

Herefordshire
Standing Advisory Council on
Religious Education
(SACRE)

SACRE Annual Report
for the Academic Year 2020/21

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1 Overview

The Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) is a statutory body set up to advise the Local Authority on matters related to religious education and collective worship. Its members are drawn from teachers, Local Authority representatives including Councillors, faith representatives from the Church of England and a range of Christian denominations, and representatives from other religious and non-religious groups represented in the region.

SACRE's key functions include monitoring the provision and quality of RE, and providing advice and support on the effective teaching of RE in accordance with the agreed syllabus. This includes advice on methods of teaching, choice of teaching material and provision of teacher training. This is primarily done through the review and implementation of the locally agreed syllabus, a process which is required every five years. This is followed by on-going monitoring of its effectiveness in the light of changing national education policy.

Herefordshire County Council supports SACRE with an annual budget of £5000. This covers the cost of the support from RE Today Services, who have supported Herefordshire SACRE for over a decade, and 20% of it accumulates to cover the cost of agreed syllabus renewals every five years.

SACRE endeavours to offer maximum support to schools through its use of conferences and network meetings. However, it still functions with only two SACRE meetings a year. This year, both meetings were held online on Friday 23 October 2020 and Friday 12 March 2021.

The Local Authority officer is Alison Naylor, Head of Learning and Achievement.

2 Supporting RE in Herefordshire

The key work of SACRE this year has been supporting the delivery of the new Herefordshire Agreed Syllabus for RE 2020-2025. However, the year has continued to be dominated by the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. The launch of the agreed syllabus in summer 2020 was disrupted by the pandemic, with the syllabus and a video introduction being made available to all schools, in place of the launch conference. An additional online conference was put in place in December 2020 to support schools with the implementation of the syllabus (see below).

3 Agreed Syllabus for RE 2020-2025

The revised agreed syllabus was distributed to schools in summer 2020, along with access to a recorded webinar introducing the syllabus, made available to all schools who registered to receive it. 72 out of 80 schools had registered by mid-Sept 2020.

SACRE planned an additional conference on Wednesday 2nd December 2020 to support schools with implementation. 32 teachers attended the online training, and all received recordings of the training, along with six teachers unable to attend on the day.

4 Support for teachers

Primary conference 2021

Herefordshire SACRE joined with Worcestershire for the summer primary conference, 15 June 2021. This was held online, with 109 teachers attending in all, 36 of whom were from Herefordshire. The conference supported schools in implementing the new agreed syllabus. It was led by Fiona Moss and Stephen Pett, national advisers from RE Today, and included sessions on:

- Ofsted and RE
- Teaching about Muslims and Hindus
- RE and climate justice
- Multidisciplinary RE

72% of delegates rated the conference as excellent value, the rest saying it was good value. Some people found the online experience was not ideal, but most delegates welcomed the access it gave.

Representative feedback comments include:

- *Very informative with an excellent balance of useful resources and up to date information about the subject.*
- *Really liked it virtually as it cut down on travel and I was able to focus on what was being said. I also feel the sessions were timed excellently.*
- *Ofsted updates really useful as we are a small school and don't always know what is changing*
- *An excellent day. I became subject lead 5 years ago and joined NATRE. I have to say all the courses that I've attended with you and the resources have been top-notch*
- *It was very informative and provided lots of excellent work to support our I, I & I for Ofsted but also some different activities to support classroom teaching and learning - fabulous day all round. Thank you*
- *A very well-presented day with surprisingly slick use of technology which was a breath of fresh air! Very good content and useful resources. I did feel that much was aimed at KS2 (upper) so would have been good to have explored more about how this fits best with younger children.*
- *The day flew by, which was amazing, considering being on zoom all day. So many brilliant resources and ideas for teaching.*
- *All sessions were really beneficial especially the practical ideas in the second session and the III Ofsted guidance. It was really useful to see which units the resources/ideas could be linked with. Thank you.*
- *Great to have so many ideas for exciting RE practice. Appreciate the breakout rooms, enables interaction and comparison of what's happening in other schools.*
- *Really useful feedback on the new syllabus and very up to date with the latest Ofsted framework*

Secondary conference 2021

The annual secondary conference saw the three counties of Herefordshire, Worcestershire and Gloucestershire join together once again. Held online on 25 June 2021, the conference was attended by 22 teachers. 90% rated the conference as excellent, and 10% as good. Led by Lat Blaylock and Stephen Pett, national advisers from RE Today, the programme included:

- Anti-racist RE
- Multidisciplinary RE
- Picturing Islam, Picturing Muslims
- TeachMeet (local teachers)

Teachers were positive about the day and clear about actions they would take as a result. Representative comments include the following:

- *Although very different - zoom! - still a fantastic day. As always I feel refreshed and positive about the future of RE. The ideas and topics were excellent and I will definitely be using many of the activities.*
- *I was surprised how close it came to the joy of attending a face to face conference. Lots of fantastic and inspiring ideas. Thank you both.*
- *As always, fantastic resources, ideas and new perspectives to explore. This conference reinvigorates me and at the end of this year, that has been especially needed! I particularly enjoyed the Anti-racist RS session. Thanks to all involved, brilliant.*
- *Wonderful day- great resources and really user friendly ideas. Marvellous.*
- *Very well run, professional, friendly and incredibly useful. I will be using so much from this day as inspiration!*
- *I can actually use all the ideas and resources in the classroom!*

- *Great resources and ideas - many of these I plan to use in my own teaching. Thank you. Inspiring- it made me rethink my plans and critically examine my thinking on Islam*
- *I plan to try and incorporate virtually every element into my teaching practice as/when the need arises. I know that's vague, but I'm not sure what my teaching load is next year yet.*
- *I will be reviewing my curriculum with a critical eye to ensure it continues to evolve.*
- *[Actions to follow] So much! Tweaking existing SOL but also inspired to move forward on our multi-disciplinary approach!*

5 Local groups and other CPD

Tracy Westlake, of Marlbrook Primary School, hosted an online National Association of Teachers of RE (NATRE) local group on Tuesday 24th November 2020. 33 teachers joined to get a first look at the new local People and Places Guide, to have a taster session on the Understanding Christianity resource that supports the new agreed syllabus, and to hear from SACRE Chair, Lama Choesang.

A second NATRE local group meeting took place on 29th April 2021, with 24 delegates joining online. The focus was on making the most of visits and visitors, both virtual and in-person. Teachers were able to question Muslim visitor, Atique Miah, who works for Gloucestershire University and NHS Trust.

Diocese of Hereford support for RE

The Diocese Board of Education provides online training and consultancy for RE throughout the year, which has included:

- Creative RE courses with local faith leaders exploring the core beliefs of each religion (Islam, Hinduism and Judaism)
- Understanding Christianity training including 'Refresher teacher training' for schools already using the scheme
- RE subject leader training
- SIAMS RE Training
- Curriculum Design support for schools
- Networks for RE leads
- Support for churches helping with RE
- Link Governor for RE briefings
- INSET for RE teaching strategies, Introducing Worldviews, and Developing Spirituality for your School

Understanding Christianity

Two cohorts of community primary schools have attended Understanding Christianity training from RE Today in 2020-2021, with eight schools in each cohort.

6 Exam results summer 2021

Due to the pandemic, GCSE and A level exams were cancelled this summer. Instead, centre assessed grades (CAG) were awarded to pupils who sat GCSE and A level RS this year. However, in line with DFE guidance, these should not be used for analysis so there is no examination data to report on.

Venerable Tsultrim Tenzin Choesang
Chair of SACRE
November 2021