



**WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL**



A Meeting of the **SACRE (STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION)** will be held virtually on **MONDAY 6 NOVEMBER 2023 AT 6.15 PM**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Susan Parsonage'.

Susan Parsonage
Chief Executive
Published on 27 October 2023

Note: Non-Committee Members and Members of the public are welcome to attend the meeting. If you wish to participate virtually via Microsoft Teams please contact Democratic Services. The meeting can also be watched live using the following link: <https://youtube.com/live/4i92-qdUugk?feature=share>

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MEMBERSHIP OF THE SACRE (STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION)

Group A

Nigel Harman	Free Church
Kiran Hunjan	Sikhism
Catherine Jinkerson	Free Church
Beth Rowland	Vice-Chair Free Church
Anju Sharma	Hinduism
Shira Solomons	Judaism
Clare Walsha	Humanists UK (co-opted)
Shahid Younis	Islam

Group B

Becky Medlicott	Church of England
John Sutton	Church of England
Linda Galpin	Church of England

Group C

Nick Barnett	Soulscape
Julie Easton	Primary RE Teacher
Paris Finnegan	Primary RE Teacher
Samantha Lawless	Primary RE Teacher
Philip Theobald	Primary Headteacher
Stephen Vegh	Chairperson Educational Advisor

Group D

Jordan Montgomery	Wokingham Borough Council
Jackie Rance	Wokingham Borough Council

Clerk to the SACRE

Luciane Bowker

LA Link / RE Advisor

Angela Hill and Emily Waddilove

ITEM NO.	SUBJECT	PAGE NO.
1	WELCOME AND APOLOGIES The Chairman will welcome members, guests and new members. The clerk will extend apologies received.	
2	AGREED SYLLABUS CONFERENCE	Verbal Report
2a	Matters arising Members to read the sample syllabuses and send any comments via email by 7 July 2023. (Subsequently this deadline was amended to Monday 17 July.)	
3	ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR To elect a Chair and Vice-Chair for the 2023/24 academic year.	

4 MINUTES

5 - 16

To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 12 June 2023.

4a Matters arising

- Secondary school survey and email to headteachers (*Draft email and survey questions to HTs will be tabled at the meeting*)
- Introducing member presentations about their faith as a standing item in meetings.
- To proactively try to recruit secondary school members.
- To encourage SACRE members to be more engaged in visits to schools to observe RE lessons and collective worship
- Possibly holding the summer SACRE meeting in a school or in a place of worship.
- Training and network dates to be shared with SACRE members.
- Samantha Lawless to share artwork submitted by her school for the Spirited Arts competition.
- To develop a more robust system to recruit new members.
- Members of group C to give presentations about collective worship at their schools.
- Emily Waddilove to contact colleagues regarding reactivating the Interfaith group.
- Angela Hill and Emily Waddilove agreed to ask schools whether they have won any RE-related awards, and report back.
- Angela Hill and Emily Waddilove agreed to explore the idea of an RE competition with schools to see if there is interest.

5 HOW ARE THINGS IN WOKINGHAM SCHOOLS?

6 DEVELOPMENT PLAN AND BUDGET - UPDATES

17 - 22

7 FEEDBACK FROM TEACHER NETWORKS AND TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

23 - 24

8 DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT ON PREVIOUS ACADEMIC YEAR

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9 WOKINGHAM SCHOOLS OFSTED INSPECTIONS UPDATE

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10 NATIONAL UPDATES RELATING TO EDUCATION AND RE, INCLUDING NASACRE UPDATES

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11 MEMBER PRESENTATION ABOUT THEIR FAITH

12 DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS

19 February 2024 – via Teams

10 June 2024 – in person

13 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

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Agenda Item 4

SACRE (STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION)

MINUTES OF A MEETING HELD ON 12 JUNE 2023 AT 6.30 PM

Committee Members Present

Group A

Shahid Younis	Islam
John Sutton	Church of England

Group B

John Sutton	Church of England
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Group C

Stephen Vegh	Chairperson Secondary RS Teacher
Julie Easton	Primary RE Teacher
Samantha Lawless	Primary RE Teacher
Nick Barnett	Soulscape

Group D

Jordan Montgomery	Wokingham Borough Council
Jackie Rance	Wokingham Borough Council

Clerk to Sacre

Luciane Bowker

LA Link / RE Advisor

Emily Waddilove / Angela Hill

1 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

The Chairman welcomed members and introductions were made.

He welcomed new members and apologised for not having been able to contact new members in advance of this meeting. He stated that new members were welcome to reach out to him if they wanted to discuss anything outside of the meeting.

Apologies for absence were submitted from Linda Galpin, Nigel Harman, Catherine Jinkerson and Beth Rowland.

2 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of SACRE held on 20 February 2023 were confirmed as a correct record, subject to the amendment below.

The third bullet point on page 7 of the agenda referred to religious belief census data.

3 MATTERS ARISING

Matters arising from the 20 February 2023 meeting were discussed.

3.1 Secondary School Survey

Emily Waddilove, Local Authority Link Officer for the SACRE presented the Secondary School Survey report.

At the last meeting the RS GCSE results of last year were shared with SACRE. Although the results in Wokingham were good and above the national average, there had been a reduction in the number of students entered for RS GCSE. This was in line with the national picture and Wokingham's number of entries were above the national average.

As a result of discussions about this issue, it was decided that SACRE would like to explore with schools the provision of RE in Key Stage 4 and 5 and the RE GCSE provision in Wokingham schools. A survey was drafted and shared with SACRE members, the final survey incorporated the comments received and was sent to 10 secondary schools.

Responses were received from 60% of schools. The report contained in the agenda pack included the questions and responses in red.

Emily Waddilove went through the report in detail, reading out the questions and responses.

The following points were highlighted:

- One school responded that they did not teach RE for Key Stage 5. However, some form of RE teaching for Key Stage 5 is compulsory;
- The survey was completed anonymously to encourage more responses and honest responses;
- One of the comments was about the wish for more direct contact from SACRE with schools headteachers and leaders. Emily Waddilove and Angela Hill, RE Advisor had discussed these comments and thought about sending a similar survey to headteachers and leaders to find out what support schools would like and their compliance with statutory requirements. This was well timed with the development of the new syllabus;
- Angela Hill added that it was clear that some schools were not fully compliant with RE requirements. She believed that offering support to schools was the best way to promote compliance.

Shahid Younis asked if Ofsted was picking up the fact that the statutory requirements were not being fulfilled. Angela Hill explained that Ofsted was an inspectorate and not a compliance organisation, and their comments about RE were infrequent. Non-compliance could affect Ofsted results but often this was not picked up.

Shahid Younis was surprised that a statutory requirement was not being monitored and added that SACREs did not have enforcement powers. He asked for further clarification.

Angela Hill stated that SACRE did have a role in relation to standards and compliance with the law in relation to RE and collective worship. However, SACRE did not have any powers to deal with non-compliance other than its advisory role.

Shahid Younis noted that only two schools reported having specialist RE teachers for all teaching at KS4. He believed that a lack of specialist teachers impacted negatively on learning outcomes. Specialist teaching was likely to improve outcomes. He asked if there

was a lack of specialist teachers and what could be done about it. He also asked if RE CPD training was available for RE teachers.

Angela Hill explained that there was a crisis in recruitment of specialist RE teachers. She pointed out that RE was, along with Personal Social Health and Economic Education (PSHEE), the subject that was most frequently taught by non-specialists. Often, when schools' budgets were tight, teachers with spare capacity in their timetables were directed to teach RE. This issue was not unique to Wokingham, it was a national issue which was often challenged by organisations. Non-specialist teachers were encouraged to do CPD, but it was recognised that RE was best taught by specialist teachers.

In terms of professional development opportunities for teachers, Wokingham's offer was very good. In Wokingham there was good engagement with primary school teachers, but there was a challenge with engaging secondary school teachers. This was also in line with the national picture. This issue was ongoing, and efforts were being made to improve secondary school teachers' participation in CPD opportunities. There were CPD opportunities outside of Wokingham too, and teachers were made aware of these in newsletters.

Emily Waddilove added that discussions were being undertaken about how best to encourage participation in CPD by secondary school teachers, including possibly working jointly with other Berkshire local authorities.

Nick Barnett asked how could we ensure that the 40% of schools who did not respond to the survey were compliant with the mandatory requirements? Emily Waddilove suggested sending an email to all headteachers, asking about RE provision in their schools. However, if schools chose not to engage, the local authority could only suggest best practice, there were no enforcement powers.

In response to a question, Emily Waddilove explained that responses from the survey with headteachers would be shared with SACRE, but without specifying the names of schools.

John Sutton asked for more information about the difference between RE teaching and collective worship (Q4 and Q6 responses raised concern that schools were not approaching these things separately). Angela Hill explained that RE was an academic subject with a syllabus and collective worship was a whole school collective responsibility. She suggested addressing this concern in the email to headteachers and school leaders.

Councillor Montgomery asked if the issue of RE specialist teaching being dropped due to budgetary constraints was on the same level as other non-STEM subjects. Angela Hill stated that she could only comment anecdotally; and she believed that STEM and English subjects received priority funding and timetabling on the curriculum for most schools.

Shahid Younis believed that SACRE had a role to play in terms of marketing RE and finding out why schools were not placing more value into the teaching of RE.

The Chairman confirmed that in his experience in schools, RE specialist teaching was the first thing to go when budgets were tight. He agreed that SACRE should look to promote the value of teaching RE to schools with the new syllabus.

Shahid Younis added that it was more than just the teaching of RE, but the learning of values, which impacted on other subjects too.

Upon being put to the vote, members voted unanimously in favour of instructing Angela Hill and Emily Waddilove to write an email to headteachers and school leaders, along the lines discussed during the meeting.

RESOLVED That:

- 1) The Secondary School Survey report be noted; and
- 2) An email would be sent to headteachers and school leaders to gain further understanding of provision in secondary schools in relation to RE and collect worship, and to open up conversations.
 - I. The survey questions would be circulated to SACRE members before they were sent out.
 - II. The feedback from the survey would be shared with SACRE.

3.2 Census Data - further information

This information was being provided in response to a request made by SACRE at its last meeting, asking for more Wokingham specific data on religion and belief in the borough. It was explained that if members went into the website, they could use the buttons to find out more detail. Screen shots of the web pages available were included in the agenda pack

The link could be found here:

<https://app.powerbi.com/view?r=eyJrIjoiMzgxYTRlNzgtZDY2NC00ZDNjLWI1MWMtNWE3NDZmZDZmNGQyIiwidCI6IjFjZTZkZDIllWzZmZctNDA4OC1iZTVlLThkYmJlYzA0YjM0YSIsImMiOiJh9>

Of note was the fact that around 37% of people in Wokingham were classified as having no religion. It was believed that this meant that 37% did not affiliate themselves with any religion, but it did not necessarily mean that they did not believe in God.

Emily Waddilove explained how to navigate the web pages and find out relevant information. Further information available included the percentage of the Wokingham population by religion; the proportion of those with different religions and beliefs by neighbourhood; the differences in census data between 2011 and 2021 in Wokingham.

RESOLVED That the Census Data – further information item be noted.

