

London Borough of Waltham Forest

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education



SACRE Annual Report 2022-23

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

1. Introduction

1.1. Preface by the Chair

The 2022-23 academic year has been challenging for schools still working hard to help students catch up from time missed and disruption earlier in their school career. School leaders faced managing budgets at a time of spiraling costs and the protracted negotiations over teacher pay led to industrial action in our schools. As always we acknowledge the dedication and hard work of those who work in our schools to provide the best for the children and young people of the borough.

During the year, thanks to the work of our adviser Julia Diamond-Conway, the RE Networks for teachers across the borough have developed to provide wider participation and impact. In November we received a report on the primary “Excellent RE Project” from Katy Youngman (Parkside School). Later in the year Is’haaq Jasat (Eden School for Girls) gave us a report on the development of the “Schools Linking Project” in the borough.

SACRE and the local authority improved their coordination on financial matters, which has helped us make better use of the budget allocated to SACRE. As a result we were able to provide all schools with resource packs to support RE learning and offer a reduced subscription to NATRE, providing resources to RE teachers.

A briefing from the borough Data Team on the 2021 Census showed us how significantly the pattern of faith and belief has changed over the last decade. In particular, the rise of those reporting “no religion” 18% (2011) to 27.9% (2021).

Ruth Kaufman (Humanist representative) provided a briefing paper on “Non-religious world views”

We continue to use the NASACRE self-evaluation tool to assess our work. I am grateful to Rukhsana Yaqoob MBE who guided us through the section on community.

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. I am particularly grateful for the support of Ruth Kaufman, Vice Chair, throughout the year.

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 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:

- 53 primary schools (30 maintained, 21 academies. 2 free schools)
- 17 secondary schools (8 maintained, 8 academies. 1 free schools)
- 2 6th form colleges
- 3 nursery schools (maintained)
- 4 special schools (1 maintained, 3 academies)

Of these schools 11 are schools with a religious character (8 primary & 3 secondary)

1.3. Key priorities for action in 2022-23

The key priorities for action were agreed as:

- Build on the established 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

¹ Source: Office for National Statistics

2. Religious Education

2.1. Locally Agreed Syllabus

The current agreed syllabus came into effect in September 2021. The results of SACRE's survey of schools show that it has been adopted in all maintained community schools and most of those academies who responded. Work to support the effective implementation of the syllabus is carried out through the RE Teacher Network. In addition, the teacher meetings offer an opportunity to review the syllabus and consider how it might evolve when considering its renewal in 2026.

2.2. Standards in RE

Confirmed results for 2021/22 cohort (see appendix B)

KS 4 GCSE Religious Studies:

In all, 18 schools entered KS 4 students for GCSE Religious Studies across 4 exams.

Year 10 entries: 2 schools entered their KS4 cohort (97% & 98%) a year early in Year 10. A further 3 schools entered a single student in Year 10.

As these results were awarded on teacher assessment in 2021 direct comparison with other years or national averages is not possible.

Year 11 entries: The majority of Waltham Forest students were entered for GCSE RS at the end of Year 11 (2022). The data shows that Waltham Forest did significantly better than the national average in 3 out of the 4 exam boards entered: AQA (WF average 5.4 vs nat 4.7) Eduqas (WF average 6.0 vs nat 4.8) Pearson RS B (WF average 5.0 vs nat 4.9).

The variation between the national average point score for each exam board and individual schools is set out in appendix A.

It is notable that wide variations are found between schools in the proportion of students entered for exams in this subject. 2 schools entered just a single student and a further 2 schools did not enter any students for this subject at GCSE.

KS5 A level Religious Studies: 2021/22

Comparisons with previous years are difficult to make this year given the changes 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 all there were 44 A level entries in the borough from 4 institutions. The number of entries in 2019 & 2020 showed an understandable decline during the pandemic. The number entered in 2022 was an increase on those in 2018 (39). The Waltham Forest 2021/22 result for A level Religious Studies is below the equivalent London, Statistical Neighbours and national results for England.

Results for 2022/23 cohort: GCSE and A level

The **national results** for Religious Studies GCSE in 2023 show that the subject was one with a very high proportion of top grades (30.5% grades 9-7). Likewise, compared to other subjects Religious Studies showed the smallest drop in the top grades from the results achieved in 2022.

Unfortunately, the DfE will not be releasing **the full 2023 results until 2024**. SACRE will be analysing the 2023 outcomes as part of our 2023/24 Report.

What did OFSTED say about RE in Waltham Forest?

