> <li>ii. The Church of England</li> <li>iii. Representatives of teacher associations</li> <li>iv. The Local Authority</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The number of people on each Committee must broadly reflect the proportionate strength of the religions, denominations and other relevant circumstances in the local authority area.</li> <li>• Some individuals may be invited to meetings of the Conference and its Committees in order to give their advice.</li> </ul> <p>In the subsequent discussion the following points were covered.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. <u>Different models</u>                              Examples were given of local authorities where ASCs comprised the same membership as the SACRE itself; and others where ASCs included additional members.</li> </ul>	

ii. Timescale

In response to a question about the timescale PK explained that the revisions to the syllabus had been delayed by a year because of uncertainty about the Department for Education's plans for RE. Then, once the revision had got underway, the process itself had taken longer than had been hoped.

AK added that on previous occasions the revision had been generated by external experts. However this time round budget and other constraints had meant that similar support had not been available and much of the work had to be done "in-house".

NM pointed out that the timing would be challenging for secondary schools as there were preparing for the implementation of the new GCSE in RE in September 2016.

iii. Co-opted SACRE members

It was noted that co-opted members of SACRE can't be members of the ASC as there is no option to co-opt to an ASC. AK reported that on previous occasions, when she had been a co-opted member, she had been invited to join the teachers' associations Committee for the purpose of the ASC, and was therefore able to attend and vote.

**The following arrangements were agreed:**

- The ASC would be held on Tuesday 2 February 2016 and would be chaired by the SACRE Chair.
- The membership of the ASC would be the same as the SACRE membership.
- Co-opted members would be invited to attend and vote as members of Committee A: Christian, Other Faiths and Beliefs.

*7.50pm – SS joined the meeting*

**Consultation: next steps were agreed as follows:**

<u>What</u>	<u>Who</u>	<u>When</u>
Send the revised syllabus to all Merton schools together with a covering letter setting out the consultation process.	<b>KS</b>	w/b 9 November
Provide an oral briefing to Primary Headteachers	<b>KS</b>	17 November
Provide an oral briefing to Secondary Headteachers	<b>KS</b>	24 November
Hold a Teacher Consultation Drop-in Event at the Chaucer Centre	<b>All SACRE members</b>	Wednesday 9 December from 3.45 – 6.00pm.

ITEM		ACTION
	<p>PK thanked SW for her presentation.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>7.55pm – SW left the meeting</i></p>	
<b>4</b>	<p><b>Minutes of the last meeting</b> The minutes of the meeting held on 21 July were approved.</p>	
<b>5</b>	<p><b>Matters Arising</b></p> <p>a <u>Item 4(a) – Directory of Places of Worship booklet</u>: Revisions were ongoing. PK asked all members to let him have final comments by 15 January. The final version would be published and launched later in 2016 alongside the revised syllabus.</p> <p>b <u>Item 4(b) - RE Quality Mark</u>: It was noted that this still needed to be raised with Headteachers.</p> <p>c <u>Item 4(c) – Membership</u>:</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">i. PK welcomed Gita Maheshwaran (GM) to the meeting. GM confirmed that she would be filling the Hinduism vacancy on Group A.</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">ii. Action to pursue the matter of representation for the 2 Group C vacancies (Teacher Associations) was outstanding. NM suggested that it might be productive to work through the local branch offices. KS undertook to progress this.</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">iii. It was noted that it had been many months since the NUT representative had attended a meeting. PK agreed to write to him.</p> <p>All other actions were either complete or were covered elsewhere on the agenda.</p>	<p><b>All by 15 Jan</b></p> <p><b>KS</b></p> <p><b>KS</b></p> <p><b>PK</b></p>
<b>6</b>	<p><b>Items deferred from the meeting held on 9 June</b></p> <p>i <u>Feedback from the meeting with the Director (Children, Schools &amp; Families) attended by the Chair &amp; Vice Chair</u> KS reported that the main discussion had been about the Prevent strategy. It had also been agreed that similar meetings should take place annually.</p> <p>ii <u>Reflections on the 23 March letter from the Chair of SACRE and the Director, CSF</u> KS explained that the main purpose of the joint letter was to let schools know about the support that was available to them from the local authority and from SACRE.</p> <p>iii <u>Feedback from the NASACRE Conference on 21 May</u> This had been attended by SS. Charles Clarke had given the keynote address. This had been followed up with the publication of a pamphlet co-authored by Charles Clarke and Professor Linda Woodhead entitled “A new Settlement: Religion and Belief in Schools” – see under item 11 below.</p>	
<b>7</b>	<p><b>Reports from Committees</b> PK reported that there had been a sub-Committee meeting to review and advance work on the draft RE syllabus. [Item 8 refers.]</p>	
<b>8</b>	<p><b>Revisions to the Agreed Syllabus – progress report and next steps</b></p>	

