

Minutes

HILLINGDON STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

25 November 2025



Meeting held at Lake Farm Park Academy school,
Botwell Common Rd, Hayes UB3 1JA

Committee Members Present:				
Group A Alavari Jeevathol Dorothy Sadlik	Rinpoche Lelung	Group B Keith Lunn (Vice-Chair) Melanie Dring	Tim Wright Pauline Byles	
Group C Sumen Starr (Chair) Jenna Naulls Ria Searle	Hedson de Castro David Beeston	Group D Councillor Jagjit Singh Councillor Shehryar Ahmad-Wallana		
Also Present: Stacey Burman (HSACRE Advisor), HSACRE Liz Penny (Democratic Services Officer)				
1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE <i>(Agenda Item 1)</i> Apologies for absence were received from Councillor June Nelson and from Michael Hawkins.				
2. MEMBERSHIP <i>(Agenda Item 2)</i> It was noted that the Muslim and Sikh members were not in attendance. Democratic Services would email them to establish whether they still wished to be members of the HSACRE. RESOLVED: That the Membership updates be noted.				
3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST <i>(Agenda Item 3)</i> There were no declarations of interest.				
4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING <i>(Agenda Item 4)</i> The rationale for holding meetings in schools was highlighted and it was noted that members had previously voted unanimously in favour of this. Another vote was held and it was unanimously agreed that SACRE meetings would continue to be held in schools. RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting dated 25 June 2025 be agreed as an accurate record.				
5. DETERMINATIONS <i>(Agenda Item 5)</i> Stacey Burman, SACRE Advisor, introduced the item. It was noted that no requests for determinations had been received from Hillingdon schools. However, members heard				

that, in other boroughs, schools had at times applied for determinations when it was not required.

The Advisor reminded SACRE that one of their statutory duties was around collective worship and noted that the guidance on collective worship in Hillingdon was due for review.

The Advisor clarified the distinction between collective and corporate worship, and the requirement for collective worship to be “mainly or broadly of Christian Character, though not distinctive of any particular Christian denomination.”

The HSACRE was informed that collective worship should be held on a daily basis in schools and be distinct from other lessons. However, it was noted that there was room for flexibility as collective worship did not need to include the whole school and there was no minimum requirement in terms of time. Quotes, song and activities from other religions could be included.

The SACRE Advisor emphasised that schools could apply for a determination for this worship not to be predominantly Christian but still had to comply with the daily collective worship requirement.

Members sought clarification as to procedures to follow when parents elected to withdraw their children from RE lessons or from collective worship. The SACRE Advisor recommended that, on receipt of such requests, the school met with the parents in question to discuss the matter further and clarify any misconceptions.

Following agreement by vote of the revised guidance proposed by the Advisor, it was suggested that SACREs could provide examples and encourage engagement. A bank of resources was also recommended.

It was explained that the SACRE Advisor was pulling together a working party on the topic of collective worship. The work was already underway, and it was suggested that this would be a good time, and hence made sense, for Hillingdon to work collectively to produce new resources.

It was confirmed that a new model for said resources had been created centred around key concepts such as ‘forgiveness’ and ‘peace’ to which different religious and non-religious worldviews could contribute.

The SACRE Advisor noted her wish to move away from the traditional model of teaching RE with a focus on six world religions, and that this model of interfaith/belief dialogue was reflected in these resources.

SACRE members were encouraged to offer any further suggestions - an online meeting would be held to agree the topics. Members were also invited to join a working party and requested to email Stacey Burman with expressions of interest.

RESOLVED: That the update in respect of determinations be noted.

6. NATIONAL UPDATES (Agenda Item 6)

Agenda item 6.1

It was noted that it would be beneficial for HSACRE and the Hillingdon Interfaith

Community Group to link up and work together more in the future. The SACRE Advisor confirmed that Interfaith Week in 2025 had been very successful; it had focussed on the theme of 'Together We Serve' and reached more than one million pupils.

