

Westminster Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education

Annual Report 2019-2020

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Introduction from the Chair of Westminster SACRE

In 2019-20, we set our focus on the practice taking place within our schools. Thanks to Lesley Prior, our SACRE advisor, we explored what RE actually looks like within our schools, and where the needs for training and support might be. We also heard from two schools, due to renew their Determinations, that they no longer required them. So the Vice Chair and I made follow up visits to the schools to explore their Collective Worship provision and discuss any ongoing support needs.

As a result, it was decided that a review of Westminster's existing guidance for Collective Worship, 'Things of the Spirit', could benefit from an update.

We also worked in tandem with our neighbours in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea to ensure our Agreed Syllabus 'Living Difference III' was completely up to date and accurately reflected the faith and beliefs of those within our community.

Membership of the SACRE was a topic which engaged us over the year, with reflection upon the groups from which members are drawn. We produced a Code of Conduct for our members to ensure that SACRE meetings retain their right focus and that the standards and attitudes demonstrated in meetings align with our values as an advisory council concerned with inter-faith cooperation, in the best interests of our students.

I also indicated my intention to step down as Chair after three years and am very grateful to our Vice Chair for his support in enabling this to happen.

Finally, along with the rest of the country (and indeed the world), we adapted our meeting protocols to pivot into virtual meetings, which was quite a challenge! I think we all missed the face-to-face connection (not to mention the food!) our physical meetings had afforded us.

As I hand on the baton, I would like to express my gratitude to all the SACRE members whose diverse views, customs and shared experiences have enriched our meetings. In a world often polarised in its opinions and outlook, our coming together around a shared purpose has been a sign of hope.

Emily Norman
Chair of Westminster SACRE
Revd John Pearson-Hicks
Vice Chair of Westminster SACRE

Background

This report summarises the activities of the Westminster Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) during the academic year 2019-20. The SACRE has a remit for monitoring Religious Education and Collective Worship in non-denominational schools. The relevant diocesan authorities monitor denominational schools. The Education Act 2002 requires that Religious Education (RE) must be provided as part of the basic curriculum in addition to the National Curriculum. Parents have the right to withdraw their children from all or part of RE and are not obliged to state their reasons for withdrawal.

This report is composed in the light of guidance from the National Association of SACREs (NASACRE) on the format of SACRE annual reports.

Details of the work of Westminster SACRE and associated papers can be found at: <http://services2schools.org.uk/Page/15387>.

1. Religious Education

1.1 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 Westminster LAS has been in place since the spring term of 2017-18 when it was formally approved by the Cabinet Member and launched to schools. It will be due for review in the academic year of 2022-23.

The Westminster Agreed Syllabus: *Living Difference III* is available on the Westminster SACRE website - <http://services2schools.org.uk/Page/15387> - along with a number of useful links to materials/websites/films that Westminster SACRE members had compiled together to help schools in teaching RE.

1.2 Standards in RE

SACRE members gave close consideration to the various national and local developments concerning the provision of RE and continue to do so.

SACRE members and the SACRE Consultant offered school-based colleagues advice, help and support during the year, reflecting the requirements of the agreed syllabus and pertinent to the individual needs of each school.

1.3 Methods of Teaching, the Choice of Teaching Materials, Teacher Training

A RE Good Practice Network, which had been previously established for teachers in Westminster, Kensington and Chelsea and Hammersmith and Fulham, continued to run on a termly basis in 2019-20 with sessions in October, January and June. Along with providing RE coordinators with updates on RE-related news and resources, the focus of these sessions included working on schemes of learning and agreeing a shared format for them, looking at Sikhism in more detail and sharing good practice.

The RE Good Practice Network sessions serve as an opportunity for RE teachers and coordinators to discuss any challenges they face and to receive relevant support, for example, around assessment and attainment in RE, measuring and recording outcomes in RE, etc.

1.4 Matters Discussed During the Year

- RE in Ofsted inspections and deep dives into RE in line with Ofsted Inspection Framework revised in September 2019;
- Collective Worship and resources for schools;
- SACRE membership;
- Support with RE online teaching and learning following the outbreak of Covid-19;
- Youth SACRE. Cllr James Spencer, Westminster SACRE Committee D member, who is leading on this work, secured a slot on the Youth Council agenda to speak about a Youth SACRE and was waiting for meeting details when the Covid-19 pandemic happened. The arrangements were then put on hold.
- SACRE Constitution review.

