

London Borough of Waltham Forest

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education



SACRE Annual Report 2020-21

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Introduction from the Chair of SACRE

We are indebted to Ted Cooke, our Chair who led us through most of the year but needed to retire from the chairmanship in March due to ill health. Very sadly Ted passed away in October 2021. He is greatly missed by all those who knew him. As Chair of SACRE for over 25 years he gave outstanding service to SACRE. His unstinting hard work and values of openness and inclusivity gave shape to the work of SACRE in Waltham Forest.

The 2020/21 school year started with all the stress and uncertainty of the previous summer term. The organization of school “bubbles” and strict covid secure procedures made the start of the new academic year unlike any other in the complexity and demands that were put on school leaders, teachers and other staff.

Despite the difficulties SACRE was able to see the launch of the new Waltham Forest Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education at a virtual event in November. The day included an exploration of the syllabus as well as separate training sessions for primary and secondary colleagues.

During the year we have sought to work with the local Authority improve the breath of representation on SACRE.

Following the confusion over awarding grades in public examinations at the end of 2019/20 the government did not publish data at a school or LA level.

At the end of the year our advisor to SACRE, Darra McFadyen, retired. We all wish her well and thank her for her excellent professional advice to SACRE as well as the support she has given to schools and teachers. Her work has helped to promote the importance of high quality Religious Education to improving the lives of the children and the communities within the borough.

Colin Whitehead

Chair Waltham Forest SACRE

The local context

The community of the London Borough of Waltham Forest is culturally and socially diverse. Many people have travelled across the globe to come and make their home among us. This diversity is celebrated in the schools, shops, restaurants, businesses, places of worship and institutions throughout the borough.

Our school population records pupils coming from over 150 different language backgrounds. This diversity is also reflected in the faiths and beliefs of our community, as well as in the varied cultural traditions of those who identify as followers within the major religious groups.

Religious affiliation in Waltham Forest 2011 Census	
Religion	% of pop.
Buddhist	0.8
Christian	48.4
Hindu	2.3
Jewish	0.5
Muslim	21.9
Sikh	0.5
No Religion	18.0
Religion Other	0.4
Religion not stated	7.3

Source: Office for National Statistics

The borough is served by 33 maintained schools (24 primary , 9 secondary, 2 special, 2 6th form colleges), 5 voluntary aided Schools, 1 voluntary controlled, plus 24 academies (18 primary, 4 secondary, 3 special)

1. Religious Education

1.1. Locally Agreed Syllabus

The new syllabus was launched at a virtual event in November. The syllabus was available for download ahead of the launch with hard copies distributed to schools at a later date. The launch, hosted by RE Today, was attended online by 36 teachers representing 26 schools in the borough. The whole day event included an exploration of the syllabus and individual training sessions for primary and secondary colleagues. Schools were advised that the full implementation had been put back to September 2021 in order for schools to prepare and pilot the new syllabus during the spring and summer terms.

1.2. Standards in RE (exam data 2019-20)

Following the confusion over awarding grades in public examinations at the end of 2019/20 the government chose not to publish data at a school or LA level. Therefore the usual analysis of individual school data is not possible.

It is notable that at a national level the number of entries for A level Religious Studies fell from 2,462 (2018/19) to 1,648 (2019/20), a decline from the previous year of around 30%.

The number of entries at KS4 for GCSE remained stable at around 225,000.

1.3. Teaching & Resources

Despite the disruption to our schools caused by the pandemic our schools linking programme run by **The Faith and Belief Forum** has continued..

Last year was the Waltham Forest Programme's third year of linking and saw F&BF connecting 14 classes; engaging over 300 young people from a mix of faith and non-denominational, primary and secondary schools.

The Schools Linking Programme aims to match students from different cultural or faith backgrounds to explore issues of identity, community and belief, based on their lived experience.

Schools normally take turns to host their partner for the first or second link day, and many take the opportunity to include tours of or Q&A sessions in on-site or nearby places of worship. The covid restrictions have made these aspects impossible. However, a number of Linking partnerships have innovated with Linking teachers worked together to facilitate the students becoming pen pals. *"It was great to see the children socially connecting despite physically distancing!"*

More information can be found about the project at:

<https://thelinkingnetwork.org.uk/national-schools-linking-network/waltham-forest/>

The programme funded by The Linking Project and will continue into 2021/22.

