



## **Harrow SACRE Annual Report 2012-2013**



Harrow  
SACRE

The religious and ethnic profile of the London Borough of Harrow is unique in England and Wales and this is reflected in the very special and well-established relationship that SACRE has with Harrow Council. Statistics from the 2011 Census are one source of information about this diversity.

Harrow has the highest religious affiliation in England and Wales and is ranked as having:

- highest percentage of Hindus (25.3%)
- highest percentage of Jains (2.2%)
- second highest percentage of Zoroastrians (0.1%)
- second lowest percentage of residents declaring No Religion (9.6%)

The Census data also reveals that 37.3%% of residents have identified themselves as Christian, 12.5% as Muslim, 4.4% as Jewish, 1.1% as Buddhist and 1.2% as Sikh.

Harrow is also defined by its ethnic profile, having:

- second highest percentage of residents of Indian origin (26.4%) and the highest percentage of residents who have described themselves using the category of 'Other Asian' (11.3%)
- highest ranking of residents identifying their country of birth as South and Eastern Africa (9.9%), Kenya (4.9%), Sri Lanka (4.3%) and Romania (2.2%)
- lowest ranking of residents with 'No British' identity (51.8%).

There are 61 schools in Harrow, 44 primary schools with nursery classes in 26 of these schools, 11 high schools, 1 all-through free school, 2 primary special schools, 2 high school special schools and 1 pupil referral unit. 8 of the high schools are Academies, as is one primary special school. In December 2013, 85% of schools are good and outstanding.

Harrow Council's Education Strategy and School Organisation service commissions the Harrow School Improvement Partnership to provide RE-specialist expertise and advice for SACRE. We are proud that, in a year of austerity measures and cuts to public services nationally, Harrow Council has maintained its financial commitment to SACRE. This is recognition of the importance of religious education, and of its contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education, in a borough where religious identity and practice is of such importance.

In 2012-13 the highlights of SACRE's work have been:

- to have an agreed self-evaluation form for schools to report to SACRE
- presentations from two schools, including two which have provided excellent models of provision for prayer and another which has enabled SACRE to recognise how RE provision and outcomes in the secondary phase;
- the launch of new SACRE guidance on school attendance and update for 2013-2014 (appendix)
- providing guidance on a place for prayer and reflection in schools
- beginning the process of review for the Agreed Syllabus
- providing seminars on subject leadership in RE

**Alison Stowe**  
**Chair of Harrow SACRE**

## SACRE GUIDANCE TO SCHOOLS

- Publications
- Professional development

### GUIDANCE PUBLICATIONS

In 2012-2013, Harrow SACRE consulted on and launched two guidance publications for schools and other stakeholders:

#### a) SACRE Guidance: Authorised absence for religious festivals 2012 – 2013

In the UK, the pattern of the school year takes account of most of the western Christian festivals and holy days. Important days of religious observance in the calendars of other religious traditions and denominations, however, often fall in term time and on school days. SACRE recognizes that parents, who are nurturing children and young people within a faith tradition, want them to be able to engage in those key events which involve corporate worship and celebration and which affirm their religious beliefs.

A long-standing agreement has been established, between SACRE, the LA and schools, whereby up to three days in the school year may be authorised for pupil absence for religious observance. SACRE has traditionally published an annual list of religious festival dates on which absence might be authorised.

At the Autumn 2012 meeting, Patrick O'Dwyer, Educational Professional Lead, ESSO (Education Strategy and School Organisation), outlined the strengthened measures the LA is taking to support schools in promoting good attendance. These include early intervention, support for families and, when necessary, prosecution and penalty notices.

It is in this context that SACRE published new guidance on authorised absence for religious festivals. The guidance has advice status only. In schools it is the Governing Body which determines the school's attendance policy and the headteacher who, on a day to day basis, decides whether or not to authorise absence for religious observance.

Published alongside its new guidance is a list of those dates which, in 2012-2013, SACRE regard as *"exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parent belongs."* These dates are recommended to schools as those on which they would authorise absence from school.

Headteachers have welcomed this publication and its support for their robust approach to improving attendance. They are making reference to it in their discussions with parents and also with staff. The guidance will be reissued for 2013-2014 (Appendix) with a new list of dates on which schools are recommended to authorise absence from school for religious observance in the academic year.

