

# Hackney SACRE

Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education

Promoting, supporting and encouraging good practice in the teaching of Religious Education in Hackney schools



## Annual Report 2020-21

The annual report is produced in accordance with the Education Act 1996

and forwarded to the DfE via NASACRE

Members approved this report on 9.2.22



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## **1. Introduction**

### **1a. Chairman's Introduction**

Each year SACRE is required to produce a summary of its activities. The Education Act 2002 requires that religious education must be provided as part of the basic curriculum in addition to the National Curriculum. Amended guidance on the content and format of this report is based on the NASACRE (National Association for Standing Advisory Councils) guidance 2021. The report outlines our work to promote RE and Collective Worship in the Borough, to develop the good teaching of Religious Education in our schools and to support community cohesion. This report covers the Academic year 2020-21 and includes a brief overview of SACRE discussions from this period.

Hackney SACRE with Hackney Education (previously the Hackney Learning Trust) continues to promote RE, Collective Worship, Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development and Community Cohesion. It is a legal requirement that SACREs review their Syllabus every 5 years, and having completed a review, the new Hackney Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education was published in 2019 following widespread consultation with teachers and local faith leaders, as well as taking into account publications from the REC and Ofsted, including the RE subject review of Summer 2021. We are confident our Syllabus reflects the best practices as outlined in these reports/reviews and documents. We have concrete evidence of its implementation in half our primary and secondary schools and further analysis as to its implementation and effectiveness will be ascertained in the near future.

We continue to support our schools' development of Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development and Community Cohesion. For example, with the production of the School RE Calendar, which, with the help of the Hackney Education, we send to all Children's Centres, Secondary schools and Primary schools in the borough. This provides some evidence of the impact of the Syllabus in schools, as the pupils' artwork included is based on key concepts and content required.

Our support for RE in schools continues through well attended and evaluated training sessions, the dissemination of updated schemes of work for key stages 1 and 2, and network meetings for Heads of Departments in Secondary schools.

Finally, I want to thank the Hackney Education in continuing to support our work over the past year.

**SACRE Chair**  
Sandra Hall

## **1b. Overview of academic year 2020-21**

Hackney SACRE met three times online during the academic year 2020-21. Each meeting was quorate.

All agendas and approved minutes of these meetings are saved regularly and made accessible via the Hackney SACRE website: <https://www.hackneyservicesforschools.co.uk/extranet/sacre>. The RE Advisor ensures all materials and minutes are updated regularly.

Agenda items for these meetings included (in no particular order):

- Training of primary teachers
- Support for Secondary teachers
- Updating primary Schemes of Work
- Borough RE Calendar
- Accommodation for SACRE meetings and the move to online meetings
- Budget and Advisory support for SACRE
- Website access to SACRE information
- Attendance and membership to SACRE
- Agreed Syllabus Review- monitoring implementation in schools
- Determinations and Collective Worship Guidance
- Constitution
- RSE Guidance and implications for faith schools, particularly Orthodox Jewish
- Creation of remote education support materials and resources promoting worldview learning in RE

## **2. Standards and quality of provision in RE**

### **2a: Provision, compliance and time allocation for RE**

The Hackney Agreed Syllabus 2019 recommends that 5% of curriculum time is dedicated to RE, and that this should equate to approximately: 36 hours per year for KS1; 45 hours for KS2; 45 hours for KS3 and 40-48 hours for KS4. This excludes time allocated for collective worship. Religious Education remains statutory for all students and Hackney expects schools to provide all students with their entitlement to study the subject, including at KS4 when they should preferably be entered for GCSE RS. While requirements for some Academies may differ, their funding arrangements ensure that they make provision for all pupils in RE.

Further informal consultation with schools has been carried out by the RE Advisor throughout the academic year 2020-21, a summary of which is below.

### **Primary Schools**

In general, the provision of RE remains constant, although now approximately half of all Hackney primary schools follow the schemes of work provided by the RE Advisor.

We can report that, in Hackney primary schools:

- The delivering teachers are all Non-specialist i.e. hold no RE qualifications beyond GCSE in all schools
- No schools have received external training other than the borough (Hackney Education) termly training, which is provided by an RE specialist, to which 25 schools regularly attend/engage.
- The termly training for teachers was delivered by the RE Advisor and included discussion of effective pedagogy using enquiry, clarification of key Ofsted messages regarding curriculum and demonstration of how the Agreed Syllabus supports these.
- Units of learning, in line with guidance from Ofsted regarding Recovery Education and how pupils learn and remember more, were shared with attendees.
- Following feedback from teachers regarding the use of guest speakers in schools SACRE agreed to devise support materials and resources promoting worldview learning in RE
- Additional training/support for the delivery of effective remote learning was provided free of charge to Hackney primary schools in conjunction with the Faith and Belief Forum. This was funded by a private sponsor sourced by SACRE members. 10 schools were able to demonstrate a positive impact of this training through pupil and parental feedback as well as with exemplar pupil work including partnership projects by pupils from different schools.