3.3 SACRE Self-evaluation Tool

Emily Waddilove explained that NASACRE had produced a self-evaluating tool that SACREs could use to self-evaluate themselves. It had been previously agreed that this would be discussed outside of a SACRE meeting and the results would be presented to SACRE. Two meetings to discuss the self-assessment had taken place since the last SACRE meeting. Beth Rowland, Angela Hill, Clare Walsh, Stephen Vengh and Emily Waddilove took part in the meetings.

The report in the agenda contained the assessment. Useful discussions were had at those two meetings. As result of this self-assessment the following suggestions were made:

- Introducing a standing item in future agendas for a member to do a short presentation about their own faith or their work as a SACRE member;
- That the SACRE Chair would contact new SACRE members before their first meeting to discuss the work undertaken by SACRE;
- That members representing a faith group could contact members of group C to organise a visit to their school to observe a RE lesson or collective worship;
- To develop a more robust system to recruit new members;
- In relation to receiving information about collective worship in schools, members of group C could do a presentation about collective worship at their schools; (Julie Easton volunteered to give a presentation about collective worship at her school)
- Improvement could be made in relation to partnerships with key local stakeholders. Mention was made of a Wokingham Interfaith Group, and Shahid Younis informed that this group but was now inactive;
- Section 3, which was about the effectiveness of the syllabus would be discussed with the hub as part of the syllabus review;
- Section 4 was covered with the other sections;
- It was felt that Section 5 about community cohesion was not within the scope of the work undertaken by SACRE. A government report had recently been published which provided information for schools about programmes supporting community cohesion, including those linking RE and community cohesion.

Emily Waddilove suggested that the most useful parts of the tool could be used on a regular basis to assess SACRE's effectiveness, and the results could be brought back to SACRE for discussion.

Samantha Lawless stated that faith members were welcome to come to Shinfield Junior. She asked who to contact about event opportunities in schools. She was informed that members could contact Luciane Bowker, SACRE Clerk or Emily Waddilove, they would be able to share the information with SACRE members.

Shahid Younis welcomed the opportunity to visit schools, he asked for an invitation. He added that it would be good to re-activate the Interfaith Group and wondered who to contact about it. Emily Waddilove could enquire with community engagement colleagues.

John Sutton agreed with the suggestions made during discussions. In relation to 1C - he noted that there was a strong representation from the primary phase in the SACRE membership, but the secondary phase representation could be improved, and asked that this be included in the self-assessment.

Emily Waddilove explained that there was awareness of this issue. However, the last time there was a vacancy in Group C, there had been no interest from the secondary phase, and lots of interest from the primary phase. The intention was to try for a secondary representative again when a vacancy arises.

In response to a question, it was explained that there was a limited number of vacancies per group. However, if there was interest, a secondary representative could join as a co-opted member.

Clare Walsh asked what the action plan for improvement was following the self-assessment. Angela Hill explained that the plan was to act on the suggestions which arose in the meetings about the self-evaluation tool, including:

- Introducing the member presentations about their faith as a standing item in meetings;
- To proactively try to recruit secondary members;
- To encourage SACRE members to be more engaged in visits to schools to observe RE lessons and collective worship;
- Possibly holding the summer SACRE meeting in a school or in a place of worship.

Angela Hill stated that the all the options mentioned above were being discussed.

Clare Walsha asked for more information about the work of NASACRE and if there would be an opportunity to feedback to them about the usefulness of the self-assessment tool.

Angela Hill explained that NASACRE was the National Association of SACREs, they were a voluntary body that sought to support SACREs across England. The local authority paid a membership fee to NASACRE, and they provided advice, support, a website, information and guidance. They also held an annual conference to celebrate the work of SACREs across England.

In terms of feedback, the results of the self-assessment would be incorporated into the SACRE's annual report which was submitted to NASACRE. She stated that there was a good line of communication between SACRE and NASACRE.

John Sutton was in favour of the proposal to hold the summer meeting in a place of worship or a school and offered to help to facilitate this at St Paul's.

RESOLVED That the SACRE Self-evaluation tool report be noted, and the proposals discussed during the meeting be supported.

4 HOW ARE THINGS FOR WOKINGHAM SCHOOLS?

Emily Waddilove stated that information previously shared with SACRE in this academic year continued to be relevant. National reports confirmed the narrative that schools continued to work hard to help children recover from the pandemic, not just academically, but in terms of well-being and behaviour too.

Some of the points highlighted are listed below:

- A national report published in February revealed a greater level of anxiety amongst children and young people, and more mental health issues. Some of the factors mentioned included family financial difficulties, negative experiences with social media, and concerns about national and global issues, including the environment;
- A recent report had criticized the government saying that much more support for schools was needed to recover from the pandemic. More funding for tutoring, more support for attendance, and improvements for SEN need to be implemented as soon as possible;
- Attendance rates were now lower than they were before the pandemic;
- Recruitment and retention of teachers (not just for RE) was a challenge for schools. The teacher workforce census showed that there was a 5% overall teacher vacancy, a higher proportion of teachers retiring early and a third of teachers were leaving the profession within six years of qualifying;
- The number of sick days undertaken by teachers had increased;
- Teachers were often working more than 60 hours a week;
- A high level of mental health issues had been reported, with high workload and Ofsted being cited as causing stress;

- There had been teachers strikes and there would be further strikes in the future;
- There had been an increase in the number of SEN children, and there was a programme of improvement of SEN provision in Wokingham;
- Children from Ukraine and Hong Kong continued to arrive in the borough, with schools welcoming and supporting them.

Teacher members agreed that schools were under a lot of pressure. Samantha Lawless added there were difficulties in relation to helping children with limited English vocabulary.

In response to a comment, Julie Easton stated that in her experience, she often felt frustrated that she could not finish all her tasks. She went on to explain the challenges faced by her that caused stress. She stated that teachers were often juggling many different tasks/challenges for which they had no control over but were accountable for.

The Chairman sympathised with Julie Easton's comments and explained that he had decided to stop teaching for a better work-life balance.

Angela Hill stated that it was important to be mindful of teachers' workload in relation to CPD requirements. She stated that often secondary school RE teachers had a huge workload to deal with, teaching many different classes.

At this point Reverend Becky Medicott joined the meeting and introduced herself. She was looking to join SACRE as a Church of England representative.

RESOLVED That the update be noted.

5 DEVELOPMENT PLAN AND BUDGET

Angela Hill and Emily Waddilove presented the Development Plan and Budget report. Angela pointed out that the main difference in this year's plan compared to last year's was the addition of the work on the development of the new syllabus. She corrected a typo in the report, it should read Summer 2023, Autumn 2023 and Spring 2024.

In relation to the development plan, the following comments were made:

- Meetings were often quorate, with representatives from all groups and decisions could be made;
- There was encouragement for SACRE members to participate in RE at schools and collective worship;
- The previous plan included CPD for secondary schools. However, in previous years attendance was so low that alternative ways to deliver training were being discussed. Network meetings for secondary school teachers had still been included in the development plan and support was still available for secondary school teachers.

There were no changes to the budget items from last year's budget. The total cost was slightly higher than last year's budget because there was a need to budget a little more for Angela Hill's time, this was because RE Today, who Angela worked for had increased Angela's daily rate. The rate remained reasonable in comparison with rates charged by other education consultants.

The Chairman drew attention to the fact that Wokingham's SACRE budget was very good in comparison with other local authorities.

Shahid Younis asked if inflation had been considered when setting up the budget. Emily Waddilove informed that she had discussed the issue of inflation with her finance colleagues. They had not been prepared to officially increase the budget but were agreeable to covering the cost of inflation if needed, for the continuation of services.

Nick Barnett suggested including a question in the email to headteachers and school leaders about the best way to deliver CPD to secondary teachers. Emily Waddilove informed that Angela Hill already asked this question at every opportunity, but agreed that it would be good to ask in the email.

RESOLVED That the Development Plan and Budget report be noted.

6 FEEDBACK FROM TEACHER NETWORKS AND TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Angela Hill presented the Feedback from Teacher Networks and Training Opportunities report and highlighted the following points;

- A cross-phase face to face RE network session took place on 7 March and was primarily attended by primary school teachers;
- The secondary RE CPD session had been re-scheduled twice, once because of low attendance and once because of a strike. An effort was being made to be flexible to encourage participation. The possibility of a pan-Berkshire joint session was being explored;
- The primary network which took place on 25 May was well attended;
- The secondary network meeting had been scheduled for 5 July, after the exam season was finished. An effort was being made to ensure this session would be engaging and useful for secondary teachers;
- A programme of training and network dates for the next year had already been developed and SACRE members were encouraged to attend if possible. Dates would be shared with members.

RESOLVED That the report be noted.

7 NATIONAL UPDATES INCLUDING NASACRE UPDATES (AND CONFERENCE/ AGM FEEDBACK)

Angela Hill informed that she had attended the NASACRE Conference and AGM on 22 May 2023. She reminded members that they were welcome to put themselves forward to attend the Conference next year with her.

The following points were highlighted:

- This event was a good opportunity for networking, finding out about innovations and the work being carried out by other SACREs across England;
- A report was presented at the Conference by Dr Katherine Wright who is the CEO of Culham St Gabriel's Trust which supports and advocates for RE. She talked about SACRE's supporting and enriching teachers' voices around RE, collective worship and worldviews;
- A discussion was had about the complexities involved in multi-academy trusts and the fact that they did not have to adhere to the locally agreed syllabus;
- Slides about the Conference would be shared with members;
- Some SACREs faced challenges in relation to their limited budgets. However, Wokingham was in a good position with a healthy budget;

- A point was made by David Hampshire in his analysis of annual reports, that SACRE's advice given to the local authority should be from the whole SACRE (and not just from the RE advisor and local authority officer);
- Hazel Henson had recently been appointed as the new subject lead for RE;
- The Children's Commissioner Dame Rachel de Souza, a former RE teacher had shared her views promoting RE;
- The report contained in the agenda included information about current competitions and awards, CPD, podcasts and other resources;
- The AREIAC (Association of Religious Education Inspectors, Advisors and Consultants) Conference would take place on 2 and 3 July 2023 and SACRE members were welcome to attend;
- RE Hubs were now live and Justine Ball led Wokingham's Hub. The Hub aimed to connect and provide resources for RE professionals;
- The NATRE (National Association of Teachers of Religious Education) survey for teachers was open until 31 July 2023.

Emily Waddilove stated that updates relevant to schools were passed on to teachers via newsletters.

Councillor Montgomery asked if any Wokingham's schools had won awards. Angela Hill and Emily Waddilove agreed to ask schools and report back. The Chairman added that it would be good to see some of the artwork produced by Wokingham's children, and Angela Hill agreed to find out whether any Wokingham schools had entered the Spirited Arts competition (which was run by the organisation she worked for). Samantha Lawless stated that her school would be entering the Spirited Arts competition and she would be glad to share the artwork submitted.

RESOLVED That the update be noted.

8 BERKSHIRE SACRE HUB UPDATE - INCLUDING SYLLABUS REVIEW

The Chairman explained that there was a duty to review the syllabus every five years. This could be delayed if there were strong reasons, for example the pandemic. This was a big project for SACRE and it would be developed during the next meetings.