## b) SACRE Guidance: Offering a space for prayer and reflection

In 2011-2012, SACRE commissioned an education consultant, who advises on Islam, to draft guidance for schools on the benefits for all pupils of establishing a space for prayer and reflection. In order to ensure that this guidance reflects the particular context of Harrow, a small group of SACRE members visited a local high school to interview students and staff about the practicalities and rationale for providing a space for prayer and what it contributes to the school community.

At Rooks Heath College, the provision of classrooms for male and female staff and students to use for prayer, is well established. Prayer for them, as young Muslims, is part of their daily routine and they expect to be able to fit in their prayer at lunch time as well as to eat their lunch and meet their friends or play sport.

Fatima Ibrahim, a teacher in the science department, described a number of benefits to the school community:

- Students who take their prayers seriously are likely to take their academic studies seriously too;
- A school which enable pupils to pray within a secular environment is modelling that it values freedom of religion, respect for diversity and inclusion;
- When Muslim students are observant of their own religious obligations without proselytising and Sunni and Shia Muslims are praying alongside each other in fellowship, they are providing challenging negative stereotypes, Islamophobia and extremism;
- Students of other backgrounds, who see Muslim students using the prayer room unobtrusively but routinely, are seeing role models of self-discipline and time management.

The headteacher and deputy of Welldon Park Junior School gave a presentation at the spring term 2013 SACRE meeting, entitled "Small change, big difference". When a small group of Y6 Muslim pupils had approached the headteacher for permission to pray in school time, the Chair of Governors had contacted SACRE for advice. The head and deputy had been keen to accommodate pupils' religious choices and commitments inclusively within the daily routines of the school. They have developed a code of conduct for those who use the space for prayer and have noticed an impact upon pupils' self-esteem and behaviour; some children enjoy the responsibility and status of leading prayer and are making good choices. Feedback from this group of children, shared with SACRE, was mature and reflective:

*"When I pray in the morning, I feel refreshed. Now I feel refreshed at lunchtime!" "Being quiet helps me not to feel distracted. It helps me not to be distracted in the afternoon."*

*"Praying helps me to forget bad things that have happened and to make a fresh start." "It helps me to reflect on what I've done and what I could change to be better."*

The final, published guidance includes cameos from these two schools, guidance on the benefits for pupils and for the school community, advice on practical arrangements and faith-specific advice.

## **IMPROVING TEACHING AND LEADERSHIP IN RE: SACRE COMMISSIONED SEMINARS FOR RE LEADERS**

In 2012-2013 termly seminars, commissioned by SACRE, were delivered by the LA Adviser to SACRE.

### **a) RE leadership**

The autumn term 2012 RE leaders' seminar was focused on improving subject leadership. Rachel Bowerman shared the RE subject-specific guidance and grade descriptors as a tool for school self-evaluation, and improvement planning. There was also an introduction to the RE Quality Mark and its criteria for evaluating provision and outcomes in RE.

### **b) Visit to the Harrow Central Mosque**

The spring term 2013 RE leaders' seminar was hosted at the Harrow Central Mosque. Zafar Halid, representative for Harrow Muslim Council on SACRE, and Iftikhar Daad Al-Azhari, Head of the Madrassah, welcomed teachers, took them on a guided tour of the new mosque and held a question and answer session. Rachel Bowerman modelled an approach to teaching about Islam, launching two new units of work for Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, which she had developed in consultation with Islamic communities:

- Year 5 '*How does learning about the Mosque help us to understand community?*' and
- Year 2 '*Growing up in a Muslim family.*'

A majority of primary schools had attended this CPD session and feedback had been very positive. Iftikhar Daad had commended the quality of the teaching and learning materials and the authenticity and sensitivity of the faith-specific training. He and Zafar Halid were in agreement that the approach modelled in the Year 5 unit would ensure that pupils and staff were better prepared for visits to the mosque.

### **c) Planning for RE at Key Stage 1**

In response to requests from RE leaders and class teachers, the focus of the summer term seminar was RE at Key Stage 1. Rachel Bowerman modelled a Year 2 unit for teaching about Christianity: Growing up in a Christian family. This unit had been developed in consultation with Christian communities. Participants were given CD RoMs with clips of DVD and other visual resources.

