
WALSALL STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

2023-2024

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Foreword

This has been a very successful year for Walsall SACRE and I believe that we can be very proud of the work we have done on behalf of Religious Education in Walsall. Not only have all 3 meetings been quorate but attendance has been excellent from all groups. The agendas for meetings have been varied and interesting, with members keen to participate in discussions around a wide range of topics.

We have made progress with our Action Plan. A pattern of meeting venues has been established with one meeting at the Town Hall and two at schools or places of worship. This year we held meetings at secondary and primary schools. Two members also attended the NASACRE conference in York and came back with ideas regarding collective worship, which will aid our work in this area during the forthcoming year.

Once again, we are indebted to Fiona Moss from RE Today. The budget provided from Walsall Council has been used to provide this invaluable support. Fiona has updated each meeting regarding Ofsted and other RE issues as well as meeting on a regular basis with primary RE teachers. Fiona has worked with Walsall SACRE for a number of years and while delighted for her, we are saddened that she has left RE Today for a new role elsewhere. All on SACRE wish her well.

The support SACRE has had from Nick Perks and Edward Cook from Walsall Council has helped to ensure a successful year and I am particularly grateful for their support.

Dave Lomax Chair Walsall SACRE

Section 1: Overview of the work of SACRE

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.

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 NASACRE and to other interested parties such as the Department for Education.

SACRE met on three occasions during the academic year 2023/24. Meetings were well attended and allowed for informal links to be made between members of SACRE. We were pleased to be able hold meetings in a variety of locations to make the most of face to face and to enable members of SACRE to see work in schools. One meeting was held at the Council House, our second meeting was held at a Secondary School and our final meeting was held at a Church of England Primary School.

All of the meeting in 2023-24 were quorate with one member from at least three of the constituent groups and a total presence of no less than eight of the appointed members.

The Agendas and minutes for these meetings are available on the Walsall Council website. (<https://cmispublic.walsall.gov.uk/cmisis/Home.aspx>)

A brief overview of each meeting can be found below.

Monday 23rd October 2023: Conference Room 2, Walsall Council House

SACRE Action Plan

The Chair introduced the report and SACRE agreed that rotating venues was positive. SACRE discussed community cohesion, communication with schools and gathering feedback from teachers regarding the Agreed Syllabus and Collective Worship.

SACRE discussed the most effective approaches to developing a guide for visiting places of worship, including the national RE Hubs programme organised into regional hubs, which Members were encouraged to participate and raise awareness of within their networks. Members of SACRE agreed that a list of places of worship and contact details was important, especially for those wishing to make contact to arrange school visits and requested an update from the Council's Community Cohesion team at a future meeting.

SACRE resolved:

- To organise an online meeting of a sub-group to develop a questionnaire in respect of Collective Worship and the effectiveness of the Agreed Syllabus.
- To invite the Councils Integration Lead to the next meeting to discuss community cohesion and lists of places of worship.

- To circulate details of the National Database to schools in the weekly briefing.
- To circulate a flyer providing training dates for circulation to members of SACRE.

SACRE Annual Report

The RE Today advisor introduced the annual report for 2022-23. Mr Green commented that he was pleased the Council took the decision in 2023 to include a Humanist representative in category 'A'. Members expressed that Walsall SACRE was well organised and should be commended both for its inclusivity and for providing the resources required to enhance both the education of its members and that of students within the Borough.

School Workforce Data

An overview of the schools that had submitted data was provided. The RE today advisor explained that it was a statutory requirement for schools to submit workforce data to the Department for Education (DfE) but some schools did not. SACRE were informed that whilst there was no legal requirement regarding curriculum time for RE, it was hoped it would be 5% and of good quality.

The RE today advisor explained that the consequences of schools not submitting information had been an ongoing conversation between the DfE and Ofsted. SACRE members supported the view that this was a matter which should be considered further and asked for a comparison with previous years to identify any trends. SACRE agreed to write to those schools which hadn't submitted data or where provision was unclear.

SACRE resolved:

- To send letters, signed by the Chair, to those schools that either hadn't submitted data or where provision was unclear.
- That the RE Today Advisor compares previous years' workforce data to identify any trends and provides an update to a future meeting.

SACRE National Updates from RE Today

The RE Today Advisor drew attention to the recruitment challenges in RE. As of September 2024, a small bursary would be made available for those training to teach RE, however this was less than for other subjects. This posed a challenge for those switching careers, who were unable to train without sufficient funding due to existing responsibilities. SACRE noted the report.

RE in Walsall - OFSTED updates

The RE Today Advisor advised that two inspection reports had been published in respect of Hilary Primary School and Rosedale Church of England School but that no comment had been made regarding RE. SACRE noted the report.

Education in Walsall updates

The Quality Assurance Team Manager highlighted that overall education in Walsall was improving with only 1 measure across Key Stages 1 to 4 where the gap hadn't been closed. In

Key Stage 5 results were better than in 2019 and in Early Years and Primary results were better than previous years. SACRE noted the report.

Election of Spokespersons for Groups (Teacher Category)

It was resolved that Mrs Leadley be appointed as the Teacher representative.

Monday 18th March 2024: Aldridge School

SACRE Action Plan

The Chair presented the report and welcomed debate. The Chair confirmed that Mrs Graham had offered Holy Trinity CofE Primary School (Clayhanger) to host the next meeting of SACRE and thanked Mrs Graham. An offer was open from Queen Mary's High School to host a future meeting. The Committee discussed that it would be desirable for a future meeting to be held in a place of worship. There was a discussion regarding the NASACRE annual conference in May 2024 and two Members volunteered to attend. Regarding the Agreed Syllabus, the RE Today Advisor advised that there had not been much negativity received however she would enquire about this at her next meeting with primary schools. The planned sub-group to develop a questionnaire would hopefully generate further feedback.

