



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

SACRE

SACRE Annual Report
September 2017 - July 2018

Wokingham Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education

The Chair's Foreword

Last year I spoke about the outstanding work conducted by the Wokingham SACRE and the Pan-Berkshire Hub. This year has been just as exciting, with the launch of the new Pan-Berkshire Locally Agreed Syllabus. Many SACRE members, teachers, support staff, members of local government and advisers were able to join us and celebrate in the launch of the Locally Agreed Syllabus.

At Wokingham we are constantly striving for the very best in Religious Education for our young people, and moving forward we will work to develop our Locally Agreed Syllabus further. We have continued to support our primary school colleagues with termly network meetings and, looking forward, we will support our secondary school colleagues at their Secondary Federation INSET.

It has been a pleasure to chair the Wokingham SACRE, an exceptionally skilled and committed group of individuals who care about Religious Education and the young people of Wokingham. Our advisor, Jan Lever, continued to excel in her work and we were sad when she made the difficult decision to take a step back from the Wokingham SACRE. We warmly welcomed and enjoy working with our new advisor Alison Harris. Finally, the support of Wokingham Borough Council has been wonderful, without which we could not support the young people and teachers of Wokingham.

Stephen Vegh, Chair: Wokingham SACRE

Contents

The Chair's Foreword

2017-2018: The Context

RE teaching in Wokingham schools

The Wokingham SACRE

The work of the SACRE in 2017-18

The role of Wokingham Borough Council

Represented nationally

Keeping up to date

Teacher network meetings

Primary RE Subject leader training

Secondary teachers

The Pan-Berkshire joint SACRE conference 2017

The Pan-Berkshire SACRE Hub

'Crossing the Bridges' Update

GCSE Examination Results

Religious Studies GCSE outcomes 2018

2017-18: The Context

RE teaching in Wokingham schools

This year saw extensive work on the review of the Pan-Berkshire RE syllabus, started in the summer term of 2017. Consultation was held throughout the year with all stakeholders, including: teacher networks; the Pan-Berkshire conference for SACRE members; and feedback from religious and world view representatives at a special day for their input. The syllabus was launched to Wokingham Schools at an evening event held at the WBC offices and was attended by 58 people. The syllabus was well received. Especially appreciated was the focussed approach taken to slim down the content to that which teachers need statutorily. The next steps for the Pan Berkshire Hub will be to review the guidance materials to further support teachers, and finalise assessment processes. Teacher networks will also further support teachers in the implementation of the new syllabus.

The Wokingham SACRE

The Wokingham SACRE continues to take very seriously its role in supporting schools and teachers, and works closely with the Borough Council to offer this support. The SACRE has met once each term to progress its work, structuring its work each year through an agreed action plan. The SACRE has continued to appreciate the support of Wokingham Borough Council, the funding offered enabling support for teachers and schools to continue, and the agreed syllabus review to be conducted. The SACRE is indebted to Emily Waddilove, WBC link officer (Teaching and Learning Advisor) for her continued support and overseer role.



Pan-Berkshire joint SACRE conference - September 2017



Pan-Berkshire joint SACRE conference - September 2017



Pan-Berkshire joint SACRE conference - September 2017

The SACRE's membership is consistent and it has welcomed new member, Cllr David Hare, this year. The dedicated Chair, Stephen Vegh, an experienced Head of Faculty (Religious Studies and Philosophy) at Waingels College, and equally committed Vice Chair, Councillor Beth Rowland, led the SACRE admirably through the very busy and productive year of meetings and syllabus review. The SACRE is also blessed with an exceptionally dedicated and very able clerk, Anne Coffey, who always goes beyond the call of duty to serve the SACRE and advance its work.

The SACRE continues to keep in touch with schools and to support them to fulfil their students' entitlement to high quality RE, mindful of the pressures upon teachers and school timetables. The SACRE listens to teachers through termly network meetings, training events and the teacher representatives on the SACRE, and the support it offers is informed by these conversations. Elected members consider the SACRE's work in the light of the bigger Council purpose, and support it whole-heartedly. Wokingham has continued to be a core member of the Pan-Berkshire SACRE Hub, offering its meeting rooms regularly as a venue for both meetings and training events.

Jan Lever, the independent adviser to the SACRE, also managed the Hub and its projects and events. This year has been very significant in reviewing the syllabus shared by the six SACREs across Berkshire.

SACRE meetings continue to be synchronised across all six SACREs, with Hub meetings in-between, allowing six meeting points each year with a flow of information and dialogue between the Hub and the SACREs. This was especially important and useful during the syllabus review and supported the sharing and feedback of information and ideas.

