

Westminster Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education

Annual Report 2015-2016

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Introduction from the Chair of City of Westminster SACRE

The Westminster SACRE (Standing Advisory Committee for Religious Education) is pleased to present their annual report. It has been a busy year for us, which included wishing farewell to our previous Chair, Andrew Copson. Andrew has a wealth of knowledge and experience, as well as an unwavering commitment to excellence in Religious Education, for which we have been extremely grateful, and we will miss him very much. We would all like to thank Andrew for his service as SACRE Chair these past few years.

I have now stepped into Andrew's impossibly large shoes as Chair, having been a member of the SACRE for three years. I am a headteacher (at St Mary's Bryanston Square School) and my primary interest is in how the SACRE can best support classroom teachers to deliver Religious Education to the pupils in Westminster, which equips them with the knowledge, understanding and skills they will need for their lives in a diverse and ever-changing society. Teaching has changed significantly in recent years and teachers are constantly being bombarded with new curricula, assessment systems and initiatives. Our SACRE wants to support teachers in delivering high quality RE lessons, by providing them with advice, guidance and a relevant, up-to-date, and well-resourced scheme of work.

To this end, we have set about the task of assisting the Local Authority in reviewing the existing Westminster Locally Agreed Syllabus for RE, in conjunction with the original authors of the scheme, Hampshire LA, and our advisor, Lesley Prior. We hope to have something available for the LA to provide to teachers for use in 2017 and beyond, and to offer training and support for teachers to be able to utilise the scheme effectively.

We are also keen to build on the vast wealth of expertise and experience of the SACRE members and the organisations they represent, to help schools with organising religious visits, providing links to resources and offering advice when it is sought.

We live in interesting times, where, now perhaps more than ever, religious literacy and understanding are crucial components for harmonious community life, and as a SACRE we hope that we can be of service to schools as they endeavour to provide this for the pupils of Westminster.

Emily Norman
Chair of Westminster SACRE

Background

This report summarises the activities of the City of Westminster Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) during the academic year 2015 – 2016. 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 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 The City of Westminster SACRE and associated papers can be found at: www.webfronter.com/westminster/RE/mnu3.html

1. Religious Education

1.1 Locally Agreed Syllabus

After due process, the Local Authority agreed to adopt the Hampshire RE Syllabus – Living Difference. Work was carried out to adapt the syllabus to make it specific to The City of Westminster. The content of the syllabus and the methodology behind it were not amended, as these were the key factors in agreeing to adopt the syllabus. The new syllabus became the statutory Agreed Syllabus for all non-denominational schools in The City of Westminster from 2011.

Appropriate advice, support and training were offered to primary and secondary teachers to enable them to implement the new syllabus. The feedback was very positive.

During 2015-16, SACRE noted the statutory requirement that the Agreed Syllabus must be reviewed every five years and that a revision would probably be necessary as a result. Work on this will begin in 2016-17 and an Agreed Syllabus Conference will be convened to carry out this work.

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 Consultants 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

The focus for the year was on continuing to support the implementation of the Agreed Syllabus and to offer advice on providing appropriate teaching and learning activities for RE.

On 1st December 2015, Dave Francis, Lead Consultant with RE Online, a key resource for RE professionals, ran a training session about the website and the ways in which it can be used to support high quality teaching and learning in the subject. Teachers and members of SACRE attended this event and their feedback was very positive. (See www.reonline.org.uk/ to access the site)

1.4 Briefing Papers for Schools

During 2015-16, some papers were commissioned to provide information for teachers to support them in meeting the pastoral needs of pupils in Westminster schools from different religious and non religious backgrounds. The paper on Islam was circulated to schools in October 2015.

1.5 Complaints concerning RE

No complaints were received by SACRE in 2015-2016.

2. Collective Worship

2.1 Advice on Collective Worship and Determinations

SACRE has produced short and clear advice for schools on Collective Worship, including the process of applying for a Determination (and a renewal of the same) and published this online. Please, see the following web link for further details: <http://webfronter.com/westminster/RE/mnu2.html>. The guidance may also be found as Appendix 2 in this document.

Visits to schools by SACRE members accompanied by the SACRE Consultant and/or the Chair of SACRE have continued. 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. There are currently three schools with a Determination:

School Name	Date determination granted
George Eliot Primary School	26.2.2014
Hallfield Primary School	28.2.2013
Queen's Park Primary School	26.2.2014

2.3 Complaints Concerning Collective Worship

No complaints were received by SACRE.

