

**Minutes of the SACRE meeting held on Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> October 2021 (7.15pm-8.45pm)  
Held at the Civic Centre, Morden**

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

Mike Freedman (MF) – Judaism  
Waleed Ahmad (WA) - Ahmadiyya Muslim Association  
Kamontip Evans (KE) – Buddhism  
John Carter (JC) – Humanism  
Ajaib Singh Bahra (ASB) - Sikhism

**Group B – Church of England (SDBE)**

Jane Savill (JS)  
Andrew Williams (AW)

**Group C – Teacher Associations**

Ro Maybury (RM) - NAHT

**Group D – Local Authority**

Cllr Laxmi Attawar (LA)

**LA Adviser**

Keith Shipman (KS) – Merton Education Inclusion Manager

**Others**

Elizabeth Nassé (EN) Clerk

See Appendix A for a full list of Merton SACRE members as at the time of the meeting.

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The following documents were circulated prior to the meeting:

- Item 3 - SACRE minutes 6th July 2021 final draft
- Item 8 - Merton SWF data 2020 for Jane
- Item 8 - Notes to accompany SWF 2020 SACRE level data
- Item 9 -Merton SACRE Report 19-20

ITEM	ACTION
<p><b>1</b> <u><b>Welcome and apologies for absence</b></u></p> <p>Apologies for absence were accepted from Rachael Norman (RN), Geetha Maheshwaran (GM), Councillor Sally Kenny (SK), Debra Beale (DB) and Councillor Hayley Ormrod (HO).</p> <p>The meeting was quorate.</p> <p>Everyone introduced themselves as this was the first meeting held in person since the start of the pandemic; social distancing was in place.</p>	
<p><b>2</b> <u><b>SACRE membership admin – membership updates, agree Chair of meeting from executive committee</b></u></p> <p>KS reminded members that SACRE was currently being chaired by an executive committee in the absence of an elected Chair.</p> <p>Andrew Williams (member of the executive committee) chaired the meeting.</p> <p>EN reported that Anne Judge (reserve representative for Humanism from 6.7.21) had resigned.</p>	
<p><b>3</b> <u><b>Approval of minutes of previous SACRE meeting 6.7.21</b></u> (and signing of minutes from 3.11.20 and 9.2.21)</p> <p>All agreed the minutes of the previous meeting held on 6.7.21.</p> <p>Andrew Williams signed the 6.7.21 minutes and those from 3.11.20 and 9.2.21 (approved at the meeting on 6.7.21) on behalf of the executive committee and handed them to EN for filing.</p>	
<p><b>4</b> <u><b>Matters arising from meeting 6.7.21 not completed or covered elsewhere</b></u></p> <p><b>Action: KS to contact Saleem Sheikh (current Vice-Chair) to see if he will be able to attend meetings once they return to being held in person. Carry forward.</b></p> <p><b>Action: JS/EN to check whether a password is needed for members to access NASACRE website materials. Done, but EN to resend.</b></p> <p>Action: JS/KS to follow up MB's introduction to the report and KS/EN to recirculate to members before sending to NASACRE and the DfE. Done.</p> <p>KS explained that NASACRE had recently issued a new framework for future SACRE reports and tabled a summary of the requirements. The new framework will allow NASACRE and the DfE to evaluate and compare the performance of SACREs nationally.</p> <p>KS added that the new framework is similar to the format that Merton SACRE had used previously but with additions that will require further consideration and sourcing of information, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SACRE self-evaluation and development plan</li> <li>•</li> </ul>	<p><b>KS</b></p> <p><b>EN</b></p>

**ITEM****ACTION**

- Statutory responsibilities
- Standards and monitoring of RE and collective worship
- Conversations with schools, website trawls, presentations from teachers
- Teacher training
- Withdrawals
- Governor training and other assistance within the community

Members discussed the implications and agreed that although the reporting will be more onerous it should increase the effectiveness and impact of SACREs.

Members agreed:

- SACRE should request further reporting from the School Improvement Partnership (SIP) via Merton Education Partners (MEPs) including reviews of RE provision, collective worship and teacher training.
- There should be standing items on SACRE agendas to ensure that reporting is collected throughout the year.
- There should be consideration of other indirect sources of data, for example the analysis of NATRE data (see item 8), which would reduce the load on MEPs.

Members further discussed the quality of teaching of RE and noted that many primary schools do not have RE leads and, where they do, many are not subject specialists. Primary pupils often learn about religions but not from them.

JS suggested that SACRE should identify schools where RE provision is strong and establish ways of sharing practice with other schools in Merton.

LA asked if there was any funding available for SACRE projects.

KS explained that Merton SACRE receive funding from the SIP in the form of admin support, LA support and some elements of teacher training. The 'Attain board' (set up to ensure the quality of teaching) also receives funding - SACRE could make a bid to the 'Attain board' if a particular project was identified.

## **5 Update on schools/education, RE coordinators' meetings – KS**

KS reminded members that Ewan Morrison oversees the training of teachers across all subject areas. Penny Smith-Orr runs twilight sessions for RE coordinators each term. These have historically not attracted many participants, so the SIP applied to the 'Attain board' for funding to provide a half-day curriculum session on RE. These half-day curriculum sessions had been very successful and well attended in other subject areas. KS reported that the 'Attain board' had declined to fund an RE session.

