

**Minutes of the SACRE meeting held on Tuesday 7th July 2020 (7.00-8.15pm)
Held remotely because of Covid-19 restrictions**

Present Group A – Christian, Other Faiths & Beliefs

Mike Freedman (MF) - Judaism

Group B – Church of England

Rachael Norman (RN)

Jane Savill (JS)

Andrew Williams (AW)

Group C – Teacher Associations

Debra Beale (DB)

Group D – Local Authority

Cllr Mike Brunt (MB)

Cllr Laxmi Attawar (LA)

Cllr Hayley Ormrod (HO)

LA Adviser

Keith Shipman KS – Merton Education Inclusion Manager

Others

Elizabeth Nassé (EN) Clerk

The following documents were circulated prior to the meeting:

SACRE minutes 9th July 2019 final draft

SACRE minutes 10th October 2019 final draft

SACRE minutes 11th February 2020 final draft

SACRE Report 18-19 Final DRAFT

Black Lives Matter PrimarySL

Black Lives Matter SecondarySL

Diversifying the curriculum

No-Place-for-Racism (002)

merton_sacre_constitution_july_2020 (draft 30.6.19)

SACRE Summer Newsletter 2020

ITEM	ACTION
<p>1 <u>Protocol for holding the meeting remotely</u> All agreed that because of ongoing Covid-19 restrictions the meeting should be held remotely. The meeting was held with video, using Microsoft Teams. Votes were cast with a show of hands. All agreed that an audio recording of the meeting could be made using a Livescribe pen, as per usual meeting arrangements (to be deleted on agreement of the draft minutes).</p>	
<p>2 <u>Apologies for absence</u> Apologies for absence were received from: Audrey King (AK) Geetha Maheshwaran (GM) Waleed Ahmad (WA)</p>	
<p>3 <u>Welcome and introductions</u> MB welcomed everyone. The meeting was quorate.</p>	
<p>4 <u>SACRE membership admin</u> It was noted that the following vacancies remain:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buddhism • Roman Catholic • Teaching union reps <p>MB reported that GM had supplied contact details for a possible Buddhist representative since the last meeting.</p> <p>KS reported that, despite requests at Primary and Secondary Heads meetings, no nominations for union representatives had been received. DB suggested contacting the head offices of NASWT/NAHT for prospective union reps. All agreed that two representatives from the same union, with one acting as a co-rep/deputy, would help maintain quoracy.</p> <p>KS reported that the local press ('My Merton') were still interested in promoting SACRE; this would be followed up once the challenges of the pandemic had lessened.</p>	
<p>Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KS to follow up on promoting SACRE in the local press, when appropriate. • MB/EN to follow up on the potential Buddhist rep and contact David Hurst and/or the Education Commission of the Archdiocese of Southwark for Catholic representation. • KS to ask again for union reps at Primary and Secondary Heads meetings. • DB to seek another NEU rep to act as a co-rep/deputy 	<p>KS MB/EN KS DB</p>

ITEM		ACTION
5	<p><u>Minutes of previous SACRE meetings – 10th October 2019, 9th July 2019 and 11th February 2020</u></p> <p>The minutes of the meetings held on 9.7.19, 10.10.19 and 11.2.20 were approved. The minutes will be signed when practicable.</p>	
6	<p><u>Matters arising from the meetings 11.2.20 not covered elsewhere</u></p> <p><u>Previous item 6 - Constitution</u></p> <p>KS reported that the Council had advised that, because the amendment to the Constitution was minor, SACRE could approve the change.</p> <p>All approved the amended Constitution which included the change requested by the Southwark Diocesan Board of Education (as agreed at the SACRE meeting on 9.7.19) and a new review date of 2024.</p> <p><u>Previous item 9 - Determinations guidance</u></p> <p>Members ratified the decision made at the meeting on 11.2.20 that, as there was already a clear legal process that schools and SACRE must follow, then no further SACRE documentation on Determinations was required.</p> <p>At the meeting on 11.2.20 all agreed that this position should be reviewed regularly (every 3 years).</p> <p><u>Previous item 11 - 2018-2019 Annual Report</u></p> <p>Members approved the final draft 2018-2019 Annual Report, which included an introduction added by MB.</p> <p>Action: EN to submit the finalised 2018-2019 Annual Report to NASACRE/DfE.</p>	EN
7	<p><u>What has been happening in schools under lockdown – KS</u></p> <p>KS explained that Merton schools had remained open to vulnerable pupils and children of key workers during the lockdown. Pupils in some year groups were gradually returning to school and as of 2.7.20 there were about 5000 pupils back in school. More primary pupils than secondary had returned, as secondary schools had been limited to an intake of 25% of the roll.</p> <p>KS stressed that schools had made very significant efforts in developing online learning and supporting families to access it in a very short timescale. KS added that the DfE, School Improvement Advisors (SIAs) and SACRE (using links from NASACRE) had provided modified curriculum materials to schools. Schools had used the materials in different ways; for example, reinforcing learning or supporting mental health and wellbeing or direct online teaching.</p> <p>KS acknowledged the significant support from the Wimbledon Dons, who had provided phones, laptops and data to families in need.</p> <p>KS reported that the pupils who had returned were very happy to be back in school. Some pupils and families had struggled to access learning during the lockdown. KS added that there was a notable divide in return rates between Wimbledon, whose</p>	

