

# Westminster Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education

## Annual Report 2020-2021

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## **Introduction from the Chair of Westminster SACRE**

It gives me immense pleasure to introduce the 2020-2021 Annual Report of the Westminster Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE).

It was a privilege to have been elected as chair of the SACRE and I would like to take this opportunity to thank my predecessor Emily Norman for the years of service she gave to the Council and to Religious Education in Westminster.

2020 and 2021 were years like no other and like many organisations the SACRE went fully virtual with our meetings taking place online. However, this did not mean we were not able to continue the vital work we do for schools. In this respect I would like to thank our RE Adviser Lesley Prior for her outstanding work in supporting the SACRE and Jackie Saddington for her support as Senior School Governance Adviser/Local Authority Adviser.

I would also like to thank our Clerk Natalija Sorokina for the assistance she provides to the entire SACRE.

I hope you find this Annual Report an interesting read.

**Cllr James Spencer**  
**Chair of Westminster SACRE**

## **Background**

This report summarises the activities of the Westminster Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) during the academic year 2020-21. The SACRE has a remit for monitoring Religious Education and Collective Worship in non-denominational schools. The relevant diocesan authorities monitor denominational schools. The Education Act 2002 requires that Religious Education (RE) must be provided as part of the basic curriculum in addition to the National Curriculum. Parents have the right to withdraw their children from all or part of RE and are not obliged to state their reasons for withdrawal.

This report is composed in the light of guidance from the National Association of SACREs (NASACRE) on the format of SACRE annual reports.

Details of the work of Westminster SACRE and associated papers can be found at: <http://services2schools.org.uk/Page/15387>.

### **1. SACRE Arrangements**

The Westminster SACRE met on the following occasions in 2020-21:

- 6 October 2020
- 25 February 2021
- 15 June 2021

SACRE meetings are usually hosted by the Local Authority or the SACRE members in venues across Westminster. Due to restrictions and safety precautions related to Covid-19, all the SACRE meetings in 2020-21 were held virtually.

Secretarial assistance and a budget for the discharge of the SACRE's duties is provided to the SACRE by Westminster City Council. The key areas of this support include the following:

- Provision of a clerk
- Provision of a Local Authority Adviser
- Commissioning of an RE Consultant
- Funding of the NASACRE annual membership
- Funding for two SACRE members to attend NASACRE's annual Conference and AGM (NB: In 2021, virtual arrangements for the Conference allowed for more members to join it at a smaller charge.)
- Costs relating to establishing and reviewing a Locally Agreed Syllabus (when appropriate)

Professional support was provided by SACRE Consultant Lesley Prior on a consultancy basis.

#### **1.1 Membership Updates**

Autumn Term 2020

- Sandra Teacher was confirmed to have replaced Sara Perlmutter as a member nominated by the Board of Deputies of British Jews on Committee A. Previously, Sandra had attended a couple of meetings as Sara's deputy.

Summer Term 2021

- Graham Buckle, Emily Norman and Simon Atkinson resigned from Committee C where they were representing the London Diocesan Board for Schools.
- The membership of You Shun Shih, Buddhist representative on Committee A, was ceased due to non-attendance and lack of communication.

Where members stepped down without arranging replacements or where their membership was ceased, Clerk contacted their nominating bodies regarding filling the relevant vacancies.

## **1.2 Review of Constitution**

The final draft of the revised Westminster SACRE Constitution was agreed by the SACRE in October 2020, and the revised Constitution was then approved by the Cabinet Member in December 2020. A copy of the new Constitution is available on the Westminster SACRE webpage [here](#).

## **1.3 Chair Elections**

Chair elections took place at the SACRE spring term meeting and Councillor James Spencer was elected as the new Chair of the Westminster SACRE. According to the Westminster SACRE Constitution revised in the autumn term 2020, the Chair and Vice Chair will be elected on an annual basis in the autumn term.

## **2. Religious Education**

### **2.1 Locally Agreed Syllabus**

By statute, every local authority is required to adopt a Locally Agreed Syllabus (LAS) of religious education and to review it every five years. The current Westminster LAS has been in place since the spring term of 2017-18 when it was formally approved by the Cabinet Member and launched to schools. It will be due for review in the academic year of 2022-23.

The Westminster Agreed Syllabus: *Living Difference III* is available on the Westminster SACRE website - <http://services2schools.org.uk/Page/15387> - along with a number of useful links to materials/websites/films that Westminster SACRE members had compiled together to help schools in teaching RE.

### **2.2 Standards in RE**

SACRE members gave close consideration to the various national and local developments concerning the provision of RE. These discussions were prompted by the information provided to the SACRE through the regular updates from the RE Consultant on the SACRE and NASACRE Briefings.

### **2.3 Methods of Teaching, the Choice of Teaching Materials, Teacher Training**

A RE Good Practice Network, which had been previously established for teachers in Westminster and Kensington and Chelsea continued to run on a termly basis in 2020-21

with sessions in November, March and June. These sessions are run by Lesley Prior, RE Consultant on the SACRE.

The RE Good Practice Network sessions serve as an opportunity for RE teachers and coordinators to discuss any challenges they face and to receive relevant support, for example, around assessment and attainment in RE, measuring and recording outcomes in RE, etc.