Angela Hill explained that the Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC) was a statutory body brought together in order to produce an agreed syllabus for RE. It was usually largely composed of the same members as SACRE, but was a separate legal body from SACRE, established by the local authority.

The specific requirements for the ASC were described in the slides shared with SACRE.

9 DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS

The dates of next meetings were confirmed:

6 November 2023 – online via Teams at 6.15pm

19 February 2024 – online via Teams at 6.15pm

10 AOB

Shahid Younis suggested the idea of a RE project competition within schools in the borough, in an effort to promote RE teaching in schools. Emily Waddilove agreed that this was a good idea, but had concerns about capacity, given the amount of work that was

needed to undertake the syllabus review. Angela Hill and Emily Waddilove agreed to explore this idea with schools to see if there was an interest.

Angela Hill added that the launch of the new syllabus would be an ideal opportunity to promote RE teaching in schools.

Shahid Younis informed that he had organised an event which took place at the end of Ramadan in May, to which many people from different churches and faiths, different political groups and the police had attended. The purpose of fasting and the reasons behind it had been explained in talks. This had been held in the Mosque in Earley. A GP had also attended to explain about fasting from a medical perspective. The feedback for this event was very positive. SACRE members had been invited to attend, but no-one from SACRE had attended on this occasion. There would be an opportunity to attend next year.

11 AGREED SYLLABUS CONFERENCE

12 ELECT A CHAIR

Upon being put to the vote, Stephen Vegh was unanimously elected Chair of ASC.

SACRE members were advised to let the schools / faith organisation they represented know that they were taking part in the syllabus review.

Although not a requirement, the intention was to work in partnership with other Berkshire ASCs.

13 DISCUSSION OF SAMPLE SYLLABUS MODELS

At this point in the meeting, members were given copies of samples of agreed syllabus pages, questions about the syllabus samples and the current syllabus for discussion. Members discussed in pairs.

Angela Hill declared an interest on the basis that she worked for RE Today. One of the samples had been produced by RE Today and was commercially available.

The samples had already been shared with some teachers and feedback was being gathered.

14 CONCLUSIONS - POINTS TO TAKE FORWARD

Angela Hill asked members to take back the samples and to take their time to read and review them. She encouraged members to send any comments via email by 7 July 2023. *Subsequently this deadline was amended to Monday 17 July.*

Angela Hill informed that the initial feedback from teachers stated that:

- They were concerned that adopting a completely new syllabus would increase their workload considerably. However, there was acceptance that there was a lot of new thinking in RE that needed to be incorporated in the new syllabus;
- They had enquired about support material for a new syllabus;
- They felt that none of the samples was too radically different from current teaching of RE.

In proposing the new syllabus, a lot of weight should be given to teachers' feedback and the support available to pupils.

Shahid Younis pointed out that, from previous experience, this exercise took a lot of time and resources. He added that in his opinion it was a good idea to work in partnership with other SACREs, to share resources and financial costs. He wondered how many members from SACRE should take part in the hub's discussions about the syllabus

Emily Waddilove stated that an email had been sent from Anne Andrews, who was coordinating the discussion groups, asking for volunteers. Angela Hill informed that that piece of work had now been completed, but there would be further opportunity for involvement in the work.

Shahid Younis asked about the timeline for this project. Angela Hill informed that a decision had been made to delay the project during the pandemic to alleviate teachers' workload. Ideally the syllabus would be ready for delivery for Spring 2024.

Shahid Younis urged SACRE members to be mindful of the current level of teachers' stress, not to add to their workload unnecessarily.

Angela Hill stated that it was important to develop a syllabus that would be robust for the next five years.

The Chairman pointed out that the current syllabus had been written five years ago and much had changed. For example, the current syllabus did not include non-religious beliefs and Humanism, the syllabus needed updating.

Julie Easton stated that having a more extensive document would be helpful for lesson planning, the current document was very thin.

Nick Barnett asked what support material would be available for schools. Emily Waddilove explained that for the current curriculum there was support available on the website. The level of support for the new syllabus would be part of the future discussions as the project developed.

John Sutton wondered if there would be an opportunity to reflect about the fact that more people were opting out of organised religion. He wondered about the impact on mental health of not having a religion, and the negative impact of certain organised religions.

Emily Waddilove mentioned the Real People Real Faith project, which consisted of video interviews with people from different faiths addressing some of the issues raised by John Sutton. She suggested using these videos as support material for the new syllabus. The videos gave an insight into people's thoughts and feelings about their faith.

Julie Easton suggested adding links to the resource materials in the syllabus document, such as to the Real People Real Faith materials, as this would facilitate the accessibility of resources for teachers.

Members were advised that the Autumn meeting would focus on the development of the new syllabus.

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Wokingham SACRE action plan April 2023-March 2024

(See budget sheet for costings)

Aim	Actions	Timescales	People Responsible	Summer 2023	Autumn 2024	Spring 2024
<p>A. CORE BUSINESS</p> <p>To be a supportive and proactive SACRE enjoying full and well-informed membership</p>	<p>1. Fill membership vacancies if/when they arise</p> <p>Work proactively with SACRE members, faith communities and other partners to ensure representation on all SACRE committees.</p>	ongoing	SACRE Chair SACRE Clerk SACRE members			
	<p>2. SACRE members attend termly SACRE meetings (3 per year) and, when possible, teacher termly network meetings and training events e.g. annual NASACRE conference</p>	<p>Termly SACRE meetings: Summer 2023 Autumn 2023 Spring 2024</p> <p>Termly teacher network meetings and occasional training events</p>	SACRE Chair/SACRE Adviser SACRE members SACRE Clerk	and in person	online	online
	<p>3. SACRE member attendance at networks and training events/and or visit local schools</p>	Aim for one person to visit a school or attend a SACRE CPD/event each term	SACRE Chair SACRE Clerk SACRE members RE teachers and school leaders	Member participation at least 1 event/or at least 1 school visit	Member participation at least 2 events/or at least 2 school visits in total	Member participation at least 3 events/or at least 3 school visits in total

	4. Produce annual SACRE Report	Autumn Term 2023	SACRE Adviser and clerk	Draft report prepared	Present draft for members' approval during Autumn term Submit report by 30 th December 2023	Present final, submitted report at Spring 2024 meeting and to Councillors on Date tbc
	5. Review the action plan at each meeting and update for next year	At each SACRE meeting	SACRE Adviser and SACRE	Meeting	Meeting	Meeting
	6. Subscribe to NASACRE Representation at annual NASACRE conference, NASACRE AGM	Ongoing	1 SACRE member and SACRE Adviser to attend annual AGM. SACRE adviser to provide updates on NASACRE business at meetings and, where appropriate, through the SACRE clerk via email	This year's conference and AGM was face to face in London on 22 nd May 2023 – Wokingham represented by adviser but no member. Report from event given at summer 2023 meeting.	NASACRE updates discussed at Autumn meeting. Invitation opened to members to attend the AGM in 2024	Spring 2024 SACRE meeting to finalise who will attend NASACRE AGM in 2024 to represent Wokingham SACRE
B. To support teachers of RE to continually improve RE learning in their school, ensuring that the agreed Pan-Berkshire	1. Provide two termly primary network meetings, two termly secondary network meetings and one cross-phase network meeting for	Ongoing, network meetings meeting each term plus feedback at each termly SACRE meeting	SACRE Adviser	Primary and secondary online network events	Primary and secondary online network events	Cross-Phase Network in the Summer term – probably at St Crispin's

syllabus is understood, and teachers are equipped to deliver it effectively	Wokingham teachers					
	2. Primary Subject Leader Training - twilight session online (may be joint with Reading or Bracknell)	Early autumn term 2023	SACRE Adviser	To be advertised in the summer term and booking to be made available	Training to take place in September 2023 Feedback to SACRE in November	Prepare to advertise September 2024 session.
Pan-Berkshire Hub	Consolidate and develop the Pan-Berkshire SACRE Hub. Syllabus review	Ongoing	Discuss convening ASC and decide who will take part	ASCs to decide on syllabus content The Real People: Real Faith Project is complete but work extended with extra funding to develop films and resources on additional faith communities.	ASCs write/develop/finalise syllabus if in-house option chosen Work with Hub to aid extensions of the Real People: Real Faith project Liaise with SACRE members and Hub to consider the feasibility of further projects, but prioritising the syllabus review Teacher survey re agreed syllabus has now been considered and next steps relating to the	Syllabus complete and roll out

					syllabus review being discussed	
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SACRE budget April 2023 - March 2024

BUDGET PLAN	Spending Apr-October 23
<p>CORE COSTS Planned spending = £3,315</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional fees: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - NASACRE subscription - Attendance at NASACRE conference • IT support for webcasting virtual SACRE meetings x 2 • Refreshments for in person SACRE meeting • Annual report design • RE advisor: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 3 x SACRE meetings (preparation and attendance) - Annual report writing - Attendance at NASACRE conference - Emails, admin - Travel expenses 	<p>£69 refreshments for June SACRE meeting £153.50 Design work for SACRE annual report 2021-22 £550 RE advisor attendance at NASACRE conference £120 NASACRE conference fee £175.83 RE advisor travel and accommodation for NASACRE conference £550 RE Advisor - June SACRE meeting attendance, prep, follow up £62.42 RE advisor travel to June SACRE meeting £550 RE Advisor writing of annual report 2022-23 £105 NASACRE subscription £50 NASACRE virtual training package £137.50 RE advisor – ad hoc queries, emails etc</p>
<p>PROJECT COSTS Planned spending = £1,890</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultancy – RE advisor: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 5 x network meetings; Twilight primary subject leader training - Travel costs x 1 network meeting • Refreshments for 1 x in person network meeting • Updating of SACRE leaflet – design costs 	<p>£275 RE advisor – Primary network meeting in May</p>
<p>BERKSHIRE SACRE HUB ACTIVITIES Planned spending = £2,275</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Termly Hub meetings (Hub managers’ prep and attendance) - Hub manager travel costs - Hub activities: Syllabus review - RE advisor attendance at hub meetings (+ prep) - RE Advisor time to support hub activities 	<p>£900 Wokingham contribution to SACRE hub £137.50 RE advisor attendance, prep and follow up – April Hub meeting £137.50 RE advisor attendance, prep and follow up – July Hub meeting</p>
<p>Total planned spending = £7,480</p>	<p>Total spends to end of October: £3,973.25</p>

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Agenda Item 7

Wokingham SACRE Autumn 2023 Meeting

Teacher Networks and Training Opportunities

Since the last SACRE meeting on 12th June 2023, the following training opportunities and networks for teachers and leaders of RE in the local authority have taken place online, as twilight sessions. All sessions were provided free of charge to teachers in maintained schools. SACRE members receive news and reminders of training and are always welcome to attend. In all cases where training has been delivered, teacher feedback has been positive.

All sessions are online, from 4pm-5:30pm, unless otherwise stated.

