

Wandsworth Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE)

Annual Report for the academic year September 2023- August 2024

1. Introduction

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Chair's welcome

It gives me great pleasure to introduce this report for the 2023-24 academic year as the new Chair of Wandsworth SACRE. We had two meetings during the year, one of which was at the Town Hall and one hosted at one of our places of worship, where we enjoyed a presentation and tour of the Khalsa Centre, Sikh gurdwara.

We welcomed new members this year – in Group A: Dr Lottie Holmes (Humanists UK) and Imam Hamzah Patel (Balham Mosque and Tooting Islamic Centre) and in Group D, Councillor Clare Fraser and myself.

We also said goodbye to some members this year – Mr Jon Fayle ((Humanists UK), Imam Khubaeb Raja (Balham Mosque and Tooting Islamic Centre), Ms Brigitte Sayers-Eugster (NASUWT) and Councillors Sana Jafri and Denise Paul. We were very sad to hear of the death of Lesley Prior, who had been a very valued adviser to our SACRE for a number of years. She will be much missed by us, as well as to the wider RE community.

Wandsworth SACRE has continued with its work to ensure that all pupils in our schools develop spiritually, morally, socially and culturally as well as academically. We participated in the NASACRE AGM and continue to follow with interest developments in RE nationally; for example, we looked to see what comments Ofsted made about RE in its annual report and assessed how the Wandsworth syllabus can encourage a Worldviews approach, following on from a revisit to the 2018 CoRE report on 2018 Religion and Worldviews.

Our SACRE actively seeks to ensure all children in Wandsworth have access to high quality and challenging RE and we provide support to primary RE subject leaders through the teachers' network meetings. These are free of charge to maintained schools and we urge school leaders to recognise the importance of

allocating school time for staff to attend. We also produce a termly newsletter which signposts resources, draws attention to issues of interest in the RE world and highlights forthcoming festivals among other features.

Pupils' learning in RE has continued to be enhanced by the Faith Trails which have allowed our children to experience exciting learning opportunities while promoting an ethos of respect for others. We are very grateful to our Group A members who have facilitated these. The trails have built on pupils' understanding of their own and other cultures and beliefs while also celebrating the religious and cultural diversity found in Wandsworth.

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

Councillor Jo Rigby
Chair, Wandsworth SACRE

Overview

1. This annual report of Wandsworth SACRE outlines the work of SACRE during the academic year 2023 to 2024. The GCSE and A-level statistics for Religious Studies for the past year are provided as an appendix to this report, with thanks to the Wandsworth Research and Evaluation Unit, which provides this information.

Meetings held in the reporting year

2. Wandsworth SACRE met on two occasions during the academic year 2023 – 2024. The scheduled meeting for the summer term was cancelled due to the proximity of the date to the general election and the agenda items carried over to the next meeting in the autumn. Meetings were held in the evenings. One meeting was held at the Town Hall and one at a place of worship; this was at the Khalsa Centre, Sikh Gurdwara in Tooting and preceded by a tour and presentation by a member of SACRE and priests at the gurdwara.

Attendance was generally good, and no meetings were inquorate. New members were welcomed, as listed above. There were five resignations and four new members, with there being one vacancy for a teacher member. The Chair of SACRE resigned due to becoming Mayor of Wandsworth and Councillor Rigby became the new SACRE Chair.

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

Autumn Term Meeting 2023

4. Meeting held on Monday, 2nd October 2023.

The Ofsted monitoring report prepared by the Local Authority's (LA) SACRE Officer was presented for discussion. This made an analysis of any comments on Religious Education (RE) or spiritual, social, moral and cultural development (SMSC) that were found in the Ofsted reports from Wandsworth schools inspected in the academic year 2022-2023. No schools had a deep dive in RE.

The CoRE report of 2018 - 'Religion and world views: the way forward, a national approach for RE' had been provided for a discussion on the current situation in Wandsworth.

A vote was taken to approve the co-opted member for Humanism as a full member of Group A.

NASACRE's training plan, which enabled all members to attend any training provided by NASACRE free of charge, was shared with the group and members encouraged to sign up for any sessions in which they had a particular interest.

