

London Borough of Waltham Forest

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education



SACRE Annual Report 2021-22

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Waltham Forest SACRE is a member of the National Association of SACRES

1. Introduction

1.1. Preface by the Chair

Schools entered the new academic year recovering from the exceptional challenges of the previous 18 months and uncertain of what might be faced in the coming year. I should like to pay tribute to all those who have worked so hard to restore the full experience of education for our children and young people.

Against this background, the members of SACRE were very pleased to welcome Julia Diamond Conway, our new adviser, to support us and the schools within Waltham Forest. She was able to initiate a termly series of network meetings for both primary and secondary teachers and school leaders of RE as well as provide relevant information to schools via the HUB newsletter.

A development programme for primary subject leadership of RE was taken up by 9 schools. This course (free to schools) enabled our teachers to collaborate with colleagues in Southwark.

Following a request from primary schools, SACRE started a project to collate information on those places of worship that are able to facilitate visits from schools. This project is ongoing.

We have started to use the NASACRE self-evaluation tool to assess our work. This highlighted the need to; widen the representation of our membership (particularly from schools), as well as, how we can more effectively monitor the provision and quality of RE across the borough.

Sadly, Ted Cooke, a former member of SACRE, passed away in November 2021. Ted gave a remarkable record of 25 years of service as Chair of SACRE from 1995-2020.

As always, I need to add my thanks and admiration to the members of SACRE for the time and energy that they have given to our work.

Colin Whitehead, Chair SACRE

1.2. The local context

The community of the London Borough of Waltham Forest is culturally and socially diverse. Many people have travelled across the globe to come and make their home among us. This diversity is celebrated in the schools, shops, restaurants, businesses, places of worship and institutions throughout the borough.

Religious affiliation in Waltham Forest % of pop. ¹		
Religion	2011	2021
Buddhist	0.8	0.7
Christian	48.4	39.0
Hindu	2.3	1.9
Jewish	0.5	0.5
Muslim	21.9	21.6
Sikh	0.5	0.5
No Religion	18.0	27.9
Religion Other	0.4	1.0
Religion not stated	7.3	7.0

The 2021 census shows some changes in the borough over the last 10 years, The most marked are; an increase in those identifying as “No religion” and a decrease in the number of those identifying as “Christian” .

Our school population records pupils coming from over 150 different language backgrounds. This diversity is also reflected in the faiths and beliefs of our community, as well as in the varied cultural traditions of those who identify as followers within the major religious groups.

The borough is served by 33 maintained schools (24 primary , 9 secondary, 2 special, 2 6th form colleges), 5 voluntary aided Schools, 1 voluntary controlled, plus 24 academies (18 primary, 4 secondary, 3 special).

1.3. Key priorities for action in 2021-22

Following the appointment of the new advisor in September 2021 the key priorities for action were agreed as:

- Establish termly Teacher Network meetings to support the:
 - Implementation of the new Agreed Syllabus
 - Subject knowledge of RE teachers
 - Development of Primary RE leadership
- Improve SACRE impact and effectiveness

2. Religious Education

¹ Source: Office for National Statistics

2.1. Locally Agreed Syllabus

The new syllabus was launched at a virtual event in November 2020. Due to the difficulties that schools were facing during the covid epidemic the implementation date was put back to September 2021. The results of SACRE's survey of schools (see section 5.4) show that it has been implemented in all community schools and most of those academies who responded.

2.2. Standards in RE

The following comments are based on the provisional results for 2021/22. As the summer exam series for 2019/20 and 2020/21 were cancelled due to the pandemic, comparisons are only available with the 2018/19 cohort.

National trends: At the national level (England) the number of entries for A level Religious Studies fell from 17,265 (in 2018) to 15,520 (2022)². Likewise, the numbers being entered for GCSE Religious Studies declined from 260,300 (2018) to 243,875 (2022).

GCSE Religious Studies: The provisional results for 2021/22 show that Waltham Forest students achieved higher average results than the average results for students in England. 65% of Waltham Forest students gained grades 9-5 as against 59% nationally. Likewise, grades 9-4 76% (nat 69%) and at grades 9-1 99% (nat 89%). This showed a marked improvement on the 2018/19 when Waltham Forest results were broadly in line with the national.

Of the 18 schools, 12 entered more students to take the subject in 2021/22 than in 2018/19. 4 schools showed a significant reduction in the proportion of their students being entered for Religious Studies in 2021/22 compared to 2018/19 and 2 schools entered no students for the subject this year.

