

## LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM

### Minutes of the Lewisham STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE)

which was open to the press and public and was held on

Tuesday 8 December 2015 starting 6.30pm at the Catford and Bromley Synagogue, 6 Crantock Road, Catford, London SE6 4RU

#### Present:

**Group A:** David Hutchens (Buddhism), Luke Donnellan (Humanism), Mohammed Barrie (Islam), Sarwoar Ahmed (Islam), Gerald Rose (Judaism), Joan Goldberg (Judaism), Rt Rev Monsignor Nicholas Rotherham (Roman Catholic), Gurbakhsh Singh Garcha (Sikhism)

**Group B:** Shaun Burns (The Church of England – chair), John Goodey (The Church of England), Revd Juliet Donnelly (The Church of England),

**Group C:** Kim Knappett (ATL), Karen Hansen (NUT), Pamela Phillips (NAS/UWT)

**Group D:** Councillor Janet Daby (Local Authority Councillor), Kate Bond (Representative of the Executive Director of Education)

**Also Present:** Rev David Rome

**SACRE Adviser:** Denise Chaplin, School Improvement Officer RE

**Clerk:** Stephen Sealy

#### 1. Welcome, Apologies for Absence

Shaun Burns thanks everyone for coming and the synagogue for accommodating the meeting.

Apologies were accepted from : Gail Exon (The Church of England), Councillor David Britton (LA), Dinah Griffiths (School Governors [Primary] and usual Chair).

Rev David Rome (minister of the synagogue) delivered a presentation on Hanukkah.

#### 2 Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising not on the full agenda

Cllr Janet Daby should have been recorded as 'on other council business' on the minutes of the last meeting otherwise those minutes were agreed as an accurate record.

Matters Arising

Denise reported that she had received the examination results over the weekend and that she will check to see if there are any inaccuracies in the data, recalling that there were

inaccuracies in the previous year's data. She reported that these will form part of the SACRE's draft annual report.

Kate Bond requested that these be treated as both a draft and as confidential. DC explained that headteachers are aware that the SACRE checks the data each year before publication of the Annual Report.

With regards to item 3 (ASC Update), DC reported that work was ongoing on several fronts, including updating the syllabus assessment advice. She reported that the young mayor's team hadn't met further although both she and Cllr Brittan had been in contact to try to arrange a meeting. Meanwhile Cllr Britten had completed a review of schools' websites, and had said he would next be starting discussions with secondary schools.

Shaun added that the next meeting of the ASC would be on at 6.30pm on 21 February at St John Baptist school.

Kate thanked John Goodey for accommodating her at his school and commended the nativity play.

Luke Donellen mentioned the new High Court ruling regarding Humanism; it was suggested this should be discussed at a future meeting in relation to the Agreed Syllabus review.

Shaun requested that all members look at the existing syllabus with a view to feeding into the ASC review.

With regard to item 4 (membership and LA update), Denise informed SACRE that there will be another training event in the new year targeted to new SACRE members around the half-term week.

NASACRE documents were circulated to the new SACRE members in attendance.

Denise confirmed that she would bring a draft of the annual report to the next meeting and that this should be finalised by Easter.

With regard to item 11 (Any Other Business, and Information Exchange), Shaun reported that the pursuit of a trustee for the Southwark Cathedral Education Centre had been put on hold for the time being.

Gurbakhsh questioned why school exam results were confidential. Kate Bond explained that the results hadn't yet been discussed with headteachers and that the confidentiality at this point was a matter of protocol. Denise suggested that the results be discussed at the next SACRE, at which point headteachers would have been informed.

Gurbakhsh added that these were published by the Department of Education, to which Kate explained that this was data that hadn't been validated.

Denise commented that no short course results were showing up; something that she would have to check with schools. Kate Bond said that she would also ask schools to inform them of any short course entries.

It was pointed out that the RE results were favourable in comparison with other subjects, but that there was room for improvement. Kate agreed, adding that overall Lewisham was not performing as well as London-wide schools or against the national picture.

