



Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education

(SACRE)

Annual Report 2020-21

Introduction by the Chair of SACRE

This will be my last annual report as Chair and I would like to highlight the key achievements of the last eighteen months or so.

Tameside SACRE was, until 2019, not meeting regularly. Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council appointed Alastair Ross as a consultant during 2019 and Alastair invited me to work with him on re-establishing the regular pattern of meetings and the effective undertaking of the statutory roles of the SACRE.

In this report you will read of the significant achievements of the last eighteen months, all of which have been achieved in the midst of the pandemic. We will soon have a revised agreed syllabus which will be properly promoted at its launch in the next few months. Meetings of the SACRE are taking place regularly. We are working hard to support schools, in both primary and secondary sectors, in the provision of RE. We have built a good relationship with the local Interfaith Forum (Faiths United Tameside). We have successfully bid for a Westhill Grant which is being used to develop good curriculum sensitive, local materials for use in and by schools associated with visits to places of worship or in preparation for a visit by a faith leader to a school. We have also been providing training in the hosting of school visits for volunteers in places of worship and have shared with Faiths United Tameside in the promotion of these events. Finally, it is worth mentioning that we have embarked on a process of collaboration with Oldham SACRE with the opportunity for chairs to attend each other's SACRE meetings and the development of some shared training initiatives.

I have thoroughly enjoyed my time as Chair of the SACRE and look forward to hearing about ongoing developments in RE provision in Tameside in years ahead.

The Rev Roger Farnworth
Chair of Tameside SACRE 2020-21

Introduction

Every local authority is required to form and support a SACRE which has responsibility for advising on its schools:

- For Religious Education (RE), SACRE advises community, voluntary controlled and Trust and Foundation schools without a religious designation.
- For Collective Worship SACRE advises the LA on community, Trust and Foundation schools without a religious designation.

Although not part of its compulsory statutory role, Tameside SACRE also seeks to serve and support all schools and academies within the borough and its agreed RE syllabus has been procured for all education institutions to use freely. SACRE also has a duty to monitor RE provision across the district.

An annual report is prepared by Tameside Standing Advisory Council on RE (SACRE) as part of its statutory responsibility. It summarises support for Religious Education and Collective Worship over the school year and also outlines any advice SACRE has given to the local authority during the year, together with the response to such advice. The report is a public document which is also sent to the National Association of SACREs and the Department for Education.

Through the work of the Learning Service and the involvement of the RE consultant, SACRE can report with insight and authority on the matters included in this report. However, SACRE does not have the resources to comment in detail on every aspect of RE or collective worship in every school. Specific reports of individual visits and reviews in schools are outside the remit of this general report, but these have informed the overall picture offered.

For further information on the report or on RE and Collective Worship in Tameside, contact the consultant Alastair Ross at alastair@penninelearning.com. You can also contact Joanne Rendell on behalf of the local authority at joanne.rendell@tameside.gov.uk. For information on SACRE please contact the clerk, Rachel Lees at rachel.lees@tameside.gov.uk.

The Work of SACRE

Priorities for 2020-21

The main priorities for SACRE during 2020-21 were agreed in a development plan. The main headings were:

1. To re-establish a fully functioning SACRE;
2. To review the agreed RE syllabus (in conjunction with four neighbouring authorities);
3. To develop support for schools in RE and collective worship, including professional development and consultancy support.

Clearly, the impact of the coronavirus pandemic affected all work in education and SACRE was no exception. However, through continued communication and the use of technology, training, advice and support all continued.

In subsequent paragraphs, the report outlines how these objectives have been achieved and what priorities emerge for the future.

Meetings

During the year Tameside SACRE met four times: 12 October 2020, 30 November 2020, 17 March 2021 and 8 June 2021. The March meeting was also a Local Agreed Syllabus Conference to discuss and decide the revision of the local agreed syllabus on RE. An additional meeting of Committee D took place on 22 April 2021 to discuss the agreed syllabus. All meetings were held virtually via Zoom.

Matters discussed at meetings included:

- The revision of the local agreed syllabus for religious education, due for September 2021;
- The constitution of SACRE and enabling the body to become fully constituted and effective;

- Interfaith activities and possible enrichment of RE through visits and engagement with faith communities;
- The preparation of a bid to the Westhill Trust to support this work;
- Professional development for teachers;
- RE subject review prepared by Ofsted and written by RE lead, Richard Kueh, published in May;
- National Association of SACREs (NASACRE) – items of interest or action, including report from NASACRE on SACRE funding. This report was compiled following freedom of information requests to all local authorities in England.

