

**Herefordshire
Standing Advisory Council on
Religious Education
(SACRE)**

**Draft SACRE Annual Report
for the Academic Year 2017/18**

1 Herefordshire SACRE Annual Report 2017-2018

The Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) is a statutory body set up to advise the Local Authority on matters related to religious education and collective worship. Its members are drawn from teachers, Local Authority representatives including Councillors, faith representatives from the Church of England and a range of Christian denominations, and representatives from other religious groups represented in the region.

SACRE's key functions include monitoring the provision and quality of RE, and providing advice and support on the effective teaching of RE in accordance with the agreed syllabus. This includes advice on methods of teaching, choice of teaching material and provision of teacher training. This is primarily done through the review and implementation of the locally agreed syllabus, a process which is required every five years. This is followed by on-going monitoring of its effectiveness in the light of changing national education policy.

SACRE is grateful to Herefordshire County Council for its continuing support, but notes that in the current reduction in funding across the Council, SACRE has not been spared. In 2016-2017 it reduced its number of SACRE meetings to two, and this was continued into 2017-2018. However, attendance at meetings dropped, with the 16 March 2018 meeting inquorate. SACRE, with the support of the adviser from RE Today, agreed to an additional meeting on 29 June 2018, to address the need to encourage attendance, increase representation, and to agree plans from the Spring meeting.

Herefordshire SACRE met three times in 2017-2018. The minutes of these meetings are available from Matthew Evans, Clerk to SACRE (matthew.evans@herefordshire.gov.uk).

Herefordshire Local Authority has been represented on SACRE by Lisa Fraser, Head of Learning and Achievement. At her promotion to interim Assistant Director Education, Development and Skills, Children and Families, her place has been taken by Alison Naylor, Head of Learning and Achievement. SACRE are grateful for their continuing support and guidance. They also appreciate the on-going support and advice from RE Today, through their adviser, Stephen Pett.

2 Supporting RE in Herefordshire

The key activities of SACRE over the period 2017-18 have focused on maintaining support for teachers. SACRE has commissioned a local teaching school to draw up a guide for visits and visitors for schools, including contact names and details.

As Worcestershire and Herefordshire SACREs share the same agreed syllabus, training that is provided for either county is made available to neighbouring schools.

3 SACRE Primary RE Conference 2018

Following the decline in numbers attending Herefordshire primary conferences (from 62 in 2015, cancelled in 2016, 21 in 2017), SACRE examined the multiple reasons for this. They decided to offer a half-day conference, running from 1.30-5.30pm. This was a reduction of training time of an hour from a full day, but would reduce the cost of supply cover to schools. Bishop of Hereford Bluecoat Secondary School offered a venue, and the cost for the session was reduced to £85 or £150 for two teachers from the same school.

The conference was called 'RE with impact: thinking hard and learning lots'. The programme was delivered by Fiona Moss and Stephen Pett from RE Today. Topics covered included an introduction to some findings of neuroscience and their implications for learning; teaching non-religious worldviews, an

update on current developments in the RE world (such as the Commission on RE) and a session on effective assessment in RE.

Comments from head teachers and teachers attending included the following representative sample:

- I found the assessment ideas particularly valuable and relevant
- It has been really informative and very inspiring
- Useful activities which are relevant and practical to take back into the classroom. Good use of resources – handouts/electronic handouts which can all be used
- Very useful. Given me lots of ideas and suggestions to take back to school.
- Great advice given and reassurance of what good practice/assessment looks like. Lots of ideas to use in the classroom were used
- Thank you, Stephen and Fiona. Your knowledge and expertise are truly inspiring!
- Glad it exists – too many 'foundation' subjects are left stranded. Good central venue.

Despite the positive response from teachers who were present, numbers were still low, however. 17 delegates from 13 schools attended. Response to the change of time was mixed:

- 5 preferred a full day
 - I can understand with tight budgets that half a day is easier for schools but there was a lot to take in at a fast pace. As a participant a full day is better.
 - Return of day conference – more useful, have gained deeper understanding from day courses.
- 3 preferred the afternoon
 - Good time of day for the conference.
 - Half a day is better – easier to cover classes at school
- 2 were unsure:
 - I think that the timings help schools (cover costs reduced) but not attendees (childcare costs/impacts)
 - Not sure about the 1-5.30 thing, but understand it reduces impact on school day.

4 Secondary RE Conference: June 2018

The SACREs of the Three Counties of Herefordshire, Worcestershire and Gloucestershire combined to offer a conference for secondary teachers. After canvassing teachers for ideas as to what they wanted to be included, the conference, 'Deeper thinking: deeper learning', included keynotes and seminar options.

