



Barnet Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE)

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 5th March 2025 at 5pm

Virtual Meeting

MINUTES

Constitution and Attendance

GROUP A: Christian denominations other than the Church of England and principal religions represented in Great Britain	Present/Apologies /Absent	GROUP B: Church of England	Present/Apologies /Absent
Mrs Vicky Golestaneh (Bahai)	Present	Ms Sue Watts (London Diocese)	Present
Ajantha Tennakoon (Buddhist)	Absent	Rev Robin Sims-Williams (London Diocese)	Apologies
Mrs Catherine Salinger (Free Churches)	Present	Maria Constantinou (Diocese of St Albans)	Apologies
Mrs Mary Karaolis (attending on behalf of Very Revd AC Damiano: Greek Orthodox Church)	Present	Lisa Bonfield	Apologies
Mr Sury Khatri (Hindu)	Present		

Mrs Veena Bedi (Hindu)	Absent		
Dr Mukal Shah (Jain)	Absent		
Vacancy (Jain)			
Dr Alan Shaw (Jewish)	Present		
Matthew Owen (Jewish)	Present		
Vacancy (Sikh)			
Vacancy (Sikh)			
Nicola Santamaria (Roman Catholic)	Present		
Norah Flatley (Roman Catholic)	Present		
Vacancy (Salvation Army)			
Vacancy (Salvation Army)			
Mr Mark Leach (Methodist)	Present		
Mr Martin Wellings (Methodist)	Absent		
Nuzhat Akhtar (Muslim)	Absent		
Gohar Akhtar (Muslim)	Absent		
Panos Fellas (Humanist)	Present		
GROUP C: Teachers Associations, including representation from Academy Schools	Present/Apologies /Absent	GROUP D: Local Authority, including elected Councillors LA	Present/Apologies /Absent
Mr Kevin McSharry (Chairman & ASCL)	Present	Agnes Slocombe (L.A.)	Apologies
Vacancy		Cllr Humayune. Khalick	Absent
Vacancy		Cllr Joshua Conway	Absent
Vacancy		Cllr Lachhya Bahadur Gurung	Absent
Ms Sandra Teacher	Present	Cllr.Linda Lusingu	Absent
Sally Giovanelli (Danegrove Primary School)	Present	Cllr.Nagus Narenthira	Present
Jack Robertson (NEU)	Absent	Cllr Ella Rose	Absent
<u>Other</u>		<u>Co-opted non-voting members</u>	
Maria Gabrielczyk – Clerk	In attendance	Jan McGuire Independent RE Advisor to Barnet SACRE	Present
Tim Sanders	Absent	Mr Neil Marlow Chief Executive and Director of Education and Learning	Present
Ruth Marx	Absent	Jennifer Brodtkin	Apologies
Sophie Tapis	Absent	Reuben Thompstone	Apologies

1. Apologies for absence

The Chair welcomed everyone present to the SACRE meeting.

A warm welcome was extended to Matthew Owen and Fiona Greening who were observing the meeting. Introductions were made.

Apologies were received and accepted from Maria Constantinou, Lisa Bonfield, Agnes Slocombe, Reuben Thompstone, Robin Sims-Williams and Jennifer Brodkin.

2. Minutes of the 6th November 2024

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting and signed by the Chair.

Matters arising

- JMcG has just started to write the Barnet SACRE Annual Report, KMcS will write the foreword and NM will send through the examination data. SACRE members approved the report to be voted through electronically. The Annual Report was completed and voted through electronically. The Annual Report has been sent out to the DfE and to NASACRE. Action **completed**
- NM added that the KS4 exam data was not received in time. It was received on Monday of this week and it will be shared with all SACRE Members, when the Minutes go out. Action: **NM/MG**
- ST informed that she is part of the DfE Faith Group. She will be meeting with Catherine McKinnell and will feedback at the next meeting. Action **outstanding (ST)**
- There is an update on the development of the launch presentation today under Item 5. Action **completed**
- The RE Hubs website training link has been shared with SACRE Members. Action **completed**

3. SACRE involvement locally

The following updates were provided:

Vicky Golestaneh reported that she has registered on the Hub and will be the certified Baha'i speaker.

Panos Fellas has volunteered on the Enfield SACRE and the Harringey SACRE as there were no Humanist representatives on either. Panos is also registered on the Hub as the certified Humanist speaker.

Nicola Santamaria and Norah Flatley, the Roman Catholic representatives, visited the Jewish Living Experience Exhibition hosted at the Edgware United Synagogue in November 2024. They both provided very positive feedback of a very good experience, learning a lot and being warmly welcomed.

