



Harrow SACRE Annual Report

2016 - 2017



Introduction

The London Borough of Harrow is among the most religiously diverse boroughs in the country and the Harrow Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) has a special and well established relationship with Harrow Council and the communities it serves. Although statistics from the 2011 Census are now somewhat out of date they are helpful in illustrating the diversity of the Local Authority.

Harrow has the highest religious affiliation in England and Wales and is ranked as having the:

- highest percentage of Hindus (25.3%)
- highest percentage of Jains (2.2%)
- second highest percentage of Zoroastrians (0.1%)
- second lowest percentage of residents declaring No Religion (9.6%).

The Census data also reveals that 37.3%% of residents have identified themselves as Christian, 12.5% as Muslim, 4.4% as Jewish, 1.1% as Buddhist and 1.2% as Sikh.

Harrow is also defined by its ethnic profile, having the:

- second highest percentage of residents of Indian origin (26.4%) and the highest percentage of residents who have described themselves using the category of 'Other Asian' (11.3%)
- highest ranking of residents identifying their country of birth as South and Eastern Africa (9.9%), Kenya (4.9%), Sri Lanka (4.3%) and Romania (2.2%)
- highest percentage of residents who identified themselves as British only (41.6%), indicating a high degree of integration
- a significant relocation of Eastern European families into Harrow since 2011.
- The 2011 National Census revealed that Harrow's population is estimated to have increased to 239,100; this figure is 15.6% higher than the 2001 Census showed, and the recently published Office for National Statistics 2014 Mid-Year Estimates show a further increase to 248,752. Over the decade¹ the borough's population has increased by 15.5 per cent (33,169). Harrow's population is now at the highest recorded level, based on records going back to 1901. The 0-4 age group has increased by 5,792 between mid-2001 (12,058) and mid 2016 (17,850), which represents a 48% increase. There have also been increases across all the statutory school age groups. The 2011 Census showed that Harrow's residents were born in approximately 200 different countries and the percentage of Harrow's residents born in the UK is the 6th lowest ranking nationally. Harrow is ranked 7th nationally (and in London) for ethnic diversity and 2nd for religious diversity in London.

At the time of this report there are 62 schools in Harrow, 42 primary schools with nursery classes in 28 of these schools, 12 high schools, 1 all-through (4-18) school,

¹ Based on ONS 2004 MYEs, revised in the light of the 2011 Census

2 primary special schools, 2 high special schools, one alternative provision secondary school, one nursery school and one pupil referral unit.

These schools include 13 academy schools: 8 high schools, one primary special school, one all-through (4-18) school and 3 primary schools. There are five free schools; an alternative provision secondary school, two primary schools and two high schools. As at 31st August 2017 98% of Harrow's schools are judged to be good and outstanding on inspection in comparison to 89% in England.

Chair's Foreword

2016-17 has been a busy year in education and Harrow SACRE has worked hard to reflect current concerns and keep abreast of political developments. As ever, the SACRE members have given a great deal of their time and energy to producing and delivering high quality RE in school.

Under the leadership of Lesley Prior (appointed LA adviser) and using the extensive knowledge of SACRE members, we launched our Agreed Syllabus. We had an extremely successful launch in June helped by friends from Harrow Interfaith Group. Our Agreed Syllabus is indeed a *locally* agreed syllabus and teachers throughout the borough, supported Lesley Prior, devised the syllabus and SACRE council members' added insight and knowledge of their own faith to support the work. There were many networking opportunities at the launch and schools used the opportunity to meet representatives of other faiths and invite speakers into classes. SACRE members discussed a NASACRE document about visitors in school but also consider that guidance written by Rachel Bowerman to still be pertinent. We had one Freedom of Information request in November 2016 asking about visitors in school. We were able to point them to our guidance.

We are also proud of a list of festival dates and guidance about non-attendance for celebrating festivals. Members of the SACRE group ensured that this information was relevant to the population of Harrow. Headteachers have stated that they find this advice very helpful. This, and other reports, can be found on the Harrow Council website.

http://www.harrow.gov.uk/info/200086/school_and_college/1627/standing_advisory_council_for_religious_education_sacre

Harrow SACRE has considered at length how to monitor RE and our Self Evaluation Form has allowed RE subject leaders a tool for analysing the quality of RE in their school. Schools who have completed a SEF have found the process helpful in determining next steps in improving practice. When listening to the findings of a SEF, SACRE members were invited to say what aspects of the report stood out for them as positives in the school.

