

Southwark Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE)
Minutes of a meeting held on Thursday 12 September 2024, 6.00 pm at Tooley Street

Present:

Committee A

Mariano Marcigaglia
Bob Vertes (remote)

Committee B

Fiona Foreman (Vice Chair)
Emily Harris

Committee C

James Lewis (Chair)
Betty Joseph

Committee D

Councillor Maggie Browning
Lee Souter

In attendance

Stacey Burman (SACRE Advisor)
Janet Clarke (Clerk)

1. Welcome and Apologies

JL welcomed all to the meeting and introductions were made. Apologies for absence were received from John Bonnici, Trevor Moore, Councillor Margy Newens and Jo Patterson.

2. Membership

2.1 Councillor Membership

There were no changes to councillor membership to SACRE.

2.2 Teacher Membership

SB informed members that there was a new teacher interested in joining the SACRE.

2.3 Vacancies

Members discussed filling a vacancy with a representative from the Hindu community. The clerk informed members that the current Muslim representative had asked to be removed from the mailing list.

Non-attendance at meetings was discussed and it was agreed that if members had not attended three meetings, then it was difficult to engage with the work of SACRE. It was agreed that SB and the clerk would look at attendance and report to the next meeting. Emily Harris (EH) agreed to check if the Cathedral could support the building of the Muslim membership, Fiona Foreman (FF) also agreed to contact her colleague who attended previously, and Mariano Marcigaglia (MM) agreed to make contact with a Hindu colleague.

Action 1: SB/EH/FF/MM/Clerk

2.4 Election of Chair and Vice Chair

The clerk informed members that nominations had been achieved for James Lewis as Chair in advance of the meeting. James Lewis (JL) was unanimously elected as Chair for 2024/25.

Fiona Foreman was nominated as Vice Chair at the meeting. Fiona Foreman was unanimously elected as Vice Chair for 2024/25.

Councillor Maggie Browning (MB) informed members that both herself and Councillor Margy Newens were interested in contributing more to SACRE and both had educational backgrounds. Councillor Browning asked what role the board wanted councillors to play and how this would feed into the work carried out by SACRE. SB noted that the work done by SACRE is aligned with Southwark objectives. It was agreed that the Chair/clerk would follow up (MB) about working with SACRE.

Action 2: MB/Chair/Clerk

2.5 Registration and use of Governor Hub and Declarations of Interest

Members were informed that declarations of interest should be completed on governor hub. It was agreed that the clerk would circulate an email with instructions on how to complete declarations on governor hub.

Action 3: Clerk

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 25 June 2024

The minutes of the meeting held on 25 June 2024 were received for approval.

Matters arising:

Page 5 - Newham Agreed Syllabus Renewal. SB informed governors that she had been in contact with Newham and the licence cannot be extended for another year. However, as the LA purchased the materials it means schools will still have access to the current materials with no further costs, but we will not be receiving updated materials from them.

Q: Can the Newham resources still be used while SACRE develop its own?

A: The Newham teaching and learning resources can still be used but not indefinitely.

Q: Do schools put materials on their websites?

A: Ofsted ask to see the RE curriculum but does not stipulate that units of learning have to be seen. There will need to be clarification about ownership with Southwark Council and teachers, as part of the pilot, who will be developing new materials, for all schools in Southwark, in due course.

Betty Joseph (BJ) informed members that she had not been attending meetings as the wrong email addressed had been used. The clerk assured BJ that the right email address was now being used and is recorded on governor hub.

It was noted that the Agreed Syllabus Conference and SACRE meeting minutes should be separate. The clerk agreed that this would be done going forward.

Members approved the minutes for signing as a true and accurate record.

5. Local Updates

5.1 Southwark 2030 Vision, Ambitions and aligned priorities

LS encouraged members to look at the new Southwark 2030 Vision document that had recently been approved at Cabinet and was now on the council website. The Vision includes the six main goals including “Giving children the best start in life”.

All goals have underpinning principles that will be the drive to improving the lives of residents and communities, including empowering people, reducing inequality and investing in prevention. Frontline staff were involved in the development of plan.

LS was pleased that for the second year running the borough was ranked first nationally in Ofsted Personal Development outcomes (23/23), with more than 96% of schools in Southwark achieving “good’ or better”, with RE part of the inspection process.

