

**STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

Meeting to be held on Monday, 20th March, 2023 at 6.00 pm

In Conference room 2 at the Council House, Walsall

**NOTE: MEMBERS ARE REQUESTED TO MAKE
EVERY ENDEAVOUR TO ATTEND THE MEETING
IN ORDER TO ENSURE A WIDER REPRESENTATION
OF THE GROUPS**

QUORUM: 8 Members from 3 out of 4 groups

Democratic Services, The Council House, Lichfield Street, Walsall, WS1 1TW
Contact Name: **Mr Neil Picken, Principal Democratic Services Officer** Telephone
(01922) **654369**
www.walsall.gov.uk

**If you are disabled and require help to and from the meeting room,
please contact the person above**

WALSALL STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION REPRESENTATIVES

Church of England

Mrs P. Lane	
Mr A. Orlik	- Lichfield Diocesan Board of Education
Mrs K. Donnellan	
Mrs R. Graham	
Vacancy	

Christian denominations, other religions and religious denominations to reflect the principal religious traditions in Walsall.

Dr G. Gomez	- Roman Catholic
Vacancy	- Salvation Army
Mrs V. Heydon-Matterface	- Methodist, Brownhills and Willenhall
Mrs M. Gibbons	- Methodist, Walsall
Mr D. Lomax	- United Reformed Church
Mrs D. Letford	- New Testament Church of God
Mrs B. Groombridge	- Walsall Quakers
Mr M. Sacha	- Muslim Welfare Society
Imam Saeed-Ur-Rahman	Mosque and Islamic Centre
Vacancy	- <i>Muslim Faith</i>
Vacancy	- <i>Hindu Faith</i>
Mr K. Bhatt	- Shree Ram Mandir (Walsall)
Mr M. Ashik Ali	- Bangladesh Islamic Association
Mr G. Singh	- Guru Nanak Gurdwara
Mr K. Mavi	- Guru Nanak Sikh Temple
Mrs B. Kaur Nijjar	- Walsall Sikh Forum
Mr G. Tsiappourdhi	- Black Country Orthodox Trust
Vacancy	- <i>Jewish Faith</i>
Vacancy	- <i>Buddhist Faith</i>

Teacher Representatives

Mr G. Headley	- National Union of Teachers
Ms H. Leadley	- Blackwood Primary School

Local Authority

Councillor K. Pedley	}	
Councillor M. Statham	}	
Councillor E. Lee	}	- Local Education Authority
Councillor Singh-Sohal	}	
Councillor R K Mehmi	}	
Councillor C. Horton	}	
Councillor F. Mazhar	}	

Co Opted Member

Mr Bill Green	- Humanist Representative
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AGENDA

1. Apologies

To receive apologies for absence.

2. Late Items to be introduced by the Chair

3. Minutes -

To approve and sign the Minutes of the meetings held on 10th October, 2022 -
Copy enclosed (pages 5 – 9)

4. Local Government (Access to Information) Act, 1985 (as amended)

To agree that the public be excluded from the private session during consideration of the agenda items indicated for the reasons shown on the agenda.

5. Changes to the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education Constitution – *Copy Enclosed (pages 10 – 26)*

6. SACRE Integration – *Copy Enclosed (page 27)*

7. RE GCSE data – *To Follow*

8. SACRE Action Plan – *Copy Enclosed (page 28)*

9. SACRE National Updates from RE Today – *Copy Enclosed (pages 29 – 39)*

10. RE in Walsall -

a) OFSTED updates - *Copy Enclosed (pages 40 – 42)*

b) Census data - *Copy Enclosed (pages 43 – 49)*

11. Education in Walsall updates - *Verbal Update*

12. Freedom Of Information Request – *Verbal Update*

13. Date of Future Meetings:

- 10th July, 2023

Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended)

Access to information: Exempt information

Part 1

Descriptions of exempt information: England

1. Information relating to any individual.
2. Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual.
3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).
4. Information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under, the authority.
5. Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings.
6. Information which reveals that the authority proposes:
 - (a) to give any enactment a notice under or by virtue of which requirements are imposed on a person; or
 - (b) to make an order or direction under any enactment.
7. Information relating to any action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime.
8. Information being disclosed during a meeting of a Scrutiny and Performance Panel when considering flood risk management functions which:
 - (a) Constitutes a trades secret;
 - (b) Its disclosure would, or would be likely to, prejudice the commercial interests of any person (including the risk management authority);
 - (c) It was obtained by a risk management authority from any other person and its disclosure to the public by the risk management authority would constitute a breach of confidence actionable by that other person.

Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education
Monday, 10th October 2022 at 6.00 p.m. at Blue Coat C of E Infant School

Present:

Mrs P. Lane (Church of England, Lichfield Diocese)
Mr A. Orlik (Church of England, Lichfield Diocese)
Mrs K. Donnellan (Church of England, Lichfield Diocese)
Mrs R. Graham (Church of England, Lichfield Diocese)
Dr G. Gomez (Roman Catholic)
Mrs M. Gibbons (Methodist, Walsall)
Mr D. Lomax (United Reformed Church)
Mrs D. Letford (New Testament Church of God)
Mr M. Sacha (Muslim Welfare Society)
Deacon Helen Webster (Walsall Methodist)
Councillor G. S. Sohal (Walsall Sikh Forum)
Councillor M. Statham
Councillor E. Lee
Councillor R K Mehmi
Councillor C. Horton

In attendance:

Fiona Moss (RE Today Advisor)
Nick Perks (Quality Assurance Team Manager, Walsall Council)
Reena Farmah (Democratic Services Officer, Walsall Council)
Nikki Gough (Democratic Services Officer, Walsall Council).

1. Apologies

Apologies were submitted on behalf of Mrs V. H. Matterface, Mrs H. Leadley, Ms M. Marther, Mr I. Saeed-Ur-Rahman and Councillor K. Pedley.

In receiving apologies, the Chair announced the following permanent changes to the membership of SACRE:

- Mrs Mather would replace Ms B. Groombridge as the Walsall Quakers representative.
- Deacon H. Webster would replace Ms M Gibson as the Walsall Methodist representative.

2. Late Items to be introduced by the Chair

There were no late items to be introduced.

3. Minutes

Copies of the minutes of the meetings held on 7th March and 20 June, 2022 were submitted

(see annexed).

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meetings held on 7 March 2022 and 20 June 2022, copies having previously been circulated, be approved and signed by the Chair as a true and accurate record.

4. Local Government (Access to Information) Act, 1985 (as amended)

It was noted that there were no items to be considered in private session.

5. Presentation from Pupils at Blue Coat C E Infant School:

A discussion took place between the RE Today Advisor and pupils.

Infant and junior pupils responded to questions in relation to:

- What pupils enjoy most about RE
- Trips to places of worship
- What pupils enjoyed about school
- If pupils learnt about different religions during RE, including Christianity
- Bible verses.

The Chair thanked pupils for attending.

6. SACRE Integration Briefing Note

This item was deferred to the next meeting. The following discussion took place under the item.

The RE Today Advisor informed members that enquiries had been received from schools in relation to visiting places of worship. A discussion took place regarding the formation of a guide for local places of worship for schools to visit. Members commented that visits created opportunities to help pupils experience a variety of religions and beliefs, reinforcing learning undertaken in schools.

A Member commented that the synagogue in Birmingham welcomed educational visits and suggested that a synagogue be included in the list.

The RE Today Advisor informed members that the Arts Society Birmingham had collaborated with six different places of worship to produce a list for schools to visit.

Resolved

That a guide for visiting places of worship be created.

7. Self-Assessment of SACRE / Action Plan

A report was submitted

(see annexed).

The report was presented by the Chair. Members noted the short-term, mid-term and long-term actions contained within the plan.

The following key points were discussed;

New members to have induction training

The RE Today Advisor informed members that training was available to all members via the National Association of SACREs (NASACRE) training programme. The Programme included new member induction training. Members were encouraged to participate in training and report back on training undertaken.

Members raised that login details had not been issued.

Standards and Quality of RE

The RE Today Advisor commented that SACRE had limited access to data making it difficult to evaluate the standards and quality of RE.

The Quality Assurance Team Manager responded that data available to the authority contained generic pass rates, the standards and quality of RE was not discussed as a specific topic by the authority.

Councillor M. Statham, introduced himself as the Portfolio Holder for Education and Skills, he commented that he would report back any specific issues from SACRE.

The Quality Assurance Team Manager explained that data was not validated until January 2023. Members agreed for data to be presented at the spring term meeting.

A discussion took place regarding academy representation on the committee. It was agreed that communication with academies required developing and would be an area of focus for the committee.

Effectiveness of the agreed syllabus

The RE Today Advisor informed members that the agreed syllabus for religion and worldviews launched in September 2022 and suggested for feedback from teachers be gathered in 12 months' taking into account a complete cycle of teaching.

Collective worship

The RE Today Advisor explained the determinations process, members agreed that clarity was required regarding the process for SACRE in Walsall.

Resolved

- 1) To note and agree the self-assessment action plan for SACRE;**
- 2) That the Chair explore NASACRE login details and report back; and**
- 3) To add RE data to the spring term agenda for discussion;**

8. SACRE National Updates

A report was submitted

(see annexed).

The RE Today Advisor highlighted the following key points:

Students in England and Wales taking a GCSE in religious studies increased nationally by 0.6% from the previous year. The take up of RE in Walsall had decreased.

The NASACRE had introduced a new team of regional leads; who will be representing and supporting their regions with a new RE Hub project (see annexed).

The RE Council of England and Wales (REC) had published draft resources for RE and worldviews, the resources were available with via the REC website (see annexed).

9. RE in Walsall including OFSTED updates

The RE Today Advisor reported on local OFSTED inspections held since 21 September 2022. Members noted that there was no requirement for the inspection report to include RE.

A member questioned whether Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) reports were available. The RE Today Advisor responded that reports were available on an annual basis. The Church of England representative suggested contacting the diocese directly for the reports.

10. Education in Walsall updates

The Quality Assurance Team Manager provided an update on OFSTED inspections.

He reported that two inspections had taken place during September 2022. A further four inspections were due to take place this week. Results of these inspections would be reported at the next meeting.

The meeting were informed that a Walsall Head teachers' conference was due to take place with Department for Education (DfE) and Ofsted in attendance.

11. Walsall SACRE Annual Report

A report was submitted

(see annexed).

The RE Today Advisor explained that it was SACRE's statutory duty to publish an annual report by the 31st December each calendar year. Copies of the report are sent to the Secretary of State for Education and NASACRE.

Members were asked to note that data was not validated until January 2023 and therefore this year's data would be included in next year's report.

Resolved:

That the Walsall SACRE Annual Report be approved.

There being no further business the meeting terminated at 7:55p.m.

Signed.....

Date.....

**Changes to the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education
Constitution**

Purpose: Review

1. Aim

Membership of the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) is based on the 2011 Census. The 2021 Census has been published and so the composition of SACRE is under review. In addition, a request has been received to establish whether membership can include a voting representee(s) of non-religious worldwide views/beliefs, such as Humanism.

2. Summary

- 2.1 SACRE's constitution is clear that the number of representative members shall be determined from time to time by the Local Authority. The Council is required to inform SACRE when undertaking a review of the SACRE constitution and receive any recommended changes put forward following that consultation.
- 2.2 There is no guidance in law or by the Secretary of State as to which specific voting group non-religious worldwide views/beliefs, such as Humanism would belong. As such, each individual Council is left to decide.
- 2.3 Lack of guidance and legislative clarity has resulted in an inconsistent approach across the UK. Wales have specific legislation to allow non-religious worldwide views/beliefs, such as Humanists as voting members. In the rest of the UK Councils have permitted non-religious worldwide views/beliefs, such as Humanists representation within category 'A', whilst others have no representation or, as in Walsall, Humanist representatives have been included as Co-Opted members.
- 2.3 In light of the request and a review of available data regarding the representation of religious and belief demographics within Walsall following the publication of the 2021 Census, a change to the membership of SACRE is proposed to include two secular voting members to Category A. This will reflect the full range of beliefs held by people living in Walsall, including those with professed religious and non-religious beliefs.

