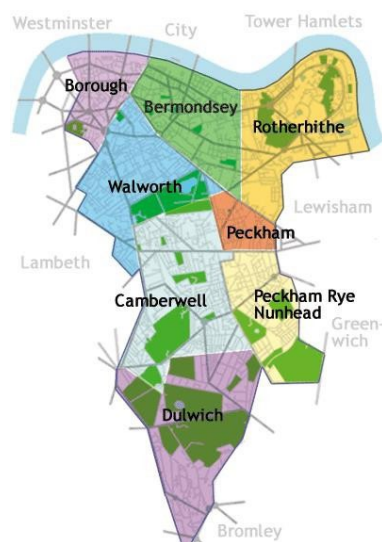


SOUTHWARK

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education

2023- 2024



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Section 1: Introduction

a. Foreword

For 2023/24 Annual SACRE Report

As a SACRE we want to ensure that the Local Authority is able to meet its statutory duties in the oversight of RE provision across the Borough. Our aim continues to ensure that the learning offer from Southwark is vibrant, relevant, and inspiring for all the young people in our schools. And to this end, we are committed to ensuring that all schools in Southwark are supported in terms of curriculum development, collective worship and the teaching and learning of Religious Education.

Part of this is the initiation of an ongoing process of reviewing the membership of SACRE to ensure that all major local religious communities as well as secular alternatives are represented. SACRE embraces this fact in its composition, approach and philosophy. And SACRE meetings continue to be engaging, and productive. All members feel that their views are considered and respected.

In Southwark, we are faced by continued challenges to school funding combined with falling school roles, similar to other London boroughs. Primary schools have been particularly vulnerable in this respect and SACRE seeks to support all schools, whatever their circumstances, to develop and implement quality-first RE for all their pupils. And to support this endeavour, we hope the review of the Locally Agreed Syllabus - with updated curriculum and teaching and learning resources and materials for teachers – leads to even greater engagement with schools. SACRE has always given advice based on an ethos of inclusion and harmony, with equity and inclusivity at the very heart of our approach.

As Chair I am incredibly grateful to all who have positively contributed to the year's work, including many RE Leads as part of the Southwark Schools Collaboration.

I would also like to offer special thanks to our colleagues at Southwark Council for their support and take great pleasure in recommending this report. We look forward to building on this, and to be able to report further progress of our work in our report next year.

James Lewis Chair of Southwark SACRE

b. Overview of SACRE Meetings

Since 1988, each Local Authority (LA) has been required by law to have a Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE).

The remit of a SACRE is principally to oversee the Religious Education (RE) and collective worship within the authority principally to:

- advise Southwark Council upon matters connected with religious worship in community schools and in foundation schools which do not have a religious character. Religious education in these schools is to be given in accordance with the Agreed Syllabus;
- advise Southwark Council on teaching methods, choice of materials and teacher training in religious education and collective worship;
- require Southwark Council to review the locally agreed syllabus for religious education at least every five years.

The reporting period of the 2023-2024 report starts from September 1 2023 and runs to August 31 2024.

SACRE met on three occasions via Zoom during the academic year, 7 December 2022, 8 February 2024 and 24 June 2024. Please see Appendix A for more information.

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

- Attendance and Apologies for Absence
- Local Updates
- Declaration of Interest from Members
- Minutes and Matters Arising
- Future Dates of Meetings
- Appointments of Chair and Vice Chair
- Proposed NASACRE CIO Constitution
- National News
- Ofsted Report on RE
- Website monitoring
- RE Coordinator meetings
- Action Plan Update
- Membership and Recruitment
- RE Schools' Awards
- Self-Evaluation
- Agreed Syllabus Conference – Draft Syllabus
- Action Planning and Annual Reporting

Section 2: Standards and quality of provision in RE

2a. The Locally Agreed Syllabus

RE is not part of the national curriculum. Each LA is required to produce an Agreed Syllabus for RE. Each LA is required to begin reviewing the current Agreed Syllabus within five years of its production. Southwark's current Agreed Syllabus, developed from Newham, was launched on 9th July 2018.

During 2023/24, the Agreed Syllabus (AS) was being reviewed, with the aim of a new, bespoke, Southwark AS, with Agreed Syllabus Conferences planned during the year.

