



Harrow SACRE Annual Report

2024-2025

**LB HARROW STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

September 2025



**Harrow
SACRE**



Table of Contents

Section		Page
1.	Introduction 1.1. Words from the Chair 1.2. Overview: religions and worldviews in Harrow 1.3 List of SACRE and ASC meetings, attendance at meetings (appendix 7), venues and brief overview of content of these meetings	3
2.	Religious Education (Statutory Responsibilities) 2.1 Agreed Syllabus and RE in schools 2.2 Standards and monitoring of RE 2.3 Teacher training and materials and advice for schools 2.4. Other information (withdrawals and how SACRE monitors, advises or supports schools with this, complaints) Advice to LA	5
3.	Collective Worship (Statutory Responsibilities) 3.1 Standards and monitoring of Collective Worship 3.2. Determinations	7
4.	Links to other Bodies 4.1. National bodies 4.2 Local bodies	8
5.	SACRE Involvement Locally 5.1 Governor training 5.2 Advice on issues within the community	8
6.	SACRE's own arrangements 6.1 Professional and Administrative support and how the LA supports the SACRE 6.2 Membership, Representation and Recruitment 6.3 Attendance (Appendix 7.2) 6.4. Training for SACRE and ASC members 6.5 Finance given to SACRE for its work.	10
7.	Appendices 7.1 Table of RS GCSE and A level Results 7.2 LB Harrow SACRE members 2024-25 and attendance at meetings. 7.3 Details on CPD provided to schools 7.4 Any LA/SACRE policy statements on RE or CW 7.5 Circulation details for the Annual Report	12

1. Introduction

1.1 Words from the Chair of SACRE 2024-25

It has been another fruitful year for Harrow SACRE. This annual report sets out our journey this year but I would like to pick out some of the highlights.

The dates for religious observance (DROs) are always heavily used by teachers, head teachers and some parents. They give clarity to schools. I am always grateful to the SACRE committee who check these dates and to Vivian Wright (our clerk) who expertly puts this all this together. This year, other SACREs have used this list, and we were happy to share.

Our 'Understanding Christianity' course was expertly run by Lisa Kassapian (our LA adviser) and teachers across the borough discovered material rich in content for their lessons with a focus on Christianity. Harrow SACRE are grateful to Lisa for sharing her expertise. We were also delighted to receive some extra funding to make this course available to primary teachers.

This year we put together a survey for schools in the local authority so that we had quantitative data to plan our next steps in training. The data that emerged helped us to plan future CPD and support for the teachers. Again, we are grateful for the support we had from head teachers and the local authority staff.

Harrow is a thriving local authority with a high percentage of outstanding schools. This is reflected in the examination results and we have good outcomes from our workforce census data. Obviously, we would like more students to study religious education, but it is clear that the quality of teaching is good.

It has been my great pleasure to work with two schools specifically on their collective worship and prepare them for determination orders. Both schools prepared thoroughly with children, staff, parents and governors, thinking through the issues and good practice.

Harrow SACRE has a good relationship with the local authority, and we were delighted to hear that our budget has increased which means we can support schools more. Particular thanks go to Lisa Kassapian, Debbie Cummings (our local authority representative), Emma Harkin (director of education) and Vivian Wright for all the work they do to support Harrow SACRE. We were delighted we could send four people to the NASACRE conference and engage with others about our future steps.

I would also like to thank all the places of worship that have hosted our meetings and welcomed us and children in the local area. I would like to commend the committee for everything they have done during the year.

Alison Stowe



Chair of the Harrow SACRE

1.2. Overview: religions and worldviews in Harrow

The London Borough of Harrow is among the most religiously diverse boroughs in the country, and the Harrow Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) has a special and well-established relationship with Harrow Council and the communities it serves. The statistics from the 2021 Census are now available and they confirm that:

- Harrow has the highest number and percentage of Hindus of any local authority in the country
- the highest number of Jains (6,246) in the country
- the lowest percentage of ‘No religion’ in the country
- the percentage of Muslims in the population has increased from 12.5% to 15.9%.

