

Minutes

HILLINGDON STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

25 March 2026



Meeting held at Guru Nanak Sikh Academy

	Committee Members Present:		
	Group A Dorothy Sadlik Jasmakal Sidhu	Group B Keith Lunn (Vice-Chair) Melanie Dring	Tim Wright Pauline Byles
	Group C Sumen Starr (Chair) David Beeston	Hedson de Castro	Group D Councillor Jagjit Singh
	Also Present: Stacey Burman (HSACRE Advisor) Liz Penny (Democratic Services Officer)		
1.	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (<i>Agenda Item 1</i>) Apologies for absence were received from Ria Searle, Alice Vahdat, David Beeston, Rinpoche Lelung and Cllr Shehryar Ahmad-Wallana.		
2.	MEMBERSHIP (<i>Agenda Item 2</i>) Mr Jaskamal Singh Sidhu, Headteacher at Guru Nanak Sikh Academy, was thanked for hosting the meeting at the school. When put to a vote, his proposed membership of Hillingdon SACRE was unanimously agreed. RESOLVED: That the membership update 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>) RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting dated 25 November 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 Collective Worship Guidance had been agreed and sample materials were being developed in collaboration with local schools, local faith groups and other SACREs. SACRE members were advised that the proposed model promoted interfaith/belief sharing alongside personal reflection opportunities and could be used flexibly by schools in assemblies, form times or registration sessions. It could also be used in conjunction with, or as an audit tool for, selecting other Collective Worship packages/materials (including those from the local Diocese). The model focused on a weekly key concept or theme e.g. 'forgiveness' to generate interfaith dialogue.		

The SACRE was informed that a working party had been set up which would meet online on 30 April 2026. The group currently comprised 12 members, but others were welcome to join. The working group would choose themes for which resources would be collated and would then be trialled in schools and feedback received.

It was confirmed that the SACRE Advisor had recently built links with the Zoroastrian Centre in Harrow, and it was anticipated that a representative of the Zoroastrian faith could join Hillingdon SACRE in the future.

SACRE members sought further clarification regarding withdrawal from collective worship. It was confirmed that, at present, a meeting was usually held with the parent prior to any withdrawal being agreed. However, a proposal had been made which would mean withdrawals would have to be automatically agreed without any such meeting. Though this revised system was not yet in place, the Church of England (CoE) had updated their guidance to schools to reflect this change already.

In response to further questions from SACRE members, it was confirmed that training regarding the collective worship model had not yet been planned, partly because it could be used so flexibly. In addition, it was anticipated that expertise should already exist within schools as this was an ongoing statutory requirement, which could be tapped into, and there were no resources to support further training at present. It was noted that a number of schools could pilot the new collective worship model – further resources could then be collated for other schools to refer to.

With regards to training, the SACRE Advisor recommended the use of video clips and resources on the website as the most cost-effective option. It was emphasised that the current focus was on the agreed syllabus - funding for these resources would need to be sourced from a future year's budget.

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

6. **NATIONAL UPDATES** (*Agenda Item 6*)

Agenda item 6.1 (NASACRE)

The SACRE Advisor informed members that NASACRE regularly organised 'In Conversation' events – these were primarily aimed at SACRE chairs and vice-chairs.

It was confirmed that the November 2025 event had focused on inter-belief dialogue, while the focus for the March 2026 event was community cohesion and the role of SACREs in relation to the national curriculum debate.

It was noted that the SACRE Advisor planned to attend the NASACRE conference in Liverpool on 18 May 2026 - the focus of the event was 'bridging communities.' Costs incurred for the Advisor's attendance would be split across the SACREs she currently supported.

Agenda item 6.2 (CAR Update)

The Advisor provided a summary to date. Dr Vanessa Ogden, Richard Kueh and Deborah Weston had taken up the challenge of achieving consensus within the RE community. It was noted that there was no funding or support provided for this. They had drafted materials which had been shared with faith groups and teachers re. what

could be included in the national curriculum. These materials focused on the 3 types of knowledge referenced by Ofsted.

It was anticipated that, if agreed, the new national curriculum with RE would not be introduced until 2028 at the earliest. The Secretary of State would be tasked with making a decision as to whether to move to phase 2 – at that point a draft national curriculum would be prepared and funding secured. Members heard that, should a decision be taken to include RE in the national curriculum, the necessary legal changes would be required around the Locally Agreed Syllabus status. Should the changes be implemented, SACREs would still have an important role to play.

The SACRE heard that a white paper had been published aimed at working towards a more cohesive United Kingdom, including the importance of SACRE support around community cohesion and improved RE education. A link to the white paper would be circulated to SACRE members.

RESOLVED: That the National Updates be noted.

7. **LOCAL UPDATES** (*Agenda Item 7*)

Agenda item 7.1 (Hillingdon Council)

It was noted that a letter drafted by the Head of Education and Lifelong Learning had been sent to Cllr Susan O'Brien, Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education asking her to kindly raise awareness of the work of Hillingdon SACRE amongst elected Members. It was believed that said letter had been forwarded to the Leader of the Council but that no further action had been taken to date.

Dorothy Sadlik informed the SACRE that she had also written a letter to the Cabinet Member regarding the online Secondary Schools Interfaith Dialogue on Religious Persecution and Holocaust Memorial Day. A heartfelt response had been received which was much appreciated.

It was suggested that the Cabinet Member could be invited to attend a future meeting of Hillingdon SACRE. It was also suggested that training regarding SACRE be incorporated into new Member induction in the future.

It was agreed that the Head of Education and Lifelong Learning would update the Cabinet Member on the work of the SACRE at one of his regular meetings with her. The SACRE Advisor would produce a summary to facilitate this.

