

Wiltshire Council



Pupils from Colerne CE Primary School visit Bristol Progressive Synagogue

Wiltshire SACRE Annual Report
2020-2021

Wiltshire SACRE's Annual Report 2020-21

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1. Introduction

1.1 Words on behalf of the Chair

There is no denying that once again the pandemic has had a major impact on the lives and work of all of us involved with education. The challenges we face have been extreme and the impact on our schools is very evident. Our thanks to school leaders, all staff and parents for working tirelessly under the most difficult COVID

restrictions to deliver quality education face to face and online. Our thanks extend to SACRE members who have given their time to support the work that we do. This has been greatly appreciated

NASCARE produced a report in May 2021 on the funding received by SACRE, which highlighted some disparities in the system; with some Local Authorities funding appearing to be as little as £105. In Wiltshire this is not the case, however the funding does not exceed the National SACRE mean average of £11,000. The current Service Level Agreement for Wiltshire SACRE (excluding extra funding for Agreed Syllabus review work is for £10,300 . However as there was no adviser to Wiltshire SACRE or SLA until January 2021, this represents a significant improvement in funding.

It's been a year of changes. Sadly, we said goodbye to Simon White, the chair of our SACRE and Annette Earl has served diligently as our chair since September 2021. Throughout these changes Wiltshire SACRE has continued to be reliant on the extremely diligent and hard working clerk: Simone Kermode without whom, so much would not occur. Katy Staples has served as our Adviser to SACRE during this time.

The time had come to look again at our Agreed Syllabus, an Agreed Syllabus working party was set up, and it was decided after consultation, and discussion to continue with the existing Agreed Syllabus in light of major National changes to RE on the horizon, for which no final guidance was yet available. This decision was also influenced by exhaustion levels due to COVID at this time, teachers reported that there was no appetite for major change.

Despite COVID SACRE has continued to offer Schools support through sending details of materials that can be accessed to support RE, and has signposted excellent CPD in the form of two conferences and local RE Hub meetings led by Higher Learning Practitioners across the Local Authority.

SACRE has also written and sent guidance to schools , both Primary and Secondary to support them in offering inspiring Collective Worship (Assemblies) during this reporting period.

The diversity of the membership remains a concern and although we have attempted to gain a greater range of belief perspectives, the demographic of Wiltshire, as a mainly rural, predominantly white British area mitigates against our efforts to a certain extent. This is something we hope to address in the future.

We continue to link with other local SACREs and NASACRE and members have attended, and appreciated, both the regional and national training opportunities.

We are looking forward to the return of normality in our schools and delivering quality Religious Education to our children and young people.

pp Annette Earl Chair of Wiltshire SACRE

March 2022

1.2 Overview – SACRE

A Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) is legally constituted by a Local Authority with the responsibility for overseeing Religious Education and Collective Worship in community, VC (RE only not CW), foundation schools without a religious character and trust schools.

Academies, Free schools & VA schools lie outside the SACRE remit, but a good SACRE will try to establish links with any of these schools in its area.

SACRE has met three times in the last academic year. All meetings were held online using video conferencing. All meetings were quorate and well attended, participation was good, despite the limitations of video conferencing

In meetings the following aspects were discussed:

- Agreed Syllabus review and funding, suggested RE resources
- SACRE constitution and membership
- Covid 19 impact and support for schools
- OFSTED research review
- RE conferences
- SACRE conferences
- Guidance about leading Collective Worship during Covid
- support for individual schools
- religion and worldviews (and its potential impact on teaching of RE)
- Acknowledging the contribution of leaving members (including the Chair)
- Election of a new chair

1.3 Overview – Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC)

Wiltshire SACRE adopted an RE Today syllabus in 2011 and offered some extra support materials in 2016 .In this reporting period we have been reviewing our agreed syllabus. As 2011 was some time ago , and a full suite of purchasable schemes of work were never offered to Wiltshire Schools (as is the current RE Today Services model), Many felt a new agreed syllabus was overdue, however many Primary Schools have bought the resource “Discovery RE” at some cost and are reluctant to replace this yet. A questionnaire was sent to schools to ascertain their evaluations of the current Agreed Syllabus for RE and their needs.An agreed syllabus working party met and debated whether to keep the current agreed syllabus or to consider an alternative syllabus.

In discussions, some concerns were raised at the timing of a change of syllabus, given the context of the Covid pandemic and the work of the RE Council in the

CORE report indicating a seismic change for RE in the pipeline as it becomes “Religion and Worldviews”. The writing of the new guidance for Agreed Syllabus Conferences, will not be finalised until 2023/4.

A decision to engage with a refreshing of the existing syllabus was then agreed through a formal vote by the Agreed Syllabus Conference on March 25th 2021,

This process is now underway and the refreshed materials and guidance to support the Agreed Syllabus will be shared with schools in March, April and May 2022.