During this academic year, the current syllabus was regularly discussed at teachers' network meetings, alongside the curriculum and teaching and learning resources and materials (non-statutory) that are provided to accompany it.

In addition, the Southwark Schools Collaboration was involved in the process of what SACRE does so there is strong ownership of the new AS as well as new teaching approaches as well as curriculum and teaching and learning resources and materials. Of this approach, engagement, feedback and evaluation to date from schools and RE Leads have been overwhelmingly positive.

2b. Standards and monitoring of RE

Monitoring of quality and standards of education has been done through:

- Verbal feedback from RE Leads at subject network meetings

Feedback from the surveys and verbal comments from RE Leads in schools were also shared in SACRE meetings.

This information will support decision making and action planning for the coming academic year.

Validated RE examination data will be added to this Report once available.

2c. Teacher training materials and advice for schools

Termly RE Coordinators' meetings were held throughout the academic year. The sessions enabled RE Leads from a range of phases and settings to collaborate to share practice, discuss challenges and provide feedback on the teaching of religious education in their setting. From September 23 – July 24, 31 unique, community schools attended subject network sessions (26 primary, 2 secondary and 3 special) as part of the Southwark Collaboration. As part of this, schools discussed their RE pedagogy, shared new approaches and piloted curriculum as well as teaching and learning resources and materials and worked together in partnership, for the benefit of schools in Southwark. Teachers reported that these sessions developed their subject knowledge and confidence in subject leadership. Through school and teacher engagement, feedback to date suggests the new pedagogical approaches implemented in classrooms have facilitated more in-depth discussion and enquiry-led learning, as well as greater pupil voice and pupils' ideas shared. The Collaboration has provided SACRE with an opportunity to hear from teachers to inform decision-making.

During meetings, RE Leads were introduced to a range of local and national initiatives and training/CPD, and were signposted to the local syllabus and curriculum as well as teaching and learning resources and materials on Southwark's Education, Learning and Achievement website.

2d. Advice given to the Local Authority and Other information

There were no formal complaints to SACRE about RE during the year.

No particular advice has been passed from SACRE to the LA outside of SACRE meetings. The LA Link Adviser and SACRE's RE Advisor work closely to ensure the effectiveness of RE across schools within the LA.

Section 3: Collective worship

3a. Standards and monitoring of Collective Worship

It has proved more difficult to monitor standards of Collective Worship than RE through looking at websites.

3b. Determinations

No determinations have been requested in the year 2023/24.

3c. Advice to the Local Authority and Other information

Southwark SACRE's guidance document for Collective worship is on the borough's Education, Learning and Achievement website. Here, teachers will also find a link to a calendar of festivals.

Southwark SACRE's Determinations procedure is available on request. There have been no applications for a determination (to alter the character of collective worship for some or all pupils in a school) in the reporting period.

There were no formal complaints to SACRE about collective worship during the year.

No specific advice was given to the local authority around the provision of collective worship.

Section 4: SACRE Links with other bodies

4a. National Bodies

Southwark SACRE are pleased to be linked with national bodies and receive national updates from the RE Adviser.

Information from NATRE and the REC has been used in meetings and shared with schools where appropriate.

In the coming academic year, SACRE will continue to develop links and make better use of information provided by and for the recently launched RE Hubs website, including the sharing of registered speakers and places of interest and worship in the local area.

In addition, connections and collaborative working links can be forged through the forthcoming NASACRE In Conversation Events with other London SACREs.

4b. Local bodies

Southwark Diocese provide excellent support to SACRE, which is pleased to have Fiona Foreman (Diocesan Board of Education Secondary Education Adviser) and Emily Harris (Southwark Cathedral Education Centre Manager) as members of committee B.

In addition, there is potential for SACRE to develop further and strengthen links with Southwark Interfaith Network.

Section 5: SACRE involvement in the Local Area and Community Cohesion

5a. Governor and head teacher links

A survey has been sent to all head teachers of schools using the syllabus asking for views in readiness for the syllabus review, with excellent response rates.

Head Teachers continue to receive RE Updates from the RE Advisor through Southwark's Education, Learning and Achievement team.

