

Hillingdon SACRE Annual Report 2024-2025

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1. Introduction**Hillingdon Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE)**

Every Local Authority is required to have a SACRE which is made up of four groups: (A) Faith representatives, (B) The Church of England, (C) Teachers and (D) Councillors and Local Authority representatives.

SACREs have responsibility for advising a Local Authority (LA) on religious education and collective worship in its schools. SACREs have a duty to publish an annual report. The main purpose of the annual report is to hold the LA to account, by informing the Secretary of State and key partners what advice SACRE gave the LA during the year and how that was responded to; this includes advice on RE and Collective Worship in those schools for which the LA has responsibility.

Hillingdon SACRE is a member of the National Association of SACREs (NASACRE). A copy of this report, which covers the academic year 2023-2024, will be sent to NASACRE.

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1a. Chair's Introduction

It is a pleasure to introduce the annual report of the Hillingdon Borough Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) for 2024-25. This is a legally required document summarising the work of Hillingdon Borough SACRE. Thank you to Stacey Burman who has collated and written much of the content.

Our function is to advise the Local Authority (LA) on matters relating to collective worship in community schools and on religious education delivered in accordance with the locally agreed syllabus.

Hillingdon SACRE continues its partnership with the Hillingdon LEAP and Hillingdon Learning Partnership (HLP) to provide high quality RE specific CPD sessions and support for all subject leaders. These sessions are FREE for all schools to join, whichever type of school you are in. These CPD sessions have been "effective in critically analysing the syllabus and identifying areas where it needs improvement" and to "provided valuable input for RE development" (Hillingdon teachers, June 2024).

Hillingdon is a proudly diverse community, recognising a person's religious beliefs and traditions can be intrinsic to their sense of identity and contribute to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural. We ensure some of our meeting time is always dedicated to this subject, clearly reflecting our commitment to contributing to our 'Universal Promise' to prepare children for adulthood.

SACRE continues to review its membership, constantly striving to increase and diversify its membership, and this year have worked hard to also build relationships with other local and national organisations, with whom we can now work collaboratively on further interfaith materials and projects which go beyond our statutory duties.

We are now in a position to devise plans for our first ever cross Borough Artwork Competition to celebrate this diversity. This will be conducted next academic year, and we are hoping to see a whole range of entries demonstrative of the diverse community of Hillingdon.

Hillingdon SACRE continues working together across our community to secure some of our key priorities highlighted in the report. These priorities will be sharply focused on making a difference to the RE learning experiences that children and young people have in classrooms, enabled by confident and knowledgeable teachers who enhance pupils' academic and personal development whilst preparing them well for a life well-lived in modern Britain.

It is an immense privilege to Chair Hillingdon's SACRE meetings, ably supported by Stacey Burman and our clerk, Liz Penny. Thank you to all the SACRE members for their hard work over the year.

Their commitment and support throughout my time as the Chair has been invaluable and I feel confident this unwavering commitment will continue into the new academic year.



Sumen Starr
Chair of Hillingdon SACRE

1b. Overview of academic year 2024-25

Hillingdon SACRE met three times online during the academic year 2024-25. Each meeting was quorate, and further details of attendance can be seen in Appendix 1.

The RE Advisor, with the support of the LA, ensures all materials and minutes are updated regularly. All agendas and approved minutes of these meetings are saved regularly and made accessible to the public via the Hillingdon Council [website](#), with further resources and supporting information for Hillingdon schools on the LEAP [website](#).