An undergraduate from the Roehampton Institute came to observe RE in one of our schools as they had heard how good it was. We are happy to extend this opportunity to other trainee teachers.

There have been regular meetings for RE subject leaders and suggestions for good practice have been collected to support schools with the new syllabus. These meetings have proved very popular and successful for teachers.

A SACRE member attended the NASACRE meeting in York and gave feedback and insights into how other SACRE are faring. Dr Joyce Miller and Prof Aaqil Ahmed both spoke at the AGM and their messages were discussed at our summer meeting.

Harrow SACRE is a thriving and energetic group that is wholly in support of our New Agreed Syllabus and strives to ensure that schools produce high quality RE.

Alison Stowe, Chair, Harrow SACRE

School self-evaluation of R.E. and Presentations to SACRE

a) School Self Evaluation

At the SACRE Meeting on 9TH March 2017, Teri-Louise O'Brien (Group C) introduced her school's SE Form. Her role as RE coordinator for Norbury Primary School is to assess RE, using the same criteria as an Ofsted inspector. The delivery of RE at Norbury is carefully linked to the Harrow Agreed Syllabus. Norbury is a very diverse school where 56 nationalities are represented and 60 languages spoken. Overall, Teri-Louise judged RE teaching and learning at Norbury to be Good. She felt that there are still some areas for development at KS2, especially in providing more challenge. This is a focus in other subjects as well. Teri-Louise outlined for members the different facets of her assessment:

- **Pupil voice:** two pupils from each year group talked to Teri-Louise about what they are learning in RE and what aspects of RE they most enjoy. Children indicated that they would like more role play.
- **Visits:** every year group visited a place of worship.
- **Links with the Community:** members of the community are invited to events at Norbury, for example the Norbury Day every March when the school celebrates world religions.
- **Assemblies:** every three weeks, Norbury holds a community assembly focussing on festivals from different faiths, such as Holi and Easter. The assemblies do not constitute a RE lesson, but can be used as a platform for a RE lesson.
- **Teaching, Learning and Assessment:** RE is assessed every term. Teri-Louise also gives a presentation on RE to governors. This serves to emphasise the importance of RE in the curriculum. The national emphasis on Maths and English can lead to slippage in other subjects.
- **Resources:** an audit is made of RE resources. This demonstrates that the school is well resourced for all the major religions. Resources are up to date. There are regular displays of artefacts relating to different faiths.
- **Questionnaires:** the feedback from staff questionnaires indicated that staff would like more CPD.
- **Next steps:** next steps are determined by the outcomes of pupil voice and staff surveys. For example, Teri-Louise has organised some INSET for teachers to support them in providing more role play in their RE teaching. Teri-Louise will monitor the success of this with another Pupil Voice exercise.
- **Value of RE:** feedback from staff and pupils indicates that RE is enjoyed, especially the celebrations and ceremonies from different faith traditions.

Children also learn values and share personal experiences and stories. The school has noticed that the behaviour gap is diminishing as children learn about mutual respect and tolerance. They are more knowledgeable and more forthcoming. No parents have withdrawn their children from RE lessons or the community religious assemblies.

- **Vision statement:** Teri-Louise concluded her presentation by reading the school's vision statement which encapsulates the values of respect and tolerance where difference is celebrated and every child valued as an individual within an inclusive and supportive community.

b) School Presentations to SACRE

At the SACRE Meeting on 27th September 2016, members welcomed a presentation from Nina Will, Head Teacher of Stag Lane Infant School. She described how British Values are promoted at her school.

British Values comprise:

- democracy
- the rule of law
- individual liberty
- mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs

See:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/380595/SMSC_Guidance_Maintained_Schools.pdf

The school is multicultural and 32 languages are spoken there. It has a very inclusive ethos and it is a Rights Respecting school. It already has a culture of respect and tolerance for others. When the staff examined their curriculum, they found that the school already promotes Democracy and the Rule of Law in the following ways:

- the children vote for their school councillors
- Rights Respecting champions are also elected
- the Pupil Voice is encouraged and respected
- each class has its own charter
- the behaviour policy ensures that children know the rules and are aware of the consequences of breaking them
- Black History Month celebrates champions of democracy and equal rights.
- the School Charter sets out rights and responsibilities
- the Playground Charter sets clear expectations
- there is also a Lunch Time Charter created by the children
- representatives from the police are regular visitors to the school

The school promotes the rights of the individual through:

- the Anti-Bullying campaign
- Circle of Friends
- the e-Safety Policy

Respect and tolerance for different religions is demonstrated through:

- the school's celebrations of major religions, whether or not they are represented in the school
- celebration of all major religious festivals
- visits from priests, rabbis and other representatives of different religions
- displays celebrating different festivals

Nina concluded by describing how the children show respect and tolerance for other religions, while celebrating their own cultural identity. Mutual respect comes through circle time and Collective Worship.