3. Recommendations

That:

- 3.1 SACRE provides a view on the proposed amendment to the constitution, to include two voting representatives, for people with non-religious affiliation or belief not represented by any other membership group so long as the non-religious beliefs analogous (similar or equivalent) to a religious belief, within category A (Religion);
- 3.2 Subject to recommendation 3.1, notes the arrangements for the appointment of those representatives as set out in paragraphs 4.7 and 4.8; and
- 3.2 Note that the outcome will be reported to Council for decision.

4. Report detail – know

Structure and membership arrangements

- 4.1 SACRE is established under section 390 of the Education Act 1996. It is not a formal committee of the Council and sits as an outside body with responsibilities relating to advising the local authority and education providers regarding the teaching of religious education, which follows the locally agreed syllabus. SACRE's broader role is to support good Religious Education (RE) and collective RE worship within its schools by:

- Giving advice on ways of teaching agreed syllabus RE, including the choice of teaching materials;
- Monitoring schools' provision for RE and collective worship as well as the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC) of pupils;
- Advising the LA on the provision of training for teachers in RE; e.g. the provision of a fair related to Religious Education for teachers and students;
- Considering complaints about the provision and delivery of religious education and collective worship referred to it by the LA.

SACRE also has power to require an LA to review the syllabus undertaken, via an Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC). Membership of ASC's will often be the same as SACRE but there is no provision to include co-opted members on ASC's.

- 4.2 Whilst its origins go back to the Education Act of 1944, the role, structure and function of SACRE in Local Education Authorities was strengthened by the Education Reform Act 1988 before being replaced by the Education Act 1996. Wording in respect of membership of each category has remained unchanged and S390(4) of the 1996 Act confirms:-

- (4) The representative groups required by this subsection are:-
 - (a) a group of persons to represent such Christian denominations and other religions and denominations of such religions as, in the opinion of the

authority, will appropriately reflect the principal religious traditions in the area;

- (b) except in Wales, the Church of England;
- (c) Associations representing teachers as, in the opinion of the authority, ought to be represented, having regard to the circumstances of the area; and
- (d) The authority.

- 4.3 The constitution allows for up to 42 members with the right to co-opt (non-voting) members. Membership is split into four groups as detailed above and in table 1. With regard to Group A, the number of representatives of each religion and religious denomination appointed, so far as consistent with the efficient discharge of the Council's functions, reflect broadly the proportionate strength of that denomination or religion in the area as indicated by the 2021 census data.

Table 1 – membership of SACRE

Group	Description	No. Members
A	Christian denominations and other religions and their denominations, reflecting the principal religious traditions of the area including:- 1 Baptist 1 Black Country Orthodox Trust 2 Methodist 1 New Testament Church of God 1 Quakers 1 Roman Catholic 1 Salvation Army 1 United Reform Church 3 Muslim 2 Hindu 3 Sikh 1 Jewish 1 Buddhist	19
B	Church of England	5
C	Teacher representatives	11 (includes 6 teachers and up to 5 Union Representatives)
D	Local Authority	7

- 4.4 Only those representatives of Groups A, B, C & D are entitled to vote and each such group shall have a single vote.
- 4.5 SACRE's constitution states that the number of representative members shall be determined from time to time by the Local Authority and the individual appointments should be made by the Local Authority after taking all reasonable

steps to assure itself that the individual is representative of the denomination or the teacher association concerned. It is desirable that all members have an interest in education in general and in religious education in particular.

Proposed number of representatives from non-religious worldwide views/beliefs and process for consideration of applications

- 4.6 Given the increase in 'No religion' within the census (see paragraph 4.9) and changing landscape nationally, as detailed within this report, it is proposed that the constitution be amended to increase the number of places in Group A by 2 to include representatives of 'other bodies' for people with non-religious affiliation or belief not represented by any other membership group. These to be available to secular belief representatives.
- 4.7 It is suggested that the Constitution be amended as follows to confirm the inclusion of an additional 2 people with Non-Religious Philosophical Convictions not represented by any other membership group and that a process of these appointments be clarified. The amended Constitution Is attached in full at **Appendix A** with additions shown in bold/underlined:-

Non-Religious Philosophical Convictions

- 2 appointed representative for people with non-religious affiliation or belief not represented by any other membership group so long as the non-religious beliefs analogous (similar or equivalent) to a religious beliefs as per the following guidance:-
- To be “analogous” we consider the non-religious beliefs must in accordance with case law under the European Convention of Human Rights and the Human Rights Act 1998 attain the necessary level of cogency, seriousness, cohesion and importance to attract protection under the Convention Rights.
- Any appointment is dependent on the relevant local authority's opinion as to whether such a representative would help ensure that the relevant traditions in the local authority's area are appropriately reflected in Group A. The final decision of an appointment rests with the local authority, and they are best placed to assess whether a SACRE has the necessary expertise and experience to properly discharge its function.

Nomination and election process

Nominations for people with non-religious affiliation or belief not represented by any other membership group in Category A should be submitted in writing to Democratic Services. Nominations to be reviewed by the Director of Children's Service together with the Portfolio Holder for Education and SACRE, to consider eligibility. A recommendation to Council shall then be made.

- 4.8 As a nomination has been received for Mr Bill Green to be appointed to represent the Humanists, it is proposed that Mr Green takes up one of the vacancies available, should the amendment be approved by Council.

National Census - Taking into account religious and non-religious affiliations – voluntary question.

- 4.9 A number of authorities, including Walsall have religiously diverse boroughs where SACRE has a strong and well-established relationship to the communities they serve. Authorities use data from the National Census to inform representation of SACRE.

Statistics from the 2021 National Census confirm that Walsall has an estimated resident population of 284,100. It also sets out the religious affiliation in Walsall. The table below compares the figures in the 2011 Census to that in 2021 together with the number of seats each religion holds on SACRE:-

Religion	(2011 census)	(2021 census)	Seats on SACRE
Christian	158,971	126,921	9
Buddhist	516	533	1
Hindu	4,560	5,096	2
Jewish	54	74	1
Muslim	22,146	32,107	3
Sikh	11,606	17,148	3
Other Religion	1,420	1,658	0
No Religion	53,876	85,819	0
No answer	16,174	14,768	0

- 4.10 The table reflects the changing nature of religious and non-religious beliefs in current society and the Walsall area. Levels of Walsall residents with no religious belief vary across the wards of the borough ranging from 7.4% to 42.7%, with an overall percentage of the population of Walsall that hold no religion being 30.2%. This does not mean that 1/3 of the population of Walsall are humanists, it is however reasonable to expect there would be a reasonable proportion of whom are.

National Context

Wales

- 4.11 In 2018, the Welsh Government issued Guidance to clarify that persons who hold non-religious beliefs (such as humanists) should be permitted full membership on Group A, in light of the Human Rights Act 1998, so long as the non-religious belief is analogous (similar or equivalent) to a religious belief, such as Humanism. This guidance only applied in Wales and specifically included the following paragraphs to ensure that the person(s) appointed was analogous to a religious belief, such as Humanism.
- To be “analogous” we consider the non-religious beliefs must in accordance with case law under the European Convention of Human Rights and the Human Rights Act 1998 attain the necessary level of cogency, seriousness, cohesion and importance to attract protection under the Convention Rights.

- An appointment is dependent on the relevant local authority's opinion as to whether such a representative would help ensure that the relevant traditions in the local authority's area are appropriately reflected in Group A. The final decision of an appointment rests with the local authority, and they are best placed to assess whether a SACRE has the necessary expertise and experience to properly discharge its function.

- 4.12 On 29 April 2021, the Welsh Government passed the Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act which introduced an array of reforms. These include changing the name 'religious education' (RE) to 'religion, values, and ethics' (RVE) and clarifying that that humanists may sit on the bodies that oversee and develop the syllabus (SACRE).

Humanists UK

- 4.13 Whilst the legislative position in England is unclear, Humanists UK have successfully challenged Local Authorities including the Royal Borough of Greenwich and Southampton Council to review their decision not to allow non-faith representation under Category A. The decision to review was taken after Humanists UK notified the authorities of their intention to take legal action against the decision. This on the basis that Humanist representatives' exclusion from being admitted as a voting member violated human rights law. The Council subsequently agreed to reconsider the matter.

The House of Lords

- 4.14 On 14 June, 2022, the Education (Non-religious Philosophical Convictions) (Bill) was introduced in the House of Lords to make provision to include non-religious philosophical convictions within the school curriculum; to require that persons who hold non-religious philosophical convictions, such as Humanists must be represented at standing advisory councils on religious education and at agreed syllabus conferences; and for connected purposes.

5. *Council Plan priorities*

- 5.1 This issue links to both the Communities (Empower our communities so that they feel they are connected and belong in Walsall, creating safe and healthy places whilst building a strong sense of community) and Children (Have the best possible start and are safe from harm, happy, healthy and learning well) priorities within Our Council Plan. SACRE sets the syllabus for religious education within Walsall Schools and so it is important that SACRE's membership is proportionate to the Boroughs Census information to ensure that it fully reflects the communities which the Council serve.

6. *Risk management*

- 6.1 If this proposal is rejected and the status quo persists, then Humanists UK and / or other affected groups could seek a Judicial Review with an aim to have the decision overturned. A similar risk would exist if Humanists were simply appointed

to the SACRE without a fair and transparent application process open to all. This would potentially have a financial and reputational risk to Walsall Council.

7. Financial information

- 7.1 There are no direct financial implications. However, should the decision be taken to refuse membership for non-religious worldwide views/beliefs, such as Humanism within Group A (Religions) the Council would incur costs in defending any potential challenge.

8. Legal implications

- 8.1 Section 391 of the 1996 Education Act requires every Local Authority (LA) in England and Wales to constitute a Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) with the following functions and duties:

1. to advise the LA on matters connected with collective worship in community schools and the RE to be given in accordance with the Agreed Syllabus. This includes particular methods of teaching, the choice of materials and the provision for the training of teachers
2. to require the LA to review its current Agreed Syllabus
3. to determine (following an application made by the headteacher of any community or foundation school) whether it is appropriate for the requirement for collective worship to be broadly Christian should not apply in the case of that school or for some of the pupils in that school
4. to publish an annual report on its work which should:
 - specify any matters on which it has advised the LA
 - broadly describe the nature of that advice on any matters which were not referred to it in the first place by the LA.

- 8.2 In 1994, the Government issued a Circular which asserted Non-Religious World Views, such as Humanist were not entitled to be voting members of SACRE in category A. This guidance was superseded by a 2010 Guidance, issued by the Secretary of State, giving examples of where Humanists taking part in SACRE meeting as co-opted members. Further, the reference to Humanists not being permitted to be voting members was not included in the 2010 guidance.

- 8.3 The Equality Act 2010 provides protection for individuals from discrimination because they have a religion or a belief or no religion or no belief; but it does not define either religion or belief in any further detail.

- 8.4 Article 9 of the Human Rights Act 1998 protects individuals right to hold both religious and non-religious beliefs. This is an absolute right which means it can't be interfered with by the state. Article 9 includes the right to choose or change religion or beliefs and confirms that individuals cannot be forced to have a particular religion.