2. Religious Education

2.1 Locally Agreed Syllabus

The locally agreed syllabus in schools is an RE Today syllabus. This has been utilised by many schools across the authority, including academies. A significant number of Primary Schools use the resource “Discovery RE” which can be used to supplement the support offered on “Right Choice”. A large number of Church of England Schools (VC and VA) also use the “Understanding Christianity” resource which is recommended by their Diocese.

2.2 Monitoring

Covid 19 has posed a considerable challenge to SACRE’s usual monitoring processes. Exam data for the last academic year is unavailable due to the changes to assessment processes during the pandemic which means results are not published. There are therefore no validated results for either GCSE and/or A Levels, however we expect national data to be published in 2022 and therefore this should be shared in the 2021-2022 SACRE report appendix.

SACRE members and the adviser have been unable to visit schools in this period due to Covid regulations and also have been mindful of the extreme pressures and difficulties faced by schools at this time.

Support was offered to schools through the adviser writing and sharing guidance on home learning activities for RE and CW which was available via the Local Authority portal; Right Choice. There is evidence from the feedback we have received from schools that the guidance and activities were useful and accessed appropriately.

2.3 HLP (Higher Learning Practitioner) Hubs (Salisbury Diocese area) and LTLRE (Learn Teach Lead RE) Hub in North Wiltshire (Bristol Diocese area)

RE. Hub leaders get access to high quality training and facilitate three hubs per year aimed at both primary and secondary teachers, and teaching assistants.

The HLP Hubs are supported by a grant from Sarum St Michaels and are accessed through SLAs with the diocese. However this model has been challenged and in future academic years these hubs will be offered for free to all schools, irrespective of foundation, Primary or Secondary. The North Wiltshire LTLRE Hub had its first meeting in the summer term 2021 and was well attended. All hubs have continued to meet online throughout the last year. Lead Teachers have received training on worldviews, the OFSTED research review and strategies to share about being a strong subject leader.

2.4 Conferences

One RE conference was held online in January 2020 and the theme was 'No single story'. 15 teachers from Wiltshire attended this conference. The focus was on ensuring teachers share diverse representations of belief and practice within and across religions and worldviews. Ed Pawson and Katie Freeman presented key notes on Primary worldviews curriculum and the use of story to create inclusive RE. Workshops for all key stages giving practical ideas on worldviews in the classroom, as well as sessions on Hindu Dharma and Islam were presented. Feedback on the conference was very positive and teachers were keen to take the ideas and suggestions back their classrooms.

Some feedback from teachers attending:

'Lovely ideas - that can be also used and adapted for many different areas of the curriculum - thank you'

'Thank you, this was really interesting and helpful as a new RE lead'

'Thank you so much. I have lots of ideas now and I am eager to share them across my school'

'Lovely to see such a focus on practical and creative ideas - love the forest school ones! Thank you!'

A second conference organised by Salisbury Diocese took place in March 2021 the Title was "**RE- Juvinating and RE-Inspiring RE Conference**" and the keynote speaker was Lat Blaylock from RE Today services, this was attended 100 delegates of whom at least a third were from Wiltshire Schools.

The feedback from this conference was also extremely positive.

LTLRE conference This blended conference was held at Engineers' House in June 2021, with 20 delegates attending in person and 46 online. There were 5 delegates from Wiltshire Schools. The title 'This is my truth tell me yours', with presentations from keynote speakers Ruth Flanagan and Richard Kueh, presented current thinking around worldviews and diversity in RE. Teachers took part in a variety of workshops including interpreting stories, disagreeing well in the classroom,

reflective stories and the animation resource 'Nobody Stands Nowhere'. Those able to attend in person were grateful of the opportunity to meet in with colleagues in the same space, and those online were appreciative of the chance to receive presentations and workshops despite being unable to attend the event physically.

Some feedback on the event:

'I appreciated being able to attend this conference online. I felt just as much a part of the conference as if I had been there in person... I got so much from it and I can't wait to start implementing the great ideas I picked up from this day'

'I was very impressed with how the conference was able to provide this blended option – a definite blueprint for the future if available for people who would wish to attend but can't in person. Intermittent use of break out rooms used effectively, in similar way you would provide opportunities for discussion face to face. Interesting and engaging speakers. Any technical issues that occurred were dealt with promptly – great team! I also really enjoyed balance of contributors / workshops I chose. Encouragement and time to reflect pedagogy / own practise / own ideas - in morningpractical ideas for classroom in the afternoon'

2.5 Communication

Termly newsletters have continued, with all schools receiving a SACRE newsletter three times per year through Right Choice. The newsletter contains contact details for various communities and resources, as well as ideas for the classroom and information on upcoming events and CPD.

2.6 School support

During Covid times and ongoing, all schools have been offered the opportunity of 1:1 support from the adviser. A few schools have accessed a 1.5 hour adviser led session supporting them with the development of RE and/or collective worship. These have mainly been happening using video conferencing in this reporting period.

