# Croydon Standing Advisory Council On Religious Education Annual Report 2022-2023

### Annual report for Croydon SACRE 2022-2023

### Welcome by the Chair

Welcome to the 2022-23 Annual Report of the Croydon SACRE.

The SACRE has met three times during the academic year in person at the Town Hall, which is a welcome change to previous virtual meetings due to Covid-19. Where possible, we prefer to hold SACRE meetings at a place of worship or a school. SACRE has worked towards the priorities outlined in the current Development Plan and contributed to the national discussions on direction and health of Religious Education in the future.

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, combined with the impact of the absence of RE from the English Baccalaureate in secondary schools, causes the SACRE great concern that Religious Education might not be apportioned the same importance as other subjects in the school curriculum. However, a renewed appetite in many schools for an improved RE profile has been detected, which is very welcome to SACRE.

This year produced winners in the primary school and secondary school categories of the SACRE short essay competition for Holocaust Memorial Day, and the introduction of the WIRE (Widening Inclusivity in RE) award for schools (developed by Bristol and South Gloucestershire RE) (see below for more).

This year has also seen the start of work on a new Agreed Syllabus by the formation of an Agreed Syllabus Conference, with representation largely overlapping with SACRE membership.

As Chairman, I would like to thank all those who serve on Croydon SACRE, teachers, Church of England representative, faith group representatives, cllrs, and the vice chairman, Lt Col Morag Rowlanes, and especially grateful to Mrs Penny Smith-Orr, SACRE Officer for Croydon, as professional support in her capacity as our Consultant and 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 Yad Vashem, the World Holocaust Remembrance Center, for kindly funding the HMD awards.

Many thanks to Rev Alison Brunt and Miss Mayura Patel for their long service on SACRE and a welcome to Mr Ajay Jobanputra as in-coming Hindu representative.

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

Overview, number of times SACRE has met and attendance at meetings, venues, and a brief overview of content of these meetings including Self-evaluation too – link to SACRE Development plan •

Croydon SACRE has met three times in the year, each time in the Town Hall in Katherine Street in Croydon;

On 15 November 2022, 16 March 2023, 12 June 2023

Membership and Attendance of Croydon SACRE 2022-2023

### A-Other Faiths B-Church of England C- Teachers D -Councillors. Numbers indicate meetings attended

Grp	Name	Present	Grp	Name	
Α	Salvation Army (vice chair)	3	С	Ms Lorna John	2
Α	Judaism	0	С	Mrs Sara Bonnick	0
Α	Muslim	3	С	Mrs Sonia Clarke	3
Α	Ahmadiyya	3			
Α	Sikh	1	С	Ms Lauren Camp	1
Α	Catholic	0	С	Ms Logini Dyges	0
Α	Hindu	0	С	Mr Paul Harvey	1
Α	Humanist Representative	1	D	Cllr Richard Chatterjee (Chair)	3
В	Cheryl Hudson	2	D	Cllr Patsy Cummings	0
В	Rev Alan Bayes	0	D	Cllr Mike Bonello	0
В	Shaun Burns	1	D	Cllr Fatima Zaman from May	0
В	Rev Alison Brunt	1		Cllr Sherwan Chowdhury	0
			D	Cllr Nikhil Sherine Thampi (from May)	1
	Penny Smith-Orr SACRE Officer	3			
	Judith Bennett (Clerk)	3			

At the meetings during the year some time was spent on reporting on progress of the ASC and the writing group. Each term there is an RE coordinators network meeting and these are reported on and any concerns raised by teachers are discussed. The SACRE WIRE award for widening inclusivity in RE is discussed each meeting and judging is done of entries received in that term. Arrangements for giving the certificate to schools are made. The Holocaust Memorial event is a standing item, schools take part each year and SACRE runs a competition with a prize for the winning Primary and Secondary school, members of SACRE judge the entries online. In the Spring term there was a presentation from Lorna John of the teacher's group on the Croydon Census data from the 2021 census. This was very interesting as it shows that 67.2% of the population identify as following a religion which makes Croydon one of the most faithful of the London boroughs. This information helps to inform the new syllabus. The NASACRE AGM is reported on in the summer term and any actions taken as a result. The development plan (See Appendix) is a standing item and progress is

monitored during the year. At the summer meeting the members did the self-evaluation exercise (See Appendix) which is done every two years. The clerk to SACRE monitors the OFSTED reports for Croydon schools and produces the results at each meeting.

