

MILTON KEYNES SACRE ANNUAL REPORT

2020-21

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INTRODUCTION

FROM THE CHAIR OF SACRE

Welcome to the Milton Keynes SACRE annual report for 2020-21! Along with the rest of the education world, but by no means facing the same degree of challenges as teachers and schools themselves, we have had to work out a different way of continuing our responsibilities as a statutory body supporting local education. This report wouldn’t be complete without paying tribute to those who’ve persevered through considerably difficult circumstances to keep primary and secondary education going. We applaud your commitment and register what may be personally costly to you and those who belong in your closest family circles.

It was good to be able to welcome new colleagues to SACRE membership over the year, namely Amanda Dicks, Shaneen Digby, Toby Long, Emma Wallace and Katie Wilkins. All bring the wealth of their teaching expertise and commitment to RE to enhance our work. My thanks to them for joining what can sometimes be a group where attendance varies from one meeting to the next and getting to know one another is tricky even in the best of times!

Our focus, as in recent years, has very much been on the delivery of the RE curriculum in the classroom. To this end our thanks to Anne Andrews who has continued to put on excellent RE Link and training sessions each term. I know the teaching staff who attend find this a really good source of practical help and encouragement. We have a development plan to give us a sense of progress and clarity about our task and I'm grateful to Anne Andrews, Michael Manley, Janet Gleghorn and Tina Virdee-Basra for working together with me on this. A vital part of our work is making the resources we develop and information about SACRE available on the internet. Lou Tribus has worked tirelessly to greatly enhance this aspect of our work, and so we thank her for this valuable contribution. Finally, we are deeply indebted to Janet Gleghorn, our indefatigable clerk, who has continued to serve us with her customary good humour and dogged determination against considerable logistical hurdles. Administration, record-keeping and communication are all absolutely vital to keep us together and going forward.

The three SACRE meetings held this year have all been online. SACRE met on 25 November, 3 March and 16 June. None of the meetings have been quorate, as councillors are unable to attend. Attendance at meetings has been consistent, but poor and there are vacancies in all groups.

- 25 November - the meeting focused on the work that has been undertaken to develop a new website for SACRE and the issues that have been encountered with the closing of the Rivers Education Centre. Suggestions were made to the LA about the resources that were formally stored at the Ethnic Minorities Achievement unit should be made available to schools. SACRE also received a report into the current work of the Youth SACRE, which has continued, though in reduced capacity over the Covid-19 pandemic.
 - 3 March – at this meeting the decision was taken to postpone the appointment of an Agreed Syllabus Conference, and to delay the syllabus review by a year. This was deemed necessary as a result of the pandemic, but also the issues of SACRE membership. However it was suggested that SACRE members could begin to gather information about the state of RE and Collective Worship in schools by carrying out a website review. It was also suggested the SACRE start up a newsletter, similar to that in some other LAs and the adviser agreed to do this and members of SACRE offered contributions. A smaller group agreed to meet to work further on the SACRE forward plan.
 - 16 June – at this meeting the first newsletter was shared, there was an update of the forward plan, discussion about the need for succession planning and reports from members who attended the NASACRE data and budget training session. There was much discussion about the budget allocated to SACRE and the LA officer was tasked to make further enquiries to enable SACRE to understand the picture better. The apparent lack of budget flexibility is another reason for MK SACRE postponing the syllabus review.
 - Each of the three meetings also received a report on the RE Networks. See [teacher training and advice](#)
 - The SACRE forward plan can be found in the Appendices
- There is currently no Agreed Syllabus Conference sitting.

I commend the remainder of this report to you for the wealth of information in it. It is also a mark of the amount of work that goes into supporting what is, after all, a vital aspect of education in MK and the country as a whole, but which is sadly left to the efforts of volunteers and little local or national government funding or sense of priority in our diverse and sometimes fragmenting society. RE provides some of the basic skills all need to understand and live comfortably in a plural society!