Below is census data (including 2011 data in brackets) for each religion:

	Christian	Sanatan Dharma (Hindu)	Muslim	No religion	Jewish	Jain Dharma	Buddha Dhamma	Sikh Dharm	Other religion
number	88,602 (89,181)	67,392 (60,407)	41,503 (29,881)	27,748 (22,871)	7,304 (10,538)	6,246 (5,259)	2,812 (2,700)	2,734 (2,752)	7,695 (5,945)
percentage	33.9 (37.3)	25.8 (25.3)	15.9 (12.5)	10.6 (9.6)	2.8 (4.4)	2.4 (2.2)	1.1 (1.1)	1.1 (1.2)	2.9 (2.5)
Harrow Population 261,203 (239,056)									

Source: Office for National Statistics – Census 2021
(In brackets – Census 2011, Religion, 2011, local authorities in England and Wales)

1.3. Meetings

Harrow SACRE met four times over the course of the academic year:

8 October 2024 at Harrow Council Hub.

4 December 2024 at the Mosaic Centre, Stanmore.

26 March 2025 via Zoom

25 June 2025 at Holy Trinity Church, Wealdstone

All meetings were quorate. For membership and attendance see 6.2. and appendix 7.2.

Development Planning Group:

25 September 2024 via Zoom

To discuss Incorporation of the Self-Evaluation review into the Development Plan

Monitoring group:

25 November 2024 via Zoom

To review of the questionnaire for schools

1.4. Summary of contents of SACRE meetings

Items included on agendas, in no particular order:

Election of Chair and Vice-Chair

DRO (Dates of religious observance) and AR 2024-25 reviewed.

Development plan for 2024-25, RAG rated, reviewed costed, and plan for 2025-26 drafted.

Self-evaluation and planning using NASACRE toolkit.

Members continued to monitor school websites for RE and CW provision.

RE survey/questionnaire for schools and RE Teachers' WhatsApp group and meetings

Determination renewals

National and local updates, including news from faith groups relating to schools

NASACRE briefings and conference

Workforce Census Data and Exam results

2. Religious Education (Statutory Responsibilities)

2.1. Locally Agreed Syllabus and RE

The Locally Agreed Syllabus, entitled “Widening Diversity” was launched and shared with schools in 2023.

Throughout 2024-5, activities to monitor the *effectiveness of the locally agreed syllabus* are listed under section 2.2, with further details of CPD provided to schools in section 7.3.

As a move towards improved contact with academies, the RE co-ordinator for secondary schools in Harrow has recently joined the subject leaders’ WhatsApp group.

2.2. Standards and monitoring of RE

Throughout the academic year 2024-5 several strategies were utilised to monitor and measure RE provision in schools.

i. RE Survey for schools

At the June meeting, the monitoring group reported back on the survey for schools:

Primary schools

- There were 33 responses from primary schools. Most schools follow the Agreed Syllabus. There was some confusion between a syllabus and a scheme of work.
- 6 schools were teaching above the recommended minimum time allocation, 10 schools below.
- RE is often taught by class teachers with some schools having RE specialists.
- Some parents exercise their right to withdraw children from RE.
- There is a wide variation in budgets.
- 17 schools hold a daily act of collective worship, 13 do not.
- All the responding schools organized visits to places of worship.

Secondary Schools

- There were 6 responses from Secondary schools including 2 voids. The survey included academies with a religious denomination.
- 1 school follows the Locally Agreed Syllabus.
- RE is taught by designated RE specialists and teachers with other specialisms
- Some parents exercise their right to withdraw their children from RE; in one secondary school 5 year 11 pupils were fully withdrawn from RE.
- Schools often arrange visits to places of worship and invite faith speakers.

ii. Public Exam Results

Please note: GCSEs are graded 1-9: 9-4 are deemed the higher grades, 5 is considered a strong pass.