Croydon has been the London Borough of Culture since April 2023 and so this has been discussed in advance and throughout the year. Three schools and the Gurdwara Saturday school took part in The Heartstone Project this year, funded by MOPAC (The London Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime) and this came up at meetings. SACRE Members were invited to the exhibition held in the Town Hall in June with the National leader, Croydon's Executive Mayor and Ceremonial Mayor, the Police and parents and friends of the pupils.

### The Agreed Syllabus Conference

We have also had an Agreed syllabus conference sitting during the year. This has been made up of most of the members of Croydon SACRE with a teacher's group of other teachers meeting separately as a writing group. The ASC met on 21 September and 17 October 2022 and 15 February 2023.

ASC originally agreed that Croydon should buy an existing syllabus and adapt it for Croydon. Following review and discussion of several different syllabuses, the Hackney Agreed Syllabus was selected but it was then found that many units were missing and indeed incomplete so was an unsuitable starting point; ASC agreed that we would write a new one ourselves that would reflect the religious nature of Croydon and be in line with current thinking of a Religion and Worldviews approach.

At the beginning of the process of revising the Agreed syllabus a questionnaire was sent to schools asking what they liked and wanted to keep and what they had found less valuable in the current syllabus. We also asked opinions on the religion and worldviews model and while some said they had not thought about this many said they would like a move in that direction if there were support. The response was quite good, and the writing group have based their work on the answers given.

The writing group of five teachers, a special needs expert and the RE Adviser, have met several times during the year and worked out a set of Big Questions one for each year group with an associated question for each unit. Within the units there are weekly questions to answer on the theme and in the summer term teachers will be asked to do work with pupils on whether they have answered the Big Question on the Year. In the working team two teachers looked at early Years and KS1, two teachers looked at KS2, one worked on KS3, the special needs teacher produced a set of key stage guidance, all were supported by the Adviser who has written section one and is putting it all together. The members of the conference have made many suggestions, the Humanist representative has helped with the world views aspect and the members who represent different faiths have checked for accuracy.

The working group had produced most of the units by the end of July 2023 and the Humanist representative has added in Humanist views for us. The previous syllabus was over 300 pages including resources and it was agreed this one would be a smaller document with resources separately available online and being designed 'in house' at the Council. It will have an appendix kindly provided by Merton Council from their syllabus with information about the Ahmadiyya community and the differences. A prepenultimate draft is intended to be sent to schools, requesting feedback and to trial some of the units and it will then be applicable from September 2024. Headteachers have had a short presentation and agreed to this procedure.

### **Religious Education (statutory responsibilities)**

Many of the Primary schools and all the Secondary schools in Croydon are Academies now but most continue to use the Croydon Agreed Syllabus. Teachers from Academies are also on the teacher group of SACRE. Some of the private independent schools in Croydon also use the Croydon Agreed Syllabus. All schools receive advice on teaching RE if requested. The RE network meetings for Primary school coordinators held each term are open to all and about 20-25 people usually attend online. Once again, we have discussed Collective worship but have not been able to actively monitor this.

### Standards and monitoring of RE

Monitoring of RE is quite tricky for a SACRE to undertake. In Croydon we get the verbal information from the RE coordinators each term on how RE is going in their school and any problems that come up. The Adviser gets emails from mainly Headteachers who have a question or concern. The Adviser has been to lead a couple of staff meetings on request and has been invited into some schools to look at RE and talk with the coordinator. This is all a good way of monitoring the state of RE but obviously doesn't cover full monitoring. SACRE looks at the OFSTED reports and are pleased if they mention RE. We had done a website trawl some years ago and it is probably time to do this exercise again.

