

**Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 10th October 2017 (7.15 – 9.05pm)
At the Buddhapadipa Temple, 14 Calonne Road, SW19 5HJ**

Present Group A – Christian, Other Faiths & Beliefs

Saleem Sheikh (SS) Vice Chair – Islam

Waleed Ahmad (WA) - Ahmadiyya Muslim Association

Mike Freedman (MF) – Judaism

Group B – Church of England

Andrew Williams (AW)

Group C – Teacher Associations

Maria Keenan (MK) - NAHT

Debra Beale (DB) – NUT

Group D – Local Authority

Cllr Laxmi Attawar (LA)

Cllr Abdul Latif (AL)

LA Adviser

Keith Shipman (KS) – Merton Education Inclusion Manager

Others

Mr P Lom – (PL) – Buddhism

Elizabeth Nassé (EN) Clerk

SS thanked PL for organising the venue and his hospitality.

The meeting began at 7.25pm.

ITEM	ACTION
<p>1 Apologies for absence Apologies for absence were received from:</p> <p>Mark Yelland Audrey King Jane Savill Marcus Cooper Cllr Mike Brunt</p>	
<p>2 Introductions All attendees introduced themselves. Andrew Williams was welcomed as a new member.</p> <p>The meeting was quorate (at least one third of appointed members, including at least one representative from each group).</p>	
<p>3 Election of Chair Following Peter Kendrick's resignation, nominations for Chair were sought prior to the meeting. No nominations were received prior to the meeting or at the meeting. Members agreed to repeat the election process at the next meeting, when additional SACRE members are present. Members agreed that in the interim, SS would act as Chair for meetings and SACRE members would agree any Chair's decisions by committee.</p>	
<p>4 SACRE membership admin The following new members have joined SACRE, but were unable to attend the meeting:-</p> <p>Jane Savill - C of E Marcus Cooper – C of E Councillor Mike Brunt</p> <p>The following resignation has been received since the last meeting:</p> <p>Colin Powell – Church of England.</p> <p>The following existing vacancies have not yet been filled: Roman Catholic Church (1 rep.) Free Churches (1 rep.) NASUWT (1 rep.).</p> <p>KS/EN reported that the Diocese has not yet been able to fill the Roman Catholic vacancy.</p> <p>Ongoing action: KS/EN to follow up filling vacancies.</p> <p>SS offered to try again to contact the Baiha'i faith community if KS can provide contact details.</p>	<p>KS/EN</p> <p>SS/KS</p>

MERTON STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

ITEM	ACTION
<p>5 Minutes of the last SACRE meeting 11th July 2017 The minutes were agreed as a true record and SS signed them. The signed copy was retained by EN for filing.</p>	
<p>6 Matters arising from the last meeting, not addressed elsewhere.</p> <p><u>Page 2, Item 3: EN to send a reminder about nominations (for Chair) and KS/EN to follow up filling vacancies.</u> Done.</p> <p><u>Page 3, Item 5: KS to forward Directory (of places of Worship) to JS (Merton Designated Officer).</u> Done.</p> <p>KS added that there was a related action to arrange for JS to meet with the Sunni Muslim community. New action: KS/SS to liaise with JS to arrange a meeting.</p> <p><u>Page 3, Item 5: EN to remove Joanne Powell from the membership list.</u> Done.</p> <p><u>Page 4, Item 8: KS to arrange for RE coordinators to share examples of good practice at the next RE coordinators meeting and KS to advise MF/GM of the dates of the next RE coordinators meetings</u> Ongoing and discussed further in Item 8.</p> <p><u>Page 5, Item 12: SS to enquire whether the Buddhist Temple would be available for the next meeting.</u> Done.</p> <p>SS and KS expressed their thanks to PL for hosting the meeting. PL suggested that Mr Bhaskorn may wish to join SACRE as a representative of the Buddhist faith. It was noted that Colin Perry is the existing member for the Buddhist faith, so would it be decision for members of the Buddhist faith group themselves.</p>	<p>KS/SS</p>
<p>7 National Reports on RE</p> <p>The following links to two reports were circulated with the Agenda:</p> <p>http://www.commissiononre.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Commission-on-Religious-Education-Interim-Report-2017.pdf</p> <p>http://religiouseducationcouncil.org.uk/media/file/State of the Nation Report 2017.pdf</p> <p>KS hi-lighted some of the key findings from:</p> <p>'The State of the Nation'- A report on Religious Education provision within secondary schools in England:</p>	

