

Wokingham Borough Council

WBC logo

SACRE logo

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education

Annual Report September 2018 - July 2019

The Chair's Foreword

Insert Chair's Foreword here

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Stephen Vegh

Chair: Wokingham SACRE

2018-19: The context

RE teaching in Wokingham schools

This year saw the implementation of the Pan-Berkshire RE syllabus. The syllabus has been well-received and has enabled teachers to streamline the statutory content for RE. Many schools are using *Discovery RE* to support the delivery of the new syllabus. Teachers are also able to access a range of free support materials developed by the Pan-Berkshire Hub. These materials offer guidance from Early Years Foundation Phase up to Key Stage 3. These support materials can be found at Support materials for the Pan Berkshire Syllabus can be found here: <https://wsh.wokingham.gov.uk/learning-and-teaching/religious-education/re-syllabus/>

The Pan Berkshire Hub continues to review and add to the guidance materials to further support teachers and finalise assessment processes. Teacher networks and CPD also offer further support teachers in the implementation and development of their approach to the new syllabus.

The Wokingham SACRE

The Wokingham SACRE continues to take very seriously its role in supporting schools and teachers, and works closely with the Borough Council to offer this support.

The SACRE has met once each term to progress its work, structuring its work each year through an agreed action plan. The SACRE has continued to appreciate the support of

Wokingham Borough Council, the funding offered, which enables support for teachers and schools to continue, and the agreed syllabus review to be conducted. The SACRE is indebted to Emily Waddilove, WBC link officer (Teaching and Learning Advisor) for her continued support and overseer role.

The SACRE's membership is consistent this year, welcoming a new teacher members, Faith Kirby and Julie Easton. SACRE is actively seeking to recruit a Humanist 'worldviews' member to become part of the Group A committee. The dedicated Chair, Stephen Vegh, an experienced teacher and leader of Religious Education (currently teaching at The Brakenhale School), and equally committed Vice Chair, Councillor Beth Rowland, led the SACRE admirably through the very busy and productive year of meetings. The SACRE is also grateful to have an exceptionally dedicated and very able clerk, Anne Coffey, who always goes beyond the call of duty to serve the SACRE and advance its work.

The SACRE continues to keep in touch with schools and to support them to fulfil their students' entitlement to high quality RE, mindful of the pressures upon teachers and school timetables. The SACRE listens to teachers through termly network meetings, training events and the teacher representatives on the SACRE, and the support it offers is informed by these conversations. Elected members consider the SACREs work in the light of the bigger Council purpose, and support it whole-heartedly. Wokingham has continued to be a core member of the Pan-Berkshire SACRE Hub, offering its meeting rooms regularly as a venue for both meetings and training events.

The SACRE has this year appointed a new Local Authority Link/RE Advisor, Angela Hill, to provide professional support. Angela joined us in March, and is an experienced teacher and leader of RE, having worked in a number of secondary schools in Wales. She is currently a full-time National RE Adviser at RE Today Services. Angela is one of the Wokingham SACRE representatives on the Pan-Berkshire Hub.

SACRE meetings continue to be synchronised across all 6 SACREs, with Hub meetings in-between, allowing six meeting points each year with a flow of information and dialogue between the Hub and the SACREs. This was especially important in the syllabus review, and continues to be important in allowing discussion and feedback around the implementation of the new syllabus across the unitary authorities.

The work of the SACRE in 2018-19

The role of Wokingham Borough Council

The support of Wokingham Borough Council enables the SACRE to communicate directly with schools through the regular schools' e-newsletter and channels of correspondence. This enables excellent attendance at training vents and network meetings.

Councillors are pro-active members of the SACRE, and we look forward to embedding SACRE's work into the 'bigger picture' education development plans of the Borough.

The SACRE continues its campaign to raise awareness. As well as updating the 'What is the SACRE?' leaflet and disseminating it to Councillors, governors, teachers and newly qualified teachers, there is also new information on the SACRE and RE web pages on the Wokingham schools hub.

Represented nationally

The Wokingham SACRE always has representatives at the annual NASACRE (National Association of SACREs) AGM (annual general meeting) and conference. This year Michaela Wright (formerly Watters), Head of RE at the Piggott School and our new advisor, Angela Hill attended on the SACRE's behalf.