The Heartstone Project (an anti-hate crime, anti-racism project funded by MOPAC) in Croydon for a second year. This year, three Primary schools and the Gurdwara Saturday school took part. This is another way of keeping contact with the schools and discussing religious education. The teachers have support from the National organisation and half-termly support group meetings with the Croydon Adviser. At the end of the project, we held a big exhibition in the Town Hall and viewed the work and listened to the presentations by the pupils. The two Mayors of Croydon and the Police as well as several Councillors, parents, teachers and members of SACRE came to the exhibition and were all impressed by the children's enthusiasm for the project.



The WIRE Award- A couple of church schools have applied for the REQM (Religious Education Quality Mark) award in Croydon. Other schools have achieved the WIRE award which is free to enter and less amount of work for the teachers although it does require visits to places of worship to be made. We have so many places of worship in the borough though that this is not too onerous. Once the school has sent in their evidence and been judged the adviser and often the Chair of SACRE go to a collective worship and present the certificate.

### Teacher Training, materials, and advice

There is a termly RE Coordinators meeting which has an average attendance of twenty teachers. News is shared plus some CPD training and usually an RE activity is shown. There is time for teachers to network and to discuss their views. In Autumn 2022 there was a course for new RE Coordinators on zoom. A news sheet is sent at the beginning of term to all schools with useful dates of meetings and festivals and other information about RE in Croydon. During the year teachers also email or call with questions or for advice on various RE matters. As we have been writing a new syllabus, we have not done any guidance documents this year.

The SACRE Officer went to one school to do a staff meeting on British Values and visited a special school to see how they have adapted the RE syllabus to their needs.

### Withdrawals and Complaints

On withdrawals from RE lessons there have been a few enquiries for assistance, but these are getting fewer and fewer each year. There are very few children withdrawn from RE in Croydon, this might be because it is a very diverse borough with many religious groups within it and the leaders of the faiths are supportive of the work of SACRE.

### Advice to the Local Authority (LA)

SACRE advised the LA that we needed to update our Agreed Syllabus and was offered a budget to buy a ready-made one. After much thought it was decided that we should write it ourselves and use the budget for designing an online product fit for current times. We have followed the Religions and Worldviews model, and it is nearly finished. The NASACRE survey was completed with help from the LA. The SACRE Officer attends an Education Team meeting occasionally and suggestions made there have been taken forward.

### **Collective Worship (Statutory requirements)**

Once again, we have discussed Collective worship but have not been able to actively monitor this due to the amount of time dedicated to the new syllabus. There have been no determinations referred to SACRE and no complaints. The SACRE committee have had training in how to deal with a Determination but have not yet had to put this into practice.

The RE coordinators are not usually the collective worship coordinator so although we have had a few discussions at coordinator meetings they are not the group in charge of organising collective worship. There is a comprehensive guidance on CW available on the Council website.

### Links with other bodies

Due to measures flowing from Croydon Council's financial difficulties, there were difficulties in arranging payment for the NASACRE subscription. We did manage to pay eventually and sent a teacher representative to the NASACRE AGM. We have also signed up to the London Hub.

The SACRE Officer, the Chair of SACRE and Jewish representatives are responsible along with the Communities department of the Council for producing the Holocaust Memorial Day event. In January 2023 this event was held in the Town hall in the Council Chamber. The charity *Generation2Generation* did a presentation for the Memorial ceremony and several schools and a speaker from the Ukraine also took part. Each year SACRE runs a schools' competition

around the theme of Holocaust day and gives a prize to a Primary and a Secondary school at the event. This year The Minster Junior School produced a stunning piece of art and a pupil from Oasis Academy Coulsdon wrote a very moving poem:

An Ordinary Poem
An ordinary man comes to a shop,
The ordinary sale of bread takes place,
While looking in the shop window, he stops,
To see the reflection behind his face.

