

Information for Draft Annual report for SACRE 2020 to 2021 and 2021 – 2022

1) Overview of SACRE

There were no meetings of SACRE between early 2020 and October 2021 due to the Covid-19 pandemic. SACRE meetings resumed at the beginning of the 2021 to 2022 academic year with the first meeting held on 11th October 2021 at The Tickfield Centre but this was not quorate.

SACRE Membership Issues

These have been addressed between the Clerk and the RE Adviser as requested by SACRE in October 2021. Civic elections have also taken place in May 2022 and Councillors will have been appointed for the SACRE.

SACRE Self Evaluation Tool (SET)

I have appended a draft SEF in the format recommended by the National Association OF Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education (NASACRE, July 2021) to this report. This is provided as a discussion document for SACRE Members to enable SACRE to evaluate its needs and priorities as it moves forward into the forthcoming 2022 to 2023 academic year.

Appended to this report is also the main document from NASACRE's AGM

"Still Standing – A report on future directions for SACREs: A report on the joint REC/NASACRE LAN Pilot project 2020-21

(Clinton, C. (November 2021) Religious Education Council of England and Wales; National Association of Standing Advisory Councils on religious Education)

Pages 1-16 of this document will be of particular interest to members of this SACRE.

2) Statutory Responsibilities: Religious Education

Monitoring of Schools

I have conducted a school survey for Religious Education (RE) and Collective Worship (CoWo) over the last two terms across all schools (academies, maintained, independent and special settings of all phases) within the areas of our new Southend City. 31 schools responded out of 55 contacted. Information shared by schools is included within the text of this report with a more detailed report being currently compiled now the extended deadline for submission of data has been reached.

I also conducted analysis of all Southend City school websites so have information from those schools who have not responded via the survey. The results are being integrated into the report generated from the survey alongside data from those schools who did respond.

The Locally Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education (LAS) and a Survey of School

This is being widely used across the city Schools by academies and maintained schools of all phases. It is also being employed within two independent schools, one an independent primary Church of England School and one a secondary, within the city.

The Church of England Voluntary Aided School in the centre of the city have also purchased the LAS as it was highly recommended to them by the Diocese of Chelmsford.

Only 9 out of the 31 responding do not follow the LAS. Of these 4 are secondary schools, one is an independent school and four are Catholic Primary schools and these all follow the Catholic Syllabus "Come and See" as recommended by the Brentwood Diocese.

Feedback on the LAS continues to be very positive with comments shared within the survey as follows:

“Staff have had training on this delivered by our RE lead. The enquiry approach is liked by staff and children and has been successfully implemented”

“The syllabus a well rounded [sic] approach to RE, covering a variety of religions and beliefs. It is key to look carefully at each year group in the school to check the learning in being built upon and not purely overlapping and teaching the same lesson/religious stories.

“I feel confident following the guidance of a syllabus to ensure we are covering everything that we need to. I like the 'learning about' and 'learning from' elements. When the syllabus was introduced we met as a MAT to discuss changes/how we would use in our schools.”

There are some excellent views on the wish to widen the scope of the Southend LAS to embrace RE and Worldviews in a future LAS. This is to be welcomed as this is highly recommended by current RE thinking and policy.

Teacher Training and Professional Development

My work as RE Adviser did not stop during the pandemic as schools. I circulated many resources to teachers throughout the lockdown such as access to online museum visits and online speakers, supplied links to teaching resources that could be employed online to help give teachers and their pupils / students a varied diet of lessons and subjects with which to engage. These were well received and as teachers were still teaching, initially online and then following a phased return of pupils to schools.

RE and Lead RE Teachers’ Networks

One Teachers’ Network meeting takes place each school term usually in October, January, and June. Currently, these are mainly for primary schools.

The network meetings have been held throughout the 2020 to 2021 and the 2021 to 2022 academic years with successful attendance which were held over Zoom and I have continued these over Zoom, since. Teachers have expressed the wish for this format to continue for the following reasons:

- the traffic is heavy in our crowded city roads and streets (especially immediately post-school hours) which makes travelling difficult
- Parking is always problematical
- Leaving school promptly to arrive at a venue on time is itself often problematical

It meant that properly publicised the Zoom meetings were as well, if not better attended, than traditional face-to-face meetings. Teachers are very happy to continue with “online training” into 2022 to 2023 as:

- they can join from wherever suits them and their circumstances
- attend with a colleague/s
 - sharing their training and encouraging discussion in schools
- saves them time and the expense of travelling
 - this lowers costs for schools and individual teachers
- supports efforts to lower emissions and traffic in our crowded City streets

A variety of subjects have been addressed including:

- RE and worldviews
- What is meant by and how to prepare your own responses and leadership and that of your school to lead and manage an OFSTED “Deep Dive” into RE during an Inspection
- Working with National Advisors of RE from the National Association of Teachers of Religious Education (NATRE).