Barnet SACRE Interfaith Choir – Alan Shaw reported that the Mayor of Barnet has invited the choir to participate in his Charity Concert on Sunday 6th April from 4 - 6 pm at St. Jude-on-the-Hill, Central Square, NW11 7AH. Money will be raised for the Mayor's charities - Macmillan Cancer Support, Age UK Barnet and the Royal Free Charity for cardiac equipment at Barnet Hospital.

Mary Karaolis reported that the first Greek Orthodox Secondary School will be ready and open for September 2025 in the Business Park. MK has offered the venue for the June 2026 Barnet SACRE meeting.

Cllr Narenthira informed that she visited the NASACRE stall at the Labour Party Conference that she attended.

4. National and Local Update: RE statutory responsibilities including PPP

JMcG provided a snapshot of the local and national issues.

- A quiz on Barnet showed that there was strong RE in place. Barnet has more Jewish schools registered than anywhere in the UK – a total of 20 schools. ST added that there are more than 20 schools as there are also private Jewish schools. There are 21 state schools of which 16 are primary, 4 secondary and 1 special school. There are 17 independent schools, making a total of 38 Jewish schools in Barnet. NM and JMcG offered to update the information on Jewish schools. **ACTION: NM/JMcG**
- The role of SACRE is to support RE in all schools. A total of 37 schools attended the last launch. JMcG asked that SACRE members go back to their communities and let them know that SACRE is offering training.
- The National and Local Updates were reported in the Annual Report.
- The launch of the ASC – Three workshops have already taken place. They are being run by Sally and Sophia and there has been a very good response from teachers. Teaching techniques are also shared at the training. Schools that are not attending the workshops need to be contacted and supported. **ACTION: JMcG**
- It is necessary to reach as many schools as possible to participate in the launch training. A list of school that have not attended is needed, as they may not be on the package list. All schools must be registered with BELS training to attend the ASC training. JMcG offered to check. **ACTION: JMcG**
- The website is up and running and all the resources are being uploaded to it. The current focus is looking at building up the resources in a collaborative way and teachers adding their own work to the Barnet website.
- Sally gave a brief update on Workshop 2 – Sociology Glasses. This looked at suitability for younger pupils and the influences on their lives looking through different lenses. This approach was then used through the different year groups. Teachers were positive about the resources. Both Sally and Sophia are running the launch sessions and providing ongoing support for schools. JMcG thanked Sally and Sophia for their work.
- JMcG informed that a bid has been put in to NASACRE Westhill. It is for a grant of £7K to develop the Ann Taves resources, to make sure that they are the updated resources that teachers need. Sally has been put forward as the lead for this work.
- ST stated that she would like to introduce Jewish schools to SACRE and that faith based schools still need to teach about other faiths and link up to other schools that are not Jewish.
- A lot is happening nationally with AREIAC in conversation with the new Ofsted lead Hazel Hanson. There is a call for evidence for a curriculum and assessment review in Nov 2024. Jan sent this in on behalf of SACRE and RE Advisors and got invited to the House of Commons on 15th January. JMcG is waiting to hear about the curriculum review and will update at the next meeting. If there are any changes then teachers will be supported.

Q. Why are some teachers not attending the network meetings? Are there problems with not releasing them from schools?

A. 37 signed up and there were 5 late apologies for staffing issues. No further information is available regarding attendance. JMcG will identify the schools that are not attending and will make contact. Teachers needs to attend as otherwise they will not manage the changes and will be breaking the law. **ACTION: JMcG**

- Interfaith Forum – A joint statement came out on anti-semitism and islamophobia.

Q. Were the BQ3 and BQ4 appendices used that were worked on?

A. Yes they were used. Schools liked them and downloading them. Some teachers brought them to the training session. There was a Curriculum Planning session after a workshop, so were used. They were very helpful.

- There is not enough funding in schools to cover teachers so there is less attendance for training sessions as schools cannot afford, as it impacts on their budgets. JMcG encouraged SACRE members to lobby their MPs for additional funding to up-skill teachers. JMcG will share a template letter. **ACTION: JMcG**

Q. Is the training for teachers only for the schools who have bought into BELS?

A. Training is free for schools that have to implement the syllabus. Faith schools have to pay for the training.

- On 13th March 2025 at 6.30pm London RE Hubs training will take place.
- The Barnet SACRE Annual Report was **agreed** by SACRE members and submitted to the DfE and NASACRE.

5. Collective Worship statutory responsibilities including: Standards and monitoring of CW

JMcG informed that the area of CW needed to be addressed. It can be done by monitoring Ofsted reports, conversations taking place with schools and teacher groups. Additionally trawling through website and presentations from teachers.

