

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

Monday, 7th November 2022 (not quorate)

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

Election of Chair and Vice-Chair

Dates of next meetings

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

5

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 their 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 rearranged.

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 'Soulscape', 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	Number of	Description
opportunity	Participants	
Primary RE Subject Leader Training 22nd 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 4th 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

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

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

		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 30th December 2022	Present final, submitted repor 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	1. Provide two termly primary network meetings, two termly secondary network meetings and one crossphase 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
deliver it effectively	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 recources 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.

			review being	
		C Halana and the	discussed	
		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.		

SACRE budget plan April 2022 - March 2023

500 500 £1,900 £6,735 £6,800
500 £1,900
500
500
900
Wokingham contribution:
£1,985
80
20
135
250
250
1,230
1,250
12,030
£2,850
90
2,300
120
25
165
40
110

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