

**ROYAL BOROUGH OF KENSINGTON AND
CHELSEA**

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education

Annual Report 2023-2024

Table of Contents

1. Background	2
2. Meeting Arrangements in 2023-24	2
3. Locally Agreed Syllabus	3
4. Standards in RE	3
4.1 Teacher Training.....	3
5. Membership Updates	3
5.1 Members' Code of Conduct.....	4
6. Composition and Members of the SACRE in 2023-24	4
7. Matters Discussed by the SACRE in 2023-24	5
8. Collective Worship	6
8.1 Advice on Collective Worship and Determinations.....	6
8.2 Determinations.....	6
9. Complaints	7
10. Links with Other Bodies	7
11. Examination Results	7
12. Appendix A	8

1. Background

The Royal Borough's Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) is required, in accordance with Section 391(6) of the Education Act 1996, to publish an annual report on its activities. This is the SACRE's thirty third report, and it summarises its activities during the academic year 2023-24.

The Royal Borough's SACRE was established by the Education Committee (Shadow) on 14 June 1989. Its current terms of reference, as laid down by the Education Reform Act 1998, are "to advise the Authority upon such matters connected with religious worship in county schools and the religious education to be given in accordance with an agreed syllabus as the authority may refer to the council or as the council may see fit".

In particular, the SACRE is charged with the following responsibilities:

- It can require the Authority to review the Agreed Syllabus on religious education (RE).
- It may determine, on application by the headteacher, that the requirement for collective worship in community schools to be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character shall not apply to the collective worship provided for some or all of its pupils in a particular school.
- With the Authority, to review the support offered for RE teaching, the methods of teaching employed, and teachers' in-service professional development.

In addition, the Education Committee (Shadow) decided to give a direct role to the SACRE in the consideration and disposal of complaints related to the curriculum or religious worship. The SACRE will be asked to advise where complaints relate to religious education given in accordance with an agreed syllabus or to religious worship in county schools.

Details of the work of the RBKC SACRE and associated papers can be found on its designated page on the Royal Borough's website:

<https://www.rbkc.gov.uk/children-and-education/education-and-learning/standing-advisory-council-religious-education-sacre>.

2. Meeting Arrangements in 2023-24

The SACRE met on the following three occasions in 2023-24:

- 27 September 2023
- 29 February 2024
- 6 June 2024

All three meetings were hybrid meetings allowing both in-person and virtual attendance, and they were held at Kensington Town Hall.

Secretarial assistance and a budget for the discharge of the SACRE's duties are provided to the SACRE by the Royal Borough. The key areas of this support include the following:

- Provision of a Clerk

- Provision of a Local Authority Adviser
- Provision of a meeting room at Kensington Town Hall
- Commissioning of an RE Consultant
- Funding of the NASACRE annual membership
- Funding of the NASACRE annual training offer
- Funding for two SACRE members to attend NASACRE's Annual Conference and AGM in-person
- Costs relating to establishing and reviewing a Locally Agreed Syllabus (when appropriate)

The SACRE is grateful to the Royal Borough for making this support available.

3. Locally Agreed Syllabus

By statute, every local authority is required to adopt a Locally Agreed Syllabus (LAS) of religious education and to review it every five years. The current RBKC LAS has been in place since June 2020. It will be due for review in the academic year 2024-25.

The RBKC Agreed Syllabus *Living Difference III* is available via <https://services2schools.org.uk/Page/18133> along with a number of useful links to materials and websites that the RBKC SACRE members had compiled together to help schools in teaching RE.

4. Standards in RE

The SACRE members considered the various national and local developments concerning the provision of RE. These discussions were prompted by the information provided to the SACRE through the regular updates from the RE Consultant on the SACRE and NASACRE Briefings. Some examples of national developments that were discussed included the following:

- RE in Ofsted Annual Report (November 2023)
- Parliamentary question on supporting and funding RE
- House of Lords debate around the quality of RE in schools
- Challenges around recruitment and retention of RE teachers
- *Deep and Meaningful?* report on RE by Ofsted (April 2024)
- Launch of new RE curriculum toolkit by RE Council (May 2024)
- 'REady for Work' campaign by Lord Bilimoria

4.1 Teacher Training

In 2023-24, the RE Good Practice Network, previously established for teachers in Kensington and Chelsea and Westminster, met on a termly basis in November, March and July. These meetings were hosted by Ian Nicholson, RE Consultant on the SACRE.

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

5. Membership Updates

In 2023-24, the SACRE welcomed Rev'd Dr Evan McWilliams representing the Diocese of London, on Group B. Rev'd Dr Evan McWilliams attended the SACRE's summer term meeting as an observer, and his nomination and appointment were confirmed shortly after the meeting. The SACRE would formally welcome him as a full member at their meeting in autumn term 2024.