SACRE resolved:

- That the possibility of sending two representatives to the NASACRE conference be investigated and organised if possible.
- That the Clerk continue to organise a meeting of a sub-group to create a questionnaire seeking feedback on the Agreed Syllabus.

SACRE National Updates from RE Today

The RE Today Advisor updated SACRE on the HMCI Annual Report. OFSTED's full report into RE provision was scheduled for publication in December 2023 however this had been delayed. The principal findings were that many schools failed to meet statutory requirements on RE provision; that there had been insufficient support provided by Government to ensure this was delivered; and that the depth and breadth of RE provision in schools was often of poor quality and not fit for purpose. There was a discussion regarding this and it was clarified that it was unusual for a report to be so critical. It was expected that potential responses could include more 'deep dives' into RE.

SACRE also received an update regarding the 'Working Together for Humanity' campaign which had produced lots of resources in response to the ongoing conflict in Israel and Palestine. There was a discussion regarding RE Hubs and Members were encouraged to register. SACRE discussed how schools could work together to learn best practice in RE from those performing well. Mrs Donnellan confirmed that infant schools had met to discuss this pre-Covid but that this had not re-commenced. The Chair stated that some academy trusts did meet to share matters however it was generally unclear whether such practices were widespread with teachers' capacity often a challenge. SACRE noted the report and requested that information contained within be circulated to Headteachers.

Non-statutory National Content Standard

The RE Today Advisor advised that the RE community had written new guidance including a proposed National Content Standard for RE in response to the lack of substantive guidance in legislation about RE content requirements. Multiple organisations had agreed to follow this

including faith organisations which operated schools and numerous multi-academy trusts. The proposed National Content Standard provided a broad framework to establish a benchmarking standard. Agreed Syllabi should all meet this standard and it was believed the National Content Standard would be most useful to academy trusts.

Faith and Belief Forum – Identity Unboxed

The RE Today Advisor provided a verbal update regarding the Faith and Belief Forum's Identity Unboxed project. The project had been trialled in London and was expanding into the West Midlands. The project sought to involve parents in their children's education regarding identity. The project was free for schools and provided a range of resources but was struggling to get schools involved. SACRE members were encouraged to share information regarding the project to schools and organisations.

Inclusion update

The Integration Lead explained that the Council were preparing a new 2024-2034 inclusion strategy and plan. The new strategy would focus on inclusion rather than integration and consultations were underway. Where possible, these had been undertaken by individuals with shared experiences and characteristics. Since 2017 all areas of the Borough had become more diverse and there were tensions associated with this. Generally inter-faith relations were good but there was room for improvement. It was acknowledged that faith groups across the Borough did immense amounts of good work regarding issues such as poverty. In all parts of the Borough, people of colour had different experiences but this was not always apparent in statistics, such as regarding Islamophobia and the experience of African Christians, amongst whom incidents were often unreported. Institutional trust was identified as a key challenge including with regards to the police and a lack of reporting back when investigations had been unsuccessful. It was also noted that perceptions of being underprivileged amongst white communities had contributed to a rise in far-right sentiments.

Regarding the new strategy, the Integration Lead explained that RE could be a great vehicle as faith knowledge was often poor. It was noted that there were challenges regarding the perception of some faiths amongst other communities including surrounding the legacy of religion's role in colonialism. SACRE could support improving inclusion through the improvement and standardisation of RE throughout the Borough.

There was a lengthy discussion regarding the challenges faced by schools surrounding the ongoing situation in Israel and Palestine. Many schools had concerns about discussing the issue due to the national rhetoric being polarised and extreme. New legislation regarding extremism and Prevent had heightened these concerns. Whilst schools were non-political, this was not always viewed to be the case by parents. SACRE members agreed that schools should be encouraged to have these discussions as they represented a safe space in which conversations could be managed and balanced. Not having these discussions could be dangerous and contribute to assumptions of bias. There was a general perception that the advice provided to schools by Government had been weak and that the Council could have done more to support schools on the matter. SACRE noted the report and resolved that an annual report be received regarding the Inclusion Strategy and Plan.

RE in Walsall – OFSTED update

There had been several Ofsted reviews since the previous meeting including a number with no RE comments. Chuckery Primary had received positive comments regarding inclusion work and Pool Hayes had received an RE Deep Dive with good feedback. SACRE noted the report.

Education in Walsall update

It was noted that the number of schools rated as 'Good' or 'Outstanding' was increasing but that the results of three recent full inspections had not yet been published. SACRE noted the report.

Action Tracker

The action tracker was submitted and updates were received.

Monday 15th July 2024: Holy Trinity CofE Primary School, Clayhanger

Appointment of Chair for the 2024/25 Municipal Year

Mr D. Lomax was re-appointed as Chair for two years, covering the 2024/25 and 2025/2026 Municipal Years.

Appointment of Vice-chair for the 2024/25 Municipal Year

Mrs P. Lane was re-appointed as Vice-Chair for two years, covering the 2024/25 and 2025/2026 Municipal Years.

