

## Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE)

### Annual Report September 2023-July 2024



Entry for our local Spirited Arts Competition in 2023-Dahlia from Beal High School

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Chair's Foreword

To be drafted

Helen Mullis-Kunda, Chair, Redbridge SACRE

Chair of Redbridge SACRE

## 1. Introduction

1.1. Since 1988, it has been a requirement that every local authority establish a Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE).

Though legislation sets out both the structure and the remit of a local SACRE - principally, overseeing religious education (RE) and collective worship - in practice every SACRE has developed its own particular style and character.

Redbridge SACRE, which began its work in 1989, has over the years developed its own distinctive ways of working and local schools have grown to expect a level of support and guidance which will help them meet the diverse needs of pupils studying Religious Education in the area.

It is a legislative requirement that each SACRE produces an annual report of its work and that this is published, sent to the local authority, to local schools and to other interested parties. One important element of the report is performance data and an analysis of the extent to which schools are meeting their legal duties in relation to RE. GCSE data, including the short course was not available until this month, hence the delay in the publication of the report. More recently, other datasets have been made available by the DfE, most significantly the school workforce data that supports the monitoring of the level of provision in secondary schools.

A copy of this report, together with those from previous years, can be found on the SACRE section of the Redbridge Council website : <https://www.redbridge.gov.uk/schools/religious-education-in-redbridge-schools>

## 2. Meetings

The following SACRE meetings were held during the reporting period:

November 2023,  
13th March 2024  
and 19<sup>th</sup> June 2024.

The Autumn and Spring Term meetings were held online via Zoom and the Summer Term meeting, in person.

## 3. Membership

Membership of SACRE was as follows as of June 2023

Present: **Committee A**  
**Christian Denominations and Other Religions and Religious Denominations**  
Mrs C Khorsandyon (Bahá'í Faith)

Mr P Kaufman (Humanist)  
Mrs H Mullis Kunda (Chair)  
Mr L Rosenberg (Jewish)  
Rev V Hemaratana (Buddhist)  
Ms R Rehman (Muslim)  
Mr Z Hussain (Muslim)

#### **Committee B**

##### **The Church of England**

Revd James Gilder  
Ms R Everett

#### **Committee C**

##### **Teachers' Association**

Ms Farhana Hassan (Nee Aswat)  
Ms Y Stephens  
Ms S Assenjee  
Ms R Wajchandler

#### **Committee D**

##### **Local Education Authority**

Cllr Beverley Brewer,  
Cllr A Sachs  
Cllr Taifur Rashid,  
Mrs Cllr L Huggett  
Mr Colin Stewart.

Also Invited - Ms Deborah Weston (Adviser to SACRE) & Ms Frankie Chissim (Clerk)

#### **4. SACRE advice**

- I. SACRE have advised the local authority to investigate the following issues in relation to standards in Redbridge secondary schools:
- A. Where there is no reported provision in a particular year group
  - B. Where it appears that GCSE is offered but there is no provision for those who are not studying GCSE
  - C. Where provision for RE is combined with another subject and does not meet the standards defined in the syllabus

D. Where the time allocated to GCSE is less than that expected by Ofqual

II. SACRE have also advised the LA of the findings of the survey of provision in a sample of primary schools in the borough.

III. During the reporting period, SACRE advised the local authority of the following new initiatives and resources and other publications to support SACRE and the teaching of RE and provided opportunities for these to be shared with schools.

## 5. Other matters related to its remit discussed by SACRE

### Items Discussed

1. Holocaust Memorial Day:
  - Low attendance by Redbridge schools at a Holocaust Memorial play was noted as a missed opportunity for impactful learning.
  - SACRE aims to improve communication about such events to ensure wider school participation.
2. Ramadan Guidance:
  - Schools face challenges accommodating fasting students, particularly in primary settings. SACRE is refining its guidance to support schools effectively.
3. Closure of the Interfaith Network UK:
  - The discontinuation of funding for IFNUK by the government has sparked discussions on sustaining interfaith collaboration through alternative initiatives.