- 8.5 In a High Court case in 2015 it was concluded that the non-inclusion of Non-Religious World Views as part of Religious Education is a breach of the Convention for Human Rights which is enshrined in English law through the Human Rights Act.

9. *Reducing Inequalities*

- 9.1 Religion and Belief, as a protected characteristic under the Equality Act does include a lack of faith in an organised religion. Should a decision be made to not allow those with non-religious worldviews/faith such as Humanist Representatives this would limit the capacity for them to be represented fully at meetings of SACRE.
- 9.2 However, the current arrangements are in line with the legislation and requirement that these seek to provide representation to particular religious groups within the Local Authority area, as determined by the Local Authority. Opportunities for alternative involvement mitigate the negative impact such as the inclusion of a humanist representative as a co opted member.

10. Decide – Options

- 10.1 Option 1: To amend the constitution to include x2 voting representee of non-religious worldwide views/beliefs, such as Humanism, within Group A (Religions). This would enable the request from the Humanist Co opted member to become a full member possible whilst ensuring that a further place is available for another representative of secular belief, subject to satisfying the selection process outlined within the report.
- 10.2 Option 2: To amend the constitution to include x1 voting representee of non-religious worldwide views/beliefs, such as Humanism, within Group A (Religions). As a request has been made to include a Humanist representative, should that be agreed by the Authority, it would prevent other non-faith groups being represented as the place would be filled. This would disenfranchise a sizeable proportion of those living in Walsall and prevent their views and opinions from helping to shape the overall nature of Religious Education in maintained schools specifically under SACRE statutory duties, and those non-maintained who follow the Locally Agreed Syllabus.
- 10.3 Option 3: To continue with co-opted member status and not amend the constitution to allow voting representatives from non-religious worldwide views/beliefs, such as Humanism. However, this has previously been the subject of legal challenge by a Humanists UK and while a legal challenge may be defensible under current legislation, it is unlikely to be in the public interest to defend such proceedings when there is evidence supporting the need to review membership to include more secular belief systems being represented on SACRE.
- 10.4 Option 4: To include up to 2 members under category D to represent the authority. However, this is currently elected members of the Council and so consideration would need to be given as to how a member of a secular belief would represent the Council.

11. Respond

- 11.1 Once a view has been provided by SACRE, the matter will be considered by Council for decision. SACRE will be advised of the outcome at the next available meeting and.

12. Review

- 12.1 Membership will be reviewed on an annual basis.

Background papers

None

Author

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✉ Neil.Picken@walsall.gov.uk

**STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
(S.A.C.R.E.)
CONSTITUTION**

1. Legislative Background

The Education Act 1996, Sections 375-397 (in conjunction with 'Religious Education In English Schools: Non-statutory guidance 2010').

2. Terms of Reference

- a) The broad role of SACRE is to support the effective provision of RE and Collective Worship in schools. Walsall Local Authority will work with the SACRE to monitor and review the existing provision for RE and Collective Worship.
- b) The functions of SACRE are detailed in section 391 Education Act 1996 (as amended). Other responsibilities are outlined in: Religious Education in English Schools: non-statutory guidance 2010; SACRE and Self Evaluation: A guide Ofsted 2005; Circular 1/94 (Collective Worship).

These responsibilities are:

- a) **to advise** the Authority on such matters connected with Religious Education and Collective Worship in Walsall Community schools, Foundation schools without a religious character and Voluntary Controlled schools.
- b) **to monitor** the provision and quality of RE taught according to its Agreed Syllabus together with the overall effectiveness of the syllabus in all schools.
- c) **to provide** advice and support on the effective teaching of the Agreed Syllabus.
- d) **to provide** advice to the LA and its schools on methods of teaching, the choice of teaching material and the provision of teacher training.
- e) **to require** the LA to set up a statutory conference to review the Agreed Syllabus if, in the opinion of the SACRE, this becomes necessary. This must be reviewed and updated every five years but a majority of representative groups on the SACRE, other than that consisting of persons chosen to represent the Authority (Group D), may at any time require a review of the Agreed Syllabus which is currently being used by the Authority.

*For the purpose of this document British values are those identified by the DFE and monitored by OFSTED

- democracy.
- the rule of law.
- individual liberty.
- mutual respect for and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs and for those without faith.

- f) **to consider**, in partnership with the LA, whether any changes need to be made to the Agreed Syllabus or in the support offered to schools in the implementation of the Agreed Syllabus, to improve the quality of RE and the learning of pupils.
- g) **to offer** schools and the LA advice concerning how an existing syllabus can be interpreted so as to fit in with wider changes in education.
- h) **to receive, determine and review** applications from headteachers that the requirement for **Collective Worship** in community schools to be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character shall not apply to the collective worship provided for some or all of the pupils at that particular school.
- i) **to publish** an annual report on its work and on actions taken by its representative groups, specifying any matters on which it has advised the LA, broadly describing the nature of that advice, and setting reasons for offering advice on matters which were not referred to it by the LA. This report will be presented to the LA and schools and is to be delivered to the Department for Education and NASACRE (the National Association of Standing Advisory Councils for Religious Education) by the date specified. This report should also be made available to the public. The report will provide at least the information specified by the receiving body.
- j) **to develop** SACRE's own role, supported by the LA and working with inter-religious bodies, to enhance the important contribution that the study of religion and belief can make to community cohesion, British values* and the combating of religious prejudice and discrimination.
- k) **to offer** advice to the Walsall LA on any matters related to SACREs.

3. Membership of SACRE

- a) The number of representative members shall be determined from time to time by the LA and the individual appointments should be made by the LA after taking all reasonable steps to assure itself that the individual is representative of the denomination or the teacher association concerned. It is desirable that all members have an interest in education in general and in religious education in particular.
- b) SACRE is to be comprised of the members of the four Representative Groups and members co-opted to SACRE
- c) The four Representative Groups shall be:

Group A: Such Christian denominations other religions and religious denominations as, in the opinion of the LA, will appropriately reflect the principal religious traditions in Walsall and religions and faiths covered by the Agreed Syllabus. The number of representatives of each religion and religious denomination appointed shall, so far as consistent with the efficient discharge of the Council's functions, reflect broadly the proportionate strength of that denomination or religion in the area as indicated by the 2011 census data:

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- 1 Baptist
- 1 Black Country Orthodox Trust
- 2 Methodist
- 1 New Testament Church of God
- 1 Quakers
- 1 Roman Catholic
- 1 Salvation Army
- 1 United Reform Church
- 3 Muslim
- 2 Hindu
- 3 Sikh
- 1 Jewish
- 1 Buddhist

Non-Religious Philosophical Convictions

- 2 appointed representative for people with non-religious affiliation or belief not represented by any other membership group so long as the non-religious beliefs analogous (similar or equivalent) to a religious beliefs as per the following guidance:-
 - To be “analogous” we consider the non-religious beliefs must in accordance with case law under the European Convention of Human Rights and the Human Rights Act 1998 attain the necessary level of cogency, seriousness, cohesion and importance to attract protection under the Convention Rights.
 - Any appointment is dependent on the relevant local authority’s opinion as to whether such a representative would help ensure that the relevant traditions in the local authority’s area are appropriately reflected in Group A. The final decision of an appointment rests with the local authority, and they are best placed to assess whether a SACRE has the necessary expertise and experience to properly discharge its function.

Nomination and election process

Nominations for people with non-religious affiliation or belief not represented by any other membership group in Category A should be submitted in writing to Democratic Services. Nominations to be reviewed by the Director of Children’s Service together with the Portfolio Holder for Education and SACRE, to consider eligibility. A recommendation to Council shall then be made.

Group B: Church of England. This group is made up of 5 members of the Church of England, representing the Diocese of Lichfield. It can include both clergy and lay people. Each nominee will be proposed by the Lichfield Diocesan Board of Education and appointed by the LA. The nominating body will be the

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point of reference should the LA have any questions pertaining to their nominee(s) either before or subsequent to their appointment.

Group C: Teacher representatives to represent a spread of teacher specialisations as listed below, and these should reflect as broad a spread of teacher associations as possible. Any teacher association that is not represented by the teacher category criteria will have the right to nominate an additional representative. The nominating body will be the point of reference should the LA have any questions pertaining to their nominee(s) either before or subsequent to their appointment:

- 2 Maintained School Headteachers (Primary or Secondary)
- 1 Secondary Academy School Headteachers
- 1 Primary Academy School Headteacher
- Local RE subject leader Primary
- Local RE subject leader secondary
- Representatives of Unions (NUT, NASUWT, ATL, ASCL, NAHT)

Group D: Local Authority. This group shall comprise a group of up to seven elected members as nominated by the political parties represented on the council.

Co-opted members: SACRE shall have the right to co-opt additional members for the remainder of the municipal year. Co-opted members may take part in any of the discussions but do not belong to any of the groups and do not have voting rights. The co-opted members shall be appointed only by those members of SACRE who have not themselves been co-opted.

Co-opted Members to include a Humanist UK representative.

4. Officer Support

- a) Local Authority senior officer or representative (non-voting)
- b) Clerk to SACRE (non-voting)
- c) RE Consultant (non-voting)

The nominating body will be the point of reference should the LA have any questions pertaining to their nominee(s) either before or subsequent to their appointment. The Head of Service will be the point of reference should SACRE have any questions pertaining to the Local Authority Senior Officer.

5. Membership

- a) The LA shall appoint the members of the SACRE after consulting with the Nominating Bodies as appropriate.
- b) Nominating bodies will review their representation at the beginning of each municipal year or up to every five years as they see fit.

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- c) An individual representative member may resign at any time by giving notice in writing to their Nominating Body and to the Clerk of SACRE
- d) An individual representative member may be removed from membership by the LA, if in the opinion of the LA he or she ceases to be representative of the nominating denomination or teacher association.
- e) Following non-attendance of a member at two consecutive meetings without apology, the SACRE will recommend to the LA that a replacement nomination be sought from the relevant Nominating Body.

6. Term of Office

- a) Appointments to SACRE shall generally be for a term of 5 years from the date that the new member should have attended their first meeting. Groups can re-nominate members after the end of the 5 years for consideration by the LA. Members may not serve for more than two consecutive periods of 10 years (i.e. ten consecutive years in total). SACRE may waive this rule with the agreement of all voting members of SACRE if the continued service of a Member was considered to be beneficial to the Council.
- b) The SACRE shall review the membership annually at the AGM in the summer term.

7. Voting

- a) Each of the four Groups on SACRE shall have one vote. Groups are to determine their own internal voting arrangements. Decisions within a group about how that vote is cast do not require unanimity. Each group is to regulate its own proceedings including provision for resolving deadlock.
- b) A proposal shall not be deemed to be carried unless it has been approved by at least three of the four Groups, unless otherwise required by law or guidance. If there is a tied vote then the issue would fail, and no action would be taken.
- c) The validity of the proceedings of SACRE or of the members of SACRE of any particular category shall not be affected by a vacancy in the office of any member of SACRE, or on the ground that a member appointed to represent any religion, religious denomination or association does not at the time of the proceedings represent the religion, religious denomination or association in question.

8. Quorum

A quorum shall consist of one member from at least three of the constituent groups with a total presence of no less than eight of the appointed members.

9. Chairs and Vice Chair

- a) The chair and vice chair will be appointed by the membership of SACRE at the AGM in the summer term or any meeting during the year when the

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position is vacant. Normally the chair and vice chair will remain in their positions for two years.

