



AGENDA FOR THE CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Members of the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee are summoned to a meeting which will be held in Council Chamber, Town Hall, Upper Street, N1 2UD - Islington Town Hall on, **19 October 2021 at 7.00 pm.**

Enquiries to : Zoe Lewis
Tel : 0207 527 3486
E-mail : democracy@islington.gov.uk
Despatched : 11 October 2021

Membership

Councillors:

Councillor Sheila Chapman (Chair)
Councillor Kadeema Woodbyrne (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Santiago Bell-Bradford
Councillor Janet Burgess MBE
Councillor Paul Convery
Councillor Toby North
Councillor Gulcin Ozdemir
Councillor John Woolf

Co-opted Member:

Mary Clement, Roman Catholic Diocese
Zaleera Wallace, Parent Governor Representative (Secondary)
Vacancy Church of England Diocese

Quorum is 3 Councillors

Substitute Members

Substitutes:

Councillor Valerie Bossman-Quarshie
Councillor Sara Hyde
Councillor Bashir Ibrahim
Councillor Anjna Khurana
Councillor Angelo Weekes

A. Formal Matters **Page**

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Declaration of Substitute Members
3. Declarations of Interest

If you have a **Disclosable Pecuniary Interest*** in an item of business:

- if it is not yet on the council's register, you **must** declare both the existence and details of it at the start of the meeting or when it becomes apparent;
- you may **choose** to declare a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest that is already in the register in the interests of openness and transparency.

In both the above cases, you **must** leave the room without participating in discussion of the item.

If you have a **personal** interest in an item of business **and** you intend to speak or vote on the item you **must** declare both the existence and details of it at the start of the meeting or when it becomes apparent but you **may** participate in the discussion and vote on the item.

***(a) Employment, etc** - Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain.

(b) Sponsorship - Any payment or other financial benefit in respect of your expenses in carrying out duties as a member, or of your election; including from a trade union.

(c) Contracts - Any current contract for goods, services or works, between you or your partner (or a body in which one of you has a beneficial interest) and the council.

(d) Land - Any beneficial interest in land which is within the council's area.

(e) Licences - Any licence to occupy land in the council's area for a month or longer.

(f) Corporate tenancies - Any tenancy between the council and a body in which you or your partner have a beneficial interest.

(g) Securities - Any beneficial interest in securities of a body which has a place of business or land in the council's area, if the total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body or of any one class of its issued share capital.

This applies to all members present at the meeting.

4. Minutes of the Previous Meeting 1 - 10
5. Chair's Report
6. Items for Call In (if any)

7. Public Questions

For members of the public to ask questions relating to any subject on the meeting agenda under Procedure Rule 70.5. Alternatively, the Chair may opt to accept questions from the public during the discussion on each agenda item.

B. Items for Decision/Discussion	Page
1. SEND Scrutiny Review - Witness Evidence	Verbal Report
2. SACRE Annual Report	11 - 20
3. Work Programme	21 - 22

C. Urgent non-exempt items (if any)

Any non-exempt items which the Chair agrees should be considered urgently by reason of special circumstances. The reasons for urgency will be agreed by the Chair and recorded in the minutes.

D. Exclusion of press and public

To consider whether, in view of the nature of the remaining items on the agenda, it is likely to involve the disclosure of exempt or confidential information within the terms of the Access to Information Procedure Rules in the Constitution and, if so, whether to exclude the press and public during discussion thereof.

E. Exempt items for Call In (if any)

F. Confidential/exempt items

G. Urgent exempt items (if any)

Any exempt items which the Chair agrees should be considered urgently by reason of special circumstances. The reasons for urgency will be agreed by the Chair and recorded in the minutes.

The next meeting of the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee will be on 6 December 2021

Please note that committee agendas, reports and minutes are available from the council's website: www.democracy.islington.gov.uk

This page is intentionally left blank

Public Document Pack Agenda Item 4

London Borough of Islington Children's Services Scrutiny Committee - Monday, 20 September 2021

Minutes of the meeting of the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee held in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Upper Street, N1 2UD - Islington Town Hall on Monday, 20 September 2021 at 7.00 pm.

Present:	Councillors:	Chapman (Chair), Woodbyrne (Vice-Chair), Bell-Bradford, Burgess, Convery, North, Ozdemir and Woolf
Also Present:	Councillors	Ngongo
	Co-opted Member	Mary Clement, Roman Catholic Diocese Zaleera Wallace, Parent Governor Representative (Secondary)

Councillor Sheila Chapman in the Chair

272 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (ITEM NO. A1)**

Apologies were received from Claire Ballak.

273 **DECLARATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (ITEM NO. A2)**

None.

274 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (ITEM NO. A3)**

None.

275 **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (ITEM NO. A4)**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 20 July 2021 be confirmed as an accurate record of proceedings and the Chair be authorised to sign them.

276 **CHAIR'S REPORT (ITEM NO. A5)**

The Chair updated the Committee as follows:

- All members had received an email from The Children's Society. It set out the manifesto for local government including some of the key issues impacting children's wellbeing which councils had the power to change.
- The Children's Society's latest edition of The Good Childhood Report was also circulated and this showed a ten year national decline in children's happiness, even before the pandemic. There was an aim to build a network of councillors engaged with children and young people's issues and councillors could sign up to receive newsletters, reports and briefings.
- The Education Select Committee chairman, Robert Halfon, has asked Ofsted's chief inspector, to write to the committee explaining why some

reports had not mentioned off-rolling by name, despite inspectors finding the practice taking place. A report was highlighted describing an admission by Ofsted that, on some occasions, inspectors had found evidence of off-rolling in schools but not referred to it as such in their report. Inspectors had now been told that reports must always use the following set phrase to refer to off-rolling where "this practice constitutes off-rolling according to Ofsted's definition."