## 6. National Developments

### Religious Education Council's National Content Standard:

- Redbridge SACRE has formally supported the adoption of the National Content Standard, emphasizing its potential to ensure consistency and quality in RE teaching across the country.
- Discussions highlighted the importance of balancing national standards with local nuance to reflect the borough's diversity.

### RE Hubs:

- Culham St Gabriels had funded the RE Hubs Project. The idea was to create a central group that would bring together all the local groups of RE teachers, and put in place a regional structure, Hub Leads and a Central Director. SACRE members were invited to register places of interest that teachers felt that pupils should visit locally. These could then be given a flag mark on the Hub website. Over 500 places had already been kite-marked. In addition, speakers could be accredited by the Hub, then kite-marked on the website. Our SACRE members have been made aware of both of these initiatives and encouraged to sign up.

### OFSTED Report:

- OFSTED's annual report identified gaps in RE provision across the country. Redbridge' strong performance was noted as an example of effective RE teaching.
- In April 2024, Ofsted published a subject report titled "Deep and meaningful? The religious education subject report," examining the state of Religious Education (RE) in England's schools.

### Key Findings:

- **Superficial Curriculum:** Many schools offer a curriculum that is broad but lacks depth, leading to students retaining little meaningful knowledge. Covering numerous religions superficially often results in misconceptions and a lack of substantial understanding.
- **Exam-Centric Teaching:** In secondary schools, RE instruction is frequently driven by exam requirements, with teachers focusing primarily on content needed for assessments. This approach can limit students' comprehensive understanding of the subject.
- **Non-Compliance with Statutory Requirements:** A significant number of schools fail to meet the legal obligation to teach RE across all key stages, resulting in gaps in students' religious and cultural education.

#### Recommendations:

- **Curriculum Development:** Schools should design and implement a distinct, rigorous, and challenging RE curriculum for all key stages. This curriculum should build progressively on students' prior knowledge, ensuring depth over breadth.
- **Beyond Exam Specifications:** Secondary school leaders should develop RE curricula that go beyond mere exam board specifications, fostering a richer and more comprehensive understanding of the subject.
- **Teacher Training:** Schools must ensure that all RE teachers possess strong subject knowledge and effective pedagogical skills to deliver high-quality instruction.
- **Timetabling Considerations:** RE should be scheduled thoughtfully to minimize gaps between lessons, allowing for continuity and reinforcement of learning.
- **Progressive Knowledge Building:** Opportunities should be provided for students to revisit and deepen their understanding over time, enabling them to connect prior learning with more complex concepts.

## 7. Teacher Recruitment, Retention and Training:

- **Challenges:**
  - Recruitment gaps persist, with three unfilled RE teacher positions across the borough.
  - Retention remains an issue, as many teachers leave the profession within three years, reflecting national trends.
- **Support Initiatives:**
  - Programs like Teach First and flexible scheduling are being promoted to improve teacher recruitment and retention.
  - The reintroduction of the £10,000 training bursary for RE teachers is seen as a significant step forward.
  - Farmington Scholarships continue to be recommended as a valuable professional development opportunity, enabling teachers to undertake funded research on RE-related topics.
  - SACRE focused on attracting new teacher representatives and enhancing professional development opportunities for existing teachers.
  - Recruitment challenges were discussed at RE Network meetings.
  - The reintroduction of a £10,000 bursary for secondary RE teacher training was welcomed as a step towards addressing national shortages.



- SACRE received regular updates from the leaders of teacher network groups

## 8. Community Engagement:

- At each meeting, SACRE members reported on their activities related to Religious Education. SACRE members had participated in interfaith forums, school assemblies, round tables, hot seating activities and visits to places of worship and interest. They reported on how these events, not only supported RE, but also fostered community cohesion and promoted religious literacy.
- Projects like the Spirited Arts Competition and the AFAB project, celebrated diversity and creativity in schools.