Sarwoar A reported that the Young Muslim Academy was considering how to introduce Islamic Studies GCSE and was assured that it would be helpful to have this data included in the results the following year.

### **3 Membership update**

Denise reported on membership.

Saba from the Baha'i community hasn't attended any meetings as he cannot leave work in time to attend, but that she had been assured that the local Baha'is will nominate a new representative.

There are vacancies for free churches, independent evangelicals and Pentecostal churches. It is hoped that one of these may be filled before the next SACRE meeting. One teacher vacancy remains as well as a teacher from the Church of England.

One new member, Claire Adams, has fallen out of contact. Shaun Burns committed to chase this up.

Denise further reported that there was a secondary school governor vacancy. Cllr Daby questioned how these were advertised, to which DC responded that they approach the appropriate body or, in the case of teachers, local groups. Cllr Daby commented that the mayor has meetings with the deans, and she committed to investigating this opening.

Kate Bond requested that John G remain mindful of any new headteachers who may be able to join the committee.

Regarding attendance, David H commented that keeping abreast of meetings was difficult and suggested that the dates of further meetings be communicated after each one.

Shaun committed to set the calendar of meetings for the whole year at the start. The next SACRE meeting will be held at 6.30pm on Wednesday 9 March at the Lewisham Islamic Centre.

Cllr Daby requested that item 6 (Advice for schools) be brought forward.

### **6 Advice to schools**

#### **Updated Ramadan Advice**

SACRE were advised that a number of changes had been made to update the previous annual Ramadan advice given to schools (which it is planned to issue in the first headteachers' mailing after Christmas). Denise reported that Ramadan in summer 2016 and the following Ramadan would pose challenges for Muslim pupils and schools as fasting will coincide with the hottest and longest days of the year. There would be a clear impact on examinations and other school activities.

Sarwoar A reported that discussions were ongoing with the Muslim community and that some guidance should be forthcoming from the Muslim Council of Britain but that, as it's being pursued with the Joint Council of Qualifications, it's unlikely to impact on 2016. It was clarified that children could defer days of the fast if they needed to. Cllr Daby advised that adherence to fasting flexibility varies from family to family.

With regard to the section on pages 5 and 67, Kate Bond suggested that the SACRE ask Claudia Smith to input what the register check marking should be for absence for the Id Festival. She further suggested that Claudia Smith be sent the document to review its section on absence. She commented that there was no section on supporting staff but it was pointed out that the advice refers to school Governing bodies having responsibility to decide how to manage requests for absence – this being advice from the LA previously.

Shaun expressed some concern at the belatedness of exam boards considering this issue.

Gurbakhsh suggested that SACRE discuss schools' feedback on the document so that any subsequent advice can reflect this.

Kate added that schools should be cognisant of fasting times when scheduling the times of meetings, parent events, school calendar events etc.

John G suggested that the provision of food at these events may be a good idea.

Kate commended those who had participated in this document.

### **Updated 'Responding to Crises' Advice**

Shaun explained that the advice for schools was a review of advice previously written and circulated after the '9/11', '7/7' and the Drummer Rigby tragedies, and that a decision to review it further in the context of the Paris crises was taken.

Denise commented that a document that gave generic advice rather than being linked to specific crises seemed the correct approach. She explained that the latest version had been updated by a Lambeth PREVENT officer, Shaun and herself all contributing. She added that they had wanted to create a document that was positive in tone whilst addressing anxieties for children in the borough when these events happened, with some groups feeling afraid and/or victimised.

Monsignor Rethon agreed that the document needs to be generic rather than responsive, and suggested it be looked at again to ensure it met that brief.

At 7.30pm Cllr Janet Daby offered apologies for departing.

Shaun commented that one of the strengths of the document was its message that it is still good to learn about Islam and visit mosques.

Kate commented that given the current issues on rising exclusions, knife-related activity etc., this document offers opportunities to discuss issues such as gun culture and knife crime, and that conversations within the areas of primary PHSE and secondary RE would allow for discussions about safety/trust/respect etc.