Keynote 1: Engaging students at GCSE – not just 'getting through'	Lat Blaylock RE Today
A1. Five ways to encourage excellence in writing.	Lat Blaylock
A2. Practical strategies to develop religious literacy in Islam.	Chris Giles, South Bromsgrove High School
B1. Salvation and atonement in Christian thought and practice.	Stephen Pett, RE Today
B2. Teaching concepts of God creatively and thoughtfully in Islam and Christianity.	Lat Blaylock
C1. Raising the profile of the RE Department.	Chris Giles and Rebecca Davidge, University of Worcester
C2 Christians and life after death: authority, diversity and implications.	Stephen Pett
Keynote 2. More learning, less marking: assessment models that work	Stephen Pett
TeachMeet	Chris Giles and delegates

30 teachers attended. 100% rated the overall value of the conference as 'excellent'. Delegates came from the three counties, Oxfordshire, Bristol and Nottingham. Unfortunately only two teachers came from Herefordshire schools.

5. Support for special school RE

The Three Counties SACREs continue to support Special Schools in their RE. We held our fourth such training day in July 2018. Held at the stunning location of Adhithana, the Triratna Buddhist Centre near Ledbury, it was led once again by Anne Krisman, Head of RE at Little Heath Special School, Redbridge, and senior Tibetan Buddhist nun, Tsultrim Tenzin Choesang. It included sessions on planning for the specific needs of SEND pupils, using the agreed syllabus, teaching about Muslims, and experiential activities. It was disappointing that even though the conference was in Herefordshire, and it attracted teachers from Gloucestershire, Stratford-upon-Avon and Coventry, none of the Herefordshire special schools attended.

6 Commentary on exam results summer 2018

[To follow]

7 Quality of teaching in Herefordshire.

SACRE has been unable to monitor quality of teaching in Herefordshire this year. A primary school survey has been drafted and will be distributed to schools in the autumn of 2018.

8 Future support for RE

It is clear from the above reports that SACRE have not overcome the challenge of providing support for schools in a way that they are able and willing to access. Despite all three conferences being very well-received, and planned in response to the expressed needs of teachers, Herefordshire teachers did not attend as they have done in the past. This will be an on-going issue for SACRE to consider and address.

SACRE has considered the idea of putting on webinars so that a single session can be accessed by teachers from school – perhaps enabling a school to have a 60-75-minute RE staff meeting with an external trainer. RE Today has the equipment to offer this. SACRE will discuss a trial of this in the autumn.

SACRE will continue to provide CPD, but will look at how to encourage better attendance. Current plans include:

- Trial of webinars and other forms of training to local schools
- Working with Worcester SACRE and the Diocese of Hereford to create an annual SACRE conference for primary teachers.
- Planning a SACRE secondary RE conference, in partnership with Worcestershire SACRE, University of Worcestershire, Gloucestershire SACRE, Hereteach, South Bromsgrove High School, RE Today and NATRE.
- School Survey to assess impact and value of revised agreed syllabus.

9 Other matters:

SACRE considered several pertinent issues over the year, including:

- An amendment to the Constitution was agreed, whereby the Chair of SACRE would be elected by SACRE members rather than appointed by the Council.
- Strategies for increasing representation on SACRE, and for encouraging attendance.

- Funding for SACRE: the LA put the role of advisory support for SACRE out to tender in summer 2018, with a two-year contract at £4000 per year. RE Today was successful in the tender process and will continue to support SACRE over 2018-2020. It was noted that this would include the time for considering a review of the agreed syllabus, although the budget for any review would need to be found on top of the annual SACRE budget.
- A presentation on preventing terrorism and countering violent extremism was given by Neville Meredith, Community Cohesion Officer. SACRE considered the particular local context with migrant workers and the travelling community in Herefordshire. The value of RE in promoting tolerance and understanding was discussed.
- Commission on RE: SACRE discussed its response to the Interim Report from the Commission. While much was welcomed, there was a preference for a localised approach rather than the move towards centralising with the removal of the role of the SACRE in developing an agreed syllabus. SACRE commented that this would punish those areas which had established good syllabuses. Members were encouraged to give individual feedback to the report.
- Visits and Visitors Guide: the draft produced by a local Teaching School was considered. Some updates and amendments were requested. The LA Officer pointed out that this was funded from the Children's Wellbeing Commissioning Management Education team. The potential for funding an interactive online map for visiting local places of worship was considered.

Cllr John Stone
Chair of SACRE
November 2018