The conference this year took place in Manchester and the title was 'Cohesive Communities and Effective Partnerships: RE near and far.' The conference included key note addresses by Peter Bull and Dr. Julian Stern, as well as coverage of the new Ofsted Education Inspection Framework, which will focus on curriculum, behaviour and development, and reflections on the Commission on Religious Education. NATRE (National Association of Teachers of Religious Education) work with the DfE was also featured during the conference. Further details can be found at <http://www.nasacre.org.uk/conference-and-agm/2019>

Keeping up to date

The SACRE invites people to offer presentations at its meetings in order to keep up to date with developments in education nationally and locally. This year, SACRE welcomed Julian Bushell, Chairman of the Secondary Federation and Sherrie Newell, Manager of the Local Safeguarding Children Board, who gave an interesting presentation about the the board's work, and the agencies with whom they work.

Teacher network meetings

Primary teachers have again been given the opportunity to attend termly network meetings, offering updates on both national and local developments in RE. These meetings are very much appreciated by teachers and continue to be well attended. Primary teachers have worked on the appendices for syllabus during this year's meetings, which were designed to be teacher-led, rather than being advisor-led. Now that this work is complete, network meetings now include a training element to foster effectively implementation of the new syllabus, the focus for which is decided democratically by the teachers attending the previous network meeting . These meetings provide valuable time and space to share good practice, as well as to feed back to the SACRE and the Hub on the implementation of the new syllabus. At network meetings, teachers expressed that they like the new syllabus and are all in the process of implementing it.

This year, SACRE members David and Catherine also attended one of the meetings and SACRE members are reminded that they are always welcome at network meetings. This year, teachers were able to enjoy Julie Easton's presentation on her Farmington Fellowship project.

The Diocesan adviser is always invited to network meetings to ensure church schools are updated during these meetings with information pertinent to them.

This year the primary network meetings, hosted at Nine Mile Ride Primary School, have continued to be well-attended, with an average of 15 teachers at each one, and 24 schools represented over the course of the year. There were 9 delegates from 9 schools at the October meeting; 16 delegates from 15 schools at the February meeting, and 12 delegates from 11 schools in May. 7 schools attended just one network, 11 attended on 2 occasions and 6 came to all 3 meetings.

The teachers who attend are always enthusiastic and open to sharing their ideas and concerns. Teachers of varying experience attend the network meetings and there is a friendly and very supportive ethos.

Primary RE Subject leader training

Training for Primary RE subject leaders was attended by 14 teachers and received very positive feedback. Teachers reported that the training gave them greater confidence to embark on the role of RE subject leader and afforded them with practical guidance and ideas for resources.

Secondary teachers

Network meetings are not considered the best means of support for secondary RE teachers. SACRE provides support to fund their bi-annual training event. Every two years a Wokingham secondary school hosts an RE-specific training day, with national speakers and workshops, as part of the Secondary Federation common INSET day in February.

A secondary federation INSET day took place in February. The day gave secondary teachers opportunities to meet with key R.E. contributors including other teachers and leaders of RE across the federation including primary colleagues, 'Love for Life', members of Wokingham SACRE, 'RE Inspired' and others. Secondary teachers participated in a workshop on how to teach RE successfully to students with ASD, based on Julie Easton's Farmington Institute research.

Other workshops included 'Creativity in the RE classroom' by Debbie Marris, teacher of RE and Coordinator of SIAMS who offered some practical ideas to promote creativity in RE to encourage better student engagement, and an update 'the political landscape and RE.

Mary from Bearwood Primary School fed back to the primary network that the day was very positive with learning taking place between secondary and primary teachers, which was particularly useful in terms of planning good RE around transition.

The Pan-Berkshire SACRE Hub

The Hub continues to thrive, with meetings held each school term. This is very helpful in offering 6 points of contact each year, thereby facilitating communication and joint working.

The Hub has been working hard with teachers on the design and development of support materials for the new syllabus which has been a main focus of their work this year. As aforementioned, support materials can be found here:

<https://wsh.wokingham.gov.uk/learning-and-teaching/religious-education/re-syllabus/>

The Hub won a £4,000 Westhill/NASACRE award. These awards are for local projects involving schools. The awards are funded by grants from the Westhill Foundation and managed and coordinated by NASACRE. The project that Hub is undertaking is called 'Real People, Real Faith' and aims to create some short filmed interviews with faith members in a place of worship. These short interviews will be used in classrooms across Berkshire and maybe even further afield to enhance pupils' understanding of the rich diversity of lived faith in the area. The questions for the interviews will be inspired by the Pan-Berkshire Locally Agreed Syllabus 2018-2023. Secondary and primary pupils and teachers are working with the Hub to develop these valuable teaching materials.