Kathryn Kane, a representative of London Diocesan Board for Schools (LDBS) on Group B, resigned from the SACRE due to a new job opportunity. The Clerk contacted LDBS to inform them of the vacancy and to request new member nominations.

The SACRE is constantly looking to recruit new members, and contact is made with the appropriate appointing bodies to remind them that there are vacancies on the Royal Borough's SACRE. In spite of the efforts being made, it continues to be difficult to attract and retain new members. Particularly, it seems challenging to recruit to Group C (teacher representatives). During 2023-24, following the Clerk's request, Group C member vacancies were advertised via trade unions. Appeals for new teacher members were also made whenever information was sent out by the SACRE in the weekly RBKC Schools Circular. It was also agreed that Jackie Saddington, Local Authority Adviser to the SACRE, would write to headteachers of community schools regarding teacher members on the SACRE.

Membership in each category needs to be maintained to ensure that meetings of the SACRE are quorate. During 2023-24, only the autumn term meeting was quorate. In Spring and Summer, the quorum was not met due to the absence of the Group D member.

The challenge of having only one Group D member was recognised by the SACRE, which resulted in Jackie Saddington approaching the Royal Borough's Governance Team to request for additional councillors to be nominated to represent the Royal Borough on Group D. It was hoped there would be a positive development in this respect ahead of the new academic year 2024-25.

In addition to the recruitment of new members, succession planning for existing members was also a discussion point for the SACRE under the Membership Updates agenda item.

5.1 Members' Code of Conduct

There is a Code of Conduct in place for the RBKC SACRE members. It was agreed in January 2021, and [a copy of it](#) can be found on the RBKC SACRE page.

6. Composition and Members of the Royal Borough's SACRE in 2023-24

Chairman of the SACRE	Laurence Julius
Clerk to the SACRE	Natalija Sorokina, Business and Finance Officer (RBKC)
Local Authority Adviser	Jackie Saddington, Senior School Governance Adviser (RBKC)
RE Consultant	Lat Blaylock (autumn term) and Ian Nicholson, both from RE Today

GROUP A – Representing Christian and other religious denominations (up to 10 members)

- Susan Jaff Islamic Faith (Vice-Chair)
- Rev Ken Persaud Notting Hill Community Church
- Naif Sheikh Discover Islam
- Laurence Julius Board of Deputies of British Jews (more specifically, Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue, Holland Park)
- Kanwaljit Kaur (Lady Singh) Network of Sikh Organisations
- Alex Stacey Diocese of Westminster
- Mo O'Donoghue Diocese of Westminster
- Claire Bruce-Lamblin Diocese of Westminster

GROUP B – Representing the Church of England (up to 8 members)

- Katrina Quinton
- Revd Dr Evan McWilliams Diocese of London

GROUP C - Representing teachers, including teachers of RE, and teachers' associations (up to 8 members)

- Celia Platt National Education Union (NEU)

GROUP D - Representing the Royal Borough (up to 4 members)

- Cllr Roberto Weeden-Sanz

Co-opted members

- Gillian Berg Kensington and Chelsea Baha'i Community
- Jo Backus Network of Buddhist Organisations

7. Matters Discussed by the SACRE in 2023-24

In addition to the national highlights some of which are mentioned in Item 4 above, key matters included the following:

- Ramadan guidance
It was agreed for the Ramadan guidance from previous years to remain in place as a reference point for teachers and for additional detail to be added regarding music and singing.
- NASACRE/Westhill Awards
The SACRE narrowed down a possible theme for an application. A Westhill Awards working group was established, who met outside of the main SACRE meetings to move the idea forward. This work would be continuing into 2024-25.
- Locally Agreed Syllabus (LAS)

The current RBKC LAS was adopted in Summer 2020 from *Living Difference III*, the syllabus devised by Hampshire, Portsmouth, Southampton and the Isle of Wight. At the time, Hampshire's parent syllabus *Living Difference III* was revised for the London context, and so it was the London version of *Living Difference III* that was adopted by RBKC.

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

Over 2023-24, Locally Agreed Syllabus was a standing agenda item. The SACRE had various Syllabus-related discussions, touching upon the following:

- Benefits to local teachers should it be agreed to continue with *Living Difference IV*
- Strengths of *Living Difference IV* over other syllabi, as found by local teachers
- Impact of Covid-19 on teachers' confidence with embedding *Living Difference III*, which would make it more challenging for them if a completely new syllabus were to be introduced
- Importance of the Muslim and Buddhist members of the SACRE being happy with the new Syllabus in view of the challenges over the previous syllabus review
- Review of *Living Difference IV* from the Buddhist perspective
- The Foreword section of Hampshire's *Living Difference IV* allowing space for outlining any additional information not covered within the Syllabus

At the summer term meeting, the SACRE members were ready to vote for a recommendation to the LA to establish an Agreed Syllabus Conference. However, as the meeting was not quorate, the vote could not be taken, and it was postponed to the SACRE's first meeting of 2024-25.