Agenda items 6.1 and 6.2

It was reiterated that RE Hubs provided an opportunity for schools to link up with faith speakers. Speakers were registered and accredited having received training. SACRE encouraged all faith speakers to register on RE Hubs as a speaker if possible - Tim Wright and Dorothy Sadlik had already registered.

It was noted that RE Hubs also supported NASACRE. A network session entitled 'In Conversation with NASACRE' had been held on 20 November 2025. Matters discussed had included how SACREs could address the matter of tension in local communities, especially in London. The SACRE Advisor informed members that the next NASACRE conference and AGM would be held on 18 May 2026 in Liverpool. It was hoped that the local authority would provide funding for someone to attend – anyone interested was invited to contact the SACRE Advisor. The SACRE Advisor agreed to add Liz Penny, Keith Lunn and the Chair's new email details to the RE Hubs' emailing list to receive updates.

Teaching of Sikhi

The SACRE heard that, on 22 September 2025, a report had been released regarding the teaching of Sikhi in schools. It had been found that current teaching in RE was not authentic – all schools covered the five Ks but sometimes little else. The SACRE Advisor reported that further conversation with the author included a recommended analysis of the current syllabi and formation of a National Sikhi Advice Board to produce guidance for all SACREs as to what the teaching of Sikhi should entail. It was agreed that the SACRE Advisor would email SACRE members a link to a survey which they were encouraged to share with colleagues.

Curriculum and Assessment Review

It was confirmed that the Curriculum and Assessment Review had now been published recommending to the Department of Education that RE be part of the national curriculum – this had yet to be agreed. Work was ongoing to obtain the consensus of all relevant groups, and it was hoped this would be achieved by March 2026. There would then be a requirement to change the current law which would be a long process. In the meantime, SACREs were advised to continue reviewing their syllabi.

RESOLVED: That the National Updates be noted.

7. LOCAL UPDATES (Agenda Item 7)

Agenda item 7.1

This had already been covered.

Agenda item 7.2

It was reported that the Interfaith Calendar had been published and circulated. Nicki O'Flanagan was thanked for her assistance with this. The School Art Competition had been a good way to engage with schools with 21 taking part. It was agreed that the

School Art Competition and Interfaith Calendar project would be repeated in 2026 with the theme of 'Special Life Events that we celebrate.'

Agenda items 7.3 and 7.4

Regarding the Interfaith Dialogue Event, it was noted that the previous event held in a different borough had been aimed at primary schools and held online – the topic for consideration was 'How did we get here?' At the event, five representatives of different faiths had shared their views and pupils had been asked to consider their responses.

The SACRE was informed that an online Hillingdon Secondary Pupil's Interfaith Dialogue Event was planned for 15 January 2026. This event would focus on responses to religious persecution through the ages based on the question 'Why Remember?' 15 schools had already signed up. It was confirmed that Dorothy Sadlik would be a speaker at this event. Generation to Generation and representatives of the Muslim, Sikh, Humanist and Bahai faiths had also been invited to take part. It was confirmed that the SACRE Advisor had designed packs which would be circulated to schools for use prior to the event on 15 January. Pupils would be asked to prepare a piece of artwork during the following reflection session. It was proposed that showcasing some of the artwork and incorporating it into the RE syllabus would be a valuable addition.

It was confirmed that the SACRE Advisor had linked up with the Faith and Belief Forum to devise a continuation of the above in a programme of further support for secondary schools in Hillingdon.

Promotion of the event was encouraged, and Ward Councillors were requested to assist with raising awareness. An article in Hillingdon People was proposed. It was agreed that the SACRE Advisor would draft a letter regarding additional funding for community projects which would be sent to the Leader of the Council. She would also draft a letter for Ward Councillors to send to places of worship in their local areas. Councillor Ahmad-Wallana agreed to send the SACRE Advisor the email address of the Muslim Women's Group in Hayes.

RESOLVED: That the Local Updates be noted.

8. AGREED SYLLABUS CONFERENCE (Agenda Item 8)

HSACRE adjourned to convene as the Agreed Syllabus Conference.