Summer 2023

Training/networking opportunity	Date	Details
Secondary Network	5 th July	Cancelled due to industrial action

Autumn 2023

Training/networking opportunity	Date	Details
Secondary RE Network	19 th September	Training focus developing engagement in secondary RE 4 teachers attended from 2 schools. Julian Bushell attended, and has since been liaising with Emily and secondary schools to increase attendance at secondary networks and future training events.
Primary Subject Leader Training	26 th September	For newly-appointed subject leaders of RE in primary schools, or those returning to the role after a gap. 6 teachers attended.
Primary RE Network Meeting – special EYFS/KS1 event led by Lat Blaylock (RE Today)	2 nd November	RE for 3-7-year olds: collecting evidence of progress in RE through imaginative and creative strategies for younger learners. Number of attendees not known at time of writing.

Forthcoming

Spring Term 2024

Training/networking opportunity	Date	Description
Primary RE Network Meeting with Angela Hill	20 th February	Discussion of floor books session. Possible focus on reading in RE
Secondary RE Network Meeting with Angela Hill	21 st February	Training focus requested by teachers: literacy and reading in RE

Summer Term 2024

Cross-phase RE network, venue most likely St Crispin's, date late June/early July, after exam sessions in secondary schools.

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Wokingham Borough Council

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education

Annual Report September 2022 - July 2023

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SECTION 1: Introduction

1.1 Words from the Chair of SACRE

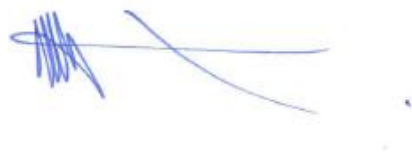
It's been another busy year for the Wokingham SACRE and once again I would like to offer my sincerest thanks to the members of the Wokingham SACRE, who are dedicated to supporting the RE community across Wokingham and also across Berkshire, through our ongoing partnership with the Pan-Berkshire Hub. We are indebted to Angela Hill, our RE advisor, for her professional advice and contributions without which we would not be able to do our work. Finally, I would like to thank Emily Waddilove, our link LA officer, who continues to fully support the work of the SACRE. Education is for improving the lives of others; RE is a subject that does indeed improve the lives of others, it is transformative for a young person and for communities. This can only happen as a result of the hard work and dedication of all the school-based staff who provide quality teaching of RE.

As a SACRE we have adapted and evolved as a result of the pandemic. We meet twice online each year, which has proved to be convenient for members, especially during the colder winter months, and once face to face in the summer. Much SACRE activity has taken place this year, including many network meetings and training courses, which have been well-attended by colleagues across Wokingham.

This year the Wokingham SACRE undertook a self-evaluation review, using the toolkit provided by NASACRE. It highlighted many areas of good practice across our SACRE and also gave us some ideas of things we could do to improve.

Membership of Wokingham SACRE has been stable for many years. This year we did have some vacancies and most have been successfully filled. We are still actively looking for a Buddhist to join our SACRE. We continue to work in partnership with our friends across the other Berkshire SACREs by playing a full part in the Pan-Berkshire Hub. One of the most exciting projects for any SACRE is the review of the syllabus. We started this work in the summer and are now in full syllabus review mode. It's been a great year for the SACRE and this exciting work is set to get even better.

I commend this report to you which contains more detailed descriptions of the work of this SACRE.



Stephen Vegh

Chair: Wokingham SACRE

1.2 SACRE Overview

The Wokingham SACRE met once each term during the academic year to progress its work, structuring this through an agreed action plan. Two of the meetings for the academic year 2022 – 2023 took place online, via Microsoft Teams; the summer term meeting took place in person. The meetings were livestreamed in accordance with protocols for public council meetings. Two out of three meetings were quorate.

An Agreed Syllabus Conference was held on 12th June, attended by those present at the preceding SACRE meeting of the same date.

Brief overview of meetings, showing main items discussed

Standing items for all three meetings:

Welcome and apologies
Approval of minutes of previous meeting
Matters arising
Update on Wokingham schools
Development plan and budget
Feedback from teacher networks and training opportunities
National updates relating to education and RE
NASACRE updates
SACRE projects/Pan Berkshire Hub Updates
AOB
Dates of next meetings

Monday, 7th November 2022 (not quorate)

As well as standing items, the following agenda items were discussed:

Election of Chair and Vice-Chair
This item was deferred as the meeting was not quorate.

Draft annual report 2021-2022

NASACRE Seld-Evaluation Tool

Worldviews

Monday, 20th February 2023

As well as standing items, the following agenda items were discussed:

Election of Chair and Vice Chair – deferred from inquorate meeting on 7th November 2022

Religious Studies exam entries and outcomes

Annual report update

Religion and belief in Wokingham: Census 2021 data

Monday, 12th June 2023

As well as standing items, the following agenda item was discussed:

Secondary School Survey

Census data – further information

NASACRE SACRE Self Evaluation Tool

Agreed Syllabus Conference, Monday, 12th June 2023 (following SACRE meeting)

Election of Chair

Discussion of sample syllabus models

Conclusions and points to take forward

1.3 Working Groups Overview

The SACREs of the 6 unitary authorities across Berkshire, namely, West Berkshire, Reading, Bracknell Forest, The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead and Wokingham, have a well-established working group, called the Pan Berkshire SACRE Hub. Wokingham SACRE is an active member of the Hub. Wokingham SACRE's Chair and Vice Chair as well as its RE Advisor, attend Hub meetings, representing the SACRE. Hub meetings are usually held termly.

The Pan-Berkshire SACRE Hub's work this academic year has been focussed primarily on reviewing the currently shared Locally Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education. There has also been further work done to develop and extend the *Real People: Real Faith* project to better reflect diversity of religious and non-religious worldviews. This project was originally funded by the Westhill Endowment.

During the academic year 2022 to 2023, there were three Pan Berkshire Hub meetings.

Brief overview of Hub meetings, showing main items discussed

Monday, 5th September 2022

Minutes from previous meeting were agreed

Real People, Real Faith Project Update (Baha'i and Humanist resources)

Syllabus Review

REC Draft Resource

NASACRE Self-Evaluation Tool

AOB: Survey on teacher training

Tuesday, 13th December 2022

Minutes from previous meeting were agreed

Syllabus review

Update on Real People, Real Faith Project

AOB: None

Tuesday, 18th July 2023

Minutes from previous meeting were agreed

Syllabus Review

Update on Real People, Real Faith

AOB: None

SECTION 2: RE (statutory responsibilities)

2.1 The locally agreed syllabus and RE in schools

During this academic year, SACRE has been in regular contact with its schools, through teacher networks and via written correspondence seeking teacher and leader voice. SACRE believes that most, if not all, academies in the borough are using the Pan Berkshire Locally Agreed Syllabus. The syllabus, and proposed developments under the syllabus review, are regularly discussed at teachers' network meetings, with the training elements of these meetings often focussing on aspects of the syllabus. The Pan Berkshire Hub Westhill Award project, 'Real People: Real Faith', has continued to produce videos and resources directly linking to key questions in the syllabus, which now encompass greater denominational diversity and Humanism as a non-religious belief system. Teachers have access to extensive resources, freely available, to support them to teach the syllabus effectively. The Hub continues to produce these resources, to enable engagement with a broader range of faiths in the local communities of Berkshire.

Review of the locally agreed syllabus is well underway following a decision to postpone due to the impact of the pandemic in schools, and also to enable proper consideration of the new thinking and debates around RE. Teachers and members of faith and belief groups across the 6 unitary authorities which make up the Pan Berkshire Hub, were encouraged to complete surveys. Teacher responses gave SACREs greater insight into the extent to which the Pan Berkshire Locally Agreed Syllabus is being utilised to create RE curricula in schools, and this is informing the development of the new or revised locally agreed syllabus for RE. SACRE members of Group A and B (faith and belief representatives)

were also asked to feed back their views in writing as well as having opportunities to attend meetings chaired by RE advisers, to discuss their views of what should be taught in RE lessons.

Wokingham convened its Agreed Syllabus Conference on 12th June 2023, and will feed back to the Pan Berkshire Hub in the first instance. The development and construction of the new syllabus will take place in the coming academic year.

2.2 Standards and monitoring of RE

At the time of writing this report, GCSE and A Level Religious Studies outcomes data for summer 2023 are not available; information about outcomes will be added to the report when the data becomes available.

As part of the SACRE's development plan, members are encouraged to visit schools. 1 member of SACRE attended the cross-phase RE network at St Crispins School on 7th March 2023.

Monitoring of Ofsted Inspection Reports

The SACRE monitors Ofsted reports for any comments about collective worship and RE. Our annual reports enable us to share any comments identifying good practice in Wokingham schools. During the academic year 2022-2023, a total of 15 Wokingham schools were inspected by Ofsted:

- 8 primary schools
- 2 junior schools
- 3 secondary school
- 1 pupils referral unit
- 1 special school

Two of the primary schools and one of the junior schools that were inspected are designated as having a religious character (one primary school and one junior school is Church of England, and one primary school is Roman Catholic). We are aware that SACRE is not obliged to report on Religious Education or Collective Worship in Church of England schools as this comes under, Section 48. However, schools with a religious character are invited to participate in all of the support provided by the Wokingham SACRE, so it seems appropriate to include these schools in our monitoring of inspection reports.

There were no 'deep dives' into Religious Education. Two of the inspection reports mention Religious Education or refer to learning closely connected to Religious Education. Both references were made in relation to primary schools:

Reference 1:

"Several pupils have given inspiring talks about their experiences with their additional needs, such as autism or having a stammer. Others have helped to develop understanding and appreciation for their faith or country of origin".

Reference 2:

"Inspectors met with leaders to discuss the curriculum and review pupils' work in design and technology, art and design and religious education."

A further comment made by inspectors at this primary school may relate to RE:

“Currently, a handful of foundation subjects are timetabled for very short blocks of time within the school year, sometimes for no more than one or two weeks at a time. This means that there are very long gaps of time between pupils’ experiences of these subjects. Consequently, some pupils find it difficult to reconnect with or recall previous learning. As a result, they are not building their knowledge securely or deeply enough in these subjects. Leaders need to review their current arrangements for the implementation and timetabling of the foundation subjects to address this.”

None of the inspection reports indicate non-compliance in terms of Religious Education or Collective worship.

2.3 Teacher training and materials and advice for schools

Training and networking opportunities for teachers provided by Wokingham SACRE

Please see the summary of training opportunities provided by Wokingham SACRE to the Local Authority’s teachers in an appendix to this report (7.2). In addition, news of training opportunities from a range of respected providers is shared in weekly Local Authority newsletters and at network meetings.

Teacher network meetings

The SACRE arranges for three RE teachers’ network meetings per academic year which can be attended by primary and secondary practitioners. There are 2 online primary-specific network meetings, 2 online secondary-specific network meetings and one cross-phase meeting, which is face-to-face, with the intention of bringing as many teachers as possible together in a friendly and informal space in which they can discuss issues relating to the provision of RE in their schools, share good practice and find ways to support one another, cross-school.

All network meetings offer updates on both national and local developments in RE, as well as providing a training focus for teachers based on their present needs and priorities. Teachers continue to appreciate the network meetings which are well attended by primary colleagues. The SACRE is exploring ways to improve attendance at networks for secondary teachers. Unfortunately, this year, industrial action has particularly affected the secondary network, with one meeting needing to be re-arranged.

