

THE LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN

At a meeting of the **STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE)** held on **WEDNESDAY, 22ND OCTOBER, 2025** at 5.30 pm in Committee Room 2, Town Hall, Judd Street, London WC1H 9JE

MEMBERS PRESENT

Panel A Christian and Other Denominations

Ann Boater (Quaker)
Dr. Lynndy Levin (Jewish)
Lorraine Nunez (Roman Catholic)

Panel B The Church of England

Mary Thorne (Chair)
Felicity Djerehe
Rev. Sarah Lee

Panel C Teachers

Sinead Costelloe
Sarah Richardson (Vice-Chair)
Sufia Tunu

Panel D Camden Local Authority

Councillor Judy Dixey
Councillor Rebecca Filer
Councillor Julian Fulbrook
Councillor Jenny Mulholland
Councillor Nazma Rahman

ALSO PRESENT

Claire Clinton, Religious Education (RE) Professional Advisor to SACRE
Rachel Davie, Director of Learning & Impact, Camden Learning

The minutes should be read in conjunction with the agenda for the meeting. They are subject to approval and signature at the next meeting of the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) and any corrections approved at that meeting will be recorded in those minutes.

MINUTES

1. ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR

Proposed by Ann Boater and seconded by Councillor Mulholland, Mary Thorne was elected as the Chair of SACRE for the duration of the 2023-24 academic year.

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Proposed by Sinead Costelloe and seconded by Councillor Nazma Rahman, Sarah Richardson was elected as the Vice-Chair of SACRE for the duration of the 2024-25 academic year.

RESOLVED –

THAT

1. Mary Thorne be elected Chair for the 2025/26 academic year.
2. Sarah Richardson be elected Vice-Chair for the 2025/26 academic year.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Stephanie Ellner, Councillor Sylvia McNamara, Rev. Damien Mason, Nandarane Naina Parmar, Abdul Quadir and Helen Young.

**3. DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY, NON-PECUNIARY AND OTHER
INTERESTS IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THIS AGENDA**

There were no declarations.

4. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Webcasting

The Chair announced that the meeting as being broadcast live to the internet and would be capable of repeated viewing and copies of the recording could be made available on request. Those participating in the meeting were deemed to be consenting to being filmed.

Ramadan Advice

The RE Professional Advisor reported that last year's Ramadan advice had now been updated and would be sent to schools in late November. They explained that the draft had been shared with the Director of Learning and Impact, who had forwarded it to the Safeguarding and Attendance Lead. It was agreed that the RE Professional Advisor would circulate the advice to SACRE members to review, who could send any comments by 12 noon on 5 November. After which it would be sent to the SACRE Chair and Vice-Chair for sign-off, prior to circulation to schools.

Action By: RE Professional Advisor

How meetings will be held for the remainder of the academic year

It was noted that the next meeting, on 11 February, would be held remotely, and that the meeting on 10 June would be held in hybrid format.

5. MINUTES

RESOLVED –

THAT the minutes of the meeting held on 1 May 2025 be approved and signed as a correct record.

6. NOTIFICATION OF ANY ITEMS OF BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIR DECIDES TO TAKE AS URGENT

There was no notification of urgent business.

7. CAMDEN SACRE TERMS OF REFERENCE AND PROTOCOL

Consideration was given to the SACRE terms of reference and protocol.

It was noted that section 5d of the protocol, 'Form Committee D during and ASC' should be amended to read 'Form Committee D during an ASC'. The RE Professional Advisor agreed to correct this.

Action By: RE Professional Advisor

RESOLVED –

THAT SACRE note the terms of reference and protocol.

8. MEMBERSHIP OF CAMDEN SACRE

Consideration was given to the membership.

Two new members were welcomed:

- Rev. Sarah Lee (Panel B - Church of England)
- Sufia Tunu (Panel C - Teachers)

Sinead Costelloe (Panel C - Teachers) was welcomed back returning from maternity leave.

Farewell and thanks was given to Ann Boater, Quaker representative, who was stepping down after this meeting. The RE Professional Advisor stated that they would approach the Free Church for a new representative.