Feedback from NASACRE Annual Conference 2024

Mrs Lane and Mr Green provided verbal feedback from the 2024 NASACRE Annual Conference. Points raised at the Conference included:

- The biggest challenge facing RE was the recruitment of specialist RE teachers due to funding issues, lack of professional development opportunities and challenges teaching for exams;
- Collective worship at secondary school was a nation-wide challenge, but some tools did exist to support this;
- The production of videos of places of worship and their use by schools was often a cost-efficient and practical means by which to share experiences of places of worship;
- NASACRE were moving towards becoming a registered charity with a formal constitution.

There were discussions regarding the pros and cons of the conferences being held in-person and surrounding resources available to support SACREs and schools. The feedback was noted and it was agreed that Newham Council's Guidance on collective worship and the document '35 Things a SACRE can do' would be shared to members. SACRE noted the feedback.

RE at Holy Trinity Church of England Primary School

Mrs Graham gave a presentation regarding RE provision at Holy Trinity CofE Primary School, covering the approaches to learning at the school. There were discussions regarding the challenges and choices faced by religious-affiliated schools in determining which 'other' religions to focus on and how to engage with children and families with limited interest and engagement in traditional, organised religion.

Election of Spokespersons for Groups

The Group spokespersons were elected as follows:

- Group A (Christian and other religious denominations) – Mr B. Green
- Group B (Church of England) – Mrs P. Lane
- Group C (Teacher Representatives) – Ms H. Leadley
- Group D (Local Authority) – Councillor I. Hussain

Action Tracker

The action tracker was submitted and updates on the actions from previous meetings were received. SACRE noted the report and requested that details of the 'Identity Unboxed' programme be re-shared in the circular to schools.

Walsall SACRE Action Plan 2024-25

The Chair presented the report and welcomed debate. There was a discussion regarding the Primary School and Headteachers Networks including how they met, the frequency of meetings and how some networks' participation had not yet returned to pre-pandemic levels. SACRE noted the report and requested that information regarding the Primary Schools Network be brought to a future meeting.

National RE Updates from RE Today

The RE Today advisor provided an overview of the report and highlighted the removal of funding for the inter-faith network and subject knowledge enhancement grants as significant challenges for the future of RE. It was as yet unclear what the implications of the recent General Election would be for these provisions. SACRE noted the report.

OFSTED Subject Report on RE

The RE Today Advisor reported to SACRE on a recent OFSTED subject report into RE. This was the first such report since 2013 and key takes included:

- RE in many schools was of poor quality;
- The RE curriculum often lacked both 'breadth' and 'depth';
- Whilst it was impossible for all religions to be taught in depth, teaching some in depth would provide the skills for further learning;
- RE was often excessively exam-focussed;
- RE was often too 'compartmentalised', reducing the ability to make links across religions.

Members discussed how the findings could be considered with regards to Walsall and how SACREs could work to address the identified shortcomings. Challenges to this included OFSTED reports of individual schools often lacking sufficient detail to clearly gauge RE performance and that the RE networks which met once a term would generally only attract those interested. SACRE noted the report.

Developing a Religion and Worldviews Approach to RE

The item was deferred to the next meeting.

REady for Work campaign

The RE Today Advisor provided a brief introduction and overview of the REady for Work campaign and encouraged Members to engage with it and help increase awareness.

RE in Walsall – Review of OFSTED reports of Walsall Schools

The RE Today Advisor explained that from September 2024 OFSTED would no longer conduct 'deep dives'. Comments related to RE were not always explicitly made but may be mentioned through other areas and phrases such as 'personal development'. SACRE noted the report.

Education in Walsall update

The Quality Assurance Team Manager provided a verbal update and advised that the outcomes of inspections in Walsall continued to improve, with 90.2% of inspections now resulting in 'good' or 'outstanding' outcomes. Several recent inspection outcomes were not yet available but initial feedback was generally positive. SACRE noted the report.

Section 2: Religious Education

RE in schools

Virtual termly briefing meetings and the RE Consultant's virtual visits to schools continued in the year 2023-24. Schools have indicated that virtual training is their preference and it is also cost effective for both schools and SACRE. Evidence from teachers attending the network meetings and the RE Consultant's virtual visits and conversations with schools, suggested that:

- Primary teachers receive on average 0-3 hours of training about RE in their initial teacher training and the majority still receive no training each year in teaching the subject. This means it is a subject that Early Career Teachers (ECTs) and teachers further on in their career need support to deliver. We note that the National Association of Teachers of RE offer free monthly training for ECTs to their members and we hope schools will use this. We note that some ECTs have attended the local primary networks.
- Schools continued to teach RE using the Locally Agreed Syllabus which was fully implemented by September 2022.

The Locally Agreed Syllabus

A new Agreed Syllabus was launched in 2021 and forms the bases of RE in maintained schools.

Standards and monitoring of RE

Ensuring that sufficient time is given to RE is an ongoing difficulty for some schools, although there are reports that the OFSTED inspection framework and RE research review is bringing a renewed focus on RE in schools where RE was struggling to get sufficient curriculum time. Fiona Moss shared the details of the OFSTED Subject report for RE with SACRE members and we will be trying to see if its findings are mirrored in Walsall schools.

We noted the disparity between those entered on full course GCSE in different school types and noted that some schools without a religious character were entering almost their whole cohort for Religious Studies (RS) GCSE. SACRE looked at school websites to find curriculum maps and timetables for those who had no or very few students sitting GCSE RS to see if they had a strong Core RE Programme. The Local Authority adviser was informed of those who did not and was tasked with informing the appropriate bodies e.g. Regional director, Multi Academy trust (MAT) CEO or headteacher.

