

Herefordshire
Standing Advisory Council on
Religious Education
(SACRE)

Draft SACRE Annual Report for the Academic
Year 2018/19

1 Herefordshire SACRE Annual Report 2018-2019

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, council representatives including Councillors, faith representatives from the Church of England and a range of Christian denominations, and representatives from other religious and non-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 Council for its continuing support. SACRE endeavours to offer maximum support to schools through its use of conferences and network meetings. However, it still functions with only two SACRE meetings a year. The long-term support from RE Today Services, who have supported Herefordshire SACRE since before 2008, was renewed for a two-year period, following a tendering process. The Local Authority officer is the Head of Learning and Achievement.

Herefordshire SACRE met twice in 2018-2019. The minutes of these meetings are available from Democratic Services (councillorservices@herefordshire.gov.uk). The decline in the membership of SACRE which has resulted in a number of vacancies on the committee, as noted in last year's annual report, has been addressed to a certain extent, with renewed membership from Roman Catholics on Committee A, and an additional member from the Church of England (Committee B). Both SACRE meetings were quorate. Membership is an on-going issue SACRE is seeking to address.

2 Supporting RE in Herefordshire

The key activities of SACRE over the period 2018-19 have focused on maintaining support for teachers as they implement the revised agreed syllabus for RE. SACRE has commissioned a local teaching school to draw up a guide for visits and visitors for schools, including contact names and details.

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

3 SACRE Primary RE Conference 2019

Having tried a new format in 2018, where the conference was a half-day only, Herefordshire reverted to its former practice and held a day conference on 26 June hosted at Bishop of Hereford Bluecoat School. 22 teachers attended, from 18 schools.

The programme was led by Fiona Moss and Stephen Pett from RE Today, with sessions literacy and RE, Ofsted and RE, creative RE, and teaching Islam and Hinduism. 100% of those attending rated the conference as excellent!

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

- *These conferences are always excellent with lots of amazing ideas. Real ideas/info for real teachers in the real world! Great presenters – Stephen and Fiona – Thanks. (HB, Mordiford)*
- *A really excellent day – really useful and relevant. The Ofsted session was particularly good and very thought provoking, Thank you. I really enjoyed all aspects. (HW, Colwall CE)*

- *Great, practical advice for RE in schools – stimulating and interesting at every turn – thank you! (BK, Eardisley CE)*
- *Excellent day, informative, fast paced, interesting. Great venue. (TK, Canon Pyon CE)*
- *Really interesting and relevant topics that will be of great practical use in school. Keen to share ideas and resources with other members of staff. Would have like more time to explore creativity and session 4. (LP, Kington)*
- *Packed full of useful ideas – great to have the downloads to present to staff and governors (TW, Marlbrook)*

Attendance was higher than 2018 with 22 teachers attending but still not reaching the numbers from in the years up to 2015 when more there were more attendees. With a new syllabus launch in summer 2020, it is hoped that most schools will attend.

4 Secondary RE Conference: June 2019

This conference was a joint Three Counties (and beyond) conference, with 23 teachers from Gloucestershire, Herefordshire, Worcestershire, Swindon and Bristol attending. Sessions focused in better writing for GCSE, deeper thinking in Islam, enquiry-based learning and exploring non-religious worldviews, and were led by Angela Hill and Stephen Pett (RE Today). All delegates rated the conference as excellent!

Representative feedback comments:

- *As always, excellent value for money and relevant materials with easily implemented ideas*
- *I absolutely love coming to these conferences and look forward to it each year. Stephen is so inspiring and always go back to my school with fresh and exciting ideas. Everybody should come to this!*
- *All very good, as per usual. Good length and variety of sessions linked clearly to research, resources, strategies and practice.*
- *This was my first SACRE/RE Today conference and it was incredibly useful! I really enjoyed meeting new people and the quality of the content was amazing!*
- *This was a superb course. Angela and Stephen were so knowledgeable and great presenters. I've learnt so much!*
- *An excellent day to network and reflect on my own practice. Lots of practical ideas to revamp our curriculum and enhance learning in a deeper and more meaningful way.*

6 Additional support for schools

On behalf of SACRE, RE Today offered Herefordshire schools more opportunities for CPD via webinar.

- Primary webinar: Meaningful and manageable assessment for RE in the primary school (10 April)
- Secondary webinar: Handling key Christian concepts for GCSE (10 July).

These hour-long webinars were available live for schools to use as CPD opportunities for whole staff/department teams. In the end, numbers were low (below 5 for each) and so the schools were able to download a recording of the webinar, to use as best suited them.

SACRE was delighted that a local teacher, Tracy Westlake, took on the challenge of setting up a NATRE local group. It had its first meeting on 8 July at Marlbrook Primary School, Hereford, and 31 teachers attended. A second date has been fixed for 21 October 2019.

7 Commentary on exam results summer 2019

[To follow]

8 Agreed Syllabus review

The current agreed syllabus is provided by RE Today and runs out in 2020. At its spring meeting 2019, SACRE set up an Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC) and considered three options.

- a. Renewing the current syllabus, with an update inserted, to take account of recent development, such as in assessment, Ofsted priorities, the national report *Religion and Worldviews*, legal judgments made with regard to Humanism in RE, etc.
- b. Adopting RE Today's more recent syllabus model. Whereas the current syllabus is mainly thematic in its teaching, the new syllabus model is more systematic, promoting the study of two religions in a year and then comparing them in the summer term. It also incorporates questions from the *Understanding Christianity* resource that is in a significant number of local schools already.
- c. Developing a new bespoke syllabus for Herefordshire.

Option C was rejected as beyond the means of SACRE's funding possibilities. It was agreed that teachers should be consulted at the annual conferences, and through local network groups in the autumn, and that their feedback should be used to help SACRE's decision at the autumn SACRE meeting.

8 Future support for RE

On-going support for teachers is planned for 2019-2020. This includes training linked to the launch of a revised agreed syllabus. The possibility of joining with Worcestershire SACRE in the agreed syllabus launches will be considered. The NATRE local primary group is also arranging dates for meetings.

9 Other matters:

SACRE considered several pertinent issues over the year, including:

Monitoring

SACRE takes its monitoring duties seriously. Contact with teachers via hub groups and conferences allows for opportunities for feedback. SACRE has carried out some online surveys in the past. In 2018, the primary survey only attracted 18 responses, so it will be repeated early next year, via local hub groups.

Secondary school GCSE and School Workforce Data

SACRE discusses GCSE and A level results each year and members are delighted with the hard work and dedication shown by teachers and students, especially in the light of the changes to the GCSE and A level, with their increased demand.

The results also show issues of provision, as does the School Workforce Data. SACRE has on-going discussions on the best way to support and challenge school who are not meeting their statutory provision.

National developments in RE

SACRE meetings have a regular item on national updates. Some of the more significant items discussed include:

- Commission on RE: SACRE discussed its response to the Commission Report, *Religion and Worldviews: a way forward*. It will bear this in mind in its choice of a new syllabus. It will continue to monitor the on-going impact of the Commission report.
- Draft Ofsted Framework 2019: SACRE noted the planned change in focus from Ofsted, with its emphasis on coherent curriculum planning. It will bear in mind these priorities when considering the agreed syllabus revision. The primary conference 2019 explored ways in which schools can develop their thinking in RE in relation to these Ofsted priorities. This will continue to be part of SACRE support for teachers.

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