- On 12 September 2021, the Guardian reported that over 20,000 parents across the UK had been surveyed about childcare costs. It presented compelling evidence that lack of access to childcare was preventing progress on gender equality. The survey also suggested the government's flagship shared parental leave policy had not worked and one-third of parents said they paid more for childcare than their rent or mortgage.
- A report by the BBC on 8 September 2021 into special needs funding reported that 97% of responses to a survey by the Head Teachers' Union said they received insufficient funding to support pupils who had special needs. The report, based on a survey of 1,500 head teachers, suggested that nearly a third of schools had cut services in the past year. Separately, parents and carers of children who had special needs had written to the Prime Minister, demanding better in-school provision.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

277 ITEMS FOR CALL IN (IF ANY) (ITEM NO. A6)

None.

278 PUBLIC QUESTIONS (ITEM NO. A7)

None.

279 SCRUTINY REVIEW - WITNESS EVIDENCE - PRESENTATION ON TRANSITION FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES (SEND) (ITEM NO. B1)

The Committee received a presentation from Candy Holder and Sue Imbriano on Transitions. In the presentation the following main points were made:

- The council's guidance on transition planning recognised that all children might need support at some time to enjoy the new opportunities and meet the challenges they would face as they moved through different stages of their life. Some children and young people, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) were likely to need more support however, particularly at key transition times.
- The four over-arching principles of guidance were: 1) the effective planning to support children and young people and their families in managing change; 2) the engagement and participation of children and young people and their families in assessment, planning and review; 3) ensuring information exchange – with children and young people and their parents as well as across services and between institutions; 4)

effective commissioning to ensure the right provision and support was in place for the right children at the right time – this sometimes meant conversations about funding had to take place with parents.

- The Islington Multi-Agency Progression to Adulthood protocol set out the role of each agency and processes for accessing support for those transitioning to adulthood.
- Where a child or young person had an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), the child's parent (or the young person over the age of 16) had the right to request a particular school / college (including an independent school) be named in their EHCP. Where this happened, the local authority must comply with that preference and name the school or college in the EHCP unless it would be unsuitable for the age, ability, aptitude or SEN of the child or young person, or the attendance of the child or young person there would be incompatible with the efficient education of others, or the efficient use of resources. The local authority must consult the school or college concerned and consider their comments before deciding whether to name it in the child or young person's EHCP. Where a parent or young person did not make a request for a particular school or college, the local authority must specify mainstream provision in the EHCP. Mainstream education could not be refused by a local authority on the grounds that it was not suitable. A local authority could rely on the exception of incompatibility with the efficient education of others only if it could show that there were no reasonable steps it could take to prevent that incompatibility. The SEND Code of Practice set out in some detail with examples, what 'reasonable steps' might look like (para 9.91 to 9.94).
- Children with SEND were supported across the Early Years provision by well trained staff, with advice and guidance from Area SENCOs, Educational Psychologists, CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services), Therapists and other support services. There were also 36 specialist (additionally resourced) places across Early Years and early years providers could also apply for additional funding to put in place additional support for identified children. It was important to identify children with SEND as early as possible.
- Early years, the SEND Team and Health colleagues worked closely together to identify those children who might have special educational needs that would require support over and above what was normally available, and therefore might need an EHCP to support them when they transferred to school through well-established multi-agency systems.
- Transition was carefully planned and managed between the Early Years provider and destination school, with support from the Area Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) Team. This would normally include an exchange of information, visits and joint planning that fully involved parents and carers. For those children who might require an EHCP, every effort was made to ensure this was in place before they transitioned to school so that the school had a clear understanding of needs, outcomes and provision for that child as well as any top-up funding assessed as necessary to support the delivery of the plan. The school would always be consulted before they were named in a plan, but as for all cases, the local authority had to comply with parental preference unless there was concrete evidence that this would not be compatible with the efficient use of resource or the education of others.