Spring Term Meeting 2024

5. Meeting held on Monday, 4th March, 2024.

The SACRE Annual Report for 2022-23 was presented and discussed. While the NASACRE template for the report was used, it was very similar to the format that had been used by the LA in previous years. There was some discussion on Wandsworth schools' Religious Studies (RS) GCSE and A-Level results, which were better than the national average at GCSE, with some very good individual school results.

The Ofsted annual report was discussed, and SACRE members agreed that it gave cause for concern in relation to the status of RE. Few of Ofsted's school inspection reports nationally gave any information on RE, which was also the case for the reports on Wandsworth's schools.

Information on RE Hubs was shared. Extending current school interfaith initiatives such as the Faith Trails were considered and it was decided to relaunch the secondary school Faith Direct event later in the year.

Summer Term Meeting - cancelled

2. Religious Education

Syllabus

The current Wandsworth Locally Agreed Syllabus (LAS) was originally launched in September 2017. Due to the new directions in RE relating to

Worldviews and forthcoming commissions for exemplar syllabi, it was updated and extended rather than replaced. The revised document was approved in February 2023 and continues to be in use.

Monitoring and standards

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

A trawl was also made of Ofsted reports to look for references to RE and SMSC (spiritual, moral, social and cultural development). This was done and reported upon in the first meeting of the new academic year, October 2023. Section 48 reports are also sent to SACRE. There were just two in the last year, one by the Catholic Schools Inspectorate (CSI) of a primary school and one SIAMS (Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools) inspection of a secondary school.

Continuing professional development

The primary RE subject leaders' network met once in each term at Wandsworth's Professional Development Centre. The foci for meetings in the last year were:

- A presentation and discussion on Humanism from a representative of Humanists UK followed by a teacher sharing her school's deep dive experience
- Talks and discussions from Wandsworth SACRE's Sikh representatives followed by a session on assessment
- Implications from Ofsted's Deep and meaningful report before a session on progression in the RE curriculum

Other support for schools

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

The LA SACRE Officer produced a termly newsletter which had a calendar of events including major faith festivals, signposted good practice and shared resources.

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

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

3. Collective Worship

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

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

Freedom of Information (FOI) Requests

There were two FOI requests during the past year; one about actions taken arising from SACRE annual reports and the other whether there had been any withdrawals from Christian worship. Both were responded to within the requisite time frame.

4. Links with other bodies

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

Close links were maintained with Wandsworth's Voluntary Sector Development Manager, one of whose briefs was to connect and support faith groups across the borough. She provided relevant information to SACRE meetings and was active in promoting multi faith/cultural events.

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

5. Other SACRE local involvement

The Faith Trails for Year 5 and 6 pupils in primary schools, a SACRE initiative which began in the 2021-22 academic year, grew and flourished during the last year, and were referred to in the Chair's opening remarks. Some Group A members were very helpful in facilitating these. There are now four trails in operation, covering different areas of the borough – Wimbledon Parkside, Southfields, Balham and Tooting.

16 different schools have now taken part on 27 trail occasions, with some of these schools making this a part of their regular curriculum offer in RE. Evaluations from hosts and schools were extremely positive and pupils' work from the visits of a high standard, showing much thought and perception.

6. SACRE's Administrative Arrangements and Financial Support

SACRE meetings are clerked by a Democratic Services Officer from Wandsworth Council. An officer is provided to support the LA.

The annual budget for support for SACRE in 2023-24 was £6000, the same as in 2022-23. This funded the LA SACRE Officer, NASACRE membership, the annual conference and other incidental expenses. Wandsworth Town Hall provided a room for meetings, but it has now been established that at least one meeting a year is held at a place of worship. As noted, this year, one meeting was at the Town Hall and one at the Gurdwara.

Membership

While some members had been in place for a number of years, there is always some movement in the membership, but vacancies were quickly addressed. There were no inquorate meetings in the past year.

Group A contains representatives of all the major faiths and some denominations or branches within them, and two nominated deputies for some faiths. The Humanist member gained full membership during this reporting year.

Training

The LA Officer attended the NASACRE conference in 2024. SACRE is also happy to fund a certain amount of training for members and signed up to NASACRE's training package.