OFSTED reports also provide a way of monitoring RE. We have been pleased to consider evidence from OFSTED reports regularly in our meetings. See a sample below;

Primary School A

The school has a focus on the values and personal characteristics that will prepare pupils for later phases of education or employment as well as supporting them to maintain positive relationships. This is achieved through assemblies and carefully considered links across the curriculum. This is helping to prepare them for life in their own diverse community and in modern Britain.

Primary School B

Pupils' wider development is a strength. Pupils talk confidently about different religions and cultures.

Primary School C

Pupils know the importance of being tolerant and active citizens and understand that being different is to be celebrated.

Primary School D

Pupils value the opportunities in the educational visits provided. These include trips to botanical gardens, a local fire station and local places of worship and outdoor learning residential experiences.

Pupils have a clear understanding of fundamental British values and are well prepared for life in modern Britain. There are many opportunities for pupils to take on positions of responsibility. This includes being personal and spiritual ambassadors, school librarians, sports leaders and members of the student support team.

Secondary School A

This is a school where everyone is made to feel welcome. The school ensures that pupils learn about how they can contribute to wider society as a British Muslim.

Secondary School B

The wider curriculum promotes equality of opportunity and diversity effectively. As a result, pupils understand, appreciate and respect differences in the world and its people. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

The PSHE curriculum also emphasises respect for different races, faiths and cultures. Pupils say that everyone is equal and should be respected for who they are. All pupils are encouraged to participate in activities to extend their learning beyond the classroom. All of this prepares them well for later life.

SACRE is also internally using the information from the school workforce survey that NATRE sourced from the DfE but will not be publishing commentary on this. Individual conversations are held between the local authority and school leaders where it seems schools might not be following legal or contractual expectations regarding RE.

Teacher training materials and advice for schools

Termly briefings provided a regular input of professional support and development for those who attended including subject leaders; class teachers and HLTAs delivering RE; and those in their own school to whom they disseminate learning.

These briefings remained virtual in 2023-24. This method of delivery is currently still preferred by those attending. There continues to be a higher attendance than there was previously at face-to-face meetings.

Termly network meetings and training sessions also continue to support non-specialist TAs, HLTAs and teachers in primary schools to increase their confidence leading, managing and teaching RE.

This year termly primary networks have taken place on teaching non-religious worldviews, Primary inspection and best practice and teaching Dharmic traditions. The number of teachers signing up has remained steady at around 20 teachers per session.

These sessions were relatively well attended but due to loss of admin support in the local authority, Fiona Moss provided the admin support for these. It is pleasing that the Local authority share details of these meetings through bulletins and other communication channels with schools.

These Termly networks provide a regular input of professional support and development for those who attend (a mixture of subject leaders, senior leaders, teachers and teaching assistants) and those in their own school to whom they disseminate learning. These meetings have moved to 4-6pm. The RE adviser is also available before and after these meetings for 1:1 meetings with subject leaders and teachers and can provide support by phone and email.

Information on resources for RE is provided in SACRE meetings and the Local authority sends this out to schools via the Head teachers' bulletin.

Other information

There were no formal complaints to SACRE about RE during the year.

Advice given to the Local Authority

Section 3: Collective worship

Standards and monitoring of Collective Worship

The SACRE has found it hard to monitor collective worship over the past few years but was pleased to continue to have input from local schools on SACRE. SACRE has developed a questionnaire which will be circulated to schools following the beginning of the 2023-24 academic year to hopefully gather further feedback.

Determinations

No determinations have been requested in the year 2023-24.

Teacher training provided

No training on Collective worship has been provided in 2023-24.

Other information

There were no formal complaints to SACRE about collective worship during the year.

Advice to the Local Authority

No advice was given to the local authority around the provision of collective worship.

Section 4: Links with other bodies

National Bodies

Walsall SACRE are pleased to be linked with national bodies and receive useful national updates from Fiona Moss, our RE adviser.

Walsall SACRE are members of NASACRE. Two members attended the NASACRE conference and provided valuable feedback to SACRE.

Reports from NATRE, including the School Workforce Data have proved useful to SACRE when monitoring schools. Further resources from NATRE have been shared with schools.

Information from the REC has been used in meetings and shared with schools where appropriate.

Local bodies

Lichfield Diocese provide support to SACRE and we are pleased to have a member of the diocese as vice-chair.

SACRE tried hard to further links with Walsall for All and now this organisation has changed we have made links with others in the council responsible for this work and have invited them to speak at SACRE.

Section 5: SACRE involvement in the Local Area

Governor and head teacher links

Information has been shared to head teachers via briefings and newsletters.

Advice on community issues

The RE adviser regularly gives advice on speakers coming into schools and visits to places of worship locally.

Section 6: Managing the SACRE and partnership with the Local Authority (LA)

Professional and administrative support

The Local Authority provided funding to support SACRE activity 2023 -24 by contracting with RE Today Services of an RE adviser for a number of days during the year. These days include servicing SACRE, writing reports and providing papers and advice working with schools, providing primary networks training and first response consultancy.

Fiona Moss from RE Today continued in the role of RE consultant.

Fiona Moss
RE Today Services
Imperial Court
Sovereign Road
Birmingham
B30 3FH

Moving Forward Debbie Yeomans will take on this role

Debbie Yeomans
RE Today Services
Suite 5-6, 1 Devon Way
Birmingham
B31 2TS

Clerking of SACRE is undertaken by Edward Cook. The clerking services are provided by:

Legal and Democratic Services.
Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council
Council House
Lichfield Street
Walsall, WS1 1TW

Nick Perks from the Local Authority's Children's Services Directorate holds responsibility for supporting SACRE and attends its meetings.