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

- Engagement and Training of primary teachers and support for Secondary teachers
- Communication with schools, including newsletters supported by LA
- Borough RE Calendar Competition
- Accommodation for SACRE meetings and the move from solely online meetings
- Budget and Advisory support for SACRE and support from the LA
- Website access to SACRE information
- Attendance and membership to SACRE, including updating the constitution
- Discussion around Sentientism and wider Muslim (Shia) representation on SACRE
- Determinations and Declarations of Interest of members
- SACRE action planning and self-evaluation
- Ofsted updates and subject reports, including of May 2021 and April 2024
- Membership to NASACRE and attendance to In Conversation Events with London SACREs
- NASACRE AGM and conference
- Opportunities for members' development in understanding other worldviews and religions
- Development of the subject following national research, including the National Content Standard
- Connecting with other organisations, including RE Hubs
- Locally Agreed Syllabus
- Opportunities for members to support schools in delivering high quality RE
- Creating additional guidance materials for schools, including 'religious observance'
- Aligning SACRE works with LA initiatives e.g. Universal Offer
- Provision of additional guidance for schools e.g. Religious Observance
- Holocaust Memorial events and resources
- Building links with local Hillingdon Interfaith Group
- Interfaith Dialogue Conference for Pupils

The support work of SACRE is recorded in an action plan which is continually updated by the RE Advisor. This action planning takes into account awareness of national developments raised via the RE Advisor, and any feedback received from teachers in schools, including those shared through the Teachers' Network Groups.

All support work is continually logged and shared with Members via a detailed action plan. From academic year 2024 onwards, members have agreed to complete an annual self-evaluation, which will then be used to inform this support work.

2. Standards and quality of provision in RE

When the RE Adviser took over the role in the previous academic year, it was agreed that the main priorities for SACRE were to establish links with schools, and to open lines of communication in order to ascertain the provision and standards of RE in schools. This year, focus has been given to establish a baseline of understanding with these schools and SACRE members about expectations for RE in schools.

2a. School Support

Teacher Sessions

During the academic year of this report, the RE Advisor, with support of the LA and liaising with the Hillingdon Learning Partnership, has coordinated, successfully planned and delivered 3 termly networks CPD sessions with subject leaders from primary and secondary schools, including academies, faith schools and community schools. These have been provided at no additional costs to Hillingdon schools.

The information/evidence referenced throughout this report information has been gleaned by the RE Advisor through conversations, visits, reports surveys and subsequent email communications with schools as part of or following these sessions (see section 2b).

Sessions have included clarification and sharing of research around what high quality, meaningful RE can look like in schools, with opportunities to share and discuss planning documents to support this type of RE. Teachers are clear about Ofsted expectations around the including of different types of knowledge. This year, teachers have been sharing examples of learning and have even started to co-plan RE learning in line with these expectations in readiness for the Agreed Syllabus Review.

Schools Website

The LA continues to support the development and revising of the SACRE pages for schools on their website, which now include updated resources and information, as well as guidance documents to support the delivery of RE as a subject as well as including guidance documents for headteachers to support their pupils on matters relating to whole school issues and concerns beyond the RE curriculum. SACRE will endeavour to continue adding support materials to this website.

School Communication

Further to this, the LA has supported the development and sharing of bulletins and newsletters devised by the RE Advisor, meaning that all schools have been receiving national and local updates and been notified of the support available (including the networks, above). This has not only ensured schools are reminded of the importance and relevance of the statutory subject, but have also been continually informed as to how they are able to provide it.

Advice to Schools

Last year, Hillingdon SACRE devised, approved and shared some written guidance on this for head teachers, which has now also been included in the exemplar materials on the NASACRE [website](#) under 'Other Guidance from SACREs to Schools.' In addition, in response to requests from the LA, SACRE members were asked to provide some information to support a Boroughwide 'Critical Incident' policy.

See also Section 5 for 'Interfaith Events and Resources'.

2b. The Agreed Syllabus

When the current RE Advisor began the role in supporting SACRE, the purchase of a Syllabus had already been agreed and [shared](#) with schools in April 2022, and throughout the academic year of this report, the RE Advisor conducted informal reviews and consultation sessions with teachers, via the aforementioned networks (2a), as well as a series of electronic surveys.

Meanwhile, SACRE has regularly engaged in informal discussions around national research developments and Ofsted publications and have even engaged with some examples/activities in their own meetings.

