

Wandsworth Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE)

Annual Report for the academic year September 2024- August 2025

1. Introduction

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Chair's welcome

It gives me great pleasure to introduce this report for the 2024-25 academic year as the Chair of Wandsworth SACRE. We had three meetings during the year, one of which was at the Town Hall and two hosted at places of worship, Balham Seventh-day Adventist Church and the Buddhapadipa temple, where we enjoyed presentations and a tour.

We welcomed new members this year – in Group A: Mr Anup Saggar (Hindu Society) and in Group C: Mrs Jan Sharp, Ms Ruhena Bakhsh and Ms Brigitte Sayers- Eugster.

We also said goodbye to some members this year – in Group A, Mr Nabhinandan Das and Ms Jyotika Pandya (Hindu), Rev. Rosamund Hollingsworth (Methodist) and Mr Colin Perry (Buddhist); and in Group B, Ms Rachel Croft.

Wandsworth SACRE has continued with its work to ensure that all pupils in our schools develop spiritually, morally, socially and culturally as well as academically. We participated in the NASACRE AGM and conference and continue to follow with interest developments in RE nationally; for example, we were interested to see what Ofsted thought of the state of RE in its “Deep and Meaningful?” report and look forward to delving into the relevant parts of Professor Becky Francis’s led Curriculum and Assessment Review. We continue to support the Wandsworth syllabus to encourage a Worldviews approach, noting the findings of Stephen Pett’s handbook, “Developing a Religion and Worldviews approach in Religious Education in England”.

Our SACRE actively seeks to ensure all children in Wandsworth have access to high quality and challenging RE and we provide support to primary RE subject leaders through the teachers’ network meetings. These are free of charge to maintained schools and we urge school leaders to recognise the importance of

allocating school time for staff to attend. We also produce a termly newsletter which signposts resources, draws attention to issues of interest in the RE world and highlights forthcoming festivals among other features.

Pupils' learning in RE has continued to be enhanced by the Faith Trails which have allowed our children to experience exciting learning opportunities while promoting an ethos of respect for others. We are very grateful to our Group A members who have facilitated these. The trails have built on pupils' understanding of their own and other cultures and beliefs while also celebrating the religious and cultural diversity found in Wandsworth. Secondary students are able once more to meet a range of local faith leaders on the same day as part of "Faith Direct" and ask them any faith related questions they wish.

I offer my heartfelt thanks to members of Wandsworth SACRE and all others who work so hard to support RE in Wandsworth.

Councillor Jo Rigby
Chair, Wandsworth SACRE

Overview

1. This annual report of Wandsworth SACRE outlines the work of SACRE during the academic year 2024 to 2025. The GCSE and A-level statistics for Religious Studies for the past year are provided as an appendix to this report, with thanks to the Wandsworth Research and Evaluation Unit, which provides this information.

Meetings held in the reporting year

2. Wandsworth SACRE met on three occasions during the academic year 2024 – 2025. Meetings were held in the evenings. One meeting was held at the Town Hall and two at places of worship; these were at Balham Seventh-day Adventist Church and the Buddhapadipa Buddhist temple, Wimbledon Parkside. Each of these meetings was preceded by a tour and presentation. This was by a member of SACRE at the church and the senior monk at the temple.

Attendance was generally good, and no meetings were inquorate. New members were welcomed, as listed above. There were five resignations and four new members, two of whom were co-optees.

3. The NASACRE briefing is a standing item at all SACRE meetings.

Autumn Term Meeting 2024

4. Meeting held on Monday, 30th September 2024

This was a very full meeting, as the agenda for the meeting, due to have been held the previous June but cancelled due to its proximity to the general election, had been added to the usual items for the autumn meeting.

A short remembrance was held for Lesley Prior, who had been our adviser until her final illness.

The Ofsted monitoring report prepared by the Local Authority's (LA) SACRE Officer was presented for discussion. This made an analysis of any comments on Religious Education (RE) or spiritual, social, moral and cultural development (SMSC) that were found in the Ofsted reports from Wandsworth schools inspected in the academic year 2023-2024. One primary school had had a deep dive in RE and the RE leader gave a presentation on the school's experience of this. The reports of faith schools inspected by the relevant authorities were also considered.