Rev Dr Paul Smith

RE (STATUTORY RESPONSIBILITIES):

LOCAL AGREED SYLLABUS AND SCHOOLS

- SACRE currently has little information about how the Agreed Syllabus, in place since 2017, is being implemented. Several schools are known to have purchased the Scheme of Work for RE, written by the Diocese of Oxford, which meets the requirements of the syllabus. This includes several of the academies, to whom the syllabus is available with no charge.
- While the plan has been to carry out website monitoring of schools to gather initial information about which schools reference the Locally Agreed Syllabus, this work has not yet begun.
- The work of youth SACRE supports the syllabus and the development of RE generally, but the group have not been able to meet across schools, phases, and key stages as they would normally do.

STANDARDS AND MONITORING OF RE

- The absence of examination results in 2020, and the lack of Ofsted and SIAMS reports means that SACRE is not as aware of standards in schools as it would like to be. Conversations with teachers at RE Network meetings and in SACRE meetings, have highlighted the difficulty that some schools have had in maintaining effective RE teaching during the last year, while others have adapted well and quickly to new ways of working.
- SACRE has planned to carry out a website trawl and a letter has been prepared to send to schools in September 2021 informing them of SACRE's plans.

TEACHER TRAINING AND MATERIALS AND ADVICE FOR SCHOOLS

- RE Network meetings have continued online and received positive feedback.
 - 19 October 2020 – Putting RE back on the map – a twilight session looking at how schools can reintegrate RE into their curriculum.
 - 23 March 2021– Designing a coherent Curriculum – a twilight session on the need to ensure coherence as the key to effective quality first teaching.
 - 23 June 2021 – RE, Ofsted, Knowledge and Worldviews – this was a change to the originally published RE network in response to the Ofsted RE Research Review
- In addition SACRE has run an online session for teachers new to RE in Milton Keynes and a follow up session for those new to subject leadership. Both meetings attracted a small but committed group, eager to learn and a new SACRE member was recruited from the group.
- SACRE has received no information from the LA on withdrawals from RE, and no requests for help from schools or the LA on any matters related to RE.
- The LA was advised that the resources, previously stored in the Ethnic Minorities Achievement Centre should not be lost, but relocated to an accessible place, as SACRE had invested recently in new books and artefacts. The LA are looking onto alternative venues.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP (STATUTORY RESPONSIBILITIES):

STANDARDS AND MONITORING OF CW

- Again the lack of Ofsted and SIAMS reports, and the inability of SACRE faith group members, including the Bridge Builders Trust which offers Collective Worship support to schools, to actually visit SACRE has little information about what is going on in collective worship across the LA. Conversations with teachers who are members of SACRE have suggested that schools have valued

the time to come together online as community for collective worship, but this information is anecdotal.

- The planned website trawl will hopefully gather some initial information that can be used to initiate conversations with schools. This work will take place next academic year (2021-22)

DETERMINATIONS

- There are currently no determinations in force, and none have been applied for during the academic year 2020-21.

TEACHER TRAINING PROVIDED

- No teacher training on collective worship has been provided, but the new SACRE newsletter will contain information about worship, links to resources and training events available.

OTHER INFORMATION

- No information on withdrawals has been sent to SACRE.

ADVICE TO THE LA

- The only advice given to the LA is that SACRE thinks some training on collective worship should be provided, as it has been in the past by Bridgebuilders.

LINKS WITH OTHER BODIES

NATIONAL BODIES

- Members of Milton Keynes SACRE have attended NASACRE conferences and the AGM and the adviser to SACRE is a member of the NASACRE executive committee.
- The MK RE network is NATRE linked.
-

LOCAL BODIES

- The Diocese of Oxford provides the advisory support to Milton Keynes SACRE.
- SACRE work with Youth SACRE
- SACRE works with the Milton Keynes Bridgebuilder Trust

SACRE INVOLVEMENT LOCALLY

- SACRE has not provided any governor training this year and has not provided any advice on community matters.

SACRE'S OWN ARRANGEMENTS (STATUTORY RESPONSIBILITIES):

- Advisory support is paid for on an annual contract offering a minimum of time to cover the meetings, preparation and RE networks, with additional works being funded on an ad hoc basis.
- A smaller working party has been involved in drawing up the forward plan, and has included the chair, vice-chair, LA officer and adviser.