You see, this man was of the Jewish faith, An ordinary choice, you may assume, But these people were haunted by a wraith, And so, in Germany, their lives meant gloom.

The ordinary bread shop now in flames,
The people all around are struck with fear,
Back then, the Holocaust was in first phase,
For ordinary people, death was near.
The man buying bread might be shocked to see:
His killers were ordinary as he.

### Ordinary People by The Minster Juniors:



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. The Bishop of Croydon's Interfaith officer is also a member of SACRE.

### **SACRE** involvement locally

In November 2022 during Interfaith week a walk calling at four places of worship was arranged and about 35 people took part. The walk concluded with lunch at the Gurdwara having stopped at a Hindu centre, Croydon Minster, and a Turkish Mosque on the way.

As usual a Ramadan guidance document was sent to schools.

SACRE members came to the final exhibition of the Heartstone project (see above) and talked with the pupils about their work.

The SACRE officer has a quarterly meeting with the executive Mayor and leaders of the many faith communities in Croydon.

In January the Chair and the SACRE Officer were invited to the Baitul Futuh Mosque in nearby Morden by the Ahmadiyya representative. This was a very interesting visit and the exhibition on the Ahmadiyya history was wonderful. We have an Ahmadiyya Mosque in Croydon which hosts visits from schools, as do many of the other places of worship we have in our diverse borough.

### **Croydon SACRE (statutory responsibilities)**

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 faith communities are represented reasonably well and include an Imam from Norbury Mosque and a representative from the Ahmadiyya Mosque, we also have a Humanist representative on Group A. The Councillor's on the committee are also very helpful and willing to support activities.

Finance for SACRE is there 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). A budget has been set aside for a new syllabus and brought forward from the previous year. The new syllabus is being designed 'in house' with this budget.

# ${\bf SACRE\ Development\ Plan\ September\ 2022-\ September\ 2023\ } \ {\bf Adviser\ time\ 50}$ days.

## Priorities for 2023 in RED due to work on the new Croydon Syllabus

Objective	Key Tasks	Who	Success criteria Mo Deadline / Time	Resourc es	Progress	
To prepare agenda, respond to any action from previous meetings and plan an ongoing programm e for SACRE committe e meetings.	Arrange and attend 3 pre agenda meetings per year Write papers and reports for the meeting to LA timetable Attend 3 SACRE meetings per year	Clerk Chairma n RE Adviser  RE Adviser  All members of committ ee	3 pre agenda meetings 3 Termly meetings Effective meetings with by Members between		Meeting venues  Clerk at pre agenda  Clerk at Meetings	Autumn meeting held  3 Meetings held in Town Hall
SACRE consider reports and initiatives from NASACRE, the RE Council and AREIAC	Consider relevant material from AREIAC Conference and NASACRE AGM and the Commission on RE	RE Adviser/ Chairma n and any other rep	As required and as Follow up to NASACRE AGM business Continue to try to arrange subscription payment	2 days adviser time to attend meetings and write reports	Adviser or member of SACRE	Lorna John to go to NASACR E conference and report back to the summer term meeting
Renew the Croydon Agreed Syllabus	Hold an Agreed Syllabus Conference and decide which	All member s	Decision made and purchase completed.  Edit the purchased syllabus to make it	3 days and counting	Informati on on syllabuse s to purchase	3 ASC held. Decision to rewrite and update current syllabus

