

## Luton SACRE Meeting 2 of 2024-25

Tuesday 1<sup>ST</sup> April 2025, 4.00pm – 6.00pm, St Andrew’s Church, Blenheim Crescent, Luton

John Williams (JW)	Co-opted : Chair
Caroline Dawes (CD)	Group D :Luton Council - Head of Standards & Effectiveness in Education
Luke Larnar (LL)	Group B: Church of England Representative
Peter Farquar (PF)	Group B: Church of England Representative
Ryan Parker (RP)	Group B: Church of England Representative
Lawrence Patterson (LP)	Group A: Free Churches Representative – Vice Chair
Muhammad Rayhan (MR)	Group A: Luton Council of Mosques representative
Jasvinder Singh Nagra (JSN)	Group A: Sikhi Representative
Masood Akhtar (MA)	Group A: Luton Council of Mosques Representative
Rehana Faisal (RF)	Group A: Luton Council of Mosques Representative
Sujel Miah (SM)	Group A: Luton Council of Mosques Representative
Carol Green	Group A: Judaism Representative
Farzad Forghani (FF)	Group A - Bahá’i Representative
Yogesh Mistry	Group A Hinduism Representative
Charles Bailey	Group A: Humanism Representative
Tazeen Rashid (TR)	Group C: NEU Representative
David Mingay	Group C: NEU Representative
Gietje Reid	Group C: - check membership spreadsheet for union
Elif Ucar (EU)	Group C: NASUWT Representative
Kay Kokabi (KK)	Co-Opted, Luton sixth form college
Patricia Hyman (PH)	Clerk – Luton Council

### **Apologies**

Clare Hodgson (CH)	Co-opted Teaching and Learning Consultant – Luton Council
Paul Quinton (PQ)	Group A: Pentecostal Representative
Ryad Khodabocus	Luton Council of Faiths Representative
Mark Sherwin-Peddie	NAHT Representative
Cllr Ghulam Abbas	Labour Representative
Cllr Mahmood Hussain (MH)	Group D: Elected Member Representative
Cllr Maria Lovell (ML)	Group D: Elected Member Representative
Cllr Gillian Fry (GF)	Group D: Elected Member Representative
Paul Wagstaff (PW)	Luton Council - Director of Education
Jamia Islamia Ghausia Trust	

## **1. Welcome and Apologies**

1.1 Apologies were received as listed above.

1.2 The Chair, JW, welcomed all attendees to the meeting.

1.3 Introductions were made, and PH was formally introduced as the new Clerk to Luton SACRE.

## **2. Minutes and Matters Arising**

2.1 Members were directed to refer to the Actions Sheet – SACRE2526-002.

2.2 The minutes of the previous meeting held on 10 October 2024 were approved by RP and MR.

2.3 CD reminded members that submissions for the Education Service Newsletter were welcomed. Email submissions to [school.improvement@luton.gov.uk](mailto:school.improvement@luton.gov.uk)

2.4 CD confirmed that the revised Constitution, incorporating all agreed changes, has now been circulated to members.

## **3. Education Service / Clerk's Update**

3.1 PH shared a brief introductory statement, expressing appreciation for the welcome and her commitment to supporting SACRE's work.

3.2 CD informed members that a dedicated email address for SACRE is now live: [SACRE@luton.gov.uk](mailto:SACRE@luton.gov.uk). Members are encouraged to use this address for all SACRE-related correspondence. PH will be managing and monitoring the inbox.

3.3 CD also noted that PH has begun updating the SACRE webpage, a process that will continue in collaboration with Democratic Services. Key documents including agendas and minutes will be made publicly available via the website [Luton SACRE](#)

## **4. 2023–24 Annual Report**

4.1 JW invited comments or questions on the draft Annual Report.

4.2 CD confirmed that the finalised report will be formally submitted to NASACRE on behalf of Luton SACRE.

4.3 FF noted that upon checking the NASACRE website, the most recent published submission from Luton SACRE dated back to 2014.

4.4 JW acknowledged this and explained that reports were produced in previous years, though it is unclear why they were not submitted.

4.5 CD highlighted that the SACRE Constitution has undergone revisions to strengthen clarity and ensure compliance with NASACRE standards. In particular, the structure and voting rights of the four SACRE groups must now be adhered to more strictly.

4.6 Vote on the Annual Report Submission to NASACRE:

- Group A – Agreed
- Group B – Agreed
- Group C – Agreed
- Group D – Agreed

The vote passed unanimously.

**ACTION:** PH to correct the typo that was highlighted and then send report to the Department for Education and NASACRE for publication.

## 5. Feedback on Implementation of the New Agreed Syllabus

5.1 CD delivered the feedback in CH's absence. She acknowledged the significant contribution CH had made through extensive advice and support, including arranging external speakers and setting up a WhatsApp group for ongoing communication and collaboration. CD recognised that a substantial amount of effort had gone into the successful implementation of the new syllabus.

5.2 CD confirmed that SACRE had match-funded the initiative in partnership with the Local Authority. She clarified the statutory requirement for all maintained schools to follow the locally agreed syllabus, whereas academies were not obligated to do so—though several had voluntarily adopted it.

5.3 CD informed the group that SACRE had funded eight RE Network Meetings, with the next scheduled for May. Each meeting was attended by approximately 25 participants, focusing on aspects of the new syllabus, including:

- An overview of the revised local syllabus and its updates
- Planning and drafting units
- Tools to support RE teaching
- Supplementary CPD sessions (e.g., February/March) which addressed worldviews and the diversity within religions

5.4 Feedback from the Network Meetings had been overwhelmingly positive. Regarding the Supplementary Material, participants appreciated the range of activities, the engaging pace, and the relevance of the themes, especially in Early Years settings. Educators found the objectives clear and accessible.

