



Bradford SACRE Annual Report 2021

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2. Introduction

From the Chair of SACRE, Ros Garside, Co-opted Member

I am very grateful to all our members for supporting SACRE during very challenging times for all of us, personally and for our communities. Inevitably three of our meetings this year were online, and we had good attendance despite a few challenges with technology. In both our online and face to face meetings, we maintained the usual high standard of contributions from our diverse and thoughtful membership. Throughout our meetings, dialogue continues to be constructive and respectful of other members and of divergent views.

We achieved a very good outcome to our deliberations on reviewing and changing the Agreed Syllabus with effect from 1 September 2021 (see section on Agreed Syllabus Committee).

We really appreciate the commitment of members and hope that having reduced to three meetings per year from the start of this academic year (Autumn 2021) will make regular attendance easier for members. Attendance at our November meeting suggests that this should be the case.

Overview

SACRE has met four times this academic year. Three meetings were online, and our most recent meeting was at Margaret McMillan Tower, a Bradford Children’s Services base in the city centre which is accessible by public transport and has good car parking facilities.

Attendance at 2021 meetings

Committee	2.2.21		19.5.21		1.7.21		9/11/21	
	Possible	actual	possible	actual	possible	actual	possible	actual
A	20	11	20	9	19	8	18	12
B	3	3	3	2	3	2	5	2
C	2	1	3	1	3	1	3	1
D	5	3	4	3	4	3	5	3

Meetings Summary

At the February meeting, we discussed potential new members and shared local and national information. The clerk presented information about last year’s GCSE results, but this was less detailed than usual. No exams took place and the DfE did not provide the usual statistics to the LA. Instead, much of what we knew was based on information provided by schools voluntarily to the Fischer Family Trust (see Appendix A).

At the May meeting we shared views on a regionally produced document called **Voices and Viewpoints**, which gives individual faith perspectives and to which our clerk and our Sikh representatives had contributed. We adopted this document as one that we would recommend for Bradford schools. We also explained that the opportunity to contribute individual faith perspectives was still open as the document could be added to. We updated members on the training that had been put in place for the new Agreed Syllabus. In addition, we revisited our plans for supported self-reviews of RE, first considered two years ago.

At the July meeting we welcomed Ed Horwich and Toni Griffiths to talk about the **Connecting Small Histories** project, whose objective is to document and celebrate Jewish life in Britain. We considered two Determinations, both of which were approved.

At the November meeting, we invited an RE subject leader from one of our primary schools to feed back on her implementation of the new Agreed Syllabus. Her overview was extremely positive. In addition, we received a primary school Determination. Detailed feedback was provided to enhance an application which was judged to be of high quality. Our final activity was to share a film made in Bradford during Black History Month. The film illustrates the contribution of refugees and asylum seekers to our community and celebrates Bradford’s status as a City of Sanctuary.

We also included an element of self-evaluation at the November meeting. Members felt that we had been successful this year in spite of the difficulties of meeting. In addition to discussion in the meeting, we invited email comments.

Agreed Syllabus Committee

The Agreed Syllabus Committee met before the SACRE meeting in February (having started the process of reviewing the syllabus in the previous calendar year). This meeting was online but good quality discussion took place. Members had already agreed in Autumn 2020 that the structured approach to the six major faiths and other worldviews should be retained from our previous syllabus (2016 – 2021). Members also supported the deep questions approach. However, it was acknowledged, based on feedback from teachers, that we had not provided the support for planning that had been anticipated in 2016, largely because the specialist adviser retired and was not replaced.

Our decision as an ASC was therefore to look at other syllabuses that had similar strengths to ours but also offered more support to teachers. We considered a shortlist of syllabuses from Newham, Manchester, and West Yorkshire (which at that point had been adopted by Calderdale, Kirklees and Leeds).

Following detailed discussion, members overwhelmingly supported the adoption of the West Yorkshire syllabus while acknowledging the strengths of the others. The West Yorkshire syllabus was judged by members to be inclusive, to maintain the focus on big questions and deep thinking and to provide a staged approach to the introduction of different faiths. In addition, a very good range of high-quality planning resources were available for schools to purchase.

The West Yorkshire syllabus was formally adopted for use from September 2021.

3. Religious Education

It has been hard to monitor the quality of Religious Education teaching and learning during this calendar year due to school closures during the pandemic and the additional pressures on schools throughout the year.

One action that had to be put on hold during the time that schools were closed was the introduction of supported self-reviews of Religious Education facilitated by an RE expert. This has now been revived and the visits to schools have begun.

We have continued to facilitate a Religious Education subject leaders' network which has been effective in sharing ideas and resources and in enabling us to alert teachers to other opportunities related to RE. The quality of the discussion indicates that teachers who attend are committed to continuous improvement of RE and give generously of their time to support each other. However, we acknowledge that there is only a small number of schools represented at the meetings – interestingly bigger numbers since we started meeting online which is why we are continuing that approach. The discussions at the training for the new syllabus indicated high levels of commitment to RE and a concern to improve practice.

