

# Westminster Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education

## Annual Report 2022-2023

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

I am honoured to be able to introduce the Annual Report of the Westminster SACRE for 2022-23. It has been a very interesting year, with the publication of the new census figures and of the Bloom report. The committee has also looked in depth at the questions around a determination visit and the parameters of the new Living Difference LAS.

We are enormously grateful for the clear and knowledgeable help we received from Lesley Prior and hope she will be able to continue advising us. Jackie Saddington has provided valuable information as LA Advisor on the committee. Our SACRE has also benefitted hugely from the continual support of Natalija Sorokina as our Clerk.

I hope this report helps to give a clear picture of the work that the SACRE is committed to in support of our local schools.

**Dr Linda Ulrich**  
**Chair, Westminster SACRE**

## **Background**

This report summarises the activities of the Westminster Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) during the academic year 2022-23. 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 2022-23:

- 22 November 2022
- 28 March 2023
- 29 June 2023

SACRE meetings are usually hosted by the Local Authority or the SACRE members in venues across Westminster. All three meetings in 2022-23 were hybrid meetings allowing both in-person and virtual attendance. Meeting rooms at Westminster City Hall were booked for those who were able to attend in person.

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 of the NASACRE annual training offer
- Funding for two SACRE members to attend NASACRE's annual Conference and AGM when it is held in-person
- Costs relating to establishing and reviewing a Locally Agreed Syllabus (when appropriate)

Professional support was provided by RE Consultant Lesley Prior and interim RE Consultant Adam Robertson on a consultancy basis.

#### **1.1 Membership Updates**

Autumn Term 2022

- Mariano Marcigaglia was appointed to represent the Network of Buddhist Organisations on Committee A.

- Daniel Hirschfield was formally appointed to represent the Board of Deputies of British Jews on Committee A.
- Donna McDowell was appointed to represent the London Diocesan Board for schools on Committee B.
- Cllr Ruth Bush resigned from Committee D.
- The membership of Cllr Antonia Cox on Committee D ceased.

### Spring Term 2023

- Emma Larkin, RE Teacher from Gateway Academy, was appointed to represent the National Education Union on Committee C.
- Cllr Karen Scarborough was appointed to representing the Local Authority on Committee D.
- Cllr Angela Piddock was appointed to represent the Local Authority on Committee D.
- Cllr Jason Williams was appointed to represent the Local Authority on Committee D.
- Rajinder Singh Bhasin, Sikh representative, resigned from Committee A.

## 1.2 Chair and Vice-Chair Elections

As specified in the Westminster SACRE Constitution revised in the autumn term 2020, Chair and Vice Chair elections need to take place on an annual basis in the autumn term.

In 2022-23, both Chair and Vice-Chair annual elections took place at the SACRE meeting in November 2022 with the following outcome: Linda Ulrich and John Pearson-Hicks (both Committee B) were elected as Chair and Vice-Chair respectively.

## 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 was adopted in Autumn 2017 from *Living Difference III*, the syllabus devised by Hampshire, Portsmouth, Southampton and the Isle of Wight. At the time, Hampshire's parent syllabus *Living Difference III* was revised for the London context, and so it was the London version of *Living Difference III* that was adopted by Westminster.

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

Hampshire reviewed their parent syllabus *Living Difference III* in 2021, which resulted in the *Living Difference IV* edition coming out in November 2021.

In September 2022, Hampshire gave a presentation on *Living Difference IV* to share an overview of how it differed from *Living Difference III* and what deals they could offer to local authorities considering adopting it. The presentation was organised specifically for RE teachers and SACRE members in London local authorities whose Agreed Syllabus had been

adopted from *Living Difference III*. Feedback from this session was discussed at the SACRE's autumn term meeting.

Westminster's LAS was due for review in the academic year of 2022-23. Groups A, B and C voted for a recommendation to the Local Authority to establish an Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC) for the review of the syllabus at the SACRE's meeting in November 2022. As Group D is the Local Authority, it did not get a vote. It was the wish of the Local Authority to appoint existing SACRE members to the ASC, and all SACRE members agreed with this. Nominations were then confirmed with the members' nominating bodies.

The first meeting of the ASC, following the Local Authority's agreement to convene it, took place on 28 March 2023, after the main SACRE meeting.

Further meetings of the ASC were agreed to be deferred until the following academic year due to the fact that the SACRE's regular RE Consultant was on a long-term sick leave, and it was agreed to wait until Autumn 2023 to check her availability going forward. Thus, the work of the ASC and the LAS review was postponed until the autumn term 2023. In the meantime, the SACRE continued discussions about other syllabi that they could consider as part of the review process in addition to Hampshire's updated *Living Difference IV*.

## **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**

In 2022-23, the RE Good Practice Network, previously established for teachers in Westminster and Kensington and Chelsea, was scheduled to meet on a termly basis to be hosted by Lesley Prior, RE Consultant on the SACRE. However, the Network only met in the autumn term. The other two sessions were cancelled as the RE Consultant was unavailable due to a long-term sickness.