In setting up an agenda for each termly Westminster SACRE meeting in 2019-20, consideration was given to NASACRE's recommendations for agenda items as suggested in NASACRE's regular briefings.

1.5 Complaints Concerning RE

No complaints were received by SACRE in 2019-20.

2. Collective Worship

2.1 Advice on Collective Worship and Determinations

The advice for schools on Collective Worship, including the process of applying for a Determination (and/or a renewal of it) is published online and can be accessed via the following web link: <http://services2schools.org.uk/Page/16173>. The guidance can also be found attached in Appendix 5.2 of this document.

Any school applying for or renewing a Determination should receive a visit from SACRE members prior to the application being discussed at a meeting.

2.2 Determinations

There were no new applications for a Determination in 2019-20.

There is currently one school with a Determination in Westminster:

School Name	Date determination granted
Hallfield Primary School	28.02.2018

Determinations are for a period of five years. The Determination granted to Hallfield Primary will therefore be lapsing in February 2023.

At the autumn term SACRE meeting, feedback was provided by the Chair and Vice Chair of the SACRE on their quality assurance check visits to the two schools which had decided not to renew their determinations in 2018-19. One of the visits required a follow up visit which was scheduled for the spring term 2020.

Following the feedback from the above-mentioned visits, the SACRE agreed that similar visits should be offered to all the community schools in Westminster without a determination as a way of support. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the pressures that schools were under, these visits were postponed from the summer term to the academic year 2020-21.

In September 2019, the Local Authority received a Freedom of Information request enquiring about how many schools in Westminster had applied for a determination and how many of these applications had been successful. In November, another request came in enquiring about the determination guidance. Both requests were responded to by Clerk with consultation with the Local Authority servicing officer where necessary.

2.3 Complaints Concerning Collective Worship

No complaints were received by Westminster SACRE in 2019-20.

3. Links with Other Bodies

Westminster SACRE is affiliated to The National Association of SACREs (NASACRE).

In September 2019, Emily Norman, Chair of the Westminster SACRE, attended the RBKC SACRE to share the experience of the Westminster SACRE with regards to updating their Locally Agreed Syllabus.

At the spring term SACRE meeting, members Linda Ulrich and Sara Perlmutter volunteered to represent the Westminster SACRE at the NASACRE 2020 Conference and AGM on 18 May 2020. However, this was cancelled due to the Covid-19 pandemic and national lockdown.

In May 2020, Emily Norman was re-nominated by the SACRE to the NASACRE Executive for another term of three years.

4. SACRE Arrangements

SACRE meetings were held on the following dates:

- 21st November 2019 at Hallfield Primary School, Westminster
- 13th February 2020 at Edward Wilson Primary School, Westminster
- 10th June 2020 via Microsoft Teams (virtual meeting)

Clerking of SACRE was provided by The City of Westminster.

Professional support was provided by SACRE Consultant Lesley Prior on a consultancy basis.

The Local Authority covered the running costs.

4.1 Membership Updates

September 2020

- **Fiona McTaggart**, co-opted member on Committee C, stepped down from the SACRE due to a change of role at the school.

February 2020

- **Julia Walker**, Committee A member representing Buddhism, resigned due to relocation to a different part of the country.
- **Cllr Aicha Less**, Committee D member, informed that she had been appointed to the SACRE to cover for Cllr Ruth Bush while she was Lord Mayor. Following the new Lord Mayor elections in May 2020, Cllr Bush was to return to the SACRE. The spring term meeting was the last SACRE meeting which Cllr Less attended.

March 2020

- **Patricia Rogers** was nominated by Humanists UK to represent them on Committee A.

June 2020

- **Cllr Ruth Bush** returned to the SACRE to represent the Local Authority on Committee D.
- **Jackie Saddington**, Bi-borough Head of Governor Services, replaced Lucy Nutt in her role as the Local Authority Servicing Officer after Lucy Nutt left the Council in May 2020.