ITEM	ACTION
<p>The latest draft of the syllabus was tabled along with a handout about “British Values and SMSC”.</p>	
<p>KS explained that SMSC stands for Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development, which schools have a statutory duty to promote through the curriculum. Added to this is the more recent requirement for schools to promote British Values.</p>	
<p>KS was proposing that a section on British Values and SMSC should be included in the recommended RE syllabus to highlight how well taught RE can help pupils to develop the necessary skills, attitudes and understanding.</p>	
<p>Members <b>agreed</b> that the document was clear and that it would be helpful to include it in the syllabus with links to the relevant units.</p>	
<p>Members then went through the draft syllabus page by page and the following points were noted:</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Page 4 – the list of acknowledgements would be completed once the consultation with teachers had been carried out.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Page 7 – the new section on British Values and SMSC would be inserted here.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pages 11 – 14 – KS would arrange for one of his colleagues from the School Improvement Team to review the content of these pages.</li> </ul>	<b>KS</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pages 16 &amp; 17 – editing changes were discussed and would be made.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Page 111 – AK had provided a redraft of the section on Humanism to replace the current version.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Page 116 – NM undertook to check whether KS4 short courses still existed.</li> </ul>	<b>NM</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Page 124 – the changes took account of the discussion at the previous meeting.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Page 142 – KS undertook to provide text to reflect the need for school to have vetting procedures for visiting speakers. It was also suggested that guidance on this could usefully added to the SACRE section of the Merton website.</li> </ul>	<b>KS</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Page 189 – AL had provided text about the 5 pillars of Islamic belief which needed to be added here.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Page 193 – the glossary of terms needed to be sorted into alphabetic order by faith.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Page 207 – the glossary of terms for Buddhism was very short. PK undertook to contact the representative for Buddhism about this.</li> </ul>	<b>PK</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Page 208 – one of the 5 Ks was missing: ASB undertook to provide text.</li> </ul>	<b>ASB</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Page 237 – this was new text replacing the one still shown on page 238.</li> </ul>	

ITEM

ACTION

Next steps were agreed as follows:

<u>What</u>	<u>Who</u>	<u>When</u>
The draft would be amended in light of the discussion.	<b>PK</b>	By 6 November
Headings, fonts and formatting would be checked.	<b>PK</b>	By 6 November
The draft would be sent to schools for consultation along with a covering letter explaining the process.	<b>KS</b>	w/b 9 November

PK

PK

KS

**9 Proposed revisions to the Merton SACRE Constitution**

PK reported that LH had produced a revised draft of the Merton SACRE Constitution.

LH explained that the existing constitution dated back to 2010 and was therefore due for a review. She also expressed the view that as a new Clerk she felt that in some respects it was not as helpful as it could be. She had therefore looked at the NASACRE guidance and at a couple of recently produced constitutions from other local authority SACREs and against that background had prepared a revised draft for consideration.

Given the current workload it was agreed that a sub-committee would meet to review the draft. The following members agreed to join the sub-committee:

- Audrey King
- Cllr Abdul Latif
- Cllr Imran Uddin

KS and LH also agreed to take part, and LH offered to arrange a meeting.

LH

**10 Arrangements for producing the Annual Report**

KS reported that he would be taking the lead in producing the 204-15 Annual Report.

KS

**11 A New Settlement: Religion and Belief in Schools**

[See also under item 6(iii) above.]

A copy of this document and an accompanying NASACRE briefing had been emailed to members in advance of the meeting. KS explained that the key proposals were:

- Replacing locally agreed RE syllabuses with an agreed national syllabus; and
- Abolishing the statutory requirement for an act of collective worship.

These would have an impact on the role of SACREs.

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

ITEM	ACTION
<p>Members agreed that it was important to reflect on the proposals in some detail and from the Merton perspective; and that it would help structure any future discussion to use the NASACRE briefing. It was agreed that this should be an agenda item for the next meeting.</p>	<p>2 Feb agenda</p>
<p><b>12 Future Events</b></p> <p>i <u>AREIAC/NASACRE Joint Conference</u> – 19 November 2015, Ibis Hotel, Birmingham The theme of this conference is “Approaches to Curriculum Design in RE: <i>random bricks or building a structure?</i>” SACRE members were invited to let Keith Shipman know if they wished to attend as a fee of £75 was payable.</p> <p>ii <u>NASACRE Conference &amp; AGM</u> – 17 May 2016, Central Hall, Westminster No decisions were taken about attendance at this event as it was still some time away. However, PK indicated that he would probably wish to attend.</p>	<p>All members</p>
<p><b>13 Date &amp; time of the next meeting</b> Tuesday 2 February at 7.15 pm at Merton Civic Centre.</p> <p>This meeting would incorporate the Agreed Syllabus Conference.</p> <p>It was confirmed that, at the invitation of Asad Malik, the venue for the following meeting (Tuesday 7 June) will be the Baitul Futuh Mosque in Morden.</p>	
<p><i>The meeting closed at 9.30pm</i></p>	