Gayatri Athalye, Senior Performance Analyst at Harrow Council provided information of 1988 entries for RE GCSE and 76 entries for A level.

At the March meeting the committee reviewed the Harrow GCSE and A level results:

In GCSE Religious Studies (RS) Harrow performed higher than the national average. This could be accounted for by the number of high performing schools in the borough; Faith schools are also represented in the data. Harrow also has a number of diverse and inclusive school communities who value RE as a way of promoting social cohesion. At A level RS, students are performing below the national average. This may be due to the transition between A levels and GCSEs, or possibly to weaker pupils choosing RE.

At the time of writing this report validated examination data 2025 was not available. This information will be included in the next years' annual report. However, details of last years' data can be found in Appendix 7.

It has also been noted that early access to reliable KS 4/5 data is getting increasingly difficult, and SACRE may need to find alternative strategies and sources of further analysis.

iii. Workforce Census Data

The committee also reviewed workforce data for Harrow:

- Outcomes are good in high performing schools rated outstanding by OFSTED: Bentley Wood, Sacred Heart, Whitmore High.
- Nower Hill is outstanding, but examination entries are low.

It should be noted that:

- The data includes schools with religious denominations.
- Park High has now been regraded as 'good' by Ofsted.

iv. REQM Award

In 2024-2025 no Harrow schools applied for the REQM award. It was discussed at the November Subject Leaders' meeting. Please see section 7.3.

2.3. Teacher training and materials and advice for schools

See also Appendix 7.3.

Termly meetings for RE teachers and training session at St John's CE school on "Understanding Christianity"

The Teachers' Network is working on a list of places of worship in Harrow and its environs which can be visited and also a list of speakers from different religions and world views who will visit schools. Members will contribute to this list.

2.4 Other information

Complaints: There have been no complaints to SACRE in 2024-25 in relation to Religious Education.

Withdrawals: as noted in 2.2 above, some parents exercise their right to withdraw their children from RE; in one secondary school 5 year 11 pupils were fully withdrawn from RE.

3. Collective Worship (Statutory Responsibilities)

3.1. Standards and Monitoring of Collective Worship:

At the June meeting, a working party was established to take this forward. It was agreed that SACRE members would continue to focus on providing further support and is included in the budgeting and development planning for academic year 2025-6.

3.2 Determinations

Guidance on applying for a determination (or a renewal of the same) can be found with the relevant application forms in the LB Harrow SACRE document 'The A to Z of School Collective Worship' via this link: <https://www.harrow.gov.uk/schools-learning/standing-advisory-council-religious-education>.

SACRE can offer additional support with this process on request.

During the academic year covered by this report:

- No academies have applied for a determination.
- The Chair visited both Norbury and Glebe schools and both schools were able to make a presentation at a SACRE meeting.
- Norbury sent representatives in person. Glebe's Head Teacher had hoped, but was unable to attend a meeting in person but managed, in the face of some technical difficulties, to give an interview and answer questions via Zoom.
- Subsequently, Norbury and Glebe Schools successfully renewed their determinations.
- This document will be reviewed in due course, following the development of any further Collective Worship guidance, as per section 3.1.

4. Links to other bodies

4.1 National

NASACRE

Harrow SACRE is affiliated to The National Association of SACREs (<https://nasacre.org.uk/>) and login details to access members' only resources from the **NASACRE** website can be obtained from the SACRE Clerk.

Relevant notes and key points from the termly briefings are regularly shared and discussed at SACRE meetings.

In addition, during the academic year covered in this report, both the Advisor and the Chair of Harrow SACRE attended the "In Conversation with NASACRE" online events for London SACREs delivered with the support of the **RE Hubs**.

This provided an opportunity to network with other London SACREs and receive messages direct from members of the NASACRE Executive.