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 28% of secondary schools told the Department for Education that they gave no dedicated curriculum time to RE. • <i>The level of provision of RE is largely dependent on the type of school pupils attend and schools with a religious character typically provide a higher level of provision of RE. 96% of schools with a religious character offer RE at KS4.</i> • Academies are the least likely type of school to offer RE at KS4, with just 73% of schools reporting that they offer RE at this level. 	
<p>KS explained that he had asked the heads of the three secondary academies in Merton about their teaching of RE:</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harris Academy Merton – all Key Stage 4 pupils study RE at GCSE; there are a small number of children who access a reduced curriculum that do not study it. • Harris Academy Morden – Key Stage 4 pupils study compulsory PSHE/RE, which includes a small element of RE. They offer RE at GCSE, but very few pupils study it. • St Mark’s Academy – all pupils take RE at GCSE. 	
<p>KS noted that as non-GCSE RE courses are not considered when publishing progress and attainment data there is less reason for schools to offer it.</p>	
<p>KS explained that the report had summarised a list of recommendations from the findings and discussed the top four:-</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold schools to account for the level of provision and standards of teaching of RE. • Encourage ministers to speak about the importance of RE in the curriculum and about its impact on wider educational outcomes, including on society at large. • Issue a clear public statement that it is not acceptable in any circumstances for a school to be failing to provide RE at any Key Stage as part of its broad and balanced curriculum. • Publish data about RE provision routinely in an accessible format (without the need to issue Freedom of Information requests) to allow local Standing Advisory Councils for RE (SACREs) and other bodies to more easily fulfil their duty to monitor provision for RE in their local area. This data should include school workforce data and GCSE entries. 	
<p>KS explained that the Commission on Religious Education (CoRE) 'Interim Report on Religious Education For All' report is seeking views on recommendations on the role of SACREs. SS confirmed that it had also been discussed at the recent NASACRE conference. KS commented that the report discusses the importance of RE and the view that the UK's outstanding record in teaching of RE is at risk of being lost. LA asked whether there should be some involvement of MP's in response to the report. AW replied that it is likely that the final report will be followed by government</p>	

ITEM

ACTION

action. KS added that the 'Prevent' agenda is also emphasising the importance of RE.

KS summarised the report's key recommendations:

- ***a national entitlement for RE (with a local syllabus)***
- ***holding schools to account for the provision and quality of RE***
- ***a national plan to improve teaching and learning in RE***
- ***a renewed and expanded role for Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education (SACREs).***

The CoRE is seeking SACRE views on the final recommendations. KS advised members that they could also respond as individuals, but discussed the following points, so that Merton SACRE can develop a joint response:



- a) *the government should publicly highlight and reaffirm the important role of SACREs in supporting and resourcing RE.*
All agreed.
- b) *the government should consider whether the role of SACREs should be expanded to include a duty to advise on all matters relating to religion and belief in schools.*
All agreed.
- c) *the government should consider ways of securing funding to resource SACREs adequately; options for this may include:*
 - i. *ring-fenced funding for SACRES – All agreed*
 - ii. *funding for SACREs from the Department of Culture, media and Sport or the Department of Communities and local government. – All agreed it should be outside the DfE and from a nominated source.*
 - iii. *Specifying a minimum amount of funding (perhaps per school or per pupil) to which local authorities must adhere.*
- d) *the government should consider the composition of SACREs and the law should be changed to include representatives of non-religious worldviews as full members.*
All agreed and noted that Merton's SACRE already includes a representative from Humanists UK.
- e) *the government should publish all SACRE annual reports publicly on a dedicated website.*
All agreed; Also that SACREs need information published by the government so that SACREs can fulfil their role, including curriculum reports and data from secondary schools.

LA asked whether schools have to report on the overall ethos of the school. KS replied that Ofsted reports refer to ethos, PSHE and RE, but there are very few direct references to RE. MK commented that with the current situation there would be little or no reporting route for Good and Outstanding schools, as Ofsted do not inspect them in detail; there would have to be a different reporting priority for RE.