- b) The chair and vice chair, where possible, will represent different Groups of the SACRE and if possible have different religious backgrounds.
- c) SACRE will put in place procedures to consider succession planning for the posts of chair and vice chair.
- d) Where a vote is required, voting will be by a simple majority with each Group being assigned one vote.
- e) The Chair will be responsible for:
 - the management of meetings
 - representing the SACRE to other bodies
 - such other duties as the SACRE considers appropriate.
- f) The Vice Chair will be responsible for:
 - deputising for the chair as required;
 - representing the SACRE to other bodies in the absence of the chair or in agreement with the Chair
 - such other duties as the SACRE considers appropriate.

10. The Clerk

The LA shall appoint, fund and supervise a Clerk to:

- a) attend the full meetings of SACRE, any agenda setting meeting and Agreed Syllabus Conference meetings
- b) take appropriate minutes and notes at meetings
- c) maintain and update the records of SACRE and its meetings
- d) perform any other necessary administrative duties
- e) provide a copy of the minutes and papers of meeting to the members of SACRE and LA

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11. The Local Authority Senior officer

SACRE shall be served by a Local Authority Senior Officer. The LA officer will:

- a) attend each SACRE and ASC meeting
- b) represent the views of the LA at these meetings
- c) provide necessary information and support to the RE Consultant regarding RE and Collective Worship in the Walsall schools
- d) ensure that the LA provide sufficient funds for SACRE to perform its functions.

12. The RE Consultant

The RE adviser will:

- a) attend each meeting of the SACRE and support the SACRE to fulfil its function with regard to RE and Collective Worship
- b) work with the Chair, Clerk and LA Officer to prepare the SACRE agenda and any reports, papers or advice required
- c) report regularly to SACRE on work completed on behalf of SACRE
- d) provide expertise and advice in the areas of RE and Collective Worship.

13. Meetings of SACRE

- a) There will normally be three SACRE meetings per academic year, one per term. Meetings will be convened by the LA. The summer term meeting will be the AGM.
- b) Special meetings may be called by the Chair, Vice Chair and LA acting jointly.
- c) Details of the business to be considered by the meeting, which will be included in the agenda, must be received by the Clerk not later than 15 school days before the meeting.
- d) The Clerk will, no later than 5 working days before the meeting, circulate the agenda and supporting papers to the members.
- e) Meetings of SACRE shall be held in public except where an item of business is being considered which involves the consideration of confidential information in accordance with the Religious Education (Meetings of Local Conferences and Councils).

14. Convening an Agreed Syllabus Conference

- a) Walsall LA is required to convene an Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC) to review the Agreed Syllabus every five years. An ASC may be requested to be convened by SACRE more frequently.
- b) This conference will ideally have the same composition as SACRE. There is no provision for co-opted members, however some individuals may be invited to all meetings of the conference and its Groups in order to give their advice.

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15. General

- a) The SACRE may if it wishes establish working parties to take forward specific projects comprising representatives of each of the groups and the RE Consultant. These working parties will report back to SACRE regularly, according to a schedule agreed at the outset of the project.
- b) In accordance with the statutory requirements of the Education Act 1996 and associated regulations, the press and public will be entitled to attend meetings of the SACRE, but may be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of items containing information capable of being treated as exempt information if meetings of SACRE were meetings of a Local Authority. The press and public are not entitled to attend meetings of an Agreed Syllabus Conference.
- c) The Constitution will be reviewed on a biennial basis at the Summer term meeting of SACRE (the AGM) and suggestions for amendment voted on as described in Sections 7 & 8. Minor amendments may be brought to any meeting, with the agreement of members, and such minor amendments voted on as described in Section 7 & 8.

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SACRE Integration Briefing Note

Walsall Council were part of the Government's pilot integration programme which one of the factors considered was that Walsall Schools were the 12th most segregated in the country.

This really was a reflection of the borough, which has wards with a very diverse residents base and wards, which are predominantly white British residents who, through consultation in 2017 were found to be resistant to mix.

One of the key influencers in promoting integration are faith-based organisations, schools and places of worship.

Through Walsall For All it was established that dialogue between communities was a very effective method of promoting integration, building friendship and rectifying uninformed views to a more accurate experience and belief. Key to the approach were the Faith and Belief Forum who are a national organisation developing community dialogue sessions. A model that can be replicated through schools using an issue based approach.

Another successful project was School Linking, which pairs two schools of often-different demographics or religious beliefs to work with one another through an exchange model of visits and learning. This impacts not only the students but also teachers and parents as they explore differences in cultural norms, which can include localised ward based cultures.

When considering the 2040 consultation currently being undertaken faith is having a downward trend, which has witnessed significant reduction in attendance at worship across religions. <https://www.cumberlandlodge.ac.uk/read-watch-listen/uk%E2%80%99s-changing-faith-and-belief-landscape-exploring-religious-diversity>

Predictions of around 60% of the population would self-classify as having no faith by 2040 and society and schools will need to consider this downward trend in religious belief.– the risk to schools and society considering predictions for white British may be the lack of purpose and identity

There is a clear split from an ethnic minority and white British perspective. 60% of white British identify as having no faith while 80% of non-white British identify as having a faith. This should be considered from a SACRE perspective especially considering the basis of the original SACRE legislation based on Christian values.

There are concerns when considering the predictions around those who have a religious belief and those who do not. This may raise tensions and suspicion from those without a belief of those with a belief, which may extend along racial lines. The reverse may also happen with those with a religious belief and those who do not, again along race lines, with white British being deemed non-believers and not answerable to God

There is no uniform approach to faith across the borough, and often links between schools and places of worship were facilitated by the place of worship approaching the schools on a locality based perspective. Children's Services have stated they have no intention of leading on school linking

Faith visits are facilitated by a number of voluntary groups but this is on an ad hoc basis with no formalised approach. A previous approach to formalise multi faith visits by schools was not successful.

Nigel Rowe

Integration Lead

Nigel.rowe@walsall.gov.uk

WALSALL SACRE 2022-23 ACTION PLAN

This plan is in 3 sections,

1. Actions to be completed immediately
2. Actions to be completed this academic year
3. Actions to be held over to 2023-24

ACTIONS TO BE COMPLETED IMMEDIATELY

- Meetings to be held at a variety of venues- the first meeting was at Blue Coat Primary school and the next is at a Gurdwara
- Members to have access to training- members have received details of NASACRE training
- Have opportunities to hear from students- this happened at our meeting at a Blue Coat Primary School.

ACTIONS TO BE COMPLETED THIS ACADEMIC YEAR

- The chair to attend the NASACRE Conference
- Review the present membership of Walsall SACRE
- Use co-option to ensure the membership is well informed and represents the diversity of the local community
- Ensure SACRE plays a key role in promoting community cohesion
- Monitor the early effectiveness of the new agreed syllabus by receiving feedback from teachers
- Gain information about RE provision in schools and examination entries
- Gain information regarding the practice of delivering collective worship in schools

ACTIONS FOR 2023-24

- Establish communication between SACRE and school leaders
- Develop effective communication with academies

RE National Updates Spring 2023

SACRE receives updates on what is happening in the world of RE. We thought you might like to have this information – about resources and events, and other news updates. Please pass this on to members of your community, RE subject leads and others interested in RE.

Resources

Inclusive Judaism: resources from the Jewish Museum of London

Classroom resources, including an extensive image library, open up the diversity of Jewish communities. Developers, Shereen Hunte and Eliana Mendelsohn, say: *The teaching of Inclusive Judaism is important for many reasons and ensures that:*

- *The Jewish community is represented authentically.*
- *Students truly understand what it means to be Jewish, in all its diversity.*
- *We are able to connect to each other's experiences with empathy and compassion.*

See: [Inclusive Judaism - The Jewish Museum London](#)



NATRE Primary Subject leader support pages

Natre have created a new resource the primary subject leader toolkit. This has many resources and links to support your role as Religious Education/ Religion and Worldviews subject leader. All the content detailed and linked in these pages has been written and collated by Primary members of the NATRE Executive and RE Today Advisers.

www.natre.org.uk/primary/primary-subject-leader/

Visits, videos and other resources for the classroom

THE ARTS SOCIETY BIRMINGHAM

Birmingham faith visits

The Arts Society Birmingham has worked with six faith communities to provide guidance and materials on six places of worship. Teachers can find a 4-page booklet, three videos introducing the building and community, and a related quiz for each place of worship.

Supported by a generous grant from Westhill Endowment Trust, The Arts Society Birmingham has collaborated with six different places of worship, Birmingham Faith Leaders and other organisations to produce resources designed to enhance a school visit, or to support a virtual visit, to a place of worship for children 8 to 13 years.

Actual visits to the places of worship may be arranged by contacting them directly. Contact details are provided on the Illustrated Guides. <https://birmingham-faith-visits.theartsociety.org/>

£600 grants for teaching Christianity

The Jerusalem Trust's

Small Grants to Schools Scheme

Resourcing the teaching of Christianity within Religious Education

The Jerusalem Trust's Small Grants to Schools Scheme supports the teaching of Christianity within Religious Education. The scheme operates by providing schools with grants of up to £600 to purchase resources for use in RE lessons.

The scheme is open to state funded schools in England and Wales, with 60% awarded to secondary schools and 40% to primary schools.

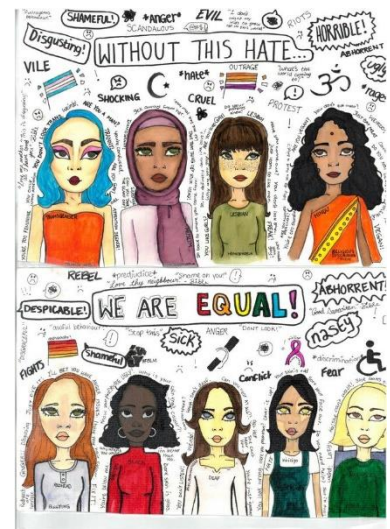
Details and application information: www.regrants.org.uk

NATRE Spirited Arts 2022 WINNERS!

Over 30,000 young people from around the world took part in the Spirited Arts competition last year, with entries from Australia, Bahrain and Thailand, as well as many from Stoke-on-Trent. 523 schools took part, selecting their pupils' best artworks, and sending 3196 entries for judging. 27 winners have been selected and are now in the [Spirited Arts online gallery](#).

Categories in the 2022 competition included:

- 'God's Good Earth?', which invited pupils to explore the threat of climate change and the beauty of the earth
- 'Searching for God', where pupils considered their personal search for God, regardless of whether they are atheist, agnostic, or believers in God, and
- 'A view of the world', where pupils were encouraged to explore their own worldview.



Mollie (13) - Winner

The competition is supported by the Jo Cox Foundation. This year entrants were invited to develop a creative response to the 2015 quote from the late Jo Cox MP:

"We are far more united and have far more in common than that which divides us".

www.natre.org.uk/about-natre/projects/spirited-arts/spirited-arts-gallery/2022/

NATRE Spirited Arts 2023 – new themes announced

Will your school join hundreds of schools from around the world taking part in this year's Spirited Arts competition? Entries are welcomed in (almost!) any art form pupils can think of. Winning entries will provide a good response to one of the 5 themes, and judges will be asking is it original? Is it well-crafted? And (most importantly!) is it excellent RE?

The 6 themes

1. "We have more in common than that which divides us."
2. Green faith, green future? ['God's good earth?']
3. Where is God today?
4. Faith in action, values in action.
5. Sacred space and holy buildings
6. All God's creatures?