Within the borough 6 schools showed very strong support for the subject with over 90% of their cohort entered for the 2021/22 Religious Studies exam.

² source: OFQUAL <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/provisional-entries-for-gcse-as-and-a-level-summer-2022-exam-series/provisional-entries-for-gcse-as-and-a-level-summer-2022-exam-series>

A level Religious Studies: Comparisons with previous years are difficult to make this year given the unprecedented change in how A level grades were awarded in 2020 and 2021, as well as changes to the grade boundaries and methods of assessment put in place for 2021/22. In addition, the DfE will not be releasing the sixth-form colleges provisional entries data for 2021/22 until February 2023.

In all there were 44 A level entries in the borough in 2021/22. Of these 97.7% achieved grades A*-E, that is 2.3 ppts lower than the previous year (100.0%), although 8.5 ppts higher than 2019 result (89.2%).

The Waltham Forest 2021/22 result is below the equivalent London, Statistical Neighbours and national results for England.

The provisional “unvalidated” 2021/22 GCSE data for Waltham Forest schools are to be found in **Appendix A** along with the 2018/19 data for comparison . Unfortunately, the A level results for 6th form colleges will not be published by the DfE until Feb 2023.

Provision for RE in secondary schools: In January SACRE examined the 2020/21 DfE workforce survey workforce data for WF schools. The data showed that in 2021 60% of schools in the borough reported a decrease in the % of teaching hours devoted to RE, compared to the previous year.

This may be a result of the recent exception pressures that schools have been facing. Monitoring the 2021/22 returns will give a better informed picture.

OFSTED reports: Ofsted carried out 8 inspections in WF during 2021/22 (3 secondary, 4 primary schools, 1 sixth form college). 7 were graded good or better and 1 as requires improvement.

Three of the inspections included a “deep dive” into RE (2 secondary, 1 primary).

Two reports cited areas to improve in RE:

- “..pupils do not learn sufficiently deep knowledge in key Stage 3...” (Secondary).
- “..some of the resources used in lessons have not been updated and do not engage pupils in their learning...” (Primary).

Advice and support has been offered to both schools.

2.3. Support for Teaching & Learning

This year, advisers from RE Today led 2 twilight training sessions for staff working in Waltham Forest primary schools and 2 for Waltham Forest secondary staff.

In addition, a joint session on 'ways of knowing' in RE (for both primary and secondary staff working in Waltham Forest schools) was planned for early the summer term but postponed to early in the Autumn term 2022/23..

Topics covered in workshops this year have included:

- Worldviews in RE
- Sikhism for primary
- Ensuring that RE is ready for an Ofsted 'deep dive'

Additionally, schools have been made aware of several additional training opportunities, including courses run by Chelmsford Diocese and Humanists UK. Schools have been made aware of several additional training opportunities, including courses run by Chelmsford Diocese.

Primary schools were offered the opportunity to attend a 3.5 day 'Excellent RE course' for free and 9 took up the offer. This course focuses on both improvement of RE within one's own school and a multi-disciplinary approach to the subject. 2.5 days have been held in this academic year and the final day will be in October 2022.

- Buxton School
- Chase Lane Primary School
- Downsell Primary School
- Greenleaf Primary School
- Handsworth Primary School
- Jenny Hammond Primary School

2.4. Complaints about RE

SACRE has a role in investigating complaints against schools in relation to RE and Collective Worship. In 2020-21 there were no such formal complaints reported.

2.5. Withdrawal from RE

Currently we do not have data to indicate the number of students that have been formally withdrawn from RE lessons.

3. Collective Worship

3.1. Guidance to schools

SACRE updated the guidance for Collective Worship in Waltham Forest schools. Copies of the revised guidance can be found here:

<https://thehub-beta.walthamforest.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2021-03/Collective-Worship-Guidance-for-schools-2021.pdf>

3.2. Determinations

SACRE has a statutory role in considering and granting determinations under The Education Reform Act of 1988. No such requests were made this year. The Adviser to SACRE is always available to assist Headteachers in respect any request.

4. Links with other bodies

During the year members attended and contributed to Inter Faith events hosted at both Eden School for Girls and Willowfield School.

5. Other local issues

5.1. Holocaust Memorial Day

SACRE members contributed to a video marking Holocaust Memorial Day. This was distributed to schools as a virtual commemoration and teaching resource.