It was felt unanimously that the current syllabus was not felt to support schools in sufficiently recognising effective and meaningful RE in alignment with recent developments in the subject (please see section 2c), and therefore, it was unilaterally agreed to conduct a more formal review of the Syllabus by convening an **Agreed Syllabus Conference** (ASC). This would have the same membership as SACRE, which now has increased representation of teachers following the actions of the previous year. The LA was informed of this via letter, and further funding was requested for this work.

The first meeting of this ASC was held in the summer term, in which a new pedagogical model was shared and agreed as effectively reflecting the interplay of the different types of knowledge which leads to meaningful RE for pupils, as well as being helpful for teachers in planning the learning.

It was unanimously agreed, by both the ASC and SACRE that:

- The syllabus would have a statutory section as well as a non-statutory section
- The non-statutory section would include additional materials that could be added to and enhanced following teacher reflection, supporting the implementation of the requirements as specified in the statutory section
- The RE Advisor would draft the statutory section, to include the pedagogical model (as above), and work with teachers in the coming year support the above materials in the non-statutory section.

2c. School Provision, Attainment and Quality of Religious Education

The setting up of the teacher networks and communications systems (as specified in section 2a and 2b) have allowed some initial consultation with schools to determine a picture of RE provision in the Borough.

Primary

Conclusions drawn from the information provided by schools is that the Syllabus is not as helpful as it could be in defining or planning for high quality RE which reflects the research and other developments in the subject, nor Ofsted expectations.

Schools that have engaged with us have informed us they are predominantly following purchased curriculum packages (of which the RE Advisor is familiar), without awareness or confirmation that these are adherent to the current syllabus.

All schools in the network have now been exposed to a range of exemplar curriculum and planning documents, which reflect the pedagogy of RE being promote. Many of these schools now recognise where these purchased packages do not meet the promoted pedagogy and are keen for a new/revised syllabus to be created that meets these expectations.

Secondary

The current Hillingdon Agreed Syllabus recommends that 5% of curriculum time is dedicated to RE, which should equate to approximately 38-45 hours for KS3 and 30-36 hours for KS4, excluding time allocated for collective worship. No specific proposal has been included or is made for Key Stage 5.

RE (or RS) remains statutory for all pupils in every key stage, whether or not sitting a GCSE or equivalent qualification in the subject. While requirements for some academies may differ, their funding arrangements ensure that they make provision for all pupils in RE. However, in the recent [Ofsted](#) Report, it is clear that nationally “Fewer than 1/5 schools ... included any discernible RE content at KS4 and in sixth form for those who had not chosen to study the subject at GCSE or A Level.” This number falls to 1/2 with no KS4 RE at all for academies, and disappointingly, 1/3 of schools did not even teach RE at KS3.

As a result, all schools have been made aware of their statutory obligations, as well as the Hillingdon ‘Universal Promise’ via the SACRE website and through communication via the LA and with a newsletter. In conversation with the secondary schools engaged with the networks, there are similar findings, in which only those pupils who have opted at GCSE actually studying any discernible RE content in KS4.

Subject Leaders in schools have shared with the RE Advisor some of the barriers to providing an appropriate and sufficient curriculum in line with these requirements, including lack of specialist teachers to deliver or the budget to devise one. Therefore, whilst SACRE is aware that further clarification may need to be provided in a revised syllabus in due course, without additional support or funding, schools themselves are less likely or able to rectify the deficit.

2d. Standards and Quality of Provision of RE - Public Examinations

Table 1 presents data collated from the Teaching Hours for RE from the School Workforce Census for the previous year, which may also provide some information about the provision of RE in secondary schools in the Borough.

Please note: Unless stated otherwise, all schools are academies with no religious character, and Ofsted “rating” where applicable.

It appears only 3 schools/institutions (8, 13, 20) are providing a minimum of 5% curriculum time for RE in Years 12 and 13, and two of these are faith schools. In addition, most schools are also failing to provide adequate curriculum provision for Key Stage 3 (Years 7-9).

While most schools continue to enter pupils for the Full Course (%FC ent), no schools entered pupils for the Short Course.