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ITEM	ACTION
<p>schools were full and Mitcham, whose families were more fearful of returning.</p> <p>DB commented that she had been very impressed by the response of Headteachers across Merton in very challenging times and with variable guidance from the DfE.</p> <p>RN added that the Merton school where she was Chair of governors had done very well in supporting their vulnerable pupils and the mental health and wellbeing of students and staff. The school had kept pupils engaged and had provided effective online learning.</p> <p>JS added that as Chair of governors at a Mitcham school she had been impressed by the commitment of the SLT and teachers in supporting vulnerable children and keeping in touch with all families - they had worked extremely hard. JS suggested that SACRE should write to staff leaders to acknowledge and thank them for their efforts.</p> <p>KS explained that some schools had remained open through the holidays since March and stressed that safeguarding of children had been of paramount importance. Schools had supported families in securing food, making home visits and in some cases daily phone calls. The safeguarding of pupils and successful management of staff throughout the lockdown had been a significant achievement for Headteachers.</p> <p>RN reported that throughout the lockdown schools had continued to offer acts of worship using online platforms, thereby maintaining a sense of community.</p> <p>MB reported that he had received feedback from some maintained schools that they had felt well supported by the LA. KS explained that the Assistant Director of Education and Head of School Improvement had held regular meetings with SIAs and representatives from clusters of schools throughout the pandemic.</p>	
<p>Actions: KS to draft a letter to schools from SACRE, to be signed by MB.</p>	<p>KS/MB</p>
<p>MB/EN to add an agenda item to next meeting to review the effects of lockdown and how collective worship/spiritual learning may have impacted outcomes.</p>	<p>MB/EN</p>
<p>8</p>	<p><u>Black Lives Matter (BLM) and RE</u></p>
<p>KS reported that cross-school groups of SLTs and governing boards had met on 7.7.20 to discuss BLM issues and how schools should respond. Initial priorities and themes discussed were: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 'Attain Board' (school improvement funding stream) should identify new projects focussing on BLM and mental health. • The data hasn't changed – what is going to be different this time? • Do schools understand the data and where things are going wrong? • Specific project work e.g. addressing unconscious bias or asking secondary pupils to share their experience of primary school. • Improving families' relationships with schools. 	

ITEM

ACTION

MB invited comments and questions:

DB explained that she had been to a recent informal teacher event and had been surprised at the low levels of confidence that teachers had in addressing issues raised by BLM issues; many were worried about saying the wrong thing or what the response from parents would be. Teachers of some subjects had more concerns than others.

RN advised that schools need to avoid an immediate response; it needs to be considered so that it does not appear tokenistic. Improvements may be needed in schools' systems, structures and processes as well as within the curriculum.

MF asked whether the staffing of schools reflected the diversity of the borough and MB asked about Merton recruitment processes.

KS explained that there had been an increase in diversity of senior leaders in primary and secondary schools and an increase in diversity of staffing across all schools generally. KS added, however, that staffing may still not represent the population of Merton; for example, Asian, Tamil and black African groups are underrepresented. KS added that there was no diversity amongst the senior leaders of the Council; it is not easy to anonymise the recruitment process as the pool of candidates is very narrow. It may require more positive efforts to increase diversity.

KS highlighted that, in parallel with equality issues, some primary teachers were not confident in teaching about other faiths, for fear of saying the wrong thing. However, teachers of some subjects were likely to feel more comfortable than others e.g. Drama and English. KS added that it would be useful for different teacher groups within the borough to share experience with each other.

LA asked whether teachers received training to enable them to become more confident. KS replied that there wasn't formal training as such, but individuals within each school should cascade their experience and knowledge to less confident teachers.

MB suggested that the next RE coordinators meeting should focus on shared experience and support for teachers. Also, SACRE should ensure that the agreed syllabus addresses BLM.

Action: MB/EN to add agenda item for the next SACRE meeting to consider planning a review of the syllabus which considers the impact of BLM and Covid-19.

MB/EN

9 Faith dialogue project – update from Andrew Williams

AW reported that three sessions had taken place prior to the lockdown: - the launch at the Civic Centre and subsequent sessions at Mitcham Parish Church and the Ahmadiyya Mosque in Morden. Two further sessions had been planned at the Wimbledon synagogue and the Shree Ghanapathy Temple but were on hold. AW added that students from Ursuline, Wimbledon College, RR6 and St Mark's had taken part; the sessions had been very successful.

MB asked whether the project would be resumed in the next academic year.

AW/KS explained that this might not be practicable as the students would be taking A'

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ITEM		ACTION
	<p>Levels and because of ongoing social distancing measures. MB suggested that it may be helpful to run a follow up virtual meeting to discuss how faith had helped participants during the pandemic and to conclude the project.</p>	
	<p>Action: KS to contact participating schools to gauge interest in concluding the project and/or providing feedback for future similar projects.</p>	<p>KS</p>
10	<p><u>Any Other Business</u> None.</p>	
11	<p><u>Proposed date of next meetings:</u> -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tuesday 6th October 2020 • Tuesday 9th February 2021 • Tuesday 6th July 2021 <p>All agreed if the next meeting needed to be held remotely then a start time of 6pm would be preferred.</p>	



Chair of Merton SACRE.....

Date 3.11.20.....

(signed electronically because of Covid-19 restrictions)