Children's Services Scrutiny Committee - 20 September 2021

- Challenges in Early Years to Primary Transition included a rapid increase in the number and complexity of children with SEND in Early Years which had led to more demand for specialist places at transition, which had both immediate and longer term implications for the local offer.
- 25 additional places had been made available at The Bridge Special School (for children with Autism) from September 2021, while longer-term solutions were being considered through the current SEND Review. All schools were seeing a higher number of children with EHCPs and SEND Support needs across Key Stage 1, and for a small number of schools, 10% or above of children in one class had complex needs.
- Islington was looking again at SEND funding arrangements through the SEND Review to see how 'front load' funding for predicted intake could be improved. In the meantime, schools could apply for exceptional needs funding in individual / unforeseen circumstances.
- To support primary to secondary transition, the primary school should share information with the secondary school the child or young person was moving to. This was achieved in a number of ways including visits, through review meetings and/or at an annual SENCO conference organised by the local authority. There were some examples of good practice in Islington schools, e.g. one secondary school had all children with SEND in attendance for a week before term started to enable them to get to know the building, rules and the staff who would be supporting them. The school should agree with parents and pupils the information to be shared as part of the planning process.
- For children with an EHCP, the plan must be reviewed and amended by 15 February in the calendar year of the transfer. The SEND Team had an officer dedicated to Secondary transfer who guided parents through the process.
- Each secondary transfer cohort included approximately 100 children. Parents were encouraged to identify more than one preference. Where the parent's preferred school was not named in the plan, the parent had the right of appeal to the independent First Tier (SEND) Tribunal. Within the context of the requirements of the Code of Practice, the SEND Team kept oversight of parental choice to identify any school that might have a disproportionately high number of EHCP preferences. In such cases, and where the school might not be the closest to the home address, consideration would be given to whether naming the school would be compatible with the efficient use of resource or the efficient education of others, although the burden of proof on this was high.
- Challenges in primary to secondary transitions included: 1) Different school operated different practice in transition arrangements; 2) Despite the good transition practice, the majority of schools (Islington and out-of-borough) respond negatively to the initial consultation (which normally took place in early January); 3) Parents might not give consent to information sharing; 4) Children with an EHCP would receive confirmation of the school named in their plan by 15 February while all other children would receive their offer on 1 March; 5) The First Tier (SEND) Tribunal found in favour of Local Authorities who did not name the parents preferred school for only 8% of cases; 6) Some Islington secondary schools felt that that decision making regarding placement of children was not transparent or fair. For the 2021 exercise Secondary School SENCOs of other representatives were being invited to join officers when they considered the cohort, preferences and placement. In the current cycle 50% of preferences had been received and there had been 18 requests

for one special school with only six places available; 7) Where a parent identified an out-of-borough school, not only the school must be consulted, but also the home local authority for that school. This could make negotiations more challenging. Similarly, other Local Authorities must consult Islington before naming an Islington school for one of their residents and this also had to be taken into account in planning.

- In relation to the Transition to Adulthood, the Code of Practice expected that high aspirations about employment, independent living and community participation should be developed from the earliest possible stage. It also expected schools to seek partnerships with employment services, businesses, housing agencies, disability organisations and arts and sports groups, to help children understand what was available to them as they got older, and what was possible for them to achieve.
- Local authorities were required to ensure for those with SEND that the relevant services they provided help to prepare the young people for adulthood. This might include housing services, adult social care and economic regeneration. There were good examples of these relationships through Islington's special schools and New River College (PRU), supported by wider Council services such as iWork, iSet (Islington Supported Employment Team) and 100 hours of Work. New River College had won a national award for their careers advice.
- For teenagers, preparation for adult life should become a more explicit element of their planning and support, focused on what they wanted to achieve and the best way to support them. Considering the right post-16 option was part of this planning. Local authorities had a range of other duties which were particularly relevant to this area, including: 1) to offer advice and information directly to young people over the age of 16 together with health services, to make joint commissioning arrangements about the education, health and care provision of children and young people to secure positive adult outcomes, 2) to co-operate with Further Education colleges, sixth-form colleges, 16-19 academies and independent specialist colleges; 3) to include in the Local Offer provision which would help children and young people prepare for adulthood and independent living. Also, EHCPs covered Education, Health and Care, so that transition to adult health and where necessary, social care services was also a very important part of this planning.
- Maintained schools and pupil referral units (PRUs) had a statutory duty (section 42A of the Education Act 1997) to ensure all pupils from Year 8 until Year 13 were provided with independent careers guidance. Academies, including 16-19 academies, and free schools were subject to this duty through their Funding Agreements. All young people should be helped to develop the skills and experience, and achieve the qualifications they needed, to succeed in their careers, with the expectation that the vast majority of young people with SEND were capable of sustainable paid employment. All professionals working with them should share that presumption.
- One of the most effective ways to prepare young people with SEND for employment was considered to be through work-based learning that enabled them to have first-hand experience of work, such as: 1) Apprenticeships: paid jobs that incorporated training, leading to nationally recognised qualifications. Young people with EHCP could retain their plan when on an apprenticeship; 2) Traineeships: Education and training programmes with work experience, focused on giving young people the skills and experience they needed to help

them compete for an apprenticeship or other jobs; 3) Supported internships: Structured study programmes for young people with an EHCP, based primarily with an employer. Internships normally lasted for a year and included extended unpaid work placements for at least six months. Wherever possible, they supported the young person to move into paid employment at the end of the programme. Young people with EHCP would retain their plan when undertaking a supported internship. Local examples include Project Search Whittington Hospital – in conjunction with Ambitious College (for young people with autism), Project Search Moorfields (for young people with learning difficulties and/or autism). These opportunities were in a range of areas such as IT, catering, engineering and maintenance. The opportunities across the council were vast.

