

**Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 20th February (7.15 – 8.55pm)
At the Merton Civic Centre**

Present Group A – Christian, Other Faiths & Beliefs

Saleem Sheikh (SS) Vice Chair – Islam
Waleed Ahmad (WA) - Ahmadiyya Muslim Association
Mike Freedman (MF) – Judaism
Audrey King (AK) – Humanists UK
Ajaib Singh Bahra – Sikhism
Gheeta Maheshwaran - Hinduism

Group B – Church of England

Andrew Williams (AW)
Jane Savill (JS)

Group C – Teacher Associations

Debra Beale (DB) – NUT

Group D – Local Authority

Cllr Laxmi Attawar (LA)
Cllr Abdul Latif (AL)
Cllr Mike Brunt

LA Adviser

Keith Shipman (KS) – Merton Education Inclusion Manager (from 7.40pm)
Elizabeth Fitzpatrick (EF) (to 7.40pm) – Head of School Improvement

Others

Elizabeth Nassé (EN) Clerk

SS welcomed members to the meeting.

ITEM	ACTION
<p>1 <u>Apologies for absence</u> Apologies for absence were received from: Marcus Cooper Maria Keenan</p>	
<p>2 <u>Introductions</u> All attendees introduced themselves. The meeting was quorate.</p>	
<p>3 <u>Election of Chair</u> Nominations for Chair (to replace Peter Kendrick) were sought prior to the meeting. Two nominations were received before the meeting; JS's nomination of MB was confirmed at the meeting and one was withdrawn. No other nominations were made at the meeting. Councillor Mike Brunt was unanimously elected as Chair. It was noted that SS's position as Vice Chair remains (a term of 4 years from 7.6.16). EF congratulated MB and thanked him for standing. MB wished to compliment SACRE members for their hard work on developing the agreed syllabus and thanked them for their efforts. MB also suggested that an official acknowledgement and appreciation of Peter Kendrick's time as Chair of SACRE should be organised. See item 12.</p>	
<p>4 <u>SACRE membership admin</u> EN reported that there had been no further changes to membership since the last meeting. Vacancies remain.</p>	
<p>Ongoing action: KS/EN to follow up filling vacancies.</p>	KS/EN
<p>Action: GM offered to contact the Baiha'i faith community to try and arrange representation.</p>	GM
<p>5 <u>Minutes of the last SACRE meeting 10th October 2017</u> The minutes were agreed as a true record and MB signed them. The signed copy was retained by EN for filing.</p>	
<p>6 <u>Matters arising from the last meeting:-</u> Action: KS/SS to liaise with John Shelley (Designated Officer) to arrange a meeting with an Imam. Ongoing</p>	KS/SS
<p>Action: KS will draft a Merton SACRE group reply (to the Commission on Religious Education consultation) based on the responses above. Done.</p>	
<p>Action: KS/MF/WA to arrange use of venues for next (RE Coordinators) meetings. Done and ongoing.</p>	
<p>Action: KS will explore with Primary Heads the idea of having a group of faith teachers who would work across schools. Ongoing.</p>	KS