7. Appendices

Tables of exam results for the year 23-24

CPD provided for schools – see above

SACRE has provided advice for schools on Collective Worship -

[wandsworth_sacre_guidance_on_collective_worship.pdf](#)

and on Ramadan

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

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

WANDSWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL

SACRE - MARCH 2025

STANDARDS IN RELIGIOUS STUDIES EXAMINATIONS IN 2024

- **Introduction**

This paper summarises the Wandsworth and England results for 2024 Religious Studies GCSE and A Level examinations. It provides more detailed data for Wandsworth down to school level.

This is provided for information and discussion.

- **Summary of national data**

Outcomes are still provisional to date (software to be updated with final data in April). Headline figures are as follows:

The key outcomes for Religious Education in England at KS4 and KS5 in 2024

- There were 224,925 entries for the full course in GCSE Religious Studies (RS), a significant increase from 2023 (193,610).
- 2023 had itself seen a significant increase from 2022.
- There was no data available for entries for the short course in GCSE RS.
- The percentage of grades 9-4 dropped from 72.2 in 2023 to 72 in 2024.
- The points average rose slightly from 5.0 in 2023 to 5.1 in 2024.
- There were 14,477 entries at A level, continuing a downward trend since 2018 (14,720 in 2023, 16,660 in 2018).
- Percentages of A*- B dropped from 55.4 in 2023 to 54.5 in 2024. A - E remained constant at 97.6

Report to SACRE on Religious Studies Examination Results 2024

• Summary of Wandsworth data

- 1,038 students sat a Religious Studies (RS) examination in Wandsworth in 2024, very similar to the numbers in 2023 (1,029).
- 949 students sat the GCSE full course (939 in 2023), but none the short course.
- As for previous years, the number of students in the cohort has been included in the data, which shows the wide variation in the percentage of a cohort opting for RS. There was again a great divergence between schools in this: St Cecilia's, Ark Bolingbroke and Graveney entered almost all their students; Chestnut Grove and St John Bosco, the vast majority; Ashcroft about half and Burntwood a third.
- The lowest proportion was at Harris Battersea, where it was about a fifth of the cohort but this was more than last year.
- Ark Putney and Ernest Bevin again entered no students as it was not offered as a GCSE option for this year, but it is now an option for the future. Southfields also did not enter any students this year; it has been an option in the past but is not currently being offered.
- It is not surprising that church schools enter more pupils, as RS is entitled to a defined amount of curriculum time, 10% in Catholic schools.
- The points score averages for Ark Bolingbroke, Ashcroft and Graveney were all above the LA average, Ashcroft and Ark Bolingbroke significantly so; Burntwood and St John Bosco perceptibly below. Ark Bolingbroke had made an improvement of 1.2 from 2023. While Harris was just below the LA average by 0.2, it had made a great improvement of 0.8 from last year; from 4.7 to 5.5, comfortably above the national average. The LA average of 5.7 was the same as last year, much higher than the national average of 5.1.
- The highest average points (6.7) were earned at Ashcroft, the lowest at St John Bosco (4.9) Only St John Bosco was below the national average.
- Overall the indicator of grades 9 - 4 showed that Wandsworth was again above the national average – 79.8% compared with 72% national, though just below the LA 2023 9 - 4 average of 80.6%.
- In Wandsworth there were 87 entrants for A Level, down from 97 in 2023. Except for two, all passed with at least an E grade.
- There were just two entrants for AS level, one from Graveney and one from Ashcroft.
- At A level, the percentage A* - B comparator in Wandsworth dropped to 35.6%, down from the 45.4% of 2023. This was also well below the national comparator of 54.5%. Well above the national were Ashcroft at 83.3% (6 students) and above the LA comparator, St John Bosco (nine students) at 44.4%.
- At A* - E, Wandsworth (97.7%) was only slightly below the average of 2023 (97.9%). The national average remained constant from 2023 at 97.6%.