- SACRE self-evaluation using NASACRE's self-evaluation tool
In evaluating their work, the SACRE felt similar to the year before, i.e., that they were established with the support of the LA Adviser, RE Adviser and the Clerk, and that the gap between 'established' and 'enhanced' was too big with some unrealistic expectations and could not be justified from a cost-benefit perspective.
- RE Adviser arrangements for 2023-24 and 2024-25
The SACRE had commissioned RE Today for 2023-2024, following illness to their long-standing RE Adviser, Lesley Prior. Sadly, Lesley Prior passed away on 20 April 2024, and the SACRE sent their condolences. Subsequently, the SACRE agreed to continue with the support from Ian Nicholson from RE Today.

Further information on what the SACRE discussed in 2023-24 will be available in the minutes of the three meetings held in that year. All the minutes of the SACRE meetings are kept on the RBKC SACRE [webpage](#). As the SACRE's meetings in Spring and Summer 2024 were

not quorate, no sets of minutes from 2023-24 were formally signed off. They would be on the agenda for approval in 2024-25.

8. Collective Worship

8.1 Advice on Collective Worship and Determinations

The guidance for schools on Collective Worship, including the process of applying for a Determination can be found attached in Appendix A of this report.

8.2 Determinations

The SACRE received no requests in 2022-23 from headteachers seeking a determination to lift or modify the requirements for collective worship in their schools.

The procedures for making such a request are set out in the Appendix A of this report. Information about the procedures can also be obtained from the Clerk to the SACRE at the Town Hall, Hornton Street, London W8 7NX.

9. Complaints

No complaints about the RE curriculum or collective worship in community schools were received by the SACRE in 2023-24.

10. Links with Other Bodies

The Royal Borough' SACRE is affiliated to The National Association of SACREs (NASACRE).

The annual NASACRE Conference 2024 was held on Monday 20 May 2024 at Hilton York Hotel, York. Jo Backus attended the Conference as part of the NASACRE Executive and fed back to the SACRE at their summer term meeting. Full details and copies of the relevant paperwork from the 2024 Conference can be found via <https://nasacre.org.uk/conference-and-agm/2024-how-can-sacres-support-high-quality-re-collective-worship/>.

11. Examination Results

GCSE 2024 Religious Studies

GCSE Religious Studies														
LA	Sch type	School name	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	U	Entry	No entry
RBKC	Secondary	All Saints Catholic College	14.7%	16.1%	15.4%	16.1%	9.8%	7.0%	8.4%	7.0%	2.8%	0.7%	97.9%	2.1%
		Chelsea Academy	5.1%	11.4%	12.5%	17.0%	8.5%	11.4%	14.2%	8.5%	2.8%	0.6%	92.0%	8.0%
		Holland Park School	3.2%	5.5%	7.4%	7.8%	3.2%	4.6%	2.8%	1.4%	0.9%	0.5%	37.3%	62.7%
		Kensington Aldridge Academy	1.6%	8.3%	4.1%	6.7%	4.1%	3.1%	1.6%	0.5%	1.0%	0.0%	31.1%	68.9%

	St. Thomas More Language College	1.5%	9.6%	14.7%	18.4%	16.9%	8.8%	16.9%	8.1%	2.2%	0.7%	97.8%	2.2%
	The Cardinal Vaughan Memorial RC School	17.7%	21.0%	25.8%	16.9%	7.3%	5.6%	3.2%	1.6%	0.8%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%
Secondary Total		6.5%	11.1%	12.1%	13.0%	7.7%	6.6%	7.4%	4.2%	1.7%	0.4%	70.8%	29.2%
Special	Kensington Queensmill School												100%
	Parkwood Hall Co-Operative Academy												100%
Special Total													100%
RBKC Total		6.4%	10.9%	11.9%	12.8%	7.5%	6.5%	7.2%	4.2%	1.7%	0.4%	69.5%	30.5%

A Levels 2024 Religious Studies

A Level Religious Studies												
LA	Sch type	Sch name	A*	A	B	C	D	E	U	Total RS entries	Total KS5 pupils	
RBKC	Secondary	Kensington Aldridge Academy		3	8	5	2	1	1	122	142	
		Holland Park School	1	5	5	5	1			49	66	
		The Cardinal Vaughan Memorial RC School		2							196	198
		Chelsea Academy		3	7	3	2				137	152
Secondary Total			1	13	20	13	5	1	1	504	558	
RBKC Total			1	13	20	13	5	1	1	504	558	