One primary school was supported by the RE Advisor in successful application for an REQM award.

## Secondary Schools

In general, the provision of RE remains similar to that recorded last year (please see table, below). Most schools continue to share information about RE provision with parents via newsletters and/or the school website and also have space for displays of pupils' RE learning on walls. However, many are failing to provide the minimum time allocation requirement in KS4, with RE remaining optional for pupils in KS4.

There is evidence in some Hackney schools where the RE Curriculum is not consistently being delivered by RE Specialists. The RE Advisor has provided additional support to these Subject leads in three schools beyond the borough (Hackney Education) termly training. During the last academic year these termly meetings have included sessions with an examination board.

Hackney 2017	Hackney	(CoRE) September 2018
All pupils in KS3 and KS4 were taught by an RE specialist teacher	Similar	
All schools delivered KS3 RE through schemes of work derived from the Hackney Local Syllabus	Similar	Nearly 20% of all schools offer no RE @KS3
All KS4 pupils followed an examination board syllabus for Full Course RE	Several schools GCSE from 2018 optional only	1/3 of all schools provide no RE @KS4. Drop of 43000 in Full Course GCSE in 3 years Drop of 229000 in Short Course over 8 years
All pupils received at least the minimum time allocation requirement in KS3 and KS4, and in schools of a religious nature they received more time	No longer the case – see above	
All schools regularly share information about RE provision with parents via newsletter/website	Similar	
All schools also have space for displays of pupils' RE learning on walls	Similar	

## **2b. The Agreed Syllabus**

The Syllabus was unanimously agreed and positively received by schools when it had a soft launch in 2019 and is available on the SACRE webpage provided by the Local Authority.

Evidence gleaned by the RE Advisor in conversations, visits and reports from schools demonstrates that over half Hackney primary and secondary schools are following the Syllabus, and a further survey will be sent to schools this academic year as part of a deeper review process. This includes academies, faith schools and community schools. A more in-depth monitoring and analysis of schools' adherence to the Syllabus will be carried out in due course.

We are confident that our Syllabus reflects the best practices as outlined in various reports/reviews and documents recently published, including REC research into a worldviews approach in RE. Early reports show that pupils and teachers are engaging well with the enquiry approach and pedagogy set out in the syllabus, and the RE Advisor has supported individual primary and secondary schools in the implementation of the Syllabus in their school curriculum beyond the teacher meetings upon request.

In addition, Hackney SACRE continues to support both the creation of new and the revision of previous aforementioned primary schemes of work by the RE Advisor that complement this syllabus, using contributions and feedback from the schools. These schemes have been structured in a way that pupils' critical thinking and analytical skills are developed further and they are increasingly engaged in philosophical and ethical discussion and are exposed to a wider range of content. The schemes continue to be developed to allow all pupils from all backgrounds to engage with the subject, and are updated regularly.

## **2c: Public Examinations 2020-21**

### **Religious Studies – GCSE**

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, pupils did not sit formal examinations for the academic year of 2020-21. Pupils were instead graded through internal assessment, and therefore no official/verified data was provided. However, following consultation with secondary schools who attended the Secondary School RE Networks provided with the support of Hackney Education, it was reported that most schools maintained consistency in pupil attainment to previous years and in accordance to predicted grades for their cohorts of pupils.

### **Religious Studies – A Level**

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, pupils did not sit formal examinations for the academic year of 202--21. Pupils were instead graded through internal assessment, and therefore no official/verified data was provided. However, following consultation with secondary schools who attended the Secondary School RE Networks provided with the support of Hackney Education, it was reported that most schools maintained consistency in pupil attainment to previous years and in accordance to predicted grades for their cohorts of pupils.

## **2d: Guidance and Advice from SACRE 2020-21**

At the start of the academic year Hackney SACRE discussed implications of the Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) requirements particularly for Jewish faith schools. It was agreed that a working party would be set up, with the proviso of creating some guidance for these schools demonstrating how they could support the delivery of the requirements in a manner that reflects the ethos of the school.

This working party was set up by the RE Advisor, liaising and including members from a range of Hackney Education departments and external agencies along with volunteer members from SACRE. In the first meeting it was agreed that primary schools could indeed deliver the requirements, and a SACRE member volunteered to work with the RE Advisor to devise a guidance paper demonstrating how much of the content may already be included in the Kodesh subjects. Due to illness and unforeseen circumstances this work was not able to be completed.

