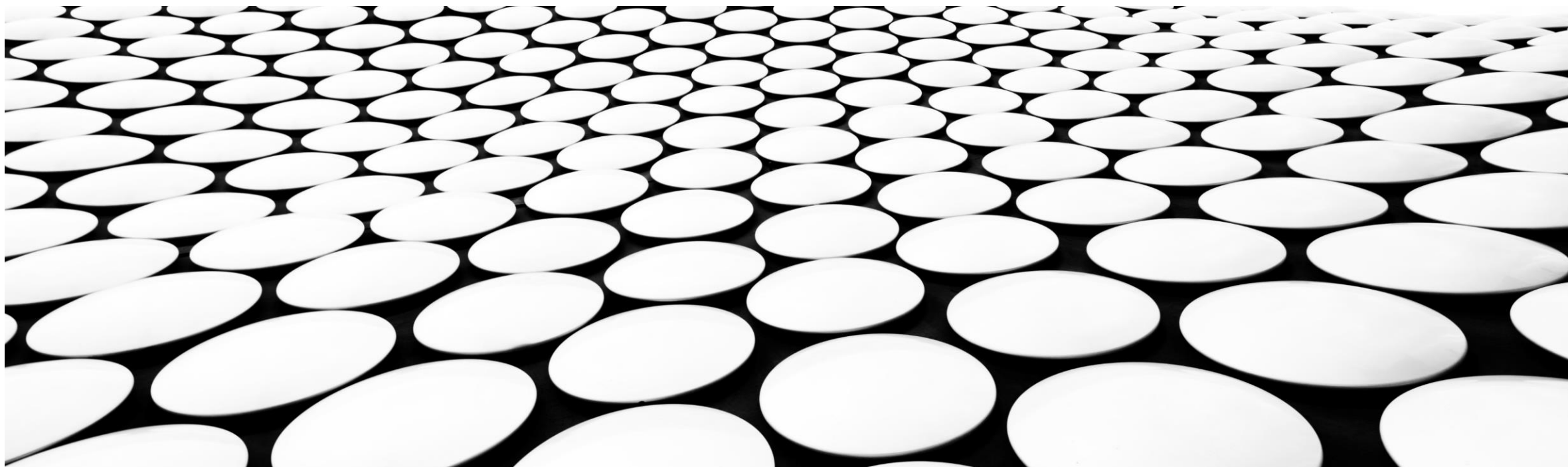

SACRE ANNUAL REPORTS 2021 – 2022

MAIN FINDINGS - LESSONS LEARNED

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PATTERN OF SUBMISSION OF SACRE REPORTS

- In 2023 72 SACREs submitted their annual report for 2021 – 2022, 16 more than in 2022. This figure is similar to the number submitted in 2021 (n68) and would indicate that the main cause for not submitting a report last year was the Covid-19 pandemic, which continued to have an impact in the year under report. The pattern of submission of reports is more complicated than first appears. Only 29 SACREs have submitted a report in all three years (2021 – 2023), 37 submitted their report twice, 35 once and 52 not at all. There is no clear reason why this is the case but there is a need to contact those SACREs that have not submitted a report to the DfE or NASACRE to find out which SACREs have produced reports, and which have failed to do so, where those SACREs are responsible for submitting report to the Secretary of State.

COVID-19 AND THE PANDEMIC

- Whilst the restrictions relating to the Covid-19 pandemic ended in February 2021 the impact of the pandemic continued to effect SACRE meetings and the ability of SACREs to fulfil some of their statutory responsibilities. Some SACREs had substantial issues with membership and vacancies. It is not clear whether this was an issue of the local authority not being able to appoint, but desiring to do so, or whether this was an issue that SACREs felt they had to address themselves. Whichever this was causing an issue for some SACREs.

LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND SACRES

- One of the main influences on a SACRE's work was its relationship with the local authority. Where the local authority was fully engaged with SACRE and its work this was evident in a SACREs report. Reports indicate that the level of support for a SACRE was proportionate to the importance of religion and belief in the local authority area, often related to concerns about community cohesion – although that language was rarely used.

RURAL/SHIRE LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

- Where SACREs covered more rural areas the importance of Church of England diocese and its schools was more likely to be evident. This led to reporting on standards of RE and collective worship through a scrutiny of SIAMS reports. At least one SACRE was served by a diocesan officer and others received reports from diocesan officers.

CONFLATIONS

- It was clear that SACREs took their work seriously and were trying their best to support RE, if not always collective worship, in the schools in the local authority – in at least one case with no obvious support from the local authority. This though could lead to a series of conflations in reporting, such as the professional advice given by an adviser or consultant with that of a SACRE and the conflation of data, such as workplace surveys, with standards in RE. SACREs rarely evaluated the impact of their advice or actions, and this should be addressed if SACREs are to show their impact and focus on areas of improvement.

COLLABORATIONS

- In many areas SACREs also work in collaboration with other SACREs, especially in the area of Agreed Syllabus development, implementation and training. To that extent links with external bodies such as NASACRE remain important as does their trialling and supporting of national initiatives to support RE in schools, such as REQM and WIRE.

COMMUNITIES

- SACREs continue to support schools and communities, in some areas, beyond their statutory remit and this shows how valued they are as providing something unique within a local authority. A number of SACREs reported how they made links with local inter faith and faith and belief forums.

SOME QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- Now that the pandemic is over what new ways of working have been established that have assisted SACREs in their task?
- The LA is key to SACRE fulfilling its statutory role, who is ensuring the LA is doing this and what is the role of Group D?
- The main role of a SACRE is to advise the LA, does it do that? How does it report on the LA's response to its advice?
- How would your SACRE know it is making a difference?



ADDITIONAL TRIVIA QUESTION

- Which SACREs do not have to submit their reports to the Secretary of State for Education?