## SACRE Monitoring and Evaluation of

- ❑ Attainment in RE
- ❑ Quality of teaching and the extent to which the curriculum delivers the Harrow Agreed Syllabus and meets the needs of pupils
- ❑ Leadership and management of RE

### Religious Studies Public Examination Data 2012-13 (non-denominational schools, LA level)

#### GCSE RS Short Course

Local Authority level data (non-denominational schools only)

Year	No. entries	% cohort	A*	A	B	C	A* - C	A* - G
2013	1318	76%	8.1%	15.6%	21.2%	17.6%	62.4%	95.9%
2012	1519	81%	6.9%	15.2%	20.3%	17.1%	59.5%	94.8%
2011	1646	86%	10.2%	14.9%	19.3%	17.3%	61.7%	95.7%
2010	1434	87%	7.3%	16.6%	23.9%	20.8%	68.6%	98%
2009	1398	74%	12.2%	18.7%	20.9%	18.0%	69.8%	98.9%
2008	1294	65%	7.7%	14.8%	21.5%	22.2%	66.1%	97.7%

#### GCSE RS Full Course

Local Authority level data (non-denominational schools only)

Year	No. entries	% cohort	A*	A	B	C	A* - C	A* - G
2013	312	18%	13.8%	26.6%	25%	15.1%	80.4%	97.4%
2012	179	10.7%	25.7%	30.2%	21.2%	14%	91.1%	98.9%
2011	113	7%	25.7%	28.3%	17.7%	15.9%	87.6%	99.1%
2010	211	11%	13.7%	25.1%	27.2%	17.3%	83.5%	99.5%
2009	196	10%	30.1%	29.1%	16.8%	10.7%	86.7%	100%
2008	215	13%	15.3%	26.5%	23.3%	20.5%	85.6%	97.7%

#### AS Level

Local Authority level data (non-denominational schools only)

Year	No. entries	A	C	E	A - B	A - E
2013	5	40%	-	-	80%	100%
2012	13	0%	15.4%	15.4%	46.2%	76.9%
2011	16	6.3%	25%	12.5%	25%	93.8%

## A Level

Local Authority level data (non-denominational schools only)

<b>Year</b>	<b>No. entries</b>	<b>A*</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>A* - B</b>	<b>A* - E</b>
2013	25	0%	8%	28%	44%	36%	100%
2012	31	3.2	9.7	54.8	25.8	67.7	100%
2011	20	15.0%	15.0%	71.4%	14.3%	70%	100%

## School Presentation: Self-evaluation in a secondary setting

At the summer term 2013 meeting of SACRE, the Head of RE at Rooks Heath College and her deputy (who will succeed her when the current leader retires) presented to SACRE their self-evaluation of RE.

Dr Donkor gave a summary of provision for RE at Rooks Heath, including timetable allocations at Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 and a broad outline of the Key Stage 3 curriculum, which is designed to meet the requirements of the Harrow Agreed Syllabus. At Key Stage 4 all students in Year 10 and Year 11 follow the Edexcel RS GCSE Short Course: Religion and Life, studying Christianity and one other religion.

He provided broad headlines about pupil attainment. The department makes on entry baseline assessments in Year 7 and judges that pupils have made expected progress by the end of Key Stage 3. The 2012 GCSE results broadly reflected pupils' predicted grades and 33 students exceeded expectations by two or more grades.

The quality of teaching in the RE department is judged to be good and this evaluation is based upon lesson observations by the Senior Leadership Team and Ofsted.

Dr Donkor concluded his report on RE at Rooks Heath College by outlining some of the strengths of RE and his priorities for further development. He emphasised that neither the conversion to Academy status nor the introduction of the EBacc has made any difference to the profile of RE or the status of the RE department. RE continues to make a rich contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, as was reported by Ofsted. It is a subject in which pupils new to the school or to the country, and for whom English is an additional language, make good progress because the vast majority feel that their religious identity is valued and that they can contribute to the learning as well as engage with it. Dr Donkor is aware that some students would like the department to offer full course GCSE; he continues to regard the short course GCSE as inclusive and accessible to lower attainers. At present, the number of students who would opt for an RS A-level are too small to make it a viable cohort.