Three major reports relating to RE had been circulated with the papers in advance and each generated much discussion. They were "Deep and meaningful? The religious education subject report" from Ofsted; "Developing a Religion and Worldviews approach in Religious Education in England; A Handbook for curriculum writers" - Stephen Pett; and the National Content Standard for Religious Education in England, from the Religious Education Council of England and Wales. The Ofsted report gave SACRE members some cause for concern. The need for good RE teaching to incorporate world views and to increase the community understanding that led to better society cohesion were felt to be paramount. Sir Stephen Timms lecture and faith's place in Labour's mission of national renewal was shared. Discussions led to a decision for Wandsworth SACRE to write to the DfE, with the support of local MPs and the Executive Director of the Council's Children's Services, to voice its concerns.

It was noted that Wandsworth would be the London Borough of Culture in 2025 and possible contributions from local faith groups were debated.

The success of the Faith Trails for primary schools (see section 5 below) was celebrated and the report on them discussed.

NASACRE's training plan, which enabled all members to attend any training provided by NASACRE free of charge, was shared with the group and members encouraged to sign up for any sessions in which they had a particular interest.

The NASACRE conference talk: "35+ things a good SACRE can do!" provided some ideas Wandsworth SACRE thought they could take forward.

Spring Term Meeting 2025

5. Meeting held on Monday, 3rd March, 2025.

The SACRE Annual Report for 2023-24 was presented and discussed. The NASACRE template for the report was used. There was some discussion on Wandsworth schools' Religious Studies (RS) GCSE and A-Level results, which were better than the national average at GCSE, with some very good individual school results. At A level, while the percentage of passes was in line with national, those at A* – B were lower.

Written feedback on the relaunched Faith Direct was discussed. This Wandsworth initiative for secondary schools pioneered by the Multi Faith Forum (MFF), was first held in 2006 in response to the events of September 11th, 2001. It took place annually until Covid but had not run since 2019. It consisted of a seminar held like a "speed dating" event with 100 students in groups of 10 from various Wandsworth schools having the chance to hear from and then question 10 different faith leaders from Wandsworth. All major faiths were represented, plus those with a strong Wandsworth presence. SACRE took this over from MFF and was delighted with the success of the revived event, which took place in Interfaith week. It was opened by the Council's Cabinet Member for Education and closed by the Mayor. Faith leaders, teachers and students all reported very positively on their experiences.

Three SACRE members had attended an Interfaith Week consultation workshop and reported on the discussions.

The NASACRE reflection resources from the NASACRE website were used for a group work activity in twos and threes. The questions debated were "What makes an effective SACRE?" and "What makes a good SACRE member?" It was found to be a very worthwhile exercise which generated much meaningful discussion.

Summer Term Meeting 2025

6. Meeting held on Monday, 9th June, 2025

The major item for discussion was the Curriculum and Assessment review interim report. Members agreed with the general points raised regarding RE and the need for improvements on a national and local scale.

Feedback was given on the NASACRE conference and some of the papers were shared.

The outcomes of the NASACRE reflection resources activity undertaken at the last meeting were reviewed, following analysis of the comments and common top priorities. This was followed by group work on the other NASACRE reflection resources "What does quality RE look like?" and "What do we want pupils to gain from their experience of RE?"

2. Religious Education

Syllabus

The current Wandsworth Locally Agreed Syllabus (LAS) was originally launched in September 2017. Due to the new directions in RE relating to Worldviews and forthcoming commissions for exemplar syllabi, it was updated and extended rather than replaced. The revised document was approved in February 2023 and continues to be in use.

Monitoring and standards

Standards in RE in secondary schools were monitored by scrutinising the exam data from GCSEs and A level. See appendix.

