

Foreword and Summary

By the Chair of SACRE

Foreword

During the academic year 2019-20, the education sector, along with wider society generally, has experienced unforeseen challenges with the emergence of Covid-19. Camden SACRE began the academic year with vigour, committing to self-evaluate its work rigorously and develop an ambitious action plan accordingly. Camden SARE began the process of self-evaluation prior to the onset of coronavirus in the UK with positive outcomes. Once lockdown in the UK set in, SACRE ceased physical meetings, but continued working online behind the scenes. With the invaluable support of our RE advisor, Lesley Prior, and our Camden Learning colleagues, namely Owen Rees, we were able to continue this process of self-evaluation as well as lay down the foundations of an action plan for the coming year.

We were able to adapt our working arrangements, as well as make the necessary concessions for schools that were set to renew determinations during the lockdown period, extending their time to do this. Schools have faced immense difficulties during the latter half of the academic year, unprecedented in recent times, and have tried their best to meet these challenges head on. Camden SACRE hopes that the teaching of RE and the place of collective worship within the school culture will remain important going forward. We will continue to try to support this in whatever way can, remaining as a positive partner for schools in Camden, especially during such difficult times, and hope that our new plans reflect that.

As the last academic year for which I will be Chair, I also want to take some space here to thank all the members of the SACRE who have continued to work positively towards the objectives of Camden SACRE throughout my time as Chair, especially our RE advisors. I have also appreciated the increasing support provided by Camden Learning and hope that this is a relationship that will continue to prosper. And I wish the new Chair the best of luck going forward and continue to be excited by the potential of the work of the SACRE.

Shahanaz Begum
Chair of Camden SACRE 2019-20

LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN

ANNUAL REPORT OF CAMDEN STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION 2019-20

Background

This report summarises the activities of Camden Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) during the academic year 2019-20. SACRE has a remit for monitoring Religious Education and Collective Worship in non-denominational schools. The relevant diocesan authorities monitor denominational schools. The Education Act 2002 requires that Religious Education must be provided as part of the basic curriculum in addition to the National Curriculum. Parents have the right to withdraw their children from all or part of RE and are not obliged to state their reasons for withdrawal.

This parliamentary briefing sets out the legislation in place at present, as well as outlining issues surrounding the teaching of RE and its curriculum, and provides information on related topics such as collective worship and the right to withdraw a child from RE classes.

<https://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/CBP-7167#fullreport>

1.0 Religious Education

1.1 Locally Agreed Syllabus

After due process, the Local Authority agreed to adopt the Hampshire RE Syllabus – Living Difference in 2012. Work was carried out to adapt the syllabus to make it specific to Camden with the assistance of Westminster SACRE where Living Difference had also been adopted in an amended version suitable for a London context. The content of the syllabus and the methodology behind it were not amended, as these were part of the condition of agreeing to adopt the syllabus. The new syllabus became the statutory Agreed Syllabus for all non-denominational schools in Camden from September 2012.

Materials were sent to schools in July 2012. Each school received hard copies of the Agreed Syllabus, plus CD versions. Schools also received a primary or secondary handbook, as appropriate.

Appropriate advice, support and training were offered to primary and secondary teachers to enable them to implement the new syllabus. The feedback was very positive.

1.2 Revision of the Agreed Syllabus

During 2016-17, SACRE members were mindful of the legal requirement that the Agreed Syllabus should be reviewed in 2017-18.

In this context, the SACRE Adviser gave regular updates about the latest revision process of the 'parent' syllabus from Hampshire, now Living Difference III. Throughout the year, she also reported that Living Difference III would be produced in a parallel but slightly amended version to

make it more suitable for use in London Boroughs where it had previously been adopted, including Camden.

On 6th July 2017, an initial meeting of the Agreed Syllabus Conference took place. Preliminary discussions were held among members about the options to be considered during the review process. These included:

- retaining the present syllabus and authorising it for a further five years
- creating an entirely new syllabus
- adopting Living Difference III in its London 'version'
- sourcing and adopting another suitable syllabus from elsewhere, looking in particular at examples from other London Boroughs with similar demographics to Camden.