Details of arrangements for any SACRE meeting can be obtained from the clerk, Rachel Lees (rachel.lees@tameside.gov.uk)

Membership

The local authority has formally appointed a chair, the Rev Roger Farnworth, who is also the Borough Dean from the Anglican Diocese of Manchester. He is supported by a vice-chair, Michael Lowe, the Jewish representative.

The local authority appointed two representatives during the year, meaning that SACRE became fully constituted, albeit with some vacancies remaining.

SACRE membership includes representatives from all four constituent committees.

Committee A	Faith communities except for the Church of England
Committee B	Anglican representatives
Committee C	Teachers and schools
Committee D	The local authority

The membership in July 2021 is outlined below.

Amrit Mistry	A	Hindu representative
Imam Ghulam Moyhuddin	A	Muslim representative
Kevin Malone	A	Humanist representative

Michael Lowe (V Chair)	A	Jewish representative
Indu Popat	A	Hindu representative
Vidyapala	A	Buddhist representative
Bhagwant Singh	A	Sikh representative
Quddus Ashu	A	Baha'I representative
Vacancy	A	URC representative
The Rev Robert Balfour	A	Methodist representative
Vacancy	A	Baptist representative
Vacancy	A	Quaker representative
Vacancy	A	Roman Catholic representative
The Rev Jean Hurlston	B	Diocese of Manchester
The Rev Roger Farnworth (Chair)	B	Diocese of Manchester
Vacancy	B	Diocese of Chester
Beth Lindemann	B	Diocese of Chester
Susan Marsh	B	Diocese of Manchester
Leanne Bugler	C	Teachers associations
Isabella Worsley	C	Teachers associations
Vicky Hewitt-Lee	C	Teachers associations
Liam Spencer	C	Teachers associations
Kate Rodgers	C	Teachers associations
Vacancy	C	Teachers associations
Cllr Michael Smith	D	Local authority
Cllr Vimal Choksi	D	Local authority
Vacancy	D	Local authority
Graham McGuffie	Z	Oldham SACRE adviser (Co-opted)

Funding of SACRE

In 2021 the National Association of SACREs (NASACRE) prepared a report on the funding of SACREs. The information was based on a Freedom of Information Request to all local authorities in England. The key findings were:

- The majority of SACREs in England do not get a sufficient share of the CSSB to enable them to carry out their duties well.
- Only 12 Local Authorities in 2019-2020 stated that they used 2% or more of CSSB funds on SACRE business, meaning 92% of SACREs were allocated less than 2% of the CSSB. 25 Authorities (18%) claim to use no funding on SACRE business in contravention of statutory responsibilities.
- Over a quarter (27%) of Authorities said they allocate no funds to professional support for the SACRE.
- More than half of LAs (42, 53%) disclosed that they do not use any funds to support RE in schools. Due to lack of adequate support it is increasingly difficult for some SACREs to fulfil their statutory duties;
- 7 LAs told NASACRE that their Agreed Syllabus was over 6 years old. One syllabus was last reviewed in 2010

Tameside Council funded the cost of RE consultant and a SACRE clerk, together with providing a free primary RE network for schools. During the coming year the Council has also committed to meet the costs of the revised local agreed syllabus which is expected to be about £6000.

Partners, support and advice

SACRE is grateful for the expertise of its members. Teacher and governor representatives continue to advise on the needs and progress of schools. Local authority representatives have shown an active interest in constructive partnerships. There is a range of stakeholders and communities, including: local schools and teachers, neighbouring SACREs in the region, NATRE (National Association of Teachers of RE), NASACRE (National Association of SACREs), the RE Council of England and Wales and Ofsted. In particular, Faiths United in Tameside has been a key partner in developing educational links between schools and faith communities, designed to enrich RE and nurture tolerance and understanding.

Advice to the Local authority

Tameside SACRE offers the following advice to the local authority:

1. To provide and implement a revised local agreed syllabus for RE with effect from September 2022;
2. To monitor compliance with the legal requirements for religious education, especially in secondary schools and academies, and to offer advice and support if required;
3. To ensure SACRE's annual report is considered carefully by the Scrutiny Panel of the Council and any of its content noted.
4. To review the funding of SACRE to ensure it is in line with national recommendations and good practice.

Complaints

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

Priorities for 2020-21

The main priorities for SACRE during 2021-22 are currently being discussed and will be included in the ongoing development plan. They are likely to include:

- Training and preparation for implementing the revised agreed syllabus in September 2022;
- Implementing the 'Schools Welcome' programme of links with faith communities to support RE and tolerance;
- Monitoring and supporting compliance with the requirements for RE, especially focusing on secondary schools and academies;
- The continuing strengthening of SACRE, including training, roles and attendance
- Developing CPD for teachers with collaboration with neighbouring authorities and other providers.