ITEM	ACTION
<p>Action: MF to contact 'Muslim Women of Merton' to enquire whether they would like to learn more about the teaching systems that the synagogue has established. Done. MF reported that he had been in contact and they were developing a plan of support.</p> <p>Action: SACRE to consider developing a list of recommended contacts for school visits. Discussed in item 11.</p> <p>Action: KS to address (a peer to peer project) with Primary and Secondary heads. AW offered to support the development of a project. Discussed in 11.</p> <p>Action: KS to explore the idea (of an inter faith event) with Secondary heads; SACRE members would need to support proposals with help from their faith groups. Discussed in 11.</p>	
<p>7</p> <p><u>SIAMS Report</u></p> <p>The SIAMS report for Bishop Gilpin was circulated prior to the meeting. EF explained that Bishop Gilpin C of E primary school was the only Merton school that had been inspected since the previous SACRE meeting. The SIAMS inspection is separate from and is less frequent than the Ofsted inspection cycle. The school had retained its 'Outstanding' rating by SIAMS (it also has a current 'Outstanding' Ofsted rating). All agreed that it was a very positive report, which praised many aspects of the school.</p> <p>AK commented that SACRE had written to schools in the past, following positive SIAMS reports. All agreed that it would be helpful for SACRE to send a congratulatory letter to Bishop Gilpin and to other schools, as and when SIAMS inspection reports are received.</p>	
<p>Action: EF/KS to draft a letter to Bishop Gilpin.</p>	<p>EF/KS</p>
<p>8</p> <p><u>Action plan from Prevent Scrutiny Report</u></p> <p>The Prevent Scrutiny Report (February 2018) was circulated prior to the meeting. KS explained that the report had been produced by a cross-party group of Councillors to show how primary schools across the borough were responding to the Prevent agenda. KS reminded members that SACRE had received a briefing from a Prevent Met. Police officer at the SACRE meeting on 4th October 2016.</p> <p>KS further explained that the aim of Prevent is to identify young people at risk of being radicalised, to refer cases of concern and to ensure that schools offer a safe learning environment that informs young people how not to become radicalised. The report described the positive ways in which Merton schools are addressing issues around Prevent and identified that the use of the 'Rights Respecting Schools' framework is effective and should be promoted.</p>	
<p>KS highlighted the recommendation that referred to SACRE in particular:-</p>	
<p><u>Recommendation 3</u></p> <p><i>The idea that schools provide young people with a narrative that change is achieved through struggle and time and is not achieved through violence is powerful. We didn't have the opportunity to explore how Merton's schools may already be doing this. However, we recommend that it would be good to explore how through the agreed syllabus support can continue to be offered to schools in developing counter narratives.</i></p>	

ITEM

ACTION

KS explained that Ofsted consider that it is a safeguarding duty to deliver teaching explicitly around radicalisation and extremism and through inspection will review what pupils have been taught in these areas. KS also reported that resources for developing counter narratives have been given to areas of the country where higher levels of Prevent referrals have been made.

AL raised concern about some of the content in the Prevent strategy and in particular about teachers' observation of young people's interest in science and engineering. KS commented that the content may have originated in early documentation and that AL should forward the documentation for review. KS acknowledged that some activity can be wrongly identified as being of concern. KS also added that there are not many Prevent referrals in Merton and most of them are related to far-right material/activity.

MF commented that teachers should be monitoring children's welfare through observation, as a matter of course and noted that the report indicates that teachers are focussing their efforts on promoting positive behaviour rather than referring inappropriately. MB added that the aim should be for schools to provide a safe learning environment where pupils can voice their concerns, along with a duty to protect.

Members discussed how the Merton agreed syllabus is already being used positively and identified the following:-

- The syllabus itself promotes engagement across faiths.
- RE Coordinators meetings allow teachers to engage with faith leaders and visit places of worship
- Faith leaders engage with pupils through visits to schools and school visits to places of worship – the Directory of places of worship provides guidance on this.

Members discussed additional ways in which the syllabus or SACRE could support the development of counter narratives:-

- Organising a cross-faith session with teachers focusing on Prevent issues (possibly facilitated by Equaliteach).
- In the future the syllabus could include information about inspirational leaders across faiths who had advocated the use of democratic peaceful means.
- When the agreed syllabus is next reviewed, more specific Prevent information could be included.

SS commented that SACRE/communities should also address Prevent issues in the shorter term and commented that the recent Merton Mosque open day had been very helpful.

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SACRE support for RE teachers

Feedback from the session at the synagogue

SACRE members who attended the RE Coordinators meeting at the synagogue reported that it had been well attended by Merton primary schools; teachers had found the session practical and engaging. EF commented that teachers had appreciated visiting the synagogue and being informed about Judaism.

JS asked whether schools visit the synagogue. MF replied that they did and the synagogue is developing a program of school visits by faith leaders.

ITEM

ACTION

AK commented that it would be useful if Secondary schools attended the RE Coordinators meetings. KS agreed and hoped that holding the meetings in different faith settings may encourage them to do so.