Issues of cost and capacity were also considered.

These discussions took place against the background of various national projects addressing the nature of RE and its possible future within the curriculum, including the much anticipated interim report from the RE Council of England and Wales' independent Commission on RE: <http://www.commissiononre.org.uk>

Living Difference III (London version) became the new agreed syllabus and was launched in May 2018, with a reception for community schools hosted by the Mayor of Camden in the Mayor's Parlour. It was followed by training events for primary schools with training also made available to secondary schools.

The syllabus can be accessed via this link:

<http://democracy.camden.gov.uk/documents/s67486/Living%20Difference%20III%20-%20Camden%20-%20print%20version.pdf>

Support continues to be provided to subject leaders via access to the Hampshire RE website where there are additional resources, including teaching plans. Many of these are free of charge in the 'open' section: <https://re.hias.hants.gov.uk/>

1.3 Standards in RE

The school visit programme has continued and is a useful way of sampling approaches to the subject in a range of schools across Camden. SACRE members and the SACRE Adviser offer school based colleagues advice, help and support during these visits, reflecting the requirements of the agreed syllabus and pertinent to the individual needs of each school.

The SACRE Adviser also offers advice and support to schools by email and/or telephone where and when this is needed.

1.4 Complaints concerning RE

No complaints were received by SACRE in 2019-20.

2. 0 Collective Worship

2.1 Advice on Collective Worship

SACRE continues to provide advice about collective worship to schools.

Visits to schools by SACRE members, usually accompanied by the SACRE Consultant and/or the Chair of SACRE have continued. Any school applying for or renewing a Determination should receive a visit from SACRE members prior to the application being discussed at a meeting.

2.2 Determinations

There are currently several schools with a Determination. The schools and the dates of their Determination expiry are listed below:

- Hampstead School 06/20
- Torriano Infant School 06/20
- Torriano Junior School 06/20
- Primrose Hill Primary School 10/20
- Brecknock Primary School 02/21
- Rhyl Primary School 05/21
- Beckford Primary School 02/22
- Kingsgate Primary School 02/22
- Christopher Hatton Primary School 05/22
- Fleet Primary School 05/22
- Frank Barnes School for Deaf Children 05/22
- Edith Neville Primary School 04/23
- Eleanor Palmer Primary School 06/23
- Gospel Oak Primary School 10/24

At the SACRE Meeting on 29th October 2019, members considered an application for the renewal of a determination from the following school:

- Gospel Oak Primary School

Members agreed to grant Gospel Oak a renewal of its Determination, subject to a satisfactory outcome of a school visit.

Gospel Oak School was subsequently granted a renewal of its Determination when this outcome was secured.

Further to guidance received by the Adviser to SACRE from the Department for Education, the following schools were informed by SACRE that their existing determinations could continue beyond their expiry dates as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. The Clerk to SACRE wrote to inform them of this decision and to invite them to consider making applications for renewals at a later date:

- Hampstead School 06/20
- Torriano Infant School 06/20
- Torriano Junior School 06/20

(It should be noted that since 2015, Torriano Infant and Torriano Junior Schools have merged into one all-through primary school, so any renewal of a determination in relation to collective worship would be on behalf of the whole school.)

The Adviser to SACRE met with senior staff at Regent High School in the autumn term about a possible application for a determination but no such application was received in 2019-20.

2.3 Complaints Concerning Collective Worship

No complaints were received by SACRE.

3.0 MATTERS CONSIDERED BY SACRE

The following matters were considered by SACRE in the year 2019-20.

- a) Newer members of SACRE asked for more information and training to help them undertake their role more effectively. The Adviser to SACRE offered a training session to new and existing members immediately prior to the SACRE Meeting held on 21st January 2020.

She also reminded members that Camden SACRE is part of the National Association of SACREs (NASACRE) and that a wealth of advice and guidance is available on the NASACRE website at: <https://www.nasacre.org.uk/>

Some of these materials are in the 'password protected' section of the NASACRE website and SACRE members can obtain the necessary login details from the Clerk to SACRE.