JMcG is waiting on documentation that is being updated on CW. JMcG will check to see when this will be ready. **ACTION: JMcG**

The most up to date information should be used and it is hoped that it will be available before starting the training. It was suggested working with Diocesan Leads as they have the good practice. It was also suggested to have a Working Party and SW offered to work with JMcG on that.

It was noted that in the Ofsted reports there is little being said about RE. This lack of information makes it difficult for SACRE to help in supporting teachers.

There have been no letters of complaint and no schools are requesting determinations or withdrawals.

6. Update from Neil Marlow on behalf of Barnet

NM informed that the Local Authority (LA) continues to support the Barnet SACRE (which includes clerking, adviser and links to the Council) and is proud of the work it does. Barnet SACRE also has a website page on the main Council website.

A lot of work has been done on the new syllabus which is being rolled out to schools for a September 2025 launch. There are training sessions for primary and secondary school RE leads and the website has also been updated.

Ofsted are consulting on the new framework for September 2025. There will be Report Cards as part of the reports from November 2025. The consultation finishes in April. When

the framework is agreed, it will be tested out in schools between April and November and then rolled out in November 2025. Gaynor Roberts spoke to primary Heads regarding the new Ofsted framework and asked for volunteers, both primary and secondary, to trial a one day inspection and to try out some ideas in schools. It is a feasibility study, so an opportunity for Ofsted to see how the new framework will work.

Currently, there have been 16 Ofsted Inspections in Barnet and they have gone well. There have been no deep dives in RE. The new framework will not have deep dives. It is unsure whether RE for non-faith schools will be looked at.

Appendix A of the Annual Report has been shared and it will be sent out to all SACRE Members with the minutes. **ACTION: NM/MG**

It contains the Achievement Data for 2024. There is no data for primary schools as it is not assessed at primary level and therefore not reported. The secondary grades are 1-9, where 9 is the top grade. There are slightly less pupils studying RE in 2024 compared to 2023.

The data for A Levels showed that Barnet was in line with national in some areas, or just slightly below in others. It was suggested that each school will be looked at regarding their A level results and studies. Schools will be contacted to see if support can be offered.

Q. What is the reason for the dip in results? Is it due to a transient intake or problems with staffing?

A. Support can be provided with up-skilling teachers via the Cullum St Gabriel's programme.

NM offered to break down the data and see which schools are underperforming and contact these school to see what support is needed. **ACTION: NM/JMcG**

This breakdown in data will also show if there is a downward trend. Previously, there were comparison tables, but these stopped when Covid started. However, trends can be viewed over a 3 year period prior to Covid. NM offered to look at the data for the trend in GCSE and A Level results. **ACTION: NM**

Q. Is the difference in percentage significant?

A. The A Level results were in the top 5% in the country and it is rare for them to have dropped. Barnet wants to be in the top 10% in all areas.

Q. Is RE recruitment an issue in Barnet?

A. NM was unsure if this was the case and would ask Headteachers. JMcG added that RE teacher recruitment is a national problem. Parliament has been lobbied and a £10K bursary has been offered for all prospective RE teachers coming in. Parliament will be lobbied for a £20K bursary.

Q. How does the bursary compare with other subjects?

A. JMcG was unsure if there has been an uplift, but similar bursaries were offered for Science and Maths. JMcG offered to find out. **ACTION: JMcG**

MK added that St. Andrew the Apostle School went out twice to recruit for an RE teacher and confirmed that RE teachers are difficult to recruit. This seems to be a national problem.

AS informed that Jewish schools have a Section 48 inspection by Pikuach. Both ST and AS offered to prepare a summary to share for the Jewish schools in Barnet. **ACTION: ST/AS**

SW informed that the Church of England schools have a SIAMS inspection and SW offered to prepare data on that. **ACTION: SW**

MK stated that St. Andrew The Apostle Greek Orthodox Secondary School is waiting for a faith inspection when they move into their new building. They will be looking for a Catholic Diocese to do the inspection.

7. Actions and responsibilities for members this year:

- JMcG informed that this year's June SACRE meeting will take a different format, as there were no awards to share with RE teachers. The SACRE meeting on 11th June will be more of a social event for SACRE Members and the Development Plan will be discussed.
- Venue suggestions were requested. SG suggested St. Mary's Church in East Barnet that also has two halls for hire. MK suggested St. Katherine's Church in Friern Barnet that also has a hall for hire. MG will follow up these suggestions. **ACTION: MG**

8. AOB

There was no AOB.

9. FUTURE DATES

Meeting dates for 2024-2025

- Wednesday – 11th June 2025 at 5-7pm (in person – venue TBC)

The meeting closed at 7pm

Chair of Barnet SACRE:

Date: