

# **BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET COUNCIL**

## **Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education**

### **Annual Report September 2019 – August 2020**

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All enquiries should be addressed to:

The Clerk to SACRE  
Bath and North East Somerset Council  
School Improvement  
PO Box 25, Riverside  
Keynsham BS18 1DN

## 1 Overview

### 1.1 Requirements as under the Education Act 1996

Much of the year, from the last week of March onwards, was disrupted by the Covid-19 lockdown arrangements. As in previous years, however, there were no applications from Headteachers in community schools to waive the requirements that collective worship shall be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character.

## 2 Religious Education

### 2.1 Locally agreed syllabus

Bath and North East Somerset SACRE shares a locally agreed syllabus with Bristol, North Somerset and the London Borough of Haringey. Since its adoption in 2016, SACRE has added a wealth of materials to its website to support schools in the provision of high quality RE. The programmes of study, together with all the supporting guidance, can be found at [awarenessmysteryvalue.org](http://awarenessmysteryvalue.org). A link to the site is also published on the Bath & North East Somerset SACRE website: [banes-sacre.com](http://banes-sacre.com).

In a very difficult end to the year, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, SACRE published support for online RE learning in messages to schools and academies.

## 3 Standards in Religious Education

### 3.1 Local Authority Concerns

SACRE has not been informed by the Local Authority of any concerns about standards of religious education in primary, secondary and special schools.

### 3.2 Reports and Monitoring: Ofsted and SIAMS

SACRE accesses Ofsted reports on local schools throughout the year. During 2019-20, only three schools received inspections; and only one of these mentioned RE (or collective worship). This was Farrington Gurney CofE Primary School, where it was noted that 'Leaders are passionate about developing pupils' knowledge in religious education (RE). Pupils talk about their current learning in RE with confidence. For example, children in the early years talk knowledgeably about the key parts of a church, and pupils in Year 3 demonstrate a good understanding of stories from the Old Testament, for example Exodus. However, pupils struggle to recall knowledge that they have been previously taught.'

At Welton Primary School, although RE was not mentioned, inspectors noted that 'Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well supported through carefully planned assemblies, lesson[s] and events. Pupils learn to respect each other and celebrate differences, through a wide range of activities that teach them about people in the wider world'.

In addition to Ofsted inspections, all Church of England schools are inspected as a designated church school through the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS). Church schools are inspected every three years if the school's previous judgment was Ineffective (previously Inadequate) or Requiring Improvement (previously Satisfactory), and every five years if previously judged to be Excellent

(previously Good or Outstanding). No schools have been inspected since Easter 2020. It is not known when they will restart but it would be January 2021 at the earliest. In Bath & North East Somerset SIAMS has rated no church schools Ineffective and just one that is currently rated to be Requiring Improvement. The rest are rated Good or Excellent.

### 3.3 Schools' Self-evaluation of Religious Education

In order for SACRE to gain information about RE and collective worship in Bath & North East Somerset schools, SACRE has begun to send a short survey to a proportion of schools on a rotational basis each year.

3.3.1 During the school year, replies were received from seven schools. These were from one community junior school, one voluntary controlled primary school, one junior academy, two church primary academies and two secondary academies. *Overall, compared with responses from previous years, but given the fairly small sample, there appear to have been improvements in the average time provided for RE in the curriculum, and in providing pupils with contact with representatives of different worldviews, though there are continuing weaknesses in providing CPD for teachers other than within some of the schools themselves.*

3.3.2 All bar one of the schools (the community junior school) were providing an average of at least 50 minutes of RE on the timetable each week. In terms of a budget for RE, four schools said that they had no budget and had to request money as needed, one provided at least £2 per pupil for RE resources and only one less than £1.

3.3.3 None of the schools reported that pupils were being withdrawn from *all* of RE by their parents, and only two schools (one community junior and one secondary academy) reported that one or more pupils were being withdrawn from *part* of the RE programme.

3.3.4 Two of the schools reported average levels of attainment in RE and three above average. One school reported high levels of attainment (a secondary academy) and one low (the other secondary academy). In terms of the standard of progress and learning in RE, one school (a church primary academy) reported a need for improvement, four that standards were good and two (both secondary academies) outstanding.

