

**ROYAL BOROUGH OF KENSINGTON AND
CHELSEA**

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education

Annual Report 2022-2023

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1. Background

The Royal Borough's Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) is required, in accordance with Section 391(6) of the Education Act 1996, to publish an annual report on its activities. This is the SACRE's thirty second report and it summarises its activities during the academic year 2022-23.

The Royal Borough's SACRE was established by the Education Committee (Shadow) on 14 June 1989. Its current terms of reference, as laid down by the Education Reform Act 1998, are "to advise the Authority upon such matters connected with religious worship in county schools and the religious education to be given in accordance with an agreed syllabus as the authority may refer to the council or as the council may see fit".

In particular, the SACRE is charged with the following responsibilities:

- It can require the Authority to review the Agreed Syllabus on religious education.
- It may determine, on application by the headteacher, that the requirement for collective worship in community schools to be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character shall not apply to the collective worship provided for some or all of its pupils in a particular school.
- With the Authority, to review the support offered for RE teaching, the methods of teaching employed, and teachers' in-service professional development.

In addition, the Education Committee (Shadow) decided to give a direct role to the SACRE in the consideration and disposal of complaints related to the curriculum or religious worship. The SACRE will be asked to advise where complaints relate to religious education given in accordance with an agreed syllabus or to religious worship in county schools.

Details of the work of the RBKC SACRE and associated papers can be found on its designated page on the Royal Borough's website:

<https://www.rbkc.gov.uk/children-and-education/education-and-learning/standing-advisory-council-religious-education-sacre>.

2. Meeting Arrangements in 2022-23

The SACRE met on the following three occasions in 2022-23:

- 29 September 2022
- 21 March 2023
- 8 June 2023

All three meetings were hybrid meetings allowing both in-person and virtual attendance. Meeting rooms at Kensington Town Hall were booked for those who were able to attend in person.

Secretarial assistance and a budget for the discharge of the SACRE's duties is provided to the SACRE by the Royal Borough. The key areas of this support include the following:

- Provision of a Clerk

- Provision of a Local Authority Adviser
- Commissioning of an RE Consultant
- Funding of the NASACRE annual membership
- Funding of the NASACRE annual training offer
- Funding for two SACRE members to attend NASACRE's annual Conference and AGM in-person (additional bookings can also be considered on a case by case basis)
- Costs relating to establishing and reviewing a Locally Agreed Syllabus (when appropriate)

The SACRE is grateful to the Royal Borough for making this support available.

3. Locally Agreed Syllabus

By statute, every local authority is required to adopt a Locally Agreed Syllabus (LAS) of religious education and to review it every five years. The current RBKC LAS has been in place since June 2020. It will be due for review in the academic year 2024-25.

The RBKC Agreed Syllabus *Living Difference III* is available via <https://services2schools.org.uk/Page/18133> along with a number of useful links to materials and websites that the RBKC SACRE members had compiled together to help schools in teaching RE.

4. Standards in RE

The SACRE members considered the various national and local developments concerning the provision of RE. These discussions were prompted by the information provided to the SACRE through the regular updates from the RE Consultant on the SACRE and NASACRE Briefings.

4.1 Teacher Training

In 2022-23, the RE Good Practice Network, previously established for teachers in Kensington and Chelsea and Westminster, was scheduled to meet on a termly basis to be hosted by Lesley Prior, RE Consultant on the SACRE. However, the Network only met in the autumn term. The other two sessions were cancelled as the RE Consultant was unavailable due to a long-term sickness.

The RE Good Practice Network sessions are aimed at serving as an opportunity for RE teachers and coordinators to discuss any challenges they face and to receive relevant support, for example, around Ofsted's deep dives in RE, assessment and attainment in RE, measuring and recording outcomes in RE, etc.

5. Membership Updates

In 2022-23, the SACRE welcomed Alex Stacey, Mo O'Donoghue and Claire Bruce-Lamblin, all representing the Diocese of Westminster, on Group A, and Cllr Roberto Weeden-Sanz, representing the Local Authority, on Group D.

The SACRE also agreed to co-opt Jo Backus, a representative of the Network of Buddhist Organisations.

Graham Marriner, a representative of London Diocesan Board for Schools on Group B, resigned from the SACRE due to having relocated to a different borough.

The SACRE is constantly looking to recruit new members and regular contact is made with the appropriate appointing bodies to remind them that there are vacancies on the Royal Borough's SACRE. Appeals for new members are also made whenever information is sent out by the SACRE in the weekly RBKC Schools Circular. In spite of the efforts being made, it continues to be difficult to attract and retain new members. Particularly, it seems challenging to recruit to Group C (teacher representatives).