- Local authorities must ensure that the EHCP review at Year 9, and every review thereafter, includes a focus on preparing for adulthood.
- Preparing for adulthood planning in the review of the EHC plan included: 1) support to prepare for further education and/or employment to include identifying appropriate post-16 pathways, training options such as supported internships, apprenticeships and traineeships, or support for setting up businesses. Reviews covered support in finding a job, learning how to do a job (e.g. through work experience opportunities) and help in understanding any welfare benefits that might be available; 2) support to prepare for independent living should also include discussing where the child or young person wanted to live in the future, who they wanted to live with and what support they would need; 3) support in maintaining good health in adult life, including effective planning with health services of the transition from specialist paediatric services to adult health care; 4) support in participating in society, including understanding mobility and transport support, and how to find out about social and community activities, and in developing and maintaining friendships and relationships; 4) the review should identify the support the child or young person needed to achieve these aspirations and should also identify the components that should be included in their study programme to best prepare them for adult life; 5) For young people moving from secondary school to a post-16 institution or apprenticeship, the review and amendments to the EHCP must be completed by the 31 March in the calendar year of the transfer.
- There was a Progression to Adulthood Programme of Work which included work in relation to goals and aspirations (education, employment and training), independent living, health and wellbeing, health and wellbeing and community cohesion.
- The government had refreshed the national strategy for improving the lives of autistic people and their families (published in July 21) has for the first time extended its scope to include children and young people. The revised strategy also took account of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on people with Autism, backed by research from the Policy Innovation and Evaluation Research Unit (LSE) (Autistic People's Experiences During the Pandemic) and by the National Autistic Society and others (Left Stranded) which confirmed the view that the pandemic had exacerbated challenges many autistic people already faced, such as loneliness, social isolation and anxiety, with those with higher support needs, autistic women and non-binary people particularly impacted. The strategy set out changes across six areas, the following two of which might have particular relevance to the Scrutiny Committee in the

context of this review: 1) Improving autistic children and young people's access to education and supporting positive transitions into adulthood. The SEND system should enable autistic children and young people to access the right support within and outside of school. Schools should provide better support to autistic children and young people so they were able to reach their potential and there should be improvements to the support autistic people received in their transitions into adulthood; 2) Supporting more autistic people into employment. The employment gap was closed as more autistic people who were able and wanted to work could do so.

In the discussion the following main points were made:

- In response to a member's question about Headteachers' funding concerns, the officer advised that a survey of Headteachers had been undertaken. Some respondents stated that they were at capacity but with the right vision they could do more. Spending had been contained through the existing budget and there was an extra £4m this year which would be directed to where it would be most effective. Officers had discussed other funding models with other boroughs. If the second tier of funding was front-loaded, this would give schools greater flexibility and mean resources could be moved to where most needed. Formal consultation would take place but it was expected that schools would formally support the change.
- In response to a member's questions about transitions, an officer stated that there were many transition points and parents often thought they were always in some type of transition. Transitions were more complex where a child moved in or out of borough. Moving from mainstream to a special school or vice versa was often a difficult transition to support.
- In response to a member's question about the rapid increase in children with SEND, the officer stated that it was anticipated, based on a three year trend, that next year there would be an additional 40 children with social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs. There had also been a significant increase in those with Autism. There were more children entering the system than there were exiting it. Health colleagues had advised that it currently took 2.5 years for an autism diagnosis.
- In response to a member's comment that there was a broad Autism spectrum, the officer stated that some children required minimal support and others had complex needs. The London Trust provided support for those with complex needs.
- In response to a member's question about only 50% of plans being issued in a 20 week timeframe, the officer stated that during COVID, timeliness suffered with food etc. being prioritised. Since then, the figures were on track and were currently at 80%. Sometimes delays occurred when parents wanted more advice or were waiting for health assessments.
- In response to a member's question about how many exceptions for funding were received and granted, the officer stated that five requests had been received so far this term. It was hoped that a shift in the funding model would mitigate exceptions for funding. Officers met SENCOs regularly. As pressure grew, conversations with parents about funding were happening more frequently.
- In response to a question from a member of the public about whether officers communicated with teachers who received SEND payments, the officer

advised that there was no direct communication, but communication took place with SENCOs and Headteachers.

- In response to a member's question about whether there were longitudinal studies in relation to transitions to adulthood e.g. the impact of internships, the officer advised that there were no studies on the impacts and the scheme was quite new. She was also not aware of any national studies.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the presentation be noted.
- 2) That the Internship Project Manager be invited to give evidence.

280

CHILD PROTECTION ANNUAL REPORT (ITEM NO. B2)

Laura Eden presented the report which provided an update on progress being made in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of Islington's most vulnerable children from 1 April 2020 to March 2021.

In the presentation and discussion the following main points were made:

- In response to a member's question about domestic violence being the most common reason for contacts requesting a service, the officer advised that of the 11,147 new contacts in 2020/21, 15.6% of contacts were due to domestic violence and this was a 1% increase on the previous year.
- In response to a member's question about whether changes in ways of working in Young People's participation in CLA Reviews during Covid would continue post-Covid, the officer advised that successful ways of working would be continued. Many young people preferred virtual meetings and these would be continued where appropriate. Statutory in-person visits would still take place.
- A member asked if there would be any specific interventions and strategies in relation to anti-social behaviour and gang activity following lockdowns. The officer advised that preventative work continued to take place and work was undertaken with those who were most at risk at transition points including Years 6 and Years 7. Intensive work was also undertaken with families who had support for 20 hours a week to assist them and divert young people from criminal exploitation.
- In response to a member's question about Islington having a higher rate of child protection plans than statistical neighbours, the officer advised that there were more strategy discussion and investigations than in other boroughs and that Islington constantly looked at the thresholds and looked at any areas where practice could be improved. Unlike other boroughs, Islington undertook child protection enquiries where adolescents alleged physical abuse but had no injuries for example and also utilised the child protection procedures for exploitation and serious youth violence whereas some boroughs did not. Although the council did not have to do this, Ofsted had found no fault with doing this.