## 9. Resource Library:

- Discussions are underway to store RE artefacts at a local church, with the aim of creating an accessible resource hub for schools.
- The church is preparing a bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund to support renovations that include a dedicated storage and community space.

## 10. Achievements and Future Goals

### Achievements:

- performance in RS GCSEs and
- Successful expansion of the AFaB program.
- Enhanced community engagement through projects like “Better Together” and school-based interfaith activities.

### Future Goals:

- Strengthen secondary school network participation by addressing barriers and leveraging topics of shared interest.
- Advocate for improved teacher recruitment strategies and support mechanisms to retain skilled educators.
- Develop innovative interfaith and belief resources, such as short video presentations from SACRE members, to enrich the teaching of Religious Education.

## 11. Redbridge Ambassadors of Faith and Belief (AFaBs)

At each meeting, SACRE discussed this scheme which began in Redbridge but has spread around the country. The key points to report from the 2022/23 cohort are as follows:

- Frankie Chissim is the Lead for AFaBs.
- Training took place early September 2022. Over 40 students applied and 33 successfully passed the training programme.
- The AFaB training took place in our main training hub, John Bramston Primary School. Highlands Primary School has also supported us with the training. Christchurch Primary will be supporting us by providing a training base next year.
- Four secondary schools supplied AFaBs this year; WCHS, ICHS, Caterham and Beal. The calibre of the students involved is very high and many wanted to become AFaBs partly to support their applications to top universities, including Oxford and Cambridge. Many of our AFaBs in this

**Commented [DW1]:** Frankie - can you write this section please?  
The text here is from last year

cohort aspire to study medicine and understand the importance of religious literacy when working in the NHS.

- There was a good mix of religious and non-religious beliefs on the AFaB Team, although unfortunately there were no Jewish AFaBs taking part in 2022/23. Students represented the following faiths: Islam, Jainism, Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism and Sikhism. Some of the AFaBs represented two faiths as they were raised by parents from different religions. This year we also had agnostics, atheists and a humanist. There is a lot of diversity within each religious group too.
- We are increasingly being asked to provide outreach support in schools outside of the Borough. We do this through Zoom and Teams.
- Six AFaBs from last year became 'senior AFaBs' and supported us by training the new AFaB Team and with some specialist work.
- We are planning to create a team of 'mini AFaBs' at John Bramston Primary School. John Bramston Primary is a Gold accredited UNICEF Rights Respecting School and a centre of excellence for RE. They have been keen to work with us as part of their work on community cohesion and promoting respect for all.
- Our Buddhist AFaB is using the AFaB Scheme as part of his volunteering duties for his Gold Duke of Edinburgh Award.
- There were a few issues with snow days and strike days (and a school closure due to a gas leak) but other than that, all has gone well. We have had over 100 bookings in our primary schools. Many schools asked AFaBs to support with lessons during National Interfaith Week or during their own 'RE Weeks'.
- We offered the scheme to support Year 7 lessons. There was a good take up.
- The 2022/23 Team visited the Town Hall to meet the Major in July 2023. They described the important work they are doing for schools throughout the Borough.
- Frankie Chissim attended a national RE Hubs training event and the Redbridge AFaB Scheme now has its first kitemark (accredited speakers)!



- We are now part of the RE Hubs network and are getting lots of interest from RE Leads about the work we do in Redbridge.
- We've presented to children in the London Borough of Barking & Dagenham as part of an RE Event, and to children in Yorkshire schools (via Zoom). A school in Canada has also benefited from having on-line AFaB presentations.
- As always, the reviews from our primary schools were really positive.
- The AFaB Team met the new Mayor in July 2023, which was great. She had no idea that the scheme was going on or that it has had so much impact for so many years and we discussed the need to raise the profile of the scheme within the Council and within the Redbridge community more generally.

- Five of our AFaBs met Wes Streeting MP in the Houses of Parliament in July 2023 to talk about the work they are doing in his constituency. Wes Streeting was highly impressed with the AFaB Scheme and asked to visit the whole AFaB Team, which he did in early September.