The RE curriculum is taught in accordance with the Harrow Locally Agreed Syllabus and British Values are also demonstrated across the curriculum. The children see the relevance of British values for all cultures and creeds.

Recent initiatives at the school reflecting its commitment to British Values include a visit to the Houses of Parliament, setting up a Debating Club and the introduction of Playground Buddies.

The introduction of British Values has not only fulfilled the school's expectations, it has exceeded them.

A helpful checklist can be found on the school's website:

<https://www.staglaneinfant.harrow.sch.uk/harrow/primary/staglaneinfant/arenas/webcontent/web/promotingfundamentalbritishvalues25515.pdf>

SACRE Monitoring and Evaluation of Attainment in R.E.

Public examination entries and results in RS GCSE and GCE AS and A level in 2016-2017

GCSE Short Courses are not counted in the Performance Table Attainment and Value Added Measures

GCSE Religious Studies Full Course

Local Authority Level Data (non-denominational schools only)

Year	No. entries	% cohort	A*	A	B	C	A* - C	A* - G
2016-17	1,140	55.6%	9.8%	23.7%	22.4%	19.4%	75.3%	98.6%
2015-16	1,227	57.7%	9.2%	24.9%	21.6%	17.7%	73.3%	98.8%
2014-15	1,126	53%	11.7%	20.4%	26.0%	18.5%	76.6%	98.8%
2013-14	499	27%	14.0%	24.2%	26.3%	15.6%	80.2%	98.4%
2012-13	305	18%	14.1%	27.2%	25.2%	15.4%	82.0%	99.0%
2011-12	179	10.7%	25.7%	30.2%	21.2%	14.0%	91.1%	98.9%
2010-11	113	7%	25.7%	28.3%	17.7%	15.9%	87.6%	99.1%
2009-10	211	11%	13.7%	25.1%	27.2%	17.3%	83.5%	99.5%

Source: Harrow KS4 Data

National GCSE Data 2009-2010 to 2016-2017 final results (Please note this data includes all schools)

Year	No. entries	A*	A	B	C	A* - C	A* - G
2016-17	264,527	10.3%	19.6%	23.3%	18.4%	71.6%	97.9%
2015-16	268,759	10.8%	19.0%	23.3%	18.5%	71.6%	97.8%
2014-15	269,511	11.1%	19.0%	23.3%	18.8%	72.2%	97.9%
2013-14	259,359	11.2%	19.3%	22.7%	18.5%	71.7%	97.6%
2012-13	229,009	11.6%	19.9%	23.0%	19.1%	73.6%	98.2%
2011-12	210,602	11.9%	20.2%	22.9%	19.1%	74.1%	98.4%
2010-11	195,109	11.8%	20.2%	22.7%	19.0%	73.7%	97.3%
2009-10	176,350	11.8%	19.9%	22.9%	18.8%	73.4%	98.5%

2009-10 to 2016-17 Source: DfE Statistical First Release KS4 'SFR01_2018_subject_timeseries'

AS Level

Local Authority Level Data (non-denominational schools only)

Year	No. entries	A	B	C	D	E	A - B	A - E
2016-17	35	2.9%	11.4%	5.7%	25.7%	14.3%	14.3%	60.0%
2015-16	30	3.3%	6.7%	16.7%	20.0%	20.0%	10.0%	66.7%
2014-15	13	0%	7.7%	15.4%	46.2%	23.1%	7.7%	92.3%
2013-14	16	6.3%	37.5%	0%	43.8%	6.3%	43.8%	93.8%
2012-13	5	40.0%	40.0%	0%	20.0%	0%	80.0%	100%
2011-12	13	0%	46.2%	15.4%	0%	15.4%	46.2%	76.9%

Source: Harrow KS5 Data

National A Level AS Data 2011-12 to 2016-17 final results (Please note this data includes all schools)

