

June 2021 Barnet SACRE Report

Religious Education Adviser Report

Introduction

SACRE last convened on the 9th March 2021. Since our last meeting we have seen the publication of two influential reports (i) Hinduism (ii) Ofsted RE Review that require SACRE's consideration and response. THEOS also launched a video that helps teachers, school, parents and SACRE's to understand the complexity of lens through which we observe the world. Barnet SACRE members have also attended the NASACRE Conference.

Schools continue to navigate the post-pandemic issues, particularly focusing on the well-being and educational support of the children impacted by this unusual time. BPSI have continued to offer the schools support and have also added an option of a bespoke surgery that will enable the schools to access support via zoom to manage issues and solve curriculum questions that are particular to their school.

It has been a busy time partly in response to the continuing VAT project, Young Ambassadors and the WIRE award and as a result of teachers needing support and CPD.

1.Ofsted: Ofsted publishes research review on religious education 12th May 2021

Barnet SACRE would like to draw the attention of Headteachers, Governors and teachers of RE to the latest **Ofsted** subject review founded on the education inspection framework (EIF) and other **religious education** (RE) literature to identify what contributes to high-quality RE curriculum, assessment, pedagogy and systems in schools: **to prepare pupils to engage in a complex, multi-religious and multi-secular world**. The latest review draws on the Ofsted education inspection framework (EIF) and other religious education (RE) literature to identify what contributes to high-quality RE curriculum, assessment, pedagogy and systems in schools where Ofsted inspects RE.

Read the [RE research review](#).

The review recognises that there is no single way of constructing and teaching a high-quality RE curriculum. However, it does identify some common features:

- The curriculum should cover substantive content and concepts collectively (or 'collectively enough'), rather than covering excessive amounts of content superficially. Content is sufficient for pupils to grasp a bigger picture about the place of religion and non-religion in the world.
- What is taught and learned in RE is grounded in what is known about religion or non-religion from academic study. This helps prevent pupils from developing misconceptions about religion and non-religion.
- Pupils study certain areas of the RE curriculum in depth and acquire a range of detailed knowledge of different concepts and ideas, which they remember long term. Drawing on this prior knowledge enables them to consider more complex ideas about religion. Leaders and teachers select this 'depth of study' from contrasting religious and/or non-religious traditions so that pupils avoid developing misrepresentations.
- The curriculum is well sequenced to ensure that pupils learn the knowledge they need for later topics.

- There is a consideration of when pupils should relate the content to their own personal knowledge (for example, their own prior assumptions).
- How the curriculum is taught and assessed focuses pupils' attention squarely on the knowledge they need to learn.
- Adequate curriculum time is given to RE, so that leaders can deliver an ambitious curriculum.
- There is sufficient training and professional development so that teachers have appropriate subject professional knowledge.

The review refers to 3 different types of subject-specific knowledge that pupils learn in RE. Each of these is powerful and should not be confused with 'mere facts'. The first is 'substantive' knowledge about various religious and non-religious traditions. The second type is 'ways of knowing', where pupils learn 'how to know' about religion and non-religion. The third type is 'personal knowledge', where pupils build an awareness of their own presuppositions and values about what they study. The review suggests that improvement in RE at both primary and secondary level includes knowing more of these 'pillars of progression'. This prepares pupils to engage in a complex, multi-religious and multi-secular world.

In the spring term of 2022, Ofsted will be publishing a report on the quality of RE curriculums taught in schools. We will gather the evidence for this through subject 'deep dives' during inspections under the EIF. To find out more about Ofsted's curriculum work, read the [principles behind the research reviews and subject reports](#).

** this is a summary of the full version of the Ofsted review. To read the full version go to:

[Research review series: religious education - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/research-review-series-religious-education>

2. Barnet SACRE are pleased to share the THEOS short, animated film FREE to RE teachers. The film reminds us that in an increasingly pluralistic society, there is no neutral perspective and everyone sees the world through a certain lens. The film is a powerful tool for classroom learning, transforming a complex concept into an accessible and personal format, stimulating conversation and encouraging pupils to think through their own worldview and how this impacts their lives.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AFRxFK-FJdos>

3. Barnet SACRE are continuing to support the WIRE Award that encourages high quality RE in school. The process expects schools to complete three manageable tasks aimed at improving the experience and quality of RE for pupils in school:

1. Someone from your school must attend an RE conference or an RE Network or CPD session (BELs) ₁
2. Choose one: *Take a group of your pupils to visit a place of worship: Q & A *Virtual tour of a place of worship: meeting the faith community *Partnering with a local faith school *Attend a SACRE meeting to talk about RE & ideas for improving RE in your school ₂
3. School base event: enter a Competition to do with RE (such as the Spirited Arts) or arrange an RE virtual/event ₃



Young Ambassador/ WIRE schools in Barnet:

	School	
1	BROOKLAND JUNIOR SCHOOL HILL TOP, HAMPSTEAD GARDEN SUBURB, LONDON NW11 6EJ	
2	Danegrove Primary School	Young Ambassadors
3	Woodcroft Primary School Goldbeaters Grove Edgware Middx HA8 0QF Tel: 020 8959 3244	Young Ambassadors
4	QE Queen Elizabeth's School , Queens Road, Barnet, Hertfordshire EN5 4DQ	Young Ambassadors
5	East Barnet School	Young Ambassadors

4.Young Ambassador Programme

The Young Ambassador Programme is making good progress. The Young Ambassador group will be meeting on Thursday 17th June 2021.

The plans are now in place. Please see the outline below.

Proposal: Stage 1 (Supported by the REC/AREIAC 2020-2021)

- Aim to recruit and train Young Ambassadors from 4 schools (from Haringey and Barnet)
- Jan McGuire will support YA's in their activities including:
 - Raising the profile of RE in their school through the promotion of NATRE 'Spirited Arts Competition'/ WIRE Award Programme
 - Discussions between pupils from different schools: how to improve RE/ RE post C19 Pandemic 2020-21
 - Presentations to SACRE and NASACRE
 - Presentation at National Conferences, Parliament, the RE Council etc

Proposal: Stage 2 (project extension)

- Lobbying MP's (inc possible Westminster debate)
- Local and national media contributions
- Presentations through social media (eg in support of RE teacher recruitment, GCSE and A level options material etc)

Jan McGuire will support the project and will take responsibility for providing Project reports to the REC including content suitable for the REC website and other media

Each school on the programme is also encouraged to be champions of the Barnet WIRE Award and VAT in RE as part of the Young Ambassador programme: sharing their experience of high quality RE in their school and promoting the upskilling of RE teachers

5. VAT Westhill NASACRE Project 2020-2021

The VAT Project has made reasonable progress considering that schools and teachers have many additional demands on their time. Most of the curriculum discussion and design sessions have been continued as twilight sessions. Jan McGuire has been writing up the curriculum exemplars, and the teachers are trialling these in the classroom.

Jan McGuire submitted the interim report to Westhill NASACRE in May 2021, and the second tranche of funding has been released to Barnet to support the final stage of the project. The project may now finish slightly later than the original planned date to allow for the children and teachers of each VAT school to attend a SACRE celebration event face-to-face in November 2021.

6. NASACRE Conference: Virtual May 2021



SACRE Annual
Reports template Con

JM attended two workshops at the NASACRE conference. These were chosen by JM specifically to support her SACRE RE Adviser responsibility of writing the annual report for Government on behalf of the Local Authority.

1. Workshop F – New SACRE annual report template proposal

This session focused on the proposed changes to the report form used by Advisers writing the annual report to Government. Normally in Barnet the SACRE agenda headings follow the current report headings, to allow the clerk to minute the business discussed in the meetings. This allows for a clear account of each of the responsibilities SACRE is supposed to be aware of and act upon. It also highlights areas that require development. For example, in Barnet it is noted under the section of support for schools that SACRE needs to monitor the RE offered in schools more proactively. Hence, this has been flagged as a development area.

Action: SACRE will await the decided NASACRE report form and will change the agenda of the SACRE meetings to reflect this going forward. JM will then write the report for Government using this new advised format.

2. Workshop I – How can national data help SACREs speak with authority?

Deborah Weston led this helpful workshop on data. She advised SACRE's to approach the LA for clarification of the following, as actions:

Actions:

A summary of the answer provided to the NASACRE FOI regarding the financing of SACRE in the Borough: how much comes into the Borough for SACRE? How much is actually spent on SACRE? In November 2020 NASACRE sent out a Freedom of Information (FOI) request to all LAs in England about how they finance their SACRE – at present we are analysing this data. NASACRE have had responses from 135 out of 154 LAs, with 19 not responding, many citing COVID reasons.