Children's Services Scrutiny Committee - 20 September 2021

- In response to a member's question about how it was determined that a child with a Child Protection Plan was no longer in harm, the officer stated that good interventions could change parenting capacity. After having a Child Protection Plan, the aim was that a child became a Child in Need for at least six months and then stepped down to Early Help.
- In response to a question as to how children placed both in and out of borough were followed up, the officer advised that all children, whether in borough or out of borough, were seen every four weeks if in a short term placement or every six or eight weeks if in a long term placement. There was no difference in the social care interventions in or out of the borough but there could be a difference in educational support or emotional wellbeing support for example, also in Adventure Play or Youth provision Islington had a good offer. In relation to health, Islington did all the assessments for all children wherever they were placed, however Islington children had access to local support services e.g. CAMHS and support services could vary for those placed out of borough.
- A member asked about the four serious safeguarding incidents which produced Rapid Reviews. The officer stated that three of them related to serious youth violence and recommendations had been implemented. The other reviews undertaken had no theme. Action plans were monitored and recommendations had been implemented.
- In response to a member's question about 36% of young people moving to semi-independent accommodation after their 18th birthday, the officer advised that young people already in semi-independent accommodation on their 18th birthday were not included in the figure. Few 18 year olds moved straight into secure tenancy accommodation as each individual was assessed regarding when they were ready, not when they reached an age limit. The House Project enabled 12 young people at a time to prepare for going into secure council accommodation early.
- In response to a question about 44 initial child protection conferences taking place after the 15 working day timescale from strategy discussion, the officer advised that although this was 10% below the London average, some boroughs had two discussions which affected their timescales. In Islington, conferences were only held when they were purposeful. It was recognised that some late bookings could be avoided.
- In response to a question about delayed timescales in the care planning for children under 6, the officer stated that this was affected by some family members not coming forward until the case was in court. Timescales would continue to be monitored.
- In response to a question about caseloads, the officer stated that the number was not set in legislation. If caseloads were too high, less direct work could take place. Direct work was important to work with children and improve the parenting capacity of parents. Students, who often stayed in Islington, and new staff, required smaller caseloads

when they started and more supervision but in the long term this was worthwhile.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

281 QUARTER 1 PERFORMANCE REPORT (ITEM NO. B3)

In response to a question from a member about whether Academies had a higher level of absence than local authority schools, an officer confirmed that they did. The Council was working with the Executive Head of the Trust and the Regional Schools Commissioner.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

282 WORK PROGRAMME (ITEM NO. B4)

RESOLVED:

That the work programme be noted.

MEETING CLOSED AT 8.15 pm

Chair



Report of: Corporate Director of Children's Services

Meeting of:	Date:	Ward(s):
Childrens Scrutiny	19 October 2021	N/A

Delete as appropriate:	Exempt	Non-exempt

SUBJECT: SACRE ANNUAL REPORT 2021

1.	Context
1.1	<p>The law states that Religious Education must be taught in all schools. However, Religious Education (RE) is not part of the National Curriculum and therefore it is a local responsibility.</p> <p>Islington SACRE's role is to advise the local authority on what needs to be done to improve RE and collective worship (CW) for schools in its area. Through the SACRE, local communities and teachers have the opportunity to influence directly what pupils learn in RE.</p> <p>The main duties of SACRE include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • addressing issues relating to RE in local schools and other educational establishments • developing ways of supporting schools in the delivery of the religious education syllabus and monitoring this delivery • developing and maintaining links with local and national faith communities • considering applications for determinations from Head teachers. This is an application that the school be released from the requirements for CW to be of a mainly Christian character • produce an annual report of its work

	<p>Religious Education encompasses religious literacy and the knowledge of the values and insights of religious and non-religious world views. Islington SACRE are proud that it also provides the endorsement of diversity and the encouragement of tolerance, respect, and mutual understanding within our neighbourhood, our nation, and the wider world.</p> <p>Religious Education is the only strand of the curriculum, which is shaped and influenced by local perspectives, therefore, SACRE is in a unique position to listen to, and take account of, local needs and circumstances.</p>
1.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In implementing the agreed Islington Agreed Syllabus of 2017, we sought to provide a framework for the teaching of Religious Education based on current thinking on religious education, but attentive to local circumstances and needs of Islington schools. • Support and expertise of the School Improvement Service and CS Islington now publishes a range of resources and guidance for schools.
1.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In March 2020, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, there was a nationwide lockdown, schools were closed to all pupils except key workers, and those deemed vulnerable. School leaders across Islington rose to the challenge with resilience and courage to support those pupils attending school and those learning at home whilst being mindful of pupil and staff wellbeing. Leaders faced unprecedented challenges in responding to a dynamic situation and ever changing guidance. • The impact of the COVID emergency on pupils is yet to be seen. Academically it is likely to have most negative impact on the more vulnerable and the disadvantaged. The impact on the mental health and wellbeing of young people could be wide reaching. On the other hand, some children may have thrived during this period. • Unfortunately, much of the work of SACRE has been curtailed and limited and particularly its ability both to convene and to connect. SACRE is confident that the work of the previous years has provided solid foundations on which to build. • SACRE acknowledges the significant effort that has gone into making provision to support lockdown learning, lesson resources, online learning and useful websites. • Schools responded quickly in order to deliver collective worship and many schools were able to deliver successful virtual collective worship through various IT platforms.
1.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Looking ahead, the Islington Agreed Syllabus will be reviewed by March 2022, plus broaden the range of resources directly available to schools, including training for school leaders and classroom practitioners and discovering new ways to engage with local schools will continue to be important ongoing tasks for SACRE. • SACRE continue to broaden and renew the membership of Islington SACRE, recruiting faith and belief representatives from a number of traditions, as well as local teachers, young people, and others. The essential value of SACRE to local schools is that all voices are heard and every perspective is included.

