



**Oldham**  
Council

Oldham  
Standing  
Advisory  
Council on  
Religious Education  
Report 2020-2021

## **Introduction**

This annual report has been drafted by the consultant to Oldham SACRE Graham McGuffie and approved by the full committee of Oldham SACRE at the meeting held Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> November 2021

Oldham SACRE met 3 times this year through Microsoft Teams with the support of Oldham Council

This report provides a picture of the support given for Religious Education and Collective Worship during 2020-2021

SACRE as a body is required to advise the Local Authority on matters relating to Religious Education and Collective Worship.

The report is a public document which is also sent to the National Association of SACREs (NASACRE) and the Department for Education.

**The Chair of Oldham SACRE, The Reverend Canon Jean Hurlston**, would like to record her personal thanks to Oldham Council for the support received from officers in facilitating meetings and for their guidance on broader educational matters. Also, thanks to consultant, Graham McGuffie, for his advice, knowledge and experience in developing the work of Oldham SACRE. The SACRE committee has been expanded this year to include a wider membership from local faith communities which has produced a broader, more inclusive view of the borough. Thank you to everyone who has given so freely of their time to attend meetings and to link with their local schools. Finally, immense gratitude is expressed to our teachers and school heads, who continue to teach our children RE with enthusiasm and dedication, and most especially during these long months of teaching the subject in such difficult circumstances during the pandemic.

## **Oldham SACRE**

External links were maintained with:

National Association of SACREs (NASACRE)

North West SACRE Hub

RE Today (online)

The Association of RE Inspectors, Advisers and Consultants (AREIAC)

The Diocese of Manchester

AQA

The School Performance Team Oldham

Northern Teaching Alliance based at The Blue Coat School

The Oldham Inter Faith Forum

Greater Manchester Faith Network

### **The Oldham context**

The outbreak of COVID-19 virus has continued to significantly impact Oldham. Nevertheless, the cycle of meetings was maintained. Support and advice for schools was continued and online communications maintained to support practitioners. SACRE included a significant number of members working on the front line to support children, families and health and education providers, as well as supporting vital services.

The members of SACRE were very appreciative of the support received from Oldham Council.

Oldham SACRE ensured support for Primary and Secondary Teacher networks for Religious Education through the First-Class digital network. The opportunity to support Newly Qualified Teachers through the Primary Network and the support for secondary teachers through the Northern Teaching Alliance (The Blue Coat School) was continued mainly online.

Reporting on the 2-year Development Plan 2020-2022 published in November 2019 was maintained as far as possible.

SACRE would like to record thanks to the officers who support SACRE. Ms Clare Cheetham (Senior School Improvement Advisor, Oldham Learning)

Mrs Carol Hyde (Clerk to SACRE) (until March 2021)

Mrs Gaynor Murray (Clerk to SACRE July 2021)

### **Highlights from the meetings of Oldham SACRE 2020-2021**

All meetings during this period took place using Microsoft Teams

- **8<sup>th</sup> December 2020**

A SACRE newsletter was introduced and sent to schools in Oldham

Positive reports received about the two on-line Training Events for School Governors, delivered jointly by the Chair and Consultant

Establishment of working groups to lead on review of guidelines for Collective Worship and Joint Planning for an Ethos Day in 2021/2022

Initiative to link members to schools in their locality to maintain links and offer support

Oldham SACRE to be aligned with Oldham Learning

- **11th March 2021**

Welcome to the Chair of Tameside SACRE, The Reverend Roger Farnworth, and to the start of a closer working relationship between the two neighbouring SACRE's

Raising the profile of Oldham SACRE

Use of digital technologies to support Collective Worship

Principles for supporting Collective Worship

Training opportunities with specialist providers

Award Projects including RE Quality Mark

- **1st July 2021**

Thanks to Rev Sheila Coop on her resignation for her service to SACRE over many years also to Paul Jacques due to increased work load

A school website audit document focussing on Religious Education

Reports received from NASACRE and address by Dr Richard Kueh (OFSTED)

**Future dates for meetings in 2021-2022**

- Thursday 25th November 2021
- Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2022
- Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> June 2022

## **Financial support**

The local authority has a statutory duty to fund and support a SACRE, Oldham Council does support SACRE enabling it to fulfil the legal obligations, including the publication and distribution of the Locally Agreed Syllabus 2020-2025 and consultant support.

## **The locally Agreed Syllabus**

Publication of the Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education in October 2019 allowed schools to plan for implementation of new schemes from September 2020 with online digital support available from the Oldham Council website. SACRE indicated its desire for training for governors to be delivered in the Autumn Term 2020 and this was completed in November 2020 and repeated in March 2021

## **Religious Education: Training needs identified**

Following the launch of the new Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education for Oldham 2020-2025 held in the Council Chamber, Oldham Civic Centre on 22 October 2019, comments were received from delegates helped identify possible future training opportunities; some were addressed in the development plan and others through the cycle of meetings within the RE networks and SACRE meetings.

