

HARTLEPOOL STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION



ANNUAL REPORT
ACADEMIC YEAR 2020-2021

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Chair's introduction

What does it mean to belong? Like so many this year, I have been forced to find belonging in different ways through technology and virtual communities. I have reflected on belonging as schools worked tirelessly through autumn isolations, winter lockdowns and a summer 'pingdemic' to ensure that all the children and young people in our schools could continue to experience real belonging even when they couldn't attend school. I have wondered about what it means to belong to a global community as fire, flood and disease devastate communities across the world. At times, I have questioned whether I want to belong, where I belong and with whom I belong as my own worldview has once again been tested and challenged.

Religious education enables children and young people to explore these and other important questions for themselves and helps them understand themselves and others more deeply. Throughout 2020-21 SACRE has sought to support them and their schools.

I would like to thank all those members of SACRE who give so generously of their time and expertise to enable SACRE to do this. I am also very grateful to Catherine Robson of Education Durham who has supported us professionally. Her unfailing good humour and deep understanding are highly appreciated. Ann Turner, our clerk, draws on many years of experience and knowledge to support us and we are very grateful to her.

Most importantly of all, I need once again to thank teachers and senior leaders in schools for their ongoing commitment to religious education and their excellent engagement with SACRE.

Jane Kashouris

September 2021

Religious Education

The Agreed Syllabus and RE in schools

The Agreed Syllabus was formally adopted by the local authority in February 2020 on the recommendation of the agreed syllabus conference and launched for schools in the summer term 2020.

Eleven maintained primary schools and one maintained secondary school without a religious character are required to use the syllabus. The syllabus also applies to one primary special school 'as far as is practicable'.

Eight primary academies, two secondary academies and one secondary special academy without a religious character are invited to use the Agreed Syllabus.

Standards and monitoring of RE

The programme of routine Ofsted inspections has been suspended throughout the academic year 2020-21. There have been no Ofsted reports for our schools during this period which mention religious education, or spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Exam results for 2021 are not to be published at institution level for GCSEs, AS levels and A levels and will not be used to hold schools and colleges to account. SACRE will, therefore, not use these results for monitoring.

Complaints

There were no complaints about religious education in schools.

Teacher training and materials for schools

During the academic year 2020 - 21, SACRE focused on supporting schools to fully embed the revised agreed syllabus in schools.

We were delighted to continue to work with Catherine Robson and Education Durham to provide further advice to schools around effective religious education. This included three sessions in the autumn term focused on leading RE in a primary school and covering:

- effective leadership;
- establishing a climate of enquiry;
- meaningful and manageable assessment.

This training was very well-attended by both maintained and academy schools without a religious character with fourteen schools and 16 teachers represented. Engagement with SACRE is high and SACRE welcomes the fact that the syllabus is used in many academies without a religious character.

In addition, Catherine led three well-attended network meetings for leaders during the year.

These focused on

- progression in the teaching of Christmas and Easter;
- the diversity units;
- virtual visits and engaging with faith.

She has also offered advice to schools on remote learning and on adapting the curriculum in the light of the effect of restrictions on school attendance.

Last year, following the launch of the agreed syllabus, we were asked to:

- provide more support with enquiry-based learning and with the new religious diversity units in the syllabus.
This was offered in the Leading Religious Education training (enquiry-based learning) and a network meeting (diversity). Exemplified medium and outline short term planning was included as part of this offer.
- signpost the extra support for planning developed by Education Durham
Links to the e-shop to purchase these materials have been provided. The materials are in use in schools and much appreciated.
- Establish termly network meetings for RE leaders
SACRE commissioned Catherine Robson through Education Durham to provide a termly network meeting and support to SACRE during the academic year 2020-21.

Collective Worship

Advice on Collective Worship

SACRE was able to offer guidance on collective worship in primary schools without a religious character (see below).

Standards and monitoring of Collective Worship

The programme of routine Ofsted inspections has been suspended throughout the academic year 2020-21. There have been no Ofsted reports for our schools during this period which mention collective worship or spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Determinations

Determinations are made where a school, on behalf of a number of parents, requests collective worship other than that set down by statute. No such requests have been received by SACRE during the past year.