1.5	The profile of Islington Schools:	
Maintained Schools using the Islington Agreed Syllabus and Schemes of Work	Kate Greenway Nursery School, Margaret McMillan Nursery School, North Islington Nursery School, Ambler Primary School, Ashmount Primary School, Canonbury Primary School, Copenhagen Primary School, Drayton Park Primary School, Duncombe Primary School, Gillespie Primary School, Grafton Primary School, Hanover Primary School, Hargrave Park Primary School, Highbury Quadrant Primary School, Hugh Myddelton Primary School, Laycock Primary School, Montem Primary School, Moreland Primary School, Newington Green Primary School, Pakeman Primary School, Pooles Park Primary School, Prior Weston Primary School Robert Blair Primary School, Rotherfield Primary School, Thornhill Primary School, Tufnell Park Primary School, Vittoria Primary School, Winton Primary School, Yerbury Primary School, Arts & Media School Islington, Beacon High, Central Foundation Boys School, Elizabeth Garrett Anderson School, Highbury Fields School	
Voluntary Aided schools may choose to follow their locally agreed syllabus or different locally agreed syllabus (with the permission of the SACRE concerned) or devise their own curriculum (which must broadly reflect the requirements of an agreed syllabus).	Blessed Sacrament RC Primary School, Christ The King RC Primary School, Sacred Heart RC Primary School, St Andrews CE Primary School, St Joan of Arc RC Primary School, St John Evangelist RC Primary School, St Johns Highbury Vale CE Primary School, St Johns Upper Holloway CE Primary School, St Joseph's RC Primary School, St Jude & St Paul's CE Primary School, St Luke's CE Primary School, St Mark's CE Primary School, St Mary's CE Primary School, St Peter's & St Paul's RC Primary School, St Aloysius' College	
All through Maintained Schools using the Islington Agreed Syllabus and Schemes of Work	New River College, Samuel Rhodes Special School, Richard Clousdley Special School	
All Through Academies may choose to follow their locally agreed syllabus or different locally agreed syllabus (with the permission of the SACRE concerned) or devise their own curriculum (which must broadly reflect the requirements of an agreed syllabus).	St Mary Magdalene Academy	

	<p>Single Academy Trust/Free Schools As above</p>	<p>William Tyndale Academy, Whitehall Park School, The London Screen Academy, The Pears Family Charitable Foundation School</p>
	<p>Multi Academy Trusts <i>*note individual schools identified in MATs are the ones in Islington. These MATs may have schools outside of Islington but are not highlighted here.</i> As above</p>	<p>City of London MAT (Highbury Grove, Highgate Hill, COLAI, COLPA-I), The Bridge London Trust (Primary, Secondary, Satellite, Integrated Learning Space Special schools and Hungerford Primary) Living in Harmony (New North Primary School)</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SACRE directly provides the Islington Agreed Syllabus and Schemes of work to all educational settings • 23/57 (40%) of educational settings are not required to adopt the Islington Agreed Syllabus or Schemes of Work 	
<p>2. Recommendations</p>		
<p>2.1</p>	<p>To accept this report and agree the recommendations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendation 1: increase the diversity and membership of SACRE, and to work collaboratively with the Islington Youth Council • Recommendation 2: review the agreed syllabus in consultation with educational settings by March 2022 and share proposals for September 2022 - 2027 • Recommendation 3: continue to develop professional development opportunities for staff across Islington, including governors • Recommendation 4: continue to implement the RE Syllabus and Scheme of Work in light of the Islington Recovery Curriculum and the Children’s Scrutiny Education Inequalities 14 recommendations with a particular focus at KS3 and KS4. 	
<p>3. Summary of SACRE work 2020 - 2021</p>		
<p>3.1</p>	<p>Advice to statutory bodies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SACRE has provided up-to-date advice, which is shared on Islington CS portal for schools. This advice is for schools and Local Authority parties or any other interested member of the community. An online function enables members of the public to contact the Head of School Improvement and/or the Chair of SACRE to ensure SACRE can receive questions (including FOIs) and comments. To date SACRE have published national guidance about diversity of religion and belief as well as the 2017 Agreed Syllabus for Islington. • SACRE has also provided guidance (via CS Islington) on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting students during Ramadan • Matters of religion and belief associated with PE (Physical Education) • Collective Worship guidance • Sex and Relationships education requirements • Attendance at school and religious observance (to be published) 	

- Additionally, the School Improvement Service supports and acts as a broker in the ongoing engagement with Head Teachers, senior leaders and RE Leaders across Islington in order to provide a platform for keeping senior leaders abreast of news about SACRE. For example:
 - Coordinating and convening support groups and the summer Conference
 - Supporting RE Leaders to prepare for an Ofsted "Deep Dive" in light of the Ofsted inspection focus that schools are providing a curriculum that is broad and balanced.
 - Providing bespoke support for schools as required

3.2 **Standards and Quality of Provision of RE:**

The table above illustrates the 3 year trend for Religious Studies at GCSE level (please note that outcomes for 2021 are yet to be published):