She suggested that it may be useful to consult with the Police for advice and guidance on linking the document to gun crime.

Gurbakhsh commented that 'radicalisation' was bandied around in the press but that although being vigilant for signs of radicalisation is part of schools' safeguarding responsibility, this was hard to do when most of the activity happens through social media. He asked what support Lewisham had received at a national level to provide a coherent

approach/strategy to tackling this problem, and suggests that schools needed to have programs about keeping safe on the internet.

Kate suggested that a model safeguarding policy was needed for the borough.

Luke D questioned if there was anything in the document about media studies, how the media operates and exercising caution over accuracies and reliability of information presented by the media.

John G reported that he had undergone training on PREVENT and British values and informed the committee that various toolkits were being made available. He added that all primary schools are required to do a safeguarding audit but that a key competence was being vigilant. He commented that he advocates engaging different communities throughout the school; thus lessening groups becoming desensitised.

Denise asked that anyone with any alterations emails these to her. She will then redraft (including faith-specific information) and recirculate this for SACRE to look at on another day.

Kate remarked that less is more and suggested that the curriculum be referenced in the document.

Gerald commented that while much of the document focussed on Islam, there was nothing about antisemitism in it. He informed the group that Jews in the community had safety concerns – hence the activity of CST and the need for security guards at synagogues.

#### **4 Lewisham Values Project**

John Goodey explained that school councils from three schools had met to talk about what was most important to them in their community and their lives. He explained that St Johns has a rich tradition of values and he had introduced the values curriculum into St Mary's. Olive Tree School was the third school taking part in this child-led discussion. He reported that a Police Officer was also involved.

He reported that while all representatives were initially shy, their involvement was such that it was difficult to call an end to the proceedings at the end of the meeting. He reported that the children wanted to continue working together and that there was a chance of working with the Jimmy Mizen Foundation (<http://forjimmy.org/>). The schools have identified some of their most vulnerable children across years 5 and 6 to get together and decide what project they want to undertake with an aim of developing five values and engaging stakeholders across the borough while engaging the vulnerable children too.

Kate B questioned whether this couldn't connect to transition also. John responded that whatever the children identified could further be developed. Kate suggested that information be added to the Schools Mailing.

Sarwoar reported that pupils had suggested sending a questionnaire to all schools. Kate proposed the Young Mayor's team be involved as they meet every week, suggesting that the SACRE approach Malcolm Ball about this.

Denise reminded SACRE about a funded project on passing on the concerns of pupils entering secondary schools, for primary schools that they had engaged in some years before, which had led to the development of statements about secondary school and themes of anxiety, faith and belief. The children had been concerned that their faith and beliefs practices be valued and supported in their new schools.

Kate informed the committee that Pat Barber is the Lewisham Governors Association lead member and suggested that JG speak to her. She said that projects like these need to be school-led and that if they were pupil-led, this was an even stronger position.

John commented that they believed that an ongoing annual activity was better than a one-off activity.

Gerald remarked that it would be a challenge was getting both primary and secondary schools to value it. Kim Knappett emphasised the importance of children channelling the project - rolling out of this to other children.

Kate underlined that fact that Malcom Ball was key to this, and suggested that school councils be used to communicate ideas like these, making use of their links with the Young Mayor.

## **5 A New Settlement in RE**

Shaun suggested that this agenda item be deferred until the next meeting, alongside the reports which were made accessible this week.

He encouraged the committee to read the NASACRE briefing report, feeding back on what they thought of it.

Denise informed SACRE that she had emailed links to the two reports to the committee. In response to Luke mentioning the report by the University of Goldsmiths, she agreed to send this to Luke.

## **7 Holocaust Memorial Day 2016**

John Goodey reported that his school had received the pack for the Holocaust Memorial Trust and recommended that the committee read this.

Kate advised that information on the Holocaust Memorial events could be entered in Heads Mailing.