A group of four Rooks Heath students gave a presentation. They outlined:

- the contribution of RS to young people's personal, social and moral development, regarding it as a vital element of education for adult life in a plural society
- how the pedagogy of RE - with its emphasis upon learning the ground rules of respectful discussion and debate - were very important. It was suggested that although Harrow is one of the most religiously diverse boroughs, there is less conflict than elsewhere and this might be due both to adherence to religious values and also perhaps to the way in which RE promotes tolerance and respect;
- their perspective upon the status of RE nationally and suggested some ways to enhance the subject's profile with employers and higher education institutions

The students joined with SACRE members in a question and answer session. They were very well prepared, highly articulate and eloquent and very engaging speakers. Good ambassadors for their school and for religious education.

SACRE are aware that there is no mechanism to carry out a monitoring role. Although SACRE meetings now feature regular presentations from schools, SACRE still only hears from a very small sample and because schools are not using a common format for their reports, the evidence base, on which to evaluate RE in Harrow, is not robust.

## MANAGING THE SACRE AND PARTNERSHIP WITH THE LOCAL AUTHORITY, SCHOOLS AND OTHER KEY STAKEHOLDERS

- Membership
- Partnership with Harrow Council
- Partnership with schools
- Partnership with NASACRE and the RE Council

### Meetings

In the academic year 2012 – 2013, SACRE met four times: 10 October and 4 December 2012 and 6 March and 12 June 2013.

### Membership

This year Mercedes Afnan replaced Sanaz Missaghian as the Baha'i representative. An additional Christian (Catholic) representative was appointed.

## SACRE membership 2013

**Chair** Alison Stowe (Group C)  
**Vice Chair** Cllr Camilla Bath (Group D)

### Group A: Religious traditions and Christian churches

Ms Mercedes Afnan (from 4/12/12)	
Ms Sana Missaghian-Ajala (until 4/12/12) Baha'i	
Ven Sumaner Sramaner	Buddhist
Mike Bishop	Christian (Free Church Federal Council)
Neville Ransley	Christian (Catholic)
Ms Angela Clapham	Christian (Catholic)
Vijay Hirani	Hindu (Swaminarayan)
Ananda Caitanya Das	Hindu (International Society for Krishna Consciousness)
Dr Julie Crow	Humanist (Harrow Humanists)
Varsha Dodhia	Jain
Zafar Khalid	Muslim (representing Harrow Muslim Council)
Zia Baig	Muslim
Cllr Asad Omar	Muslim
Gill Ross	Jewish
Doreen Samuels	Jewish
Beverley Wilson	Rastafarian
Paramjit Singh-Kohli	Sikh
Phiroza Gan-Kotwal	Zoroastrian

### Group B: Church of England

Mary Abbott  
Revd. Philip Barnes  
Revd. Matthew Stone

### **Group C: Teachers' Associations**

Manju Radia  
Alison Stowe  
*Vacancy*

### **Group D: Local Authority**

Cllr Nana Asante Labour (until May 2013)  
Cllr Camilla Bath Conservative  
Cllr Sasi Suresh Labour  
*Vacancy* Independent Labour  
Cllr James Bond Independent/Ungrouped (from June 2013)

**Note:** Members have served throughout 2012 – 2013 unless otherwise indicated

### **Partnership with schools**

In order to raise the profile of SACRE, the Lead LA officer gave a presentation at the summer term meeting of Harrow Head Teachers with the Corporate Director of Children and Families, Catherine Doran. Rachel used this presentation to:

- emphasise the importance of SACRE in the local context – using 2011 census data about Harrow's religious diversity and very high percentage of religious affiliation
- remind schools of SACRE's statutory duties in relation to Collective Worship – in 2011-2012, SACRE published new procedures for applications for a determination and the annual report that year published cameos of good practice in local primary schools
- remind schools of SACRE's statutory duties in relation to RE – monitoring and reporting to the LA on standards and quality of teaching in RE – and of the SACRE- commissioned termly seminars for RE leaders which have helped to develop links with local faith communities
- highlight SACRE's recent guidance publications
- alert headteachers to the forthcoming review of the Harrow Agreed Syllabus.

At the end of the academic year, the Lead SACRE officer was invited to attend the Primary Headteachers' Executive meeting to discuss an agreed scheduling of school reports so that SACRE can obtain regular and consistent information about RE in schools. Having presented them with a menu of ways in which SACRE might monitor the quality of RE in schools, it was agreed that schools should submit a written report annually to SACRE and should use the prepared self-evaluation form for this.