RM/KS explained that the reasons for this had been two-fold – firstly the time taken; it had taken two years to cover four subject areas; secondly, the cluster of local church schools had not considered it good use of resources.

KS suggested that SACRE could make a case for provision of the RE session as SACRE has a legal responsibility to ensure the quality of RE. KS added that the 'Attain' sessions are free to schools and staff are given release time to attend.

## ITEM

## ACTION

Members discussed the quality of teaching of RE and training and identified that: -

- training sessions in the day would attract more participants and SACRE should be pushing for an RE curriculum session.
- there is a lack of knowledge and confidence in teaching RE in primary schools.
- some teachers may not necessarily have chosen to lead RE.
- RE subject leads are often in positions of responsibility earlier than they would be in other subjects.
- RE leads are rarely specialists in primary schools.
- some schools are not fulfilling their statutory responsibilities and are not teaching RE at all.

KS explained that this was not the case in Merton but sometimes there had been no qualified RE lead in secondary schools; this can affect the quality of GCSE teaching. KS added that many RE teachers were capable and knowledgeable but not necessarily confident about teaching RE, for fear of causing offence.

KE commented that places of worship can help by inviting schools for visits and by offering online resources. KS agreed, adding that RE coordinators sessions had taken place at places of worship; faith leaders within SACRE can help by facilitating this practice.

All agreed that SACRE should approach the 'Attain board' stressing the importance of increasing the confidence of teachers and suggested a half-day RE session covering:

- Expectations of the RE leadership role.
- Confidence on the subject matter.
- Cascading learning from the RE lead to teachers and then pupils – including a framework (possibly PowerPoint) for sharing with staff.
- Confidence in knowing where further resources can be found – with reference to the Merton syllabus.

## 6 **Planning for syllabus review; including impact of Black Lives Matter - KS**

Previous meeting actions in bold italics:

***KS to ask Primary and Secondary Heads and RE coordinators for feedback about the syllabus in the Autumn term. Carry forward.***

KS

KS explained that a simple questionnaire or Survey Monkey survey will be sent to primary Heads seeking feedback on how the syllabus is used, how effective it is and any areas that need development.

***KS to ask two teachers to carry out an 'equalities' review of the syllabus in the Autumn term.***

## MERTON STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

ITEM		ACTION
	<p>KS reported that no teachers were able to take on the review and suggested asking Roehampton University or UCL Institute of Education to carry out a review for a fee.</p> <p>AW offered to carry out the review at Roehampton (with no fee). KS thanked AW for the offer.</p> <p><b>Action: AW/KS to liaise about an equalities review of the syllabus.</b></p> <p><b><i>All to consider whether a full ASC review (including changes to content) was needed later in 2022. Carry forward.</i></b></p> <p>KS reminded members that the agreed syllabus was due to be reviewed in 2022 and would need to consider Ofsted's third attainment strand - 'ways of knowing' – understanding how knowledge about religions is known, including validity of information, accuracy, misconceptions, bias etc.</p> <p>MF commented that the third Ofsted strand was akin to philosophy and that the organisation 'Philosophy for Children' was used by some schools. KS added that one Merton school had achieved a 'Philosophy for Children' gold award.</p> <p>KS added that until recently no Merton secondary schools offered A' level Philosophy (unlike schools in other boroughs), but RR6 (Combined 6th Forms of Rutlish and Ricards Lodge High Schools) now offer it.</p>	<p></p> <p><b>AW/KS</b></p> <p><b>All</b></p>
7	<p><b><u>Interfaith dialogue project feedback – KS/AW</u></b></p> <p>AW reminded members that the 6<sup>th</sup> Form interfaith dialogue project had been unfinished because of the pandemic but it had started very positively with sessions at the Mosque and Mitcham church; these were due to be followed with sessions at the Synagogue and Hindu temple.</p> <p>AW/KS/RM had discussed the proposal of running an interfaith project within one primary school (Abbotsbury). The aim would be to start with conversations amongst pupils of different faiths and denominations in school, then visit places of worship, then end the project with a closing session in school.</p> <p><b>Actions:</b></p> <p><b>RM to identify a small group of Abbotsbury pupils to take part in the spring term and consider places of worship that could be visited e.g. the Synagogue and Buddhist temple.</b></p> <p><b>AW/KS to reinstate the 6<sup>th</sup> Form project in 2022-23, starting with a new cohort of students. Planning to take place in July, for a start in September 2022. The project would follow the same schedule as previously.</b></p>	<p></p> <p><b>RM</b></p> <p><b>AW/KS</b></p>
8	<p><b><u>NATRE data - JS/KS</u></b></p> <p>JS discussed the Merton data that she had been sent by NATRE. JS explained that the data had been reported by schools in different ways but gave an overview of trends. The data indicates the time allocated to teaching RE in secondary schools. Most schools had increased the amount of RE teaching time, but two schools had</p>	