GCSE RS entries & results 2020 compared to 2019 and 2018			
Grade	Results 2018	Results 2019	Results 2020
9	12	34	32
8	26	55	31
7	43	74	46
6	70	79	79
5	71	84	65
4	59	60	67
3	49	62	77
2	19	35	33
1	13	9	16
U	3	4	6
X	0	1	0
# Entries	365	497	452
# 7+	81	163	109
# 4+	318	386	320
7+ grades included in performance tables* as % of entries	22.2	32.8	24.1
4+ grades included in performance tables* as % of entries	87.1	77.7	70.8
Entries included in perf. tables as % of Roll.	25.9	33.8	30.8
Average Point Score	5.0	5.36	4.95

3.3	<p>GCSE examination results:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2021 outcomes have yet to be published at the time of writing the report. This year assessments were based on moderated teacher assessment and are therefore not comparable to previous years' outcomes. Outcomes for 2021 will not be published until January 2022. • 2020 outcomes are a reflection on the impact of COVID-19, the lockdown of schools, the partial reopening and the challenges of assessment processes that secondary schools were asked to implement by the DFE. The number of entries decreased by 45 in 2020. Pupils achieving the highest grade (9) remained stable compared to 2019. • 2019 outcomes were better than those in 2018 for all indicators: % 4+, % 7+ whether we look at % of entrants passed or % of roll that passed. In 2019 there was an increase in the number of pupils taking RE compared to 2018 (497 compared to 365, an increase of 36%).
3.4	<p>Quality of RE provision in schools:</p> <p>The majority (91%) of schools in Islington are rated as good or outstanding in 2019 (Ofsted Data View, August 2019), this includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% of nursery schools were good or outstanding • 94% of primary schools were good or outstanding • 70% of secondary schools were good or outstanding • 100% of pupil referral units (PRU) were good or outstanding • 100% of special schools were good or outstanding • 96.4% of early years settings were rated good or outstanding, this compares positively to national (96.1) and London (94.9) December 2019. <p>Nationally, 62% of schools are rated by Ofsted as good or outstanding as at August 2019. In London, 93% of schools rated as good or outstanding.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Islington, 40% of secondary schools are Outstanding compared to 36% across London and 21% nationally. <p>At primary, SACRE has begun to reap the rewards of a deliberate effort to reach out to and support teachers of RE.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During 2020 – 2021 the opportunity to move to virtual meetings was postponed due to the pandemic. One meeting was held in Autumn 2020. • In 2019 – 2020 the focus had been prior to lock down was the preparation of subject leaders for a "Deep Dive" during an Ofsted inspection of a school. • The focus in 2018-19 was on assessment of the Agreed Syllabus. • In 2017- 2018 network meetings focussed on the Agreed Syllabus; sharing information for those not at the launch, workshopping teaching approaches and sharing best practice. <p>At Secondary a new teacher representative to SACRE has been appointed in 2020 – 21. It is anticipated that this will help to engage secondary schools in developing a model, similar to the primary network meetings. The 2017 Agreed Syllabus made full provision for secondary RE, however nationally there is a tendency for secondary schools to engage with their locally Agreed Syllabus only so far as it supports the GCSE. Ofsted do not recommend this. Responses from Islington secondary schools will be a particular focus during the planned review of the Islington Agreed Syllabus.</p>

	SACRE continues to encourage all schools to achieve RE Quality Mark (REQM)
3.5	<p>Withdrawal and Complaints:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There have been no complaints about RE and no requests for withdrawal. • There have been no requests for change of designation and no complaints about collective worship. • There have been two (2) FOI requests which were responded to within the statutory time frame.
3.6	<p>Agreed Syllabus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Agreed Syllabus for Islington was launched in 2017 and has been well received by schools, thanks to the ongoing external support from RE Today and from the Islington School Improvement Service, in highlighting and disseminating information about the syllabus and the concomitant resources. • SACRE is aware that the Commission of RE (Report, 2018) has recommended changes to SACREs in future, to be renamed Local Advisory Networks for Religion and Worldviews, and significantly to lose their statutory duty to review and produce an Agreed Syllabus every 5 yrs. • SACRE will keep abreast of any policy or pressures which suggest such changes might be underway through the input of the RE adviser and updates from NASACRE. • SACRE will prepare to review the 2017 Agreed Syllabus by March 2022 as it is uncertain whether changes to primary legislation will occur before then. This work will begin in September 2021.
3.7	<p>Collective Worship:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SACRE provides a comprehensive guidance on Collective Worship (CW) on the website covering the legal requirements, its presence in different school types and the difference between 'collective' and 'corporate' worship. • Collective Worship is a statutory requirement in all schools. The legal requirement to provide a daily act of Collective Worship and religious education in the curriculum, known as the 'religious clauses', stems from the 1944 Education Act. • In this Act RE was included in the school day as Christian faith nurture rather than an academic subject of the curriculum. Some schools find the requirement for Collective Worship an anomaly, other schools do not offer worship in a religious sense but bring pupils together to celebrate shared values and develop a sense of trust, commitment and community. The future for RE seems to be as an academic subject rather than personal growth. • We believe Islington SACRE's continued guidance on Collective Worship, including non-religious approaches to Collective Worship, is an example of good practice. • As noted, there have been no requests for change of determination or complaints about Collective Worship
3.8	<p>Management of SACRE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two meetings of SACRE were held in 2020/21, including the AGM in May. The meeting of July 2021 was cancelled due to technical issues via Zoom. • Islington Council is responsible for the composition of SACRE. Islington SACRE is made up of three groups: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Representatives of the Church of England, other Christian denominations and other religions and world-views to reflect broadly the diversity of belief in the

