

**Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> February 2020 (6.30pm – 9.15pm)  
At the Wimbledon Synagogue**

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

Mike Freedman (MF) - Judaism  
Geetha Maheshwaran (GM) - Hinduism  
Waleed Ahmad (WA) – Ahmadiyya Muslim Association

**Group B – Church of England**

Rachael Norman (RN) (to 8.30pm)

**Group C – Teacher Associations**

Not represented.

**Group D – Local Authority**

Cllr Mike Brunt (MB)  
Cllr Laxmi Attawar (LA)  
Cllr Hayley Ormrod (HO) (to 8.45pm)

**LA Adviser**

Keith Shipman KS – Merton Education Inclusion Manager

**Others**

Elizabeth Nassé (EN) Clerk

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The group was given a tour of the Synagogue by Mike Freedman.  
MB thanked him for organising the venue, for the tour and his hospitality.  
The meeting started at 7.50pm

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The following documents were circulated prior to the meeting:

DfE circular1-94 Religious Education and Collective Worship  
Education Act 1996  
Legal Advice on SACRE constitution  
Lewisham SACRE guidance on collective worship (1)  
scc-collective-worship (Southampton)  
SACRE Report 18-19 DRAFT

ITEM		ACTION
1	<p><b><u>Apologies for absence</u></b>  Apologies for absence were received from:</p> <p>Debra Beale  Jane Savill  Ajaib Singh Bahra  Andrew Williams  Saleem Sheikh  Audrey King</p>	
2	<p><b><u>Welcome and introductions</u></b>  MB welcomed everyone. Rachael Norman introduced herself as the new representative from the Southwark Diocesan Board of Education (SDBE) (replacing Marcus Cooper). All attendees introduced themselves.</p> <p><b>The meeting was not quorate.</b></p>	
3	<p><b><u>SACRE membership admin</u></b></p> <p>Admin - The following vacancies were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Buddhism</li> <li>• Roman Catholic</li> <li>• NAHT and NASUWT</li> </ul> <p>KS reported that despite two requests at Primary Heads meetings, no union rep nominations had been received. EN added that the prospective Catholic representative was no longer in contact. MB reported that Saleem Sheikh (SS) was planning for someone to take over from him. GM added that she had recently met a speaker from the Buddhist temple who could be approached as a prospective rep.</p> <p>KS/MB reported that MB and SS had met Merton's Director of Children, Schools and Families in January and had discussed ways of raising the profile of SACRE. KS explained that local press will be invited to interview students taking part in the next session of the faith dialogue project. It is hoped that this will encourage more nominations from teachers and faith groups.</p> <p><b>Actions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>KS to follow up on promoting SACRE in the local press.</b></li> <li>• <b>GM to forward contact details of a possible Buddhist rep to EN/MB.</b></li> <li>• <b>EN to add RN to SACRE membership/circulation list</b></li> <li>• <b>KS/MB to consider approaching Evereth Willis (Policy, Strategy, Partnership Corporate Services, Merton about Baha'i faith representation.</b></li> </ul>	<p>KS/GM /EN</p>
4	<p><b><u>Minutes of previous SACRE meetings – 10<sup>th</sup> October 2019 and 9<sup>th</sup> July 2019</u></b>  The minutes of the meeting held on 10.7.19 were agreed. Members will recommend approval of the minutes (9.7.19 and 10.10.19) at the next quorate meeting.</p>	
5	<p><b><u>Matters arising from the meetings 10.10.19 and 9.7.19 not covered elsewhere</u></b>  Members noted that actions had largely been around recruiting new members and the faith dialogue project; these were discussed in Items 4 and 12.</p>	