- Opportunity for fully funded training for teachers/Schools to attend NATRE’s research based “Excellent RE” Course from which feedback has been excellent.
 - Information about the course is appended to this document “RE Today project for Excellent RE / Religion and worldviews in the Primary School”

Examination Results Years 2019 to 2020 and 2020-2021

There are no formal examination results for GCSE, AS or A level examinations from schools to include in this report as explained in the following Department of Education (DFE) statement (some links have expired):

“Due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, most exams and assessments did not take place in the 2019 to 2020, or 2020 to 2021 academic years. The government also announced that it would not publish school or college level results data on compare school and college performance [compare school and college performance](#) (also commonly referred to as school and college performance tables) in autumn 2020 or

autumn 2021, and that this data would not be used to hold schools and colleges to account. We have also made clear that results data from 2020, and the 2020 to 2021 academic year will not be used in school and college level performance measures in future years. We have set out further information on school and college accountability for the [2020 to 2021 academic year](#).

Department of Education (19th July 2021) Policy Paper: School and college accountability: academic year 2021 to 2022 available from [School and college accountability: 2021 to 2022 academic year - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) (accessed 13 June 2022)

Examinations for the Current Academic Year 2021- 2022

The DFE has informed school that examinations will have resumed and the examination results for the current academic year, 2021 to 2022, will be available once they are published by the DFE in the autumn 2022, however, following DFE advice in their Policy Paper cited above any conclusions and comparisons will need to be treated extremely carefully between these results and those of previous years or between schools or groups of students due to the understandable variability of the effect of the pandemic and its impact upon such results.

Successes in achieving the Religious Education Quality Mark (REQM)

Edwards Hall Primary has achieved a “Silver standard” within REQM Virtual Assessment recently with the assessor recommending the silver standard with elements of Gold Standard was achieved.

I have also liaised with an Independent Church of England School, St Michael’s, within the City who have now embarked upon the REQM assessment process compiling their evidence and reporting to the assessors.

Complaints regarding RE:

SACRE has received no complaints with regards to Religious Education in 2020 to 2021 nor in 2021 to 2022

3) Withdrawal from Religious Education and Collective Worship (CoWo)

At the time of the survey approximately 20 pupils are withdrawn from RE across the city with the numbers in individual schools being very small.

Similarly in Collective Worship the numbers of withdrawal are small at 12 across the city. In addition to this number one larger secondary school reported that their number varies to up to 15 pupils across the year depending upon a range of variables (such as time of the year or content).

Within the RE and CoWo information within the survey of schools and websites schools provide an insight into provision for pupils. A variety of provision is made for pupils/students such as joining a class studying another subject, area, topic, or continuing self-study for older students or providing a room to work, encouraging the

pupils/ students to study their own religion if this is appropriate to the child's circumstances or encouraging a project or self-study on an area of interested chosen by the child/student.

Determinations regarding Collective Worship

SACRE have received no applications for determinations in the years 2020 to 2021 and 2021 to 2022.

Complaints regarding Collective Worship

SACRE has received no complaints regarding Collective Worship in 2020 to 2021 nor in 2021 to 2022 (as of the date of this report).

4) SACRE's links with other bodies.

SACRE is a member of The National Association of Standing Advisory Councils for Religious Education (NASACRE) and members can now log into the site and access important documents and information to aid their work and understanding in matters relating to the or work as a members of SACRE.

I have successfully renewed a dialogue with the Brentwood Diocese and the RE Adviser who (jointly) advises Essex County Council and the Chelmsford Diocesan Director of Education.

5) SACRE Involvement locally

During lockdown, when the subject matter was relevant, I attended the online meetings of the Faith and Belief Network working as the Local Authority's RE Advisor, although not on behalf of SACRE, this was a vehicle through which I could continue to support schools. I have reported back to SACRE as meetings recommenced. The Network led an online "Faith and Belief Festival". I was able to encourage teachers to engage and support their pupils to take part in this successful pilot event through their online learning in RE lessons.

6) SACRE's own arrangements to fulfil its Statutory Responsibilities

SACRE is provided with:

- a Clerk, Mr Robert Harris, Principal Democratic Services Officer
- an independent Adviser, Mrs Frances Neil.

The Chair of this SACRE, Mr Kevin Ryan, Mrs Neil and Mr Harris attended the NASACRE AGM and Training Day including additional courses as offered throughout June.

The Local Authority provide a venue, documentation, and a budget to enable SACRE Meetings to take place.

Appendices:

- a) SACRE's NASACRE Draft Self Evaluation Tool
- b) RE Today project for Excellent RE / Religion and worldviews in the Primary School
- c) NASACRE report on SACRE's "Still Standing"