A video marking **Holocaust Memorial Day** was distributed to schools as a virtual commemoration and teaching resource. We are grateful to all those involved as participants and organisers. This included: Chris Robbins, (Mayor of WF at the time and now sadly deceased), Cllr Grace Williams (Leader of the Council), Paul Neville (descendant of victims of the holocaust), with SACRE members (Ted Cooke, Ruth Kaufman, Cllr Sweden and Ishaq Jasat), The project was co-ordinated by Donna Miller at Governor Services.

1.4. Complaints about RE

No complaints regarding Religious Education were received by SACRE during the year.

1.5. Withdrawal from RE and collective worship

SACRE did not receive any notifications from schools of parental withdrawals from RE or collective worship.

2. Collective Worship

2.1. Guidance to schools

SACRE updated the guidance for Collective Worship in Waltham Forest schools. Copies of the revised guidance can be found here:

<https://thehub-beta.walthamforest.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2021-03/Collective-Worship-Guidance-for-schools-2021.pdf>

2.2. Determinations

SACRE has reviewed the Determinations Policy & Procedures following a consultation with schools. No requests for determinations relating to collective worship or complaints about how collective worship is delivered in school were received.

3. SACRE

3.1. Other advice: Guidance to schools on Ramadan

SACRE updated the guidance to schools on Ramadan. Copies of the revised guidance can be found here:

https://thehub-beta.walthamforest.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2021-03/Ramadan_Guidance_for_schools_2021.pdf

3.2. School survey

It was intended that SACRE survey schools to gain a better understanding of the provision made for RE across LA and to identify those areas in which SACRE could assist further development.

Work was completed on developing the online survey but the continuing pandemic was not the ideal time to gain the response when schools are under

such stress. It is hoped that an Annual SACRE survey of schools can be introduced at some point in the future.

3.3. Membership

SACRE has been in discussion with the LA with regard to the membership. A new protocol for recruiting members into SACRE has been established. New members into Group A have helped enhance the representation. However, concern about the lack of a broad representation in Group C from teachers remains.

3.4. Links with local SACREs

Members of SACRE made a series of visits to observe other local SACREs in action. This was greatly facilitated by meetings now being held online. The experience was most useful and resulted members returning with suggestions to improve the quality of our meetings as well as indicating how SACRE may be effective in promoting excellence in teaching and learning RE.

3.5. Safeguarding

A role description for a lead safeguarding member for SACRE has been developed and all members have now familiar with the duties as set out in “Keeping Children safe in Education”

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/954314/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_2020 -
Update - January 2021.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/954314/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_2020_-_Update_-_January_2021.pdf)

3.6. Thinking ahead: Religion and World Views

The publication “Religion and World Views, The Way Forward” was published in 2018, as the culmination of a two-year review by the Commission on RE.

SACRE had not been able to discuss the report when it was first launched, but set aside some time for discussion during 2020/21.

The review's recommendations on RE provision were aimed at government rather than SACREs, and the government chose not to pursue these recommendations.

Nonetheless, the publication contains the result of a lot of evidence gathering and thoughtful consideration, supported by many independent organisations, which gave SACRE plenty of food for thought. Particular questions for us in Waltham Forest include:

- Is the national picture of erratic RE quality and provision, with much of the teaching by non-specialists, mirrored in Waltham Forest?
- Can we incorporate some of the ideas for a broader, richer National Entitlement in our own resources for schools? and
- Might we want to initiate locally some of the additional (optional) SACRE envisaged by the CRE, even without the national change they recommend?

This discussion will help inform our planning for the future.

<https://www.commissiononre.org.uk/final-report-religion-and-worldviews-the-way-forward-a-national-plan-for-re/>

3.7. Annual Plan

In the summer of 2021 SACRE confirmed the priorities for the work of the meeting in the coming academic year 2021-22.

