

## **THE LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN**

At a meeting of the **STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE)** held on **WEDNESDAY, 11TH FEBRUARY, 2026** at 5.30 pm via Microsoft Teams. This meeting can be watched live at [www.camden.gov.uk/webcast](http://www.camden.gov.uk/webcast)

### **MEMBERS PRESENT**

#### **Panel A Christian and Other Denominations**

Mandip Singh (Sikh)

#### **Panel B The Church of England**

Felicity Djerehe  
Stephanie Ellner  
Rev. Sarah Lee

#### **Panel C Teachers**

Sarah Richardson (Vice-Chair)  
Sufia Tunu  
Helen Young

#### **Panel D Camden Local Authority**

Councillor Sylvia McNamara  
Councillor Jenny Mulholland  
Councillor Nanouche Umeadi

### **ALSO PRESENT**

Claire Clinton, Religious Education (RE) Professional Advisor to SACRE  
Rachel Davie, Director of Learning & Impact, Camden Learning  
Halima Khanom, Community Partner, Camden Council, and Faith Forum representative

**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. APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Mary Thorne, Councillor Judy Dixey, Loraine Foster, Councillor Rebecca Filer, Councillor Julian Fulbrook, Rev. Jared Jagers, Nandarane Naina Parmar and Abdul Quadir.

The Vice-Chair (Sarah Richardson) was chairing the meeting, in the absence of the usual Chair (Mary Thorne).

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

There were no declarations.

**3. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**Webcasting**

It was 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.

**4. MINUTES**

**RESOLVED –**

THAT the minutes of the meeting held on 22 October 2025 be approved and signed as a correct record.

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

There was no notification of urgent business.

**6. MEMBERSHIP OF CAMDEN SACRE**

Two new members were welcomed. The Vice-Chair welcomed Rev. Jared Jagers as a new member and noted that he was unable to attend this meeting, but would join the next one. The RE Professional Advisor explained that Rev. Jagers came from the Free Church and the United Reformed Church and worked closely with education and young people. The RE Professional Advisor also welcomed Mandip Singh as a new Sikh member who was present, who did extensive work in education and with schools and supported national coordination within the Sikh community.

The membership was noted.

**7. FAITH FORUM UPDATE**

Consideration was given to the Faith Forum update.

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The Faith Forum representative (Halima Khanom) gave the following updates:

- Holocaust Memorial Day was held on 27 January and was attended by around 120 people in the Council Chamber. A Holocaust survivor spoke at the event, alongside other speakers, speaking on themes including genocide.
- Local young people and schools took part, including Acland Burghley School and the Deputy Youth MP. It was Acland School's first time engaging with the event and they had not had enough time to prepare for their speaking slot therefore support would be offered earlier next year to help schools prepare.
- During the question and answer session, concerns were raised about a decline in schools choosing to teach the Holocaust and taking part in Holocaust Memorial Day events. Reasons discussed included world events, confidence speaking publicly on the subject, and time pressures. The Leader of the Council committed to addressing this with Camden Learning ahead of next year and invited suggestions of ideas on how to approach this.
- Work continued on school conferences in partnership with the RE Professional Advisor.
- Coffee mornings with faith representatives were ongoing, with around 20 representatives attending the last session from across Camden.

The Vice-Chair thanked the Faith Forum representative for the update and invited questions and comments from members. The following was discussed:

- The RE Professional Advisor noted an approach used in another borough, where headteachers were asked directly about the status of Holocaust education to establish a factual picture. Once this was understood, it should be supported by work with Camden Learning to plan activity and address any gaps. She highlighted that the Holocaust Educational Trust provided free resources, and that the RE Hub website offered accessible materials in one place which could be shared with schools. Holocaust education usually appears in English in Years 5 and 6, and then again in secondary schools via history and RE.
- A teacher representative reported that most Holocaust education in secondary schools was delivered through history as it was part of the national curriculum. Confidence levels varied between schools. Regent Park school was taking part in the Beacon training process, which would provide accreditation and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) to support cross-curricular teaching for other schools in Camden. They used resources from University College London's (UCL's) dedicated centre, and all their history teachers had completed that CPD training. Links were also made with RE teaching at Regent High. They noted that many secondary schools were likely to be in a similar position. Regent Park School was happy to share resources from its Google Drive, and their curriculum for RE and history was reviewed annually. The RE Professional Advisor confirmed that Holocaust resources were regularly shared with RE leads through newsletters and network meetings. The Director of Learning and Impact added that the approach used at Regent Park School was likely to be reflected in other schools, although the level of integration would vary.
- Another teacher representative welcomed the offer of shared resources on Google Drive. They reported that in primary schools, the Camden syllabus was being used with support from the RE Professional Advisor. The RE Hub virtual

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tools had been helpful, allowing children to see what a synagogue looked like when arranging an in-person visit had been difficult. The virtual resources also supported learning about other religions and beliefs. They noted that recent world events had made organising real visits more challenging.

- The Vice-Chair reported recent discussions with the Faith Forum about increasing school involvement across the borough. An idea for an art competition had been considered, but it was agreed that Holocaust Memorial Day should be approached with reverence and respect. Some schools were cautious about taking part because they did not want to cause offence or handle the topic incorrectly.

**RESOLVED –**

THAT SACRE note the update.

**8. COLLECTIVE WORSHIP ADVICE TO SCHOOLS**

Consideration was given to the Collective Worship (CW) advice to schools item.

The RE Professional Advisor reported that, following the request made at the last meeting, a comment from a councillor had been added to the paper regarding the right to withdraw from CW, clarifying that pupils aged 16 and over could choose whether to take part. The paper's formatting had also been updated. Work was underway with the Department for Education (DfE) to revise Circular 194, following several years of discussion. Section on page 34 of the agenda, originally developed in Newham and adopted by other authorities, had been based on the old Ofsted framework. This had now been rewritten to align with the current framework, using the updated terminology for strong and expected standards.

Members feedback positively that the guidance was in-line with the Ofsted framework.

**RESOLVED –**

THAT SACRE agree the final Collective Worship Advice to Schools document, that it is published on the Local Authority website, and shared with schools.

**9. CAMDEN SACRE ANNUAL REPORT 2024-25**

Consideration was given to the Camden SACRE Annual Report 2024-25 item.

The RE Professional Advisor gave the following updates:

- Section 2.2 on primary schools showed that Camden had a good system of teacher evaluation through network meetings, and it was valuable to include teacher voice in the report.

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- The annual survey on RE and CW provided schools' self-reflection, which had not been available before. 18 primary schools and five secondary schools completed the survey. As the process became more routine, this would form a starting point for ongoing monitoring, with guidance from Camden Learning.
- At the secondary network meeting, teachers asked for individual sessions with the RE Professional Advisor to review exam results.
- Last year's GCSE intervention work included a number of webinars and a half-day course for schools. Several schools took part, and Camden's GCSE RE results were, for the first time, just above the national average, reflecting the impact of this intervention and the continued support.

The Vice-Chair thanked the RE Professional Advisor for the reports and invited questions and comments from members. The following was discussed:

- A member welcomed the positive impact of the intervention work, noting that it had been well delivered and followed through, and that schools could see the link between the support provided and the improved results. This showed that schools could achieve strong outcomes without major changes or additional focus. The Director of Learning and Impact commented that the impact of the work was due to the practical approach the RE Professional Advisor took with schools, not only giving advice, but working alongside leaders to make changes, which created a significant second layer of impact. The RE Professional Advisor added that it was valuable to work directly with teachers on real issues.
- The RE Professional Advisor suggested that she could write an annual letter to schools to congratulate well performing departments, stating that this would also support schools in understanding what SACRE looked at and provide positive feedback, and members agreed. A member commented these positive actions had a significant impact on senior leadership teams and teaching staff

