

Wandsworth Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE)

Annual Report for the academic year September 2021- August 2022

1. Introduction

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Chair's welcome

It gives me great pleasure to introduce this report as the new Chair of Wandsworth SACRE. The 2021-22 academic year was another atypical year for Wandsworth SACRE following a slow return to normal post the pandemic. We did however return to the practice of three meetings during the year, two of which were virtual. It was a delight to meet in person in the summer term, and for this meeting to be hosted at one of our places of worship, where we enjoyed a presentation and tour of Balham Mosque.

We welcomed new members this year – in Group A Ms Saffi Haines from the Religious Society of Friends; Mr Jatin Bhatt and Mr Nabinhandan Das, Hindu society; and in Group D, Councillors Jafri, Marshall and myself.

Wandsworth SACRE has continued with its work to ensure that all pupils in our schools develop spiritually, morally, socially and culturally as well as academically. We participated in the NASACRE AGM and continue to follow with interest developments in RE nationally, for example the ideas presented by Dr Richard Kueh, HMI and adviser to Ofsted, in the Research Review Series: Religious Education, and the Religion and World Views in the Classroom; developing a Worldviews Approach - draft handbook from the REC.

Our SACRE actively seeks to ensure all children in Wandsworth have access to high quality and challenging RE and we provide support to primary RE subject leaders through the teachers' network meetings, now taking place in person again. These are free of charge to maintained schools and we urge school leaders to recognise the importance of allocating school time for staff to attend. We also produce a termly newsletter which signposts resources, draws attention to issues of interest in the RE world and highlights forthcoming festivals among other features.

Pupils' learning in RE has been enhanced by the Faith Trails which have allowed our children to experience exciting learning opportunities while promoting an ethos of respect for others. They have built on their understanding of their own and other cultures and beliefs while also celebrating the religious and cultural diversity found in Wandsworth.

I offer my heartfelt thanks to members of Wandsworth SACRE and all others who work so hard to support RE in Wandsworth.

Councillor Juliana Annan
Chair, Wandsworth SACRE

Overview

1. This annual report of Wandsworth SACRE outlines the work of SACRE during the academic year 2021 to 2022. After the absence of examination data in the last two years, it has again been possible to include GCSE or A-level statistics for Religious Studies for the past year as an appendix to this report, with thanks to the Wandsworth Research and Evaluation Unit, which provides this information.

Meetings held in the reporting year

2. Wandsworth SACRE met on three occasions during the academic year 2021 – 2022. Meetings are held in the evenings. Two of these were held virtually using Teams, but it was a delight to be able to be in person again for our summer term meeting. This was held at Balham mosque, and preceded by a tour and presentation by the Imam.

Attendance was generally good, but sadly one meeting was inquorate. New members were welcomed, including from the Society of Friends and a new Hindu member and deputy. There was again no attendance by Salvation Army, the Methodist church, the Sikh member nor the Humanist co-optee however. The summer meeting welcomed three new councillors, including a new chair, as Wandsworth Council moved from a Conservative to a Labour majority in the May elections.

3. The NASACRE briefing is a standing item at all SACRE meetings.

Autumn Term Meeting 2020

4. Meeting held on Monday, 4th October 2021.

Information was given on the new Faith Trails initiative, to be launched that week, where upper key stage 2 primary pupils would visit three contrasting places of worship on the same day. The first trail was to the Buddhist Buddhapadipa temple, the Wimbledon Synagogue and Our Lady and St Peter Catholic church, and pupils from two of the teacher Group C SACRE members would pilot it. The documentation relating to the trail, such as feedback and guidelines, were discussed.

Workforce data received from NATRE on RE teachers and time allocation in state funded Wandsworth secondary schools was considered, and ways in which SACRE could support them, for example by setting up a secondary RE teachers' network. The primary network was functioning well.

It was agreed to sign up for NASACRE's training plan, which would enable all members to attend any training provided by NASACRE free of charge.

Spring Term Meeting 2022

5. Meeting held on Monday, 21st March, 2022.

The SACRE Annual Report for 2020-21 was presented and discussed.

An introduction was given to Wandsworth SACRE's new website, easily accessed directly from the main Council website, and with links to key documents with SACRE members would find helpful.

SACRE's Guidance on Collective Worship was reviewed, and updates agreed.

A full evaluation was given on the Faith Trails initiative. The first one had been very successful and the LA Officer was asked to develop further trails as well as set up further dates for the Wimbledon Trail.

The LA Officer reported that a forum for secondary teachers of RE had been set up but attendance at the first virtual meeting had been disappointing.

Summer Term Meeting

6. Meeting held on Monday, 13th June 2022

The LA Officer reported back on the NASACRE conference which had been held online. The feedback provided by the conference was also provided. The world views draft handbook was discussed, as well as the ideas presented by Dr Richard Kueh, HMI and adviser to Ofsted, in the Research Review Series: Religious Education. In particular, depth versus breadth was discussed and the importance of finding the right balance to prepare young people for the complexity of modern life in Britain.

Two additional schools would be taking part in the Wimbledon Faith Trail the following week. A pilot for the Balham Faith Trail, which would visit the Balham Mosque, Balham Mandir (Hindu) and St Mary and St John the Divine CE church was launching the week after.

The Locally Agreed Syllabus (LAS) was now five years old and due for review. It was a completely new document at that time and much training had been provided for primary teachers on it. Members considered the syllabus and were of the mind that it should be retained but updated. It was not possible to take the decision to convene the Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC) as the meeting was inquorate.