The RE Good Practice Network sessions are aimed at serving as an opportunity for RE teachers and coordinators to discuss any challenges they face and to receive relevant support, for example, around Ofsted's deep dives in RE, assessment and attainment in RE, measuring and recording outcomes in RE, etc.

## **2.4 Matters Discussed During 2022-23**

Key matters included the following:

- Progress updates on the review of *Things of the Spirit*, Westminster's guidance for Collective Worship
- Review of the Locally Agreed Syllabus (please also see Section 2.1 above)
- Ramadan guidance for schools and Fasting Policy
- Census 2021 results

The Census 2021 results were reviewed, and the SACRE concluded that, for Westminster, the data had not changed significantly since the previous Census.

- Collective worship and determinations
- SACRE self-evaluation using NASACRE's self-evaluation tool

The SACRE had previously concluded it was well resourced. Three members of the SACRE - Linda Ulrich, John Pearson-Hicks and Cllr Ruth Bush – met separately in August 2022 to go through the NASACRE's self-evaluation form in more detail with a view to presenting their initial thoughts to the wider group in 2022-23. Their report was brought to the attention of the SACRE members, who further agreed to have focused discussions at the future meetings to look at specific sections of the self-evaluation form where a need for some action had been identified. The first of these discussions will fall on the SACRE's autumn term 2023 meeting.

In setting up agendas for the termly SACRE meetings in 2022-23, 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 2022-23 can be found in the minutes of the three meetings held in 2022-23. All the minutes of the SACRE meetings are kept on the Westminster SACRE [webpage](#).

## **2.5 Complaints Concerning RE**

No complaints about the RE curriculum or collective worship in community schools were received by the SACRE in 2022-23.

## **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 for Collective Worship produced by the Westminster SACRE is called **Things of the Spirit**. It can be accessed via the link above or directly [here](#). It 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 2022-23.

The Determination previously granted to Hallfield Primary was due to lapse in the spring term 2023. A determination renewal application was received from Hallfield Primary in the autumn term, following which the SACRE arranged for members Linda Ulrich, John Pearson-Hicks and Mariano Marcigaglia to visit the school and report back to the SACRE before the school's application could be considered. The visit took place on 17<sup>th</sup> March 2023, and the school's

application to renew their Determination was considered by the SACRE at its spring term meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> March. The decision was that the school's Determination should be renewed.

There is currently one school with a Determination in Westminster:

<b>School Name</b>	<b>Date determination granted</b>
Hallfield Primary School	28/03/2023

Determinations are for a period of five years. The Determination granted to Hallfield Primary will therefore be lapsing in Spring 2028.

### **3.3 Complaints Concerning Collective Worship**

No complaints were received by the Westminster SACRE in 2022-23.

## **4. Links with Other Bodies**

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

The annual NASACRE Conference and AGM 2023 was held on Monday 22 May 2023 at Fishmonger's Hall, London. Linda Ulrich and Trisha Rogers attended it representing the Westminster SACRE.

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 2023 Conference can be found via <https://nasacre.org.uk/conference-and-agm/2023-celebrating-30-years-sacres-for-the-future/>.

## **5. Appendices**

### **5.1 Westminster SACRE Membership – 2022-23**

#### **Committee A – Faiths and Denominations**



Naif Sheikh	Discover Islam	
Patricia Rogers	Humanists UK	
Rajinder Singh Bhasin	Sikh Faith	Resigned in Spring 2023
Mary Wilson	The Diocese of Westminster	
Shirin Rose King	Baha'i Local Spiritual Assembly of Westminster	
Daniel Hirschfield	Board of Deputies of British Jews	Appointed in Autumn 2022
Mariano Marcigaglia	Network of Buddhist Organisations	Appointed in Autumn 2022

### **Committee B – Church of England**

John Pearson-Hicks

Linda Ulrich

Myles Owen

Donna McDowell (appointed in Autumn 2022)

### **Committee C – Teachers**

Darren Guttridge, Headteacher, Edward Wilson Primary (NAHT)

Emma Larkin, Teacher, Gateway Academy (NEU) (appointed in Spring 2023)

### **Committee D – The Local Education Authority**

Cllr Ruth Bush (resigned after the autumn term 2022 meeting)

Cllr Antonia Cox (membership ceased in Autumn 2022)

Cllr Karen Scarborough (appointed in Spring 2023)

Cllr Angela Piddock (appointed in Spring 2023)

Cllr Jason Williams (appointed in Spring 2023)

### **Servicing Officers**

Jackie Saddington, Local Authority Adviser

Lesley Prior, RE Adviser / Adam Robertson (RE Today), Interim RE Adviser

Natalija Sorokina, Clerk

## **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 2022-23**

At the time of submitting this report, no data by subject at the local authority level has been made available for KS4 and KS5 exam results. The Department for Education has advised that they are

looking into the possibility of publishing subject data at local authority level in the future. As and when the results become available, the report will be updated.