## MERTON STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

ITEM		ACTION
	<p>reduced it.</p> <p>JS/KS highlighted that: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Harris Academies appear to limit RE teaching in Key stage 4 (KS advised that Harris Academy, Wimbledon doesn't yet have Years 10 and 11 as it is a new school) Harris Academies, Merton and Morden do not appear to teach RE in Year 11- it may be that RE GCSE is taken in Year 10.</li> <li>Ursuline don't appear on the data as they report elsewhere; KS reported that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Years 7 and 8 have two, 50-minute lessons of RE and one 50-minute lesson of English and RE per week.</li> <li>Year 9 have three, 50-minute lessons of RE per week.</li> <li>GCSE students have three, 50-minute lessons of RE per week, which is similar to maths, English and science. All other 6th Formers do one period of RE per week.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Raynes Park records can't be decoded as they combine PSHE and RE, but KS commented this provision had increased from a low base.</li> <li>There had been a decrease in RE teaching in Harris Merton and St Mark's.</li> </ul> <p>JS/KS summarised that it was generally a positive picture, but there may need to be more understanding of the KS4 provision in Harris Academies.</p> <p>JC suggested that SIMS could be used to collect data in more detail. KS replied that this was possible, but some schools do not use SIMS.</p>	
9	<p><b><u>SACRE annual report 2019-2020 receive and note published report</u></b></p> <p>Members received and noted the final report that was sent to NASACRE and the DfE. AW congratulated KS on the report and JS commented that it was a good summary of the year.</p> <p>JC requested that current membership of SACRE be published as the report only indicates membership for the previous year.</p> <p><b>Action: EN to add current membership to each set of minutes; for publishing on the Merton website.</b></p>	EN
10	<p><b><u>Future meetings - online / in person</u></b></p> <p>All agreed to continue with face-to-face meetings and suggested that they should take place in a primary and secondary school.</p> <p><b>Actions: RM to arrange hosting of the summer term meeting (5.7.22) at Abbotsbury Primary school, with a presentation by the RE lead. Start 5.00pm.</b></p> <p><b>KS to ask Secondary heads if a school would be willing to host the spring term meeting (8.2.22). With a presentation on RE.</b></p>	RM  KS

ITEM		ACTION
	<p>KS reminded members that although not all secondary schools use the SACRE agreed syllabus, SACRE is responsible for RE across all schools. It would be preferable to visit a school that does use the syllabus.</p>	
11	<p><b><u>Any other business</u></b></p> <p>MF advised members that Interfaith Week will take place in November and the Synagogue will be holding an Interfaith Friday night service and supper on 19<sup>th</sup> November. SACRE members will receive invitations shortly.</p> <p>MF reported that the Synagogue had recently hosted a pilot event run by Wandsworth SACRE – a ‘Faith Trail’ in which a Year 6 class visited (on foot) three places of worship - the Buddhist temple, the Synagogue and a church. KE added that she had also taken part at the temple. MF added that there had been problems with timings, but the event was very successful, but quite demanding on the hosts. MF commented that it was good to learn about other SACRE’s activities and added that Wandsworth SACRE plan to continue the scheme in the summer term.</p> <p>KS reported that Mike Brunt would be making an official Mayor’s Award to Audrey King for her commitment to public service - notably her lengthy service and efforts as the Humanism rep on SACRE and as a school governor.</p>	
12	<p><b><u>Date of next meetings:</u></b> - Dates of next meetings: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> February 2022, 5pm at a Merton secondary school (tbc)</li><li>• Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> July 2022, 5pm at Abbotsbury</li></ul>	

Chair of Merton SACRE.....

date.....

SACRE membership is on the following page: -

## MERTON STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Appendix A - Merton SACRE members as at 7<sup>th</sup> October 2021

Group	Name	Initials	Title/organisation	Start date
<b>A</b>	Ms Kamontip Evans	KE	Buddhism	6.7.21
	VACANCY		Free Churches	-
	Ms Geetha Maheshwaran	GM	Hinduism	Pre-2016
	Mr John Carter	JC	Humanism	6.7.21
	Mr Saleem Sheikh	SS	Islam	Pre-2016
	Mr Mike Freedman	MF	Judaism	Pre-2016
	VACANCY		Roman Catholic Church	-
	Mr Ajaib Singh Bahra	ASB	Sikhism	Pre-2016
	Mr Waleed Ahmad	WA	Ahmadiyya Muslim Association	4.10.16
<b>B</b>	Mrs. Jane Savill	JS	Church of England	10.10.17
	The Revd. Andrew Williams.	AW	Church of England	10.10.17
	Ms Rachael Norman	MC	Church of England	11.2.20
<b>C</b>	Ms Debra Beale	DB	NUT	21.2.17
	Ms Ro Maybury	RM	NAHT	6.7.21
<b>D</b>	Cllr Laxmi Attawar	LA	Councillor	Pre-2016
	Cllr Hayley Ormrod	AL	Councillor	30.5.18
	Cllr Sally Kenny	MB	Councillor	6.7.21

**Groups****A - Christian, Other Faiths & Beliefs****B - Church of England****C - Teacher Associations****D – Local Authority**