We are grateful to all those involved as participants and organisers.

5.2. Guidance to schools on Ramadan

SACRE updated the guidance to schools on Ramadan. Copies of the revised guidance can be found here:

https://thehub-beta.walthamforest.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2021-03/Ramadan_Guidance_for_schools_2021.pdf

5.3. Safeguarding

A role description for a lead safeguarding member for SACRE has been developed and all members are now familiar with the duties as set out in

“Keeping Children safe in Education”³

Safeguarding is now a standard item on all our agenda.

5.4. Survey of schools

For some time, SACRE has been aware that its communications to schools have tended to be one-way. To begin to rectify this SACRE resolved to hold an annual survey of schools. The first survey in the academic year 2020/21 was unsuccessful with a very low response rate. This may have been due to; the pandemic pressure on schools, the construction of the survey or difficulties in distributing it to schools.

This year a much shorter survey, simpler technology and assistance with the distribution from the Assistant Director (Schools) achieved a much improved response rate.

In all 22 responses were received from a possible 63 institutions in the borough.

About three-quarters of the respondents were from community schools, and about two-thirds were from primary schools. All the community schools who responded are already implementing the agreed syllabus launched in spring 2021. All but one of the responding academies are using it in whole or part.

All the schools had appointed, or were in the process of appointing, a subject leader for RE. Most of these subject leaders have some sort of external support for their role, although fewer than half have membership of relevant professional bodies, and only 3 hold a subscription to specialist resources.

Most of the respondents expressed an interest in working more closely with the SACRE adviser, and we will be taking this forward in the 2022/23 academic year. We hope that, as we begin to establish two-way dialogue with schools, the number of schools that we hear from will increase and our understanding of the state of RE in our schools and how we can best help teachers will increase correspondingly.

3

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/954314/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_2020_-_Update_-_January_2021.pdf

6. Organization of SACRE

6.1. Meetings and attendance

The SACRE had a programme of 6 meetings across the year: All meetings were conducted via Zoom.

Date of meeting	Quorate	no. attended	Apologies received
AGM 20 th October 2021	Yes	13	5
20 th October 2021	Yes	13	5
14 th December 2021	Yes	11	7
2 nd February 2022	Yes	11	4
25 th May 2022	Yes	10	5
6 th July 2022	Yes	12	7

6.2. Professional and administrative support

SACRE has enjoyed excellent professional support from the Waltham Forest Governor Services manager during the year. All meetings have been effectively clerked and minutes produced in a timely fashion.

All our meetings have been attended by Assistant Director of Learning, Gerry Kemble, who has provided the meeting with support and advice.

6.3. Membership

During the year SACRE has endeavoured to increase the representation in Groups A, B and C. We were pleased to be able to recruit additional representatives of Islam, recognizing the size of the Muslim community in our borough.

It is noted that in Group A there is not currently a representative from the Sikh faith or representatives from the wider Christian communities in the borough.

We are most grateful to Ruth Everett (Brentwood Diocese) for her assistance in recruiting new members into Group B (CofE).

The number of vacancies of for teachers in Group C remains a concern.

A list of members and representation as of July 2022 is attached in **Appendix B**

6.4. Finance

Expenditure: financial year April 1st 2021 – March 31st 2022

Item	cost
Advisor contract (REToday)	10,000
Governor Services SLA	5000
Officer support (Dir. Children's' Services Recharge)	4,282
NASACRE Membership	105
Conference bookings	60
HMD Observation contribution	500
Other (Syllabus charge to RE Today)	385
Total	20,332

6.5. Who receives this report

This report will be distributed to:

- Director of Children's Services
- Members of the Education Scrutiny Sub Committee
- Headteachers of schools and colleges in Waltham Forest
- Chairs of governors and Academy Trusts
- NASACRE

The SACRE clerk will send a copy of the SACRE report to the Department for Education: ministers@education.gov.uk

The report will also be emailed to NASACRE for publication on its website:
SACRE reports: admin@nasacre.org.uk