The training focus for each meeting continues to be decided democratically by the teachers attending the previous network meeting. Teachers attending the network meetings are always enthusiastic. They openly share good practice with one another as well as exchanging ideas and discussing concerns. Teachers of varying experience continue to participate at network meetings, which provide a constructive and supportive forum for teachers to develop their practice in the teaching of RE and engagement with collective worship.

Primary RE Subject Leader training

Training for Primary RE subject leaders was well-attended, with 10 teachers participating. In response to teacher feedback, this training now takes place in September instead of March. Teachers reported that the training was of a high standard and equipped them with useful information and resources for embarking upon or developing their role as RE subject leader at their school, or as a reminder of the main responsibilities of the role.

2.4 Other information

The SACRE is not aware of any complaints regarding RE in the Local Authority's schools.

2.5 Advice to the Local Authority

The SACRE has advised the Local Authority of the necessity to convene an Agreed Syllabus Conference. It has not provided any further advice to the local authority regarding Religious Education this academic year.

SECTION 3: Collective Worship (statutory responsibilities)

3.1 Standards and monitoring of Collective Worship

Ofsted have not raised any concerns with regards to the compliance with the law or standards in relation to collective worship in Wokingham's schools.

3.2 Determinations

Wokingham SACRE has not received any applications for determinations.

3.3 Teacher training provided (locally, or national training circulated to schools)

Wokingham SACRE provides extensive training and networking opportunities its schools. Training requirements are determined by teacher requests at network meetings. As teachers have indicated that their training needs relate to RE, no specific training has been provided this year relating to collective worship.

Please see the summary of training opportunities provided by Wokingham SACRE to the Local Authority's teachers in an appendix to this report (7.2). In addition, news of training opportunities from a range of respected providers is shared in termly Local Authority newsletters and at network meetings.

3.4 Materials and advice for schools

The SACRE has distributed all relevant information relating to supporting collective worship in schools via termly network meetings, and via the Local Authority's newsletter for schools.

3.5 Other information

The SACRE is not aware of any complaints regarding collective worship in the Local Authority's schools.

3.6 Advice to the LA

The SACRE has not provided any advice to the Local Authority regarding Collective Worship this academic year.

SECTION 4: Links with other bodies

4.1 National bodies

Wokingham SACRE is an active member of NASACRE. SACRE members are given the opportunity each year, paid for by SACRE, to attend the NASACRE Conference and AGM, as well as NASACRE's programme of online training events. The SACRE's RE Advisor, Angela Hill, represents Wokingham SACRE at NASACRE's Annual Conference and AGM.

Wokingham SACRE has worked closely with RE Today to provide a varied and extensive programme of training to teachers. It actively encourages teachers and schools to become members of NATRE (National Association for Teachers of RE).

Wokingham SACRE supports Stop Ecocide International. This campaign is led by a group of international lawyers, researchers and diplomats who are working to make ecocide (damage or destruction of ecosystems) an international crime.

4.2 Local bodies

The Wokingham SACRE has established and active links with the Pan Berkshire SACREs Hub. Teachers are also aware of RE-Hub for Southeast England, led by Justine Ball.

SECTION 5: Other areas of SACRE involvement locally

Through its members, in addition to links with places of worship and faith groups, schools and the Local Authority, the SACRE has links with the local Primary Headteachers' association; with 'RE Inspired', a local organisation teaching Christianity in schools; and 'Soulscapes', a charity working in partnership with local schools to give young people the space to reflect, and to ask big questions.

SECTION 6: SACRE's own arrangements (statutory responsibilities)

6.1 Professional and administrative support and how the LA supports the SACRE

The LA provides the SACRE with an annual budget to fund its work, enabling it to fulfil its statutory duties as well as deliver training and network meetings free of charge to teachers, and contribute funding to the Berkshire SACRE Hub. The LA provides a clerk to the SACRE who, in addition to clerking meetings, shares information with SACRE members between meetings and helps to recruit new members. A colleague in the Children's Services administration team communicates with teachers of RE, sharing useful information, reminding them about meetings and courses, and keeping the SACRE/RE area of the Wokingham Schools Hub website updated with training materials and guidance documents. An LA officer who is part of the Education Partnership team also provides much support to the SACRE and liaises with the RE advisor to support her work. The RE advisor is recruited by the LA in partnership with the SACRE chair and vice-chair. Our current adviser, Angela Hill, is a national adviser for RE Today and a highly experienced and knowledgeable RE teacher and teacher trainer. Two elected councillors, Cllr Jackie Rance and Cllr Adrian Mather, have been proactive members of the SACRE this year, and have whole-heartedly support the SACRE's work. Cllr Mather was replaced by Cllr Jordan Montgomery in June of this year. In addition to elected members who sit on Group D, another elected member, Beth Rowland, is a member of Group A, representing Christian denominations other than the Church of England. In May 2023, Beth was elected as Wokingham Borough Mayor. Also in Group A, we have Cllr Shahid Younis, our Islam member.

6.2 Membership, representation & recruitment

The SACRE is active in recruiting members to represent all groups. It also considers co-opting those with skills, knowledge and experience who can help to develop its work.

Membership vacancies are discussed at meetings alongside the SACRE development plan. During this academic year, the SACRE had two vacancies in Group A: one for Christian denominations other than the Church of England and one for a Buddhist member. Despite all our efforts, we were not able to recruit to these vacancies. The year began with two vacancies for Church of England (Group B) members. However, during the year we were successful in recruiting a Church of England representative, meaning that we now have 2 members in this group. This should assist with ensuring meetings are quorate. Groups C (Educationalists) and D (The Authority) had no vacancies during the year. SACRE also co-opted a Humanist member this year, and Wokingham LA is taking steps to afford the Humanist representative full SACRE membership within Group A.

Two out of three SACRE meetings during the year were quorate, with all groups represented according to the terms of the SACRE's constitution.

6.3 Training for SACRE (and ASC) members

All new SACRE members receive a guide to SACRE and the responsibilities associated with SACRE membership. The SACRE Clerk, LA Officer and RE Advisor are on hand to advise SACRE members.

All members are invited to attend all training provided for schools (see Section 7.2 below). They are also offered a place at the NASACRE Conference and AGM, paid for by the SACRE, and are also encouraged to attend the online training events provided by NASACRE throughout the academic year.

In addition, SACRE meetings sometimes incorporate presentations from the SACRE’s RE advisor, as in the case of the November 2022 meeting, where there was an item on ‘worldviews’.

6.4 Finance given to SACRE for its work

The LA provides an annual budget to the SACRE. Members shape the use of this funding, and are provided with budget updates by the LA Officer at each SACRE meeting. The budget plan for the financial year 2022-23 can be found in appendix 7.4.

SECTION 7: Appendices

7.1 Results of External Religious Studies examinations: short and full GCSE, A/S & A Level RS

These data are not currently available for the period of this annual report.

7.2 Details on CPD provided to schools

Training and networking opportunities for teachers provided by Wokingham SACRE

All training events have received overwhelmingly positive feedback from teachers. All events took place online, as twilight sessions, between the hours of 4pm and 5:30pm, with the exception of the cross-phase RE network, which was a face-to-face meeting (4pm to 5:30pm), and the primary subject leader training which closed at 6pm. All sessions were provided by Wokingham SACRE, free of charge to schools and were led by Angela Hill, SACRE’s RE Advisor.

Training/networking opportunity	Number of Participants	Description
Primary RE Subject Leader Training 22 nd September 2022 4pm-5.30pm with optional Q and A closing at 6pm	10	Professional learning for new RE subject leaders, those returning to the role or those wanting a refresher. Exploring the role of the subject leader, using practical activities to develop understanding of RE and your leadership and management skills. Tips on establishing and developing a vision for RE, planning a scheme of work, and effective and manageable monitoring and self-evaluation.
Primary RE Network Meeting 4 th October 4pm-5:30pm	12	RE/Education Updates for Primary Practitioners Training focus: Ways of Knowing in RE
Secondary Network 22 nd November 2022 4pm-5:30pm	3	RE/Education Updates for Secondary Practitioners Training focus: Engaging Learners with RE

<p>Secondary CPD Twilight (extra)</p> <p>14th December POSTPONED to 30th March 2023</p>	<p>2 (1 teacher and 1 SACRE member)</p>	<p>Postponed in December due to only 2 attendees from 1 school; then postponed from 1st Feb 2023 to 30th March 2023 due to industrial action. Training focus: Engaging learners with secondary RE</p>
<p>Cross-Phase face-to-face RE Network</p> <p>7th March 2023 St Crispin's School 4pm -5:30pm</p>	<p>12 (10 primary teachers, 1 secondary teacher and 1 SACRE rep)</p>	<p>RE/Education Updates for Practitioners Training focus: Engaging Learners with RE</p>
<p>Primary RE Network</p> <p>25th May 2023 4pm-5:30pm</p>	<p>8</p>	<p>RE/Education Updates for Primary Practitioners Main focus – syllabus samples discussion</p>
<p>Secondary RE Network</p> <p>5th July 2023 4pm-5:30pm</p>	<p>-</p>	<p>Cancelled due to industrial action. Local and national updates were sent to teachers as well as sample syllabi for review.</p>

7.3 LA/SACRE policy statements on Religious Education or Collective Worship

The Local Authority does not have a policy statement on Religious Education or Collective Worship.

7.4 Development plan tied to funding

Wokingham SACRE action plan April 2022-March 2023

(See budget sheet for costings)

Aim	Actions	Timescales	People Responsible	Summer 2022	Autumn 2022	Spring 2023
A. CORE BUSINESS To be a supportive and proactive SACRE enjoying full and well-informed membership	1. Fill membership vacancies if/when they arise Work proactively with SACRE members, faith communities and other partners to ensure representation on all SACRE committees.	Ongoing	SACRE Chair SACRE Clerk SACRE members			
	2. SACRE members attend termly SACRE meetings (3 per year) and, when possible, teacher termly network meetings and training events e.g. annual SACRE conference	Termly SACRE meetings: Summer 2022 Autumn 2023 Spring 2023 Termly teacher network meetings	SACRE Chair/SACRE Adviser SACRE members SACRE Clerk	Meeting	Meeting	Meeting

		and occasional training events				
3.	SACRE member attendance at networks and training events/and or visit local schools	Aim for one SACRE member to visit a school each term	SACRE Chair SACRE Clerk SACRE members RE teachers and school leaders	Member participation at least 1 event/or at least 1 school visit	Member participation at least 2 events/or at least 2 school visits in total	Member participation at least 3 events/or at least 3 school visits in total
4.	Produce annual SACRE Report	Autumn Term 2022	SACRE Adviser and clerk	Draft report prepared	Present draft for members' approval during Autumn term Submit report by 30 th December 2022	Present final, submitted report at Spring 2023 meeting and to Councillors on Date tbc
5.	Review the action plan at each meeting and update for next year	At each SACRE meeting	SACRE Adviser and SACRE	Meeting	Meeting	Meeting
6.	Subscribe to NASACRE	Ongoing	1 SACRE member and SACRE Adviser to attend annual AGM.	This year's conference and	NASACRE updates discussed at Autumn meeting. Invitation opened	Spring 2023 SACRE meeting to finalise who will attend