It is notable that one school (7) is providing double the minimum time for Key Stages 3 and 4, which is likely to be contributing to the exceptional GSCE results of 86.4% of pupils achieving grades 9-4. This is less surprising when we consider this is a school with a Catholic religious character.

Three further schools (1, 12, 15) are also commendable for entering most of the cohort into the GCSE examination with 76% or more of pupils achieving grades 9-4 in the GSCE, one of which is not a faith school either.

Table 1 Teaching Hours for RE from School Workforce Census

Schools		%hours allocated to RE Provision							% FC entries	% 9-4
		% Y7	% Y8	% Y9	% Y10	% Y11	% Y12	% Y13		
1	CoE	5.93	6.65	5.35	9.84	9.89	2.77	3.1	99.5	76.2
2		0	0.68	3.87	1.61	1.45	0	0	9.2	100
3	"Outstanding"	3.68	3.67	5.59	3.6	3.61	0	0	93.6	58.2
4	"Outstanding"	3.48	3.78	3.31	2.25	2.08	2.84	2.73	9.7	87
5									95.6	47.9
6		3.76	3.7	3.51	0.95	0	0	0	0	
7	Catholic	10.16	10.03	11.83	11.97	11.46	5.56	5.13	100	86.4
8	(LA) "Good"	5.95	5.76	4.8	2.68	3.3	0	0	25	70.7
9	(LA) "Good"	0.72	0	2.68	2.34	4.06	0	0	93.7	61
10	"Outstanding"								0	
11	"Good"	4.35	2.33	2.86	0	0	0	0	0	
12	Sikh "Good"	2.67	2.9	5.8	5.46	4.73	6.82	5.88	91.1	76.7
13	"Good"	3.68	3.67	5.59	3.6	3.61	0	0	93.6	58.2
14	"Good"	3.48	3.78	3.31	2.25	2.08	2.84	2.73	9.7	87
15	"Good"	0	0	7.88	7.49	6.57			97.8	78.9
16	"RI"	0	0	7.85	6.48	6.85			100	57
17	"Outstanding"	0	0	5.7	4.1	1.19	0	0	7.5	94.4
18	"Outstanding"	3.76	3.7	3.51	0.95	0	0	0	0	
19	"Outstanding"	5	4.7	2.56	3.83	2.48	6.84	6.93	21.4	85.1

5 other schools (3, 4, 9, 13, 16) entered the majority of their cohort but with less pupils achieving the higher grades. All of these apart from 1 school, which was apparently rated as Requiring Improvement (16), gave pupils access to less than 5% of the curriculum time for the subject.

Across the borough, 78.9% of pupils in Hillingdon schools achieved schools achieved grades 9-4 in Full Course RE, which is X higher than the national average of X.

At the time of writing this report GCSE, AS and A Level data for the 2024-5 examinations was not available, but will be reviewed by SACRE in due course.

3. Collective Worship

Hillingdon SACRE supports an inclusive approach to collective worship that promotes spiritual development and contributes to community cohesion.

Following the commencement of support provided by the new RE Advisor, a full review of policies and school application for changes of determination materials was completed. All documents have been made available on the relevant website and Hillingdon SACRE is now ready should a request be received, but there have been no requests this year.

Whilst there remains a desire to increase this support by updating our guidance and support materials further, the focus has been directed towards schools' provision of RE teaching and learning through a quality RE curriculum aligned to our syllabus. It is hoped that, if funding allows, SACRE will be able to provide further guidance and support in this area to schools in the future.

4. SACRE work with other agencies

We are active members of **NASACRE** and the RE Advisor attended the annual conference in 2024, as well as both the 'In Conversation with NASACRE' events for London SACREs held this year through the RE Hubs. Our RE Advisor continues to access the latest research and resources through her continued membership with AREIAC and as part of her work beyond the LA.