3.3.5 All the schools that responded to the questionnaire had an RE leader in place but there was a very mixed picture of continuing professional development (CPD). All bar two of the schools had undertaken some *internal* training for staff in the previous year. At the same time, only three of the schools had organised training for at least one member of staff on a course *external* to the school during the year and none of the schools reported that any teacher had received RE training of more than one day over the year.

3.3.6 All bar two of the schools had organised visits for pupils in the previous year, with three having conducted two or more. All bar two had received at least two outside visitors to contribute to RE lessons. All had built up their own artefact collections, and only one reported use of the SACRE Resources held at Saltford School.

Only two schools current membership of National Association of Teachers of RE (NATRE) and were therefore subscribed to RE Today mailing. All bar one of the schools (a secondary academy) reported that they had contact with an RE adviser (from the LA, Diocese or faith community) in support of RE during the year.

3.3.7 Only one of the schools (a secondary academy) reported that there was insufficient time for RE in some years.

### 3.4 Analysis of school websites

3.4.1 SACRE has decided to investigate the websites of schools in the cohort that did not submit a response to the survey. This amounted to a review of 23 websites. A simplified 'traffic-light' system was used by SACRE members this year to indicate quickly whether the websites contained information about the legal requirements for RE and collective worship, and to credit them where further information had been uploaded regarding such aspects of programmes of study and contributions to pupils' understanding of British Values and to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

3.4.2 Results of SACRE members' analysis were very mixed, though positive overall. RE was mentioned on most websites, but not in five of the 23 cases. There was no mention of a policy for RE, including the right to withdraw, on six of the sites, and no evidence was provided of planning for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and/or British Values on four. Eight websites had only partial information on such planning.

3.4.3 SACRE members were also asked to rate how easy the school websites were to navigate, and find the information they were looking for. Of the 23, 15 were rated green for good, eight were rated amber and none were rated red for poor.

3.4.4 SACRE is currently considering how best to follow up with individual schools. Last year, as a result of a more detailed analysis, SACRE's Associate Adviser wrote to all schools with a list of items of good practice regarding school websites and RE and collective worship. The letter also indicated some of the disappointing features of the SACRE findings. In any event, SACRE will continue to monitor school websites and provide some feedback for schools.

### 3.5 Secondary schools' public examination results

3.5.1 This year, schools were not required to share their KS4 and 5 data as it could not be used for any reporting or accountability purposes. Many schools declined to share their data so the analysis is not possible this year. All the same, *SACRE sends its congratulations to the staff and students for all their efforts in an exceptionally challenging year.*

## 4 Methods of teaching, material and training

### 4.1 Teaching materials

The agreed syllabus website [awarenessmysteryvalue.org](http://awarenessmysteryvalue.org) contains a wealth of resources for teachers as well as the statutory programmes of study. During the year updates and amendments were made to the existing materials and preliminary syllabus review meetings with our partner SACRE advisers were held.

SACRE continues to maintain a collection of artefacts for all of the major religions at Saltford Primary School, and a subscription was taken out for the National Association for Teachers of Religious Education (NATRE) which includes regular mailings from RE Today. The termly RE Today magazine and curriculum booklets are added to the Saltford School collection. A member of staff there receives a small stipend for managing the resources and arranging free loans to Bath & North East Somerset schools.

### 4.2 Teacher training and projects

One training event for teachers took place: a seminar led by the Holocaust Education Trust. The event was organised in conjunction with Bath Spa University and took place in one of the University's training rooms. Two schools took up the offer of free places and the event was also attended by five SACRE members and 17 History and RE PGCE students from Bath Spa University.

SACRE successfully applied for a Westhill/NASACRE Award for 2020-21. The project will involve teachers from across the Agreed Syllabus partnership area in the development of mini-schemes of learning around the theme of 'RE-Live'. It will make use of examples from the contemporary world to improve pupils' knowledge and understanding of the diversity of religion and belief and a deeper understanding of people from different groups.

SACRE has also expressed an interest in being part of an REC project to develop the role of SACRE in the form of a 'Local Area Network for Religion and Worldviews' as recommended by the 2018 Commission on RE.