The 2025 NASACRE Conference and AGM was held on 19 May 2025 at Stratford Town Hall, E15 4BQ. Taking advantage of reductions offered for multiple bookings, Harrow SACRE was able to send 4 delegates Alison Stowe, Lisa Kassapian, David Cryer and Mike Still. A report on conference has been deferred and will be shared at the October meeting.

Harrow SACRE is also kept updated on the activities of the **Board of Deputies of British Jews** (<https://bod.org.uk/>) and **Humanists UK** (<https://humanists.uk/>) through its faith representatives.

In addition, and in response to a recommendation from NASACRE, the chair wrote to her MP, Gareth Thomas, with our "asks for the next government" for "High quality RE for all children in all schools taught by well-qualified and trained teachers". Alison received a very positive reply and an invitation to meet. This meeting was also very positive.

Jewish Living Experience

Following a meeting with Anna Silver from the Board of Deputies at the NASACRE conference, an exhibition called Jewish Living Experience has been proposed and possible venues have been suggested.

4.2 Local:

Meetings

As part of SACRE's self-evaluation process, two meetings were held in different places of worship: the December meeting at the Mosaic Centre in Stanmore and the June meeting at All Saints Church in Harrow Holy Trinity Wealdstone. Each visit included member's introduction to the history and purpose of the building. The October meeting is planned for the Swaminarayan Centre in Kenton.

Harrow Interfaith Week, 10-17 November 2024

David reported that Harrow Interfaith held 17 events during the week. Schools also held a wide variety of events of their own.

Highlights included an interfaith dialogue at the Sri Saddhatissa International Buddhist Centre in Kingsbury, an Interfaith Walk and an exhibition at Harrow Arts Centre with faith representatives on hand to offer explanations of the objects on display. There was also an interesting event at the Zoroastrian Centre attended by David, Phiroza and Vivian, designed to show how a cinema could be adapted to accommodate religious ceremonies.

Mary hosted a number of visits from schools to the Christmas Tree festival held at her church of All Saints, Harrow Weald.

HMD Monday 27 January 2025

Several members attended the 2025 HMD commemoration event at Harrow Arts Centre which was considered inclusive and thought provoking.

Faith representatives continue to give regular updates on activities relating to schools and places open to school visits.

Tree in memory of Lesley Prior

Members have contributed towards a tree to be planted in a local park in memory of Lesley Prior who died on 20 April 2024. This has now been purchased and will be planted, with a small ceremony, in the autumn.

5. SACRE Involvement Locally

5.1. Governor training

Harrow SACRE supports school governors through updates in the schools' newsletter and through the determination application process.

5.2. Advice on issues within the community. Harrow SACRE's publications are available on the Harrow Council website, and include:

Religious Observance Absence Guidance 2024-25

Incidentally, Cambridgeshire and Nottinghamshire SACREs have enquired if they may adapt this document for their own use.

Permission has been granted, subject to proper acknowledgement.

Faith matters in physical education

Fasting during the month of Ramadan - guidance for school leaders

The A to Z of School Collective Worship (Revised 2021)

It should be noted that, as per section 3, this guidance is due to be reviewed as part of the development plan for next academic year.

Further information and updates about this and any further guidance will be included in the next Annual Report accordingly.

6. SACRE's own arrangements

6.1 Professional and Administrative Support and how the LA supports the SACRE

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

- Provision of a Clerk
- Support of a Local Authority Adviser
- Commissioning of an RE Consultant/Adviser to the SACRE
- Funding of the NASACRE annual membership
- Funding for attendance by at least one SACRE member to NASACRE's annual Conference and AGM
- Costs relating to establishing and reviewing a Locally Agreed Syllabus (when appropriate)

The SACRE is grateful to Emma Harkin, Director of Education and Debbie Cummings, Lead Adviser, Harrow Schools Standards and Effectiveness Team, Education and Children's Services, for making this support available.