Membership in each category needs to be maintained to ensure that meetings of the SACRE are quorate. During 2022-23, only the autumn term meeting was not quorate with Groups D not being represented due to member vacancies.

There is a Code of Conduct in place for the RBKC SACRE members. It was agreed in January 2021, and [a copy of it](#) can be found on the RBKC SACRE page.

6. Composition and Members of the Royal Borough's SACRE in 2022-23

Chairman of the SACRE	Laurence Julius
Clerk to the SACRE	Natalija Sorokina, Business and Finance Officer (RBKC)
Local Authority Adviser	Jackie Saddington, Senior School Governance Adviser (RBKC)
RE Consultant	Lesley Prior, Consultant to the SACRE / Julia Diamond-Conway, Interim Consultant to the SACRE

GROUP A – Representing Christian and other religious denominations (up to 10 members including two Roman Catholic vacancies)

- Susan Jaff	Islamic Faith (Vice-Chair)
- Rev Ken Persaud	Notting Hill Community Church
- Naif Sheikh	Discover Islam
- Laurence Julius	Board of Deputies of British Jews (more specifically, Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue, Holland Park)
- Kanwaljit Kaur (Lady Singh)	Network of Sikh Organisations
- Alex Stacey	Diocese of Westminster
- Mo O'Donoghue	Diocese of Westminster
- Claire Bruce-Lamblin	Diocese of Westminster

GROUP B – Representing the Church of England (up to 8 members)

- Kathryn Kane	London Diocesan Board for Schools
- Katrina Quinton	

GROUP C - Representing teachers, including teachers of RE, and teachers' associations (up to 8 members)

- Celia Platt	National Education Union (NEU)
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they could offer to local authorities considering adopting it. The presentation was organised specifically for RE teachers and SACRE members in London local authorities whose Agreed Syllabus had been adopted from *Living Difference III*. Feedback from this session was discussed at the SACRE's autumn term meeting.

Over 2022-23, the SACRE had various Locally Agreed Syllabus-related discussions, including the following points:

- If the wish was to stay in an arrangement with Hampshire, the question would be around how soon to move to the new version, i.e., whether to do it earlier or wait until the Syllabus was up for review.
 - The teachers' views remained in favour of continuing with the current syllabus causing as little unnecessary disruption as possible.
 - It was agreed to identify a shortlist of several syllabi from different Local Authorities with short summaries on each of them in readiness for Spring 2025 when, legally, a review of the Syllabus would need to start.
 - It was agreed to have Locally Agreed Syllabus a standing agenda item.
- SACRE self-evaluation using NASACRE's self-evaluation tool/Projects for SACRE
The SACRE concluded that they were very fortunate to have excellent support from the LA, with the provision of the Clerk, LA Adviser and RE Adviser.

The SACRE also discussed the big gap between 'established' and 'enhanced' as per NASACRE's self-evaluation tool. The SACRE felt that it was difficult to justify the additional investment from a cost / benefit perspective which would be needed to move into the enhanced category.

It was also agreed that it was more important to fill the existing vacancies for teacher representatives, as teacher engagement and feedback is a pre-requisite for an effective SACRE.

Further information on what the SACRE discussed in 2022-23 can be found in the minutes of the three meetings held in 2022-23. All the minutes of the SACRE meetings are kept on the RBKC SACRE [webpage](#).

8. Collective Worship

8.1 Advice on Collective Worship and Determinations

The guidance for schools on Collective Worship, including the process of applying for a Determination can be found attached in Appendix A of this report.

8.2 Determinations

The SACRE received no requests in 2022-23 from headteachers seeking a determination to lift or modify the requirements for collective worship in their schools.

The procedures for making such a request are set out in the Appendix A of this report. Information about the procedures can also be obtained from the Clerk to the SACRE at the Town Hall, Hornton Street, London W8 7NX.

9. Complaints

No complaints about the RE curriculum or collective worship in community schools were received by the SACRE in 2022-23.

10. Links with Other Bodies

The Royal Borough' SACRE is affiliated to The National Association of SACREs (NASACRE).

The annual NASACRE Conference and AGM 2023 was held on Monday 22 May 2023 at Fishmonger's Hall, London. Cllr Roberto Weeden-Sanz, Susan Jaff and Celia Platt attended it representing the RBKC SACRE.

Celia Platt, Group C member, - with the agreement of the SACRE - was nominated by Chair for NASACRE Awards as a SACRE member who had made a special impact. The Award was announced at the Conference, and Celia received an awards certificate from NASACRE afterwards. This achievement was recognised by the Local Authority's Education department.

Verbal feedback on the Conference was provided to the SACRE at its summer term meeting. Full details and copies of the relevant paperwork from the 2023 Conference can be found via <https://nasacre.org.uk/conference-and-agm/2023-celebrating-30-years-sacres-for-the-future/>.