Religious Education

Local Agreed Syllabus

The current RE syllabus '*Religious Literacy for All*' is mandatory for teaching in maintained schools from 2016-2021. It was produced by RE Today services Ltd and is shared with four nearby local authorities: Manchester, Salford, Stockport and Trafford. However, every RE syllabus must be reviewed every five years and SACRE has reviewed this during the year.

There were three main alternatives:

- a. Adopt a revised and updated version of the existing syllabus, including systematic and thematic topics, written by RE Today;
- b. Adopt a new syllabus, more focused around a systematic study of world faiths, written by RE Today;
- c. Adopt an alternative syllabus, tailor made or adapted for Tameside.

SACRE felt that, in view of the pressures on schools and local authorities, and also because of our existing partnership with four other local authorities, it was realistic to offer the first two alternatives for consideration.

Consultation with schools took place through an online survey, supplemented by individual conversations and discussions. A majority of both primary and secondary schools which responded favoured option a above.

At the same time, discussions took place between the five local authorities using the current syllabus and, after discussion with schools, all agreed a similar way forward.

It was further agreed to recommend that the implementation of the revised syllabus would be deferred until September 2022, with the current syllabus being authorised for an additional year until then.

A Local Agreed Syllabus Conference was convened for 17th March 2021 and these courses of action were unanimously agreed.

The revised syllabus will be based on the existing curriculum but be enhanced with revised and updated sections, including on Early Years and Foundation Stage (EYFS), Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND), cultural capital, sequencing and progression. The medium-term planning is also being aligned to intent, implementation and impact and there are some new and revised units of work. The syllabus will be free of charge to all schools in Tameside, the cost being met by the Council. It will be the mandatory curriculum for all maintained schools, including CE controlled schools. Other schools, including academies, will be welcome to use the local syllabus freely but have the option of buying into any alternative that fulfils the national statutory requirements for RE

There will be two (identical) launch and training days in the spring term 2022 for all five Greater Manchester authorities which use the syllabus. These will be held on 10 February at the Village Hotel, Ashton and on 17 March at Manchester Central. Other briefing and support will also be available through the RE consultant.

The syllabus will contain comprehensive medium-term planning but there is also an optional addition of an on-line package of detailed units of work, available for purchase from the syllabus authors, RE Today Services.

Professional support

During the year this professional support was provided through the consultant, Alastair Ross. He can be contacted at alastair@penninelearning.com. He is contracted to provide the equivalent of twenty days support per year in total, though this is arranged as flexibly as possible to facilitate effective working with schools and others.

Although the pandemic has led to immeasurably greater pressures on schools and has limited most face-to-face opportunities for support and dialogue, it has also opened up opportunities to widen access to professional development.

The RE consultant has been available to schools through:

- The provision of a range of on-line resources for remote RE teaching;
- Response to queries or difficulties;
- On-line consultancy over specific or general RE issues;
- RE reviews in a selection of schools;
- Availability by phone, email or virtual meetings throughout the crisis;
- Provision of a number of online courses covering subject leadership, subject knowledge and management.

The consultant has also met with the chair of SACRE regularly and with the Head of Improvement and Partnerships each half term to review progress.

Professional Development

Structured professional development has been provided through the following courses, all on-line:

- Primary RE Network: held each term after the school day, with about 20 teachers regularly attending
- Intent, Implementation and Impact: supporting schools preparing their ‘Intent’ statements and designing a curriculum (8)
- Three Faiths: developing subject knowledge of Judaism, Islam and Sikhism though a series of three webinars and including a guest from the respective faith community (about 15)
- RE Coordinator training: two linked evening sessions to support RE lead teachers (run twice) (22)

More informal and ad-hoc support has been provided through email, zoom and phone calls and through a limited number of RE reviews.

Schools Welcome!

Tameside SACRE feels that developing opportunities for pupils to engage directly with people from faith communities can enrich and deepen RE as well as nurturing awareness and tolerance of diversity. Faith visits allow pupils to satisfy their curiosity as they step inside the religious buildings in their community. Relationships are built as pupils meet and question people of faith within the context of their place of worship. SACRE decided to bid for a grant from the Westhill Trust to enable a project to develop.

The Schools Welcome! project is a partnership between Tameside SACRE and Faiths United Tameside. It will work with a diverse group of local faith communities who are willing to welcome visits from, or offer visits to, schools, offering training and accreditation for visitors.

The project aims to enable pupils in Tameside and neighbouring areas to deepen their understanding of faiths and beliefs through educational, first-hand encounters with communities and people of faith, in places of worship, on-line, or through visits to schools.