For Barnet's own analysis and information, NASACRE suggests that the SACRE Chair should ask their LA's FOI team for a copy of their response to the FOI request. Each LA has an FOI team, paid for centrally by government; we think that some FOI teams haven't known exactly who to ask to collate the relevant figures. the overall SACRE budget. NASACRE made a national recommendation of 2% of the central services allocation for LAs. I've just downloaded the **Dedicated Schools Grant** for this year from the [Gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) website - also attached. It is unusual to get 2% exactly because of LA loans and so on, which reduce the amount given in the tables. This data allows SACRE a starting point for negotiation for SACRE support and projects that encourage high quality RE in the Borough.

- Barnet dedicated schools grant (DSG) 2020-2021: £227,063,583
- Barnet Central School Services Block: 2020-2021: £2,141,192: 2%: £42,823.84
- Barnet Central School Services Block: 2021-2022: £2,192,954: 2%: £43,859

Action: Reminder to LA to set aside some reserves for future Barnet Agreed Syllabus Review costs – on top of the annual SACRE costs.

Action: An awareness in SACRE of data that strongly suggests that schools that provide high quality timetabled RE/ RE Examination opportunities were more likely to have better overall results in English/ Humanities subject. This was discussed- the research suggests RE provides additional support for literacy, critical thinking, discussion, dialogue and analytical, essay skills. Is this in fact the case in Barnet? Can we ask the LA to drill down when the examination data is next gathered- and report on this in the annual Government report?

Action: Using the Census 2021 data to direct SACRE membership. It is the LA, **not** the SACRE which determines membership of SACRE.

It is not the role of SACRE to find members, but SACRE can make recommendations if members feel that the local authority is overlooking an important group that should be represented: reflect 2021 National Census

7.RE Online recordings

Advertise to SACRE members the online recordings of present discussions in the teaching of RE

8.Hinduism Education Board UK Report 2021

INSIGHT UK presented the 2021 report on the state of Hinduism in Religious Education (RE) in UK schools. The project goal was to assess the current state of Hinduism in RE in UK schools and recommend changes to improve it.

Key Findings:

- 97% of survey respondents say it is important and paramount for their child to learn about Hinduism.
- 98% of survey respondents say the study of Hinduism in RE is low quality and deficient.
- 75% of respondents feel that Hinduism is not taught in a positive light.
- 86% of the respondents are either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the teaching of Hinduism in schools within the United Kingdom.
- 76% of primary school parents are unhappy about RE teachers' knowledge of Hinduism.
- 81% of Key Stage 3 and 87% of Key Stage 4 parents are discontented about RE teachers' knowledge of Hinduism.
- There is growing evidence of inaccurate resources used by classroom teachers for teaching Hinduism.
- Hindu parents and pupils feel they do not have a choice to study Hinduism at GCSE level.

Hinduism is the third largest religion practised in the UK, yet this report finds that the teaching of Hinduism in mainstream UK schools is very limited, flawed and often ignored. This imbalance has led to an inaccurate portrayal of Hinduism and can result in feelings of negativity and ignorance when meeting UK citizens belonging to the Hindu faith. It is found that the lack of awareness and an incorrect portrayal of Hinduism in RE results in:

1. Depriving students of a world view and understanding of the nature, diversity and impact of religion and belief in the contemporary world.
2. Depriving the knowledge of the world's third-largest religion which is followed by one of the most contributing minority communities in the UK.
3. Insensitivity towards Hindu people and their beliefs resulting in bullying and hate crimes. British Hindus are a well-integrated and highly contributing community in British society. Hinduism teaches values such as peace, universality, inclusivity and one-ness. These values when taught in the right context can enrich and build a more inclusive society. Unfortunately, the current RE curriculum and its teaching of Hinduism does not correctly represent factual Hindu beliefs and values.

All maintained schools have a statutory duty to teach RE. This report provides evidence of the views on how Hinduism is currently taught as part of the RE curriculum.

The Hindu Education Board UK would like to work with SACRE to assess and support the delivery of teaching and learning of Hinduism in Barnet. HEB request that we ensure that Hinduism is fairly and accurately represented in the locally agreed RE syllabus.

HEB are willing to offer support and have requested our Agreed Syllabus document, and this has been sent, to gauge the quality of teaching Hinduism in RE in Barnet.

We have responded to their request:

1. Do you have a Hindu representative on your SACRE? If so, can you kindly pass on our details to him/her so they can be supported.
2. Please email to us a copy of your locally agreed syllabus.



J McGuire: Religious Education Adviser SACRE Report June 2021

Jan McGuire: RE Adviser to SACRE, Barnet LA and Barnet schools: 14th June 2021