3. Links with Other Bodies

The City of Westminster SACRE is affiliated to The National Association of SACREs (NASACRE). Login details for the NASACRE website are available from the Clerk to SACRE, Amanda Price, at amanda.price@rbkc.gov.uk

Emily Norman, Chair of SACRE, and Cllr Ruth Bush represented The City of Westminster SACRE at the NASACRE AGM and Conference at Methodist Central Hall in London on 17th May 2016.

Full details and copies of the relevant presentations and speeches can be found at: <http://www.nasacre.org.uk/conference-and-agm/2016/2016-materials>
The login details (see above) are required to access these presentations.
There were two key note speakers.

The Rt Hon Baroness Elizabeth Butler-Sloss GBE, formerly President of the Family Division of the High Court, was the first female Lord Justice of Appeal and until 2004 was the highest-ranking female judge in the United Kingdom. She has chaired many high profile enquiries and inquests. Baroness Butler-Sloss served as Chair for the recently published **Commission on Religion and Belief in British Public Life**. See this link for details: <http://www.corab.org.uk>

Professor Adam Dinham is Professor of Faith and Public Policy at Goldsmiths, University of London. He is also Chair of the British Sociological Association Sociology of Religion Study Group (Socrel), Professor of Religious Literacy, Diakonhjemmet University College, Oslo, Norway and Honorary Stephenson Professor of Leadership, Religion & Society, Sheffield Institute for Interdisciplinary Biblical Studies, Sheffield University, UK. With Martha Shaw, Professor Dinham is the co-author of **RE for REal: The Future of Teaching and Learning about Belief**. See this link for details: <http://www.gold.ac.uk/faithsunit/reforreal/>

The Rt Hon Charles Clarke, speaker at last year's NASACRE AGM, is now Patron of NASACRE and attended this year's event too. He participated in a panel session with other speakers at the end of the day.

Lesley Prior, the SACRE Consultant for Westminster, is former Chair of NASACRE (2013-15) and now Assistant to the NASACRE Executive Group. She also attended the Conference and AGM.

4. SACRE Arrangements

SACRE Meetings were held on:

- 12th November 2015 at St Mary's Bryanston Square CE School, Bryanston Square, W1H 1DL
- 25th February 2016 at Hinde Street Methodist Church, 19 Thayer Street, W1U 2QJ
- 29th June 2016 at St Barnabas Church, St Barnabas Street, SW1W 8PF

At the meeting on 25th February 2016, Andrew Copson (Group A – Humanist) stood down as Chair (and Humanist Representative) after many years in the role. He has made a vital contribution to the work of the SACRE and will be much missed. Emily Norman (Group B) was elected as the new Chair. Jay Harman joined SACRE as the new Humanist Representative.

Clerking of SACRE was provided by The City of Westminster.

Professional support was provided by SACRE Consultants Roger Butler and Lesley Prior on a consultancy basis.

The Local Authority covered the running costs.

5. Appendices

5.1 Westminster SACRE Membership – September 2015 - 16

Committee A – Faiths and Denominations

Lesley Taherzadeh O'Mara	Baha'i Faith
Chueh Yun Shih	Buddhist
Julia Walker	Hindu Faith
Amir De Martino	Islamic Faith
Rajinder Singh Bhasin	Sikh Faith
Peter Ward	Catholic Church
Andrew Copson (Chair) - stood down February 2016	British Humanist Association
Jay Harman – appointed February 2016	British Humanist Association
Sophie Dunoff	Jewish Faith
Val Reid	Methodist Church
David Quorroll	Society of Friends (Quakers)
Hilary Sewell	Baptist Church

Committee B – Church of England

Elizabeth Wolverson – stood down June 2016

John Hicks

Emily Norman – Chair from June 2016

James Hearn – appointed February 2016

Graham Buckle – appointed March 2016

Committee C – Teachers

Naomi Leaver, Headteacher, Robinsfield Infant School (NAHT)

John James, Grey Coat Hospital

Committee D – The Local Education Authority

Cllr Ruth Bush

Cllr Antonia Cox

Cllr Paul Church – stood down February 2016

Cllr Jacqui Wilkinson – appointed June 2016

Servicing Officers

Lucy Nutt, Westminster City Council

Lesley Prior, Adviser to SACRE

Amanda Price – Clerk to SACRE

5.2 Westminster SACRE Guidance on Collective Worship



Westminster SACRE
Guidance to Collective