	Representation at annual NASACRE conference, NASACRE AGM		SACRE adviser to provide updates on NASACRE business at meetings and, where appropriate, through the SACRE clerk via email	AGM online on 23 rd May 2022	to members to attend the AGM in 2023	NASACRE AGM in 2023 to represent Wokingham SACRE
B. To support teachers of RE to continually improve RE learning in their school, ensuring that the agreed Pan-Berkshire syllabus is understood, and teachers are equipped to deliver it effectively	1. Provide two termly primary network meetings, two termly secondary network meetings and one cross-phase network meeting for Wokingham teachers	Ongoing, network meetings meeting each term plus feedback at each termly SACRE meeting	SACRE Adviser	Network meeting at a convenient time for teachers each term	Network meeting at a convenient time for teachers each term	Network meeting at a convenient time for teachers each term
	2. Primary Subject Leader Training - twilight session online (may be joint with Reading or Bracknell)	Autumn term 2022	SACRE Adviser	To be advertised in the summer term and booking to be made available	CPD to take place	Feedback to SACRE

	4.Support RE teachers and leaders in secondary schools with an annual twilight CPD in addition to network meetings	Ongoing	SACRE advisor, Chair and clerk	Advertise secondary CPD opportunity	Deliver secondary CPD	Feedback to SACRE
Pan-Berkshire Hub	Consolidate and develop the Pan-Berkshire SACRE Hub. Syllabus review	Ongoing	SACRE members SACRE advisers and the 6 Chairs from all Berkshire SACREs	The Real People: Real Faith Project is complete but work extended with extra funding to develop films and resources on additional faith communities. The Hub continue to seek contributions from faith communities to demonstrate diversity within as well as across religions	Work with Hub to aid extensions of the Real People: Real Faith project Liaise with SACRE members and Hub to consider the feasibility of further projects, but prioritising the syllabus review Teacher survey re agreed syllabus has now been considered and next steps relating to the syllabus	Begin to establish, in earnest, the Agreed Syllabus Conference.

				<p>Syllabus review: it has been agreed that the review will be postponed for a year due to the pandemic and new thinking emerging around RE. Discussion of ways forward will continue this year.</p>	<p>review being discussed</p>	
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SACRE budget plan April 2022 - March 2023

CORE COSTS	
Professional fees	
- NASACRE subscription	110
- Attendance at NASACRE conference (RE advisor)	40
IT support for webcasting SACRE meetings	165
Refreshments for in person meeting	25
Annual report design	120
LA link/RE advisor – 4.6 days:	2,300
- 3 x SACRE meetings (preparation and attendance) – 2 days	
- Annual report writing - 1 day	
- Attendance at NASACRE conference/ AGM – 1 day	
- Emails, admin etc – 0.6 day	
Travel expenses (RE advisor) x 1 SACRE meeting	90
Sub-total budget core costs	£2,850
PROJECT COSTS	
Consultancy – 3.5 days:	
- 5 x network meetings (2 primary; 2 secondary; 1 cross phase (1 meeting in person; others online)	1,250
- Twilight primary subject leader training (online)	250
- Twilight secondary training (online)	250
- Travel costs (1 network meeting)	135
- Refreshments for 1 in person network meeting	20
Updating of SACRE leaflet – design costs	80
Sub-total budget Wokingham project costs	£1,985
BERKSHIRE SACRES HUB	
- Termly Hub meetings (Hub managers’ prep and attendance)	Wokingham contribution: 900
- Hub manager travel costs	
- Hub activities:	
Additional materials for ‘Real People: Real Faith’ project	
Syllabus review	
Consultancy:	
-RE advisor attendance at hub meetings (+ prep) - 1 day	500
-RE Advisor time to support hub activities – 1 day	500
Sub-total budget Hub activities costs	£1,900
<u>Total budget plan</u>	<u>£6,735</u>
Budget allocation	£6,800

7.5 Circulation details for this Annual Report

Copies will be sent electronically to the relevant bodies. This report will be available on the Wokingham Local Authority and NASACRE websites for interested parties to download.

- Director of Children's Services, Wokingham Borough Council
- Lead member for Children's Services, Wokingham Borough Council
- The Department for Education (Central Government)
- NASACRE (National Association of Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education)
- Headteachers and Governing Bodies of all Wokingham Borough schools
- All members of Wokingham SACRE

Report to Wokingham SACRE on Ofsted School Inspections for the academic year 2022-2023

As a SACRE, we monitor Ofsted reports for any comments about, or relating to, Religious Education and collective worship. The total number of Wokingham's schools inspected in the academic year 2022-2023 was 15. This breaks down as:

- 8 primary schools
- 2 junior schools
- 3 secondary schools
- 1 pupil referral unit
- 1 special school

Two of the primary schools and one of the junior schools inspected are designated as having a religious character (one primary school and one junior school is Church of England, and one primary school is Roman Catholic). SACRE is not obliged to report on Religious Education or collective worship in schools with a religious character. However, these schools are invited to participate in all of the support provided by the Wokingham SACRE, so it seems appropriate to include these schools in our monitoring of inspection reports.

Findings

There were no 'deep dives' into Religious Education in any of the schools inspected. Two of the inspection reports mention Religious Education or refer to learning closely connected to Religious Education. Both references were made in relation to primary schools:

Reference 1:

"Several pupils have given inspiring talks about their experiences with their additional needs, such as autism or having a stammer. Others have helped to develop understanding and appreciation for their faith or country of origin".

Reference 2:

"Inspectors met with leaders to discuss the curriculum and review pupils' work in design and technology, art and design and religious education."

A further comment made by inspectors at this primary school may relate to RE:

"Currently, a handful of foundation subjects are timetabled for very short blocks of time within the school year, sometimes for no more than one or two weeks at a time. This means that there are very long gaps of time between pupils' experiences of these subjects. Consequently, some pupils find it difficult to reconnect with or recall previous learning. As a result, they are not building their knowledge securely or deeply enough in these subjects. Leaders need to review their current arrangements for the implementation and timetabling of the foundation subjects to address this."

None of the inspection reports indicate non-compliance in terms of statutory requirements in relation to Religious Education or Collective worship.

COMPARISON WITH PREVIOUS YEAR (2021-2022)

During the academic year 2021-2022, a total of 16 Wokingham schools were inspected by Ofsted:

- 14 primary schools (**)
- 1 secondary school

- 1 maintained nursery

** Four of the primary schools that were inspected are Church of England schools, so Ofsted does not inspect RE or collective worship in these schools.

There were no 'deep dives' into Religious Education, although for this year there were no full inspections.

However, in contrast to the current academic year, there was more detailed reference to Religious Education and collective worship.

7 inspection reports mentioned RE or referred to learning closely connected to RE. Most mention of RE was positive.

2 comments highlighted the need for better planned provision for RE, alongside other subjects in the curriculum.

None of the inspection reports indicate non-compliance in terms of Religious Education or collective worship.

Comments relating to Religious Education included:

"Pupils benefit from carefully planned opportunities to study different cultures and religions." "The curriculum promotes topics that capture the imagination of pupils and inspire creativity. Teachers plan topics carefully so that pupils can link different areas of learning. For example, in art, pupils make Diya lamps to link with their religious education study of Diwali. Learning is sequenced across the curriculum so that pupils learn the right skills and knowledge in the right order" "Pupils enjoy the chance to learn about, and celebrate, difference... Pupils are fascinated by different lifestyles and religions".

"Leaders make sure that pupils learn about different cultures and religions." "Speakers visit to talk to children about different cultures and faiths, and children learn about festivals, such as Diwali and Christmas."

Two reports mention collective worship, and both in a positive light:

"The provision for pupils' personal development is shaped by the school's values. These values, including ownership, determination, kindness and self-belief, are woven through lessons and assemblies."

"The daily collective worship provides an opportunity for pupils to explore topical issues around equality. They are encouraged to reflect on the school's values, including this term's focus on 'thankfulness'. This is demonstrated in the prayers that the pupils write and share with the school community." (Report for a Church of England School)

SUMMARY

In spite of the fact that a similar number of schools were inspected in both academic years, in 2022-2023 there has been less mention by Ofsted of RE. Whereas collective worship was mentioned in 2 inspection reports in 2021-2022, Ofsted have made no mention at all of collective worship in the academic year 2022-2023.

CONCLUSION

SACRE may wish to consider writing to Hazel Henson, Acting Subject Lead for RE at Ofsted, to put forward concerns about the apparent lack of reporting into RE and collective worship in Wokingham's schools.

National Updates for Wokingham SACRE from RE Today / Autumn 2023

Open letter from over 30 Parliamentarians

An Open Letter was published on the 18th September by the Daily Telegraph. More than 30 MPs and peers have written to the Education Secretary, highlighting that school pupils receive tokenistic religious education or none. The MPs are blaming this on a lack of trained teachers and funding for the poor quality of religious education. They argue that this lack of education leaves children ill-prepared to understand their own and others' worldviews, hindering their ability to participate in society. Link to the [letter](#)

NATRE provide evidence at Education Select committee enquiry session

NATRE, along with 3 other subject associations, were invited to speak to a session of the Education Select Committee to support their enquiry into Recruitment and retention of teachers. Deborah Weston, NATRE Research Officer and Chair of the RE policy unit (Joint group made up of NATRE, REC, RE Today), gave evidence in the two hour session.

The session can be viewed [here](#)

The TES wrote about the session in which [D&T teachers 'rummage in skips' for materials, MPs told | Tes](#)
Deborah Weston is quoted:

‘Deborah Weston, research officer at the National Association of Teachers of Religious Education, told MPs that “schools are very inflexible places”. She said that the “pressures on headteachers are so significant in terms of accountability...that there’s a nervousness about taking people on part time”. Ms Weston also argued for an increase in the provision of part-time training to become a teacher, arguing that this could boost recruitment and retention.’

RE Council of England and Wales Launch National Content Standard for Religious Education

The RE Council of England and Wales has launched its **National Content Standard** for Religious Education in England. Its aim is deal with the postcode lottery of RE provision in England, evidenced in the Ofsted **Research Review**, NATRE **primary** and **secondary** surveys, and **analysis of the DfE’s own data**. However, until now, there has been no national benchmark to cite when we are asked, “What exactly does high-quality RE look like?”

NATRE Chair, Katie Freeman said,

“It is genuinely encouraging to see so much agreement around the need for a National Content Standard that applies to all types of school in England. I hope that those who choose to work with this benchmark will find it useful to evaluate their own RE curriculum. If this standard achieves widespread support across the sector, that will give us the greatest chance of achieving our vision of securing high-quality teaching and learning in RE/Religion and Worldviews for all pupils in all schools.”

You can read the National Content Standard [here](#) and a blog about it by Deborah Weston [here](#).

DfE Guidance on the place of Humanists on SACREs

[Guidance for local authorities about membership of Standing Advisory Councils for Religious Education \(SACREs\) \(natre.org.uk\)](https://natre.org.uk)

Following a request from NATRE, the DfE have produced the guidance below which has now been sent to local authorities. It makes clear that, in relation to committee A, it is the Local Authority who select which groups can be represented on the local SACRE and on the Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC) and that this selection may include representatives from non-religious belief systems.