Year	No. entries	% of all entries	A	B	C	D	E	A - B	A - E
2016-17	9,799	1.9%	19.1%	21.0%	23.1%	16.6%	10.9%	40.1 %	90.7 %
2015-16	28,865	3.2%	19.4%	23.5%	23.0%	16.3%	9.6%	42.9 %	91.7 %
2014-15	30,498	2.8%	20.4%	22.7%	23.3%	16.1%	9.6%	43.1 %	92.1 %
2013-14	29,519	2.6%	20.5%	21.6%	22.4%	16.5%	10.2%	42.1 %	91.1 %
2012-13	27,447	2.4%	20.0%	22.2%	22.5%	16.5%	10.4%	42.2 %	91.6 %
2011-12	26,259	2.3%	20.2%	21.1%	22.9%	16.9%	10.5%	41.3 %	91.5 %

2011-12 to 2016-17 Source: DfE Statistical First Release
'SFR03_2018_A_and_AS_level_exam_subject_time_series'

A Level A2

Local Authority Level Data (non-denominational schools only)

Year	No. entries	A*	A	B	C	A* - B	A* - E
2016-17	65	3.1%	18.5%	24.6%	33.8%	46.2%	98.5%
2015-16	39	0%	12.8%	28.2%	38.5%	41.0%	100%
2014-15	39	5.1%	10.3%	41.0%	28.2%	56.4%	97.4%
2013-14	24	4.2%	29.2%	45.8%	12.5%	79.2%	91.7%
2012-13	25	0%	8.0%	28.0%	44.0%	36.0%	100%
2011-12	29	0%	10.3%	58.6%	27.6%	69.0%	100%

Source: Harrow KS5 Data

National A2 Data 2011-12 to 2016-17 Final Results

(Please note this data includes all schools)

Year	No. entries	% of all entries	A*	A	B	C	D	E	A* - B	A* - E
2016-17	22,066	3%	5.7%	18.6%	30.8%	25.8%	13.0%	4.8%	55.1%	98.7%
2015-16	22,641	3%	5.6%	18.7%	30.5%	25.6%	13.6%	4.9%	54.8%	98.9%
2014-15	21,273	2.8%	5.6%	19.1%	30.1%	25.3%	13.7%	5.1%	54.8%	98.9%
2013-14	19,838	2.7%	7.0%	18.7%	28.3%	25.1%	14.2%	5.4%	54.0%	98.8%
2012-13	19,171	2.5%	5.6%	20.8%	28.9%	24.7%	14.0%	5.1%	55.3%	99.1%
2011-12	18,849	2.4%	5.7%	20.3%	29.4%	24.5%	13.7%	5.4%	55.4%	99.0%

2011-12 to 2016-17 Source: DfE Statistical First Release

'SFR03_2018_A_and_AS_level_exam_subject_time_series'

MANAGING THE SACRE AND PARTNERSHIP WITH THE LOCAL AUTHORITY, SCHOOLS AND OTHER KEY STAKEHOLDERS

- Membership and Meetings
- Partnership with Harrow Council
- Partnership with Schools
- Partnership with NASACRE and the RE Council of England and Wales

a) Membership and Meetings

The SACRE meets four times a year, twice in the autumn term and once in the spring and in the summer terms in order to devote time to the Annual Report and to respond to the additional requests from schools for advice in that period.

In 2016-17, these meetings took place on:

- 27th September 2016
- 7th December 2016
- 9th March 2017
- 30th June 2017

SACRE has continued its efforts to recruit teachers to the SACRE via their professional associations, including one to represent the academy schools. The constitution allows for up to 6 teachers.

SACRE Membership: September 2016 – August 2017

Chair Alison Stowe (Group C)

Vice Chair Cllr Camilla Bath (Group D)

Group A Religious traditions and Christian churches

Mercedes Afnan

Baha'i

Ven Sumaner Sramaner

Buddhist

Mike Bishop

Christian (Free Church Federal Council)

Neville Ransley

Christian (Catholic)

Ciara O'Flaherty

Christian (Catholic)

Vijay Hirani

Hindu (Swaminarayan)

David Cryer

Humanist (Harrow Humanists)

Varsha Dodhia

Jain

Gill Ross

Jewish

Doreen Samuels

Jewish

Zafar Khalid

Muslim (representing Harrow Muslim Council)

Zia Baig

Muslim

Asad Omar

Muslim

Beverley Wilson (until 27/09/16) Rastafarian membership was terminated on 27/09/17 through non-attendance.