- Early Years training regarding RE and effective questioning
- Using texts and stories more effectively
- A visitor register to access tried and tested speakers
- Advice about ways of assessing
- Increase opportunities for CPD/SACRE conferences
- Training for clergy or others who go into schools to 'teach' and promote RE.
- Highlight network meetings and training for our new RE leads  
More information about an RE day where the whole school explores a question/theme
- Lists of resources shown separate to unit plans. Recommended list of resources to support other world faiths.
- Support in getting to know where one can find people to help deliver RE within school
- Governor training/awareness of requirements

## **SACRE development plan**

Priorities for 2020-22

The main priorities for SACRE during 2020-22 were agreed and approved in Autumn 2020:

### **Promote continuing improvement**

- monitor standards
- further raise the quality of teaching
- assist with raising the quality provision in RE

### **Support schools**

- Evaluating the effectiveness of the new locally agreed syllabus to be implemented in September 2020 and share excellent practice

### **Collective worship**

- Promoting improvement in the provision
- Promote improvement in the quality of collective worship

### **Effectiveness of SACRE**

- Ensure a high profile for SACRE
- Build partnership between the SACRE, the Local Authority, Oldham Education Partnership and other key stakeholders

### **Contribute to cohesion across the community**

- Promotion of social and racial harmony
- Build and strengthen partnerships

Whilst the significant disruption due to the pandemic impacted across the education sector affecting almost all aspects of forward planning, there was positive but limited progress in relation to the priorities. SACRE was able to look at a mid-year RAG rated review to assess how SACRE could maintain a profile of support and encouragement to practitioners and act positively when the opportunity arose.

## **The Impact of COVID-19 in 2020-2021**

The continuing closure and reopening of schools since September 2020 has inevitably meant disruption to the curriculum in all phases and strain on children and their teachers. The abundance of creativity in relation to home learning has been rightly headlined but the challenge of embedding learning and securing progression, especially for children in a context of disadvantage has inevitably meant difficult decisions for headteachers in making provision for foundation and basic subjects in the curriculum and consequently significant impact on RE. Some of the most enjoyable aspects of the subject, such as visits to places of worship and visits by community and faith leaders to support questioning and whole class learning fell by the wayside.

The challenge of securing the engagement and resilience among learners has led to imaginative and creative responses and new ways of monitoring and recognising pupil achievement and progress. In Oldham the Inter Faith Forum together with Suzy Ashworth Study Support Manager and Schools Linking Project, took a project forward to create online visits to 3 local places of worship. SACRE continue to monitor the extent to which, in constructing a recovery curriculum, schools will be able to give RE appropriate attention and avoid its marginalisation.

### **Advice to the Local authority**

Advice was given to the local authority and training for governors in relation to the new Agreed Syllabus was actioned.

### **Complaints**

There were no formal complaints registered to SACRE throughout the academic year.

### **Collective Worship**

SACRE received no complaints about Collective Worship during the year. Schools are reminded that it is a requirement for a notification of the right of withdrawal from collective worship be accessible on the school website and that it is desirable to make the school's policy for Collective Worship available on the school's website.

Further guidance is available:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/281929/Collective\\_worship\\_in\\_schools.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/281929/Collective_worship_in_schools.pdf)

### **Determinations**

The determination for Alexandra Park Primary School Oldham was reviewed by SACRE on 8<sup>th</sup> December 2020. The school was represented by the headteacher Mrs J Seabright, Mr P Widdall Chair of Governors and Ms Charlotte Powers RE Co-ordinator.

SACRE was pleased to grant a determination for Collective Worship for 5 years and this was confirmed unanimously on 8<sup>th</sup> December 2020 and approved in the minutes (Item 2: 11.03.2021) on 11<sup>th</sup> March 2021.

## **Public examinations 2021**

In January 2021, the prime minister announced that for the second year in a row, exams would not be taking place. Following a joint consultation between Ofsted and the DfE, the following process for generating teacher assessed grades (TAGs) was agreed:

- Students' performance would be judged on the content they have been taught, whether this was in the classroom or via remote learning.
- The grades submitted would be a fair, reasonable and carefully considered judgement across a broad range of evidence.
- Types of evidence which could be used included past papers, coursework, centre devised tasks relating to the specification and records of the standard of work produced over the course of study.
- More recent work would more likely to be representative of student performance.
- To ensure this was a robust principle it was also determined that:
- Heads of centre would need to confirm that students had been taught sufficient content to provide the basis of a grade.

Each centre would put in place an internal quality assurance process.

- Exam boards would check a sample of evidence used to award grades in some centres.
- Heads of centre would confirm that the exam board requirements had been met.
- Each grade for a subject would be signed off by 2 teachers in that subject, one of whom would be the subject lead.

The DfE made it clear that the outcomes from this process would not be used in performance tables or by Ofsted. As a result, the local authority made the decision that it would not collect school level data.

This means that there is no internal or external way of knowing the RE results in Oldham this year. Even if this information were available, comparisons with last year and previous year would not be valid as a different process was used to generate the grades.



## **Membership of SACRE 2020-2021**

Major Annette Allen	Committee A
Peter Butler	Committee A (Vice Chair)
Rabbi Daniel Walker	Committee A
Nasim Ashraf	Committee A
Bilal Brown	Committee A
Rev Howard Sutcliffe	Committee A
Ian Whitehead	Committee A
Krishna Sisodia	Committee A
Nitiksha Raghvani	Committee A
Mr P McMahon	Committee A
Mrs J McGhee	Committee A
Rev Canon Jean Hurlston	Committee B (Chair)
Rev Dr Paul Monk	Committee B
Rev Janet Pitman	Committee B
Graham McGuffie	Committee B
Jacqueline Beattie	Committee C
Sue Callaghan	Committee C
Kate O'Connell	Committee C
Clare Harewood	Committee C
Mary Butt	Committee C
Deborah Warren	Committee C
Laura Almond	Committee C

Francesca Frazer-Davies	Committee D
Nicola Smith	Committee D
Cllr Pam Byrne	Committee D
Cllr Shaid Mushtaq	Committee D
Clare Cheetham	Committee D (for the Director)
Carol Hyde	Clerk to Oldham SACRE

Report drafted for Oldham SACRE by Graham McGuffie, RE consultant 2020-21.

Any queries about the report or Oldham SACRE should be referred to the clerk,  
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