

**Croydon**  
**Standing Advisory Council**  
**On Religious Education**  
**Annual Report**  
**2021-2022**

Welcome to the 2021-22 Annual Report of the Croydon SACRE.

The SACRE has met three times during the academic year, twice virtually then once in person at the Town Hall, and has worked towards the priorities outlined in the current Development Plan and has contributed indirectly to national discussions on Religious Education.

Croydon is a richly diverse community and the need for strengthening every means of increasing tolerance and understanding of each other especially in the realm of religion has never been greater, in every decade of life.

SACRE is grateful to St James the Great Primary School and Coloma Covent Girls' School for their willingness to accept and enable access to RE materials for primary and secondary schools, respectively. The SACRE has also sought to strengthen its representation of faith groups.

A high proportion of schools in Croydon have converted to Academies and the SACRE has made ongoing efforts to engage with schools to ensure their continued compliance with requirements to provide high quality Religious Education and opportunities for Collective Worship. Some opportunities have been taken to engage with governors during training to enhance awareness of RE in schools. Keeping the place of RE in the school curriculum has been a challenge which the SACRE has sought to rise to.

This year produced winners in the primary school and secondary school categories of the SACRE short essay & art competition for the Holocaust Memorial Day's theme One Day, which was judged by members of SACRE meeting virtually in January which resulted in winning entries for Rockmount Junior School and Oasis Academy Coulsdon with award ceremonies at those schools in February, and a special commendation to St Giles School for its entry.

The Widening Inclusivity in RE (WIRE) awards for schools (developed by Bristol and South Gloucestershire)(see below for more) continued, especially commendable during the constraints of Covid-19 lockdown.

As Chair, I would like to thank all those who serve on Croydon SACRE, teachers of RE, Church of England representative, faith group representatives, Cllrs, the vice chair, Mrs Cheryl Hudson, and especially grateful to Mrs Penny Smith-Orr, SACRE Officer for Croydon, as professional support in her capacity as our consultant /adviser and for driving our work forward and keeping us abreast of developments in Religious Education nationally and locally, and Mrs Judy Bennett, committee Clerk. The help of the Education Department is also gratefully acknowledged. SACRE thanks the Home Office for kindly funding the HMD awards via Sharon Kilborne who was seconded to Croydon and greatly assisted the HMD committee.

The recent Covid-19 lockdowns have enabled some schools to value more highly collective worship.

Croydon SACRE is able to face the challenges ahead as we continue to ensure that Religious Education and Collective Worship retain their rightful place at the heart of our schools.

**Cllr Richard Chatterjee. Chair of Croydon SACRE**



**Penny Smith-Orr- Croydon SACRE officer, Nicholas Deeks -Pupil at Oasis Coulsdon and Cllr Richard Chatterjee- Chair of Croydon SACRE at the presentation of prizes for the winning Secondary school entry into the Croydon SACRE Holocaust competition.**

**Rockmount Primary school won the Primary prize.**

## **Croydon SACRE met three times during the year.**

16 November 2021- A virtual meeting

17<sup>th</sup> March 2022 -A virtual meeting (Not Quorate due to a lack of group B)

29 June 2022 - At the Town Hall Katharine Street CR0

Attendance -Appendix A

## **Overview of meetings**

Standing items are the Minutes, The RE Advisers report, entries for The WIRE award and the Development plan. The Development plan is updated during the year and is made using information from the self-evaluation tool for Croydon. The self-evaluation tool was last completed in Spring 2021 and will be looked at again in Spring 2023. (Appendix B)

If there are any OFSTED reports for Croydon schools, compiled by the Clerk, these are looked at. They don't very often mention actual religious education any more which is a problem but mentions of SMSC and collective worship can give SACRE an idea of what is happening in the school.

The Holocaust event and the Heartstone Project for schools were reported to the meetings. The RE report card and the NATRE schools work data were discussed with interest. Training for members was advertised as were the activities of the Faiths Together in Croydon group including Croydon schools' participation in an Interfaith Week event.

SACRE held the annual Holocaust competition for schools and prizes of Jewish Artefacts were awarded. Two schools did presentations which went on film to be sent out as part of the virtual Holocaust Memorial Day event.

At the Spring meeting the SACRE officer encouraged members to start thinking about the renewal of the Croydon agreed Syllabus which was reviewed in 2018

## **Religious education (RE)**

The Croydon Agreed Syllabus is used by most schools and is also used as a source of ideas for some of the Church schools, who use the Southwark Diocese syllabus. The Croydon Agreed Syllabus has been in use for 10 years with a revision in 2018 at the Spring meeting the SACRE officer encouraged members to start thinking about the renewal of the Croydon Agreed Syllabus. Some members indicated they wanted to keep the current syllabus, but this is not an option. Further discussions were held and information on a new syllabus was given to members at the summer meeting. It was agreed that a new syllabus could be bought from somewhere and edited to become suitable for Croydon Schools. The Education department gave a potential budget and agreement. This led to an Agreed Syllabus Conference being set up for October 2022.

Conversations with the Primary RE Coordinators help to monitor the use and usefulness of the current syllabus. SACRE has also looked at websites of schools and emails from teachers to the Adviser indicate how the syllabus is used.

Croydon SACRE implemented the WIRE award (widening inclusivity in RE) in 2019 and supported schools through lockdowns with ways to achieve the award. This is a free award to schools and during this year three Primary and two Secondary schools achieved the award. Finally in the summer term the Adviser was able to go into a school and present their certificate in person, rather than just posting it. To our knowledge no school applied for the REQM. The Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Croydon asked for two teachers who had worked particularly well during lockdown that he could write a commendation for; two schools were chosen and were pleased to receive their letter.

In January 2022 a Guidance on Early years RE was sent to schools having been written by a working party of teachers, the SACRE officer, and the Early Years lead. This is on the Council website and was received well by schools.

**Courses for teachers** were for the 'New RE Coordinator', 'Assessment' and 'Early Years' and a talk about teaching the Holocaust. There were also 3 virtual RE Coordinator network meetings. Advice to schools is given regularly through a termly newsletter and emails to schools. Teachers also request help by email, and this is given as required. There is also a website with information and helpful advice available to teachers through the RE Adviser/SACRE officer. Advice to schools on Ramadan was sent out and schools have access to several helpful documents including one on respect for pupils with a religious identity.

Advice is given to schools who request it on withdrawal of pupils from RE although requests of this sort happen much less now than in the past.

Advice to the Local Authority has been about the new syllabus, see above, and on the guidance documents produced for schools. The SACRE Officer meets regularly with a manager in the council to discuss SACRE.

### **The Heartstone Odyssey Project (Appendix C)**

This national project is funded by MOPAC and teaches pupils strategies for anti-hate crime and anti-racism through the method of story circles. Croydon was picked to undertake this project and an Oasis Academy, and three Primary schools took part with years 5-7 and a special school Year 9 took part. The heroine of the story is an Indian girl which was of particular interest to our pupils and the debates, artwork and activities captured the interest of all the pupils and teachers who took part.

The RE adviser supported the schools along with training from the National Organiser. At the end of June, we held an exhibition of the work in the Town Hall with the presence of the Deputy Mayor, the Police and the Anti-hate crime lead for Croydon while the national organiser joined via zoom. The teacher from the Oasis Academy received a special award from the Heartstone

Project for her commitment and excellent work produced. See Appendix C for some examples of the work. There is funding for another round which other Croydon schools are now taking advantage of.

Exam results have not been received and evaluated at the time of writing.

### **Collective Worship (CW)**

SACRE occasionally discusses collective worship and has looked at schools' websites to check that it is part of the day in schools. There is a comprehensive guidance document on the Council website.

Collective worship is also discussed at the RE network meetings, however as most of the coordinators are not in charge of collective worship information can only be passed through them.

There have been no determinations requested. The SACRE committee has received training in how to deal with a determination but in the last 22 years there has never been a request. Occasionally the SACRE officer is asked for support over a pupil who has been withdrawn from CW. No advice has specifically been given to the Local authority.

### **Links with other bodies and other local involvement**

SACRE has been trying to pay their subscription to NASACRE for the last two years. Unfortunately, NASACRE cannot be paid for by a local authority credit card and so the Council has not been able to pay. The SACRE officer is still trying to sort this out. Some SACRE members have, however, managed to pay to join in some of the NASACRE online training events.

The SACRE Officer, the Chair of SACRE and the Jewish representative are responsible along with the community's department of the Council for producing the Holocaust Memorial Day event. In January 2022 this event was held virtually with presentations from schools and speakers, but it is hoped to be back to face to face in 2023. The charity Generation2Generation did a presentation for the Memorial ceremony. They also did a twilight course for schools on the Holocaust and having made contact with schools did some work with Croydon schools.

A representative from the Southwark Board of Education staff is on the SACRE committee which is also a very useful link with the church schools. The SACRE officer is also the Chair of Faiths Together in Croydon which is the Interfaith group and therefore SACRE members are invited to all the events and 9 schools, mostly from Croydon, took part in an Interfaith week event online in 2021. This was organised by a mixture of SACRE and Faiths Together members. The Bishop of Croydon's Interfaith officer is also a member of SACRE.

As mentioned above a Ramadan guidance was sent to schools.

## Statutory responsibilities of SACRE

Croydon SACRE has a clerk provided and paid for by the Council and a SACRE officer/ RE Adviser is also provided and works for one day a week for Croydon. The SACRE officer has close links in the Council and is aware of Council initiatives which could impact the work of SACRE.

Membership of the committee is reasonably representative of the local faith community and includes Academy schools and community schools' representation. The Councillor's on the committee are also very helpful and willing to support activities.

Finance for SACRE is to pay for the Officer and the Clerk. A meeting venue is provided free to council officers. Payment to subscriptions is an ongoing problem (as above) but a budget has been set aside for a new syllabus.

Training given to members this year has been on 'Religion and Worldviews', 'SACREs and Religious Education', and on the 'Responsibilities of an Agreed Syllabus Conference'.

## Appendix A Croydon Attendance

### Membership of Croydon SACRE 2021-2022 A-Other Faiths B-Church of England C- Teachers D - Councillors. Numbers indicate meetings attended

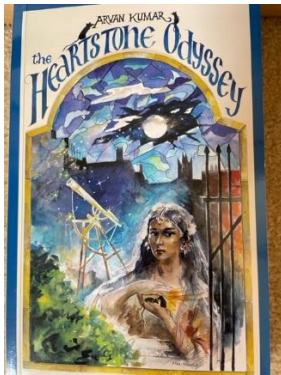
Grp	Name	Present	Grp	Name	
A	Salvation Army	2	C	Ms Lorna John	1
A	Judaism	2	C	Mrs Sara Bonnick	1
A	Muslim	2	C	Mrs Sonia Clarke	2
A	Sikh	1	C	Ms Lauren Camp	2
A	Catholic	0	C	Mrs Kerry Ann Van Der Berg	1
A	Hindu	3	C	Mr Paul Harvey From May	1 of 1
A	Humanist Rep	2	D	Cllr Richard Chatterjee (Chair)	3
A	Ahmadiyya Community (from may)	1 of 1		Cllr Bernadette khan	0 of 2
B	Cheryl Hudson Vice Chair	0	D	Cllr Patsy Cummings	2
B	Rev Alan Bayes	1	D	Cllr Badsha Quadir (deceased)	1
B	Shaun Burns	2	D	Cllr Ola Kolade	1
B	Rev Alison Brunt	0	D	Cllr Mike Bonello	1
	Penny Smith-Orr SACRE Officer	3		Cllr Nikhil Sherine Thampi from May	0 of 1
	Judith Bennett (Clerk)	3			

## Appendix B Self-Evaluation of Croydon SACRE – July 2021

Key Area Number	Key Area	Developing	Established	Advanced
<b>Section 1 Standards and quality of provision of Religious Education</b>				
1a	RE Provision across the LA		X (E/A)	
1b	Standards of achievement and public examination entries		X (E/A)	
1c	Quality of learning and teaching		X	
1d	Quality of leadership and management, including the provision and management of resources			X
1e	Recruitment and retention of skilled specialist RE staff		X	
1f	Relations with academies and other non-LA maintained schools		X	
<b>Section 2 The effectiveness of the locally agreed syllabus</b>				
2a	The review process			
2b	The quality of the local Agreed Syllabus			
2c	Launching and implementing the Agreed Syllabus			
2d	Membership and training of the Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC)			
2e	Developing the revised agreed syllabus			
2f	Making best use of National Guidance			
<b>Section 3 Collective Worship</b>				
3a	Supporting pupil entitlement		X (E/A)	
3b	Enhancing the quality of provision of collective worship		X (E/A)	
3c	Responding to requests for determinations			X
<b>Section 4 Management of the SACRE and partnership with the LA and other key stakeholders</b>				
4a	SACRE meetings			X
4b	Membership and training		X	
4c	Improvement/development planning		X	
4d	Professional and financial support		X	



4e	Information and advice		X (E/A)	
<b>Key Area Number</b>	<b>Key Area</b>	<b>Developing</b>	<b>Established</b>	<b>Advanced</b>
4f	Partnerships with key stakeholders		X	
4g	Relations with the Academies sector		X	
<b>Section 5 Contribution of SACRE to promoting cohesion across the community</b>				
5a	SACRE's membership			X
5b	SACRE's understanding of the local area		X (E/A)	
5c	SACRE's engagement with the community cohesion agenda		X (E/A)	
5d	SACRE's role within wider LA initiatives on community cohesion		X (E/A)	



Appendix C. Some of the Heartstone Project Artwork