The RE Professional Advisor confirmed they continued to pursue the final sign-off to welcome the new Buddhist representative.

Rachel Davie, Director of Learning & Impact, was welcomed as the new Camden Learning officer affiliated to SACRE, replacing Owen Rees.

RESOLVED –

THAT SACRE note the membership.

9. FAITH FORUM UPDATE

Consideration was given to the Faith Forum update.

Councillor Rebecca Filer gave the following updates:

- Several interfaith coffee morning events had taken place, the most recent on 11 September at the Baptist Church, attended by the Leader of the Council and a Cabinet Member.
- Reassurance work had been carried out following the far-right protest and the Manchester terror attack, with additional engagement with Jewish communities in Camden and work following the arson attack in Sussex.
- Interfaith Week activities were approaching, including: a walk on 13 November, an evening of social action to support the C4WS night shelter, the June RE conferences, and an art exhibition. Further Interfaith Week updates were discussed on Item 12.
- The first RE Hubs training had been completed, with contacts increasing from 27 to 48. September and October had been particularly productive, with follow-ups and new meetings taking place.
- Updates on the Camden Junior RE Interfaith 1-day conferences 2026 were shared which were incorporated to item 13 of the minutes.

Councillor Filer expressed a wish to strengthen links and combine more activity between the Faith Forum and SACRE.

RESOLVED –

THAT SACRE note the update.

10. COLLECTIVE WORSHIP IN CAMDEN

Consideration was given to the Collective Worship Guidance.

The RE Professional Advisor noted that collective worship could easily be overlooked in school timetables but remained a statutory requirement in maintained schools. They advised that SACRE could request revisions to make the Collective Worship guidance more visually consistent with the agreed syllabus. They suggested including coloured logos to create a unified look and emphasise that both documents were part of the same framework. Members agreed that a more consistent style would be beneficial and for this to be actioned.

Action By: RE Professional Advisor

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The following was discussed:

- A member asked whether schools were aware of the Collective Worship Guidance. The RE Professional Advisor confirmed that no training on collective worship had yet taken place in Camden, as the priority had been implementing the new syllabus. They proposed that training or an information session could be considered next year, potentially through a headteachers' briefing or online update. The Director of Learning & Impact suggested including a reminder in the headteachers' bulletin and offering an online session.
- A member referred to section 5 of the document, highlighting the legal requirement for all registered pupils, including those in Years 5 and 6 and sixth form, to participate in collective worship unless withdrawn. Another member queried whether the right to withdraw applied up to age 18 or only in sixth form. The RE Professional Advisor confirmed that parents retained the right to withdraw their child until age 18, after which the individual student could make that decision themselves. The RE Professional Advisor agreed to update the guidance wording to clarify the rules around pupil withdrawal, particularly for sixth form students.

Action By: The RE Professional Advisor

- A member asked for an update on collective worship practice in Camden schools. The RE Professional Advisor reported that there were currently 12 schools with determinations, a figure which changed over time. No secondary schools in Camden currently had determinations, though they were eligible to apply.

RESOLVED –

THAT SACRE note the documents.

11. NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SACRE (NASACRE) UPDATES

Consideration was given to the NASACRE updates.

The RE Professional Advisor informed members about the annual conference in Liverpool, noting that two places were available and that travel expenses and the cost of attending the conference for the day would be covered.

RESOLVED –

THAT SACRE note the update.

12. INTERFAITH WEEK UPDATE

Consideration was given to the Interfaith Week update.

The RE Professional Advisor reported that all relevant briefings and information had been shared through the newsletter and sent directly to schools.

Other updates on interfaith week were incorporated in item 9 of these minutes.

RESOLVED –

THAT SACRE note the update.

13. NASACRE/WESTHILL GRANT UPDATE

Consideration was given to the NASACRE/WESTHILL grant update.

The RE Professional Advisor stated that the sixth form speakers project grant had increased to £12,000 for the second project. Four pupils from Acland Burghley were currently involved, with a target of twelve participants in total. The project aimed to train young people to speak about faith or belief systems, which did not have to be religious, and to create a database of trained speakers who could visit other schools. The RE Professional Advisor confirmed that she was working with a senior figure in debate and oracy, who was co-leading the project who had experience delivering similar initiatives, such as through the Youth Parliament. Eight secondary schools had expressed interest in joining through network meetings, which was a higher level of engagement than initially expected, as interest had been anticipated mainly from primary schools.