Tameside's bid was one of four successful applications across England. There are two elements to the project.

Developing the skills, resources and potential of local faith communities

Free training will be offered to staff and volunteers who host educational visits in their place of worship. In these sessions, they will learn about the local RE syllabus, try out practical ideas and discuss some of the challenges and sensitivities raised by faith visits in our multi-cultural area. The training itself contributes to community cohesion as delegates from different faiths and denominations discuss questions of faith and practice while they learn together.

Following the training, faith communities may choose to undertake a simple accreditation process. This involves an assessment of their procedures, facilities and communication skills. Once complete, the “Tameside Schools Welcome” badge can be displayed on their website and used to advertise their visits to local schools. The list of centres will be included on the Tameside schools platform with a clear outline for how to book the education visit.

Quality assured resources and training will ensure that school visit organisers can trust visits booked with the ‘Tameside - Schools Welcome’ badge will be purposeful for the needs of their students. These visits will be open to all Primary and Secondary students, but will specifically be targeted to meet the curriculum needs of KS2 and KS3 students.

Supporting and encouraging visits and visitors, face-to-face and on-line

This strand of the project involves communicating with schools, encouraging them to enrich learning in RE through the hospitality offered by willing faith communities. Visits will be possible on-line or in-person as circumstances, resources and preferences allow. They may also take the form of visits into school by representatives of faith communities.

Through the project funding we will be able to contract teachers to create six planned ‘experiences’, in partnership with SACRE and local places of worship. These resources will be designed for use before, during and after visits, working either as stand-alone activities or as part of an interconnected series. They will dovetail with the local agreed RE syllabus and can run throughout school years, key stages or the primary/secondary sectors.

The experiences will be delivered by trained place of worship volunteers, in association with class teachers, and will have clear objectives and outcomes, linked to the local agreed syllabus. This will support schools to achieve the principal aim of the new locally agreed syllabus - “to engage pupils in systematic enquiry into significant human questions which religion and worldviews address”.

A list of participating contacts in local faith communities, and other relevant contacts, will be compiled and regularly updated. This will be made available to schools through the

Tameside website and also to schools beyond the authority. The list will also include guidance and information on visits, gaining parental support and helping these to run smoothly.

Guidance

A half-termly newsletter is prepared for schools in Tameside. A range of guidance has been prepared and is now available through the intranet. Guidance covers the following topics:

- RE Policy
- Withdrawal from RE
- Collective Worship

RE Reviews

An RE review has been developed as an opportunity to reflect on the quality and provision of their religious education and to discover strengths and priorities for future improvement. It can be used as an internal self-assessment tool or it can be the focus for a review with the RE Consultant. The review has also been designed to dovetail with the national RE Quality Mark and it can act as a stepping-stone towards achievement of that national recognition.

Examinations

In January 2021, the UK prime minister announced that for the second year in a row, exams would not be taking place in England. 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 Leeds 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.

Collective Worship

Through the consultant SACRE is always ready to advise or support schools on request.

These questions may be helpful in reflecting on the value and effectiveness of collective worship in school:

1. Collective: How does the assembly celebrate and promote a sense of community within the whole school (or group)?
2. Educational: Is there a clear aim and focus, with appropriate learning? Does it engage and interest pupils and staff?
3. Spiritual: How does the assembly nurture pupils' awareness of their beliefs and values - and those of others (including non-religious beliefs)? How does it develop a sense of the meaning, purpose and value in their lives?
4. Reflective: Is there space and opportunity for thoughtful reflection, in the assembly or as a follow up? If prayers are used do these allow for different approaches and responses?
5. Inclusive: How does the assembly programme develop understanding of different perspectives and cultures? How does it promote values of tolerance, diversity and equality?
6. Responsive: How did pupils respond and participate?

Parents have a statutory right to withdraw their children from collective worship. During the year guidance on good practice and protocols for withdrawal has been prepared and is available to schools. SACRE recognises parents' legal rights but hopes all children will be enabled to receive stimulating and balanced RE as part of their entitlement to a broad curriculum. Guidance is also provided to schools in fulfilling statutory obligations over collective worship and promoting good SMSC development.

Complaints and determinations

There were no complaints made during the year to SACRE about Collective Worship.

There are no determinations to vary statutory requirements in any maintained school in Tameside, so far as SACRE is aware. Responsibility for determinations in English academies and free schools rest with the Schools Funding Agency.



This annual report is prepared by Tameside Standing Advisory Council on RE (SACRE) as part of its statutory responsibility. For further information on the report or on RE and Collective Worship in Tameside, please contact Alastair Ross at alastair@penninelearning.com