

Luton SACRE Meeting

Monday 9th February at 1.30pm – 3.30pm

Venue: Ramridge Primary School, Turners Road North, Luton, LU2 9AH

Attended

Noshin Hussain (NH)	Group C: CHAIR
Carol Green (CG)	Group A: Judaism Representative
Farzad Forghani (FF)	Group A: Bahá'í Representative
Charles Baily (CB)	Group A: Humanism Representative
Jasvinder Singh Nagra (JSN)	Group A: Sikhi Representative
Rehana Faisal (RF)	Group A: Luton Council of Mosques Representative
Ryan Parker (RP)	Group B: Church of England Representative
Yogesh Mistry (YM)	Group A Hinduism Representative
Grietje Reid (GR)	Group C: NASUWT Representative
Elif Ucar (EU)	Group C: NASUWT Representative
Sharon Welburn (SW)	Group C: NASUWT Representative
Caroline Dawes (CD)	Group D: Luton Council - Head of Standards & Effectiveness in Education
Cllr Mahmood Hussain (MH)	Group D: Elected Member Representative
Ryad Khodabocus (RK)	Group A: Luton Council of Faiths Representative
Patricia Hyman (PH)	Clerk to Luton SACRE

Apologies

Masood Akhtar (MA)	Group A: Luton Council of Mosques Representative
Kevin Smith (KS)	Group A: Quakers Representative
Sujel Miah (SM)	Group A: Luton Council of Mosques Representative
Steve Chiswell (SC)	Group A: Roman Catholic Representative
Paul Quinton (PQ)	Group A: Pentecostal Representative
Muhammad Rayhan (MR)	Group A: Luton Council of Mosques representative
Peter Farquar (PF)	Group B: Church of England Representative
Luke Larner (LL)	Group B: Church of England Representative
David Mingay (DM)	Group C: NEU Representative
Tazeen Rashid (TR)	Group C: NEU Representative
Cllr Gillian Fry (GF)	Group D: Elected Member Representative
Cllr Aziz Ambia (AA)	Group D: Elected Member Representative
Tahmina Saleem (TS)	Group D: Elected Member Representative
Mark Sherwin-Peddie (MS-P)	NAHT Representative
Kay Kokabi (KK)	Co-opted, Luton sixth form college
Saraj Qazi	Islamia Ghousia Trust

Item	ACTION	Whom
4.2	Invite Cllr Javeria Hussain (Portfolio Holder for Education & Skills) to attend the next SACRE meeting	Clerk
6.5	Require organisations receiving SACRE funding to provide updates on impact and use of funds	All Funding Recipients
8b	Commission Clare Hodgson to continue development of Key Stage 2 of the Teachers' Manual	Caroline Dawes / Chair
8c	Produce formal religious jewellery guidance on SACRE headed paper for review and approval	Patricia Hyman

1. Welcome and Apologies

1.1

The Chair, Noshin Hussain, welcomed all members to the meeting of Luton SACRE held at Ramridge Primary School.

1.2 Attendees introduced themselves. Apologies were noted, as above, and will be recorded.

1.3

The Chair clarified and went through the main core purpose of SACRE using the Declaration of Interest document, detailing attendance requirements, quorum responsibilities, and the application of the Nolan Principles of Public Life. These were discussed in relation to how they underpin SACRE's accountability, transparency, and ethical standards. The Chair outlined SACRE's optional and advisory roles and summarised the mandatory duties of SACRE to advise the LA on matters to do with RE in schools and collective worship

2. Minutes and Matters Arising

2.1 The minutes of the previous meeting were reviewed and approved.

2.2 Members were directed to refer to the Actions Sheet – SACRE2526-008.

3. Clerk's Update

Patricia Hyman

3.1

The Chair noted the importance of ensuring that **all groups (A–D)** were represented at the meeting. A show of hands confirmed that each group had a representative present, confirming that the meeting was quorate and that any vote taken would be fair, democratic, and compliant with SACRE's statutory requirements.

3.2

The Clerk reminded members of the upcoming **NASACRE training opportunities** she had circulated. Members were invited to contact her if they wished to be booked onto training sessions, and she confirmed she would happily arrange this.

3.3

The Clerk informed members that **Cllr Gillian Fry** will need to submit her resignation from SACRE due to health reasons. SACRE will formally accept her resignation.

4. **Portfolio Holder for Education and Skills**

4.1

Cllr **Javeria Hussain** was due to attend to introduce herself but sent apologies.

4.2

An update will be provided at the next meeting.