11. Examination Results

At the time of submitting this report in December 2023, no data by subject at the local authority level has been made available for KS4 and KS5 exam results. The Department for Education has advised that they are looking into the possibility of publishing subject data at local authority level in the future. As and when the results become available, the report will be updated.

12. Appendix A

The Requirement for Collective Worship

Introduction

1. Section 7 of the Education Reform Act 1988 lays down that the collective worship required in community schools shall be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character. DES circular 3/89 states that, in the Secretary of State's view, an act of worship which is 'broadly Christian' need not contain only Christian material provided, taken as a whole, it reflects the traditions of Christian belief. Any such worship should not be distinctive of any particular Christian denomination. It is not necessary for every act of worship to be of this character but within each school term the majority of acts must be so.

2. How collective worship is organised is for the headteacher to decide after consultation with the governing body, having regard to the following considerations:
 - any relevant circumstances relating to the pupils' family backgrounds, for example the faith of the family;
 - their ages and aptitudes.
3. These considerations should inform:
 - the extent to which (if at all) any acts of collective worship in the school are not of a broadly Christian character;
 - the extent to which the broad traditions of Christian belief are reflected in those acts of worship of a broadly Christian character; and
 - the ways in which those traditions are reflected.

The Role of the SACRE

4. If the headteacher of a community school considers that the requirements for collective worship described in paragraph two above could conflict with what is required by paragraph three, **he or she can apply to the local Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) to lift or modify the requirements**. Before doing, so the headteacher must consult the school's governing body who in turn may wish to seek the views of parents. **The headteacher's application does not need to apply to the whole school**. It can be limited to any class or description of pupils at the school, and might relate, for example, to a particular group or year group(s) in the school in which there were many pupils of a particular faith or religion.
5. The purpose of this procedure is to allow for acts of collective worship according to a faith or religion other than Christianity where, for some or all of the pupils in a school, the requirement that worship should be of a broadly Christian character is inappropriate. One factor which may inform a headteacher's decision to make an application to the SACRE is the extent of withdrawals from Christian collective worship.
6. In considering whether to grant a headteacher's request, the SACRE must take account of any relevant circumstances relating to the family backgrounds of the pupils concerned. When it has made a **determination** on the request – which can only take the form of acceptance or rejection without modification – it must communicate this in writing to the headteacher and state the date from which it will take effect. It is for the headteacher to decide what form the alternative worship will take, although the SACRE should be informed of the proposed arrangements.
7. The headteacher will wish to take appropriate steps to notify the governing body and parents of the new arrangements. Where such a determination is made in respect of all or some of the pupils in the school, daily collective worship must still be provided for them. Where a determination has been granted in respect of a class or description of pupils of a particular faith or religion, the alternative collective worship may be provided for those pupils as a whole. It may not be distinctive of any particular denomination of any faith or religion but may be distinctive of a particular faith or religion. Parents continue to have a right to withdraw their children from this collective worship.

8. Any determination made under these arrangements ends after five years, unless renewed by the SACRE. There must be a review by the SACRE no later than five years after any determination was introduced; and subsequently within five years of each review. The headteacher can request an earlier review at any time, after consulting with the governing body. The headteacher must be given an opportunity to take part in any review and, in turn, is required to consult the governing body who may wish to seek the view of parents.
9. It has been a legal requirement since 1944 that all pupils attending a maintained school should take part in daily collective worship. Section 6 of the Education Reform Act provides for flexibility in timing and organisation of daily collective worship. It needs no longer be held at the start of the school day. There may be a single act of worship for all pupils or separate acts for pupils in different age groups or school groups. For this purpose, a 'school group' means any group or combination of groups in which pupils are taught or take place in other school activities; it does not mean a group reflecting particular religious beliefs.
10. If a headteacher considers that changes of the sort described in paragraphs four and five of this Appendix are justified, he or she should:
 - consult with the governing body,
 - after that, make application to SACRE on the form below.

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education



Application for a variation in the requirement of the Education Act 1988 that collective worship be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character.

1. **Name of school**.....
2. **Address of school**.....
3. **Name of headteacher**.....
4. **Pupils for whom the application is made**
(Is the application being made on behalf of the whole school or part of it? If a part, state which group and their numbers.)
5. **On what grounds is the application made?**
(State why you consider the requirement that collective worship should be 'wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character' to be inappropriate for pupils. Give any relevant information, including numbers, on the family background and faith of all pupils who would be affected.)
6. **Has the Governing Body been consulted?**
(By law it must be. Please state the view the Governing Body gave. Did the Governing Body consult parents? What was their view?)
7. **Have Parents been consulted?**
(What were their views?)
8. **What form would the proposed alternative form of collective worship take?**
(Give as much information as possible.)