Ofsted visited 29 schools in the borough during 2022/23 (6 secondary, 17 primary and 3 special schools). 24 were graded good or better, 1 as requires improvement.

Only one of the inspections included a “deep dive” into RE. None of the reports included any comments or recommendations with regard to RE.

2.3. Support for Teaching & Learning

RE Teacher Network Meetings hosted by Julia Diamond-Conway (Advisor to SACRE)

During the academic year, 2 well-attended Subject Network meetings were held. The first was on Monday 3rd October 2022. This focused on the 2nd pillar of knowledge referred to in Ofsted’s “Research review series: Religious Education” (2021)² as ‘ways of knowing’. The review refers to three pillars of knowledge in RE and explains that for a student to get better in RE, the student needs to know

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/research-review-series-religious-education/research-review-series-religious-education>

and remember more of each pillar. The three pillars of knowledge are: substantive knowledge, ways of knowing (which was focused upon in this meeting) and personal knowledge. The group looked at different methods of approaching “ways of knowing” with pupils and considered how the use of other academic disciplines in RE might be helpful here. Developing a wider understanding in RE through using other approaches is currently on trend in schools. The disciplines most associated with this approach to RE are history, human and social sciences, philosophy and theology. Pupils can be encouraged to look at a particular RE topic through using one or more of these disciplines and over time should become more familiar and confident with each.

The second meeting was held on Tuesday 14th March. This was a practical meeting focusing on engaging learners in RE. Throughout the meeting, attendees had the chance to think about questions including: what is engagement in RE? What does engagement look like in the RE classroom? What practical ideas can we use at our school to ensure pupils are properly engaging in RE lessons? How can we ensure that pupils’ discussions in RE are of quality?

The Waltham Forest network currently works well as a cross phase group, with both primary and secondary teachers attending and sharing ideas. It is led by two advisers; one a primary specialist and one a secondary specialist so that the meeting can split into groups by age of pupils taught where necessary. Whilst most attendees are leaders of RE, the network is often joined by staff who do not lead, but teach RE. During this year, meetings have been attended by individual members of staff from schools, other schools have chosen to have groups of staff attend meetings, with one school using the first meeting of the year as a whole school INSET session. In order to meet the needs of staff, the meetings include discussions on which CPD people would find most useful; these are always taken into account when the next meeting is planned.

Curriculum resources and teacher support

The local authority, on behalf of SACRE, arranged for the distribution of a teaching resource pack (primary and secondary version) to be sent to schools to support and enhance the implementation of the syllabus. In addition, all schools were offered a reduced subscription of school membership to the National Association of Teachers of RE. 31 schools took up this offer.

2.4. Complaints about RE

SACRE has a role in investigating complaints against schools in relation to RE and Collective Worship. In 2022-23 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

The survey of schools carried out in summer term 2023 indicated that some respondents were unclear about the obligations on Collective Worship. It is now a priority for SACRE to update the guidance for Collective Worship and advise the LA of the need to provide further training.

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.

Both the Chair and Vice Chair attended the NASACRE conference in May.

A number of SACRE members are also members of the Waltham Forest Faith and Belief Forum.

5. Other local issues

5.1. Safeguarding

Safeguarding is a standard item on all our agenda and all members are now familiar with the duties as set out in “Keeping Children safe in Education”³.

5.2. Survey of schools

Schools were asked to respond to a short survey in the summer term 2023. The survey this year focused on Collective Worship. Only a third of respondents reported that their school complied with the requirement for pupils to take part in an act of daily collective worship. A half of the responding schools did not have a policy for collective worship. Of those that did, most did not have the policy available on the school website.

On sharing the best features of Collective Worship at their school comments included: “.. pupil engagement, peaceful atmosphere” “...to be able to encourage children and adults to have respect for the beliefs that others hold” “..for children to reflect on their actions and think about our core set of values.”

90% of respondents felt that the current Agreed Syllabus met the needs of their school and pupils. On further support and development required, suggestions included: “..training for newly qualified and non-specialist RE teachers” “..sharing examples of good practice.” “..sample assessments and examples of how to structure feedback” “..links to leaders of differing religions.”

In all 17 responses were received.

6. Advice given to the local authority by SACRE

6.1. Amendments to Appendix A of the constitution

SACRE asked the LA to consider a rewording of how the membership of group A and Group C are described. SACRE felt that the existing wording limited the ability to provide effective representation of these groups.

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

The **LA agreed to consider these** recommendations subject to consultation with the LA legal team.