Nick Perks
Children's Services Quality Assurance Team
Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council
The Civic Centre
Walsall
WS1 1TP

Membership

In 2023- 2024 three meetings of SACRE took place. All meetings were quorate.

The table provided in Appendix A demonstrates the diverse composition of Walsall's SACRE, but it does also show that during this challenging time a number of membership vacancies have arisen and the clerk will continue to work on filling these vacancies over the next year.

Training

Some members of SACRE have attended training provided by the RE Adviser to primary teachers.

Finance

The Local Authority reported that the budget was £5,000 per annum and that this would be spent primarily on meeting costs, Primary network meetings and professional advice to SACRE and Walsall schools provided by the Adviser. It was noted again that this sum had not risen for a number of years and yet the same services are provided.

Appendix A: Membership

The membership of Walsall SACRE at the end of the academic year 2023-24 was as follows:

<p>Committee A: Christian Denominations and Other Religions and Religious Denominations</p> <p>Dr G. Gomez - Roman Catholic Mrs V. Heydon-Matterface - Methodist, Brownhills and Willenhall Deacon Helen Webster - Methodist, Walsall Mr D. Lomax - United Reformed Church Mrs D. Letford - New Testament Church of God Mrs M. Mather - Walsall Quakers Mr M. Sacha - Muslim Welfare Society Imam Saeed-Ur-Rahman Mosque and Islamic Centre Mr K. Bhatt - Shree Ram Mandir (Walsall) Mr M. Ashik Ali - Bangladesh Islamic Association Mr G. Singh - Guru Nanak Gurdwara Mr Jujhar Singh Bachra - Guru Nanak Sikh Temple Mr S. Singh Padda - Walsall Sikh Forum Mr G. Tsiappourdhi - Black Country Orthodox Trust Mr Bill Green - Humanist Representative</p> <p>Vacancies</p> <p>X 1 Jewish X 1 Salvation Army X 1 Buddhist X 1 Hindu X 1 Baptist</p>	<p>Committee B: Lichfield Diocesan Board of Education The Church of England</p> <p>Mrs P. Lane Mr A. Orlik Mrs K. Donnellan Mrs R. Graham X 1 Vacancy</p>
<p>Committee C Teachers' Associations</p> <p>Mr G. Headley National Union of Teachers (NUT) Ms H. Leadley, Blackwood Primary School (Academy).</p> <p>Vacancies</p> <p>X 2 Maintained School Head teachers X 1 Secondary Academy Head teacher X 1 Subject Leader Primary X 1 Subject Leader Secondary Representatives of Unions (NASUWT, ATL, ASCL, NAHT)</p>	<p>Committee D Local Authority</p> <p>Councillor I. Hussain Councillor R. K Mehmi Councillor L. Nahal Councillor A. Nawaz Councillor Singh Sohal Councillor C. Statham Councillor M. Statham</p>
<p>Also invited</p> <p>Mrs F. Moss (RE Today)</p>	<p>Democratic Services Team, Walsall MBC, to provide clerking service to the meetings of SACRE Mr N. Perks, Children's Services, Walsall MBC</p>

Appendix B: STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (S.A.C.R.E.) CONSTITUTION: updated March 2023

1. Legislative Background

The Education Act 1996, Sections 375-397 (in conjunction with 'Religious Education In English Schools: Non-statutory guidance 2010').

2. Terms of Reference

a) The broad role of SACRE is to support the effective provision of RE and Collective Worship in schools. Walsall Local Authority will work with the SACRE to monitor and review the existing provision for RE and Collective Worship.

b) The functions of SACRE are detailed in section 391 Education Act 1996 (as amended). Other responsibilities are outlined in: Religious Education in English Schools: non-statutory guidance 2010; SACRE and Self Evaluation: A guide Ofsted 2005; Circular 1/94 (Collective Worship). These responsibilities are:

a) **to advise** the Authority on such matters connected with Religious Education and Collective Worship in Walsall Community schools, Foundation schools without a religious character and Voluntary Controlled schools.

b) **to monitor** the provision and quality of RE taught according to its Agreed Syllabus together with the overall effectiveness of the syllabus in all schools.

c) **to provide** advice and support on the effective teaching of the Agreed Syllabus.

d) **to provide** advice to the LA and its schools on methods of teaching, the choice of teaching material and the provision of teacher training.

e) **to require** the LA to set up a statutory conference to review the Agreed Syllabus if, in the opinion of the SACRE, this becomes necessary. This must be reviewed and updated every five years but a majority of representative groups on the SACRE, other than that consisting of persons chosen to represent the Authority (Group D), may at any time require a review of the Agreed Syllabus which is currently being used by the Authority.

f) **to consider**, in partnership with the LA, whether any changes need to be made to the Agreed Syllabus or in the support offered to schools in the implementation of the Agreed Syllabus, to improve the quality of RE and the learning of pupils.

g) **to offer** schools and the LA advice concerning how an existing syllabus can be interpreted so as to fit in with wider changes in education.

h) **to receive, determine and review** applications from headteachers 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 the pupils at that particular school.

i) **to 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 describing the nature of that advice, and setting reasons for offering advice on matters which were not referred to it by the LA. This report will be presented to the LA and schools and is to be delivered to the Department for Education and NASACRE (the National Association of Standing Advisory Councils for Religious Education) by the date specified. This report should also be made available to the public. The report will provide at least the information specified by the receiving body.

j) **to develop** SACRE's own role, supported by the LA and working with inter-religious bodies, to enhance the important contribution that the study of religion and belief can make to community cohesion, British values* and the combating of religious prejudice and discrimination.

k) **to offer** advice to the Walsall LA on any matters related to SACREs.