The Hub members have set prospective dates for a conference June or July 2020, when all Hub projects can be reviewed and celebrated.

SACRE Projects

'Crossing the Bridges' Update

Work on updating and expanding of the Crossing the Bridges Directory has been the main ongoing SACRE project this year. The Directory is now reported by Wokingham teachers to be in regular use, and comments from visits or contacts is fed back through teacher networks.

SACRE is particularly grateful to Catherine Jinkerson for her continuing hard work not only on updating and expanding the directory, but also in reaching out to her contacts from this project to encourage visitors from faith communities to contribute to assemblies in schools. This could be an effective way to increase compliance with the statutory requirement for an act of daily collective worship in schools.

From September 2018 to July 2019, there ~~were~~ was a total of ~~the~~ 89 educational visits ~~with~~ ~~RE~~ connected to RE. Of these, 83 had RE as the main purpose and 6 as the secondary purpose. This is slightly down from last year, although still an improvement on the previous two years.

Previous years' figures are as follows:

2017-2018. 104 trips (94 RE main purpose, 10 secondary purpose)

2016-2017. 76 trips (64 RE main purpose, 12 secondary purpose).

2015-2016. 47 trips (42 RE main purpose, 5 secondary purpose).

This relates to both primary and secondary school visits and covers over 40 different venues/destinations.

GCSE Examination Results

The pan-Berkshire Agreed Syllabus for RE states that during Key Stage 4 "All pupils must receive Religious Education and should follow an externally accredited course for Religious Studies e.g. GCSE, or an alternative, well-structured and challenging programme of Religious Education. Schools are encouraged to facilitate examination entry for as many students as possible."

Religious Studies GCSE outcomes 2018

	% of cohort entered (2017)	% achieving Grade 7+ (2017 A+)	% achieving Grade 4+ (2017 C+)	Average point score (2017)

Wokingham	61.9 (76.1)	24 (26.9)	73 (72)	5.0 (4.8)
National	36.5 (46.9)	28 (27.4)	71 (70)	5.0 (4.7)

(Data from FFT Aspire)

61.9% of the Year 11 cohort in Wokingham was entered for the Religious Studies GCSE examination in 2018, a reduction on last year's 76.1%, but a significantly higher percentage than the 36.5% entered nationally. Of those Wokingham students entered, 24% achieved a 7+ (A or A*) grade, slightly below the national figure of 28%. The percentage of students in Wokingham gaining grade 4 (C) or above was 73%, 2% above the national equivalent. The average point score for RS for the Wokingham cohort was 5.0, in line with the national equivalent.

In summary, as in previous years, Wokingham schools achieved results in line with national results, and accomplished this despite entering a larger percentage of the cohort than was entered nationally.

Quotes to be interspersed throughout the report – inside text boxes:

'Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent at this school. Pupils understand differences, symbolism and beliefs of other religions and cultures through their strong tutor and assembly programme, as well as their religious studies lessons.' (Ofsted report on a Wokingham secondary school)

'Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well supported. For example, a visitor was invited to the school to speak about her beliefs as a Muslim. Pupils also celebrate a variety of festivals, such as Diwali, through their religious education.' (Ofsted report on a Wokingham primary school)

'[Pupils] value the diversity of their different backgrounds and respect each other's faiths and beliefs. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.' (Ofsted report on a Wokingham primary school)

'A well-planned religious education programme and a range of opportunities in other subjects, combine to promote a good awareness of spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues. Pupils respect people from different backgrounds, cultures and beliefs and are well prepared for life in modern Britain.' (Ofsted report on a Wokingham secondary school)

'In one class, pupils wrote about aspects of Islam and compared it with their own religion. Apart from giving pupils a clear understanding of this faith, it also promoted their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively.' (Ofsted report on a Wokingham primary school)

'Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school.' (Ofsted report on a Wokingham primary school)