A trawl was also made of Ofsted reports to look for references to RE and SMSC (spiritual, moral, social and cultural development). This was done and reported upon in the first meeting of the new academic year, September 2024. Section 48 reports are also sent to SACRE. There were five in the last year, three by the Catholic Schools Inspectorate (CSI) of a primary school and two SIAMS (Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools) inspections, also of primary schools. It was noted how much fuller a picture of school life, British values, personal and social development and SMSC is given in the reports on faith schools than in standard Ofsted reports.

Continuing professional development

The primary RE subject leaders' network met once in each term at Wandsworth's Professional Development Centre. The foci for meetings in the last year were:

- A presentation and discussion on Buddhism from the Buddhist representative on Faith Direct; a look at the vocabulary needed for pupils to fully benefit from a visit to a place of worship and a sharing of Christmas activity suggestions.
- Talks and discussions with the Imam from Wandsworth SACRE, followed by a book scrutiny from some of the primary schools and a sharing of Easter activity suggestions.
- Q and A with the Jewish representative from Wandsworth SACRE, followed by a presentation on cross curricular opportunities to extend the RE curriculum.

Other support for schools

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

The LA SACRE Officer produced a termly newsletter which had a calendar of events including major faith festivals, signposted good practice and shared resources.

SACRE produced guidance for schools on Ramadan, which is updated annually (see appendix).

No complaints about religious education in schools were referred to SACRE this year.

3. Collective Worship

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.

No complaints regarding collective worship in the community schools of Wandsworth were referred to SACRE during the year. SACRE produced guidance for schools on collective worship (see appendix).

Freedom of Information (FOI) Requests

There were no FOI requests during the past year.

4. Links with other bodies

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

Close links were maintained with Wandsworth's Voluntary Sector Development Manager, one of whose briefs was to connect and support faith groups across the borough. She provided relevant information to SACRE meetings and was active in promoting multi faith/cultural events.

There are good links with the Church of England Diocese of Southwark and the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Southwark, whose advisers to Wandsworth's VA schools are much valued by the schools themselves and the School Improvement Service.

5. Other SACRE local involvement

The Faith Trails for Year 5 and 6 pupils in primary schools, a SACRE initiative which began in the 2021-22 academic year, grew and continued to flourish during the last year, and were referred to in the Chair's opening remarks. Some Group A members were very helpful in facilitating these. There are now four trails in operation, covering different areas of the borough – Wimbledon Parkside, Southfields, Balham and Tooting.

There were 14 trail dates offered last year, welcoming 20 schools. While trail dates can accommodate two one form or small two form entry schools on the same day, larger three form entry schools need the entire slot. 23 different schools have now taken part, with some of these schools making this a part of their regular curriculum offer in RE. Evaluations from hosts and schools were extremely positive and pupils' work from the visits of a high standard, showing much thought and perception.

6. SACRE's Administrative Arrangements and Financial Support

SACRE meetings are clerked by a Democratic Services Officer from Wandsworth Council. An officer is provided to support the LA.

The annual budget for support for SACRE in 2024-25 was £6000, the same as in 2023-24. This funded the LA SACRE Officer, NASACRE membership, the annual conference and other incidental expenses. Wandsworth Town Hall provided a room for meetings, but it has now been established that at least one meeting a year is held at a place of worship. As noted, this year, one meeting was at the Town Hall and two in places of worship.

Membership

While some members had been in place for a number of years, there is always some movement in the membership, but vacancies were quickly addressed. There were no inquorate meetings in the past year.

Group A contains representatives of all the major faiths and some denominations or branches within them, and two nominated deputies for some faiths. The Humanist member gained full membership last year.

Training

The LA Officer attended the NASACRE conference in 2025. SACRE is also happy to fund a certain amount of training for members.

7. Appendices

Tables of exam results for the year 24-25

CPD provided for schools – see above

SACRE has provided advice for schools on Collective Worship - [wandsworth sacre guidance on collective worship.pdf](#) and on Ramadan [Wandsworth Ramadan guidance \(updated annually\)](#)

In addition to the DfE and NASACRE, the report is circulated to SACRE members and schools.

WANDSWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL

SACRE - JANUARY 2026

STANDARDS IN RELIGIOUS STUDIES EXAMINATIONS IN 2025

- **Introduction**

This paper summarises the Wandsworth and England results for 2025 Religious Studies GCSE and A Level examinations. It provides more detailed data for Wandsworth down to school level.