LS informed members that since the last meeting there had been violent disorder, a new national government with the DfE launching a Curriculum & Assessment Review, amongst other things. And there is also a new, innovative “We are Southwark” localised curriculum (tackling social and racial injustice, including Inclusion, Belonging, Diversity themes as part of Personal Development) being developed with opportunities to link to the new Locally Agreed Syllabus, in continuing to provide support for teachers on the frontline. LS suggested all aligned to the local focus on “Aiming for Excellence”.

Q: Is the Southwark curriculum being developed?

A: Yes.

Mariano Marcigaglia (MM) noted that Southwark is a dynamic borough, and it will be a challenge to keep the syllabus aligned with all the changes.

5.2 Subject Leader Network meetings incl. local pilot and CPD/training sessions

Stacey Burman (SB) informed governors that today's network meeting had been attended by 30 teachers throughout the afternoon from primary and secondary schools and all had engaged. There had been a change of subject leaders in some primaries, but SB had been made aware of three, so there is continuity that was not there before. It was clear from the continuity and attendance that the sessions are valued by schools. LS pointed out that the consistency and level of confidence is much higher and very noticeable and extended thanks to SB.

MM said that the only challenge is empowering teachers to carry out the work. SB said that she was conscious about building capacity of those who attend to support teachers in schools. Members were informed that a CPD session was delivered last year for teachers to deliver in their own schools about changes to RE and recommendations from Ofsted. LS mentioned the teacher request to deliver a twilight, online CPD session for new subject leads to support leadership in schools (as previously delivered in summer 24). RE is appearing in staff meetings and it is important to keep the momentum going.

Members were informed that in the long-term, samples of pupil work could be reviewed at these network sessions, so that teachers can check what they should be looking for together. BJ added that this method was how RE was taught and it was good to see this being brought back. MM reminded members that the way of working is a challenge as it is experimental, one of the few in country and required special attention. Members were informed that teachers are willing to engage in the new way of working, in the development and that empowerment is visible. LS thanked SB for her report, feeding back what is unique and special about the Southwark approach.

Q: What percentage of Southwark schools participate in the sessions?

A: There are about 40 schools who are attending and in communication, with further schools who engaged in the survey previously.

LS said that he was impressed with the inclusivity and engagement at the meetings, including KS3 colleagues from secondary and colleagues from special schools. MM asked if it was worth inviting Ofsted early so any adjustments can be done. SACRE need to be certain about the Ofsted recommendations and be aligned to them. SB informed members that the Ofsted report was used in developing the pedagogy and to bear in mind that inspectors are most often not trained in RE.

6. Action Plan Update

6.1 Action Schedule

The clerk informed governors that a schedule of actions agreed at meetings will be kept and added to the end of minutes.

6.2 Self-Evaluation and Annual Reporting

SB proposed that each committee takes responsibility to evaluate a section that will feed into the annual report. FF suggested mixing the committees. It was agreed that committees would be mixed for the self-evaluation and a member of the mixed group selected to take the lead.

Action 4: SB/JC

6.3 Action Plan

SB informed members that a draft Action Plan 24/25 will be uploaded governor hub. The Plan is a rolling document, building on previous years plans and would be updated based commissioning intentions, budget considerations and discussions in meeting.

Action 5: SB, LS & Chair

7. Dates of Future Meetings

The next meeting of SACRE will take place on 16 January 2025, 6 pm at Tooley Street in person. Refreshments will be available from 5.30 pm.

An Agreed Syllabus Conference will take place on Wednesday 27 November, 6.30 pm at Tooley Street in person. Refreshments will be available from 6 pm.

8. Any Other Business

SB drew attention to the free exhibition at the Catford and Bromley Synagogue from 4 to 15 November 2024.

Action Log

Thursday 12 September 2024			
No	Item	Who	By
1	To look at attendance at SACRE and report to the next meeting. Check with the Cathedral and other colleagues for support with SACRE membership	SB/Clerk EH/FF/MM	16/01/25 16/01/25

2	Role of Councillors on SACRE	Chair/ Clerk	ASAP
3	Circulate how to declare business interests on governor hub	Clerk	ASAP
4	Self-evaluation by groups	SB/Clerk	ASAP
5	Update Action Plan	SB	27/11/25

Documents Approved

No documents approved at this meeting.

Chair _____

Date _____