Harrow SACRE is also very fortunate in the support it receives from its Councillor representatives. The current representatives have been members for two years; they have shown interest in and support for SACRE's aims and activities and their attendance at meetings is exemplary.

6.2. Membership representation and recruitment: quoracy, issues and successes with recruitment.

The elections for Chair and Vice-Chair in 2024 were postponed until the October meeting, as the June meeting was not quorate. Alison Stowe continued to serve as Chair in 2024 and was re-elected in June 2025. Camilla Bath was Vice-Chair until the autumn of 2024 but had to retire due to ill-health and David Cryer was elected as Vice-Chair. David was re-elected in June 2025.

We were very sorry to lose Camilla who has been a very loyal and long-serving member of the committee. Another long-serving member, the Zoroastrian representative, Phiroza Gan-Gotwal has also had to retire. It is hoped that Deirdre Monaghan will be able to replace Camilla and Ruzbeh Hodiwalla has been nominated by Malcolm Deboo of the Zoroastrian community to take over from Phiroza Gan Kotwal.

Piyananda Godamune is due to replace Sumana Sramaner as representative of Buddha Dhamma.

Two members have lapsed their membership due to lack of attendance and two members have recently moved away. Replacements have yet to be found.

A full list of SACRE members is included in Appendix 7.2.

6.3. Attendance see appendix 7.2.

6.4. Training for SACRE members

Harrow SACRE has taken out a subscription which allows members to attend NASACRE courses at a reduced cost.

Members have taken advantage of the following webinars:

“So you’ve joined your local SACRE”: 24 September 2024: Mike Still and Sejal Kapadia
24 June: Ruzbeh Hodiwalla

“How can SACREs make strategic use of the Deep and Meaningful Ofsted RE Report (May 2024) in their work?” 17 October 2024: Alison Stowe and Lisa Kassapian

“NASACRE in Conversation” led in regions 21 November 2024: David Cryer
20 March 2025: Mary Abbott. Please see section 4.1.

“Calling All members of SACRE Group D – How to be an effective member of your SACRE?” 21 January: Debbie Cummings

“Being an Effective SACRE Clerk! 25 February 2025: Vivian Wright

Mercedes Afnan and Laura Thornton have also attended a training session run by RE Hubs on hosting and making visits to and from schools. They have been awarded the Kitemark.

Alison Stowe attended all Harrow RE subject leadership courses, these are also attended by Mary Abbott, Heena Mistry and Elizabeth Boulter, wherever practicable.

6.5. Finance given to SACRE for its work

This year’s budget has increased from £4,969 to £5488 for 2024-5, increasing to £6110 for 2025-6 subject to a fully costed development plan.

Appendices

7. Appendices

7.1. Exam Results 2023/24 For reference

GCSE

2023/24	% 9-1	% 9-4	% 9-5	% 9-7	% 9	% 8	% 7	% 6	% 5	% 4	% 3	% 2	% 1
England (All Schools)	97.5	72	61.5	31	8.1	10.8	12.1	16.5	14	10.5	12.6	8	4.8
Harrow	98	76	66	33	10	12	11	18	15	10	11	7	5

Source: England: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/key-stage-4-performance>
Harrow : KS4 Pupil Level Data

A Level

2023/24	% A*	% A*-A	% A*-B	% A*-C	% A*-D	% A*-E	Entry Count
England	6.1	25.8	54.5	77.9	91.8	97.6	14477
Harrow	5	18%	45%	71%	83%	97%	76

Source: England: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/a-level-and-other-16-to-18-results>
Harrow: KS5 pupil level data

7.2. SACRE Membership and Attendance 2024-25

Chair: Alison Stowe (Group B)

Vice Chair: Camilla Bath (Group A) until 8 October 2024
David Cryer (Group A) from 8 October 2024

Attendance: the number of meetings attended out of the possible number that could be attended is shown in brackets.