It is difficult to use inspections to monitor RE, especially this year as the majority of inspections (24 at the time of writing) have been Section 8 Covid checks. Section 5 inspections have taken place at Holy Family Catholic Secondary School and Glenaire Primary School. There is no mention of RE or Collective Worship in either case.

4. Statutory Responsibilities

The work of the ASC has been described above. Following the adoption of the new syllabus, we ran four training sessions to introduce all of its different aspects. 72 schools accessed the briefing sessions for the new RE syllabus, of which 61 were Community schools and 11 had Academy status. This is currently the best available information on how many Academies are using the West Yorkshire syllabus.

In addition, we have explained our intention to monitor RE in schools through supported self-review. We also monitor take up of RE at GCSE and A level and outcomes across our schools. As seen above, 2020 data was limited in this regard. Network meetings provide valuable feedback on which aspects of RE teaching are working well and which are not. We scrutinise Ofsted reports, but they rarely contain references to RE or Collective Worship.

We produced detailed guidance on Collective Worship in 2018. This includes how to apply for Determinations as this is still highly relevant in Bradford. Our applications for Determinations indicate that schools find this guidance useful. Committee feedback when scrutinising Determinations drew our attention to one aspect of wording in our guidance which seemed to be unhelpful to schools. Therefore, we recently made a minor amendment to our guidance. Applications for Determinations are one useful way of monitoring the quality of Collective Worship.

SACRE has received no complaints about RE or Collective Worship in 2021, and we are not aware of any withdrawals from either.

5. Advice to the Local Authority

An important aspect of our advice this year has been to ensure that key officers and Elected Members as well as headteachers and RE leaders are aware of the change of syllabus for RE. The syllabus and training have been well publicised through Bradford Schools online. We were pleased with the level of take up of training and with the very positive feedback which it received.

We also brief Bradford LA's governor service to ensure that input about quality RE and Collective Worship are included in relevant training, eg on statutory responsibilities, preparation for Ofsted inspections and the school curriculum.

We have high quality representation on Committee D from both members and a very senior officer from Children's Services, all of whom provide effective links with their colleagues.

6. Partnership Working

We were very well supported in the introduction of our new syllabus by Calderdale and Kirklees Local authorities and by Pennine Learning, an RE specialist consultancy which developed the West Yorkshire syllabus.

We have strong links to the other West Yorkshire authorities. We participate in a termly meeting for Chairs, Vice Chairs and clerks and intend to revive annual joint SACRE meetings in 2022. The adoption of the West Yorkshire syllabus has strengthened links with Calderdale, Kirklees and Leeds and provided us with easier access to a wide range of high-quality training.

We also have a close link with the Interfaith and Diversity and Education Team, who are part of Bradford Council and offer traded support to schools around RE and Collective Worship. In response to public health concerns, they now offer online as well as face to face support, including pre-recorded sessions and virtual tours of places of worship.

7. Conclusion

In summary, we are proud of our achievements in another challenging year. We are grateful to all the headteachers and subject leaders for RE who ensure that RE and Collective Worship are at the heart of their thinking, planning and continuous improvement. We look forward to further improving SACRE's support for schools as circumstances allow.

We are also very grateful to our committed and thoughtful membership for their support and fellowship in challenging times.

Appendix

School performance summary 2020 Religious Studies GCSE

	DfE	Pupils	Actual results		Pupil progress	
			Avg Point Score	% Grade 4+	% Grade 7+	
Bradford (380)	380	1240	5.1	73%	30%	
Appleton Academy (3804061)	3804061	2	4.5	100%	0%	
Beckfoot School (3804064)	3804064	15	6.6	93%	53%	
Beckfoot Thornton (3804040)	3804040	13	5.2	69%	31%	
Beckfoot Upper Heaton (3804025)	3804025	12	5.3	92%	25%	
Belle Vue Girls' Academy (3804041)	3804041	84	5.6	89%	31%	
Bradford Academy (3806906)	3806906	198	2.9	34%	9%	
Bradford Forster Academy (3804021)	3804021	84	5.9	93%	37%	
Buttershaw Business & Enterprise College Academy (3804029)	3804029	97	5.6	82%	36%	
Co-op Academy Grange (3804086)	3804086	126	4.5	60%	18%	
Dixons Cottingley Academy (3804073)	3804073	109	4.7	69%	19%	
Dixons Trinity Academy (3804010)	3804010	114	6.6	98%	51%	
Feversham Academy (3804613)	3804613	124	6.6	92%	55%	
Hanson School (3805401)	3805401	11	6.4	91%	45%	
Immanuel College (3804616)	3804616	91	6.3	90%	49%	
One In A Million Free (3804013)	3804013	63	3.4	37%	8%	
Titus Salt (3804074)	3804074	45	5.8	89%	36%	
Tong Leadership Academy (3804028)	3804028	52	4.4	62%	12%	