Complaints

There were no complaints about collective worship in our schools

Teacher training

SACRE offered advice to schools on the provision on collective worship in primary schools without a religious character. Nine schools attended an afternoon of live virtual training and were able to discuss issues arising and share good practice.

The LA's Teaching and Learning Adviser who is also the chair of SACRE has been able to support five schools to review their collective worship provision, following the training. Each school reported increased confidence in the quality of their provision.

Links

National

Hartlepool SACRE is a full member of the National Association of Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education (NASACRE) and benefits from its advice and support materials. The Chair of Hartlepool SACRE attended training entitled '*How can national data help SACREs speak with authority?*' Learning from this will be discussed in the next academic year.

Local

Interfaith week

SACRE was disappointed that the planned activity to celebrate Interfaith Week had to be postponed due to capacity issues in schools in the autumn term and hopes that some form of marking the week will be possible in the new academic year. It will meet early in the autumn term to review the situation and plan to support schools.

Holocaust Memorial Day

SACRE was delighted to note the excellent work of Stand Together – a group of young people in Hartlepool aged 13-16 who promote solidarity, tolerance and the need to value difference and diversity – with support from Hartlepool Youth Service. You can see their work on YouTube via the link: bit.ly/STHpoolYT .

Management of SACRE

The local authority supports SACRE with access to a highly experienced and knowledgeable Clerk and an annual budget which allows the commissioning of professional support for SACRE meetings and the provision of network meetings for schools.

During this academic year, SACRE has been strengthened by the support of a representative from the Nasir Mosque and has also co-opted a representative of humanism. The small number of Hartlepool residents who identify as having a faith other than Christianity and the small number of schools who use the Agreed Syllabus mean that ensuring that SACRE has the necessary understanding and expertise to fulfil its role is both very important and a continuing challenge. We are very grateful to all who give their time and expertise in this way.

SACRE met on 4 occasions during the academic year 2020-2021. All of these meetings were held virtually in line with government guidance during the COVID 19 pandemic. Meetings were quorate on three of these occasions.

Appendix A

The membership of SACRE consists of four representative groups (or committees) and co-opted members.

Membership of SACRE as at July 2021

GROUP A: CHRISTIAN AND OTHER DENOMINATIONS

- Emma Daly
- Reverend Dr Andrew Craig
- Wendy Strain
- Christian Atkinson

GROUP B: CHURCH OF ENGLAND

- Jane Kashouris
- Andrea Swift

GROUP C: TEACHERS

- Gaynor Parkinson
- Nicola Dunn
- Vacancy

GROUP D: LOCAL AUTHORITY

- Councillor Shane Moore until June 2021 ,Councillor Sue Little Appointed June 2021
- Councillor Brenda Harrison Reappointed June 2021

CO-OPTED

- Christopher Simmons
- Lesley Davies (Humanism)

Clerk Ann Turner

Professional advice was provided to SACRE by Catherine Robson of Education Durham.

All new members are provided with a copy of NASACRE's 'A reference handbook for SACRE members' and ongoing support, advice and training is provided through our partnership with Education Durham.

The chair attended NASACRE virtual training entitled '*How can national data help SACREs speak with authority?*'

Appendix B

Matters considered by SACRE

Autumn term

- Launch of Agreed Syllabus training evaluation and CPD planning for 2020-21
- Collective Worship in primary schools
- Interfaith week
- Holocaust Memorial Day

Spring term

- Constitution of SACRE and recruitment of members
- Ofsted's Education Inspection Framework and RE
- Annual Report for 2019-20
- Network meeting – update

Summer term

- Constitution of SACRE and recruitment of members
- Advice regarding withdrawal from RE and Collective Worship
- Ofsted Research Review – RE
- NASACRE – SACRE funding report
- CPD for teachers – update

APPENDIX C

This report will be sent to

- the Secretary of State for Education
- NASACRE
- Hartlepool schools

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