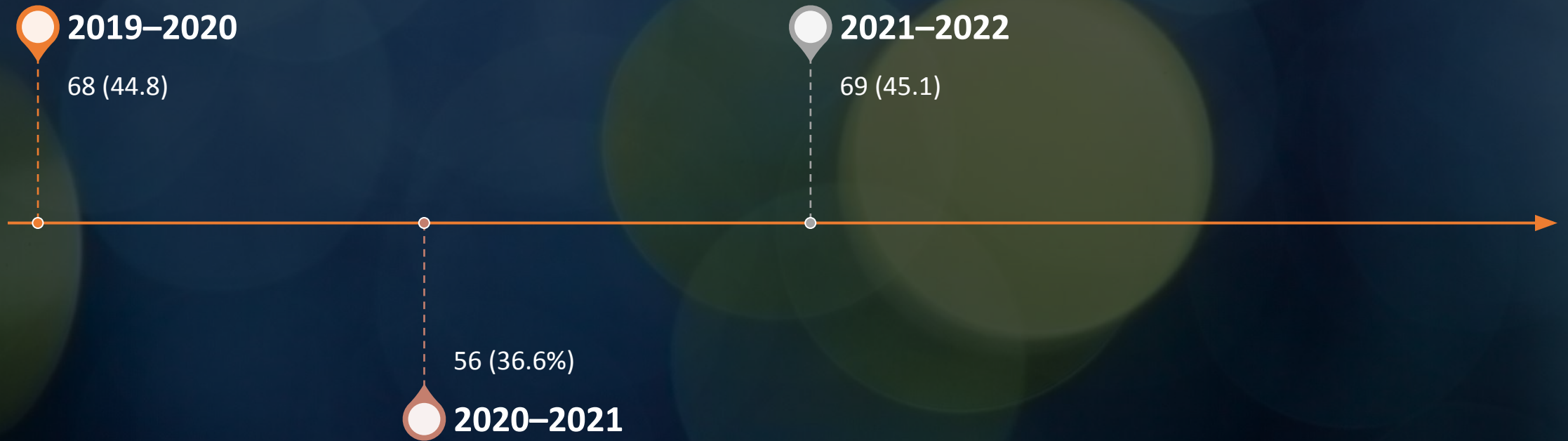




SACRE Annual Reports 2021 - 2022

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Number of SACREs that submitted reports to NASACRE and/or DfE: 2021 - 2023



Of the 153 SACREs in England 28 submitted a report in all of these three years, 37 in two of the years, 35 once and 53 not at all.

Covid-19 and its continuing impact

- As can be see from the previous slide the number of reports submitted in 2022 (2020 – 2021 reports) was substantially lower than in the previous year (pre-Covid) and the current year. It was recognised in 2022 that the pandemic had a profound impact on SACREs and their work.
- This does not mean that SACREs were not affected after the removal of restrictions in February 2021. Those reporting early in the 2021 – 2022 cycle were unable to access examination data, those later in the cycle were increasingly able to access GCSE and A Level results.
- Just under 90% of SACRE reports submitted in 2023 referenced the Covid-19 pandemic.
- One enduring benefit from the pandemic was the availability of technology that allowed online events and hybrid meetings. One SACRE live streamed its meetings on YouTube, others did the same with Zoom.

LA Support for SACREs

- 97.1% of SACREs that submitted reports in 2023 had professional support, but not all: *This was another challenging year, for SACRE. As there is no RE advisor or paid support for RE in the LA, all development work is usually led by members of SACRE and/or local teachers.*
- 78.3% stated that they had funding or financial support for their work but only 42% actually stated what that budget was. It did not follow that if a report had a costed development plan that a budget was specified in the report.
- As appointed bodies SACREs are dependent on LAs for their membership (other than co-options), as are ASC (where co-option does not apply). Reporting on membership, attendance and quoracy varied in the reports submitted and therefore it is difficult to have a comprehensive picture of what is going on. There were obviously challenges, though, and one SACRE reported 23 vacancies and another that it was inquorate on two occasions, in the first because no members of Group C was present and the second no members of Group D.
- The positive engagement of an LA with its SACRE is the best predictor of a well supported SACRE.
- From this one question arises about the role of Group D as specifically representing the LA on SACRE and SACRE to the LA.

