

**ROYAL BOROUGH OF KENSINGTON AND
CHELSEA**

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education

Annual Report 2024-2025

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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 fourth report, and it summarises its activities during the academic year 2024-25.

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 2024-25

The SACRE met on the following three occasions in 2024-25:

- 26 September 2024
- 26 February 2025
- 5 June 2025

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
 - o *Living Difference IV* Syllabus readoption licence from Hampshire County Council - £1500
 - o Associated training by Justine Ball in July 2024 - £875

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 RBKC LAS *Living Difference III* (previously adopted by the Borough's Agreed Syllabus Conference as an adapted version of the Hampshire, Portsmouth, Southampton and Isle of Wight Agreed Syllabus *Living Difference III* at the time) was due for review in the academic year of 2024-25. In Autumn 2024, Groups A, B and C voted for a recommendation to the Local Authority to establish an Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC) for the review of the syllabus following the SACRE's extensive discussions in the preceding couple of years. As Group D is the Local Authority, it did not get a vote.

It was the wish of the Local Authority to appoint existing SACRE members and co-optees to the ASC, and all members at the time agreed with this. Nominations were then confirmed with the members' nominating bodies.

The first meeting of the ASC took place in Spring 2025. As part of the SACRE's prior discussions and the review of the ASC, the following points were taken into consideration:

- Positive feedback from teachers about *Living Difference III* and their preference to continue with it
- Good levels of engagement of pupils with *Living Difference III* as reported by local teachers
- Impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and the restrictions of online teaching: teachers did not have enough time to properly embed the syllabus in their lessons since its first adoption in June 2020. Teachers would like to continue embedding Hampshire's syllabus in its revised form of *Living Difference IV*, benefiting from continuity and as little distraction with teacher training and lesson planning as possible.
- More effective RE good practice network opportunities in the Bi-borough with both RBKC and Westminster RE teachers using the same syllabus
- Closer links with Westminster RE teachers around support and sharing good practice
- Census 2021 results showing little change in the Borough's demographics suggesting no change in the range of religious traditions to be engaged with

As a result of the above and with the views of the local teachers in mind, in June 2025, the ASC voted to adopt the London version of *Living Difference IV*, which emphasises a greater breadth of religious and non-religious perspectives to be enquired into, right from EYFS.

After the above-mentioned vote, the Chair of the SACRE worked on a personalised Foreword section, and the Clerk put together local context wording for the Syllabus. The ASC members representing Buddhism, Islam and Bahai' faith submitted additional information to be offered to schools along with the Syllabus.

The final RBKC version of *Living Difference IV* was put together and provided by Hampshire later in June 2025, after which it was submitted to the Director of Education and Libraries for approval, which was the final stage of the adoption process. The approval of the Syllabus was received on 26th June 2025.

Two training sessions on the revised *Living Difference IV* syllabus by Justine Ball, County Inspector for History and RE from Hampshire, were arranged for RE teachers and subject leads in RBKC, with the first session taking place on 3rd July 2025 and the second session moved to 11th September 2025.

The RBKC LAS webpage - <https://services2schools.org.uk/Page/18133> - was subsequently updated with the new *Living Difference IV* syllabus and the additional resources ahead of the new academic year 2025-26. It also offers 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 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.

4.1 Teacher Training

In 2024-25, the termly RE Good Practice Network meetings were replaced by 9 virtual training sessions that were facilitated by RE Today. The sessions were open to teachers from RBKC as well as other local authorities across the country. RBKC teachers were welcome to choose to attend as many of the nine sessions as they preferred. Some of the sessions were run by the RE Consultant on the SACRE with others facilitated by other RE Today consultants.

5. Membership Updates

In 2024-25, the SACRE formally welcomed the following members (listed in chronological order of appointment):

- Rev'd Dr Evan McWilliams representing the Diocese of London on Group C
- Councillor David Lindsay on Group D
- Zoe Barton deputised for Celia Platt on Group C as her maternity cover
- Sarah Webber representing the London Diocesan Board of Schools (LDBS) on Group B
- Yusra Omar representing National Education Union (NEU) on Group C
- Christian Kendall-Daw representing Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL) on Group C

- Imran Asif representing Discover Islam on Group A (replacing their previous representative Naif Sheikh)

The following members resigned from the SACRE (listed in chronological order of resignation)

- Rev'd Dr Evan McWilliams representing the Diocese of London on Group B
- Alex Stacey representing the Diocese of Westminster on Group A

Naif Sheikh representing Discover Islam on Group A was replaced by Imran Asif at the request of the nominating body in June 2025.

The membership of Mo O'Donoghue representing the Diocese of Westminster was ceased in Spring 2025 due to non-attendance.