This is provided for information and discussion.

- **Summary of national data**

Outcomes are still provisional to date (software to be updated with final data in April). Headline figures are as follows:

The key outcomes for Religious Education in England at KS4 and KS5 in 2025

- There were 218,631 entries for the full course in GCSE Religious Studies (RS), a decrease from 2024 (224,925).
- This was still higher than 2023 however (193,610).
- There was no data available for entries for the short course in GCSE RS.
- The percentage of grades 9-4 increased from 72 in 2024 to 72.3 in 2025.
- The points average rose slightly from 5.1 in 2024 to 5.2 in 2025.
- There were 14,210 entries at A level, continuing a downward trend since 2018 (14,530 in 2024, 16,660 in 2018).
- Percentages of A* - B rose from 54.5 in 2024 to 56.4 in 2025. A - E rose slightly to 98.1%.

Report to SACRE on Religious Studies Examination Results 2025

• Summary of Wandsworth data

- 1,090 students sat a Religious Studies (RS) examination in Wandsworth in 2025, very similar to the numbers in 2024 (1,038).
- 1,010 students sat the GCSE full course (949 in 2024), but none the short course.
- As for previous years, the number of students in the cohort has been included in the data, which shows the wide variation in the percentage of a cohort opting for RS. There was again a great divergence between schools in this: St Cecilia's, St John Bosco, Chestnut Grove and Graveney entered the vast majority of their students; Ashcroft about half and Harris Battersea and Burntwood a third. Ark Putney entered students for the first time in some years, but Southfields and Ernest Bevin again did not.
- It is not surprising that church schools enter more pupils, as RS is entitled to a defined amount of curriculum time, 10% in Catholic schools.
- The indicator of GCSE grades 9 - 4 for Ark Bolingbroke, Ashcroft, Burntwood, St John Bosco and Graveney were all above the LA average, Ashcroft, Ark Bolingbroke and Burntwood significantly so. Harris Battersea, Chestnut Grove, St Cecilia's and Ark Putney were below. Burntwood had made an improvement of 20% from 2024. The LA average rose from 79.4% in 2023 to 79.7% in 2025.
- The GCSE points score average for Wandsworth was 5.6, down 0.1 from 2024, but still higher than the national average of 5.2. The highest points scores were achieved by Ark Bolingbroke (6.7), Ashcroft (6.3) and Graveney (6.1). The lowest were at Harris (4.8) and Chestnut Grove (4.9).
- From 2024 to 2025, the highest GCSE improvements in point score averages were at St John Bosco and Burntwood (0.6).
- Harris Battersea saw the biggest GCSE fall at 0.7, but Chestnut Grove has seen averages fall on a downward trajectory since 6.2 in 2022 to 4.9 in 2025.
- Overall percentages of students achieving GCSE grades 9 – 4 showed that Wandsworth was again above the national average – 79.7% compared with 72.3% national, and up 0.3% from the 2024 average of 79.4%.
- There were just two entrants for AS level, both from Graveney. One passed (C– E) and the other did not.
- There were 78 entrants at A level, fewer than the 91 in 2024. Nationally, the number of entrants had dropped too, from 14,530 in 2024 to 14,210 in 2025. At A level, the percentage A* - B comparator in Wandsworth rose to 48.7%, up from the 35.6% of 2024, but still below the national comparator of 56.4%. Well above the national were Bolingbroke (75% from 12 students), Ashcroft at 66.7% (four students) and St Cecilia's (62.5% from eight students). Well below national and local comparators was Graveney with 21.1% (19 students).