However, the RE Advisor has built strong working links with the Hackney Education PSHE consultants working with and in Hackney schools, and is in regular communication with them regarding this matter and to offer support where links with Religious Education may apply. In addition, SACRE has offered to check any materials that Hackney Education wish to promote in support of RSE, to ensure that the contents are respectful and accurate in relation to the religions and worldviews represented in our community.

In addition, in response to remote learning and requests from schools, Hackney SACRE agreed to devise support materials and resources promoting worldview learning in RE in the form of short video clips. The RE Advisor has prepared guidance and will support the editing, publication and responsible promotion of these, and support teachers in their effective deployment in the classroom. Volunteer members of SACRE will record their own responses to four key enquiry questions which appear in the primary units of work and refer to ultimate issues that are included in GCSE specifications.

## **3. Collective Worship**

Hackney SACRE support an inclusive approach to collective worship that promotes spiritual development and contributes to community cohesion. SACRE have previously provided resources for use in school assemblies, which were shared with schools at a primary training day along with the Recommended Approach for Collective Worship. This issue continues to be discussed in primary training, led by the RE Advisor, and is included in advisory work/support materials that have been delivered as part of Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) development training in schools, also provided by the RE Advisor.

The RE Advisor has also been in communication with the Church of England Diocesan Board, as well as the Faith and Belief Forum, regarding potential support for further collective worship guidance and materials. However, the RE Advisor is limited in providing further support meaning the desired review and development of Collective Worship support and materials has been delayed.

**Determinations:** There have been no applications for determination during 2020-21.

Hackney SACRE have now updated the procedures for schools to apply for a determination, and updated guidance has been approved by Hackney council and been made available to schools.

## **4. SACRE work with other agencies**

Hackney SACRE supports RE that meets the needs of all students with or without religious beliefs, and promotes inclusion and religious, non-religious and racial harmony. We believe that RE promotes understanding and respect for all communities and it is even more vital now that we continue to do this, with the rise of fundamentalism and extremism in the UK and worldwide and examples of conflict within our own local community. Through the teaching of RE, negative stereotypes and prejudices can and should be tackled and we should generate understanding, overcome barriers, and promote community cohesion.

We are members of NASACRE and our Advisor is able to access the latest research and resources through her continued membership with AREIAC with thanks to the Local Authority. Over the past year, she has worked in collaboration with the Faith and Belief Forum and national examination boards to provide training and support for Hackney teachers.

## **5. Contribution of SACRE to Community Cohesion**

Our SACRE membership reflects the rich mix of faiths and communities found within the borough, including attendance to SACRE meetings representatives from the Alevi and Humanist communities, and much work is directed at supporting wider diversity agendas.

The revised Hackney Agreed Syllabus of 2019 contains information about how RE should support the development of SMSC, and efforts have been made to increase references to a wider range of religious and non-religious beliefs that are represented in our community. This includes specific mention and expectation in the syllabus for schools to teach about our Alevi and Haredi Jewish communities in Hackney, but will require the future development of teaching and learning materials by our RE Advisor once time becomes available for this additional support.

In addition, we are working to better support the development of the understanding of both religious and non-religious responses to ultimate questions and ethical issues within these schemes and within the guidance included in the Syllabus, as well as through the training that has been provided at borough level. Further to this, SACRE have agreed to develop further support materials and resources promoting worldview learning in RE in the form of short video clips.

Furthermore, Hackney SACRE has again, thanks to the support of Hackney Education, been able to produce a full-colour wall calendar showing religious and non-religious festivals and other significant dates. This was illustrated with artwork selected in a competition open to all Hackney primary school pupils. The calendar was sent to all Hackney schools and Children's Centres. It not only supports and promotes the Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) development of pupils in schools, but also encourages learning about and celebrating the diversity of culture in Hackney.

The RE Advisor also offered support to the System Lead - Young Black Men Project for the inclusion of RE in the recently developed Hackney's Diverse Curriculum. Sadly this was not taken up, but other opportunities and projects were explored by the RE Advisor to further support community cohesion and the promotion of networking between Hackney schools. This included devising a unit/scheme of work for KS3 pupils to investigate beliefs about life and death from a range of worldviews and religions through art and/or music. This was collaboratively with secondary schools across the Borough ready for teaching next academic year.