Group A - Religious Traditions and Christian Churches

Ms Mercedes Afnan: Baha'i 2/4

Ven Sumaner Sramaner: Buddha Dhamma 1/4

Karen Collier Christian (Free Church Federal Council) until 27 July 2025.2/4

Camilla Bath Christian (Catholic) until 26 March 2025 0/2

Laura Thornton Christian (Catholic) 3/4

Vijay Hirani: Sanatana Dharma (Swaminarayan) 2/4

Arvind Halai: Sanatana Dharma (Swaminarayan) 2/4

David Cryer: Humanist (Harrow Humanists) 3/4

Varsha Dodhia: Jain until 27 July 2025 0/4

Gill Ross: Jewish 2/4

Doreen Samuels: Jewish 3/4

Muhammad Dato: Muslim until 25 June 2025 0/3

Shahid Khan: Muslim from 4 December 2024 until 27 July 2025 1/3

Vacancy: Rastafarian

Paramjit Singh-Kohli Sikh Dharm 1/4

Phiroza Gan-Kotwal Zoroastrian until 27 July 2025 1/4

Group B - Church of England

Mary Abbott 4/4
Alison Stowe 4/4
Reverend Mike Still 3/4

Group C - Teachers' Associations

Fatema Rahemani (NAS/UWT Union) until 8 October 2024 0/0
Heena Mistry (NAHT) until 8 July 2025 0/4
Elizabeth Boulter (NEU) 2/4
Sayyeda-Maryam Jessa (NEU) 2/4
Sejal Kapadia (NEU) from 8 October 2024 4/4

Group D - Local Authority

Councillor June Baxter, Conservative 4/4
Councillor Janet Mote, Conservative 4/4
Cllr Sasi Suresh, Labour 3/4
Councillor Ramji Chauhan, Conservative (Reserve)

Councillor Hitesh Karia, Conservative (Reserve)
Councillor Ghazanfar Ali, Labour (Reserve)

Lisa Kassapian, Advisor to Harrow SACRE

Members have served from September 2024 to August 2025 except where otherwise indicated.

In Attendance:

Vivian Wright, Clerk to the Harrow SACRE

Members have served from September 2024 to August 2025 except where otherwise indicated.

Observers

It was hoped that Ruzbeh Hodiwalla, Piyananda Godamune and Deidre Monaghan would attend the June meeting as observers with a view to taking over as Zoroastrian, Buddha Dhamma and Roman Catholic representatives respectively. They were unable to attend so this has been postponed until the October meeting.

Emma Harkin, Director of Education and Debbie Cummings, Lead Adviser, Harrow Schools Standards and Effectiveness Team, Education and Children's Services, attended the March meeting as an observer.

7.3. Details of CPD provided to schools

Understanding Christianity: Wednesday 16 October 2024, St John's CE School
This meeting was attended by 12 RE leaders, hosted by Elizabeth and visited by the rector of St John's church, Matthew Stone. Understanding Christianity has just won a Christian Funders' award.

Subject Leaders' meetings

27 November 2024: subject leaders meeting at Grange Primary School

Subject leaders discussed effective subject leadership, self-evaluation, pupil and teacher voice surveys and REQM (Religious Education Quality Mark). Attendees provided initial feedback on the implementation of the Agreed Syllabus in their schools.

26 February 2025: subject leaders meeting at Marlborough Primary School

Alison reported back on this session which covered making connections, raising standards, Easter and Passover. It had been a very interesting and thought-provoking session.

18 June 2025: subject leaders meeting at Stag Lane Primary School. report on this? (No detailed report at the June meeting.)

7.4. Any LA/SACRE policy statements on RE or CW

These have not been changed in the year 2024/25

7.5. Circulation details for the Annual report

This Annual Report is shared with the Director of Education for LB Harrow and sent to the Department for Education, NASACRE and Harrow schools, including governors. The report will be available for anyone to view on the SACRE section of the LB Harrow website:

<https://www.harrow.gov.uk/schools-learning/standing-advisory-council-religious-education>