An article about SACRE and how it can support Governing Bodies fulfilling their responsibilities for provision of RE and Collective Worship, was included in the *Harrow Governors' Bulletin*.

### **Review of the Harrow Agreed Syllabus**

The Chair of SACRE wrote to the Corporate Director Children and Families to inform her that a review of the Harrow Agreed Syllabus is now required. SACRE was mindful of two national initiatives that should be taken into account when shaping the local Agreed Syllabus. The Chair therefore recommended that the work of the Agreed Syllabus Conference should commence once the new National Curriculum has been published and

there has been a final report from the RE Council and a published response from the government. SACRE also advised the Director that whilst the local academies were not required to deliver the local Agreed Syllabus, they had been invited to nominate two representatives to SACRE and members would be pleased to consider a similar representation on the Agreed Syllabus Conference.

Harrow Council has set aside appropriate funds in order to convene an Agreed Syllabus Conference and, if the ASC should decide that it is necessary to do so, to develop a new agreed syllabus. SACRE has been asked to put forward proposals regarding the projected costs and timescales for the review and potential syllabus development activities which will commence in 2013-2014.

### **Partnership with NASACRE**

Although Harrow SACRE was not represented at the NASACRE AGM, presentations from the two keynote speakers – Alan Brine HMI, National Lead for RE and Mark Chater, Director, Culham St Gabriel's Trust – were included on the agenda for the Harrow SACRE summer term meeting.

Members used questions posed at the AGM to discuss whether SACREs are fit for purpose. Harrow SACRE members affirmed the role of SACRE in championing RE locally and nationally. They regard this as an increasingly relevant and necessary duty. They continue to value the way in which local review of the Agreed Syllabus can galvanise new interest in RE and furnish a new entitlement to training.

At its summer term meeting, SACRE also discussed a summary report of "*The Truth Unmasked*"; an enquiry by the all party parliamentary group on Religious Education.

### **Collective Worship and Determinations**

No advice on collective worship was requested in 2012-2013 and there were no applications for determinations.



**SACRE GUIDANCE:  
Authorised absence for religious festivals 2013-2014**



Harrow  
SACRE

## Harrow Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE)

### Authorised Absence for Religious festivals: Guidance for headteachers and Governing Bodies

This document has advice status. It is the Governing Body which determines the school's attendance policy. On a day to day basis, the headteacher implements that policy and decides whether or not to authorise absence for religious observance, balancing religious requirements with the importance of regular attendance.

#### Context

In the UK, the pattern of the school year takes account of most of the western Christian festivals and holy days. Important days of religious observance in the calendars of other religious traditions and denominations, however, often fall in term time and on school days.

Those parents, who are nurturing children and young people within a faith tradition, understandably want them to be able to engage in those key events which involve corporate worship and celebration and which affirm their religious beliefs. Schools will want to be sensitive to parental requests for the authorisation of absence for religious observance because they recognize that a family's religious beliefs and traditions are intrinsic to their sense of identity and contribute to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Whilst sympathetic to the need of families to remain in contact with relatives and their 'heritage' overseas, headteachers will seldom authorise absence for extended visits abroad because of the consequences for pupils' attendance and learning.

#### Guidance to school leaders

In preparing this guidance, SACRE has taken full account of current legislation in relation to attendance:

*"The child shall not be taken to have failed to attend regularly at the school by reason of his absence from the school -  
(c) on any day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which his parent belongs"*  
*Education Act 1996, Part VI, Chapter II, Paragraph 444*

A long-standing agreement has been established within the Local Authority that up to three days in the school year may be authorised for pupil absence for religious observance. SACRE has traditionally published an annual list of religious festival dates on which absence might be authorised. Harrow SACRE is aware that headteachers have requested further guidance in order that this agreement does not diminish robust procedures aimed at improving attendance. SACRE therefore advises that:-

- headteachers should authorise absence **only** for a festival date 'exclusively set apart by the religious body';

- if a festival date has not been ‘exclusively set apart’ on the SACRE list or by the relevant religious body, headteachers might enquire whether religious observance can be accommodated outside of school hours;<sup>1</sup>
- in some religious calendar years, a ‘religious body’ sets apart holy days on which religious observance will require absence from school amounting to more than three week-days in term time<sup>2</sup> and headteachers are advised to consider this sensitively;
- absence taken on a school day for a festival falling at a weekend, or in a school holiday, would not be authorised;
- additional days taken on either side of the festival day would not be authorised;
- the LA agreement of up to 3 days should not be viewed as an entitlement which is to be taken in full. For example, if only 1 festival day falls on a week day in term time then a school would only authorise that 1 day’s absence. The school would not authorise an additional 2 days absence;

### **The needs of different religious groups**

Within some religious traditions, observance varies between different denominations and communities. Ashura, for example, is a relatively minor festival for Sunni Muslims but a holy day of major significance for the Shia community.