ACTION: Invite Cllr Hussain to the next meeting

5. **Review of SACRE Budget 2025–26**

Caroline Dawes

5.1

Caroline Dawes (CD) presented a summary of the SACRE budget for 2025–26, outlining overall income, expenditure to date, and projected spend to the end of the financial year in April 2026. The total DSG allocation for the year was confirmed as £15,118.

5.2

CD explained that the majority of expenditure had been directed towards implementation of the locally agreed syllabus, including RE network meetings, development of the Teachers' Manual, support for schools through partner organisations, enrichment activities, clerking, subscriptions, training, and meeting costs.

5.3

Members noted that overall expenditure remained within budget, with a modest underspend forecast at this stage. CD confirmed that unspent funding will not automatically be carried forward and should therefore be used appropriately before the end of the financial year.

5.4

It was noted that partner organisations who had received SACRE funding would be required to provide updates on how the funding had been used, to support SACRE's year-end financial reporting.

5.5 Members discussed priorities for the use of any remaining budget. There was strong consensus that funding should be used strategically to support schools in Luton, with a particular emphasis on:

Training and professional development to increase teacher confidence and subject knowledge in RE; and

Practical support for schools, including enabling pupils to access educational visits to places of worship.

5.6

Members highlighted that transport costs are often a significant barrier preventing schools from organising visits, particularly for schools with limited budgets. It was agreed that such visits are an important part of helping pupils understand faith, belief, and lived religious practice, and align closely with the aims of the locally agreed syllabus.

5.7

The Chair summarised the discussion, noting clear agreement that SACRE funding should focus on removing barriers to high-quality RE, particularly through training opportunities for teachers and supporting schools with transport costs to access places of worship.

5.8

A vote was taken on the principle of using available SACRE funding to support: RE-related training and professional development, and Transport and access costs for school visits to places of worship.

Vote outcome:

Group A – agreed

Group B – agreed

Group C – agreed

Group D – agreed

6. SACRE Budget 2026–27

Caroline Dawes

6.1

Caroline Dawes (CD) presented the proposed SACRE budget for 2026–27, outlining planned priorities and areas of expenditure for the forthcoming financial year.

6.2

Members discussed the continued running of RE Network Meetings. It was agreed that these should continue for the time being. Elif asked how well attended the meetings had been and whether attendance data was available. It was agreed that attendance and impact should be reviewed, and that future decisions about continuation would be informed by this feedback.

6.3

Grietje shared her experience of attending the Network Meetings, reporting that they were well attended, positive, and had delivered useful outcomes for teachers.

6.4

Ryan Parker (RP) suggested that greater clarity be provided in advance about the focus and content of future Network Meetings, so schools are aware of what the sessions will cover and can plan attendance accordingly. Members agreed this would be helpful.

6.5

It was noted, as previously discussed, that partner organisations receiving funding will be required to provide updates on how funds have been used and how schools have benefited. Ryad confirmed he will provide an update regarding expenditure linked to LCOF -school support.

6.6

Members discussed whether some funding could be allocated under management and advisory support, including the possibility of commissioning RE advisory support on a flexible basis. This was seen as a potential way to strengthen strategic guidance for schools.

6.7

Ryan Parker suggested that training videos, such as question-and-answer sessions, could be developed and hosted on the online platform to provide ongoing professional support for teachers.

6.8

Rehana Faisal emphasised the importance of continuity in training, particularly supporting staff teaching up to Year 6, to ensure consistency and progression in RE delivery.

6.9

Sharon Welburne suggested that effective materials already developed—particularly content created by Clare Hodgson—could be adapted and carried forward into the 2026–27 programme, rather than duplicating work.

6.10

The Chair confirmed that funding would also be considered to support educational visits, including transport where appropriate, but reiterated that the primary focus for 2026–27 should be on training and high-quality resources.

6.11

Members discussed the potential development of Key Stage 2 materials, but agreed that overall budget priorities for 2026–27 should centre on training, professional development, and resource sustainability.

6.12 A vote was taken on the proposed SACRE Budget for 2026–27.

- Group A – agreed
- Group B – agreed
- Group C – agreed
- Group D – agreed

6.13 The SACRE Budget for 2026–27 was unanimously approved.

ACTION 6.5: Funding recipients to provide updates on how monies have supported schools and pupils.

7. Determinations

Chair

7.1

The Chair introduced Determinations as a standing agenda item and invited the Clerk to confirm whether there were any schools currently holding or applying for a determination.

7.2

The Clerk confirmed that there are no determinations in place at present, and that no applications have been received since the last meeting.