3. Membership of SACRE

a) The number of representative members shall be determined from time to time by the LA and the individual appointments should be made by the LA after taking all reasonable steps to assure itself that the individual is representative of the denomination or the teacher association concerned. It is desirable that all members have an interest in education in general and in religious education in particular.

b) SACRE is to be comprised of the members of the four Representative Groups and members co-opted to SACRE

c) The four Representative Groups shall be:

Group A: Such Christian denominations other religions and religious denominations as, in the opinion of the LA, will appropriately reflect the principal religious traditions in Walsall and religions and faiths covered by the Agreed Syllabus. The number of representatives of each religion and religious denomination appointed shall, so far as consistent with the efficient discharge of the Council's functions, reflect broadly the proportionate strength of that denomination or religion in the area as indicated by the 2021 census data:

- 1 Baptist
- 2 Black Country Orthodox Trust
- 2 Methodist
- 1 New Testament Church of God
- 2 Quaker
- 1 Roman Catholic
- 2 Salvation Army
- 1 United Reform Church
- 3 Muslim
- 2 Hindu
- 3 Sikh
- 1 Jewish
- 1 Buddhist

Non-Religious Philosophical Convictions

2 appointed representative for people with non-religious affiliation or belief not represented by any other membership group so long as the non-religious beliefs analogous (similar or equivalent) to a religious beliefs as per the following guidance:-

- To be "analogous" we consider the non-religious beliefs must in accordance with case law under the European Convention of Human Rights and the Human Rights Act 1998 attain the necessary level of cogency, seriousness, cohesion and importance to attract protection under the Convention Rights.
- Any appointment is dependent on the relevant local authority's opinion as to whether such a representative would help ensure that the relevant traditions in the local authority's area are appropriately reflected in Group A. The final decision of an

appointment rests with the local authority, and they are best placed to assess whether a SACRE has the necessary expertise and experience to properly discharge its function.

Nomination and election process

Nominations for people with non-religious affiliation or belief not represented by any other membership group in Category A should be submitted in writing to Democratic Services. Nominations to be reviewed by the Director of Children's Service together with the Portfolio Holder for Education and SACRE, to consider eligibility. A recommendation to Council shall then be made.

Group B: Church of England. This group is made up of 5 members of the Church of England, representing the Diocese of Lichfield. It can include both clergy and lay people. Each nominee will be proposed by the Lichfield Diocesan Board of Education and appointed by the LA. The nominating body will be the point of reference should the LA have any questions pertaining to their nominee(s) either before or subsequent to their appointment.

Group C: Teacher representatives to represent a spread of teacher specialisations as listed below, and these should reflect as broad a spread of teacher associations as possible. Any teacher association that is not represented by the teacher category criteria will have the right to nominate an additional representative. The nominating body will be the point of reference should the LA have any questions pertaining to their nominee(s) either before or subsequent to their appointment:

- 2 Maintained School Headteachers (Primary or Secondary)
- 1 Secondary Academy School Headteachers
- 2 Primary Academy School Headteacher
- 1 Local RE subject leader Primary
- 1 Local RE subject leader secondary
- Representatives of Unions (NUT, NASUWT, ATL, ASCL, NAHT)

Group D: Local Authority. This group shall comprise a group of up to seven elected members as nominated by the political parties represented on the council.

Co-opted members: SACRE shall have the right to co-opt additional members for the remainder of the municipal year. Co-opted members may take part in any of the discussions but do not belong to any of the groups and do not have voting rights. The co-opted members shall be appointed only by those members of SACRE who have not themselves been co-opted.

4. Officer Support

- a) Local Authority senior officer or representative (non-voting)
- b) Clerk to SACRE (non-voting)
- c) RE Consultant (non-voting)

The nominating body will be the point of reference should the LA have any questions pertaining to their nominee(s) either before or subsequent to their appointment. The Head of Service will be the point of reference should SACRE have any questions pertaining to the Local Authority Senior Officer.

5. Membership

- a) The LA shall appoint the members of the SACRE after consulting with the Nominating Bodies as appropriate.
- b) Nominating bodies will review their representation at the beginning of each municipal year or up to every five years as they see fit.
- c) An individual representative member may resign at any time by giving notice in writing to their Nominating Body and to the Clerk of SACRE
- d) An individual representative member may be removed from membership by the LA, if in the opinion of the LA he or she ceases to be representative of the nominating denomination or teacher association.
- e) Following non-attendance of a member at two consecutive meetings without apology, the SACRE will recommend to the LA that a replacement nomination be sought from the relevant Nominating Body.

6. Term of Office

- a) Appointments to SACRE shall generally be for a term of 5 years from the date that the new member should have attended their first meeting. Groups can re-nominate members after the end of the 5 years for consideration by the LA. Members may not serve for more than two consecutive periods of 10 years (i.e. ten consecutive years in total). SACRE may waive this rule with the agreement of all voting members of SACRE if the continued service of a Member was considered to be beneficial to the Council.
- b) The SACRE shall review the membership annually at the AGM in the summer term.