In July, some of our AFaBs met up in London with some young faith ambassadors from schools in Yorkshire. They met in Westminster Abbey and had an amazing Q&A session about religion and belief as well as a tour of the Abbey.

- A colleague from Edge Hill Uni (Teacher Training) asked us if we can support them with a Subject Knowledge Enhancement Course for RE. The plan is for our AFaBs to take part in a Q&A with student teachers. This could be an interesting extension (and future source of income) for the Redbridge/AFaB Scheme.
- A key priority for the future is to create short films of AFaBs talking to primary children about their faith and beliefs. We think this would be really impactful and a great resource for RE teachers. AFaBs could also support future RE lessons by making a short video about their place of worship. A priority for next year is to increase our profile within the Redbridge community (possibly by organizing more press coverage in the local papers and community websites). Another priority is to recruit some Jewish AFaBs as well as more representatives from the Sikh faith.
- The AFaB scheme has gone from strength to strength over the years and the work of the 2023/24 AFaB Team will be reported in next year's Annual Report.

## 12. SACRE Work Plan

See appendix A

## 13. Standards in Redbridge Schools

See appendix b: School workforce Data Nov 2023 (reported June 2024) and provisional GCSE entries and results 2024. As a result of SACRE's analysis of this data, they have advised the local authority to investigate the following issues:

...

- A. Where there is no reported provision in a particular year group
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In Autumn 2022 SACRE sent a report on their discussions based on a self-evaluation of provision in primary schools in the borough. The local authority was also advised on the key points of this report.

#### **14. 2023/2024 Budget**

The Associate Advisor reported that the budget was approximately £13,000 per annum and that this would be spent primarily on clerking services to SACRE, meeting costs, professional advice to SACRE and Redbridge schools provided by the Adviser.

## Appendix A: SACRE WORK PLAN

### Redbridge Standing Advisory Council on RE - Action Plan

From Religious Education in English Schools DCSF (2010)

A SACRE must:

- advise the LA on RE given in accordance with the agreed syllabus, and on matters related to its functions, whether in response to a referral from the LA or as it sees fit
- publish an annual report on its work and on actions taken by its representative groups, specifying any matters on which it has advised the LA, broadly describe the nature of that advice, and set out reasons for offering advice on matters not referred to it by the LA
- send a copy of the report to the DfE
- meet in public unless confidential information is to be disclosed
- make minutes of its meetings available for inspection at the LA's offices (so far as the minutes relate to the parts of meetings that were open to the public). There are also provisions about public access to the agenda and reports for meetings.

A SACRE should:

- monitor the provision and quality of RE taught according to its agreed syllabus, together with the overall effectiveness of the syllabus
- provide advice and support on the effective teaching of RE in accordance with the locally agreed syllabus; provide advice to the LA and its schools on methods of teaching, the choice of teaching material and the provision of teacher training
- in partnership with its LA, consider whether any changes need to be made in the agreed syllabus or in the support offered to schools in the implementation of the agreed syllabus, to improve the quality of teaching and learning of RE
- offer advice to the LA, and through the LA to schools, concerning how an existing agreed syllabus can be interpreted so as to fit in with a broad, balanced and coherent curriculum.

A SACRE may:

- require its LA to review the agreed syllabus and, if after discussion a vote is taken on this matter, the LA group on SACRE is not entitled to cast a vote. A majority decision by the three other committees is sufficient
- decide to advise the LA on matters related to its functions to the LA – equally, an LA may decide to refer matters to its SACRE
- co-opt members who are not members of any of the four groups
  - such co-opted members may provide educational expertise, young peoples' views or religious and non-religious views that reflect a diverse multi-cultural society.
- However, on any question to be decided by a SACRE, its constituent groups each have a single vote but co-opted members do not have a vote.
- Decisions within a group do not require unanimity. Each group must regulate its own proceedings, including provision for resolving deadlock. Many SACREs have chosen to adopt a constitution to regulate their proceedings and ways of working.