7.3

Caroline Dawes outlined how determinations are considered by SACRE when applications are received. This prompted discussion among members.

7.4

Members noted that the wording “broadly Christian” can raise concerns for some parents and, in some cases, may contribute to parents considering withdrawal of their children from collective worship. It was acknowledged that this wording can be perceived as sensitive, but should not present an issue when properly understood and applied in an inclusive and balanced way.

7.5

Charles Bailey informed members about the Assemblies for All resource provided by Humanists UK, noting that it offers a large collection of high-quality, inclusive assemblies that schools can access free of charge. He explained that the resource is designed to support meaningful and inclusive assembly content that is suitable for pupils of all backgrounds and

belief systems, organised by theme, key stage, and calendar events, and contributed by a range of educational and community organisations.

7.6

Rehana Faisal commented that she had reviewed the Assemblies for All website and noted that Islamophobia month was not included, which she felt was a significant omission.

7.8

The Chair emphasised that the absence of resources for assemblies on Islamophobia, which impacts on so many Luton children, is a particular concern in the Luton context, given the borough's demographics. The Chair highlighted the importance of fairness, balance, and inclusion for all pupils and noted that issues such as Islamophobia must be actively challenged.

7.9

Members agreed that advice to schools promotes inclusive practice and representation of all faiths within Luton.

8. AOB

a. **Use of the term 'Main Religion'**

The Chair reminded members of the core purpose and remit of SACRE, emphasising that the committee's focus should remain on improving religious education and collective worship for children in Luton schools, rather than becoming overly focused on nuanced wording or terminology.

The Chair asked members whether they agreed with this approach, and all members agreed.

Farzad Forghani reiterated his previously raised concern regarding the use of the term "main religion", noting that he had referenced the Prevent Strategy, which highlights the importance of careful and appropriate language.

Caroline Dawes responded by acknowledging FF's point as valid and respectful but clarified that matters relating to national policy language or Prevent guidance sit outside the remit of SACRE, whose responsibility is specifically focused on RE and collective worship in Luton schools.

It was acknowledged and accepted by members that while FF's concerns were legitimate and understood, they fell outside the scope of SACRE's statutory role. This position was agreed and understood by all members present.

b. Whether to proceed with Key Stage 2 of the Teachers' Manual.

Members discussed whether to proceed with the development of Key Stage 2 of the Teachers' Manual.

ACTION: It was agreed to commission Clare Hodgson to continue work on the Key Stage 2 section of the Teachers' Manual.

c. Review outcome and formal advice re: wearing of religious jewellery

Members were reminded that the Clerk, Patricia Hyman, had previously been commissioned to research legal considerations, precedents, and guidance relating to the wearing of religious jewellery in schools.

PH confirmed that this research had been completed and that a written handout summarising findings and recommendations had already been circulated and presented to SACRE members. PH reiterated the key recommendations, which included:

- Starting from the presumption of allowing religious expression, particularly where items are small, secure, and pose no clear safety risk
- Requiring evidence-based justification for any restriction, supported by a risk assessment
- Ensuring consistency across all religions and all forms of jewellery
- Using proportionate adjustments, such as tucking items inside clothing, using break-safe chains, or removing items only for higher-risk activities
- Making school policies transparent, clearly explaining when, why, and how restrictions apply

Sharon Welburn confirmed that the guidance provided by Patricia had already been shared with a parent who had raised a concern at her school. She reported that the parent was now satisfied with the guidance, and that the matter had been successfully resolved, with the child removing jewellery for PE and safely tucking it away at other times. Members noted that the issue which prompted the original discussion had now been resolved positively.

CD proposed that SACRE should formalise the guidance produced by Patricia by placing it on headed paper, with a view to bringing it back to the next meeting for approval, prior to publication on the SACRE website.

ACTION: Clerk to prepare a formal draft of the religious jewellery guidance on SACRE headed paper for review and approval at the next meeting.

d. Kirpan policy guidance

Jasvinder Singh Nagra informed members that the kirpan policy guidance has now been drafted.

ACTION: JSN to circulate the document to all SACRE members in advance of the next meeting and it will be brought forward for discussion and formal vote.

9. Date of Next Meeting

9.1

The next meeting of Luton SACRE will take place on Monday 15 June 2026, from 1:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

9.2

Moving forward, it was proposed and agreed that SACRE meetings will be held **from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.**, as this timing was suitable for most members.

9.3

It was confirmed that the next meeting will be hosted at the **Raise Up Foundation**, 5 All Saints Close, Luton LU3 1FA.