The work of the SACRE in 2017-18

The role of Wokingham Borough Council

The support of Wokingham Borough Council enables the SACRE to communicate directly with schools through the regular schools' e-newsletter and channels of correspondence. This enables excellent attendance at training events and network meetings.

Councillors are pro-active members of the SACRE, and we look forward to embedding SACRE's work into the 'bigger picture' education development plans of the Borough.

The SACRE is aware that it needs to continue its awareness-raising campaign. Updating the 'What is a SACRE?' leaflet and disseminating it to Councillors, governors, teachers and newly qualified teachers has been a useful way to ensure people know the SACRE is here to support them and to monitor RE and Collective Worship in Wokingham. Further promotion of the role and importance of SACREs is planned as part of the work of the Hub for the coming academic year.

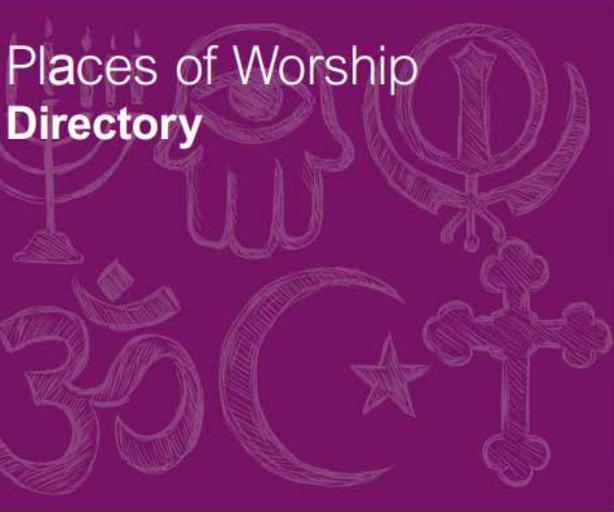
Represented nationally

The Wokingham SACRE always has representatives at the annual NASACRE (National Association of SACREs) AGM (annual general meeting) and conference.

This year it was held in London, and delegates were afforded the opportunity to hear a keynote presentation from Dr Vanessa Ogden who spoke on the topic of the links between SACREs, schools and society. SACRE members discussed feedback from this event at the following SACRE meeting.

'Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent at this school. Pupils understand differences, symbolism and beliefs of other religions and cultures through their strong tutor and assembly programme, as well as their religious studies lessons.'
- Ofsted report on a Wokingham secondary school

Places of Worship Directory



Christianity

Buddhism

Hinduism

Islam

Judaism

Sikhism

Other



in the area. They also had multiple opportunities to be updated on and give input to the new syllabus

Primary RE Subject Leader training

Some primary subject leaders new to post attended the training session for them, run in partnership with Reading SACRE. Although the attendance at this was low, the small group afforded a much more bespoke approach to supporting each leader and allowed time for plenty of discussion.

'A well-planned religious education programme and a range of opportunities in other subjects, combine to promote a good awareness of spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues. Pupils respect people from different backgrounds, cultures and beliefs and are well prepared for life in modern Britain.'
- Ofsted report on a Wokingham secondary school.

Keeping up to date

The SACRE invites people to offer presentations at its meetings in order to keep up to date with developments in education nationally and locally. However there were no presentations in the 2017-18 meetings due to the ongoing work on the new syllabus.

'Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well supported. For example, a visitor was invited to the school to speak about her beliefs as a Muslim. Pupils also celebrate a variety of festivals, such as Diwali, through their religious education.'

- Ofsted report on a Wokingham primary school

Teacher network meetings

Primary teachers have again been afforded a termly network meeting offering updates on both national and local initiatives in RE as well as input on the syllabus review at every stage. These meetings also provided opportunities to share good practice as well as to feed back to the SACRE and the Hub on the syllabus as it took shape. Teachers also had the opportunity to hear the presentation from our Chair and Alison Harris on creative teaching and learning approaches that had been showcased at the Hub Conference.

The Diocesan adviser is always invited to network meetings to ensure church schools are updated during these meetings with information pertinent to them.

This year the primary network meetings, hosted at Nine Mile Ride Primary School, have continued to be well-attended, with an average of 15 teachers at each one, and 24 schools represented over the course of the year. There were 9 delegates from 9 schools at the October meeting; 16 delegates from 15 schools at the February meeting, and 12 delegates from 11 schools in May. 7 schools attended just one network, 11 attended on 2 occasions and 6 came to all 3 meetings.