More details here www.natre.org.uk/about-natre/projects/spirited-arts/spirited-arts-2023/

Training and CPD opportunities and other support

NATRE's annual Strictly RE conference returned on 28-29th January 2023

Taking place online for the third year, the conference themes explore: **depth, diversity and Abrahamic worldviews**



Although the conference is over all sessions were recorded and schools can buy access to all the recording for only £135 (£115 for NATRE members)

Workshops included:

- Thinking out loud- joining the dots to help children think more critically (Primary)
- Introducing Philosophy and Philosophers to the Primary Classroom (Primary)
- Dharmic Lenses on the Climate Crisis (Secondary)
- Creating a core RE Programme for KS4 (Secondary)
- Interfaith conversations - exploring creative projects that deepen pupils' understanding in RE (Crossphase)
- Special RE (Crossphase)
- Championing and advocating for RE with parents (for SLTs)

To buy access contact courses@retoday.org.uk

Free webinars for primary and secondary ECTs – a taster for NATRE ECT membership

Early Career Teachers have access to a range of free support through a series of online sessions. 'Café' sessions give you a chance to talk with experienced teachers and experts from different worldview backgrounds. The taught sessions offer expert input with a focus on practical classroom strategies.

Date – All Mondays 4.00-5.30pm	Topic
9 Jan	Taught session: Focus on Non-religious worldviews
13 Feb	Taught session: Focus on Hindu Dharma
13 Mar	Café NATRE – Subject knowledge Judaism
15 May	Taught session: Focus on Multidisciplinary RE
12 June	Taught session: Focus on Sikhi
10 July	Café NATRE: Subject knowledge Christianity

ECT webinars booking link www.natre.org.uk/membership/early-careers-teacher/ect-free-monthly-webinar/

Culham St Gabriel's 'In conversation' series

Extend your understanding of religion and worldviews, subject knowledge and pedagogy by listening in on conversations among teachers, researchers and other experts.

Two conversations are programmed for the spring:

- 20 Feb: 4-00-4.40pm Learning from experiences in Lebanon: diversity, solidarity and safeguarding human dignity (recording available)
- 20 March 4.30-5.10pm RETOPEA! Promoting religious peace and tolerance through history

Details and booking info here: www.cstg.org.uk/activities/events/in-conversation/

Extensive back catalogue here: www.reonline.org.uk/research/in-conversation/

Regional RE Hub leads in place and ready to go!

Under the leadership of Claire Clinton, Lead Director, a fantastic team of Regional Leads will be supporting ten regions of England and Wales. They have been recruited to build relationships with advisers, dioceses, universities, SACREs, LAs, governors, MATs, teaching school hubs and more. The Regional Leads will also act as conduits between the regional providers of research, CPD, resources, places of worship and so on for the benefit of all RE/Religion and Worldview stakeholders.

The Regional Hub structure aims to increase accessibility for all teachers to local and regional professional development and research, and to enable teachers to teach with greater confidence through their access to the support, knowledge, training and resources available in their region.

Details and the list of Regional Leads:

www.natre.org.uk/news/latest-news/the-regional-re-hubs-team-is-ready-to-go/

Through the regional Hubs there will be a regional website. Amongst other things this will feature local speakers and places of worship. In order to feature on the website there is a free training session to attend which will get those attending kitemark accreditation.

To book a date visit: <http://bit.ly/3lqzN91>

These online sessions are led by professionals in RE, RE Hubs Director, Claire Clinton and Re Hub leads. Suitable for those hosting visits and visiting schools.

Can this be shared with local speakers and places of worship?

NATRE: new membership packages!

NATRE is the largest membership organisation that promotes, defends and supports RE teachers and RE teaching. It does this through producing high-quality resources and CPD, lobbying government, being involved in conversations with the DfE and Ofsted, Local Authorities and SACREs, telling teachers' stories and experiences and being a voice for all teachers.

Membership packages for students, ECTs, teachers, schools, RE professionals and RE enthusiasts!

Details: www.natre.org.uk/membership



NATRE: welcome webinars for new members

New NATRE members are invited to a monthly welcome webinar. This will help them use their NATRE membership and enjoy it to its fullest!

What will they learn?

- How to Access NATRE resources
- Access online termly mailing resources
- Access Local Groups area
- Take the best out of the NATRE monthly newsletter
- How to redeem your REtoday library membership
- How to use your membership discount

Members can register their interest to attend a webinar at this link.

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Other information

Research into parent views on Religious Education

In summer 2021, the Culham St Gabriel's Trust (CSTG) commissioned a survey to understand more about public perception of an education in religion and worldviews. In the summer of 2022, CSTG commissioned another survey, this time exploring the views of parents about education in religion and worldviews. In both cases, the language used in the questions was chosen to try to avoid these misconceptions and to collect a more accurate set of data about what people thought about modern RE.

Some key findings about what parents talk about with their children:

- Around 8 in 10 discuss beliefs about the origins of life and the universe (78%)
- 7 in 10 discuss beliefs concerning what happens when we die (72%)
- 8 in 10 discuss beliefs that affect people's behaviour and decision making (77%)
- 7 in 10 discuss issues related to religious and non-religious worldviews that appear in the media (67%)

Find out more here: www.cstg.org.uk/activities/campaigns/parent-survey/

How can SACRE capitalise on these findings to further improve RE provision in the LA?

Link between study of RS at examination level and positive outcomes for disadvantaged students?

There is a growing body of research linking the study of Religious Education/Studies with improved outcomes for pupils identified as 'disadvantaged'.

This collection of research would suggest that schools that are serious about improving the outcomes for their disadvantaged pupils, should look carefully at their provision for Religious Studies at key stage 4 and 5. Find out more [here](#)

What do we know about the levels of disadvantage in the schools in our area and their experience of RE?

Why does the rate of entry for GCSE RS vary so much around England? Does the 2021 Census provide part of the answer?

In answer to a parliamentary written question asked by Janet Daby MP and **answered by Nick Gibb MP in January**, the minister provided a table ranking each local authority in relation to the number of entries for GCSE Religious Studies in 2022. The range is significant; from 14.4% to 81.0%. Looking for an explanation for this gap, we tabulated the percentage of the population in each local authority that recorded they belonged to a religion in the 2021 Census alongside the average entries for GCSE. The correlation is interesting as you will see by the colour coded shading in the last column. Comparisons between the local authorities entering the most and the least students are worth noting as follows:

An average of 57% of the English population, recorded that they had a religion in the 2021 census

An average of 51% of the population, in the bottom 10 LAs in terms of entries for GCSE RS, recorded that they had a religion in the 2021 census

An average of 71% of the population, in the top 10 LAs in terms of entries for GCSE RS, recorded that they had a religion in the 2021 census

The full table can be downloaded [here](#).

Even though this is correlation and not proven causation, SACREs may like to consider the following:

- How do entries in their LA compare with other LAs in their region and nationally?
- Does the census data provide part of the answer or not?
- Why do some LAs buck the trend implied by the census data – i.e. pupils appear to be more likely to be entered for GCSE RS in areas with a larger proportions of people who identify with a religious worldview?
- Might parental views of what their child should study be affecting curriculum design? See CSTG survey of parents [here](#).
- What are the implications of the answers to these questions for Religious Education in England?

Find out more in the document linked below

Local Authorities entries for GCSE and census records

Cross-party calls for RE National Plan after Westminster debate

London, 01 November 2022: A Westminster Hall debate heard cross-party calls of support for religious education, as MPs urged the Government to do more to protect the subject, they considered vital for young people in modern Britain.

The debate, entitled ‘Religious Education in Modern Britain’, was called by Conservative MP Martin Vickers who cited concerns about the number of schools fulfilling their statutory responsibility to teach the subject. At year 11, one school in five reported offering zero hours of RE.

www.religiouseducationcouncil.org.uk/?news=re-in-modern-britain-westminster-hall-debate

How do these figures compare with the picture in our LA?

What action (if any) should SACRE be taking?

Would SACRE like to inform local politicians further about issues facing RE? [This document](#) might support this activity

Shortage of Specialist Secondary RE Teachers

We are pleased to have collaborated with Culham St Gabriel’s Trust and our partners in the RE Policy unit on this Policy Briefing on the current shortage of subject specialist secondary teachers for religious education. We hope it will provide a useful source of information about the national picture of recruitment and the arguments we are making to lobby for government action. Please share this document widely.

Access the documents here.

Minister Admits most Teachers of RE mainly teach another subject

In response to the **parliamentary written question** asked by Janet Daby MP, minister for school standards; Nick Gibb MP admitted that 51% of the total number of secondary teachers of RE spend most of their teaching timetable delivering a different subject. Only 27% of teachers of History, 28% of Geography and 13% of English fall into this category. This statistic lends further support for the call for immediate action to boost the number of trainee teachers of RE after the government, yet again, refused to offer trainees teachers of RE a bursary and, unsurprisingly, recruitment is currently down 32% on last year (22% for all subjects).

NATRE believes pupils deserve better, and that they should be taught by well-trained and qualified teachers. According to the government's own **teacher standards** (3), teachers must "demonstrate good subject and curriculum knowledge". It is difficult to see how these can be met when the proportion of specialist teachers is so low.

School leaders struggling to recruit RE specialists blame the DfE, especially as they **recently justified the decision**, on the basis that in one single year in the last ten (2020/21), the target was exceeded, conveniently ignoring the fact that it had previously **stated**, "In 2020/21, we saw an unprecedented increase in new entrants to ITT compared to the previous year, which was likely to be a direct result of the impact of COVID-19..."

A school leader in the North of England spoke for many when he described the consequences of DfE policy:

"I have championed and delivered RE as a compulsory subject from Year 7 to Year 11 for a significant number of years. I have also made it compulsory for all students to sit the GCSE RS examination throughout this time. Unfortunately, the Government did not include RE in the Humanities subjects in the English Baccalaureate and due to a national shortage of RE teachers I have been unable to appoint new staff. Therefore, I do not have trained RE teachers to deliver RE on the scale I have done previously."

You can find detailed arguments and statistics to support our case for action to support the case for government action including the restoration of bursaries here:

The case for ITT bursaries 2023 final

NATRE survey of provision for RE in primary schools published

Key highlights from the survey show:

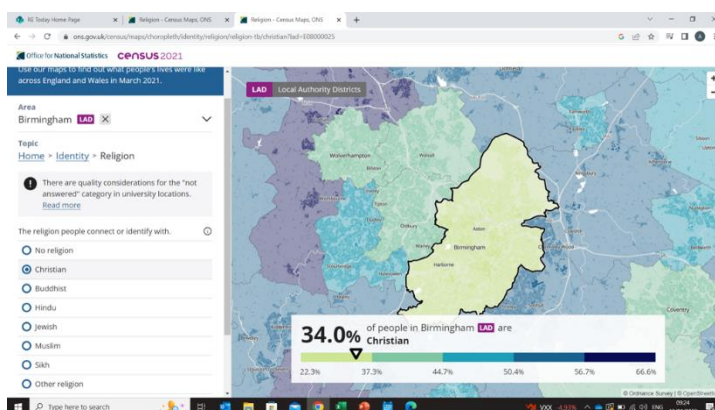
- The number of schools where pupils are withdrawn is increasing. 23% of schools report some withdrawal from RE (18.6% in 2020. and 16% in 2018).
- 96% of schools report that they make provision for RE for all pupils in their school.
- More than 40% of teachers report that they received between 0 and 3 hours of training to teach RE in their initial teacher training. 20% received none.
- 63% of schools say some RE is being delivered by adults other than teachers (TAs/HLTAs etc.)
- In 28% of schools, RE receives no budget or no set budget and is 30% less funding than foundation subjects.
- In just under a third of schools (31.5%) insufficient time (less than 60 mins) is being spent on the teaching of RE to ensure that pupils make good progress.
- In 80% of schools, subject leaders receive some training but 25% of other teachers receive none and report reduced confidence.
- In over 30% of schools, time for RE increased and in 30% of these, Ofsted has cited as the main reason: inspection comments, the Framework, or the Research Review in RE.

Read more [here](#) and an infographic [here](#):

To what extent do these findings from primary teachers nationally, reflect the situation in our area?