If you have any comments about this report, please contact

Waltham Forest Governor Services :
governor.services@walthamforest.gov.uk

Appendix A

GCSE 2021/22 (provisional) : Religious Studies

School	2021/22p ¹					
	Entries	% 9-1	% 9-4	% 9-5	Pupils end of KS4	% Entries / Cohort
Belmont Park School	10	90	0	0	14	71
Buxton School	1	100	100	100	117	1
Chingford Foundation School	222	99	78	65	241	92
Connaught School for Girls	128	98	81	76	128	100
Eden Girls' School, Waltham Forest	117	100	91	85	119	98
Frederick Bremer School	0				169	0
George Mitchell School	36	100	72	61	107	34
Heathcote School & Science College	0				174	0
Highams Park School	25	96	80	76	230	11
Holy Family Catholic School	200	99	64	48	208	96
Kelmscott School	150	94	52	35	158	95
Lammas School and Sixth Form	28	100	82	68	133	21
Leytonstone School	30	100	90	83	170	18
Norlington School and 6th Form	107	100	84	72	110	97
South Chingford Foundation School	24	96	58	33	83	29
Walthamstow Academy	60	100	93	78	176	34
Walthamstow School for Girls	92	100	90	84	178	52
Willowfield School	80	100	89	80	164	49
Waltham Forest LA	1,310	99	76	65	2,745	48
England (All state-funded)	207,345	89	69	59		

School	2018/19 ¹					
	Entries	% 9-1	% 9-4	% 9-5	Pupils end of KS4	% Entries / Cohort
Belmont Park School	5	80	20	20	12	42
Buxton School	123	97	49	34	140	88
Chingford Foundation School	220	100	64	54	226	97
Connaught School for Girls	116	100	85	75	117	99
Eden Girls' School, Waltham Forest	93	100	88	81	97	96
Frederick Bremer School	0				161	0
George Mitchell School	21	95	81	71	97	22
Heathcote School & Science College	11	100	64	64	152	7
Highams Park School	37	100	89	76	222	17
Holy Family Catholic School	170	100	72	59	172	99
Kelmscott School	157	96	63	48	162	97
Lammas School and Sixth Form	21	100	81	67	101	21
Leytonstone School	18	100	83	72	153	12
Norlington School and 6th Form	94	100	84	73	107	88
South Chingford Foundation School	120	91	47	35	125	96
Walthamstow Academy	13	100	62	62	168	8
Walthamstow School for Girls	74	100	85	73	173	43
Willowfield School	117	100	91	79	153	76
Waltham Forest LA	1,410	98	71	60	2,605	54
England (All state-funded)	210,796	98	71	59		

¹ Source: Waltham Forest LA 2021/22 (provisional) & 2018/19 (revised) DfE Analyse School Performance.

England 2021/22 (provisional) & 2018/19 (revised) DfE Academic Year 2021/22 provisional [publication](#)

and 2018/19 Key stage 4 performance 2019 (revised) [publication](#).

Appendix B

MEMBERSHIP OF WALTHAM FOREST SACRE, December 2022

Group A	Other Christian denominations and other faiths represented in Waltham Forest		
	Mrs Tara Khare	Hinduism	27/03/23
	Mr Jamal Mannan	Islam	5/7/25
	Ms Ruquyya Vankad	Islam	5/7/25
	Mr Paul Braham	Judaism	10/07/26
	Ms Jasmin Danish	Bah'ai	19/10/25
	Mr Keith Pilling	Buddhism	27/03/23
Group B	The Church of England: Appointed by the Diocese of Chelmsford Education Committee with the Synod of the Waltham Forest Deanery.		
	Ms Ruth Everett		17/10/25
	Rev Dave Edmondson		22/08/26
	Rev Polly Kersys-Hull		22/08/26
Group C	The Teachers and Educators of the borough		
	Ms Heather Soar	Primary	10/10/25
	Mr Is'Haaq Jasat	Secondary	07/07/24
	Ms Rukhsana Yaqoob	Secondary	05/06/26
	Mr Colin Whitehead	Sch. governor	20/03/26
	Ms Katy Youngman	Primary	30/11/26
Group D	The London Borough of Waltham Forest and the community		
	Cllr Sazimet Palta-Imre	Elected Member	24/05/26
	Cllr Richard Sweden	Elected Member	24/05/26
	Cllr Caramel Quin	Elected Member	24/05/26
	Cllr Uzma Rasool	Elected Member	24/05/26
	Mr Gerry Kemble	LBWF Assistant Director – Schools	
	Ms Ruth Kaufman	Humanist	04/05/23
Others attending - non-voting			
Ms Julia Diamond-Conway	RE Advisor to WF SACRE		
Mr Ade Akano	Waltham Forest Faith and Community Officer (Met Police)		
Ms Donna Miller	SACRE Administrator		