Recruiting and retaining new SACRE members continues to be a challenge. Particularly, it is the SACRE's wish to recruit more to Group C (teacher representatives). Appeals for new teacher members were made whenever information was sent out by the SACRE in the weekly RBKC Schools Circular.

Membership in each category needs to be maintained to ensure that meetings of the SACRE are quorate. During 2024-25, quorum was met in two out of three meetings.

In addition to the above, a request was received from the Humanists UK in Summer 2025 for their representative to join the SACRE as a full member. As the SACRE's existing composition did not have a vacancy for such a representative under Group A, this led to a discussion to consider changing the membership, and this was linked with the review of the SACRE's Constitution. The SACRE agreed to revisit this in 2025-26.

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 2024-25

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	Ian Nicholson 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 (removed by nominating body in June 2025) |
| - Imran Asif Sheikh) | Discover Islam (appointed in June 2025 in place of Naif Sheikh) |

- 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 (resigned in June 2025)
- Mo O'Donoghue Diocese of Westminster (removed in March 2025)
- Claire Bruce-Lamblin Diocese of Westminster

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

- Katrina Quinton Diocese of London
- Revd Dr Evan McWilliams Diocese of London (resigned in June 2025)
- Sarah Webber London Diocesan Board of Schools

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

- Celia Platt National Education Union (NEU) (maternity leave)
- Zoe Barton Celia Platt's maternity cover
- Yusra Omar National Education Union (NEU)
- Christian Kendall-Daw Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL)

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

- Cllr David Lindsay
- 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 2024-25

In addition to the national highlights as mentioned in Item 4 above and the LAS review, key matters included the following:

- Ramadan guidance
- NASACRE/Westhill Awards application project
The Westhill Awards working group shared updates on the progress of their work.
- Review of the SACRE's Constitution - in relation to quorum and approvals (e.g., of meeting minutes) as well as membership with a view to possibly increase numbers to allow for the two co-opted members to become full members and to create space for a representative of non-religious worldviews.
- RE Adviser arrangements for 2025-26
The SACRE agreed to continue with the RE consultancy support from RE Today.

Further information on what the SACRE discussed in 2024-25 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](#).

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 2024-25 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 2024-25.

10. Links with Other Bodies

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

The annual NASACRE Conference 2025 was held on Monday 19 May 2025 in Stratford Town Hall (London). Yusra Omar and Christian Kendall-Daw attended the Conference on behalf of the RBKC SACRE and fed back to the SACRE at their summer term meeting. Full details and copies of the relevant paperwork from the 2025 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

Please see below.

GCSE 2025 Religious Studies

GCSE Religious Studies															
LA	Sch type	School name	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	U	Entry	% of cohort taking RS	
RBKC	Secondary	All Saints Catholic College	14%	11%	13%	19%	17%	7%	7%	7%	4%	0%	100%	94%	
		Chelsea Academy	14%	17%	6%	19%	14%	11%	6%	9%	4%	0%	100%	91%	
		Holland Park School	10%	19%	19%	14%	10%	5%	10%	10%	0%	5%	100%	10%	
		Kensington Aldridge Academy	6%	18%	19%	20%	19%	10%	6%	1%	1%	0%	100%	42%	
		St. Thomas More Language College	5%	10%	13%	18%	15%	16%	11%	4%	7%	1%	100%	98%	
		The Cardinal Vaughan Memorial RC School	23%	24%	11%	18%	12%	4%	6%	2%	0%	0%	100%	98%	
	Secondary Total		13%	16%	12%	18%	15%	9%	7%	5%	3%	0%	100%	66%	
	Special	Kensington Queensmill School	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
		Parkwood Hall Co-Operative Academy	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
	Special Total		0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
RBKC Total			13%	16%	12%	18%	15%	9%	7%	5%	3%	0%	100%	65%	

A Levels 2025 Religious Studies

A Level Religious Studies											
LA	Sch type	Sch name	A*	A	B	C	D	E	U	Entry	% of cohort

											taking RS
RBKC	Secondary	Kensington Aldridge Academy	16.7%	16.7%	0.0%	50.0%	16.7%	0.0%		100%	5.5%
		Holland Park School	20.0%	30.0%	20.0%	20.0%	0.0%	10.0%		100%	11.4%
		The Cardinal Vaughan Memorial RC School	0.0%	40.0%	40.0%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%		100%	2.6%
		Chelsea Academy	0.0%	18.2%	9.1%	36.4%	18.2%	18.2%		100%	9.2%
RBKC Total			9.4%	25.0%	15.6%	31.3%	9.4%	9.4%		100%	6.3%

12. Appendix A

The Requirement for Collective Worship

Introduction

1. 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.
2. 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.)