

**ROYAL BOROUGH OF KENSINGTON AND  
CHELSEA**

**Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education**

**Annual Report 2020-2021**

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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 thirtieth report and it summarises its activities during the academic year 2020-21.

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 2020-21

The SACRE met on the following four occasions in 2020-21:

- 12 November 2020
- 16 December 2020
- 21 January 2021
- 27 May 2021

The SACRE usually meets at the Royal Borough's Town Hall. Due to restrictions and safety precautions related to Covid-19, all the SACRE meetings in 2020-21 were held via virtual platforms.

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 for two SACRE members to attend NASACRE's annual Conference and AGM
- 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 the June 2020. It will be due for review in the academic year of 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 gave close consideration to 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**

A RE Good Practice Network, which had been previously established for teachers in Kensington and Chelsea, Westminster and Hammersmith and Fulham, continued to run on a termly basis in 2020-21 with sessions in November, March and June. These sessions are run by Lesley Prior, RE Consultant on the SACRE.

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.

### **5. Membership Updates**

In 2020-21, the SACRE bade farewell to Ms Darcy Biddulph, representative of the Buddhist faith on Group A.

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 school communications. In spite of the efforts being made, it remains

difficult to attract and retain new members. Particularly, it seems challenging to recruit to Group C (teacher representatives). Regular requests are made directly to staff and via emails to the teaching unions.

Membership in each category needs to be maintained to ensure that meetings of the SACRE are quorate. During 2020-21, despite the vacancies in each Group, all the four SACRE meetings were quorate.

A Code of Conduct for the RBKC SACRE members 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 2020-21**

Chairman of the SACRE	Mr Laurence Julius
Clerk to the SACRE	Ms Julie Farmer, Governor Support Officer (RBKC)
Local Authority Adviser	Ms Jackie Saddington, Head of Governor Services (RBKC)
RE Consultant	Ms Lesley Prior, Consultant to the SACRE

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

- Ms Susan Jaff Islamic Faith (Vice-Chair)
- Rev Ken Persaud Notting Hill Community Church
- Ms Darcy Biddulph Buddhist Faith (resigned January 2021)
- Mr Naif Sheikh Islamic Faith
- Mr Laurence Julius Jewish Faith

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

- Mrs Kathryn Kane London Diocesan Board for Schools
- Mr Graham Marriner London Diocesan Board for Schools
- Mrs Katrina Quinton

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

- Ms Celia Garth Rodriguez Colville Primary School

**GROUP D - Representing the Royal Borough** (up to 4 members)

- Cllr David Lindsay (joined Spring 2019)

At the SACRE's summer term meeting, the SACRE bade farewell to Ms Julie Farmer, Clerk to the SACRE, and thanked her for contribution to the SACRE which she had served on since 1997.

## **7. Matters Discussed by the SACRE in 2020-21**

Key matters included the following:

- Supporting materials to schools and how they should be reviewed
- SACRE development
- Challenges around SACRE membership and how it can be improved
- Flu vaccine and the Public Health England guidance on vaccines
- Recording of SACRE meetings
- SACRE funding and NASACRE's report on SACRE Funding in England 2021
- Ramadan guidance
- Locally Agreed Syllabus – next steps

## **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 2020-21 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 2020-21.

## **10. Links with Other Bodies**

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

The 2021 annual NASACRE Conference and AGM was held virtually on Monday 24 May 2021, and Susan Jaff and Naif Sheikh attended it representing the RBKC SACRE. 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 2021 Conference can be found at <https://nasacre.org.uk/conference-and-agm/2021>.

## **11. Examination Results**

The government cancelled all public examinations at Key Stage 4 and 5 again in 2021 due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Students were awarded grades through the Teacher Assessed Grades (TAG) process. Teachers in RBKC schools used a range of evidence to award grades to students. These grades will not be published.

## 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.)