However, CD also noted feedback around:

- The pitch and content (a few inaccuracies)
- Resource availability (some teachers required additional help)
- Progression of learning (some felt stories and activities were repeated)  
To ensure consistency, the progression map had been temporarily removed and centralised for further refinement.

5.5 CD elaborated on the concept of “World View,” encouraging exploration of diversity within religions. She noted strong support from schools for RE and a clear appetite to deepen engagement. A Teachers’ Manual was being considered to further support curriculum delivery in schools.

5.6 LL shared his recent experience with a Year 8 assembly at Denbigh High School, emphasising the importance of high expectations.

5.7 RP supported the syllabus’s approach of exploring Christianity through a wider world view lens, which helps pupils understand it from diverse perspectives. He emphasised that some religious assumptions were conflicting. He also noted that Ofsted guidance identifies three different types of knowledge with some key elements still missing from the syllabus.

5.8 GR highlighted a resource titled Understanding Christianity that she found highly beneficial and was currently using. KK cautioned that while useful, it may not align fully with the current agreed syllabus and should be used with discretion.

5.9 LL expressed concern around communication and time constraints related to the implementation of the syllabus. He requested a clearer timeline for schools to understand when and how to implement the changes effectively.

5.10 CD clarified that responsibility for the implementation of the syllabus lies with individual schools through their own curriculum plans. The local authority and SACRE are continuing to develop resources to support delivery. SM added that it was crucial to integrate the agreed syllabus with local curriculum objectives in a practical and sustainable way.

5.11 SM reflected positively on SACRE’s progress, noting the increased diversity, transparency, and participation within the group. He praised the strong turnout, stating it reflected the values and spirit of Luton. He acknowledged JW, who was chairing his final meeting, and thanked him for his resilience, positivity, and longstanding contribution to Luton SACRE. His legacy, SM said, would be remembered and appreciated. This sentiment was warmly echoed by all members.

5.12 CB commended the revised syllabus, describing it as a “breath of fresh air.” He was greatly encouraged by the positive teacher feedback and impressed by the speed and quality of work.

5.13 EU commented that the syllabus should be made freely accessible to all schools and that teachers should not be required to pay for it, unlike subscriptions and fees for published resources.

5.14 CD stated that SACRE had paid the Local Authority Education Service for nine days of support in 2024-25 budget. The LA provided more days as part of match funding.

5.15 CD informed the Google Drive for resources for the locally agreed syllabus, can be found at: [Luton SACRE Curriculum Resources](#)

5.17 The formal vote was deferred until the next SACRE meeting

## **6. 2025–26 Budget for Approval**

6.1 JW reported that the allocated budget for SACRE for the financial year 2025–26 is £15,000.

6.2 JW noted that this figure is significantly lower than previous years and highlighted that although SACRE benefits from matched funding from the Local Authority for certain initiatives, the current allocation represents 0.9% of the Central School Services Block (CSSB) of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) compared to the NASACRE recommend funding of 2%. The Chair informed members that he had written to NASACRE to seek advice on how best to present this matter to the Schools Forum in an effort to request additional funding for SACRE operations.

**ACTION:** The Chair informed members that he had written to NASACRE to seek advice on how best to present this matter to the Schools Forum in an effort to request additional funding for SACRE operations.

6.3 A proposal was tabled as part of item 6 – 2025-26 budget to commission the Teaching School (CTG) to continue the RE Network Meetings and provide further training opportunities. CD confirmed the planned RE Conference in July, to be organised and delivered by CTG. School Improvement have shared their planning to date.

6.4 CD also proposed that School Improvement compile a Teachers' Manual at a total cost of 8 days work – 4 days funded by SACRE (£2360) and 4 days match funded by the Education Service. Proposal that by the end of the year, CH would complete and publish a Teaching Manual to be hosted on the SACRE website. SACRE agreed that a Working Group would support CH in its development. The members of the working group are:

- Muhammad Rayhan (MR)
- Ryan Parker (RP)
- Kay Kokabi (KK)
- Farzad Forghani (FF)

**ACTION:** Establish Working Group to support CH in developing and publishing the Teaching Manual

6.5 FF raised the importance of having at least one elected councillor in attendance at SACRE meetings or someone proposed nominated to attend on behalf of Group D in their absence.

6.6 A vote was taken on the approval of the proposed budget:

- Group A – Agreed
- Group B – Agreed
- Group C – Agreed
- Group D – Agreed

## **7. NASACRE Conference**

7.1 The upcoming NASACRE Annual Conference, titled “SACREs Taking a Stand: Positive Responses to Controversial Issues”, will take place on Monday, 19th May 2025 in London.

7.2 All members were encouraged to register and attend. The conference presents an opportunity for SACRE representatives to engage in national discussions and share best practices.

## **8. Appointment of New Chair**

8.1 JW opened the floor for nominations or expressions of interest in taking up the role of SACRE Chair, as this was his final meeting in the role.

8.2 JW emphasised the importance of the incoming Chair having a strong background in both education and faith and stated that the new Chair needs to be a member of one of SACRE’s four representative groups.

8.3 JW expressed a wish to conclude his tenure with a new Chair in place and asked members to consider suitable candidates. He also reminded the SACRE of the value of strong headteacher representation.

**ACTION:** CD to review eligible representatives from among Heads of Schools and liaise regarding potential nominations.

## **9. Any Other Business (AOB)**

9.1 No additional matters were raised.

**10. Date of Next Meeting**

10.1 The next meeting of Luton SACRE is scheduled to take place on:

Monday 7<sup>th</sup> July 2025 4.00pm – 5.30pm

Venue: Hillborough Junior School