	syllabus to purchase		suitable for Croydon		Meeting venue	taken. Coordinato rs sent a questionna ire and consulted at network
Units of work for schools to use with the new syllabus	Questionnair e sent to secondary schools. Secondary units written by a working party. Primary units edited. Possible working party on EYFS	Lorna John and Adviser	A set of units of work for schools to use to enhance their teaching and learning	Several meetings to be held and writing and editing done.  Launch Summer term 2022 if possible	Zoom, face to face venues Teachers Adviser	Primary and Secondary schools sent the questionna ire.  Responses showing what like/dislike  Meeting held with teachers group and groups of teachers working on sections with Penny. Meeting again on 12th June.
Launch of new RE syllabus for Croydon	Arrange a launch and training event	Adviser Lorna John	New syllabus in place and training on its use delivered	2 days	Venue. New syllabus	To be arranged once syllabus is finished
To work towards being an advanced SACRE	Revisit the SACRE self-evaluation document in Summer meeting 2023  Start to use new	Member s of all 4 committ ees plus Adviser	A series of proposals to be put into action to ensure that SACRE moves forward  Using information from self-evaluation	2 days adviser time  Monitorin g of the proposals to be looked at each termly meeting	Time of members Time at meetings	Evaluation done and used for next developme nt plan

	evaluation document			and updated in summer term		
Training for SACRE members on quality RE/	A) Time during Meetings for a short training session	Adviser to prepare training or invite outside speakers.	SACRE committee to understand RE and CW in schools more comprehensively	3 days adviser time	Meeting time	Explanatio n of Syllabus writing and inclusions at Summer meeting
Monitor Collective Worship through Covid	Ask RE Coordinators what has been happening in their schools.  Possibly write to HT in schools	Adviser to write	Help to schools who ask.  Direct them to the SACRE Guidance	1-2 days as required	Adviser to report at meetings	Potentially on hold until after the syllabus is launched
To continue to promote The WIRE award for schools.	Coordinate entries and give advice to teachers	RE Adviser SACRE members at end of process	Schools entering into the award and widening inclusivity in RE  Celebrate achieving schools at Network meetings  Go to schools to present certificate	Any 12 month period	Adviser and SACRE members to look at evidence at each meeting	Schools working on evidence collection  1 school has asked for help for the RE Quality Mark and 1 school has achieved it
To report annually on the work of SACRE.	Collect information on exam data ( if available)	RE Adviser to write, Chairma n to read,	Completed on time and copies provided for SACRE members, Directors libraries, schools etc	Deadline end December 2022 RE Adviser	Adviser	Annual Report written and sent off to DFE and NASACR E

	and SACRE work  RE Adviser to write an annual report by December on the previous academic year.	Clerk to circulate.		time 3 days		
To arrange and lead an RE coordinato rs meeting each term	Advertise date, plan information (national and local) respond to requests for agenda items Follow up meetings/em ails etc.	Adviser	RE Coordinators kept up to date with local and national information and advised on excellent teaching and learning for RE.	4 days adviser time	Adviser time	Autumn, Spring and summer term meetings held on zoom.  18-24 attendees
To run courses for RE coordinato rs/ teachers on aspects of the teaching and learning in RE  Go to head teachers breakfast 1x annually	Advertise dates  Plan courses and deliver. Follow up	Adviser  Governo r services officer	All schools confident in using the agreed syllabus. Courses. Using the new syllabus Being the new RE coordinator planned for Autumn 2023	As required (3 days)	Adviser	N/A  Autumn Term breakfast invitation
Croydon schools to take part in the second year of the National	Support schools with the project on anti-hate funded by MOPAC	Adviser	Meetings held twice a term and support given to contact other relevant parties.	5/6 days	Adviser time and other input as necessar y	Krishna Avanti, The Minster, Broadmea d schools and the

Heartston e Project			Exhibition to be held in the summer term			Gurdwara taking part.  Downsvie w and Rockmoun t on the second year  Exhibition on 14 <sup>th</sup> June 2-5.30
Council Holocaust Memorial Day event schools' involveme nt	Attend monthly meetings x6 with Equalities dept of Council to plan event. Discuss themes with schools and encourage participation . Send out information and reminders. Report to SACRE.	Adviser Chair of SACRE	Schools' participation in Council event. Schools marking the day within their cw, using resources A successful event Schools entering the SACRE competition 2022  First meeting July 2022  Advertise schools competition if possible Get prizes from sponsors?	Adviser time 6 days	Adviser/schools members	Oasis Coulsdon and Riddlesdo wn took part  Over 80 entries in the competitio n- won by The Minster Juniors and Oasis Coulsdon.  Yad Vashem sponsored the prizes.  2023 meeting arranged for June 14th
On behalf of SACRE and education departmen t disseminat	Answering telephone and email requests from public and education	Adviser	Information/help on religious education and collective worship queries given as necessary.	Approx 4 days	Telephon e/ Broadba nd	FOI on SACRE answered Feb 2023