- Support the implementation of the new Agreed Syllabus
- Contribute to the Covid Recovery Plan for schools
- Promote understanding and collaboration between schools that serve different communities across the borough
- Support the development of Primary RE leadership
- Support the subject knowledge of RE teachers
- Improve SACRE impact and effectiveness

Appendix A Membership

Group A Other Christian denominations and other faiths represented in Waltham Forest		
African Caribbean Free Church	1	<i>vacancy</i>
Bah'ai	1	<i>vacancy</i>
Buddhism	1	Mr Pilling
Free Church	1	<i>vacancy</i>
Hinduism	1	Mrs Tara Khare
Islam	4	Mr Akhtar, Mr Looch, Mr Qureshi, <i>vacancy</i>
Judaism	1	Mr Braham
Roman Catholic	1	<i>vacancy</i>
Sikhism	1	Mr Tarsem Bhogal
Pagan	1	Mr Stygal
Group B The Church of England		
Appointed by the Diocese of Chelmsford Education Committee with the Synod of the Waltham Forest Deanery	4	Mr Cooke, Fr Summers, Ms Waller, Fr Walsh.
Group C The Teachers and Educators of the borough		
Headteacher	1	<i>vacancy</i>
Early years	1	Ms Lloyd
Primary	1	Ms Soar
Special schools	1	<i>vacancy</i>
Primary Academy	1	<i>vacancy</i>
Secondary Academy	2	Mr I Jasat + <i>vacancy</i>
Secondary Schools	2	Ms L Hamilton + <i>vacancy</i>
KS5	1	Mr O'Brien
Higher Education	1	Mr O'Neil
School Governor	1	Mr Whitehead
Group D The London Borough of Waltham Forest and the community		
Elected Members	4	Cllr Rehman, Cllr Sweeden, Cllr Saumarez Cllr Lyons.
Director of Learning (or appropriate nominee)	1	Mr Kilgallon
Humanist non-faith representative		Ms Kaufman
Others (non-voting)		
RE Advisor to WF SACRE		Ms McFadyen
Waltham Forest Faith Community Forum		<i>vacancy</i>
Faith and Community Officer (Met Police)		PC S McDonald

Appendix B Meetings and attendance

Key

Attended: **Y**

Absent: **-**

Apologies received: **ap**

Membership:

	Autumn 2020		Spring 2021		Summer 2020	
Meetings	16 th Sept	25 th Nov	27 th Jan	24 th Mar	21 st April	7 th Jul
Mr Pilling	ap	ap	ap	ap	ap	Y
Mrs Tara Khare	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Mr Looch	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mr Akhtar	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mr Mannon						Y
Ms Vankad						Y
Mr Qureshi	-	-	-	-	-	
Mr Braham	Y	Y	Y	ap	Y	Y
Mr Tarsem Bhogal	Y	ap	-	-	-	-
Mr Stygal	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	ap
Mr Cooke	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	ap
Fr Summers	-	-	-	-	-	-
Ms Waller	-	-	-	-	-	-
Ms Lloyd	-	-	-	-	-	-
Ms Soar	Y	-	Y	ap	Y	-
Mr I Jasat	Y	Y	Y	Y	ap	Y
Ms L Hamilton	-	-	-	-	-	-
Ms K O'Brien	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mr D O'Neil		-	-	-	-	-
Mr Whitehead	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Cllr Rehman,	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Cllr Sweeden,	ap	Y	-	Y	-	Y
Cllr Saumarez	ap	-	-	-	Y	-
Cllr Lyons	-	-	-	-	-	Y
Cllr Anna Mbachu				Y	-	Y
Mr Kilgallon	ap	Y	ap	Y	ap	
Mr Gerry Kemble						Y
Ms Kaufman	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Ms McFadyen	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
PC A Akano	Y	Y	Y	Y	ap	Y

Appendix C

Constitution of the Waltham Forest Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education [SACRE]

1. Defined Terms / Acronyms:

Adviser	The LA's professional RE technical lead
Agreed Syllabus	The approved RE syllabus adopted by the LA
DfE	Department for Education
HMI	Her Majesty's Inspector
LA	The Local Authority known as Waltham Forest Council.
Members	Nominated and approved SACRE person eligible to vote
Ofsted	Office for Standards in education- the sector inspectorate
Other Persons	Any member of public eligible to join SACRE but does not hold voting right solutions for SACRE work topics
Representative	The LA's professional representative from Children's Services
RE	Religious Education
Working Parties,	A delegated group from within SACRE tasked with recommending