- Membership has improved over the year as a couple more teachers have been recruited, but Group D have not yet been able to send a representative to any of the meetings. The timing of the meetings seems to present a problem, so discussions will take place next academic year to find a solution. Quoracy has therefore been a problem, and attendance at meetings is not good form any of the four groups.
- SACRE is undergoing a review and revision of the website and one member has been working with the LA to make the website more useable. This work is being funded by SACRE, and is still in progress, despite having hit some setbacks.
- No training has been offered for SACRE members this year.
- There is no Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC) currently sitting, as the decision has been made to postpone the syllabus review.
- The SACRE budget is listed on the Schools' Forum as £12,000 with £4352 being actually delegated to SACRE. The balance pays for admin time, recharges by the LA and LA advisor time

APPENDICES

- Table of GCSE – short and full, A/S & A Level RS results – not available this year
- Details of CPD
- Copy of development plan
- Circulation details for this AR –
 - SACRE members & co-optees
 - LA Education officers
 - Parish Councils
 - Press
 - Public inspection copy available at Time Square (though not during COVID)
 - Libraries
 - County Archivist

Sample CPD flier:

The flier features the ODBE partnership logo (a cross in a circle) and the Milton Keynes Council logo (MK). The main title is 'Designing a Coherent Curriculum in RE' in large black font. Below it, the subtitle is 'Using the Milton Keynes Locally Agreed Syllabus 2017-2022'. The date and time are 'Tuesday 23 March 4.15 – 5.30pm'. The booking information is 'Booking to: Janet Gleghorn Janet.Gleghorn@Milton-keynes.gov.uk'. There are four key questions listed in orange text: 'What are the core concepts we should be teaching?', 'How do concepts relate to content in RE?', 'How do concepts relate to the outcomes?', and 'How should we sequence the learning?'. A fifth question, 'What do we teach online?', is also present. An image shows a person pointing at a screen displaying religious symbols: a cross, a crescent moon, a yin-yang, and a Star of David. At the bottom, it says 'Serving our communities in a Christ-like way where education enables all to flourish'. On the left side of the flier, there is a small image of hands raised, with the text 'Ethnic Minority Achievement Network' above it.

SACRE Development Plan

2021-2024

Revised: Monday 24th May 2021

Introduction

A Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education, legally constituted by a Local Authority with the responsibility for overseeing Religious Education and Collective Worship in community, Voluntary Controlled (RE only), 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.

The Composition of SACRE

A SACRE is comprised of 4 groups; to be quorate there should be at least one representative from each group present and each group has one vote in a formal voting situation. There may also be co-opted members. They may not vote.

Group A: Christian denominations and other religions and their denominations, reflecting the principal religious traditions of the area (and specified in the SACRE's constitution)	Group B: The church of England with representatives nominated by the diocese
Group C: Teacher and Head teacher associations invited by the Local Authority	Group D: The Local Authority – ideally reflecting the range of political viewpoints across the area. This group may include representatives of school governing bodies.

The Responsibilities of SACRE

SACRE is an advisory body. Its main aim is to advise the Milton Keynes Local Authority on matters related to Religious Education and Collective Worship. The main focus of a SACRE, and therefore each SACRE member, is to support the learning and development of children in regard to Religious Education and Collective Worship. The SACRE is responsible for the production of the Locally Agreed Syllabus for RE (although the actual writing of the syllabus is undertaken by the Agreed Syllabus Conference, which may or may not be made up of SACRE members, but which has the same basic structure). The SACRE is also responsible for “determinations” – deciding whether a particular school can change collective worship away from the current requirement to be “wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character”.

The Functions of SACRE

The SACRE carries out its function by advising the Local Authority. The SACRE should monitor provision for Religious Education and Collective Worship, offer advice and training to teachers and head teachers and share good practice. The SACRE should hold the LA to account for provision for teacher training for RE and ensure that there is sufficient funding and training available when a new syllabus is launched. Activities may include:

- requesting a review of the Agreed Syllabus,
- responding to complaints about RE or CW provision,
- examining data on RE,
- reading OFSTED reports for comments on RE, CW and SMSC,
- visiting schools or organising events to promote good practice.
- producing a report each year in line with statutory requirements. The report includes details about the work and actions taken by its representative groups in the previous academic year, clarification of its role and function and statistics relevant to Religious Education in Milton Keynes.
- giving advice on methods of teaching agreed syllabus RE including the choice of teaching materials
- advising on the provision of training for its teachers in relation to RE and collective worship and organising training for teachers in schools.
- Influencing the provision, recruitment and retention of RE teachers in Milton Keynes.