Agenda items 8.1, 8.2 and 8.3

The SACRE Advisor suggested launching the RE syllabus in conjunction with Hillingdon Interfaith. A meeting with Hillingdon Interfaith at the Gurdwara in summer 2026 was proposed.

In respect of the statutory section, SACRE members were reminded of the previously agreed flower model which would be used to facilitate discussion around meaningful questions founded in cosmology, ontology, praxeology, axiology and epistemology. In terms of the non-statutory section, it was reported that sample materials would be provided to schools. A copy of the curriculum map was circulated to attendees. It was noted that the SACRE Advisor also planned to develop support materials around SEND children in both primary and secondary schools in Hillingdon.

	<p>All SACRE members present confirmed that they were happy with the proposed approach in respect of the statutory and non-statutory sections and planned development of materials for SEND children.</p> <p>Any Members interested in joining the working party or able to recommend someone who would be interested were requested to liaise with the SACRE Advisor directly.</p> <p>It was confirmed that the intention was to launch the new syllabus by the end of the current academic year. The SACRE Advisor would liaise with the local authority's Head of Education and Lifelong Learning regarding the design etc.</p> <p>The recommendations of the SACRE Advisor were approved by members of the ASC. The HSACRE meeting subsequently re-convened, and the recommendations of the ASC were approved by HSACRE members.</p>
9.	<p>HSACRE ACTION PLAN (Agenda Item 9)</p> <p><i>Agenda item 9.1</i></p> <p>It was noted that the Annual Report was included in the agenda pack. The annual report was agreed by SACRE members.</p> <p><i>Agenda item 9.2</i></p> <p>In terms of the budget for SACRE, it was confirmed that £11,500 had been requested for the current financial year. This had not been agreed in time; hence the SACRE Advisor was unable to submit invoices at present. This matter would be discussed with the Council's Head of Education and Lifelong Learning outside of the meeting.</p> <p><i>Agenda item 9.3</i></p> <p>Members who had completed the self-evaluation forms were thanked for their contributions. It was noted that, in the agenda pack, the biggest challenges had been underlined. These included building links with the local authority and with Hillingdon Interfaith. However, it was noted that progress was being made in this regard. (See Agenda items 7.3 and 7.4).</p> <p><i>Agenda item 9.4</i></p> <p>With regard to the Action Plan, it was confirmed that this was updated regularly.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the HSACRE Action Plan be noted.</p>
10.	<p>DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS (Agenda Item 10)</p> <p>To facilitate communication between meetings, the SACRE Advisor recommended the sharing of email addresses. All attendees voted in support of this approach. It was confirmed that absent members would have the option to opt out of this within a given timeframe following the sharing of the minutes.</p> <p>It was confirmed that the next meeting of HSACRE would be held on 25 March 2026. The venue had yet to be finalised.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the dates of future meetings be noted.</p>

11.	<p>AOB (<i>Agenda Item 11</i>)</p> <p>Representatives of Hillingdon Interfaith confirmed that school pupils regularly visited the Buddhist Temple with over 2,000 visitors each year. Discussion focussed on how to be a good human being and feedback was very positive. It was suggested that it would be beneficial if Hillingdon Interfaith Group could be represented on RE Hubs.</p> <p>In response to questions from members, it was noted that all faith representatives were encouraged not to speak on behalf of an entire religion but to only share their own experiences.</p> <p>It was noted that SACRE hoped to work more closely with Hillingdon Interfaith Group in the future and promote their work. It was anticipated that representatives of Hillingdon Interfaith Group would be present at the launch of the new syllabus in 2026.</p>
	<p>The meeting, which commenced at 5.55 pm, closed at 7.50 pm.</p>

These are the minutes of the above meeting. For more information on any of the resolutions please contact Clerk to HSACRE - Email:democratic@hillingdon.gov.uk on Please enter via main reception and visit the security desk to sign-in and collect a visitors pass. You will then be directed to the Committee Room.. Circulation of these minutes is to Councillors, Officers, the Press and Members of the Public.