	<p>area. Currently this includes representatives of Christian, Jewish, Hindu, Muslim and Jain faiths and Humanist worldview</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Associations representing teachers. Currently this includes both Primary and Secondary school teachers from Islington Schools. There remains a vacancy from teacher unions ○ Local Council representatives (including deputies as required) ○ Local authority adviser ○ Clerk to SACRE provided by Islington Governor Services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● During 2020 – 21 we thanked the following Local Authority representatives for their valuable contribution to Islington SACRE: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Councillors Ngongo and Hyde ● Islington SACRE welcome the following Local Authority representatives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Councillors Chapman and Ozdemir ● SACRE meetings are held at the Islington Town Hall and clerked by Islington Governor Services. There is no cost to Islington SACRE.
3.9	<p>Contribution of SACRE to the wider Local Authority agenda:</p> <p>School partnerships:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In bringing teachers together for network/CPD meetings and the annual conference SACRE is contributing to schools’ ability to collaborate effectively. ● In briefing school leaders and Governors on RE-related matters, including the work of teachers, SACRE supports schools’ knowledge and understanding of the wider educational picture. <p>Attainment measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Maintaining a focus on assessment and learning outcomes, SACRE has supported teachers of RE to create high quality teaching and learning and assessment materials. ● Through the School Improvement Service a range of moderation services have been provided to secondary schools <p>SACRE’s contribution to the LA’s public sector equality duty:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Islington SACRE contributes to the borough’s wider equality duty by actively recruiting and welcoming people from diverse backgrounds. Islington is a diverse borough and SACRE reflects this. ● Islington SACRE is aligned to the Islington Council Challenging Inequality agenda ● SACRE has welcomed the School Improvement Service offer of Unconscious Bias training to Islington educational settings ● However, diversity of faith and belief is only one type of diversity. The Commission of RE final report recommends SACREs enlarge to include expertise from education, academia, museums and galleries, as well as faith and belief ‘insiders’. A next step will be to consider what strategic relationships and partnership with local educational and cultural organisations may support the work of SACRE.
3.10	<p>Planned future work:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Review the Islington Agreed Syllabus ● Review Collective Worship guidance to educational settings ● Supporting families and young people with the implementation of Relationship and Health Education and how the teaching of RE can support/complement this ● Provide a suite of training for school governors: Islington Agreed Syllabus/Collective Worship and other RE-related matters

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to support schools to develop their preparedness for a “Deep Dive” during an Ofsted inspection • Enlarge and renew the SACRE membership • Organise a summer conference (2022) for teachers and SACRE members to relaunch the Islington Agreed Syllabus for September 2022 - 2027
4.	Implications
4.1	Financial implications:
	There are no financial implications from the recommendations in this report.
4.2	Legal Implications:
	The authority must constitute a standing advisory council on religious education (SACRE), to advise the authority on religious worship in community and non-denominational foundation schools and religious education to be given in connection with an agreed or other syllabus (sections 390 and 391 Education Act 1996). SACRE must publish an annual report, in particular in relation to advice given to the authority (section 391(6) and (7) Education Act 1996).
4.3	Resident Impact Assessment:
	<p>The council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and to advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations, between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it (section 149 Equality Act 2010). The council has a duty to have due regard to the need to remove or minimise disadvantages, take steps to meet needs, in particular steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities, and encourage people to participate in public life. The council must have due regard to the need to tackle prejudice and promote understanding.</p> <p>A Resident Impact Assessment has not been completed because Religious Education is a statutory requirement and it supports schools and settings to enact the Equality Act of 2010.</p>
4.4	Environmental Implications and contribution to achieving a net zero carbon Islington by 2030:
	There are no environmental Implications as a result of the recommendations in this report.
5.	Reason for recommendations
5.1	No further recommendations – please refer to section 2

Final report clearance:

Signed by:		
	Director of Childrens Services	Date:

Report Author:	Anthony Doudle on behalf of the SACRE Board	
Tel:	020 7527 3387	
Email:	Anthony.doudle@islington.gov.uk	

Financial Implications Author:	Tim Partington	
Tel:	020 7527 1851	
Email:	Tim.partington@islington.gov.uk	

Legal Implications Author:	Uma Mehta	
Tel:	0207 527 3127	
Email:	Uma.Mehta@islington.gov.uk	

Children's Services Scrutiny Committee

Work Plan 2021/22

DRAFT

19 October 2021

1. Scrutiny Review – witness evidence
2. SACRE Annual Report

6 December 2021

1. Scrutiny Review – witness evidence
2. Quarter 2 Performance Report

11 January 2022

1. Scrutiny Review – witness evidence and concluding discussion
2. Executive Member questions

1 March 2022

1. Scrutiny Review – draft recommendations
2. Islington Safeguarding Children Board – Annual Report (to be noted)
3. School Results 2021 (including qualitative data from schools and the 3Rs strategy)

28 March 2022

1. Scrutiny Review – draft report
2. Quarter 3 Performance Report
3. Youth Offending Service

June 2022 (date to be confirmed)

1. Membership, Terms of Reference, Dates of Meetings
2. Quarter 4 Performance Report

3. Annual report back on the Transition from COVID-19 scrutiny review
1. School Place Planning