## **2.4 Matters Discussed During the Year**

- Review of *Things of the Spirit*, Westminster's guidance for Collective Worship, and practicalities around how it could be revised. Next steps were identified in order to start this work.
- Review of the Westminster SACRE Constitution
- Discussions with the Youth Council members around a possibility of setting up a Youth SACRE. The Youth Council members attended the SACRE's autumn term meeting to share their views on RE in schools and how the SACRE could support young people. There was also a separate meeting set up afterwards to discuss this in more detail, and this was led by Cllr James Spencer, Committee D member.
- Emphasis on RE by Ofsted and partnership working between NASACRE and Richard Kueh, Ofsted's Chief Inspector for RE
- Prominence was given to a number of reports and publications, including the following:
  - o [A Report on the State of Hinduism in RE in UK Schools](#) by INSIGHT UK
  - o [Ofsted Research Review Series: RE](#)
  - o [NASACRE Report on SACRE Funding and Recommendations](#)
- SACRE membership
- Quality of RE in academies. A working group was established to look at how the SACRE's approach to RE as best practice as well as its existing Locally Agreed Syllabus and resources could be promoted to academies.

In setting up agendas for the termly Westminster SACRE meetings in 2020-21, consideration was given to NASACRE's recommendations for agenda items as suggested in NASACRE's regular briefings.

Further information on what the SACRE discussed in 2020-21 can be found in the minutes of the three meetings held in 2020-21. All the minutes of the SACRE meetings are kept on the Westminster SACRE [webpage](#).

## **2.5 Complaints Concerning RE**

No complaints were received by SACRE in 2020-21.

## **3. Collective Worship**

### **3.1 Advice on Collective Worship and Determinations**

The advice for schools on Collective Worship, including the process of applying for a Determination (and/or a renewal of it) is published online and can be accessed via the following web link: <http://services2schools.org.uk/Page/16173>. The guidance can also be found attached in Appendix 5.2 of this document.

Any school applying for or renewing a Determination should receive a visit from the SACRE members prior to the application being discussed at a meeting.

### 3.2 Determinations

There were no new applications for a Determination in 2020-21.

There is currently one school with a Determination in Westminster:

School Name	Date determination granted
Hallfield Primary School	28.02.2018

Determinations are for a period of five years. The Determination granted to Hallfield Primary will therefore be lapsing in February 2023.

During the year of 2019-20, the SACRE discussed that the SACRE should offer courtesy check visits to all community schools in Westminster without a determination as a way of supporting them. This was not possible to implement due to the Covid-19 pandemic, which also remained the case in 2020-21.

### 3.3 Complaints Concerning Collective Worship

No complaints were received by the Westminster SACRE in 2020-21.

## 4. Links with Other Bodies

Nationally:

- The Westminster SACRE is affiliated to The National Association of SACREs (NASACRE).

Jackie Saddington, Local Authority Adviser, along with members Cllr James Spencer (Chair) and Sandra Teacher represented the Westminster SACRE at the NASACRE 2021 Conference and AGM on 24th May 2021. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic and national lockdown, the Conference was held virtually. Verbal feedback on the Conference was provided to the SACRE at its summer term meeting. Full details and copies of the relevant paperwork from the 2021 Conference can be found at <https://nasacre.org.uk/conference-and-agm/2021>.

Locally:

- Please refer to the point 2.4 above for details of the contact that the SACRE had with the Youth Council and Youth MP during 2020-21.

- Discover Islam, represented by Naif Sheikh on Committee A, produced a Ramadan Guide for Schools 2021 which the SACRE agreed to share with schools and have it on its webpage as a resource.

## 5. Appendices

### 5.1 Westminster SACRE Membership – 2020-21

#### Committee A – Faiths and Denominations

Naif Sheikh	Discover Islam	
Patricia Rogers	Humanists UK	
Peter Ward	The Diocese of Westminster	
Rajinder Singh Bhasin	Sikh Faith	
Sandra Teacher	Board of Deputies of British Jews	
You Shun Shih	London Fo Guang Shan Temple (Buddhist Faith)	Membership ceased in June 2021

#### Committee B – Church of England

Emily Norman (Chair) - *resigned in June 2021*

Graham Buckle - *resigned in June 2021*

John Pearson-Hicks (Vice Chair)

Linda Ulrich

Simon Atkinson – *resigned in June 2021*

#### Committee C – Teachers

Darren Guttridge, Headteacher, Edward Wilson Primary (NAHT)

Catherine Thornton, Teacher, Hallfield Primary (NEU)

#### Committee D – The Local Education Authority

Cllr Antonia Cox

Cllr Ruth Bush

Cllr James Spencer

#### Servicing Officers

Jackie Saddington, Local Authority Adviser to SACRE

Lesley Prior, Adviser to SACRE

Natalija Sorokina, Clerk to SACRE

### 5.2 Westminster SACRE Guidance on Collective Worship



Westminster SACRE  
Guidance to Collective



More can be found on the Westminster SACRE webpage [here](#).

### **5.3 KS4 and KS5 RE Results 2020-21**

The government cancelled all public examinations at Key Stage 4 and 5 again in 2021 due to the Covid 19 pandemic. Students were awarded grades through the Teacher Assessed Grades (TAG) process. Teachers in Westminster schools used a range of evidence to award grades to students. These grades will not be published.