Whilst headteachers and teachers must ensure that requests are genuine and reasonable, they are recommended not to doubt a request on grounds that other families of the same faith have not requested absence on the same day or at the same time. It may be the case that:

- the level of observance differs amongst families within the same faith tradition;
- a particular denominational or cultural grouping observes different holy days to other groups within the same faith;
- some pupils, though growing up within a faith community, may prefer to attend school on festival days.

### **What can schools do to meet the needs of families from religious traditions whilst promoting high attendance rates?**

Harrow schools are aware of the religious communities represented within their school and are advised to take reasonable steps to ensure, whenever possible, that events in the school diary – such as parents evenings, school performances - do not clash with days of significant religious importance to pupils and staff.<sup>3</sup>

As part of their written communications with families, some schools send a termly or annual proforma asking for advance information of requests for absence for religious observance. However, some communities may not be able to identify festival dates that far in advance. Parents should be asked to give the school as much notice of a proposed absence as is reasonably possible and be willing to discuss with the school how pupils will catch up with work missed.

For religiously observant children and young people there are expectations of religious prayer and observance throughout the year. Schools can usually make provision for pupils to fulfil these observances without the need for absence during the school day. For example, through consultation with the Muslim communities represented within the school, a prayer room and nearby facilities for washing can enable young Muslims to perform salah on the school site (see SACRE Guidance on offering a place for prayer and reflection).

SACRE has been involved in the Consultation with Schools on the Local Authority's Duties and Legal Measures to Secure School Attendance. Although absences are no longer separately categorized as authorised and unauthorised, SACRE encourages schools to analyse attendance data against a range of criteria, including absence each half-term for religious observance.

---

<sup>1</sup> In the Christian tradition, for example, Ash Wednesday observance does not require absence from school and families can attend church for worship outside of school hours.

<sup>2</sup> The Board of Deputies of British Jews, for example, publishes a Jewish Holiday Calendar indicating those days on which obligations and restrictions similar to Shabbat apply. In some years of the Jewish calendar, this will amount to more than 3 days on which Jews are obliged to be absent from school, because work is forbidden.

<sup>3</sup> Indirect discrimination may occur if provision is applied generally but has the effect of disadvantaging those with a particular 'characteristic.' (Equality Act 2010 DfE Advice for School leaders September 2012)

## SACRE Guidance: Dates ‘set apart’ for religious observance 2013 – 2014

SACRE has traditionally published an annual list of religious festival dates. In line with its newly published and robust guidance to school leaders, representatives of local faith communities have identified those dates which they regard as “*exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parent belongs.*” These dates are recommended to schools as those on which they would authorise absence from school.

This list can only have advice status because the reference in law to “*the religious body to which the parent belongs*” is not easily defined. Within faith communities there may be a range of religious ‘bodies’, which are invested - locally, nationally and internationally - with the status of determining which festivals require absence from school and the exact date on which a festival should be celebrated.