## MERTON STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

ITEM		ACTION
6	<p><b>Review/Approval of revised Merton Constitution</b>            KS/EN reminded members that SACRE had agreed to the revised wording of the Constitution requested by the Diocese of Southwark at the SACRE meeting on 9.7.19. Members discussed the response from Merton's legal department. The advice was that the amendment of the Constitution needed to be agreed by the Council, rather than SACRE, but as the proposed change reflected usual practice there should be no opposition to the amendment.</p> <p><b>Action: KS to clarify who has delegated authority to agree the amended Constitution and report the outcome as a matter arising at the next meeting.</b></p>	<p><b>KS</b></p>
7	<p><b><u>List of speakers from the Ahmadiyya Muslim Association (AMA)</u></b>            WA explained that he had forwarded a list of recommended speakers to KS and requested that enquiries about using their services be routed through him. Members discussed how best to share lists of speakers and agreed that generalised descriptions of speakers and central contact details should be added to the Directory of Places of Worship. KS reiterated that speakers should be able to talk about their faith with knowledge of the SACRE agreed syllabus. Members agreed that although it may not be a legal requirement for speakers to be DBS checked (as they would not be working alone with young people) schools would expect DBS checks to be in place. KS/GM noted that speakers from Muslim Women of Merton and the Hindu temple were DBS checked.</p> <p><b>Actions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>KS to anonymise the Ahmadiyya Muslim Association document before circulating more widely.</b></li> <li>• <b>WA to arrange DBS checks for AMA speakers if applicable.</b></li> <li>• <b>MF, GM, AK, RN to forward contact details for suitable speakers for Judaism, Hinduism, Humanism and C of E, respectively</b></li> </ul>	<p><b>KS</b></p> <p><b>WA</b></p> <p><b>MF, GM, AK, RN</b></p>
8	<p><b><u>Dates of RE Coordinators meetings</u></b></p> <p>Members noted that the following meetings had taken place or were planned; meetings start at 4.30pm. KS reconfirmed that SACRE members were welcome to attend.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9<sup>th</sup> Oct. 2019 – Visit to Mitcham Parish church</li> <li>• 27<sup>th</sup> Nov. – Visit to Wimbledon synagogue</li> <li>• 11<sup>th</sup> Feb. – Being an RE subject leader</li> <li>• 4<sup>th</sup> March – Equiteach – RE and British Values.</li> </ul> <p>RN asked whether the meetings were cross phase. KS replied that participation was mainly by primary RE leads, as the borough has only three maintained secondary schools that would access the sessions.</p>	
9	<p><b><u>Determinations guidance</u></b>            KS referred members to Circular number 1/94 - Religious Education and Collective Worship and the extract from the Education Act 1996 that were circulated prior to the meeting. KS explained that Merton had received a Freedom of Information Request about whether Merton SACRE had a policy on Determinations on Collective Worship</p>	

## MERTON STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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<p>and whether Merton has received any requests for Determinations. KS commented that the legislation that had been circulated also served as a reminder of the duties of SACRE.</p> <p>Members noted that a Determination request for a local school was made over 10 years ago, but Merton had not received any requests since then. The school has since closed.</p> <p>KS reported that there is no statutory requirement for SACRE to have a policy, but the development of guidance would be good practice. KS referred to examples of Collective Worship guidance produced by Southampton and Lewisham Councils. KS added that Ofsted no longer comment on Collective Worship.</p> <p>HO asked whether schools had asked SACRE for guidance on Collective Worship. KS replied that they hadn't; however, this may mean that either they didn't need guidance, or they were not fully aware of their statutory duties.</p> <p>Members discussed the risk of not having a policy or guidance in place and considered that as there was already a clear legal process that schools and SACRE must follow, then no further SACRE documentation was required. All agreed that this position should be reviewed regularly (every 3 years).</p>	<p><b>MB/KS /EN</b></p>
<p><b>Action: Recommendation to be formally agreed at the next quorate SACRE meeting. MB/KS/EN to add agenda item.</b></p>	
<p><b>10</b></p>	<p><b><u>Feedback from the meeting with the Director of Children, Schools and Families.</u></b> Discussed in item 3.</p>
<p><b>11</b></p>	<p><b><u>Annual Report</u></b> Members reviewed the draft 2018-2019 annual report. KS highlighted that the report included the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• activities that SACRE had carried out over the year.</li> <li>• details of documents that SACRE is responsible for i.e. the agreed syllabus, Directory of Worship, the Constitution and some guidance materials.</li> <li>• extracts from 2018-2019 Ofsted inspection reports that included comments relating to RE.</li> <li>• 2018-2019 GCSE and A' level results.</li> </ul> <p>KS stressed that the Ofsted comments about spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects of Merton's schools were all positive. KS added that as Ofsted inspections will now focus more on curriculum there may be more direct reporting on RE in the future.</p> <p>KS highlighted that the number of Merton students achieving GCSE Grade 9 in RE had increased to 117 (from 71 in the previous year) and the number of students achieving 8, 7 and 6 were above National Average.</p> <p>LA asked why this had been the case</p> <p>KS replied that there was some outstanding RE teaching in the borough and some individual schools had achieved very high results. Results were better than last year and better than National Average. KS added that Merton has a higher uptake of RE</p>