Office for National Statistics publishes responses to the question on religion in census 2021

- For the first time in a census of England and Wales, less than half of the population (46.2%, 27.5 million people) described themselves as “Christian”, a 13.1 percentage point decrease from 59.3% (33.3 million) in 2011; despite this decrease, “Christian” remained the most common response to the religion question.
- “No religion” was the second most common response, increasing by 12.0 percentage points to 37.2% (22.2 million) from 25.2% (14.1 million) in 2011.
- There were increases in the number of people who described themselves as “Muslim” (3.9 million, 6.5% in 2021, up from 2.7 million, 4.9% in 2011) and “Hindu” (1.0 million, 1.7% in 2021, up from 818,000, 1.5% in 2011).
- Wales had a greater decrease in people reporting their religion as “Christian” (14.0 percentage point decrease, from 57.6% in 2011 to 43.6% in 2021) and increase in “No religion” (14.5 percentage point increase, from 32.1% in 2011 to 46.5% in 2021) compared with England and Wales overall.
- London remains the most religiously diverse region of England in 2021, with over a quarter (25.3%) of all usual residents reporting a religion other than “Christian”; the North East and South West are the least religiously diverse regions, with 4.2% and 3.2%, respectively, selecting a religion other than “Christian”.



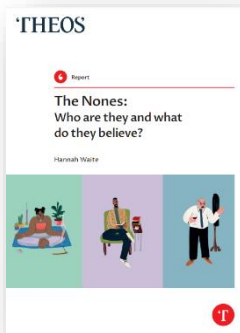
Explore our region and the surrounding area using this interactive online map: www.ons.gov.uk/census/maps

What are the implications of this census for our Agreed Syllabus and the membership of SACRE?

How are the religious and non-religious traditions, including the smaller ones reflected in the membership of our SACRE?

How does the data for 2021 compare with 2011? How is our area similar and different to England and Wales as a whole?

Theos Report: Who are the Nones and what do they believe?



This report published on 24th November, shortly before the census data above was released explores the demography, beliefs and practices of Nones and then presents a cluster analysis of this group. It shows that Nones comprise a complex and sometimes counter– intuitive group with, for example, only 51% of them stating they “don’t believe in God,” and 42% believing in some form of the supernatural.

Download the full report here:

www.theosthinktank.co.uk/research/2022/10/31/the-nones-who-are-they-and-what-do-they-believe

What, if any, are the implications of this report for our Agreed Syllabus?

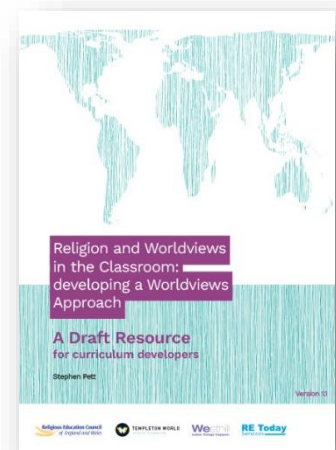
Draft Resource for Religion and Worldviews in the Classroom

As part of a three-year Worldviews project, the RE Council of England and Wales (REC) has published a draft resource for Religion and Worldviews in the Classroom.

The resource sets out a rationale for a religion and worldviews approach, building on the developments since the 2018 Commission report. It incorporates a revised **National Statement of Entitlement** (NSE), which gives a clear description of an education in religion and worldviews, and sets a benchmark for high-quality teaching and learning. The resource then offers practical guidance, including how to use the NSE to develop a syllabus or curriculum, applying ways of knowing, developing pupils’ personal worldviews, and what progress looks like in a worldviews approach.

Sections include:

- What do people mean by ‘religion’?
- What do people mean by ‘worldview’?
- The value of worldviews
- Purposes for RE in a religion and worldviews approach
- **Revised National Statement of Entitlement**
- Developing pupils’ personal worldviews
- Making good progress
- Applying disciplinary methods
- How to use the NSE to develop a syllabus
- How to use the NSE to develop questions and construct units of work
- Making good progress: three models



The resource is primarily written to inform three Framework Development Teams, who are currently working to apply the NSE and the guidance to their own contexts. During this process, the draft resource will be tested and revised as necessary, before the publication of a final Handbook, three example frameworks, sample units of work and pupil responses, in 2024.

You can download copies of here: www.religiouseducationcouncil.org.uk/projects/draft-handbook-and-nse/

News updates created for Walsall SACRE by RE Today Services, March 2023



Do you work at a place of worship, at a museum, or are you a school speaker?



If so, join our kitemark accreditation online training to get tips on how to work well with schools. Whether you are hosting visits, visiting schools, or delivering a speech, this training can give you the confidence to ensure you are providing the best experience for schools.

The webinars are being led by professionals in RE, RE Hubs Director Claire Clinton, and RE Hubs Leads.

These are free to attend and will be ran on a monthly basis for you to select a session that fits your schedule.

To book a date visit:
<http://bit.ly/3lqzN91>

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RE Hubs is a new project seeking to build relationships between Advisers, Dioceses, Universities, SACREs, LAs, Governors, MATs, Teaching school Hubs, places of worship, school speakers and more.

Delegates that have signed up to our agreed principles for working with schools, will then be accredited with our RE Hubs Kitemark.

2023
★ ★ ★ ★ ★
REHubs
Accredited

Webinar dates

- 2023**
- Thursday 23 March 2-3:30pm
 - Tuesday 18 April 9:30-11am
 - Wednesday 17 May 11-12:30pm
 - Tuesday 20 June 10-11:30am



To book a date visit:
<http://bit.ly/3lqzN91>



Review of OFSTED reports of Walsall Schools

The following inspection reports have been published between **21st September 2022 and 28th October 2023**

Barcroft Primary School Good 18 and 19 October 2022

Trips and residential help pupils to develop curiosity about the world around them. For example, trips to places of worship, such as the Gurdwara, supports pupils' understanding of different religions. Pupils respect and celebrate difference. They say that people should treat everyone equally, no matter what.

Barr Beacon School Good 22 and 23 November 2022

No comment on RE

Beacon Primary School Good but could be outstanding 9 and 10 November 2022

No comment on RE

Birchills Church of England Community Academy Good but could be outstanding 13 and 14 December 2022

No comment on RE

Blue Coat Church of England Aided Infant School Good 11 and 12 October 2022

They learn about their own faith and the faith of others through assemblies and special events such as Bhangra dance workshops.

Elmwood School Good 21 and 22 September 2022

Staff promote equality and diversity effectively. Pupils learn how to be tolerant and respectful.

Goldsmith Primary Academy Good 2 and 3 November 2022

No comment on RE

Holy Trinity Church of England Primary School Good 18 and 19 October 2022

Pupils understand about different faiths and cultures and say that everyone is equal. They are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

Meadow View JMI School Good 14 and 15 September 2022

Pupils particularly look forward to the residential visit in Year 6 and spoke of how entering an international art competition helped them to understand different faiths and religions. (NATRE Spirited arts Competition)

Palfrey Infant School RI 11 and 12 October 2022 RE deep dive

In subjects such as religious education and history, pupils are excited to learn about the world around them. In some cases, staff have carefully linked the pupils' prior experiences to new learning, for example using pupils' own experiences of the Islamic festival of Eid al-Fitr to develop an understanding of Diwali or harvest festival. Consequently, some pupils are confident to talk about the personal importance of Eid al-Adha and how this helps them to understand the importance of other festivals for other faiths. However, the way in which the curriculum is taught means that some

pupils cannot remember what they have learned in previous lessons. This makes learning new things harder.

A recent project encouraged pupils to reflect on their faith and spirituality through art.

Park Hall Infant Academy Good 1 and 2 November 2022

No comment on RE

Phoenix Academy Good 22 and 23 November 2022

No comment on RE

Pinfold Street Primary School Good 18 and 19 October 2022

No comment on RE

Short Heath Junior School Good 29 and 30 November 2022

No comment on RE

St Michael's Church of England C Primary School Outstanding but... 6 and 7 December 2022

Pupils build their awareness of different cultures in subjects like art and design and music. Leaders know that there is work to do to ensure that pupils are more knowledgeable about world religions.

St Thomas More Catholic School, Willenhall Good 11 and 12 October 2022

Pupils have frequent opportunities to engage with different views, beliefs and opinions. They show tolerance towards all members of their diverse school community.

The Streetly Academy Good 18 and 19 October 2022 (RE Deep dive)

Where learning is more ambitious, teachers build on key subject knowledge very well over time. For example, in Year 7 religious education, pupils begin with a basic understanding of different faiths. In later year groups, teachers then lead in-depth discussions and evaluations about these faiths. Pupils welcome these discussions when they are exposed to them. However, in key stages 3 and 4, some teachers do not take opportunities to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding as fully as they might. For example, some teachers do not always ask pupils in-depth questions to promote appropriate discussion between them. This means that pupils are not able to fully extend their understanding of different topics.

Walsall Wood School Good 11 and 12 October 2022

No comment on RE

Watling Street Primary School Good 15 and 16 November 2022

Leaders provide many opportunities to support pupils' personal development. For example, pupils go on trips to local places of worship.

Whitehall Junior Community School Good 2 and 3 November 2022

Teachers do not ensure that pupils are able to make secure links between their PSHE learning and fundamental British values, including their knowledge of diversity, other faiths and citizenship. Consequently, pupils have a limited understanding of the importance of British values. Leaders

should ensure that teachers help pupils to make clear links between their PSHE learning and fundamental British values to fully prepare them for the next stage of their education.

Willenhall E-ACT Academy 13 and 14 December 2022

No comment on RE

A report on responses to the religion question of the 2021 Census: Walsall

Executive Summary

The publication of the 2021 census on 29th November 2022 provides a useful source of information for SACRE. It allows members to consider whether or not the Agreed Syllabus is sufficiently flexible to meet the needs of schools serving both religious and non-religious families and where the demographic in relation to different religions varies. The 2021 census also provides a snap shot of the size of some of the smaller groups, allowing members to consider whether to recommend to the local authority that new members be included in Committee A.

1. Recommendation(s) that SACRE:

- Review the data from the census as it applies to Walsall (note this is already on the agenda for the meeting today)
- Consider whether the membership of Committee A is appropriate and, in particular, if SACRE should recommend to the Council that a representative of any other religion or belief system should be sought.

2. Introduction and Background

Group A of SACRE is required by law to include, "Such Christian denominations and other religious denominations as, in the opinion of the Authority, will approximately reflect the principal religious traditions in the area. In respect of Group A, section 390(6) Education Act 1996 states: The number of representative members appointed to any representative group under subsection (4)(a) [referred to as Group A] to represent each denomination or religion required to be represented shall, so far as consistent with the efficient discharge of the group's functions, reflect broadly the proportionate strength of that denomination or religion in the area.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

3.1 The decision of which groups to include in committee A is a matter for the council but it is within the remit of SACRE to make recommendations on this matter as it sees fit. We do this through adapting our constitution and then proposing changes to the council.

3.2 The Equality Act 2010 makes it illegal to discriminate against someone because they are of a particular religion, and the guidance published by the Equality and Human Rights Commission makes it clear this applies to smaller religions for example

Paganism: <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/religion-or-belief-discrimination> If the council were to receive an application from a Pagan to serve on SACRE then these legal matters would need to be considered. SACRE has not received such an application recently. This would also be true if an application was made from a non- religious worldview.