Paramjit Singh-Kohli

Sikh

Phiroza Gan-Kotwal

Zoroastrian

Group B Church of England

Mary Abbott

Revd. James Power (from 27/09/16)

Revd Kate Blake

Group C

Teachers' Associations

Manju Radia

Alison Stowe

Teri-Louise O'Brien

Group D

Local Authority

Cllr Camilla Bath Conservative

Cllr Ghazanfar Ali Labour

Cllr Kairul Kareema Marikar Labour

Cllr Simon Brown Labour (reserve)

Cllr Manji Kara Conservative (reserve)

Cllr Chika Amadi Labour (reserve) until 29 June 2017

Cllr Margaret Davine Labour (reserve) from 29 June 2017

Lesley Prior* is adviser to Harrow SACRE

Members have served throughout 2016 – 2017 unless otherwise indicated

In Attendance:

- Vivian Wright, Clerk to the SACRE

*SACRE may determine that some of Lesley's time may be used for her to run the termly RE Coordinators' Meetings for teachers in primary schools. During this academic year, Lesley has also supported the work of the Agreed Syllabus Conference and contributed to the teachers' working parties engaged in formulating the new document and supplementary materials which will support its delivery.

The SACRE website is accessible from the Council's website. It is updated with the agendas and minutes of SACRE meetings and SACRE Annual Report (see www.harrow.gov.uk/SACRE)

The website raises the profile of Harrow SACRE.

It includes easier access to the calendar of meetings and to Harrow SACRE briefing documents, such as the guidance on:

- **Days of Religious Observance:**
http://www.harrow.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/10097/sacre_religious_observance_guidance_17-18
- **Fasting During Ramadan**
http://www.harrow.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/7960/harrow_sacre_guidance_on_ramadan
- **Faith Matters in PE**
http://www.harrow.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/7605/faith_matters_in_pe

b) Partnership with Harrow Council and the Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC) 2016-167

Agreed Syllabus Conference

The Agreed Syllabus should be reviewed every five years by the ASC. The last locally agreed syllabus was published in 2008. The review of Harrow's Agreed Syllabus was delayed until the publication of the new National Curriculum and guidance from the RE Council. It met to review the syllabus and once the syllabus was agreed on 18th April, 2016, the ASC was dissolved. Harrow SACRE worked closely with Harrow Council to establish the Agreed Syllabus Conference and all members of the SACRE agreed to be appointed to the Conference and support its work. Members considered the guidance set out in the DfE circular based on the Education Reform Act of 1988 (Religious Education in English Schools: Non-Statutory Guidance 2010).

Once the Agreed Syllabus was adopted by Harrow Council it became a statutory requirement for maintained schools. Voluntary aided schools with a religious character are not required to deliver the Agreed Syllabus, nor are Free Schools and Academies. However, Free Schools and Academies have to provide RE and fulfil the statutory requirements and many choose to do so by voluntarily following the locally agreed syllabus. Non-denominational academies and free schools must meet statutory requirements although not necessarily through the locally agreed syllabus.

The Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC)

The Agreed Syllabus Conference was established in September 2014. Julie Crow was appointed as Chair of the Agreed Syllabus Conference and Mary Abbott as Vice-Chair. A small working party consisting of all groups was established to agree the principles for the Agreed Syllabus, to confirm the special adviser and oversee the development of the syllabus on behalf of the Agreed Syllabus Conference. This working party was chaired by the Chair of the Agreed Syllabus Conference. In the summer of 2015 it completed the initial tasks and confirmed the agreement of the ASC to these steps. The work of the ASC produced separate minutes although an update was provided regularly to the SACRE.

Consultation with Teachers and Professional Development

In conjunction with the revision of the Agreed Syllabus, a teachers' working party met with the RE Consultant Lesley Prior for three afternoon sessions.

- 13th October 2015
- 3rd November 2015
- 24th November 2015

These sessions focused on:

- current issues in RE and in education more widely, both locally and nationally, including statutory and non statutory documentation and guidance
- the opportunities and challenges offered by the existing agreed syllabus and the needs of staff and pupils
- principles of curriculum design in RE

In total, about fifteen teachers were involved and in the main, they came from primary schools, so the focus was initially on EYFS and Key Stages 1 and 2, though the same principles they identified could be broadly applied across all ages and phases of schooling.