7. Voting

- a) Each of the four Groups on SACRE shall have one vote. Groups are to determine their own internal voting arrangements. Decisions within a group about how that vote is cast do not require unanimity. Each group is to regulate its own proceedings including provision for resolving deadlock.
- b) A proposal shall not be deemed to be carried unless it has been approved by at least three of the four Groups, unless otherwise required by law or guidance. If there is a tied vote then the issue would fail, and no action would be taken.
- c) The validity of the proceedings of SACRE or of the members of SACRE of any particular category shall not be affected by a vacancy in the office of any member of SACRE, or on the ground that a member appointed to represent any religion, religious denomination or association does not at the time of the proceedings represent the religion, religious denomination or association in question.

8. Quorum

A quorum shall consist of one member from at least three of the constituent groups with a total presence of no less than eight of the appointed members.

9. Chairs and Vice Chair

- a) The chair and vice chair will be appointed by the membership of SACRE at the AGM in the summer term or any meeting during the year when the position is vacant. Normally the chair and vice chair will remain in their positions for two years.
- b) The chair and vice chair, where possible, will represent different Groups of the SACRE and if possible have different religious backgrounds.
- c) SACRE will put in place procedures to consider succession planning for the posts of chair and vice chair.

- d) Where a vote is required, voting will be by a simple majority with each Group being assigned one vote.
- e) The Chair will be responsible for:
 - the management of meetings
 - representing the SACRE to other bodies
 - such other duties as the SACRE considers appropriate.
- f) The Vice Chair will be responsible for:
 - deputising for the chair as required;
 - representing the SACRE to other bodies in the absence of the chair or in agreement with the Chair
 - such other duties as the SACRE considers appropriate.

10. The Clerk

The LA shall appoint, fund and supervise a Clerk to:

- a) attend the full meetings of SACRE, any agenda setting meeting and Agreed Syllabus Conference meetings
- b) take appropriate minutes and notes at meetings
- c) maintain and update the records of SACRE and its meetings
- d) perform any other necessary administrative duties
- e) provide a copy of the minutes and papers of meeting to the members of SACRE and LA

11. The Local Authority Senior officer

SACRE shall be served by a Local Authority Senior Officer. The LA officer will:

- a) attend each SACRE and ASC meeting
- b) represent the views of the LA at these meetings
- c) provide necessary information and support to the RE Adviser regarding RE and Collective Worship in the Walsall schools
- d) ensure that the LA provide sufficient funds for SACRE to perform its functions.

12. The RE Adviser

The RE adviser will:

- a) attend each meeting of the SACRE and support the SACRE to fulfil its function with regard to RE and Collective Worship
- b) work with the Chair, Clerk and LA Officer to prepare the SACRE agenda and any reports, papers or advice required
- c) report regularly to SACRE on work completed on behalf of SACRE
- d) provide expertise and advice in the areas of RE and Collective Worship.

13. Meetings of SACRE

- a) There will normally be three SACRE meetings per academic year, one per term. Meetings will be convened by the LA. The summer term meeting will be the AGM.
- b) Special meetings may be called by the Chair, Vice Chair and LA acting jointly.
- c) Details of the business to be considered by the meeting, which will be included in the agenda, must be received by the Clerk not later than 15 school days before the meeting.
- d) The Clerk will, no later than 5 working days before the meeting, circulate the agenda and supporting papers to the members.

e) Meetings of SACRE shall be held in public except where an item of business is being considered which involves the consideration of confidential information in accordance with the Religious Education (Meetings of Local Conferences and Councils).

14. Convening an Agreed Syllabus Conference

a) Walsall LA is required to convene an Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC) to review the Agreed Syllabus every five years. An ASC may be requested to be convened by SACRE more frequently.

b) This conference will ideally have the same composition as SACRE. There is no provision for co-opted members, however some individuals may be invited to all meetings of the conference and its Groups in order to give their advice.

15. General

a) The SACRE may if it wishes establish working parties to take forward specific projects comprising representatives of each of the groups and the RE Consultant. These working parties will report back to SACRE regularly, according to a schedule agreed at the outset of the project.

b) In accordance with the statutory requirements of the Education Act 1996 and associated regulations, the press and public will be entitled to attend meetings of the SACRE, but may be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of items containing information capable of being treated as exempt information if meetings of SACRE were meetings of a Local Authority. The press and public are not entitled to attend meetings of an Agreed Syllabus Conference.

c) The Constitution will be reviewed on a biennial basis at the Summer term meeting of SACRE (the AGM) and suggestions for amendment voted on as described in Sections 7 & 8. Minor amendments may be brought to any meeting, with the agreement of members, and such minor amendments voted on as described in Section 7 & 8.

Appendix C: Circulation of the Annual report

The Walsall Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education Annual Report will be:

- Provided, via e-mail, to all SACRE Members
- Provided, via e-mail, to the Department for Education
- Provided, via e-mail, to NASACRE
- Published on the Local Authority website

Appendix D: GCSE Results 2023



KS4 Grade Summary by Subject

2023 | NPD | Religious Studies

Subject: Religious Studies (4610) / Exam: GCSE (9-1) Full Course (391)