KS clarified that the session at the synagogue was the first RE Coordinators meeting to be held in a place of worship, but the two previous sessions had included talks by a Church of England vicar and an Imam.

Future sessions

KS encouraged SACRE members to assist by arranging meetings in different places of worship across the borough and by providing representatives to talk about the section of the agreed syllabus pertaining to their faith.

GM offered to host the next RE Coordinators meeting at the Hindu temple in Tooting and JS offered to arrange a Church of England venue and speaker for the following meeting.

MB asked members to think about venues for future sessions and thanked MF for facilitating the meeting at the synagogue.

10

SACRE Report

KS tabled the draft 2016-2017 SACRE annual report and explained that the report will be sent to NASCRE and will be uploaded to the Merton website.

KS highlighted the list of issues that SACRE had addressed over the 2016-2017 academic year and summarised the potential projects that SACRE had discussed:

- An inter-community event whereby children of faith and belief might discuss faith with each other
- A youth SACRE linked to the youth parliament
- Celebrating RE
- Specialist support for secondary RE departments
- Promoting the use of digital materials
- Capturing feedback on RE from within faith communities and feeding this back into SACRE meetings
- Meeting the new LADO John Shelley
- Promoting the Places of Worship Directory and increasing visits and visitors with schools.

KS explained that in the report he had included comments made by Ofsted about RE in Merton schools and had found that no negative comments had been received; moreover several schools had been identified as having strength in RE. The report also contains a summary of GCSE and A Level RE results.

KS commented that the report reflects the key role of Merton SACRE. JS thanked KS for drafting the report and commented that it demonstrates that SACRE is an effective body and shows the impact that it has on schools.

Members discussed how it should be shared and suggested that in addition to the website and NASACRE it should be sent to Peter Kendrick, the Faith and Belief forum, Diocese of Southwark, Director of Children's Services and all should share it within their faith groups and possibly with MPs.

MERTON STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

ITEM		ACTION
11	<p>WA asked whether the impact of SACRE on schools can be assessed. KS replied that there was no formal inspection process for this, but SACRE should consider following up the launch of the agreed syllabus (July 2016) with another questionnaire to Headteachers.</p> <p>Action: Item to be added to agenda for next SACRE meeting and KS to investigate whether the original questionnaire and responses are available.</p> <p>AK suggested that resources that would be needed for carrying out a review of the agreed syllabus in 2020 should be considered now.</p> <p><u>Future SACRE projects</u> In summary, from discussion at the meeting and from the list in item 10, members agreed to progress the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Continuing to facilitate RE Coordinators meetings in places of worship. 2) Developing a list of recommended speakers from faith groups and helping develop skills within faith communities to establish resources and representatives that can be easily accessed by schools. 3) Helping to deliver an inter faith event/peer to peer project for young people. 4) Facilitating a meeting with John Shelley (LADO) and faith groups (initially the Imam). 5) Assessing the impact of the agreed syllabus with a follow-up questionnaire to Headteachers. <p>Members shared their experiences of a range of inter faith and peer to peer events and agreed to discuss proposals at the next SACRE meeting.</p> <p>Action: AW will bring information about the ‘Conversation of the Soul’ peer to peer project to the next SACRE meeting.</p>	<p>KS/EN</p> <p>AW</p>
12	<p><u>Any Other Business</u> Action: MB suggested that a thank you to Peter Kendrick should include a letter or address by the Mayor and requested that KS explore how this can be arranged.</p> <p>AW advised members that Merton College is in discussion with the Diocese of Southwark about the viability of establishing a Chaplaincy for the college and it is holding a faith fair on 1st March.</p>	<p>KS</p>
13	<p><u>Date of next meeting</u> The date of the next SACRE meeting is: 7.15pm, Tuesday 10th July 2018.</p> <p>Proposed venue for 10th July – Hindu Temple, Tooting. To be confirmed. Action GM to enquire about availability.</p>	<p>GM</p>

Chair of Merton SACRE..... *Michael A Brub* date..... *10/7/18*