The new syllabus was agreed in 2016 and is available via this link: http://www.harrow.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/9712/sacre_agreed_syllabus_2016

It is a revision of the previous syllabus, rather than an entirely new document and:

- retains the two attainment targets – in equal balance
- reflects the increasing diversity of faith and belief in Harrow, while allocating some prominence to Christianity
- inclusive of eight other religions (Baha'i Faith, Buddhism, Hinduism, Jainism, Judaism Islam, Sikhism and Zoroastrianism) and humanism (as an example of an ethical non theistic world view) and aspects of these must be included at each stage of schooling up to and including Key Stage 3, albeit with varying degrees of emphasis
- requires that assessment of each pupil's progress is carried out each half term
- retains the level statements for advice and support purposes although consideration is also given to new national advice on assessment without levels in RE
- acknowledges that there are many different ways of assessing pupils and of keeping records of the work they have done, including, but not restricted to written work in books or folders
- gives clear advice on how to plan academically rigorous and creative RE, without supplying a complete and detailed scheme of work
- outlines principles of curriculum planning in RE which focus on an enquiry/question led approach to the subject (see this link for details: <http://www.reonline.org.uk/religious-education-in-the-new-curriculum/>)

The syllabus was launched on 20th June 2017 at Norbury Primary School. SACRE members attended the Launch and made the occasion a happy event. The Chair received very positive feedback. There were lovely displays from all the faith groups and the atmosphere was truly celebratory. The event also provided good opportunities for networking.

c) The Association of Religious Education Inspectors, Advisers and Consultants

Harrow SACRE was a member of AREIAC for 2016-2017 (see www.arei.ac.org.uk).

d) Partnership with Local Faith Communities

- **Guidance on Days of Religious Observance and Pupil Absence:** This annual guidance and list of days of religious observance is one of the most valued services that Harrow SACRE provides to schools. It helps headteachers to decide how much leave may be allowed to pupils for religious observance. SACRE members work on this guidance over the summer ready to send out in the autumn. With so much relying on school attendance, SACRE recognises how vital it is for schools to have this guidance that comes with the authority of the faith communities.

It can be found here:

http://www.harrow.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/10097/sacre_religious_observance_guidance_17-18

It is updated every year, using dates supplied by the Shap Working Party on World Religions in Education. See www.shapworkingparty.org.uk/ for details.

- **Fasting During Ramadan:** Schools have found this publication to be very useful and it has also been well received more widely. The Guidance is balanced and helps schools to manage over this period. Other LAs and SACREs, such as Hertfordshire would like to use it and these requests have been approved, providing that the work of Harrow SACRE is appropriately acknowledged. Cllr Ali (Group D) consulted local religious scholars about the document and received positive feedback from the Central Mosque and from Stanmore Mosque.

See this link for access:

http://www.harrow.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/7960/harrow_sacre_guidance_on_ramadan

e) Partnership with NASACRE

The NASACRE Conference and AGM (York 2017)

Harrow SACRE is affiliated to The National Association of SACREs (NASACRE).

Ciara O’Flaherty (Group A), represented Harrow SACRE at the NASACRE AGM and Conference at The Hilton Hotel in York on 16th May 2017.

Full details and copies of the relevant presentations (including sound recordings of the main speeches) can be found at:

<http://www.nasacre.org.uk/conference-and-agm/2017>

The login details (see above) are required to access these presentations.

There were two key note speakers.

Dr Joyce Miller is Associate Fellow in the Religions and Education Research Unit at the University of Warwick (WRERU). In 2007 she retired as Head of Diversity and Cohesion at Education Bradford, prior to which she was a Senior Lecturer in Religious Studies at the University of Wolverhampton. Joyce has taught in secondary schools in Coventry and Northumberland. She is a former Chair of the RE Council, AREIAC, Bradford SACRE and the Schools Linking Network.

Joyce is one of the Commissioners appointed by the RE Council to review the legal, education and policy frameworks for RE.

Prof Aaqil Ahmed is the only person to have been both BBC and Channel 4 Head of Religion and Ethics. He grew up in the north of England and is a practising Muslim. He is a Professor at the School of Media and Performing Arts, University of Bolton and a Board member of various organisations including The Prince’s Trust mentoring charity, Mosaic. Aaqil has written on the subject of religious literacy, recently delivering contributory chapters to Open Democracy’s ‘Rethinking the BBC’ and Lapido Media’s ‘Religious Literacy for Journalists Handbook’.

Aaqil explained why religion and ethics are so important in today’s world, and how to present the issues fearlessly but fairly without creating phony controversy: “The subject matter is so rich, you don’t need to be that foolish and set out to do it. You just need to tell the most important stories that are relevant today.”

The Rt Hon Charles Clarke’ (speaker at the NASACRE AGM in 2015) is Patron of NASACRE and attended this year’s event too. He participated in a panel session with other speakers at the end of the day.

Lesley Prior, RE Consultant, is former Chair of NASACRE (2013-15) and now Assistant to the NASACRE Executive Group. Lesley is also a member of many other RE professional bodies and shares information from them at SACRE Meetings.