3. Collective worship

3.1 Policies and guidance

SACRE has not reviewed its CW or SMSC policy or guidance during this period. Additional guidance was created during this year for both Primary and Secondary schools to help teachers and those leading Collective Worship / Assemblies with support and resources during the lockdown periods and on returning to school under Covid19 guidelines.

3.2 Monitoring and support

During this reporting period it has only been appropriate for SACRE to provide guidance and support and not monitoring and scrutiny of Collective Worship. Schools have shared their appreciation for the support offered.

3.3 Determinations

During this reporting period there were no determinations applied for.

4. Links with other organisations

4.1 NASACRE

Wiltshire SACRE continues to maintain its membership to the National Association of SACREs. This provides access to important updates on national issues and the use of recommended templates for policies and guidance documents. SACRE members were invited to attend the NASACRE AGM on 24th May. The theme of the event was 'Authority in RE', with keynote speakers Denise Cush and Richard Kueh presenting on 'sources of authority in RE' and "RE and OFSTED". A variety of workshops were available on subjects such as bringing faith communities into the classroom, lesson plans for the Big Ideas project and what makes a text sacred. Four members attended this conference.

4.2 LTLRE

As outlined above, Wiltshire SACRE continues to have significant commitment and practical involvement with the Learn, Teach, Lead RE programme. The Adviser to SACRE assists in the planning and running of meetings and communicates with hub members regularly with RE updates and information via email. She is also on the steering committee for the project. The Salisbury Diocese HLP programme organised by Nicola Coupe, a School Improvement Adviser for Salisbury Diocese has continued to offer training and a support network for teachers of RE across the authority. Katy Staples, the Adviser to SACRE is working with Nicola to ensure that in future years the Hubs across the area are open to all schools and she will contribute to the training that lead practitioner Hub leaders receive.

4.3. Diocese

SACRE maintains strong working relationships with the Church of England (Salisbury and Bristol diocese.) Through contractual agreements, the adviser to SACRE is also a schools adviser for Bristol Diocese and a large amount of goodwill and RE development takes place in Wiltshire through this connection and with the service of Nicola Coupe from Salisbury Diocese. Church schools are able to ensure continuity and consistency in their support and advice for RE, and community

schools are able, through contractual arrangements to access 1.5 hour sessions of support time as requested and arranged.

4.4 Other local involvement

Governor training – SACRE is prepared to offer governor training on RE, Assemblies and SMSC on an annual basis. However this has not happened in this reporting period, largely due to pandemic related disruption. Greater partnership between SACRE and Governor services in Wiltshire, needs to be forged to ensure that this takes place either face to face or online in future.

Regional SACRE conference – this was held online this year due to Covid restrictions. Three delegates from Wiltshire SACRE joined in discussions around how SACRE were coping and continuing to work during the pandemic, listened to a presentation from Farid Panjwani on ‘decolonising the curriculum’ and also a presentation from Richard Kueh, HMI, on how SACREs can learn from the summer OFSTED and reports on RE from OFSTED.

5. SACRE arrangements

5.1 Organisation

Chair – Simon White / Annette Earl

Clerk – Simone Kermode

Local Authority link officers – Nicola Shewring

Adviser – Katy Staples

5.2 Membership

As reported in the introduction, all meetings in this period were quorate.

In the July 2021 meeting, the constitution was revised and Annette Earl was welcomed formally onto the SACRE as a member of committee A, (with full voting rights) as a humanist representative. The SACRE recognised this change (having previously been a non-voting co-opted member) as the beginning of an inclusive outlook for the constitution.

At the same meeting Annette was elected as the new chair from Autumn 2021

Further recruitment for representation is needed on Group A, as there are several communities locally that currently are not represented on the SACRE.

Members of SACRE September 2020 – July 2021:

Committee A: Christian and other religious denominations

6 Members

Tony Wilson
Tod Goledale
Lynda Ford-Horne
Jo Backus
Bal Kaur
Annette Earl (From July 2021)

Committee B – Church of England

5 members

Nicola Coupe
Simon White (Chair)
Helen Cooke
Lindsay West
Katherine Bloomer

Committee C – teachers nominated by the Wiltshire TCC

Up to 6 members:

Vicky Bunting
Hannah Crook
Claire Brooks
Lorraine Marlow
Rebecca Carson
Mark Perraton

Committee D – Local Authority representatives
Up to 3 members

Cllr Mary Douglas
Cllr Antonio Piazza

Committee E – non voting co-opted

Up to 6 members

Annette Earl (October and March meetings)



GCSE Religious Studies pupils in Year 10 and 11 from Malmesbury Secondary School went to the Bhaktivedanta Manor in London to support their studies.

“Students were able to experience and question what they had learnt already about the religion during their GCSE course (AQA Religious Studies A – Hinduism). Both students and teachers enjoyed the experience, many questions were asked and it was a memorable two days”