- *We seek views on what the duties of SACREs should be in relation to promoting good community relations, beyond matters relating to religion and belief in schools.*

ITEM	ACTION
<p>All agreed that SACREs should be promoting good community relations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>We are still considering how the composition of SACRES should be adapted to be fit for purpose in a changed social and educational landscape in particular, we are considering whether the committee structure should be changed or abolished. We seek views and evidence on this.</i> <p>In summary, members agreed that the four committee structure needs to be changed to achieve equality. Membership would need to be managed so that voting is proportionate, that it is representative of a diverse range of faith groups and not be limited to those that are present in the local community. SACREs in less diverse communities could link with SACREs in other areas.</p> <p>AW/KS hi-lighted that the consultation is seeking views on <i>'whether it is desirable to look to adopt an overall approach to the design of the RE curriculum in every school so that it is sufficiently 'objective, critical and pluralistic' as to render it capable of right to withdrawal'</i>.</p> <p>KS also hi-lighted that the findings from consultation with young people included a comment that 'RE helps them to make friends'. All agreed this sentiment was valuable in promoting understanding and community cohesion.</p> <p>AW commented that he was impressed with the report and explained that Roehampton University is planning to hold an event in Autumn 2018, after the publication of the final report.</p> <p>The consultation ends at the beginning of December.</p> <p>Action: KS will draft a Merton SACRE group reply based on the responses above.</p> <p>Hard copies of the two reports were handed to SS.</p>	<p>KS</p>
<p>8&9</p>	<p>RE coordinators' meeting 20.9.17 and feedback from the RE leads and SACRE to lead a project with schools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving visits to places of worship in Merton Improving visitors to schools by faith and belief speakers Exploring diversity Expressing my faith and belief – peer to peer project Promotion of True Tube or other resources Merton school interfaith event Other ideas <p>KS reported that he had discussed the above list of SACRE actions with RE leads. The items that the leads were most interested in were:</p> <p>Improving links with faith groups by holding RE Coordinators meetings at local places of worship and hearing from faith leaders. This may encourage secondary school RE teachers to attend and help promote school visits.</p> <p>The next RE Coordinators meeting (31st January 2018, tbc) is proposed to be held at</p>

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<p>the Wimbledon synagogue and possibly the following meeting at the Ahmadiyya mosque.</p> <p>DB asked whether the meetings are well attended. KS replied that there had been between 20-25 people at the last two meetings. SACRE members, PK and AK have attended them regularly in the past. KS confirmed that SACRE members are welcome to attend.</p>	<p>KS/MF/ WA</p>
<p>Action: KS/MF/WA to arrange use of venues for next meetings.</p> <p>Improving the quality of visits to places of worship and presentations by faith groups. RE coordinators suggested that it would be useful if SACRE could develop a directory of recommended representatives who could communicate well with children and young people about their faith.</p> <p>MK suggested that teachers from different faith groups could be organised to address pupils across the borough's schools; MF added that if SACRE was funded sufficiently in the future, the proposal could be supported by a teacher release scheme. MF explained that the synagogue has developed a scheme of training faith representatives to work in schools and would be pleased to support other faith groups in establishing something similar.</p>	<p>KS </p>
<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.</p>	<p>MF</p>
<p>Action: SACRE to consider developing a list of recommended contacts for school visits.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploring diversity in schools - no themes have yet been discussed. • Expressing my faith and belief – peer to peer project – AW suggested that a project could be modelled on 'Conversation for the Soul' which could be adapted for children. KS suggested that a project could be linked with Merton Primary and Youth Parliaments, either within a school or amongst several schools. DB described her school's 125th anniversary conference at which 400 pupils from several girls' schools and colleges listened to speakers and took part in activities linked to faith. DB commented that as the conference had been facilitated and the venue large, costs had been high. 	<p>All </p>
<p>KS explained that teachers he had spoken to thought that an event for Year 5 and 6 pupils would be suitable.</p> <p>Action: KS to address with Primary and Secondary heads. AW offered to support the development of a project.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion of True Tube - will be referred to Penny Smith-Orr. • Merton school interfaith event - MF described an annual Year 9 event that he had attended at Chestnut Grove (Wandsworth) where pupils from several 	<p>KS</p>

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ITEM		ACTION
	<p>schools had had the opportunity to meet different faith leaders in a short time.</p> <p>Action: KS to explore the idea with Secondary heads; SACRE members would need to support proposals with help from their faith groups.</p>	<p>KS/all</p>
10	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>None.</p>	
11	<p>Date of next meetings</p> <p>The dates of the next SACRE meetings are: 7.15pm, Tuesday 20th February 2018 7.15pm, Tuesday 10th July 2018</p> <p>Proposed venue for 20th February - Gudwara, Tooting. To be confirmed. Action SS to enquire about availability with Mr Singh.</p> <p>Proposed venue for 10th July - Hindu Temple.</p> <p>The meeting closed at 9.05pm</p>	<p>SS</p>

Chair of Merton SACRE..... Michael Abant date 20/02/2018 .