We are also keen to model and support all endeavours to expose more pupils to different worldviews and religions with experiences of real believers beyond a textbook as part of effective RE. Therefore, Hillingdon members not only took part in their own **Interfaith Week for Schools** activities (which were logged as examples on the relevant website), but members have also been encouraged to take part in the free training provided through the RE Hubs, so that they may become accredited speakers whom our schools can approach to invite into their schools. Further to this, SACRE wrote to local places of worship across the borough to suggest they also become registered with the RE Hubs.

Moreover, following discussion in SACRE meetings, it became clear there was an active **Hillingdon Interfaith Group** working in the borough independent of SACRE, also trying to support schools with interfaith experiences. The RE Advisor and some members have been active in building links with this organisation in the hope of working collaboratively in the future.

Please also see Section 5 'Interfaith Events and Resources'.

5. Community Cohesion

Hillingdon SACRE supports RE that meets the needs of all students with or without religious beliefs, and promotes inclusion and religious, non-religious and racial harmony. We believe that RE promotes understanding and respect for all communities and it is even more vital now that we continue to do this, with the rise of fundamentalism and extremism in the UK and worldwide and examples of conflict within our own local community. Through the teaching of RE, negative stereotypes and prejudices can and should be tackled and we should generate understanding, overcome barriers, and promote community cohesion. It is these principles of interfaith dialogue and collaboration which will underpin our new Agreed Syllabus (see section 2b).

Hillingdon is incredibly proud of the diversity of its community. It has also been agreed that our SACRE shall now also present attendance to meetings for each group/committee in the Annual Report, therefore making it easier to identify additional/alternative members to be invited to join SACRE. Please see Appendix 1.

Following the annual review of our membership we have noted regular absence to meetings by some. Actions have been taken to confirm these members and to ascertain whether in the coming year there is a need to secure other members for these places, including Sikh and Buddhist representatives.

Interfaith Events and Resources

In support of our desire to model and promote interfaith dialogue and collaboration, Hillingdon SACRE have this year embarked on a new project to celebrate our community's diversity by engaging primary school pupils in creating artwork for an **interfaith calendar** via a boroughwide competition. Dates of upcoming religious festivals and secular commemorations will be collated so that schools can use this calendar to support their planning of

collective worship and their pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development beyond the Religious Education classroom.

This competition was well received by schools, with three quarters of schools within the primary network taking part. We are hopeful that the LA will be able to fulfil their commitment to support the design and production of the calendar.

Pupil Interfaith Dialogue Conference

This year, the RE Advisor was made aware of one school running interfaith learning for Year 9 students, to which all secondary schools were invited. Having attended, the next meeting of the network for secondary schools included the collaborative planning of a second event.

In addition, it was agreed that these events could be supported by SACRE and the LA, with increased engagement and a wider focus for building community cohesion, as well as opportunities for linking with other groups and organisations acting in the Borough.

The Interfaith Conference Programme is therefore being devised to run in January 2026 to help pupils to explore examples of religious persecution, within a supportive and constructive model (which reflects the interfaith principles in the new Agreed Syllabus) as they grow to become responsible and empathetic citizens.

This programme for secondary pupils is based around the big question "why remember?" and has been divided into several stages to include:

- A fully resourced introductory/pre-session for teachers to run in school with chosen pupils to begin engaging with the key words and concepts and prepare for the online event.
- An online conference with a range of volunteer speakers from 6 religions and worldviews, including SACRE members as well as others sourced from the Holocaust charity Gen2Gen and Hillingdon Interfaith Group (see section 4), and one via the RE Advisor who is experienced and been trained through the RE Hubs.
- A fully resourced reflective session for pupils who attended the online event, supported with evaluation materials and opportunities for pupils to respond through artwork and other media.

We are hopeful that the LA will fulfil their commitment to supporting this programme with the additional funding requested by SACRE earlier this year.

6. Management of SACRE

The Chair of SACRE remains Sumen Starr from the Teachers/Schools representative Group C. The Vice Chair is currently Keith Lunn, from Group B.

