

Wandsworth Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE)

Annual Report for the academic year September 2018- August 2019

1. This annual report of Wandsworth SACRE outlines the work of SACRE during the academic year 2018 to 2019. It also includes GCSE and A-level statistics for Religious Studies for 2019.

Religious Education

Wandsworth's Agreed Syllabus

2. The agreed syllabus was adopted in September 2017. As was the case last year, training, mostly relating to subject knowledge, has again been provided for primary RE subject leaders to help in its implementation.

3. Monitoring standards and provision

SIAMS reports (of Section 48 denominational inspections of Church of England schools) and S48 reports for Catholic schools were provided to SACRE for information/discussion. Two SIAMS reports were presented, both excellent, which is the new descriptor for the highest judgment outcome in CE schools. Five S48 Catholic reports were considered, four of which were outstanding and one good. Of the 13 schools Ofsted inspected in 2018 -19, seven contained significant comments on RE or spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Complaints

4. No complaints concerning RE were received during the year.

Methods of Teaching and Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

5. The primary RE subject leaders' network met once in each term and received high quality training by a professional RE consultant. The foci for meetings in the last year were
 - RE and good community relations (October 2018)
 - Spring Festivals (February 2019) - Christianity (Easter) and Sikhism (Baisakhi); Hindu festivals and dance
 - Buddhism (June 2019)

The email network group set up by the LA SACRE Officer has continued to enable members to keep in touch with each other to seek advice and share good practice. It includes some co-ordinators from independent schools as well as LA community schools.

Collective Worship

6. No monitoring of collective worship, either of quality or compliance to statutory requirements, took place during the year. No requests for determinations were received during the year. No schools in Wandsworth have been given determinations in the past.
7. No complaints regarding collective worship in the community schools of Wandsworth were referred to SACRE during the year.

Composition of SACRE, Attendance and the focus of meetings

8. Representation is generally good from the local authority, faith communities and teachers. One meeting had no attendance from Group C. New members were welcomed to all groups and vacancies were filled in groups B and C. There was again no attendance by the Hindu community during the year however.

Meetings held in the reporting year

9. Wandsworth SACRE met on three occasions during the academic year 2018 - 2019. All meetings were held during the evening in the Town Hall. In future, it is planned that one meeting a year will be held at the place of worship of one of the Group A members. The NASACRE briefing is a standing item at all SACRE meetings.

Autumn Term Meeting 2018

10. Joint meeting of SACRE with the Multi-faith Group, held on Monday 5th November 2018.
11. The final report from the Commission on Religious Education (CoRE) was discussed and the recommendations were considered. It was agreed to provide feedback to the Commissioners and NASACRE.
12. The recommendations from "A New Settlement Revised: Religion and Belief in Schools (Westminster Faith Debates 2018)" were noted and it was agreed to provide feedback to the authors.
13. The Chair of the Strategic Hate Crime Group gave an update. It was noted that this is fortunately not a major problem in Wandsworth, which though very diverse, is a community in which most residents live in harmony. However, underreporting could be a problem and it was important to provide a variety of communication channels in which people felt safe to come forward if there were issues.
14. The Ofsted monitoring and SIAMS reports were noted.

Spring Term Meeting 2019

15. Meeting held on Monday, 4th March, 2019.
16. A presentation was given on private fostering, by the Head of the Looked After Children Service. Members of SACRE were asked to consider if they were aware of children in private fostering arrangements in their faith communities and the legal aspects of the situation were explained. It was likely that there were many unofficial cases of private fostering as only five were known of by the LA. To raise awareness, it was agreed to send the presentation to members of the council and to schools.
17. The SACRE Annual Report for 2017-18 was presented and discussed. The successful implementation of Wandsworth's Agreed Syllabus was noted.
18. Kate Bond, Assistant Director of Children's Services, introduced the report on GCSE and A level results. Whilst Wandsworth again generally had excellent results in comparison with national averages, she noted that Wandsworth had the biggest gap of the inner London boroughs between the attainment of disadvantaged students and their peers.
19. There had again been a reduction in the numbers of students studying Religious Studies, mostly because of the further decline in the short course. It was noted that some academies entered none, or very few students for RS qualifications. It was decided to circulate the annual report and exam results to all secondary schools to show case the successes at some schools.

20. In relation to addressing disadvantage and improving the life chances for these children, there was a discussion about the LA's provision for 2-year olds, the benefits it could offer and the low take up of free nursery provision amongst the disadvantaged.
21. The LA SACRE officer had produced advice on Ramadan for schools, After discussion, it was agreed to circulate the guidance leaflet to all schools and put in on the LA's main website.
22. The evaluation of Faith Direct was noted. It had again been a very successful and informative experience for those students from secondary schools who were able to take part. Unfortunately resources would not stretch to providing this event for primary schools, but it was agreed that it could be offered to primary school RE subject leaders as a CPD opportunity. .

Summer Term Meeting 2019

23. Meeting held on Monday 17th June, 2019, preceded by an induction briefing/refresher training on the role of SACRE for all members
24. The revised SACRE constitution was presented. The main changes related to the provision of greater details in the membership of the four groups; the mechanism whereby a new faith group could join Group A and a Code of Conduct, based on a model from NASACRE.
25. The SACRE Officer presented information on the changes in the new Ofsted framework, in place from September 2019, and where they were relevant to the provision and leadership of RE. It was noted that RE was likely to have a greater prominence in the new framework.
26. The LA SACRE Officer had attended NASACRE's annual conference in May – theme "Cohesive Communities and Effective Partnerships - RE near and far " and reported back on the presentations. Ideas from the "Beacon of Hope" presentation from a Liverpool secondary school were felt to be an initiative worth pursuing and the SACRE members from St Cecilia's school agreed to take this forward.
27. Following on from the Relationship, Health and Sex Education (RSE) Statutory Guidance published by the DfE and the adverse attention and protests that this has attracted in Birmingham, SACRE members were asked to read the guidance prior to the next meeting, when it would be an item for discussion with the Multi-Faith Forum.

Links with other bodies

28. Wandsworth SACRE is affiliated to the National Association of SACREs (NASACRE).

Professional and Administrative Support

29. SACRE meetings are clerked by a Democratic Services Officer from Wandsworth Council. An officer is provided to support the LA. Specialist RE professional support for SACRE is provided by an external consultant, Lesley Prior, who supports a number of London SACREs.

Finance

30. The annual budget for support for SACRE in 2018-19 was £6000, an increase from the £4000 which had been the funding for many years. This funds the external consultant, LA SACRE Officer, NASACRE membership and other incidental expenses.

Standards of RE and Religious Studies (RS) in secondary schools

31. See appendix.