12. Appendix A

The Requirement for Collective Worship

Introduction

- Section 7 of the Education Reform Act 1988 lays down that the collective worship required in community schools shall be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character. DES circular 3/89 states that, in the Secretary of State's view, an act of worship which is 'broadly Christian' need not contain only Christian material provided, taken as a whole, it reflects the traditions of Christian belief. Any such worship should not be distinctive of any particular Christian denomination. It is not necessary for every act of worship to be of this character but within each school term the majority of acts must be so.
- How collective worship is organised is for the headteacher to decide after consultation with the governing body, having regard to the following considerations:

- any relevant circumstances relating to the pupils' family backgrounds, for example the faith of the family;
- their ages and aptitudes.

3. These considerations should inform:

- the extent to which (if at all) any acts of collective worship in the school are not of a broadly Christian character;
- the extent to which the broad traditions of Christian belief are reflected in those acts of worship of a broadly Christian character; and
- the ways in which those traditions are reflected.

The Role of the SACRE

4. If the headteacher of a community school considers that the requirements for collective worship described in paragraph two above could conflict with what is required by paragraph three, **he or she can apply to the local Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) to lift or modify the requirements**. Before doing, so the headteacher must consult the school's governing body who in turn may wish to seek the views of parents. **The headteacher's application does not need to apply to the whole school**. It can be limited to any class or description of pupils at the school, and might relate, for example, to a particular group or year group(s) in the school in which there were many pupils of a particular faith or religion.
5. The purpose of this procedure is to allow for acts of collective worship according to a faith or religion other than Christianity where, for some or all of the pupils in a school, the requirement that worship should be of a broadly Christian character is inappropriate. One factor which may inform a headteacher's decision to make an application to the SACRE is the extent of withdrawals from Christian collective worship.
6. In considering whether to grant a headteacher's request, the SACRE must take account of any relevant circumstances relating to the family backgrounds of the pupils concerned. When it has made a **determination** on the request – which can only take the form of acceptance or rejection without modification – it must communicate this in writing to the headteacher and state the date from which it will take effect. It is for the headteacher to decide what form the alternative worship will take, although the SACRE should be informed of the proposed arrangements.
7. The headteacher will wish to take appropriate steps to notify the governing body and parents of the new arrangements. Where such a determination is made in respect of all or some of the pupils in the school, daily collective worship must still be provided for them. Where a determination has been granted in respect of a class or description of pupils of a particular faith or religion, the alternative collective worship may be provided for those pupils as a whole. It may not be distinctive of any particular denomination of any faith or religion but may be distinctive of a particular faith or religion. Parents continue to have a right to withdraw their children from this collective worship.
8. Any determination made under these arrangements ends after five years, unless renewed by the SACRE. There must be a review by the SACRE no later than five years after any determination was introduced; and subsequently within five years of each

review. The headteacher can request an earlier review at any time, after consulting with the governing body. The headteacher must be given an opportunity to take part in any review and, in turn, is required to consult the governing body who may wish to seek the view of parents.

9. It has been a legal requirement since 1944 that all pupils attending a maintained school should take part in daily collective worship. Section 6 of the Education Reform Act provides for flexibility in timing and organisation of daily collective worship. It needs no longer be held at the start of the school day. There may be a single act of worship for all pupils or separate acts for pupils in different age groups or school groups. For this purpose, a 'school group' means any group or combination of groups in which pupils are taught or take place in other school activities; it does not mean a group reflecting particular religious beliefs.
10. If a headteacher considers that changes of the sort described in paragraphs four and five of this Appendix are justified, he or she should:
 - consult with the governing body,
 - after that, make application to SACRE on the form below.

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education



Application for a variation in the requirement of the Education Act 1988 that collective worship be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character.

1. **Name of school**.....
2. **Address of school**.....
3. **Name of headteacher**.....
4. **Pupils for whom the application is made**
(Is the application being made on behalf of the whole school or part of it? If a part, state which group and their numbers.)
5. **On what grounds is the application made?**
(State why you consider the requirement that collective worship should be 'wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character' to be inappropriate for pupils. Give any relevant information, including numbers, on the family background and faith of all pupils who would be affected.)
6. **Has the Governing Body been consulted?**
(By law it must be. Please state the view the Governing Body gave. Did the Governing Body consult parents? What was their view?)
7. **Have Parents been consulted?**
(What were their views?)
8. **What form would the proposed alternative form of collective worship take?**
(Give as much information as possible.)