e informatio n to teachers and members of the public and respond to FOI requests  To respond to requests for help and advice from teachers	dept. Writing reports as necessary. Keep website relevant for schools RE Advisor to visit schools, or do virtual meetings, which request help using the Croydon syllabus		Keep www.reconsultant. co.uk website updated.  Ensure Croydon Council website SACRE information correct.  RE Coordinators confident in delivering the RE curriculum in their school	As required-approx. 2 hours per school	Adviser	Advice given to schools.  Visits to St Giles, Broadmea d and The Minster  staff meeting at Gresham
Continue to contact Academy chains in Croydon and inform them of SACRE and support available	To contact RE teachers in Academies and the leaders of teaching Alliances and offer support	Adviser	Support given to Academies and teaching Alliances. These schools knowledgeable on Croydon Syllabus and resources available	2 days	Adviser	Many Primary academies attend the RE network
To meet with line manager as required	Report on work of SACRE and arrange ways to highlight the work to relevant parties	Advisor	Investigate and undertake means of highlighting SACRE to schools and Governors in Croydon	Adviser time  Attendanc e at meetings and making presentati ons	Advisor time	Meetings held with new line manager and education team

To support the work of schools holding Resources	Adviser to liaise with St James the Great and Coloma High School	Adviser	Adviser to work with schools to ensure quality resources and efficient loan system and liaise between education dept and schools.	3 days adviser time	Adviser time Adviser to write reports.	Contact with St James the Great is proving quite difficult. Will continue to work on this.
And Faiths Together in Croydon	Members invited to FTiC events.	All member s	Adviser to attend and represent SACRE. Report on the various events	Reports to SACRE if applicable	1 day. Member s time	

# **Self-Evaluation of Croydon SACRE – June 2023**

Key Area Number	Key Area	Requires Improve ment (RI)	Developing	Established	Advanced
Section 1	Management of the	ment (ixi)			
	d Partnership with the				
	ner key Stakeholders				
1a	Funding: professional				X
	and financial support				
1b	SACRE meetings				Х
1c	Membership and training			X	
1d	Improvement/developm ent planning			X	
1e	Information and advice			X	
1f	Partnerships with key stakeholders				X
1g	Relations with the Academies Sector			Х	
	Standards and quality				
of provision education	on of religious				
2a	RE provision across the LA			Х	
2b	Standards of achievement and public examination entries		X		
2c	Quality of learning and teaching			Х	
2d	Quality of interaction and communication with leadership and management of RE in schools			Х	
2e	Relations with academies and other non-LA maintained schools			Х	
Section 3	The effectiveness of the				
locally agr	eed syllabus				
3a	The review process			X	
3b	The quality of the local agreed syllabus				X
3c	Launching and implementing the Agreed Syllabus			n/a	
3d	Membership and training of the Agreed			Х	

	Syllabus Conference (ASC)			
3e	Developing the revised agreed syllabus			X
3f	Making best use of National Guidance			X
Section	n 4 Collective Worship		Χ	
4a	Supporting pupil entitlement			
4b	Enhancing the quality of provision of collective worship	X		
4c	Responding to requests for determinations			X
Section	n 5 Contribution of SACRE			
to pron	noting cohesion across the unity			
5a	SACRE's membership			X
5b	SACRE's understanding of the local area			Х
5c	SACRE's engagement with the community cohesion agenda		Х	
5d	SACRE's role within wider LA initiatives on community cohesion			Х