QAN: 60184000

Est. No.	Centre	NOR	NOE	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	U	X	9-5	9-4	9-1	Avg Pts
-	National (All Schools)	671390	113680	8.6	11.1	12.1	16.6	13.9	10.4	13.8	7.5	3.8	1.5	0.7	62.3	72.7	97.8	5.2
-	National (State Funded)	606910	105240	7.3	10.2	11.7	16.6	14.3	10.9	14.7	7.9	4.0	1.6	0.7	60.1	71.0	97.7	5.1
-	LA (State Funded)	3611	566	9.9	11.5	14.8	15.0	15.4	11.5	11.7	6.5	2.7	0.5	0.5	66.6	78.1	98.9	5.5
5405	Aldridge School - A Science College	257	50	-	8.0	6.0	8.0	12.0	16.0	30.0	16.0	-	4.0	-	34.0	50.0	96.0	4.0
5406	Barr Beacon School	289	18	16.7	22.2	22.2	16.7	11.1	11.1	-	-	-	-	-	88.9	100.0	100.0	6.8
4004	Blue Coat Church of England Academy	145	141	1.4	4.3	9.2	14.2	18.4	22.0	19.1	7.1	3.5	0.7	-	47.5	69.5	99.3	4.5
4057	Brownhills Ormiston Academy	129	12	-	-	-	8.3	-	8.3	33.3	25.0	25.0	-	-	8.3	16.7	100.0	2.6
6907	Grace Academy Darlaston	175	25	4.0	16.0	24.0	16.0	8.0	16.0	12.0	4.0	-	-	-	68.0	84.0	100.0	5.8
4007	Joseph Leckie Academy	234	26	-	7.7	3.8	23.1	23.1	11.5	15.4	15.4	-	-	-	57.7	69.2	100.0	4.7
4106	Pool Hayes Academy	180	21	-	-	4.8	9.5	9.5	23.8	19.0	14.3	9.5	-	9.5	23.8	47.6	90.5	3.3
5404	Queen Mary's Grammar School	148	147	13.6	16.3	25.2	21.1	18.4	2.7	2.0	-	0.7	-	-	94.6	97.3	100.0	6.7
5403	Queen Mary's High School	120	61	47.5	24.6	16.4	4.9	4.9	-	-	-	1.6	-	-	98.4	98.4	100.0	8.0
4606	St Francis of Assisi Catholic College	167	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	100.0	-	-	0.0	0.0	100.0	1.0
5400	The Streetly Academy	256	47	2.1	10.6	19.1	21.3	19.1	6.4	10.6	8.5	2.1	-	-	72.3	78.7	100.0	5.4
4003	West Walsall E-ACT Academy	200	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
4002	Willenhall E-ACT Academy	138	16	-	6.3	-	6.3	25.0	25.0	6.3	25.0	6.3	-	-	37.5	62.5	100.0	3.9

Subject: Religious Studies (4610) / Exam: GCSE (9-1) Full Course (391)

QAN: 60184012

Est. No.	Centre	NOR	NOE	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	U	X	9-5	9-4	9-1	Avg Pts
-	National (All Schools)	671390	12920	8.4	11.7	12.7	17.1	14.0	10.5	12.4	7.9	3.5	1.3	0.6	63.8	74.3	98.1	5.3
-	National (State Funded)	606910	11770	7.8	11.3	12.3	16.9	13.9	10.7	12.8	8.4	3.8	1.4	0.6	62.2	72.9	98.0	5.2

QAN: 60184012																		
Est. No.	Centre	NOR	NOE	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	U	X	9-5	9-4	9-1	Avg Pts
-	LA (State Funded)	3611	1	-	100.0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	100.0	100.0	100.0	8.0
5402	Shire Oak Academy	241	1	-	100.0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	100.0	100.0	100.0	8.0

Subject: Religious Studies (4610) / Exam: GCSE (9-1) Full Course (391)

QAN: 60188790																			
Est. No.	Centre	NOR	NOE	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	Q	U	X	9-5	9-4	9-1	Avg Pts
-	National (All Schools)	671390	48600	7.1	10.0	11.8	15.6	14.3	11.9	12.8	9.0	5.1	-	1.6	-	58.9	70.8	97.7	5.0
-	National (State Funded)	606910	47060	6.6	9.7	11.6	15.6	14.5	12.1	13.1	9.2	5.2	-	1.6	-	58.0	70.2	97.7	5.0
-	LA (State Funded)	3611	398	4.0	7.8	9.8	15.1	14.8	12.6	15.8	10.1	6.5	-	2.0	1.5	51.5	64.1	96.5	4.6
5402	Shire Oak Academy	241	10	-	-	-	-	20.0	10.0	20.0	20.0	20.0	-	-	10.0	20.0	30.0	90.0	2.6
4606	St Francis of Assisi Catholic College	167	164	4.9	13.4	12.2	17.7	16.5	13.4	11.6	3.7	4.9	-	1.2	0.6	64.6	78.0	98.2	5.3
5401	St Thomas More Catholic School, Willenhall	236	224	3.6	4.0	8.5	13.8	13.4	12.1	18.8	14.3	7.1	-	2.7	1.8	43.3	55.4	95.5	4.1

Subject: Religious Studies (4610) / Exam: GCSE (9-1) Full Course (391)

QAN: 60300632																		
Est. No.	Centre	NOR	NOE	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	U	X	9-5	9-4	9-1	Avg Pts
-	National (All Schools)	671390	25130	8.0	10.9	11.4	17.4	13.2	10.0	14.0	7.8	4.9	1.8	0.6	61.0	71.0	97.6	5.1
-	National (State Funded)	606910	24040	7.6	10.6	11.2	17.4	13.2	10.2	14.3	8.0	5.1	1.8	0.6	60.0	70.2	97.6	5.1
-	LA (State Funded)	3611	20	-	20.0	5.0	15.0	25.0	10.0	10.0	15.0	-	-	-	65.0	75.0	100.0	5.1
4003	West Walsall E-ACT Academy	200	20	-	20.0	5.0	15.0	25.0	10.0	10.0	15.0	-	-	-	65.0	75.0	100.0	5.1