2. The purpose of the Waltham Forest SACRE is:-

1. **To advise the Local Authority (LA)** on matters connected with collective worship in community schools and the religious education (RE) to be taught in accordance with the local agreed syllabus in community and voluntary aided schools. SACRE also provides advice to Academy, Independent and free schools within the LA boundary.
2. SACRE may respond to other matters regarding religious education which the borough may refer to the SACRE, or as the SACRE may see fit e.g. challenging the provider with regards to opportunities to study the subject, training of staff, and standards of achievement.
3.
 - a. SACRE is the local body to agree a "determination", for a particular school, on application by the Headteacher. Whilst the Law requires the majority of acts of collective worship in schools, to be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character, the Act also gives to SACRE the power to amend this requirement by a determination and put in its place an alternative form of collective worship, for some or all pupils.
 - b. SACRE may appoint a sub-committee to exercise this role which will consist of the chair, the vice chair and one representative of each SACRE group.
4. **To work with and actively support the Borough** in implementing the Waltham Forest Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education.

3. The work of SACRE will be achieved in partnership with the interested parties by:-

- a) Being given information about the existing provision for RE in schools, i.e. levels of staffing, resources, curriculum used, progress data, achievement and results.
- b) Providing support for RE within the LA and to schools, subject to available resources
- c) Publicising SACRE's role and function to Headteachers, Governors, Teachers, Parents, Academies, Free Schools, Independent Schools and the wider Faith Communities and the local community as a whole.
- d) Advising those in c) about the nature of RE, its legal requirement in schools and their responsibilities for ensuring its provision.
- e) Supporting and fostering community cohesion, citizenship and interfaith and cultural links
- f) Encouraging members of SACRE to lead and participate in training activities
- g) Advising resources for the support of the WF Agreed Syllabus and the promotion of good citizenship, community cohesion and interfaith links
- h) The Council keeping up to date with national developments from HMI, Ofsted, and DfE with regard to the development and teaching of RE and provision for collective worship
- i) Offering advice, support and participation in the Borough's complaints procedure when appropriate/on request.
- j) Discussing in a local context national policy, in relation to RE.

5. **(i) To publish an annual report** (as per Circular 1/94) which shall:-

- a) Specify any matters in respect of which SACRE has given advice to the borough
- b) Broadly describe the nature of advice given
- c) Where any matter was not referred to the SACRE, give SACRE's reason for offering advice
- d) Report on the public examination results in RE / RS for the previous school year
- e) Report on activities undertaken to promote and develop RE and collective worship in the borough's schools and community
- f) Describe work towards the production of/ review of/modification of the Waltham Forest Agreed Syllabus
- g) Describe work done by SACRE to promote community cohesion in the LA.

(ii) SACRE may appoint a sub-committee to carry out this function which must include representatives of all four groups.

3. **Membership**

The Waltham Forest Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) shall consist of representative members appointed by Waltham Forest Council (the Local Authority) to represent:

- Group 'A': Christians and other religious denominations as will appropriately reflect the religious traditions of those within the Local Authority (See appendix A)
- Group 'B': The Church of England
- Group 'C': Teachers Associations Recognised by the Authority and Other educational establishments
- Group 'D': The Local Authority and non-faith organisations

The Membership of the SACRE will be reviewed annually at the first meeting of the autumn term.

4. Composition and quorum

All Groups the composition shall be as presented in Appendix A of this document.

Meetings of the SACRE shall be quorate when at least one representative member from each of the four representative groups is present; four representatives. If the meeting is not quorate, the meeting can continue, but decisions would have to be ratified at the next meeting of the SACRE.

A Working Party meeting does not constitute a formal SACRE meeting (see paragraph 6).

5. Co-opted Members

The representative groups on the SACRE may co-opt other persons for such purposes and such length of time as the representative groups on SACRE decide. Co-opted members may resign at any time and may be removed by representative Groups at any time.

6. Working Parties

SACRE may establish and appoint members to Working Parties which may include non-members of SACRE that have the expertise to contribute to a particular subject/topic. Any established Working Party will have a 'terms of reference' for its work leading to recommendations to SACRE rather than the delegation of decision making. The composition for a working party will include a member representative from each Group of the constitution of SACRE.

7. Position of Chair and Vice Chair of SACRE

The elections of the Chair and Vice Chair of SACRE shall be conducted annually by the representative members of the SACRE, at its first meeting of the council cycle.