**SACRE WORK PLAN**  
**To meet the statutory duties of a SACRE**  
**2023-24**

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Success criteria</b>
1. SACRE meetings are planned and dates published annually	Agenda planning Liaison with clerk and chair Meeting preparation Report writing Meeting attendance Minute taking Publication of meeting agendas and minutes	Clerk, Chair, Adviser  LA representative, members	Termly SACRE meetings	Meetings are effective meetings with actions followed up between meetings  Members have a working knowledge of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• issues affecting RE in the area</li> <li>• the Agreed Syllabus for RE</li> <li>• an understanding of the responsibilities of SACRE</li> </ul>
2. SACRE have the opportunity to consider national developments in relation to RE in Redbridge	Consider relevant material from National organisations (AREAIC, NATRE, REC, NASACRE as well as the DfE, Ofsted and Redbridge Council departments  Termly NATRE local group newsletter distributed to primary and secondary network leads  SACRE to be kept up to date with developments around government White Papers, inquiries, Bills and consultation on Dfe Curriculum Review	Adviser  NATRE local group officer  Adviser	As information is published	Items on the Agenda for each meeting, Attendance at relevant meetings e.g. NASACRE AGM  Minutes record discussions and actions

<p>3. Produce annual report of the work of SACRE including advice to the council.</p>	<p>Collate information, source data and draft report Ensure final report presented to LA Report published to schools Copy to Department for Education and to NASACRE</p>	<p>Adviser to draft, Chair to write foreword, Clerk to circulate.  An elected representative to present to council</p>	<p>Spring Term (to account for data publication dates)</p>	<p>Completed draft in time for Spring meeting Report presented to council Copies sent to all schools via mailing system Copy acknowledged by DfE</p>
<p>4. Engage with local schools and Academy Trusts to understand how Religious Education and Collective Worship are provided in Redbridge</p>	<p>Schools encouraged to complete the online survey once every three years Members analyse findings Findings circulated via mailing system Reported in Annual Report</p>	<p>Adviser Primary and Secondary Network leader</p>	<p>Once every three years</p>	<p>Surveys completed by majority of schools Findings discussed at SACRE meetings. Evidence of improvement year on year</p>
<p>5. Provide information on the RE curriculum and resources to schools including through training</p>	<p>Update schools on current developments in RE (NATRE and other material requested by SACRE) via mailing system and Network meetings  Invite update to list of places to visit and visitors and publish new version</p>	<p>Adviser Primary and Secondary Network leads  Adviser</p>	<p>Termly  Annually  Annually</p>	<p>Schools in receipt of material Teachers respond to material received Teachers raise questions to the adviser</p>
<p>6. Monitor provision for RE and Collective Worship</p>	<p>Source and present national and local data as follows: – GCSE validated and unvalidated results and entries (local and national) – School workforce data (local and national) – Ofsted Reports that mention RE</p>	<p>Adviser All SACRE members LA representative</p>	<p>Annually</p>	<p>LA respond to advice offered on strengths of RE and collective worship, and areas in need of development  Schools respond to feedback on their websites and policies</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Surveys of provision and of issues such as withdrawal, use of agreed syllabus, who teaches RE etc (local)</li> <li>– Review school websites</li> <li>– Write to schools about findings</li> <li>– Sample collective worship policies</li> </ul>			
7. Evaluate SACRE work and establish priorities	Item at summer term meeting	All SACRE members	Summer term meeting	Evaluation identified success criteria are met

Activities identified from the completion of the NASACRE self-evaluation toolkit:  
SACRE should consider:

1. Making clearer links between its plans to other local work and projects, and wider LA priorities.
2. Creating a strategic, costed development plan with clear objectives and success criteria
3. Arranging for papers to be distributed well in advance of the meeting and draft minutes circulated within three weeks of the meeting
4. Establishing procedures so that meaningful contact can be made with and between members outside of SACRE meetings
5. Extending opportunities for members to take part in induction and other training activities (perhaps via NASACRE – but cost implications?)
6. Sharing examples of good practice including different models for fulfilling pupil entitlement within local schools
7. Identify means of measuring and reporting on the quality of learning and teaching and reporting to SACRE
8. Advise the LA on where support is needed to secure high quality RE and Collective Worship
9. Communicate more effectively with senior leaders in schools
10. Improve the public profile of the work of SACRE including through the use of media e.g. Spirited Arts?
11. Reinstate the regular programme of visits to observe RE and Collective Worship by SACRE members
12. Review the membership of SACRE and advise the LA accordingly. Discussion of the census will provide an opportunity for review

### Appendix B: School workforce data 2023 and GCSE data 2024

Hours taught for years 7 to 13, in subjects RE, philosophy and all subjects, reported by a sample of state-funded secondary schools with electronic timetabling software, School Workforce Census 2022



Redbridge Schools continue to perform significantly higher than the National Average for attainment at grades 9-4 on GCSE Religious Studies. Disappointingly however, many schools do not enter their pupils for a GCSE Short or Full course as required by the Local Agreed Syllabus. Some of these schools are Academies and exempt from this requirement. However, they are still required to make provision for RE in all key stages and year groups including year 11.

School	% Hours RE	Entries % of Year 11	% achieving GCSE grade 9-4	Ofsted	FSM %	Premium	Yr7Perc	Yr8Perc	Yr9Perc	Yr10Perc	Yr11Perc	Yr12Perc	Yr13Perc
Beal High School	2.32	38.20	91.20	Outstanding	16.8	Very Low	0	0	0	2.79	3.37	5.45	6.03
Canon Palmer Catholic School	9.03	92.90	78.40	0	22.9	Low	10.62	10.53	10.34	8.68	8.69	4.86	4.96
Caterham High School	0.00	20.10	79.30	Good	35.4	Low	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Chadwell Heath Academy	2.40	29.40	86.50	Requires improvement	22.1	Low	3.85	3.73	3.57	2.06	2.96	0	1.61
Forest Academy	2.31	11.90	43.80	Good	29.2	Low	4.58	4.76	4.51	0	1.68	0	0
Ilford County High School	4.71	71.90	98.40	Good	9.5	Very Low	6.16	6.28	6.23	3.93	3.82	2.74	3.33
Ilford Ursuline High School	9.58	99.20	90.80	0	19.5	Low	10.53	10	10	11.11	11.11	5.91	6.33
King Solomon High School	4.79	98.80	73.70	Requires improvement	22.5	Low	6.59	6.6	4.74	4.01	5.66	2.08	1.93
Mayfield School	0.94	4.90	78.60	Good	29.3	Low	0	0.43	0	1.01	1.52	5.54	0
Oaks Park High School	2.73	20.30	86.40	Good	19.5	Low	4.16	4.03	1	2.06	2.03	2.88	3.3
The Chadwell Heath Foundation School	2.40	29.40	86.50	Outstanding	22.1	Low	3.85	3.73	3.57	2.06	2.96	0	1.61
The Palmer Catholic Academy	9.03	92.90	78.40	Good	22.9	Low	10.62	10.53	10.34	8.68	8.69	4.86	4.96
The Ursuline Academy Ilford	9.58	99.20	90.80	Good	19.5	Low	10.53	10	10	11.11	11.11	5.91	6.33
Trinity Catholic High School	0.00	98.70	72.00	Good	12.2	Very Low	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Valentines High School	1.61	34.10	91.70	Outstanding	20.1	Low	3.35	2.51	3.66	0.66	1.29	0	0
Wanstead High School	2.02	20.40	62.50	Good	15.9	0	1.91	1.95	1.8	1.18	1.54	10.8	2.11
Woodbridge High School	1.85	9.20	88.90	Outstanding	18.5	Low	2.4	2.63	3.3	0	0.86	1.94	2.17
Woodford County High School	5.81	24.00	100.00	Good	10.5	Very Low	6.73	6.95	4.97	7.47	7.65	3.32	3.24
REDBRIDGE		45%	0.83										
NATIONAL		32%	72%										