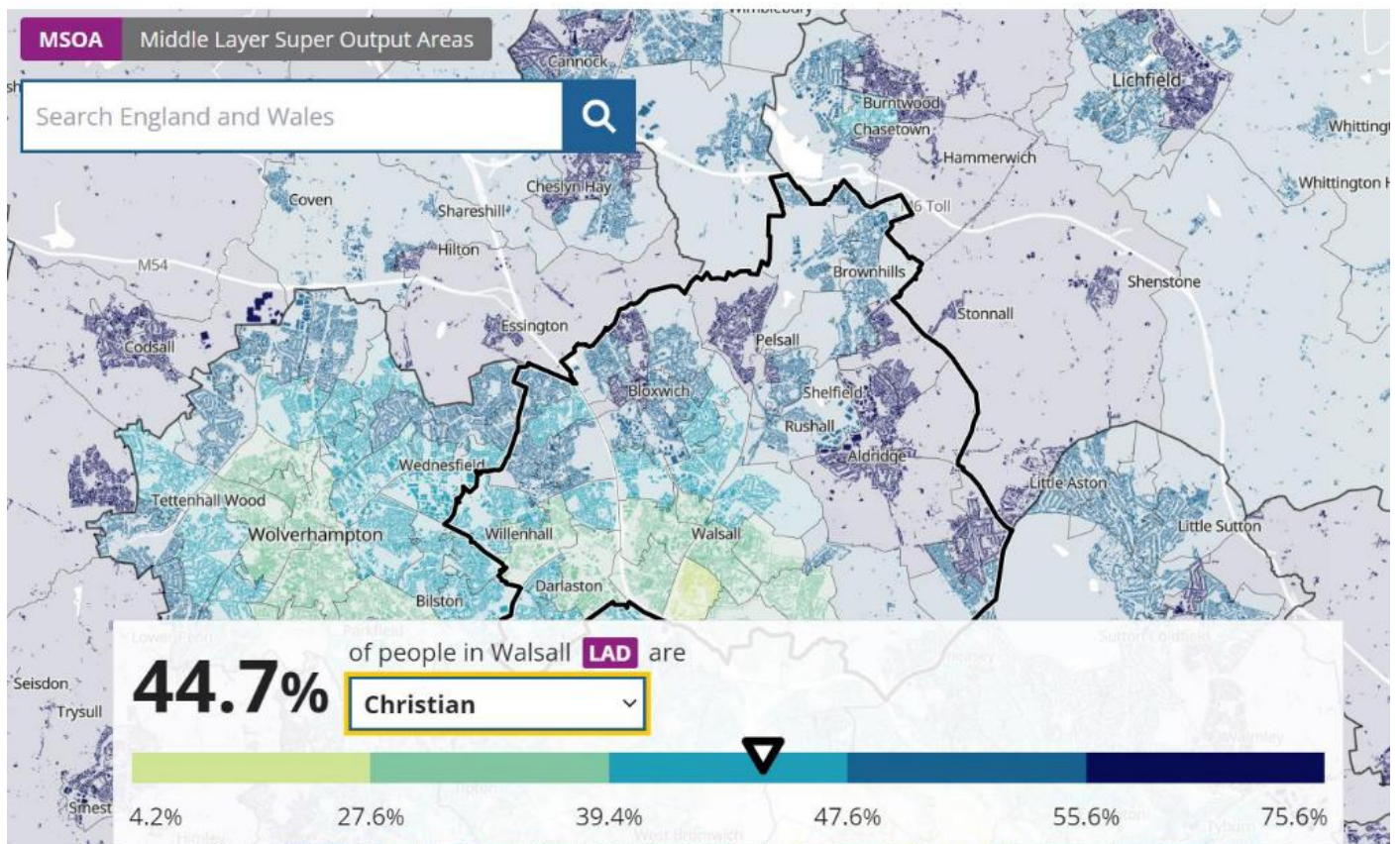
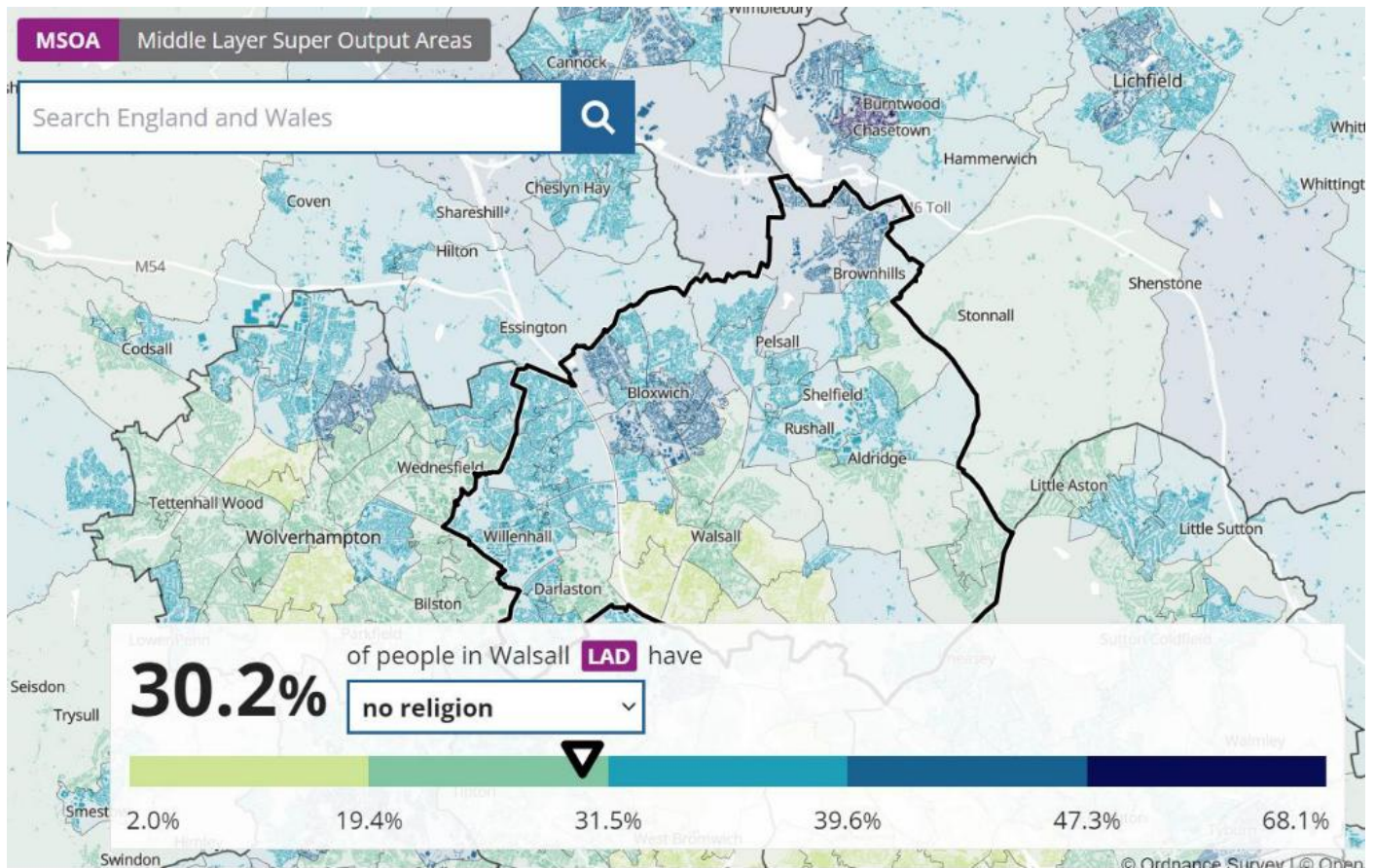
Main points – From the Office for National Statistics with additional commentary in relation to Walsall

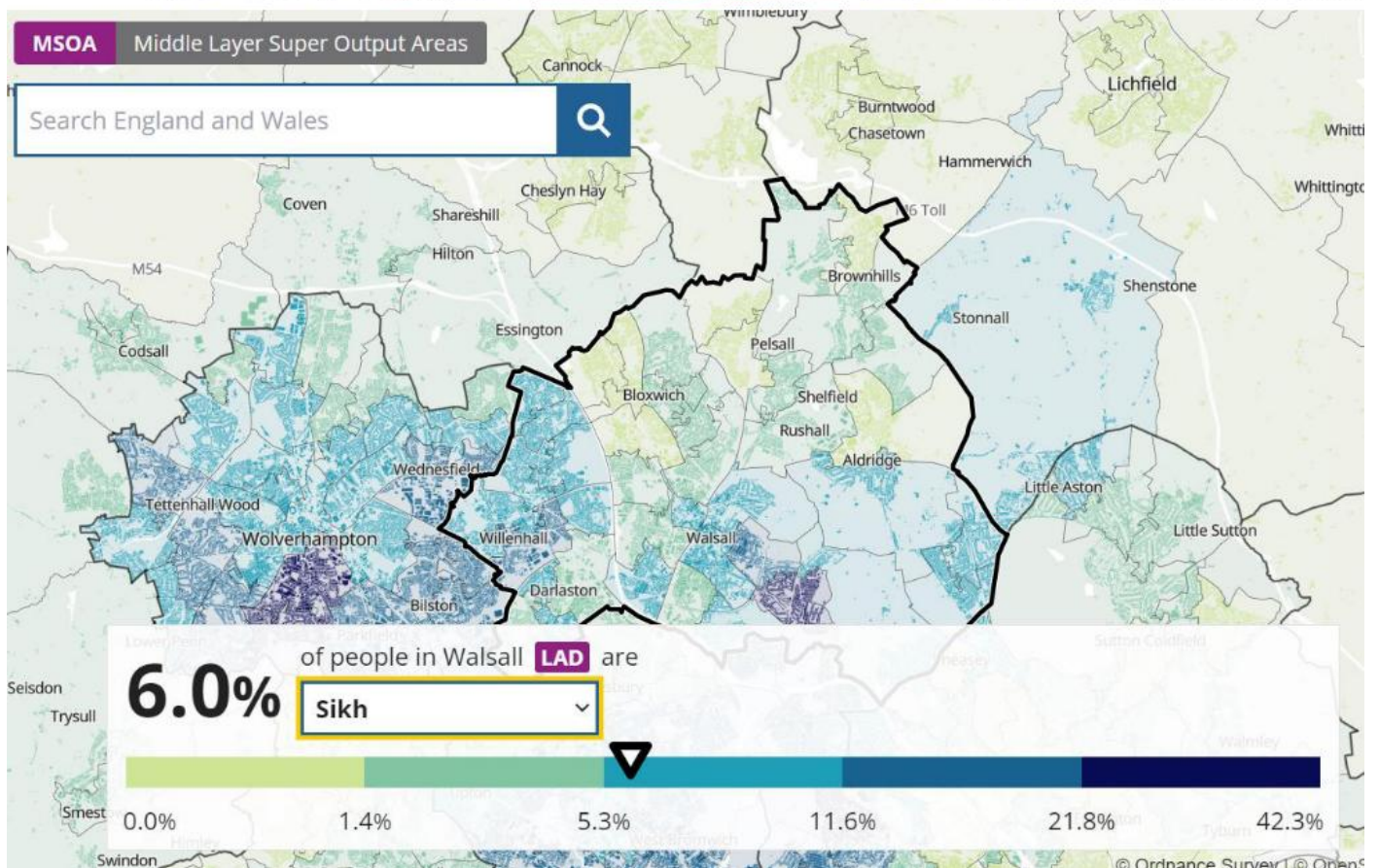
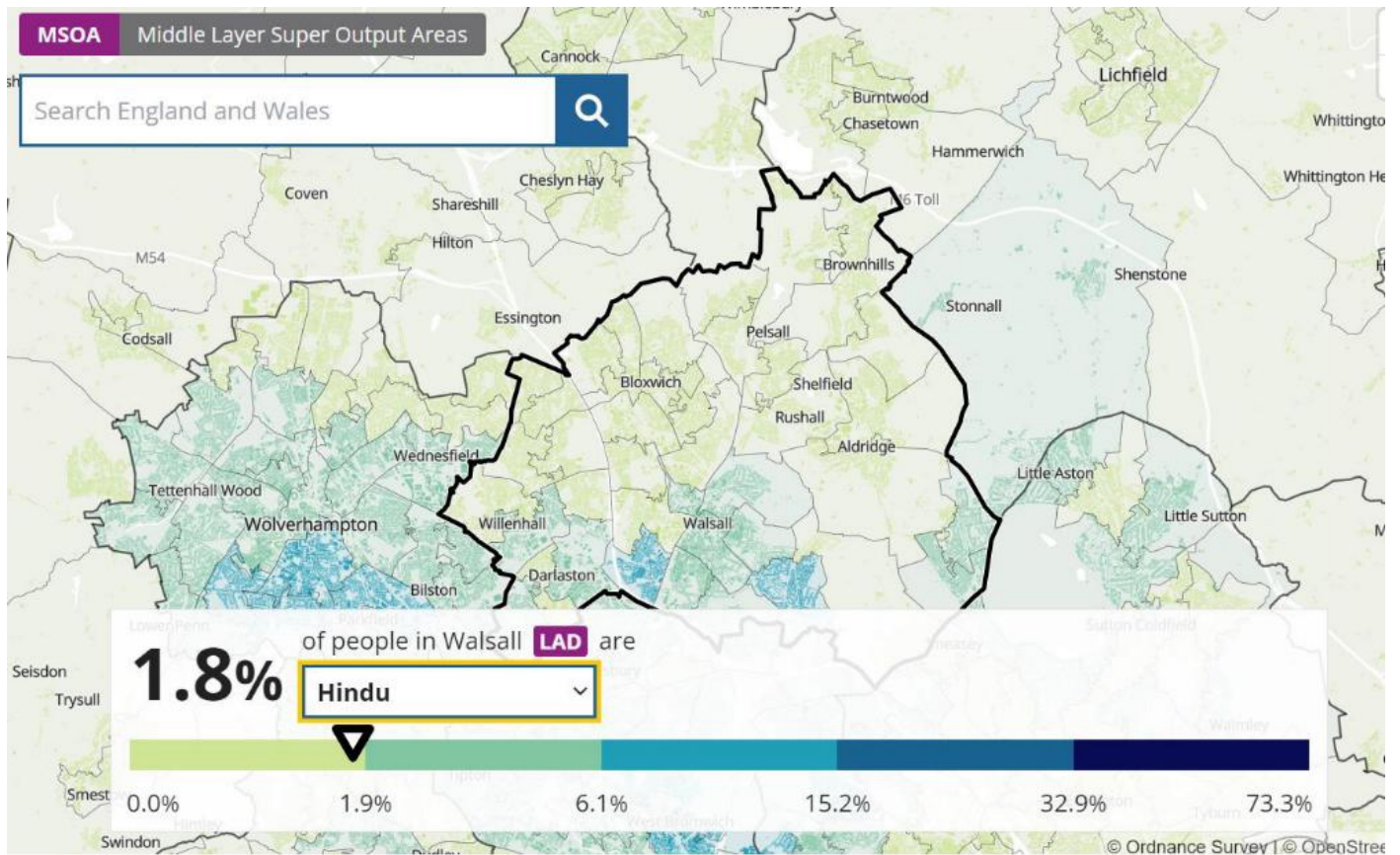
For the first time in a census of England and Wales, less than half of the population (46.2%, 27.5 million people) described themselves as "Christian", a 13.1 percentage point decrease from 59.3% (33.3 million) in 2011; despite this decrease, "Christian" remained the most common response to the religion question.