August 2020

- **Naif Sheikh** was nominated by Discover Islam to represent them on Committee A.

Where members stepped down without arranging replacements or their membership was ceased, Clerk contacted their nominating bodies regarding filling the relevant membership vacancies.

4.2 Members' Code of Conduct

During 2019-20, the Westminster SACRE members agreed to put in place a code of conduct. The final version was shared with the members in June 2020. A copy of it can be viewed on the Westminster SACRE website [here](#).

4.3 Chair Elections

In 2019-20, Emily Norman informed the SACRE that she would like to step down from the role of Westminster SACRE Chair due to the change in professional commitments and that a new Chair would need to be elected before the end of the year.

Arrangements were made for the Chair elections to take place at the summer term meeting on 10th June, which had to be hosted virtually due to the Covid-19 national lockdown. Prior to this meeting, a member had raised an objection that the Chair election process had been carried out outside of the Westminster SACRE Constitution and requested for the process to be annulled.

The details of the objection were clarified to all the members at the meeting on 10th June, and all members were asked to split into their virtual Committee groups to reflect on how the election process had been conducted and to consider, as a group, whether they were happy for the election to proceed and for the results of the election to be announced by the returning officer, or whether the process should be re-set as it had not adhered to the Constitution.

The vote from the four Committees was equal and a deciding vote was given to the Chair, who decided that, in view of the circumstances, the fairest solution would be to re-run the election process in the new academic year.

4.4 Review of Constitution

A review of the Westminster SACRE Constitution was planned for the summer term meeting on 10th June, and this was further to the discussions that the SACRE had had about its membership. The Constitution was last reviewed in May 2014 and it was felt that the membership information in it was out of date and needed to be updated.

However, the situation around the Chair elections, as described in point 4.3 above, further highlighted the need to revise the Constitution. It had been questioned whether the election process for the Chair and Vice Chair, as outlined in the Constitution, was clear enough.

As a result of this, Lesley Prior and Jackie Saddington had reviewed the Westminster SACRE Constitution ahead of the meeting on 10th June and presented their suggested changes for discussion at the meeting. Following the members' comments, it was agreed for Jackie and Lesley to revise the Constitution incorporating all the feedback from the meeting and bring a revised draft to the autumn term meeting for final comments.

5. Appendices

5.1 Westminster SACRE Membership – 2019-20

Committee A – Faiths and Denominations

Naif Sheikh	Discover Islam	Appointed in August 2020
Patricia Rogers	Humanists UK	Appointed in March 2020
Peter Ward	Catholic Church	
Rajinder Singh Bhasin	Sikh Faith	
Sara Perlmutter	Board of Deputies of British Jews	
You Shun Shih	London Fo Guang Shan Temple (Buddhist Faith)	

Committee B – Church of England

Emily Norman (Chair)
Graham Buckle
John Pearson-Hicks (Vice Chair)
Linda Ulrich
Simon Atkinson

Committee C – Teachers

Darren Guttridge, Headteacher, Edward Wilson Primary (NAHT)
Catherine Thornton, Teacher, Hallfield Primary (NEU)
Hayat Boujettef, Teacher, Edward Wilson Primary (NEU) (co-opted)

Committee D – The Local Education Authority

Cllr Antonia Cox
Cllr Ruth Buth – *resumed her SACRE membership in June 2020*
Cllr James Spencer

Servicing Officers

Lucy Nutt/Jackie Saddington, Westminster City Council
Lesley Prior, Adviser to SACRE
Natalija Sorokina – Clerk to SACRE

5.2 Westminster SACRE Guidance on Collective Worship



Westminster SACRE
Guidance to Collective

More can be found on the Westminster SACRE webpage - <http://services2schools.org.uk/Page/16173>.

5.3 KS4 and KS5 RE Results 2019-20

No GCSE and A Level exams took place in summer 2020 due to the Covid-19 outbreak. To enable students to receive qualifications, it was announced that students who were due to sit A level, AS level or GCSE exams would receive a calculated grade.

There has been no subject level data for KS4 or KS5 available from the Department for Education for 2019-20.