SACRE Advice

- A primary function of a SACRE is to give advice to its appointing LA and schools maintained and controlled by the authority regarding RE and maintained in relation to collective worship, as well as making determinations and investigating complaints brought to it by the LA.
 - A minority of SACREs gave advice to their LAs for RE (42%) and collective worship (7%).
 - The majority of SACREs gave advice to schools in the LA for RE (56%) and collective worship (65%).
 - But, there is a caveat. Some conflated the advice given by their professional officer/support with advice given by SACRE, the latter is a result of a SACRE decision tabled and minuted at a meeting.
 - Many SACREs included determinations (87%) and complaints (70%) as a category in their reports, the vast majority reported they had none.
 - Some SACREs also monitored withdrawal from RE and collective worship (56%).

Monitoring RE and collective worship

- Due to access to data the majority of SACREs monitored GCSE results (65%) with fewer monitoring standards in primary RE (39%), non-exam secondary RE (36%) and A Level (29%). This changed, though, in relation to when SACREs published their reports. It is reasonable to expect that more SACREs will report monitoring in the next cycle.
- One source of data was: School Workforce Data published summer 2022 by the Joint Council for Qualifications, one SACRE advised the LA: *SACRE has advised the council to carry out an investigation into these cases.* [Schools that had no RE in any particular year group(s).]
- Only 27% of SACREs reported on monitoring collective worship.
- The role of the local authority is key, as can be seen from one SACRE report: *Working more closely with the LA would enable SACRE to be more effective and to begin to gather more information about standards on RE across the LA.*

Ways of monitoring RE and collective worship

- Technology certainly played a role for some SACREs:
 - *Monitoring for this academic year continue to take place via email conversations, online conversations and some face-to-face conversations where deemed safe as schools recovered after COVID-19.*
 - *We learned to adapt with zoom meetings and monitoring of school's RE activities via surveying their websites, together with on-line teacher training and other activities to maintain the profile of RE.*
- Some SACREs scrutinised Ofsted reports and at least one SACRE included information from SIAMS reports, although it is not clear why these were being reported on at all, given these schools (with the exception of controlled schools and collective worship) do not come within the remit of a SACRE.

Training, resources, and their monitoring

- 92% of SACREs mentioned training in their reports but only 32% monitored the training delivered. One noted:
 - *Our SACRE actively seeks to ensure all children in the borough have access to high quality and challenging RE and we provide support to primary RE subject leaders through the teachers' network meetings, now taking place in person again. These are free of charge to maintained schools and we urge school leaders to recognise the importance of allocating school time for staff to attend. We also produce a termly newsletter which signposts resources, draws attention to issues of interest in the RE world and highlights forthcoming festivals among other features.*
- Another reported:
 - *Our support for RE in schools continues through well attended and evaluated training session.*
- A small number of SACREs mentioned resources for RE, Widening Inclusion in RE (WIRE) was one of those, one SACRE also looked at issues relating to the representation of Hinduism

Agreed Syllabus review

- 62% of SACREs were starting, engaged with or had published a new agreed syllabus and much of the training SACREs undertook or supported was for Agreed Syllabus implementation.
- Some SACREs reported that their timetable for review had been delayed due to the pandemic, and this was particularly notable where a review of a syllabus was a joint enterprise by a number of SACREs. As noted:
 - *During the year we discussed the new Agreed Syllabus due to be published in 2023. Due to the pandemic and having consulted with the other SACREs [with which the syllabus is shared], we decided along with them to delay this until 2024.*
- Issues relating to attendance could also effect SACREs work, as one noted:
 - *The agreed syllabus will be due for review in the academic year of 2022-23. Groups A, B and C will need to vote for a recommendation to the Local Authority to establish an Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC) for the review of the syllabus at the SACRE meeting in Autumn 2022. As Group D is the Local Authority, it does not get a vote. The voting was originally planned for the SACRE's meeting in June 2022; however, it did not take place as the meeting was not quorate.*

Thoughts

- The first draft report (all 24 pages and 8393 words) has been submitted to the Executive Assistant for comment and will be finalised for June, when hopefully it will be made available, it has a number of recommendations for the NASACRE Executive and the DfE.
- Before that delight though, here are some thoughts:
 - The Covid-19 pandemic had a profound effect on SACREs and has continued to have effects in this reporting cycle.
 - SACREs have done a tremendous job in bouncing back and building on some of the products of the pandemic, such as online training and hybrid meetings.
 - The LA's support is crucial if a SACRE is going to meet its potential, although some are doing wonders with little or no support.
 - SACREs would do well to report on the impact of their work, so:
 - what was the response to advice given?
 - What difference did the event SACRE put on actually make?
 - The DfE needs to hold LAs to account when it comes to SACRE, as they are statutory bodies. How will the DfE hold the LAs to account for those 53 SACREs that haven't submitted a report in the last 3 years?



Thank you.