There is a dedicated section of the Milton Keynes Council website which is a source of information, curriculum materials, guidance and support for schools, as well as further information about the role and function of the SACRE.

SACRE Development Plan 2021-2024

The Milton Keynes SACRE Development Plan has three main objectives for 2021-2024:

- Enhancing the effectiveness of RE teaching in Milton Keynes
- Enhancing the capacity of SACRE members
- Enhancing the quality of Collective Worship in schools in Milton Keynes

The actions associated with each objective are detailed below:

Objective	Actions	Person or Group Responsible	By When	Comments and ideas (working draft)
To enhance the effectiveness of the teaching of Religious Education in Milton Keynes	Revision to Agreed Syllabus taking into account changes in RE.	ASC To be appointed by July 21	September 2023	Informal discussion with teacher reps. Survey to follow. Introduction at March 2022 meeting? Ask LA about postponing ASC for 1 yr following Covid disruption. Collect RE profile info from school websites (leave out VA/VC church schools) AA devise template of questions. To be adopted by Easter 2024 for use from September 2024
	Review and revise programme of support for Network Meetings and CPD for teachers	Anne Andrews	July 2021	What induction is offered to new RE teachers in MK? Is RE training part of the SCITT professional or subject studies courses? What CPD does the LA need?
	Research and develop specific CPD for increasing the subject knowledge of teachers and understanding of topics	Shammi & Anne Andrews	December 2021	Having more teachers on SACRE will help with this
	Use SACRE website to signpost subject knowledge website links	Lou Tribus	March 2022	Anne Andrews to support
	Topic booklets and other curriculum resources to be made available on SACRE website	Lou Tribus	March 2022	Migrate booklets to website; in meantime collate into zip files that could be sent to schools; ask teachers whether this is useful
	Develop newsletter for communication with teachers and schools	Anne Andrews	July 2021	Done. Termly newsletter Might need this to replace loss of EDUCATE. AA could write some generic material but it also needs to be applicable to MK. Take pressure off SACRE website.
	Establish list of key school contact details and agree a cycle for updating	Janet Gleghorn	October 2021	
To enhance the capacity of SACRE members and thus the effectiveness of SACRE	Develop the induction package for new members	Anne Andrews and Michael Manley	June 2022	
	Develop training programme for members			
	Review and revise the links between SACRE and Youth SACRE	Shammi	TBA	Video clips made by SACRE members for Youth SACRE; what are the aims and objectives of youth SACRE? (eg raise profile of RE and build IF relations between pupils) Monitor impact of desire of pupils to learn values
	Develop the principles for succession planning for key roles in SACRE	Michael Manley	November 2021	Statement. Succession planning and link with faith groups go together. Faith reps but also senior officers. Consider having two vice-chairs?/deputy chairs?

Objective	Actions	Person or Group Responsible	By When	Comments and ideas (working draft)
	Review and revise links with faith leadership in Milton Keynes in recruiting new members	Michael Manley	November 2021	Agenda June SACRE. Visit faith group meetings. Member of SACRE to take resp, Interfaith Group member?
	Review and revise the annual meeting cycle to include a meeting in a school and a meeting at a place of worship, perhaps to incorporate a presentation on a key aspect of the faith	Janet Gleghorn	September 2021	At the meeting in a school to have a presentation from a school about what they are doing in in RE. At the meeting in a place of worship to have a presentation from a member on a key aspect of their faith.
To enhance the quality of Collective Worship in schools in Milton Keynes	Review the nature of the advice that the SACRE will give to the LA on the current quality of collective worship in schools and produce guidance on this	Bridgebuilders	March 2022	Carol Whittle. Ask people in places of worship to record their own acts of worship and make available on the internet
	Develop a process for understanding the current position of collective worship in schools in Milton Keynes	Members to trawl schools' websites	March 2022	Make connections between CW and mental health
	Develop a training programme and advice to support collective worship	Bridgebuilders or Oxford Diocese TBA	June 2022	