The teachers who attend are always enthusiastic and open to sharing their ideas and concerns about the profile of RE. There are a variety of levels of experience and this promotes a very supportive ethos. The teachers looked at teaching and learning activities, including learning about the way RE is taught in secondary schools, and also were trained in the new 3rd edition of Discovery RE, as this is the prevalent scheme in use

Secondary teachers

Network meetings are not considered the best means of support for secondary RE teachers. Instead, teachers requested support to fund their bi-annual training event. Every two years a Wokingham secondary school hosts an RE-specific training day, with national speakers and workshops, as part of the Secondary Federation common INSET day in February.

The Pan-Berkshire joint SACRE conference 2017

The joint SACRE conference was held in September 2017. It brought together teachers, SACRE members, and members of faith and belief communities and entailed an update on the current position of the syllabus review; input on creative teaching and learning strategies from our chair and Alison Harris (RE Consultant and adviser to West Berkshire SACRE); plus discussion on a number of questions from the KS3 syllabus answered by representatives of different religions and world views.

The Pan-Berkshire SACRE Hub

The Hub continues to thrive, with Hub meetings being held during the first half of each school term and SACRE meetings during the second half-term. Whilst this seems obvious and simple, this arrangement is not that easy to achieve, but is very helpful in offering six points of contact each year, thereby facilitating communication and joint working. This has been especially important this year, as the constant update and feedback necessitated by the syllabus review would not have been possible or as successful without this structure.

'In one class, pupils wrote about aspects of Islam and compared it with their own religion. Apart from giving pupils a clear understanding of this faith, it also promoted their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively'
- Ofsted report on a Wokingham primary school.

'Crossing the Bridges' Update

The Pan-Berkshire SACRE Hub was eager to build on Phase 1 of this project and to create a Directory of host places of worship. The 'hosts' were to be trained to understand the requirements of the agreed syllabus and facilitate RE learning during visits, and schools enabled to make good use of the host places of worship and the interactive teaching materials. The funding for this was achieved through a Westhill/NASACRE award. This successfully supported the project activities both last year and this year: an 'on-location' training day for teachers; training events for places of worship hosts; and the collation

of the Directory. The Directory is now reported by Wokingham teachers to be in regular use, and comments from visits or contacts are fed back through teacher networks.

The Pan-Berkshire SACRE Hub is excited to see the benefits of this project for pupils and teachers alike.

Schools' visits with RE as the main purpose have been monitored. Of the 104 trips made by Wokingham schools during the year with RE as a purpose, 94 had RE as the main purpose and 10 as the secondary purpose. This compares well to previous years, which were as follows:

2016-2017: Of 76 RE trips, 64 had RE as main purpose, 12 as secondary purpose.

2015-2016: Of 47 RE trips, 42 had RE as main purpose, 5 as secondary purpose.

Teachers in the network meetings have shared best practice in terms of RE trips, and their experiences of using the Crossing the Bridges materials to support these. Virtually all of these experiences have been very positive; the very few difficulties usually being where a host place or person has changed contact details and has been difficult to contact. These issues were passed on to the Directory co-ordinator as appropriate.

GCSE Examination Results

The pan-Berkshire Agreed Syllabus for RE states that during Key Stage 4 "All pupils must receive Religious Education and should follow an externally accredited course for Religious Studies e.g. GCSE, or an alternative, well-structured and challenging programme of Religious Education. Schools

are encouraged to facilitate examination entry for as many students as possible."

Religious Studies GCSE outcomes 2018

	% of cohort entered (2017)	% achieving Grade 7+ (2017 A+)	% achieving Grade 4+ (2017 C+)	Average point score (2017)
Wokingham	61.9 (76.1)	24 (26.9)	73 (72)	5.0 (4.8)
National	36.5 (46.9)	28 (27.4)	71 (70)	5.0 (4.7)

(Data from FFT Aspire)

61.9% of the Year 11 cohort in Wokingham was entered for the Religious Studies GCSE examination in 2018, a reduction on last year's 76.1%, but a significantly higher percentage than the 36.5% entered nationally. Of those Wokingham students entered, 24% achieved a 7+ (A or A*) grade, slightly below the national figure of 28%. The percentage of students in Wokingham gaining grade 4 (C) or above was 73%, 2% above the national equivalent. The average point score for RS for the Wokingham cohort was 5.0, in line with the national equivalent.

In summary, as in previous years, Wokingham schools achieved results in line with national results, and accomplished this despite entering a larger percentage of the cohort than was entered nationally.

'Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school.'
- Ofsted report on a Wokingham primary school.

The Pan-Berkshire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education 2018- 2023