The following was discussed:

- A member asked how the project would ensure that pupils were drawn from a range of backgrounds, noting that there were currently fewer Hindu, Sikh and Jewish students involved. The RE Professional Advisor acknowledged this and said she had spoken with teachers and aimed to include students studying A Level Religious Studies. The current mix of participants from Acland Burghley, which included Muslim (Sunni), Christian, Druze and Humanist students, and said this was encouraging, though achieving broader representation would be challenging. A leaflet was being produced for heads of sixth form and teachers to share with students of different faiths, including those not taking A Level Religious Studies.
- A member suggested approaching private schools to widen participation. The Director of Learning & Impact noted that drawing participants from maintained schools would support students where language and oracy had greater variability as there would be higher numbers of disadvantaged pupils.
- A member commented that the project sounded quite intensive, with participants being trained and then moving on before new students were brought in. The RE Professional Advisor explained that students were asked to commit for one year and a term so that, in Year 13, they could mentor the incoming Year 12 students, creating a cycle of peer support and continuity. This structure would allow the students to sustain the project themselves, with staff mainly handling administrative tasks. There was funding for two years and that the project's scope would be reviewed after that period. This year,

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the focus was intentionally narrower, with schools selecting from a smaller range of topics rather than twelve different options, though the project could expand in the future.

- A member commented that it would be great if project could not be opened to the wider public rather than just schools, adding that it was important work and a great initiative.
- A member suggested reaching out to parents directly rather than only through newsletters, noting that some may not speak English as a first language and might have concerns about their children participating.

A supplementary agenda was published which included information about the Camden Junior RE Interfaith 1-day conferences 2026. The following was updated in relation to the conferences:

- Further grant funding had been obtained, and schools had been grouped by neighbourhood, with one more school sought to host an event.
- SACRE members were invited to attend for a full or part day, explaining that their involvement would help strengthen SACRE's contact with schools.
- Each participating school would bring six to ten children. The RE Professional Advisor would lead the day's activities, enabling teachers to adapt the session for their own schools with support from pupils who had taken part.
- The Faith Forum were supporting the project and that funding had been secured for a filmmaker to produce educational films for teachers to use in future sessions.

The following was discussed:

- It was confirmed that the day conferences would run from 9.45am to 2.15pm. Information about the day conferences to be shared again with SACRE members in due course.

Action By: RE Professional Advisor

- The RE Professional Advisor noted that attendance would be free and that the 'train the trainer' sessions would be particularly engaging, providing participants with a package of materials and opportunities for pupils to meet local community representatives. The Director of Learning & Impact highlighted the benefit of holding events locally to reduce travel distances.
- A member proposed changes to the school groupings, suggesting that Fleet Primary should be grouped with Gospel Oak rather than in the south. The RE Professional Advisor advised that the proposed groupings had been sent to schools on Friday and could be adjusted. Councillor Filer added that the Community Partnerships team could be consulted, as the groupings were part of Council structures, and the RE Professional Advisor confirmed she had already contacted them.
- The RE Professional Advisor explained that the intention had been to include six schools in each area, but a higher number of Church of England schools had registered interest. They were still looking for a suitable venue and considering whether to allocate places on a first-come, first-served basis or seek a larger hall. A member suggested waiting to see which schools

responded before finalising arrangements, noting it was positive that church schools were taking part.

- It was noted that different arrangements would go out to diocesan schools and that, although the funding had originally been for maintained schools, invitations for the fifth day would be extended more widely. A member encouraged mixing schools rather than grouping all faith schools together. The RE Professional Advisor acknowledged the challenge of venue capacity but said this could be explored further.
- It was also suggested that bringing Church of England schools together could support future collaboration on shared projects.

RESOLVED –

THAT SACRE note the update.

14. CAMDEN SACRE PRIORITIES 2025-26

Consideration was given to the SACRE priorities 2025-26.