**Action By: RE Professional Advisor**

- A member supported the idea of writing to schools, saying it recognised the work everyone was contributing towards. They asked whether letters could be sent to all schools, noting that all schools were putting in effort. The RE Professional Advisor said that the smaller meetings with RE leads could be used to share those messages of support.
- The Director of Impact and Learning noted that some schools did not have a RE specialist leading the subject. This was often due to staffing gaps and falling rolls, which meant there was not enough capacity for a full-time role. This affected how RE was led in individual schools, and the RE Professional Advisor was essential in helping to identify specific needs, even where the teacher responsible did not have a specialist background.
- The RE Professional Advisor reported that A-level results were mixed and that, similar to the GCSE intervention approach, there was scope to consider a light-touch intervention that could help improve outcomes. The Director of Learning and Impact noted that Key Stage 5 outcomes were being looked at across the board, and that there had already been successes at Key Stage 4 through the Raising Standards Group. Work was now focusing on developing support in the Key Stage 5 space across subjects, including identifying areas

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where additional need might exist. This provided a good opportunity to ensure that SACRE's work aligned with wider developments, increasing the likelihood of strong engagement from schools.

- The RE Professional Advisor stated that the full report needed to be made available on the Camden Learning website or the local authority website. Additionally, the summary report would need to be disseminated to chairs of governors and headteachers, providing an opportunity to highlight the successes set out in the report.

**Action By: RE Professional Advisor and Director of Learning and Impact**

- In relation to the two schools that required attention and support regarding their exam results, anonymised in section 2.3, members agreed that the RE Professional Advisor would contact the headteachers to discuss the challenges.

**Action By: RE Professional Advisor**

- It was agreed by members that, in relation to the exam results, the RE Professional Advisor could meet with any schools that wished to review their outcomes. This followed discussion at the secondary network meeting, where teachers had requested individual online 20 minute sessions with her to help them reflect on their results.

**Action By: RE Professional Advisor**

**RESOLVED –**

THAT SACRE note the reports.

**10. NASACRE/WESTHILL GRANT UPDATE**

Consideration was given to the NASACRE/Westhill grant update item.

The RE Professional Advisor invited those involved to speak about their experiences of one of the schools RE interfaith day conferences, and the following was discussed:

- A teacher representative reported that their school was the first to host the event and that all schools and children enjoyed it. It had been a full day, with children engaged throughout. The activities encouraged team building and engagement. The philosophy-for-children element helped pupils think deeply. It was observed that the children did not treat the material as an early-years level, but used it to consider wider themes. With visiting contributors present, pupils showed respect and curiosity, including when hearing from a Humanist representative, which was an eye-opening experience for them.
- Rev. Sarah Lee reported that children discussed the themes carefully, and that adults also reflected on them and felt they would benefit from doing the activities themselves. The discussions were interesting, and the children showed strong

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questioning skills and high engagement. They noted that there had been high expectations of what the children could learn, including etymology and Latin, and that the children responded enthusiastically.

- The Vice-Chair described the day as very positive. Questions about preparation, such as 'what is community?', were thoughtful, and the questions children developed were interesting, entertaining and challenging. It was valuable for children to ask questions safely and to meet people from different backgrounds.
- The RE Professional Advisor said it was beneficial for teachers to see her teaching children, as it demonstrated her practice and enthusiasm.

The RE Professional Advisor showed clips of the videos titled below, all available on the RE Matters YouTube channel.

- What does the word community mean to you?
- What does your holy book or philosophy teach about how we should treat others?
- What do you or your community do to support people in Camden?

In relation to the sixth-form inspiring speakers project, the RE Professional Advisor reported that work was underway, and that SACRE had offered additional funding to support further interviewing. She was working a national lead in RE and oracy and former Director of Debate Mate UK, who had created a film for the project. This had been shared at the network meeting, where the response was positive, and the aim was to provide additional speakers to visit schools, as pupils would value hearing directly from sixth formers. A teacher representative said the project offered a valuable opportunity for students in relation to higher-education pathways and careers, and that discussing belief across generations and providing role-modelling was important. The RE Professional Advisor noted that three sixth-form students had signed up before Christmas, with training planned after half term, and the aim was to increase participation to between 10-20 young people. While primary schools were keen to take part, it was harder to secure involvement from sixth-form students due to their commitments.