Report to SACRE on Religious Studies examination results 2024**Subject: Religious Studies (4610)****Qual: GCSE Full Course**

	Entries/NOR					% 9 - 4					Average points			
Centre	2019		2022	2023	2024	2019		2022	2023	2024	2019	2022	2023	2024
NCER National	207720		144010	193610	224945	72.4		75.3	72.2	72	5.2	5.3	5	5.1
LA Comparator	804		952	939	949	78.9		85	80.6	79.8	5.7	5.9	5.7	5.7
Ark Bolingbroke Academy	45/111		28/104	29/112	19/115	82.2		79	79.3	89.5	5.6	5.5	5.4	6.6
Ashcroft Technology Academy	98/199		97/203	108/209	111/235	91.8		96	91.7	85.6	6.1	6.5	6.7	6.7
Harris Battersea	23/115		33/166	23/174	34/165	91.3		88	73.9	79.5	6.4	6.2	4.7	5.5
Burntwood	60/264		86/261	104/280	82/253	80		91	81.7	70.7	6	6.2	5.5	5.1
Chestnut Grove	131/163		157/175	150/171	153/172	76.3		91	84	79.7	5.6	6.2	5.8	5.4
Ark Putney	0		0/118	0	0									
Ernest Bevin	6/175		13/164	0	0	83.3		100			6.5	5.8		
Graveney School	245/255		269/281	265/277	272/280	84.1		89	84.9	86.4	6.1	6.3	6	6.2
Saint John Bosco	37/45		121/130	115/133	125/137	83.8		73	73.9	72.8	5.8	4.9	5.4	4.9
Southfields	26/164		0/145	0		50					3.7			
Saint Cecilia's	133/135		148/148	144/147	153/156	62.4		70	66.7	73.2	4.8	5.1	4.9	5.3
Francis Barber				1/36					100				8	

Report to SACRE on Religious Studies Examination Results 2024

A& AS level results in Wandsworth schools (does not include sixth form colleges)

Subject: Religious Studies (4610)

Qual: GCE AS level

	Entries					%A-B			%A-E			
Centre	2019		2022	2023	2024	2019	2023	2024	2019		2023	2024
NCER National	7180					36		TBC	87.6			TBC
LA Comparator	130		None taken	6	2	60.8	0	50	95.4		50	50
Ark Bolingbroke Academy												
Ashcroft Technology Academy	31				1	80.6		100	100			100
Burntwood	0											
Chestnut Grove	38					63.2			100			
Ark Putney												
Ernest Bevin	0											
Harris Battersea	5					80			100			
Graveney School	48			6	1	54.2	0	0	91.7		50	0
Saint John Bosco	0											
Southfields	1					-			100			
Saint Cecilia's	7					-			71.4			

Report to SACRE on Religious Studies examination results 2024

Subject: Religious Studies (4610)
Qual: GCE A level

	Entries					%A* - B					%A* - E				
Centre	2019		2022	2023	2024	2019		2022	2023	2024	2019		2022	2023	2024
National	15980		14950	14720	14477	65.1		67.8	55.4	54.5	99.6		98.7	97.6	97.6
LA Comparator	105		69	97	87	51.4		73.9	45.4	35.6	96.2		100	97.9	97.7
Ashcroft Technology Academy	7		19	7	6	100		89.5	71.4	83.3	100		100	100	100
Bolingbroke Academy			3	12	14			100	25	35.7			100	100	100
Burntwood	17		9	18	22	23.5		55.6	38.9	18.2	88.2		100	100	95.5
Chestnut Grove	18		14	23	15	66.7		57.1	43.5	26.7	100		100	100	100
Ernest Bevin	9		0	0	0	22.2		0	0	0	88.9		0	0	0
Graveney School	22		11	11	14	54.5		58.3	41.7	50	100		100	91.7	100
Harris Academy Battersea	5		0	0	0	80		0	0	0	100		0	0	0
Saint John Bosco	0		0	13	9	0		0	38.5	44.4	0		0	100	100
Southfields	10		0	0	0	20		0	0	0	90		0	0	0
Saint Cecilia's	17		12	11	7	64.7		91.7	75	28.6	100		100	91.7	85.7

2024 data is provisional

National from [Time-series - A level subject entries and grade by sex, Data set from A level and other 16 to 18 results - Explore education statistics - GOV.UK](#)