## MERTON STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

ITEM	ACTION
<p>than most other boroughs.</p> <p>GM asked which RE exam boards Merton schools use. KS replied that four different exam boards were used; some of the exams were RE/ethics (AQA). GM added that a few students take Hinduism based RE (entered privately).</p> <p>KS stressed that the data shows that RE teaching and learning in Merton is very good and that the number of students taking RE GCSE is increasing.</p> <p>WA asked whether SACRE had contributed to this success.</p> <p>KS replied that some of the success was because the borough had maintained the full GCSE qualification, rather than offering half a GCSE. KS added that SACRE had also played a role in promoting RE with Headteachers. KS explained that although the GCSE results had been good, the take up of A' level RE was still low and not many Merton schools offer Philosophy A' level.</p> <p>HO suggested that the report should also include details of how schools had engaged with places of worship across the borough and how RE could be celebrated more in the report.</p> <p>Members agreed that it may be possible to provide summary reports from places of worship that indicate how many Merton school visitors they had received. For C of E schools this may need to be coordinated by the SDBE. All agreed that there should be a template for reporting.</p>	
<p><b>Actions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>all to consider reporting on school visits from September 2020.</b></li> <li>• <b>MB to draft an introductory paragraph for the report. Agenda item to be added for approval of the report at the next quorate meeting.</b></li> </ul>	<p><b>All/MB /EN</b></p>
<p><b>12</b>     <b><u>Future SACRE projects – feedback from launch</u></b> KS reported that two sessions of the 'Our Faith, Our Belief' project had taken place; the third will take place on 12<sup>th</sup> February at the Ahmadiyya Muslim Association mosque. The following two sessions will be held at the Hindu Temple and Wimbledon Synagogue.</p> <p>KS reported that the number of participants had been small, 12 at the first session and 8 at the second. The number of Catholic students had been higher than those of other faiths as their schools been proactive in getting students to attend. This had meant that there had been less dialogue than was hoped.</p> <p>The project will close at a feedback event held immediately before the SACRE meeting on 7.7.19. SACRE members were invited to attend the feedback event so that they may meet the students taking part in the project. KS stressed that learning from feedback will inform the decision about whether the project should take place again and whether anything needs to be done differently.</p>	
<p><b>13</b>     <b><u>SACRE agreed syllabus review</u></b> Deferred to the next meeting.</p>	
<p><b>14</b>     <b><u>Any other business</u></b> LA reported that she had visited a themed day at Singlegate Primary School and had</p>	

MERTON STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

ITEM		ACTION
	observed how engaged and enthusiastic pupils were about learning about religion and how it shapes their everyday lives.	
10	<p><b><u>Date of next meeting: -</u></b></p> <p><b>Tuesday 7th July 2020 - Faith Dialogue project session 4.00-6.00pm, to be followed by SACRE meeting.</b></p> <p><b>Members welcome to join from 4.00pm, refreshments available from 6.00pm, SACRE meeting to commence shortly after 6.00pm. At the Civic Centre (KS to confirm).</b></p>	KS



Chair of Merton SACRE...

date.....7.7.20.....

(signed electronically because of Covid-19 restrictions)