	Spring Term 2014	Summer Term 2014	Autumn Term 2014
<b>Baha’i</b>	21/03/14 New Year	23/05/14 The Declaration of the Bab	12/11/14 The Birth of Baha’u’llah
In the Baha’i tradition it is recommended that, where possible, work is suspended on these days.			
<b>Buddhism</b>		13/05/14 Vesakha Puja / Buddha Day	08/12/14 Bodhi Day*
Such is the religious, cultural and ethnic diversity within Buddhism that different Buddhist denominations – for example Theravada, Mayahana - follow different religious calendars. The same festival may be celebrated on different dates and different Buddhist communities will celebrate different festivals. Within those traditions that follow a lunar calendar, New Year Festivals may be religiously significant. These include Lhosar (New Year within the Tibetan and Nepalese Buddhist communities) and Songkran for Thai Buddhists. Many Buddhist communities celebrate their religious festivals collectively on the nearest Sunday.			
<b>Christianity</b>	06/01/14 Epiphany 06/01/14 Christmas Eva (Eastern Orthodox) 07/01/14 Christmas Day (Eastern Orthodox tradition) 03/03/14 Great Lent Fast (Orthodox)		
In the Orthodox tradition Easter is calculated using the Julian calendar. It is a ‘moveable’ feast and so the date of Easter, and the beginning of the Lenten fast, will differ every year. In 2013 Pascha, the Orthodox Easter Sunday, falls on 20.04.13.			
<b>Hinduism</b>			23/10/2014 Hindu New Year/Diwali
Such is the diversity within Hinduism that almost every working day might be a festival. However, few Hindu festivals require a day off school. In most temples, observances take place in the evenings in recognition of the need to attend work and school. Hindu communities in the UK also tend to celebrate festivals collectively on the nearest Sunday, either before or after major festivals, for the same reason. Most observances during the 5 days of Diwali take place in the evening and it is not necessary for pupils to be absent from school on each of those days. Krishna Janmashtami is a key festival for many Hindus but in 2014 it falls in the school summer holiday (17.08.14).			

<b>Islam</b>			03/11/14 Ashura** (Shia)
<p>In 2014 Ramadan will be observed from 29.06.14 – 27.07.14. There is no religious obligation requiring pupils to be absent from school during Ramadan. However, Muslim pupils, parents and staff will welcome the provision of a space for prayer and thoughtful arrangements at lunchtime.</p> <p>*A range of methods is used to determine when Eid begins. Muslim families will follow their masjid or community leaders. Therefore parents from different Muslim communities may request absence for Eid on two different dates and some may not be able to calculate the date in advance because they must sight the moon. In 2014 Eid-ul-Fitr falls on 29.09.14 in the school summer holiday.</p> <p>** Shia Muslims might request absence on Ashura.</p>			
<b>Jainism</b>			23/10/2014 Diwali (New Year)
<p>In 2013 Mahavir Janma Kalyanak - Mahavir's birthday - (03.11.2013) falls on a Sunday. Jains are likely to request absence for one day at Diwali, that is for New Year. On other festival days, observance can be fulfilled in after school hours unless a family has pledged to partake in a special puja, aarti, mangal diva, or shanti kalash. Sometimes extended families plan a special pilgrimage. The Jain representative on SACRE urges that schools make decisions about authorising student absence for these rare pilgrimages that are consistent with decisions about authorisation of absence for Hajj. Jains of the Svetambara tradition may request absence on Samvatsari (Bhadarva vad choth) on 09.09.13</p>			
<b>Judaism</b>		22/04/14 Pesach 6/05/14 Yom Ha'atzma'ut 04-05/06/14 Shavot	25 – 26/09/14 Rosh Hashanah 9-10/10/14 & 13-16/10/14 Sukkot 17/10/14 Simchat Torah
<p>Jewish law prohibits work on the Sabbath and certain festivals. The traditional Jewish interpretation of work includes any kind of creative activity, such as writing, operating equipment, such as computers and telephones, and traveling, other than on foot. Attending classes and taking examinations are classified as work. There is no provision in Jewish law for a dispensation to be given from these religious obligations. However, levels of observance vary between families.</p>			
<b>Rastafarian</b>	07.01.14 Ethiopian Christmas Day		11/09/14 Ethiopian New Years Day 02/11/14 Anniversary of Crowning of Haile Selassie I
<b>Sikhism</b>			23/10/14 Diwali 06/11/14 Birthday of Guru Nanak
<p>In 2013 dates corresponding to the Nanakshahi calendar fall at the weekend or during the holidays: Birthday of Guru Gobind Singh 05.01.14 Vaisakhi 13.04.14</p>			
<b>Zoroastrianism</b>	21.03.14 Jamsdeedi NoRuz*		
<p>* Observance on Jamsdeedi NoRuz will not require a day's absence. However, families may have a thanks giving prayer ceremony in the morning followed by a festive breakfast, and so children would be late coming to school.</p>			

For a full calendar of Religious Festivals in 2013-2014 please see the Shap Calendar which is available on subscription at [www.shap.org](http://www.shap.org)