See DfE guidance below.

Guidance for local authorities about membership of Standing Advisory Councils for Religious Education (SACREs)

This note provides information on a recent court ruling and shares the Department for Education's (the Department) view that representatives from non-religious belief systems may be appointed to Group A of a SACRE and/or to an Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC).

Background

SACREs are established by local authorities, as required by legislation^[1], and their membership must consist of the following groups:

- Group A: members that represent Christian denominations and other religions and their denominations who will appropriately reflect the principal religious traditions in the area;
- Group B: members that represent the Church of England;
- Group C: members that represent the teaching profession or other relevant associations that, in the opinion of the authority, ought to be represented; and
- Group D: members that represent the [local] authority.

The recent legal case of *Bowen v Kent County Council* ^[2] (more details in the Annex) clarified that applications for Group A membership from persons who represent holders of non-religious beliefs should be considered in the same way as applications from those who represent holders of religious beliefs.

In the Department's view, the non-religious beliefs adhered to by the person to be appointed must be analogous to a religious belief. To be "analogous", the non-religious beliefs must, in accordance with case law under the European Convention of Human Rights and the Human Rights Act 1998, attain the necessary level of cogency, seriousness, cohesion, and importance to attract protection under the Convention Rights. ^[3]

The final decision on appointment of persons to a SACRE or ASC is a matter for local authorities. This may include consideration of whether such a representative would help ensure that the relevant traditions and beliefs in the local authority's area are appropriately reflected in Group A.

[1] Section 390(4)(a) of the Education Act 1996

2 www.bailii.org/ew/cases/EWHC/Admin/2023/1261.html

3 This aligns with the policy in Wales, where a non-religious belief for the purposes of education is aligned with those philosophical beliefs that are protected following European Convention of Human Rights caselaw.

Recruitment crisis in teaching and especially in secondary RE

London, 6th March, 2023: A campaign to attract a new generation of RE teachers has kicked off with teaching groups, religious organisations and parliamentarians stressing the importance of the subject for preparing students for life in modern Britain.

As of January, UCAS data show that teacher recruitment for all subjects is down 22% from last year. However RE stands out, being down a third of applicants from the last recruitment cycle.

Government inaction over recruiting teachers to RE has been blamed. The Department for Education (DfE) has so far missed its target for the recruitment of RE teachers in nine of the last ten years.

Despite this year's fall in applicants, the subject continues to grow in popularity. Over the last five years entries to the GCSE have stood around an average of 250,000 with entries to the full course GCSE rising by 30% over the last decade.

The recruitment campaign – entitled 'Beyond the Ordinary' - draws attention to the academic and knowledge rich approach of the subject to life's big questions, and will seek to attract a set of talented graduates up to the task of getting young people to grips with the complex nature of modern belief.

Kathryn Wright, Chief Executive Officer of Culham St Gabriel's Trust, which is supporting the campaign, said: "Religious education is an important curriculum subject enabling children and young people to navigate our complex multi religious, multi secular society. Everyone has a worldview, and it's important we prepare young people to become free thinking, critical participants in public discourse, who can make informed judgements about matters of religion or belief and reflect meaningfully on the big questions in life."

We are looking for ambitious graduates from a range of humanities and social science subjects who can deliver an academic and rigorous curriculum aimed at getting young people to think critically about their own beliefs and those of others."

Last March, the Father of the House, Sir Peter Bottomley MP hosted a roundtable on the future of the subject. In October, a Westminster Hall Debate saw MPs and Peers from across the House agree on its importance for life in modern Britain as well as express concern around a lack of government support for the subject.

Lord Karan Bilimoria said: "The latest teacher recruitment figures are deeply worrying. Parents are concerned, schools are concerned and so too the young people are missing out.

"As a Champion for RE, I've heard numerous times from students that this is one of the few times in the classroom where they get to say what they think about the world around them. At present we face doing a disservice to a generation of young people ill-equipped to deal with the complexities of belief in Britain and the world beyond. This campaign is about getting the best humanities graduates into the classroom to help them deliver a modern RE curriculum reflective of belief in our society."

Teacher training courses are open to graduates from a range of academic disciplines and from all sorts of diverse backgrounds, with Subject Knowledge Enhancement courses available from schools, universities or other providers.

Anyone looking for more information about training to be a RE teacher should visit <https://www.cstg.org.uk/campaigns/teacher-recruitment/becoming-a-teacher>

Do we know what this problem is like in our Secondary schools?

NATRE analysis of GCSE and A level Religious Studies data: National and regional variations

The reports linked to below cover GCSE and A level RS in both England and Wales and reveal many similarities and some differences between the two nations in relation to trends over time. It is clear that the removal of the short course from performance tables has had a devastating impact on the number of children leaving school with a qualification in Religious Studies. In many cases, the loss of the short course has coincided with an increase in the number of schools reporting zero hours of timetable time for RE in year 11 in the school workforce data. At A level, entries have remained fairly stable over recent years in England but in Wales, there is a step decline, of around 33% since 2020. The reasons for this need further investigation.

For example:

A level West Midlands % A*-C 2023 76.7 % (Nat 79%)

Uptake in West Midlands 2.4% (Nat 1.88%)

GCSE West Midlands % Grade 9-4 2023 69.9% (Nat 72.2%)

GCSE Uptake West Midlands 27.2% (National Average 25.7%)

[NATRE analysis of GCSE and A level examination data for Religious Studies reveals interesting variations between nations and regions](#)

How can we encourage more pupil entries for GCSE RS, especially as we know disadvantaged pupils often do well in the subject?

Shortage of RE Teachers ‘Dangerous cycle’ within Religious Education

The shortage of religious education (RE) teachers has been highlighted in a Religion Media Centre briefing. Only six people have come forward to train as RE teachers in Wales, and in England, no RE teacher training courses have reached their target of entries.

Hundreds have their applications pending because their degrees have not been finalised due to the university lecturers' strike action. Dr Tim Hutchings, from the University of Nottingham, told the briefing that there was a dangerous cycle emerging in the study of Religious Education, where GCSE entries are stable with RE remaining as the 7th most popular subject, A-level results show a slight dip in entries, fewer students choose to study Theology or Religious Studies at university and fewer have chosen to train to teach RE.

Teachers, academics and advisers told the briefing that Headteachers want to include RE in the curriculum as the understanding of religion is vital in a global society, but the lack of specialist teachers is an issue. The RE council is campaigning for the government to create a national plan to support high standards in RE provision and bursaries to encourage new teachers.

Link to webinar below

[Shortage of RE teachers “dangerous cycle” within religious education \(natre.org.uk\)](https://natre.org.uk)

RE at the Party Political conferences

In late September and Early October, teams of teachers from NATRE will be joining representatives from the Religious Education Council of England and Wales (REC), Culham St Gabriel's and RE Today to attend the Labour, Conservative and Liberal Democrat party conferences.

This lobbying work that NATRE do on your behalf is really important because it enables us to take the voices of teachers and pupils to policy makers. At the party conferences, we will be sharing the importance of high-quality RE for all pupils in all schools, talking about the need for a national standard in the subject, sharing constituency data related to RE with MPs, SACRE members, local councillors and party members and talking about what high-quality RE looks like in Primary and Secondary classrooms.

As an election comes round. Please talk to your candidates when they come to your door and write to them about supporting RE.

Fiona will update you on this at the meeting.

[Your Voice Matters: NATRE's Call to Action to ask your MP to meet us now!](#)

Training, networking, and other support

Anti-racist RE: continuing debates and widening resources

Jonathan Marshall, MBE, ran a brilliant RE and interfaith centre in Plymouth before he retired. Thanks to Jonathan for drawing attention to resources which might compliment the NATRE anti-racist RE materials (<https://www.natre.org.uk/about-natre/projects/anti-racist-re/>)

“I think teachers might find the work of the Equiano Project on anti-racist education helpful. In the true spirit of quality RE, some diversity of views might be welcome.”

This black-led project may help teachers of RE who want to understand the complexity of an anti-racist RE approach: they should be encouraged to explore a range of different voices, one of which is to be found on the excellent website of “The Equiano project” <https://www.theequianoproject.com/>

See for example the video “Understanding the new politics of race” by Prof. John McWhorter. At just under twenty minutes, this perspective is an extremely helpful and profound insight into the background and current situation of anti-racism.

Global Neighbours: school awards from Christian Aid

The Global Neighbours accreditation scheme is an award scheme for schools run by the charity Christian Aid, in partnership with the Church of England Education Office. It is open to all primary schools and has recently expanded into secondary schools too. The scheme has been running for five years and celebrates the development of global citizenship and courageous advocacy in schools. Its aim is to encourage a deeper understanding of the world and for young people to be empowered to engage with and respond to global issues.

Schools can apply for a bronze, silver or gold award. To achieve accreditation, schools must demonstrate how they are fulfilling criteria relating to:

- Leadership, vision and values
- Teaching and learning
- Collective worship and spiritual development
- Pupil participation in active global citizenship
- Community engagement

For more information please contact Alison Brown (Global Neighbours Schools Programme Officer): abrown@christian-aid.org

NATRE Membership- direct support for teaching

NATRE is the largest membership organisation which promotes, defends and supports RE teachers and RE teaching. It does this through producing high-quality resources and CPD, lobbying government, being involved in conversations with the DfE and Ofsted, LAs and SACREs, telling teachers’ stories and experiences and being a voice for all teachers.



Membership packages for students, ECTs, teachers, schools, RE professionals and RE enthusiasts!

Details: www.natre.org.uk/membership

RE Connect Teacher Fellowship Programme

This programme is designed to help deepen teachers’ understanding and confidence for exploring the environmental crisis through the lens of religions and worldviews in RE. The programme is not just about getting ideas, but also enhancing your teaching practice and professional network around this theme.

After a successful pilot of the programme in 2021-22, RE:Connect will be running again from September 2023, thanks to a grant from the Culham St Gabriel’s Trust. There are places for **up to 10 teachers** of RE (primary and secondary) on the 6 month teacher fellowship programme.

The initiative is run by Dr Jeremy Kidwell, Associate Professor in Theological Ethics at the University of Birmingham and Dr Ian Jones of St Peter's Saltley Trust, with input from experienced primary and secondary specialists, environmental scientists, climate activists and academic researchers in religion and environment.

The programme offers opportunities to:

- Deepen subject knowledge on the intersection of religion and ecology
- Work with cutting-edge subject specialists on religious ethics/practice, ecology, and climate change policy
- Work as part of a supportive and dynamic team to create and trial new approaches and resources for teaching on this theme
- Become a champion for teaching and learning on religion and environmental crisis

The Teacher Fellowship Programme involves monthly workshops from Autumn 2023 to Spring 2024, with tasks to undertake between workshops. Programme sessions will include one fully-funded weekend residential and 6-8 online evening sessions (roughly one per month). There is no cost of participation to the teacher or their school and Fellows receive a bursary of £500 to cover costs of participation plus travel expenses to enable attendance at in-person sessions.

Interested? Please contact Ian Jones (director@saltleytrust.org.uk) to register your interest. Selection for the programme is by a formal application process.