**RESOLVED –**

THAT SACRE note the update.

**11. CAMDEN SACRE PRIORITIES 2025-26**

Consideration was given to the Camden SACRE priorities 2025-26 item.

The RE Professional Advisor reported that some processes were moving from red to green. Camden was where it should be overall. Future priorities would flow from this document in line with national SACRE criteria.

**RESOLVED –**

THAT SACRE note the document.

## **12. DRAFT MONITORING FORMS FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (RE) AND COLLECTIVE WORSHIP (CW)**

Consideration was given to the Draft monitoring forms for RE and CW item.

The RE Professional Advisor gave the following updates:

- The criteria had been updated to align with the Ofsted framework, based on information gathered from different Ofsted meetings. At a Newham network meeting for RE, published Ofsted reports were reviewed to identify where RE was mentioned. One reference appeared under curriculum, but most appeared under personal development. Mentions of RE were higher than expected. The written self-assessments were believed to be correct, but feedback would be welcomed as Ofsted activity continued, and updates could be made as needed to support schools in completing their self-assessments.
- The annual survey had been completed for the first time last year, providing data for the annual report. For the first time, SACRE could now report on withdrawal numbers. Some parents had asked to withdraw children, and it was important to monitor this, especially where it related to a particular religion or belief system.

The Vice-Chair asked whether a good level of responses was expected, and the RE Professional Advisor explained that as the process became more established, the number of returns should increase, and she anticipated the figures would double this year. The Director of Learning and Impact added that active promotion would support this, noting that the RE Professional Advisor had attended the online headteachers' briefing and contributed to the headteachers' bulletin, and that further reminders could be given at headteacher meetings, with continued emphasis expected to improve engagement over time.

### **RESOLVED –**

THAT SACRE note the documents.

## **13. NATIONAL UPDATES**

Consideration was given to the National Updates item.

The RE Professional Advisor gave the following updates:

- As NASACRE Vice-Chair, the RE Professional Advisor had also spoken with the DfE to request clearer guidance on the responsibilities of SACREs and local authorities, noting that SACREs sometimes struggled to know where to go for support. NASACRE had submitted a government funding bid to amplify SACRE voices and to improve engagement with smaller religious groups.
- A webinar on free resources for schools that SACREs can signpost to would take place on 10<sup>th</sup> March 2026.
- The 2026 NASACRE conference in Liverpool was upcoming. The RE Professional Advisor would attend, and there were two spaces available for

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SACRE members. SACRE members were asked to inform the clerk if they were able to attend.

- Workshops were scheduled for June 2026, and SACRE could fund attendance for these. SACRE could also pay for recorded sessions for members.
- The RE Professional Advisor had been approved by the DfE to contribute in a voluntary capacity to the Curriculum and Assessment Review (CaAR), working with religion and belief groups and chairing discussions to consider whether RE could become part of the national curriculum. This would require legislative change. If implemented, SACREs would then produce resources for teachers aligned with the national curriculum. The group had until the end of March 2026 to determine whether cross-sector agreement could be reached, after which a consultation would follow. The RE Professional Advisor noted that this was an important development for RE, as national curriculum status would clarify expectations for academies and schools where the subject could otherwise be overlooked. There were many tensions and many voices involved in this work.

**RESOLVED –**

THAT SACRE note the update.

**14. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT**

There was no urgent business.

**15. FUTURE MEETING DATES**

The next meeting, the final meeting of the academic year, was scheduled for 10 June 2026. The provisional meeting dates for the 2026/27 academic year would be shared with members in due course.

The meeting ended at 6.58 pm.

**CHAIR**

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**MINUTES END**