Each represented member will have one vote for the purpose of electing a Chair and Vice Chair.

The Chair and Vice Chair of SACRE will be elected from amongst members of Groups A, B, C and D. If there is more than one candidate for either position, the candidate receiving the most votes shall be elected.

In the absence of a Chair and vice chair', an executive member shall be elected to lead the SACRE for that meeting.

The prime duties of the Chair, with the support of the Vice Chair are to:

- Manage the meetings of SACRE
- Attend meetings with the LA as necessary
- Represent the WF SACRE to other bodies (e.g. NASACRE) as required and
- To lead on any other matters as agreed by SACRE

8. Advisor to SACRE

The LA will allocate appropriate advisor time to the SACRE. The specific responsibilities of this advisor are to:

- Provide advice to the SACRE and any Working Parties on professional issues
- Advise and update SACRE members on any new government guidance or policy documents
- Support SACRE to carry out its role of monitoring and supporting schools within the LA for the delivery of the RE and Collective Worship curriculums.
- Provide updates and information to the LA as necessary

9. Voting Procedures in SACRE

On any issue to be decided by the SACRE, except as provided in Section 7 paragraph 2, only the four representative groups shall be entitled to a vote and each group shall have a single vote.

Individual representative members cannot vote separately. Co-opted members are not entitled to vote; nor are the advisor(s) to SACRE.

All issues shall be decided by a simple majority vote, there shall not be a casting vote.

All decisions taken by the SACRE, including the election of Chair and Vice Chair, shall be recorded by the Clerk in the minutes of the meeting.

10. Voting procedures within each Representative Group

Before any representative group casts its single vote on any issue to be decided by the SACRE it shall meet to discuss the issue. The decision of the representative group shall be determined by a simple majority vote in which each member of the group has one vote.

Issues shall be decided by a simple majority vote and there shall not be a casting vote. In the case of a tied vote the group shall abstain from voting on the issue in SACRE; this abstention should be recorded by the Clerk.

Where there is an instance when a meeting is not quorate, votes may be polled via email to the Clerk to SACRE A written proposal must be provided to members in advance of this vote requiring a yes/no vote only.

11. Terms of Office for Representative Members

The representative members shall hold office until such members' terms of office come to an end or they resign or they become otherwise ineligible for membership.

When a vacancy arises, the LA must attempt to appoint a replacement member to the SACRE to represent the same group as the retiring member.

Any representative/ member may resign at any time.

12. Declarations of Interest

Interests, whether personal or prejudicial, should be declared annually. If a member has a prejudicial/personal interest in a particular, one-off, agenda item they should declare that interest and withdraw from the meeting and take no part in the decision making process.

13. Disqualification

Members or co-opted members who fail to attend three consecutive meetings without a satisfactory explanation will have their membership reviewed by the SACRE. The Local Authority may remove any representative or co-opted member that has failed to attend three consecutive meetings without valid reason.

14. Administrative arrangements

The SACRE must utilise its allocated funding to secure a Clerk to SACRE that will:

- Draft an agenda in accordance to requirements and legislation no less than 21 days prior to the meeting
- The agenda must be distributed to all members no less than seven days in advance of the listed meeting; all information shall be sent at least electronically and in hard format as necessary
- The minutes of each meeting shall be produced and approved with the Chair and Clerk within 20 working days of the meeting, the Clerk shall distribute these minutes to all members electronically
- The minutes of each meeting shall be listed on the agenda of the subsequent meeting for approval and shall be re issued to all members with the agenda for the forthcoming listed meeting
- Maintain an attendance register of attendance at SACRE and advise on attendance matters as detailed in point 13 of the constitution
- Publish all documents relating to the SACRE on the LA's website for public scrutiny

15. Financial Arrangements

The LA will provide the SACRE with an allocation of funding for the purposes of maintaining the work of the committee, securing professional advice as required, resourcing syllabus development and maintaining an overview of the provision in schools.

16. Disputes and Complaints

The intention of SACRE is to be collaborative and collective to ensure that no particular sector or member is unduly favoured within Waltham Forest. Any disputes or complaints shall be debated and resolved by SACRE at its meetings. Should any party/parties feel that matters have not been satisfactorily resolved they should reference the Council's Complaints Policy and Procedures for guidance.