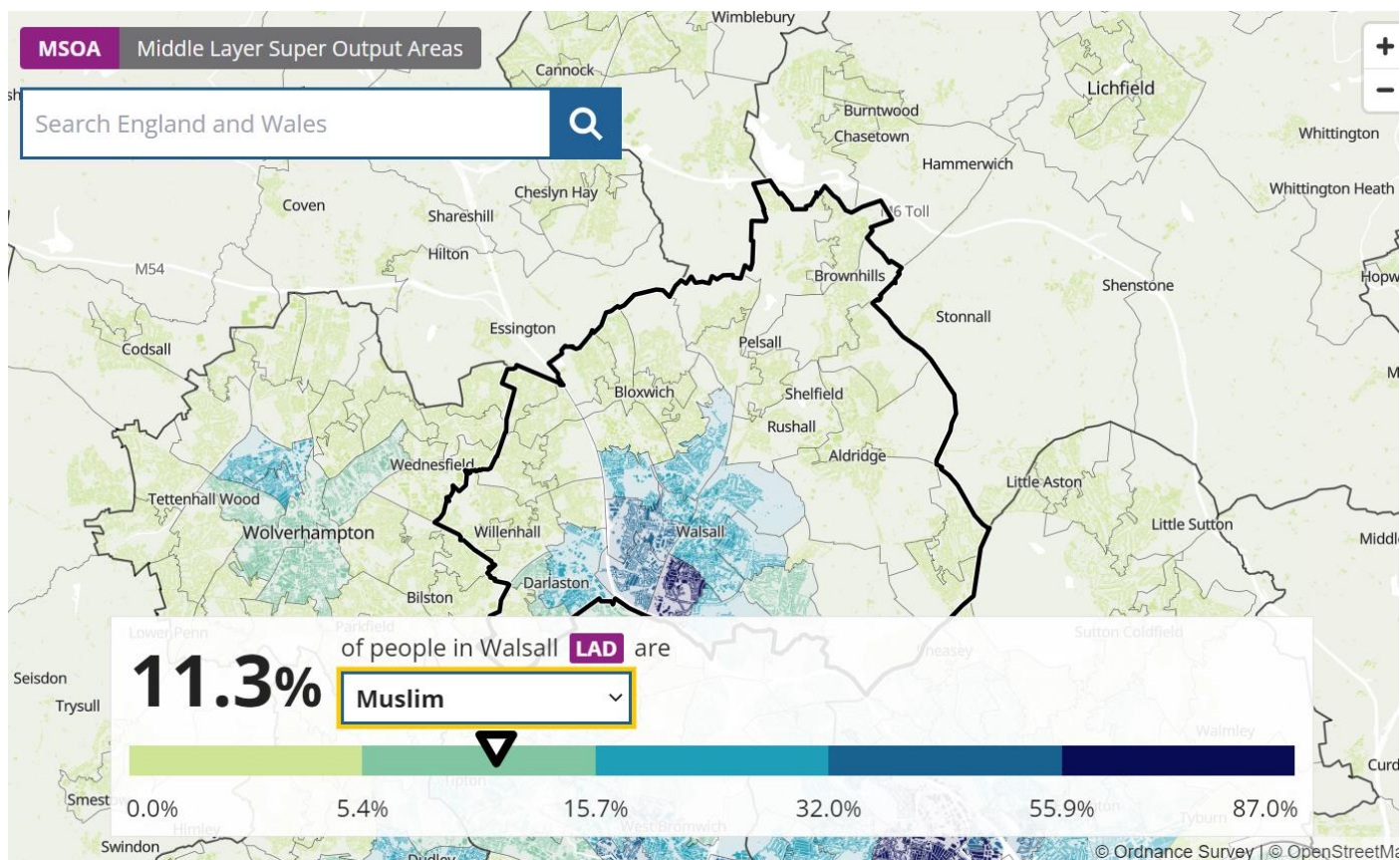
- In Walsall the proportion of the population responding “Christian” fell by a slightly larger margin than in England as a whole and the proportion of the population affiliating with Christianity (44.7%) is slightly lower than the population of England (46.32%).
- “No religion” was the second most common response, increasing by more than 48%, from around 13m to almost 21m between 2011 and 2021
- In Walsall “No religion” was the second most common response (After Christian) and increased from 20 to 30%
- There were increases in the number of people who described themselves as “Muslim” (3.9 million, 6.5% in 2021, up from 2.7 million, 4.9% in 2011) and “Hindu” (1.0 million, 1.7% in 2021, up from 818,000, 1.5% in 2011).
- The Muslim population in Walsall is the second largest single religious group. This figure has grown at a similar rate to the country as a whole – increasing from 8.2% to 11.3% which is above the national average.
- The Hindu population of Walsall has increased but slower than the national rate so the % of Hindu people is now the same as the national average.
- The Sikh population has increased to 6% which is well above the national area. Walsall and neighbouring areas proportionally have some of the largest populations of Sikh people in the country.
- London remains the most religiously diverse region of England in 2021, with over a quarter (25.3%) of all usual residents reporting a religion other than “Christian”; the North East and South West are the least religiously diverse regions, with 4.2% and 3.2%, respectively, selecting a religion other than “Christian”.
- In Walsall the proportion of residents responding that they had a religion (64.17%) is significantly above the national average (57.31%).

Regional data can be found here which demonstrates that some areas of Walsall are far more religiously diverse than others and there are more people from particular religions in certain areas.

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/religion/bulletins/religionenglandandwales/census2021>







Appendix A

Figure 1: Walsall: Religion question in %	2011	2021	England	2011	2021	Change
Christian	59	44.7	Christian	59.38	46.32	-21.99
Buddhist	0.19	0.20	Buddhist	0.45	0.46	3.21
Hindu	1.69	1.8	Hindu	1.52	1.81	18.79
Jewish	0.02	0.040	Jewish	0.49	0.48	-3.28
Muslim	8.22	11.3	Muslim	5.02	6.73	34.10
Sikh	4.31	6.0	Sikh	0.79	0.92	16.15
Total Pagan Traditions ⁱ (write in)	0.13	0.13	Total Pagan Traditions (write in)	0.14	0.18	24.07
Total other religions excluding Pagan Traditions (write in)	0.40	0.46	Total other religions excluding Pagan Traditions (write in)	0.29	0.41	43.39
Humanist (write in)	0.013	0.010	Humanist (write in)	0.03	0.02	-36.95
No religion excluding those who wrote in Humanist	20	30.2	No religion excluding those who wrote in Humanist	24.71	36.65	48.33
Religion not stated	6.0	5.2	Religion not stated	7.18	6.02	-16.11

Figure 2: Walsall: Religion question in numbers (pop 2021: 284,124)	2011	2021	England	2011	2021	Change
Christian	158,971	126,921	Christian	31479876	26167904	-5311972
Buddhist	516	533	Buddhist	238626	262437	23811
Hindu	4560	5096	Hindu	806199	1020539	214340
Jewish	54	74	Jewish	261282	269295	8013
Muslim	22,114	32,107	Muslim	2660116	3801182	1141066
Sikh	11,606	17,148	Sikh	420196	520090	99894
Total Pagan Traditions (write in)	339	361	Total Pagan Traditions (write in)	76336	100920	24584
Total other religions excluding Pagan (write in)	1081	1657	Total other religions excluding Pagan (write in)	151489	231470	79981
Humanist	34	12	Humanist (write in)	14252	9575	-4677
No religion excluding those who wrote in Humanist	53,842	85,820	No religion excluding those who wrote in Humanist	13099980	20706073	7606093
Religion not stated	16,184	14,768	Religion not stated	3804104	3400553	-403551

ⁱ Pagan Traditions include the following categories: Other religion: Animism, Other religion: Druid, Other religion: Heathen, Other religion: Mysticism, Other religion: New Age, Other religion: Occult, Other religion: Pagan, Other religion: Pantheism, Other religion: Reconstructionist, Other religion: Shamanism, Other religion: Thelemite, Other religion: Vodun, Other religion: Wicca, Other religion: Witchcraft