Gerald reported that the borough had launched its National Holocaust Memorial day event. He advised that the key event for this academic year would be 3pm on Sunday 24 January at the Rivoli Ballroom. He encouraged members to attend event, mentioning that it was appropriate for all faiths, and advising that Derek Johnson was the LA contact for tickets.

Gerald reported that at the launch the professional theatre group showed how they introduced the educational workshops in schools. He explained that the group have produced a video where key members of the Jewish community are shown being interviewed, including one who had travelled on kindertransport. He explained that the event itself simulated experiences of the kindertransport. The secondary school video features Rachel Levy who had been in a queue for the gas chamber at Auschwitz before being removed.

The memorial activity culminated in schools putting on an assembly around the time of the Memorial Day. He added that the Jewish community were hoping to visit schools to express how important this occasion was.

The 2016 theme is 'Don't stand by', and that the theatre company was the Small Nose Group. Gerald added that the focus of this year was learning about discrimination and victimisation.

Shaun asked which schools were involved and how they were chosen. Gerald explained that all schools were invited but that schools who volunteered and hadn't taken part before were prioritised. He explained that a smaller number of schools were performing this year than last.

Gerald expressed the desire for the public to attend and stated that public visual marketing around the borough was key to this being realised. He added that his hope was that parents attend the assemblies, reporting further that Sedgehill School had invited Rachel Levy to be at their assembly while Bonus Pastor had staged productions in the past and would be doing a piece this year. He expressed the aspiration that every school would focus on the holocaust that week.

John commented that increasingly this event was commemorated in schools' assemblies.

GR advised that this year the main celebration would be 'all in one'; there would be no event in the synagogue before the main event, although there would be a 'reception' by the mayor after the main event.

It was agreed that Kate and Denise would make sure information was circulated from the organising committee to schools.

## **8 National Updates**

DC advised that this be discussed in subsequent meetings and encouraged the committee to look at the 'information from the RE Council, the APPG and other National bodies'.

## **9 Items circulated to schools**

SACRE members were happy that information about Farmington Scholarships, training on 'Teaching Judaism' for GCSE and the RE and Community Cohesion Updates had been circulated to schools.

Denise reported that she had circulated information on the RE quality mark accreditation. She reported that she endeavours to send a mailout to schools at least once a term providing sign-posting to useful projects and information. SACRE agreed that schools find this useful.

Kate B reported that Suhaib Saeed is compiling the current governors pack and requested of Denise to resend the SMSC self-evaluation pack to Suhaib with a paragraph briefing for him to include. She emphasised that this needed to be done promptly.

Kate asked whether John G fed back to primary schools Heads as a result of sitting on the committee. Shaun remarked that this point illustrated the need for an appropriate headteacher representative (a vacancy).

## **10     Any Other Business and Information Exchange**

Shaun reported that the interfaith week 2015 Greenwich United 'Question time' was held at Charlton football stadium, five days after the recent attacks in Paris. He explained that about 300 people attended at this event in which the richness of diversity was celebrated. The keynote speaker was Professor Shaun Moore of the University of Greenwich but that the Chief Executive of Charlton football club also spoke.

Gerald R had also attended. He added that as part of the programme three footballers spoke about their faith.

Joan G commented that as a layperson, she found the speeches poignant, and very informative. The point was made that this event, like this evening's committee meeting, was of shared resolve.

Gerald reported that Greenwich Council has a project called Mosaic whereby a number of groups including faith groups, the police and the council meet, chaired by the DCI. In terms of funding they try to attract whatever funding is available.

Gurbakhsh, who had also attended, added that there was good participation at the event by young people who spoke well and enthusiastically. The Police played an active role in this, and seem immersed in the community. He noted that Charlton Athletic is strong in fighting racism and discrimination in the community.

## **11     To consider dates for a) the next Lewisham SACRE meeting**

It was confirmed that the next meeting would take place at Lewisham Islamic Centre on Wednesday 9 March, and that June dates would be agreed in this March meeting.

The meeting concluded at 8.35pm.