Philosophy of Religion courses from the FT

Jack Robertson, RE teacher in north London, is working with the Financial Times to offer free access to FT.com for all schools and colleges teaching sixteen to nineteen year old students. An FT subscription can support students in developing the broad knowledge that will help them stand out to examiners, universities and employers. A Philosophy Class page, ft.com/philosophyclass, is available for teachers and students of philosophy and ethics. It brings together relevant articles from across the FT and provides accompanying questions that prompt students to reflect critically and make connections to areas of the A-level specification. There is also an IB Theory of Knowledge page for IB students.

Recent Philosophy Class articles cover topics from the ethics of climate protests and abortion to developments in AI and quantum physics, as well as interviews with philosophers such as MacAskill, Chalmers and Srinivasan.

Participating schools receive the same level of access to FT.com as regular subscriber. Check if your school is registered or register your interest via the Philosophy Class page or at ft.com/schoolsarefree

Jack Robertson JRobertson@qebarnet.co.uk

RE Hubs – Website now live!



RE Hubs website is now live at www.re-hubs.uk. RE Hubs aim to connect those who can provide resources with those who need them and create a neutral platform being RE professionals together.

Many organizations serve RE/RVE/R&W education in the UK, from places of worship and school speakers to CPD partnerships and resource providers. However, until now, there hasn't been a single place to equip, enable, and signpost everyone within the community.

***How can we encourage speakers and places of worship to sign up to the training and appear on the site?
What links do you have where you can share this?***

BBC Expands early years RE resources

There are new resources for 4 and 5 year olds for RE / RME and RVE from BBC Bitesize Reception. These include some simple craft activities and some recipes for festive food with clear and simple ideas to bring the world of religion alive for small children. The subject is connected to work in the fields of expressive arts and design, helping pupils with their understanding of the world particularly in the field of religion and belief. These new materials cover Christmas, Easter, Eid ul Adha, Vaisakhi, Diwali and more and have now gone live. They include video clips made for the age group, activity sheets and information for teacher-use. Lat Blaylock, who contributed to the work says: 'I'm really pleased to see that BBC have made such a diverse and well thought out contribution to Early Years learning about religion and belief. Teachers will find this is a little treasure trove.'

Here is a link:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/z24kqyc>

Against Islamophobia: new resources free for schools

Educate Against Islamophobia (EAI) has recently published a plethora of educational materials for the Early Years, primary schools, high schools and educational practitioners across the U.K. The teaching and learning materials are reflective of the respective curriculums and national frameworks, and offer learners with learning opportunities that are applicable to their respective nations.

Early Years resources:

- Amna & Amy Storybook
- 2 lesson plans.

The storybook and accompanying lesson plans aim to support children in the Early Years to develop an awareness of equality, diversity and respectful behaviour and introduce learners to aspects of the Islamic identity.

Primary school resources:

- Unit of work

The unit of work which comprises 6 lesson plans supports KS1-KS2/P2-P7 learners in developing positive attitudes towards diversity. This unit of work also aims to introduce learners to the Islamic identity and will enable them to explore some of the similarities and differences between Islam and other faiths/culture.

High school resources:

- Unit of work

The unit of work which comprises 6 lesson plans supports KS3-KS4/S1-S4 learners in developing an awareness of Islamophobia, including its manifestations and dangers. Learners will explore the issue of Islamophobia through a range of themes and lenses including human rights, anti-bullying and media literacy.

Educator resources:

- Islamophobia awareness training session
- Equality, diversity and inclusion audit

The Islamophobia awareness training and EDI audit aims to promote an awareness of Islamophobia and equip practitioners with the understanding of how to address it in the school community. These materials will also assist educational practitioners to meet their Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act (2010).

To download your free copy of EAI's materials, visit: <https://eai.org.uk/>

If you would like to learn more about Educate Against Islamophobia's work and services contact info@eai.org.uk

Fischy Music: 25 years nurturing emotional and spiritual well being

Lots of schools use Fischy Music in RE as well as assemblies. 2023 is an exciting year for Fischy Music, this year celebrating its 25th Anniversary! Free online concerts streaming live every month throughout this year, so whole classrooms and assembly halls of children can join in with 30 minutes of uplifting songs!

Founded in 1998 by Stephen Fischbacher, Fischy Music (www.fischy.com) is a children's charity, writing songs for and with children to nurture positive mental health and help them express and manage a range of emotions.

Songs are at the heart of Fischy's work, with Health & Wellbeing and RE & Collective Worship songs and teaching resources made available to children, families, schools and churches. In addition to live events the innovative song-streaming platform, Fischy Music Online has made it easy for teachers everywhere to access over 140 songs and teaching resources, with new songs regularly added.

"Fischy Music songs open an emotional door allowing children to have the confidence to discuss issues and problems that we might otherwise not pick up on."
Teacher, St Philomena's Primary School, Glasgow

Schools can subscribe to Fischy Music Online to access over 140 songs. The RE Package includes resources created in conjunction with Lat Blaylock, RE Today, to help staff use music well in RE and connecting to significant Christian concepts (eg from Understanding Christianity). The resources can be used by all staff and are useful in all primary schools wherever you want to enable spiritual reflection and can also be used in assemblies and services for collective worship. To find out more, email: info@fischy.com

Faith-inspired Art to encourage conversation, reflection and action

Cheryl Homer, Westhill Endowment, writes: RE Today and NATRE have always been great supporters of the arts and if you are wondering if using faith inspired arts in your school might be beneficial the answer is most likely 'yes'. But where do you start?

Westhill Endowment are here to help, with years of experience working with faith inspired arts. The charity has 10 art collections which are available FREE* to schools and community venues around the UK.

Many communities have already benefited from these resources which aim to encourage conversation, enable reflections, and inspire action.

A Year 10 textiles student recently reflected on her experience with the Gethsemane Garments: "I liked the green garment [representing Hope] showing the rips and tears of the fabric, but with the sides being restitched to show signs of healing and positivity."

A Primary School Teacher reflected on a creative lockdown session provided by their local vicar using the exhibition Bald Statements: "The creative artwork [the children produced in response] has been thought provoking and the children were able to speak honestly on their feelings and experiences of lockdown."

The art collections come with a variety of themes and mediums, including free standing and wall mounted works of art. Additional materials such as booklets, education packs, and films are available. Westhill will also consider funding applications for events around your exhibition.

Westhill Endowment work one to one with all exhibition hosts helping you tailor your exhibition to suit your space and your audiences. If you'd like to know more, please contact Westhill's Arts Coordinator, Cheryl Homer, on cheryl@westhillendowment.org or check the website or social media. www.westhillendowment.org

www.facebook.com/WesthillEndowment

www.youtube.com/channel/UCHKjKpunQ0C4XSXD4j88XZA

**You may incur transport and insurance costs, please ask if this is applicable.*

New museum exploring 6,000 years of faith in Britain opens its doors

The Faith Museum in Bishop Auckland reveals encounters, experiences and expressions of faith in Britain. The museum is housed in a 14th-century wing of Auckland Castle and a striking 21st-century extension by Níall McLaughlin Architects. Over 250 objects from public and private collections across England, Scotland and Wales invite visitors to consider the ways faith has shaped lives, and continues to do so.

The Auckland Project, which has been made possible with a £12.4m grant from The National Lottery Heritage Fund. With buildings, art galleries, gardens, extensive parkland and a heritage railway, the Faith Museum is part of the wider restoration and redevelopment of Auckland Castle, which has been made possible with a £12.4m grant from The National Lottery Heritage Fund.

Find out more here: <https://aucklandproject.org/venues/faith-museum/>

NASACRE Update

The Inter Faith Network (IFN)

NASACRE is a member of the IFN and this report gives you information about their national meeting and AGM held on July 13th 2023 via Zoom. You can find out more about the IFN from their website: <https://www.interfaith.org.uk>

Inter Faith Week this year runs from 12-19 November. The Week is a tremendous opportunity to raise awareness about the importance of religion and belief literacy and to bring people of different faiths and beliefs together in creative and positive ways. The number of schools which took part in 2022 increased by a remarkable 47% on the previous year, indicating how useful they find it to add value to year-round RE learning. SACREs and their members also engaged in many areas and play an important part in the Week.

Find out more about Interfaith Week 2023 here: <https://www.interfaithweek.org/about#:~:text=WHEN%3F,runs%20until%20the%20following%20Sunday.>

NASACRE 2023-24 virtual training programme

Forthcoming opportunities

NASACRE runs webinars to support SACREs. NASACRE-subscribed SACREs have unlimited access for all their members to each and every webinar for £50 annually. SACREs may also book for individual sessions – prices are below.

Thursday 16th November 2023 Southeast Regional Hub meeting

For SACRE Chairs/Vice chairs, LA officers and professional support officers, working with their RE Hub lead, Justine Ball, and a NASACRE Exec member.

This session taking place in regions will allow for a smaller number of SACREs to come together; it continues NASACRE's conversation with our membership, to share good practice, national and local news and giving time for SACRE leadership teams to raise, discuss and help to support each other. Free session.

Tuesday 5th December 2023, 7-8pm: How may SACREs effectively monitor schools?

Led by David Levien, Catherine Hughes and Claire Clinton

A chance for SACREs to come together and hear about a range of strategies and practices that build relationships with schools and enable SACREs to monitor RE and CW. Free to SACREs who have bought an annual webinar package. £20 for a subscribed SACRE

Thursday 18th January 2024, 6:30-8pm: Using data effectively as a SACRE

Special guest: Deborah Weston

This session will help SACRE Chairs/Vice chairs and professional support officers to make effective use of the data that NATRE, NASACRE and the DfE provides, ensuring local data can be drawn upon. Free to SACREs who have bought an annual webinar package. £20 for a subscribed SACRE.

Thursday 22nd February 2024, 4-5:30pm: Being an effective SACRE clerk, part 2

Led by David Levien, Catherine Hughes and Claire Clinton

This session will help SACRE clerks to reflect on their present practice and share with other clerks around the country some top tips for fulfilling the SACRE clerk's role; it will focus on minute-taking, SACRE's constitution/terms of reference and composition. Free to SACREs who have bought an annual webinar package. £20 for a subscribed SACRE.

Monday 26th February 2024 7-8pm: Dealing with beliefs and practices about loss & death in your Agreed Syllabus

Led by: Denise Chaplin and Paul Smalley

This session will help SACREs to reflect on what they do a present to cover this aspect of the curriculum in schools. It will provide input from the national body of funeral directors, as well as examples from 2 different SACREs of their support work around these issues within their Agreed Syllabus. Free to SACREs who have bought an annual webinar package. £20

Tuesday 12th March 2024, 7-8pm: Convening an Agreed Syllabus Conference: legalities and processes

Led by: Paul Smalley with Linda Rudge

This session will share the legal process and best practice suggestions for convening an Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC) for your SACRE. Free to SACREs who have bought an annual webinar package. £20 for a subscribed SACRE

Wednesday 26th June 2024, 6:30-8pm: So, you've joined your local SACRE...

Hosted by Exec members

A rerun of the September session, to help new SACRE members to understand their role, how SACRE works, its statutory responsibilities and how members make their contribution to SACRE's work. Free session