Report to SACRE on Religious Studies examination results 2025

- The biggest A level improvements from 2024 to 2025 in A – B* were at Bolingbroke, Burntwood and Chestnut Grove, where they doubled their percentages.
- At A* - E, Wandsworth (100%) was above the average of 2024 (96.7%) and the national average of 98.1%

Subject: Religious Studies (4610)

Qual: GCSE Full Course (provisional 2025 results do not include FB data)

	Entries/Number in cohort				% 9 - 4				Average points			
Centre	2022	2023	2024	2025	2022	2023	2024	2025	2022	2023	2024	2025
NCER National	144010	193610	224945	218631	75.3	72.2	72	72.3	5.3	5	5.1	5.2
LA Comparator	952	939	956	1010	85	80.6	79.4	79.7	5.9	5.7	5.7	5.6
Ark Bolingbroke Academy	28/104	29/112	19/115	26/111	79	79.3	89.5	92.3	5.5	5.4	6.6	6.7
Ashcroft Technology Academy	97/203	108/209	111/235	112/238	96	91.7	85.6	87.5	6.5	6.7	6.7	6.3
Harris Battersea	33/166	23/174	34/164	57/158	88	73.9	79.4	71.9	6.2	4.7	5.5	4.8
Burntwood	86/261	104/280	82/253	75/245	91	81.7	70.7	90.7	6.2	5.5	5.1	5.7
Chestnut Grove	157/175	150/171	157/172	187/200	91	84	77.7	71.7	6.2	5.8	5.2	4.9
Ark Putney	0/118	0	0	22/141				63.6				
Ernest Bevin	13/164	0	0	0	100				5.8			
Graveney School	269/281	265/277	272/280	277/286	89	84.9	86.4	85.9	6.3	6	6.2	6.1
Saint John Bosco	121/130	115/133	125/134	108/129	73	73.9	72.8	80.6	4.9	5.4	4.9	5.5
Southfields	0/145	0	0	0								
Saint Cecilia's	148/148	144/147	154/156	145/151	70	66.7	72.7	69.0	5.1	4.9	5.3	5.3
Francis Barber		01/36	02/37	TBC		100	50			8	5.0	

Report to SACRE on Religious Studies Examination Results 2025

A & AS level results in Wandsworth schools (does not include sixth form colleges)

Subject: Religious Studies (4610)

Qual: GCE AS level

	Entries				%A-B			%A-E		
Centre	2022	2023	2024	2025	2023	2024	2025	2023	2024	2025
NCER National						TBC	50		TBC	84.8
LA Comparator	None taken	6	2	2	0	50	0	50	50	50
Ark Bolingbroke Academy										
Ashcroft Technology Academy			1			100			100	
Burntwood										
Chestnut Grove										
Ark Putney										
Ernest Bevin										
Harris Battersea										
Graveney School		6	1	2	0	0	0	50	0	50
Saint John Bosco										
Southfields										
Saint Cecilia's										

Report to SACRE on Religious Studies examination results 2025**Subject: Religious Studies (4610)****Qual: GCE A level**

	Entries				%A* - B				%A* - E			
Centre	2022	2023	2024	2025	2022	2023	2024	2025	2022	2023	2024	2025
National (provisional)	14950	14720	14530	14210	67.8	55.4	54.5	56.4	98.7	97.6	97.4	98.1
LA Comparator	69	97	91	78	73.9	45.4	36.3	48.7	100	97.9	96.7	100
Ashcroft Technology Academy	19	7	6	4	89.5	71.4	83.3	66.7	100	100	100	100
Bolingbroke Academy	3	12	14	12	100	25	35.7	75.0	100	100	100	100
Burntwood	9	18	22	9	55.6	38.9	18.2	44.4	100	100	95.5	100
Chestnut Grove	14	23	18	11	57.1	43.5	27.8	54.5	100	100	94.4	100
Ernest Bevin	0	0	0	0								
Graveney School	11	11	14	19	58.3	41.7	50	21.1	100	91.7	100	100
Harris Academy Battersea	0	0	0	0					0	0	0	
Saint John Bosco	0	13	9	13		38.5	44.4	46.2	0	100	100	100
Southfields	0	0	0	0								
Saint Cecilia's	12	11	8	8	91.7	75	37.5	62.5	100	91.7	87.5	100

2025 data is provisional

National from [Time-series - A level subject entries and grade by sex, Data set from A level and other 16 to 18 results - Explore education statistics - GOV.UK](#) gives finalised 2024 data.