### 4.3 SACRE website: [banes-sacre.com](http://banes-sacre.com).

The SACRE website was maintained and updated during the year. A co-opted member of SACRE receives a small stipend for managing the site and ensuring it is kept up-to-date. As well as information about SACRE, the site contains ideas for RE specifically for Bath and North-East Somerset schools, including lists of resources available to borrow and reports on the use of local visits and visitors to support agreed syllabus RE.

### 4.4 Complaints about Religious Education

The Local Authority/SACRE received no formal complaints concerning RE.

## 5 Collective worship

### 5.1 Monitoring

As with religious education (see section 3.2), SACRE has initiated a survey of a selection of schools on a rotational basis over three years, providing schools with the opportunity to provide a self-evaluation of the provision and quality of collective worship.

### 5.2 Schools' Self-evaluation of Collective Worship

5.2.1 There were seven responses to the survey on collective worship. *Overall, compared with responses from previous years, but given the fairly small sample, there appears to have been a decline in the incidence of opportunities for 'genuine acts of collective worship' to take place on a daily basis. Nevertheless, there has been no increase in the number of pupils being withdrawn from collective worship or assemblies by their parents / carers.*

5.2.2 Two of the schools surveyed (one community junior and one junior academy) had a single pupil being withdrawn from acts of collective worship by their parents. The others reported no withdrawals at all.

5.2.3 All the schools bar one (a secondary academy) received support from local ministers of religion. All bar the two secondary academies received contributions to collective worship from visitors other than a local minister of religion.

5.2.4 Only one of the seven schools reported that there was a genuine opportunity for pupils to participate in an act of worship every day. Three schools (one community junior and both secondary academies) reported that there were no genuine opportunities for pupils to participate in collective worship each week.

5.2.5 None of the schools considered that the quality of pupils' experience of assemblies / acts of collective worship was 'outstanding'. Six reported that the experience, particularly in relation to 'assemblies' was 'good, but in both secondary academies the quality of opportunity for collective worship was judged to be inadequate.

### 5.3 Analysis of school websites

As for religious education, SACRE analysed the websites of the schools that failed to respond to the invitation to participate in the self-evaluation survey, using a simplified 'traffic-light' system. It was found that 13 schools included a substantial reference to collective worship on their websites, which was a vast improvement on the previous year, when only a few sites mentioned it. Four of the sites included a partial mention. Despite the legal requirement to let parents know of the right to withdraw children from the daily act, however, seven of the sites failed to mention it. As for RE, SACRE will provide some feedback for schools about its findings on collective worship on school websites.

### 5.4 Training

No training on collective worship was organised by SACRE during the year but information from other local providers, such as the Diocese of Bath & Wells was circulated to schools.

## 5.5 Complaints and determinations

The Local Authority/SACRE received no formal complaints, and there were no requests from schools to vary the legal requirement for collective worship.

## 6 Links with other agencies

### 6.1 National

SACRE's Associate Adviser attended two Religious Education Council of England and Wales (REC) general meetings, in November 2019, (at the East London Mosque & London Muslim Centre) and May 2020 (via Zoom). He brought reports on these events to subsequent SACRE meetings.

The National Association of Standing Advisory Councils on RE (NASACRE) did not hold an AGM this year, but reports from the Executive had been published on the NASACRE website.

### 6.2 Regional

Three SACRE members attended the Southwest Conference for SACREs, which featured a keynote address by Trevor Cooling (Chair of the REC). The conference included workshops on 'Reviewing an Agreed Syllabus in the light of the National Entitlement and Big Ideas for RE', 'Engagement and Monitoring of RE provision in Schools using website checking as a tool for SACREs' and 'The new 2019 OFSTED Framework and the monitoring of RE'. A full report on the conference was shared with SACRE members and implications for future SACRE work and Agreed Syllabus review noted.