In the summer term of 2021 there were examples of the Palestinian/Israeli conflict having an impact in some Hackney schools, with evidence and complaints of Anti Semitism being brought to the attention of SACRE. We would have liked to offer free support and provision to our Hackney schools. Only support with building links with external agencies was able to be provided, even though the RE Advisor was ideally placed with cross phase and multiple subject knowledge and experience to develop and deliver suitable materials and relevant training for teachers. It is hoped that more opportunities, funding and capacity will become available next year for us to be able to provide appropriate support and events that will help schools in overcoming this Anti Semitism in their classrooms.

## **6. Management of the SACRE and partnership with the LA (Local Authority) and other key stakeholders**

Hackney Education supports the work of Hackney SACRE by providing an RE Specialist who continues to advise SACRE, deliver teacher training and support, and lead the review of the Hackney Agreed Syllabus.

Membership of SACRE is reviewed in all meetings, and members are reminded that they should provide a representative in their absence or introduce a replacement when they resign the SACRE committee. A new Sikh and Catholic members have been sourced by the RE Advisor but, despite concerted efforts, regular attendance by reliable members from Islam and Buddhism remain an action point. However, two further teacher members were appointed, broadening the spectrum of experience across primary and Early Years.

Following changes at the Local Authority buildings, meetings have been since at the Town Hall or online due to the Covid-19 pandemic, with increased efforts to align Local Authority and Hackney Council working practices and systems.

Hackney Education continues to receive the total SACRE funding provided by Hackney Council. SACRE are not informed the amount or how the funding is spent, but in 2020-21 this included:

- CPD and support materials for staff for Hackney Schools on RE teaching and learning
- Administrative Clerking support for the SACRE from Governor Services
- SACRE and Religious Education web site development and maintenance by Advisor
- Networking opportunities for the Advisor (attendance to AREIAC)

Hackney Education have honoured their commitment to supporting RE teaching and learning by continuing an allowance for free teachers' RE training as an extension to their traded Services for Schools CPD Package. However, the reduced availability of the RE Advisor from an allocation of one day a week to approximately 3 hours a week, with no additional time provided for the work on the syllabus, has had an impact on the number of school visits able to have been made. This may have a further impact over the next academic year and beyond. Hackney Education have indicated that SACRE can apply for additional time for additional activities.

Hackney Education also disseminates funding upon individual requests. In the academic year of 2020-21 this included:

- Design and publishing costs for the Hackney RE Calendar

Requests were also made for additional funding to support. These included:

- Attendance to NASACRE Conference and AREIAC Conference by RE Advisor
- Support costs to develop RSE guidance materials for Jewish Faith Schools
- Support costs to develop Anti Semitism resources and training for schools

Hackney SACRE independently sourced their own funding for certain projects. This included:

- Support costs for the development and delivery of additional primary teacher CPD for remote learning of RE

## **7. Summary**

Support for primary schools remains strong with the continued development of curriculum materials which are in line with the Agreed Syllabus and reflect key Ofsted messages regarding strong RE pedagogy. Engagement with schools remains positive with strong relationships being developed with the RE Advisor in an increasing number of Hackney schools, including academies, faith schools and community schools.

In the next academic year we are keen to further develop our support of RSE and wider community cohesion, particularly in response to issues raised in our schools around and Anti Semitism. Options we have considered that would be helpful to our schools include: a CPD event for teachers in relation to Holocaust Memorial Day, the completion of the video resources, development of CPD materials specifically promoting and developing teacher confidence in interfaith and cross-cultural dialogue, in addition to the production of a further RE Calendar.

However, we remain constrained to focus our work mostly within the termly teachers' network sessions, for which we are grateful to Hackney Education in continuing to support.

**Members of SACRE 2020-21**  
As of July 2021

Committee	Name	Representation
1. Religious Faith Groups	Ruhi Altun	Alevi
	Hasan Bolucek	
	Dulmini Wimalasekera	Buddhism
	Priya Reid	Jain/Hindu
	Sheikh Yasar Zaman	Islam
	Omer Dogan	
	Rumana Rafique	
	Naftali Loewanthel	Judaism
	Roni Tabick	
	Raj Dharma	Sikhism
	Justin Madubuko	Catholic
	Rev Andrew Letby	Christian, Other
	Ivor Millman	
2. Church of England	Lynn Hargreaves	
	Rev J Westcott	
	Prebendary Rosemia Brown	
3. Teachers	Sandra Hall	
	Michelle Byrne	
	Natalie Petzel	
	Nasima Ephraim	
	Linn Thorssen	
4. Local Authority	Harvey Odze (Cllr)	Councillor
	Katie Hanson (Cllr)	Councillor
	Kam Adams (Cllr)	Councillor
	Jessica Webb (Cllr)	Councillor
	Sade Etti (Cllr)	Councillor
	David Pollock	Humanist
	Stacey Burman	Adviser