6.2. School workforce data

SACRE expressed concern that some schools in the borough had not submitted any data with regard to hours teaching RE in the annual workforce survey 2022.

The **LA agreed to contact those schools** and discover the meaning behind the lack of data.

6.3. Collective worship compliance

Following the results on the SACRE survey of schools, the LA were advised that a number of schools in the borough were either not complying with the statutory requirement or were unaware of their responsibilities with regard to collective worship.

The **LA agreed to facilitate a training conference on collective worship** for Headteachers, teachers and governors to be held in November 2023.

6.4. Schools not entering students for GCSE RE

SACRE expressed concern that 2 maintained secondary schools had not entered any students for GCSE RE in 2022 despite it being a requirement of the Agreed Syllabus that an exam option is offered.

The **LA agreed to contact those schools** for an explanation.

7. Organization of SACRE

7.1. 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 28 th September 2022	Yes	12	5
28 th September 2022	Yes	12	5
30 th November 2022	Yes	15	3
8 th February 2023	Yes	15	1
10 th May 2023	No	11	4
12 th July 2023	Yes	11	2

7.2. 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.

7.3. Membership

During the year SACRE has endeavoured to increase the representation in Groups A, B and C.

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.

The number of vacancies in Groups B and C remains a concern.

A list of members and representation as of July 2023 is attached in **Appendix A**

7.4. Finance

Expenditure: financial year April 1st 2022 – March 31st 2023

Item	cost
Advisor contract (REToday)	£9,352.50
Governor Services	£6,302.00
Officer support (Dir. Children's' Services Recharge)	£4,282.00
NASACRE Membership	£105.00
Conference bookings	£300.00
Resources for schools (incl. NATRE sub discount)	£8,813.00
Total	£29,154.50

7.5. 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

MEMBERSHIP OF WALTHAM FOREST SACRE ~ July 2023

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.			
	4 members	Ms Ruth Everett	17/10/25	
Group C	The Teachers and Educators of the borough			
	12 members	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	09/05/27	
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		

Appendix B

GCSE KS4 Waltham Forest KS4 cohort 2022

Exam 2021 Year 10	No. on roll	No. of entries	% of entred	School Av. Pts		
AQA GCSE Religious Studies A						
Buxton School	117	1	1%	6.0		
Eden Girls' School, Waltham Forest	119	117	98%	5.6		
George Mitchell School	107	1	1%	3.0		
Norlington School and 6th Form	110	107	97%	5.0		
Walthamstow School for Girls	178	1	1%	8.0		
Exam 2022 Year 11	No. on roll	No. of entries	% of entred	School Av. Pts	difference to Nat av	
AQA GCSE Religious Studies A	Nat. av. Pt score 4.7					
Belmont Park School	14	11	79%	0.6	-4.10	
Chingford Foundation School	241	224	93%	5.4	0.70	
Lammas School and Sixth Form	133	28	21%	5.4	0.70	
Leytonstone School	170	30	18%	6.3	1.60	
South Chingford Foundation School	83	1	1%	8.0	3.30	
Walthamstow Academy	176	60	34%	6.1	1.40	
Eduqas GCSE in Religious Studies	Nat. av. Pt score 4.8					
Willowfield School	164	81	49%	6.0	1.20	
Pearson GCSE Religious Studies B	Nat. av. Pt score 4.9					
Connaught School for Girls	128	128	100%	6.0	1.10	
George Mitchell School	107	36	34%	4.9	0.00	
Highams Park School	230	25	11%	6.1	1.20	
Kelmscott School	158	154	97%	3.7	-1.20	
South Chingford Foundation School	83	23	28%	3.8	-1.10	
Walthamstow School for Girls	178	92	52%	6.2	1.30	
Pearson GCSE Religious Studies A	Nat. av. Pt score 5.1					
Holy Family Catholic School	208	200	96%	4.5	-0.60	
Schools not entering students for GCSE Religious Studies						
Frederick Bremer School						
Heathcote School & Science College						

Religious Studies (4610) / Exam: GCE A level 2022

School/College	NOE	A*-A	A*-B	A*-E	Avg Pts
National (all entries)	15220	36.2	67.9	98.7	39.9
Chingford Foundation School	9	11.1	33.3	100.0	30.0
Leyton Sixth Form College	18	22.2	50.0	94.4	33.9
Norlington School and 6th Form	1	-	100.0	100.0	40.0
Sir George Monoux College	16	12.5	25.0	100.0	30.0