We have a growing [membership](#), which is continuously being monitored, and recent revisions to the constitution has allowed us with more opportunities for additional members should the need arise. We have also continued to increase the teachers' representation, gaining additional primary teacher members and a further secondary representative to Group C. Please see section 5.

A detailed action/development plan is produced for SACRE and is regularly updated by the RE Advisor and revisited by SACRE in meetings.

From academic year 2024 onwards, members have agreed to complete an annual self-evaluation, which will then be used to inform this support work. The RE Advisor will then provide recommendations based on these comments, from which the following year's action plan can be derived.

The LA continues to be invaluable in the support of the work of our SACRE, by providing an RE Specialist to advise SACRE, deliver teacher training and support, and lead on the Agreed Syllabus. The Head of Education & Lifelong Learning with the LA is a member of SACRE, and we are keen for him to attend all our meetings. Last year he provided all required support to achieve all agreed SACRE actions and also shared further contributions and suggestions for how the work of SACRE may align with other LA priorities and initiatives, strengthening the impact of all.

The LA continues to receive all the SACRE funding, and in the last academic year used this to provide/support:

- The provision of a SACRE / RE Advisor 9 days
- CPD and support materials for staff in Schools on RE teaching and learning with the HLP
- Networking and training opportunities for SACRE RE Advisor (e.g. NASACRE conference)

As well as...

- Administrative Clerking support for the SACRE from Democratic Services
- Maintaining the SACRE/RE website of resources for teachers

In addition, the LA has been asked to provide further funding to support the Agreed Syllabus work and the Interfaith Dialogue Programme.

7. Summary

This year, Hillingdon SACRE has strived to strengthen its understanding of those represented in the committee and its relationships with local groups and schools in the area. The commitment to supporting our schools is reflected in the decision to hold SACRE meetings in schools, and much time in these meetings has been dedicated to appreciating the changes and developments in the subject and considering how this is supported by the Agreed Syllabus. SACRE is aware of the gaps between these and in the provision of RE in schools.

SACRE is keen to not only devise its own Syllabus, but to create further resources and strategies which also epitomise and promote an interfaith collaboration, using opportunities to work with a wider range of local and national organisations, and remain grateful to the support of the LA in going beyond our statutory duties.

Appendix 1

Membership			14 Nov 2024	26 Mar 2025	25 Jun 2025
Group A – Other F+ WV	Alice Vahdat	Bahai		Yes	Yes
	Balmukund Prasad Joshi	Hindu	Yes	Apologies	Apologies
	Alavari Jeevathol	Humanist	Yes	Yes	
	Dorothy Sadlik	Jewish	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Angela Lount	Methodist	No	No	No
	Naseem Bint Amir	Muslim (Sunni)	No	No	No
	Ninette Fernandes-Viana	Roman Catholic	No	Apologies	Apologies
Group B – CoE	Pauline Byles	Church of England	Apologies	Apologies	Apologies
	Melanie Dring	Church of England	Yes	Apologies	No
	Keith Lunn (Vice-Chair)	Church of England	Apologies	Yes	Yes
	Tim Wright	Church of England	Yes	Yes	Yes
Group C – Teachers	Sumen Starr (Chair)	Headteacher	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Hedson De Castro	SEND Secondary Teacher	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Ria Searle	Secondary RE Teacher	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Jenna Naulls	Primary Teacher	Apologies	Yes	Apologies
	Waheeda Rehmanji	Primary Teacher	No	No	No
	David Beeston	Primary Teacher	Apologies	Yes	Yes
Group D – LA & Cllrs	Michael Hawkins	Local Authority Officer	Apologies	Yes	Apologies
	Cllr Kishan Bhatt	Local Authority Councillor	Apologies	Yes	Apologies
	Cllr June Nelson	Local Authority Councillor	Apologies	Yes	Apologies
	Cllr Jagjit Singh	Local Authority Councillor	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Cllr Shehryar Ahmad-Wallana	Local Authority Councillor	Yes	Apologies	Apologies
Other	Stacey Burman	Hillingdon SACRE Advisor	Yes	Yes	Yes