2. Religious Education

Syllabus

The current Wandsworth Locally Agreed Syllabus (LAS) was launched in September 2017. Due to the new directions in RE relating to Worldviews and forthcoming commissions for exemplar syllabi, it will be updated rather than replaced. SACRE meeting time has been set aside in the autumn and spring to meet with working parties from the ASC, once convened.

Monitoring and standards

Standards in RE in secondary schools are normally monitored by scrutinising the exam data from GCSEs and A level. See appendix.

A trawl is also made of Ofsted reports to look for references to RE and SMSC (spiritual, moral, social and cultural development). This was done and reported upon in the first meeting of the new academic year, October 2021. Section 48 reports are also sent to SACRE, but due to the break in the carrying out of inspections, there were none in the last year.

The workforce data for secondary schools, produced by NATRE is discussed, and follow up made to schools where there has been no submission, or where time allocation to RE appears low. It should be noted that in Wandsworth, only one secondary school is a community school, while with the exception of one voluntary aided school, the others all have academy status. Some primary schools are working towards the REQM. Two schools currently hold the award.

Continuing professional development

The primary RE subject leaders' network met virtually twice in the autumn and spring terms, and in person in the summer term. High quality training is delivered by a professional RE consultant. The foci for meetings in the last year were

- Rumi and Islam as a Worldview (autumn 2021)
- Islam continued, Nation of Islam, Antiracism, Egyptian Women's mosque movement (spring 2022)
- Judaism, Big Ideas and World Views (summer 2022)

Other support for schools

The email network group set up by the LA SACRE Officer has continued to enable members to keep in touch with each other to seek advice and share good practice. It includes some subject leaders from independent schools as well as LA community schools.

The LA SACRE Officer produces a termly newsletter which has a calendar of events including major faith festivals, signposts good practice and shares resources.

SACRE has produced guidance for schools on Ramadan, which is updated annually (see appendix).

No complaints about religious education in schools were referred to SACRE this year.

3. Collective Worship

No monitoring of collective worship, either of quality or compliance to statutory requirements, took place during the year. No requests for determinations were received during the year. No schools in Wandsworth have been given determinations in the past.

No complaints regarding collective worship in the community schools of Wandsworth were referred to SACRE during the year. SACRE has produced guidance for schools on collective worship, which was reviewed this year (see appendix).

Freedom of Information (FOI) Requests

There were no FOI requests during the past year.

4. Links with other bodies

Wandsworth SACRE is affiliated to the National Association of SACREs (NASACRE).

One meeting per year has in the past been held jointly with Wandsworth's Multi Faith Forum. The agenda for this is chosen to reflect the interests of both bodies. This has not happened during the time of virtual meetings.

There are good links with the Church of England Diocese of Southwark and the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Southwark, whose advisers to Wandsworth's VA schools are much valued by the schools themselves and the School Improvement Service.

5. Other SACRE local involvement

SACRE gave its approval to the LA Officer to arrange Faith Trails for pupils to visit different places of worship local to each other on the same day. This began during the 21-22 academic year. The trails have been planned to each include a place of worship for Christians; another non Christian Abrahamic faith and a Dharmic faith. The length of trail varies from 0.5 mile to 1.4 miles, easily undertaken on foot and with a picnic, or indoor lunch possibilities, when necessary.

Two schools each piloted two trails during the year, before they were offered to other schools. The first trail was the Wimbledon Parkside Trail, visiting the Buddhapadipa Buddhist Temple, before going on to the Wimbledon Synagogue and then Our Lady and St Peter Catholic church. The second trail was the Balham Trail, visiting the Balham Mandir, Balham Mosque and St Mary and St John the Divine Anglican church. The third trail, which begins in the 22-23 academic year, takes place around Southfields, visiting the Fazl Mosque, Sikh Gurdwara South London and then the Quaker Meeting House. Four other schools have taken part so far, with a longer list signed up for summer 2023. Evaluations from hosts and schools have been extremely positive and pupils' work from the visits of a high standard, showing much thought and perception.

6. SACRE's Administrative Arrangements and Financial Support

SACRE meetings are clerked by a Democratic Services Officer from Wandsworth Council. An officer is provided to support the LA. Specialist RE professional support for SACRE is provided by an external consultant, Lesley Prior, who supports a number of London SACREs.

The annual budget for support for SACRE in 2021-22 was £6000, the same as in 2020-21. This funds the external consultant, LA SACRE Officer, NASACRE membership and other incidental expenses. Wandsworth Town Hall normally provides a room for meetings, but as noted, these have been held online (two meetings) and at the mosque (one meeting) in the past year.

Membership

While some members have been in place for a number of years, there is always some movement in the membership, but vacancies are quickly addressed. One meeting in the past year was inquorate. There was no fall off in attendance due to the move to online meetings necessitated by the pandemic however.

Group A contains representatives of all the major faiths and some denominations or branches within them, and three nominated deputies for some faiths. The Humanist member is currently co-opted, but arrangements have been made for the Humanist member to request full membership of Group A. This offer has not yet been taken up.

Training

The LA Officer attended the online NASACRE conference in 2022. SACRE is also happy to fund a certain amount of training for members and has signed up to NASACRE's training package.

7. Appendices

Tables of exam results for the year 21-22

CPD provided for schools – see above

SACRE has provided advice for schools on Collective Worship -

[wandsworth_sacre_guidance_on_collective_worship.pdf](https://www.wandsworth.gov.uk/media/10197/sacre_guidance_on_collective_worship.pdf)

and on Ramadan

https://www.wandsworth.gov.uk/media/10197/sacre_ramadan_guidance.pdf (updated annually)

In addition to the DfE and NASACRE, the report is circulated to SACRE members and schools.