Bath & North East Somerset SACRE continued to take part in the regional Learn Teach Lead RE (LTLRE) project, with funding from Diocesan and other charities, aiming to provide training in religious education, especially through the building of communities of RE teachers across the region. A third annual regional conference was postponed due to the pandemic but the planning would go forward in the hope of running it in 2021. Although schools were prioritising English Maths and Science in their new curriculum arrangements, the LTLRE group had provided some RE resources, e.g., for a Ramadan project and one on what faith communities were doing in lockdown – these had been shared with link schools. There had also been support for a project for secondary schools relating to the Black Lives Matter campaign. It used music and the arts and would go on the LTLRE website.

### 6.3 Local

Contact is maintained and found helpful with North Somerset, Haringey and Bristol SACREs, the Secondary Heads of Religious Education and the Bath Interfaith Group.

Bath Interfaith Group (IFG) members are represented on SACRE (Committee A), and local interfaith events are publicised to SACRE members.

In October 2019, representatives of different faiths addressed the annual meeting with Bath IFG Patron the Mayor of Bath Councillor Gerry Curran on his theme of 'Water'. This theme was repeated for the general public at the Mayor's Multifaith Gathering in February 2020.

As in each October, representatives of different faiths commemorated the Week of Prayer for World Peace, and to mark National Interfaith Week in November, Hindu members of the panel addressed the theme 'The Many Colours of Hinduism'.

In December, Bath Islamic Centre Imam Mohammed Gamal gave a talk about the miraculous birth of Jesus from the Qur'anic perspective.

Activities in 2020 began with Bath's annual event to honour victims of the Holocaust and other Genocides, coordinated by B&NES Council. The theme 'Stand Together' was centred around an interview with a Kinder-Transport survivor, and with music from local musicians.

The final 'live' event just before lockdown began in March was a talk on Progressive Revelation: 'One God, Many Faiths' by a member of the Bahá'i Faith.

Several planned events had to be cancelled, and The IFG continued with discussions via video conference. The first was to look at 'The response of faith communities to the Covid-19 pandemic'; with contributions from seven faith communities, held in May. In July, another was held on the topic of 'Charity' from the perspectives of six faiths (using their Holy texts).

The active programme demonstrates the good variety of local faith practitioners and activities available as a resource to SACRE.

## **7 SACRE arrangements**

### **7.1 Chair and membership**

SACRE's Chair is Dr Jane O'Hara (Group A – Bahá'i Community) and there are two Vice-Chairs, David Williams (Group B – Church of England) and Dr Yuktेशwar Kumar (Group A – Hindu Community). Dr Kumar stood down in October 2019 and Narada Das (Group A – Hindu Community – ISKCON), was elected in his place. Dr O'Hara was re-elected for a further three year term as Chair in the October 2019 meeting.

SACRE is fortunate in having participation from a diverse representation from local faith communities, and these contacts are especially useful as a resource to RE teachers locally.

SACRE recorded its grateful thanks to three members who left its service this year, Kerry Huggins (NASUWT), Rashad Azami of the Muslim community and Tim Powell (Unitarians).

During the year Lindsey Thompson (NEU) was temporarily elected to SACRE and then Polly Netto, as permanent member. A new Church of England representative, Miranda Young, and new LA representative, Stephen Luke, were also welcomed to SACRE as new members.

### **7.2 Professional and administrative support**

SACRE was supported by Dave Francis, the Associate Adviser for Religious Education and Clerk to SACRE.

### **7.3 Finance report**

See Financial Statement below.

## SACRE Financial Statement 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020

<b>Allocation</b>	<b>£ 9,434.00</b>
<b>Brought forward from 18-19 for resources costs</b>	<b>£ 232.37</b>

### Expenditure

Production of new materials for Agreed Syllabus	1,400.00
School support grants: visits/visitors and Holocaust Education training	964.95
Resource Centre including RE Today subscription	279.00
NASACRE subscription	105.00
Meeting costs	36.30
Members' training, expenses & fees	266.80
Monitoring of RE and collective worship and production of newsletters and annual report	1,050.00
SACRE and Agreed Syllabus websites hosting and management	330.66
Professional fees	5,250.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>9,682.71</b>

Allocation + funds brought forward	9,666.37
Total Spend	(9,682.71)
To be brought forward 2020-21	<b>- 16.34</b>