Agenda item 7.2 (Interfaith Calendar)

It was confirmed that the winners had been chosen and the calendar would be sent to the designers. The theme was 'life events that are special to me'. Members were requested to check the calendar dates included in the agenda pack and inform the SACRE Advisor and clerk of any anomalies by 20 April 2026 at the latest.

Agenda item 7.3 (RE in schools)

The SACRE Advisor confirmed that a session with teachers had been held earlier that day. The RE syllabus had been reviewed and representatives of 12 or 13 local schools had been in attendance with apologies received from a further 8 schools. One teacher had expressed an interest in joining Hillingdon SACRE.

Agenda item 7.4 (Interfaith Dialogue Event January 2026)

Dorothy Sadlik congratulated the SACRE Advisor on the excellent online Schools Interfaith Dialogue event aimed at secondary school pupils noting that education was key. The theme of the event was 'Why Remember?' with a focus on religious persecution. Pupils had received a pack in advance of the event. They had then participated in an online session with speakers from a variety of religions and worldviews and were provided with an opportunity for reflection thereafter. Topics discussed were persecution, sacrifice and martyrdom. It was reported that the event had been well-received and could be repeated in 2027. The focus of the next event might be 'good and evil' and hence would be inclusive of primary aged children.

It was confirmed that the SACRE Advisor had been contacted by the Faith Belief Forum and was working on a bespoke Hillingdon Schools' Linking Programme – sessions would focus on identity, community, commonality and cohesion. It was reported that Hewens College had already registered to be involved in this.

Agenda item 7.5 (Workforce Data)

Workforce data from the DfE was presented to SACRE members. It was noted that the unvalidated data covered secondary schools only and showed the % of curriculum time dedicated to the teaching of RE. It was confirmed that 5% was recommended but this was not set out in law and was rarely complied with. It was highlighted that many schools failed to teach RE to year 12 and 13 pupils although the law stated that they should.

Examinations results data was also presented. It was noted that no Hillingdon schools had entered pupils for the RE short course – most had entered them for the full GCSE. The data showed the % of pupils who had achieved a grade 9-4 and the results were encouraging. It was observed that the % of pupils taking RE 'A' level was very low. The importance of RE in supporting literacy and contributing to other subjects was highlighted.

RESOLVED: That the Local Updates be noted.

8. **AGREED SYLLABUS CONFERENCE** (*Agenda Item 8*)

HSACRE adjourned to convene as the Agreed Syllabus Conference.

Agenda item 8.1 (Development of support materials)

It was confirmed that Ofsted had been critical of RE curricula in schools that were based around visible entities or themes and were making too many assumptions and broad stereotypes. It was also discussed why RE should not be taught one religion at a time.

Ofsted promoted three types of knowledge – substantive, personal and disciplinary. It was noted that the proposed Hillingdon flower model reflected these as it focused on an important concept relevant to all in the floret, with the stem of the flower representing personal knowledge and prior learning and the petals as substantive knowledge. This model, included in the draft statutory syllabus, had been included in the agenda pack. The SACRE Advisor had included some further guidance on disciplinary knowledge in the document. Once completed, the statutory materials would

be sent to Nicola O’Flanagan for inclusion on the LEAP SACRE page.

With regard to non-statutory materials, it was noted that Early Years materials had already been produced. It was confirmed that the SACRE Advisor would also prepare SEND materials with a working group to produce these non-statutory materials and samples for the toolkit.

Agenda item 8.2 (Agreement of Recommendations to SACRE)

Members approved the draft statutory syllabus document as set out in the agenda pack.

Agenda item 8.3 (Launch)

With regards to the launch event, the importance of getting the buy in of headteachers in addition to subject specialists was highlighted. The Head of Education and Lifelong Learning recommended a November launch event. It was agreed that dialogue with the Hillingdon Association of Secondary Headteachers (HASH) and with primary headteachers regarding the launch of the agreed syllabus would be facilitated. It was agreed that the Head of Education and Lifelong Learning would provide the SACRE Advisor with the dates of the primary teacher and HASH forums. The SACRE Advisor would then make arrangements for the syllabus to be introduced to primary and secondary school headteachers accordingly.

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.

9. **ACTION PLAN UPDATE** (*Agenda Item 9*)

Agenda item 9.1 (Budget)

The Head of Education and Lifelong Learning confirmed that the SACRE budget would be £11.5k going forward. It was noted that the SACRE Advisor was owed payment for 10 days’ work completed in the previous year. It was essential that the SACRE Advisor’s time was used wisely in future to avoid another overspend.

Agenda item 9.2 (Action Plan for 2025-2026)

The SACRE Advisor informed members that she had been involved in conversations with the Secretary of State around anti-religious hate in schools. The Head of Education and Lifelong Learning confirmed that all hate incidents in schools were tracked; however, it was acknowledged that further guidance for schools on how to tackle hate would be helpful. It was agreed that the SACRE Advisor would add this topic to the Hillingdon SACRE’s future action plan. It was confirmed that the SACRE Advisor would update the action plan.

RESOLVED: That the update on the HSACRE Action Plan be noted.

10. **DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS** (*Agenda Item 10*)

It was agreed that the date of the next SACRE meeting would be changed from Tuesday 30 June 2026 to **Wednesday 8 July 2026**. The SACRE Advisor would confirm the venue in due course.

	RESOLVED: That the dates of future meetings be noted.
11.	AOB (<i>Agenda Item 11</i>) Mr Sidhu was thanked for his hospitality and for kindly agreeing to host the SACRE meeting at Guru Nanak Sikh Academy.
	The meeting, which commenced at 5.30 pm, closed at 7.10 pm.

These are the minutes of the above meeting. For more information on any of the resolutions please contact Clerk to HSACRE - Email:democratic@hillington.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.