5b. Other local agencies and communities

SACRE has membership which reflects the religious and non-religious diversity of the local community. There are regular reviews of membership to ensure this remains the case.

In addition, there is potential for SACRE to develop further and strengthen links with Southwark Interfaith Network.

In the coming year, the RE Advisor will ensure the sharing of further opportunities to link with other agencies and communities and groups.

5c. Advice on community issues

During the academic year of this report, there were no specific issues arising to which SACRE was required to provide advice to the LA.

Throughout the year, the RE Adviser regularly provided advice on speakers coming into schools and visits to places of worship locally.

In the coming months, this support will continue to be developed as per the above.

Section 6: SACRE Management and partnership with the Local Authority (LA)

6a. Professional and administrative support

During the reporting period, clerking of SACRE was undertaken with thanks to Dipesh Panchal and Maureen Boyle of Governors Services.

As Link Adviser, Lee Souter from Southwark's Education, Learning and Achievement team holds responsibility for SACRE and its budget, as well as liaison with SACRE's RE Advisor. In addition, this team continues to support the running of the RE teachers' meetings and communications with schools.

The Local Authority also host and maintain the SACRE webpage at:

<https://education.southwark.gov.uk/school-improvement-advisory-team/assessment-and-curriculum/curriculum/standing-advisory-council-on-religious-education-sacre>

From the above website, the Annual Reports and communications can be openly accessed by teachers. SACRE and RE planning resources and other useful links sections on this webpage are available with website registration. SACRE Members are also able to register and access the planning resources.

Members of SACRE are able to access all papers, documents, and messages via the Governors Hub application provided through the LA and updated by the Clerk. In addition, membership of SACRE is also listed on this application, but the representation of different worldviews and religions could be

made clearer. These can only be accessed by those who have been provided with a password.

It may be necessary to review the accessibility of some of the required public documents such as SACRE membership, minutes and agendas of meetings.

6b. Finance

The LA allocated funding to support the work of SACRE for the academic year of this report. Some of this funding was allocated to provide a SACRE RE Advisor for up to 9 days during the year. These days include attending SACRE meetings and promoting SACRE membership, providing national updates and information and first response consultancy, etc,

In addition , the LA allocated a non-recurrent budget for the review and development of a new, bespoke, Southwark AS, with Agreed Syllabus Conferences planned during the year.

6c. Membership

Please see Appendix A showing membership and attendance of SACRE for the period of this report.

6d. Professional development opportunities

Representatives were given the opportunity to attend NASACRE's annual conference.

Members receive regular training on Ofsted and other developments in the subject when included in the agenda of meetings and are invited to join the termly RE Subject Network meetings.

In addition, all members will be able to receive free 'kitemark' training when the RE HUBS website is launched, providing advice and guidance on engaging pupils in schools with lived experiences of religions and worldviews.

Appendix 1**Attendance of SACRE during 2023-24**

7 December 2023 – inquorate meeting				
A Other denominations, faiths and beliefs	B Other denominations, faiths and beliefs	C Teacher Representatives	D Authority Representatives	Apologies
Mariano Marcigaglia Robert Vertes		James Lewis	Lee Souter, LA Officer Dipesh Panchal (Clerk)	Jo Patterson John Bonnici Fiona Foreman

8 February 2024				
A Other denominations, faiths and beliefs	B Other denominations, faiths and beliefs	C Teacher Representatives	D Authority Representatives	Apologies
Mariano Marcigaglia John Bonnici Bob Vertes Jo Patterson Trevor Moore	Fiona Foreman Emily Harris	James Lewis	Lee Souter, LA Officer Dipesh Panchal (Clerk)	ClIr Graham Neale ClIr Margy Newens

25 June 2024				
A Other denominations, faiths and beliefs	B Other denominations, faiths and beliefs	C Teacher Representatives	D Authority Representatives	Apologies
Junayd Ahmad John Bonnici Kazeem Fatai Mariano Marcigaglia Trevor Moore Jo Patterson Bob Vertes	Fiona Foreman Emily Harris	James Lewis	Lee Souter, LA Officer Maureen Boyle (Clerk)	Betty Joseph