- b) Members also welcomed stronger links with the Local Authority, particularly in relation to the curriculum, exam results and inspection data regarding schools. The Chair of SACRE had meetings with the Director of Camden Learning, which she found helpful in terms of building these links and raising the profile of SACRE. She said she was keen to attend meetings of the primary and secondary heads' networks. She added that the SACRE Adviser had attended both network meetings to raise the profile of SACRE, RE and collective worship. As part of every school's annual standards meeting with Camden Learning, they were questioned about the quality of their RE provision and their collective worship, with the results reported as part of Camden Learning's annual reporting.
- c) Building on work from 2018-19, members gave significant further consideration to elements of the SACRE Self-Evaluation Framework provided by NASACRE.

Members shared their views about the following key strands included in the document:

- The partnership between SACRE, the LA and other key stakeholders
- The effectiveness of the locally agreed syllabus
- The monitoring and improvement of the provision and quality of collective worship
- The contribution of SACRE to the promotion of social and racial harmony.

The Chair of SACRE, the Adviser to SACRE and a representative of Camden Learning met online during the spring to collate the key points from these discussions and the Adviser completed a draft of the final document (**attach as appendix to this report?**) for consideration by SACRE in the autumn of 2020 with an associated action plan.

- d) At the January meeting, SACRE members reviewed SACRE's Ramadan Guidance for schools in order that this could be re-issued in good time. See: <http://democracy.camden.gov.uk/documents/s87062/Camden%20SACRE%20Ramadan%20Guidance%20for%20schools%202020.pdf>
- e) Consideration was given to a report on the membership of SACRE. As requested, infrequently attending members had been contacted to ask if they wished to continue as a member of SACRE. The membership list of Panel A was amended accordingly.

It was suggested that the constitution of SACRE be reviewed, with particular regard to the composition of the body. It was agreed that this be an agenda item at the next meeting of Camden SACRE and in any case, forms a key part of the Self-Evaluation Framework document.

- f) Members considered a summary of recent OfSTED Reports from around the country making reference to RE, noting national trends and reflecting on how these might apply to locally. It was agreed to share the key findings with schools in Camden.

4.0 LINKS WITH OTHER BODIES

The LB of Camden SACRE is affiliated to The National Association of SACREs (NASACRE). Login details for the NASACRE website can be obtained from the Clerk to SACRE.

The NASACRE AGM and Conference did not take place this year because of the pandemic.

The SACRE Adviser is a member of the NASACRE Executive Group.

The SACRE Adviser is also a member of many other RE professional bodies and shares information from them at SACRE Meetings.

5.0 CHANGES IN MEMBERSHIP

Sophie Fegan joined SACRE as a Roman Catholic member of Panel A. Ann Boater, who formerly served as a teacher rep on Panel C, is now serving as a Quaker rep on Panel A.

6.0 SACRE CONTACT

The SACRE can be contacted via the Camden Council clerk to the body, Vinothan Sangarapillai, on 020 7974 4071 or by email on vinothan.sangarapillai@camden.gov.uk

7.0 MEETINGS

Meetings of SACRE were held on:

- **29th October 2019** at the Crowndale Centre
- **21st January 2020** at the Crowndale Centre

The SACRE Meeting scheduled for **20th April 2020** was cancelled because of the coronavirus pandemic.

The Chair, the Clerk and the Consultant also met between meetings where and when necessary.

APPENDIX A

LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION 2019-20

MEMBERSHIP (and number of times attending meetings)

Group A: Christian and other religious denominations reflecting the principal religious traditions in the area.

Shahanaz Begum – 1

Ann Boater - 2

Luke Dowding - 0

Lynndy Levin - 2

Sophie Fegan - 0

Krishna Pujara - 0

Abdul Quadir - 2

Panel B: C of E

Mary Thorne – 2

Felicity Djerehe - 2

Stephanie Ellner - 2

Panel C: Teachers

Aidan Cotterell-Boyce – 0

Paul Kayser - 0

Panel D: Camden Local Authority

Cllr Nasim Ali – 1

Cllr Julian Fulbrook – 2

Cllr Maria Higson - 2

Cllr Lazzaro Pietragnoli - 0

Cllr Nazma Rahman - 0

Cllr Anna Wright - 2