The RE Professional Advisor reported that she had reviewed three sets of minutes from the previous year and compiled all agreed improvement actions into the SACRE priorities and development plan.

The following was discussed:

- Members agreed that progress against these actions should remain a standing agenda item, with the aim of tracking progress through collective discussion.
- The Director of Learning & Impact highlighted that Key Stage 4 support was being recognised, as results in some subjects, were below the national average (not limited to RE). The RE Professional Advisor added that they were already undertaking work in one of the schools to help improve outcomes.
- The RE Professional Advisor explained that the new Director of Learning & Impact now held more detailed data on attainment than was previously available, and that discussions about this information were already taking place. They confirmed that the RE Professional Advisor post now had 25 working days allocated this year (compared to 20 last year) to focus on attainment and Key Stage 4 outcomes in Camden.
- The Director of Learning & Impact reported that there had been 473 GCSE entries this year. The RE Professional Advisor noted that correlation work on outcomes had been completed the previous year. The Director of Learning & Impact advised that the data remained provisional, but that early national figures were also available. This meant improvement work could begin before validated results were published, allowing schools to identify priorities and access subject support. It was agreed that Key Stage 4 outcomes and support would be included on the next meeting agenda. The RE Professional Advisor observed that SACRE had long identified Key Stage 4 outcomes as a focus

area but previously lacked sufficient data to take action. Interventions had been carried out last year, and the data now supported further targeted work.

- Members agreed that there was no reason Camden could not meet or exceed national averages, though Director of Learning & Impact noted that there remained significant variation in outcomes between schools.

RESOLVED –

THAT SACRE note the report.

15. CAMDEN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (RE) NEWSLETTER & NETWORKS

Consideration was given to the newsletters & networks update.

A supplementary agenda was published which included information about the Oak National resources for RE, given to primary RE leads at the recent network meeting.

The RE Professional Advisor gave the following updates:

- The RE Professional Advisor had been working with the new Oak materials. Any SACRE member could attend the workshops or listen to them afterwards. Oak Academy was a Department for Education (DfE) teaching platform covering all subjects and providing schools with online teaching resources. Schools were still required by law to follow the Camden Agreed Syllabus.
- A document had been produced mapping the Oak content to the Syllabus, with all links included and a unit on Christmas highlighted. Schools were advised that the accompanying PowerPoints were useful and provided clear guidance. All materials were available under the Open Government Licence.
- The RE Professional Advisor explained that they wished to share examples of pupils' RE work with SACRE members to keep them informed about current activity in schools. They displayed samples of children's work from Early Years to Year 6, which had also been taken to a recent RE network meeting, to demonstrate the range and quality of pupils' learning. They stated that a shared folder had been created on Google Drive so schools could upload photographs of pupils' RE work and they would send a reminder to teachers this was active to access.

Action By: RE Professional Advisor

The following was discussed:

- A member commented positively on the syllabus used in her schools.
- The RE Professional Advisor noted that, following initial feedback, teachers had expressed concern that the syllabus contained too much content. They had since revised materials to highlight the most important areas of focus, which had improved teachers' confidence and understanding of priorities.
- It was noted that the new scheme was more streamlined and easier for teachers to use, with clear guidance on key elements to cover. Teachers had reported noticeable improvements in consistency and understanding.

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- The RE Professional Advisor advised that schools where RE had previously been inconsistent were now delivering the subject more regularly, with most schools either teaching or beginning to teach RE. They reminded members that full implementation was expected to take around three years as teachers built their subject knowledge. The new materials were helping to strengthen this understanding and improve confidence.
- A member raised the challenge of marking RE work and assessing what pupils were actually learning, noting the need to capture pupils' thinking as well as their written or visual work. The RE Professional Advisor agreed that children should be supported to express and hold their own views through discussion and reflection in RE lessons.

RESOLVED –

THAT SACRE note the update.

16. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT

There was no urgent business.

17. FUTURE MEETING DATES

The next meeting was scheduled for 11 February 2026. The final meeting of the academic year was scheduled for 10 June 2026.

The meeting ended at 7.00 pm.

CHAIR

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MINUTES END