

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

**SACRE Annual Report
for the Academic Year 2019/20**

1 Herefordshire SACRE Annual Report 2019-2020

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 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.

Herefordshire County Council supports SACRE with an annual budget that includes an additional element to cover the cost of agreed syllabus renewals every five years. This was outlined by the LA Strategic Finance Manager at the Spring 2020 meeting. 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. At the end of the period of this report, following a tendering process, the long-term support from RE Today Services, who have supported Herefordshire SACRE since before 2008, was renewed for a further three-year period.

The Local Authority officer is Alison Naylor, Head of Learning and Achievement.

Herefordshire SACRE met twice in 2019-2020. The minutes of these meetings are available from Matthew Evans, Clerk to SACRE (matthew.evans@herefordshire.gov.uk). Both SACRE meetings were quorate. Membership is an on-going issue SACRE is seeking to address.

2 Supporting RE in Herefordshire

The key work of SACRE this year has been ensuring the delivery of the new Herefordshire Agreed Syllabus for RE 2020-2025. However, this year has been dominated by the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. Plans and preparations for launching the new agreed syllabus in June 2020 were disrupted, although contingency plans were put in place (see below). The second SACRE meeting took place only a few weeks before the March lockdown, and SACRE members were able to discuss alternative ways of supporting schools.

3 Agreed Syllabus for RE 2020-2025

Teachers were consulted in June and October 2019, on the choice between a renewal of the current syllabus or changing to the new syllabus model from RE Today. The key difference from the current thematic syllabus constructed around three broad strands (believing, expressing, living) is that the alternative model includes more systematic study of religions before comparisons. It also incorporates the key questions and outcomes from the *Understanding Christianity* resource, used in many schools in the county and beyond.

In June 2019, 22 delegates attended the primary RE conference. They were shown the two syllabus models and had a chance to ask about the similarities and differences.

- 19 delegates completed an evaluation form and their feedback on the syllabus options.
- 2 delegates wished to retain the current syllabus
- 14 delegates wished to move to the new model

- 3 delegates had mixed feelings.

In October 2019 a group of 22 teachers attended the NATRE local group meeting, organised and hosted by Tracy Westlake at Marlbrook Primary School. They were also shown the syllabus models and asked for their feedback. All 22 teachers expressed a wish to move to the new syllabus model.

The Agreed Syllabus Conference took the recommendation of teachers and voted to recommend to the Local Authority that Herefordshire SACRE adopt RE Today's syllabus 'model B'.

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

4 Agreed Syllabus launch: June 2020

Plans to launch the syllabus on 5th June 2020 at Bishop of Hereford Bluecoat School were in place when lockdown started in March 2020. For several weeks, hopes remained that we might still be in a place to have the conference in June, but in May the decision was taken that the conference would not be possible.

The alternative was arranged by RE Today. Schools registered to receive an electronic copy of the syllabus, alongside a recorded webinar introducing the syllabus. Accompanied by a workbook, sample units, knowledge building blocks and sample long-term plans, this webinar meant that teachers could work through the new syllabus individually or as staff or department teams. By the end of the summer, 66 Herefordshire schools had accessed the new syllabus. The missing 30 or so schools will be followed up in the autumn term.

5 Local groups and other CPD

As mentioned above, a NATRE local group was held at Marlbrook Primary School on 21 October 2019. 22 teachers attended, trying out some examples of teaching and learning activities, sharing ideas and resources, as well as looking at the syllabus models. [Additional local group dates spring 2020?]

The Diocese of Hereford [training opportunities?]

6 Chair of SACRE

It was noted in the 2018-2019 report that Councillor John Stone stood down as Chair of SACRE after the summer 2019 meeting. Cllr Stone was Chair of SACRE for 18 years, from its inception in the county. SACRE is deeply grateful to Cllr Stone for his commitment to SACRE over the years. The news of his stepping down attracted comments from a number of past local authority officers, advisers to SACRE, head teachers and a Diocesan Director. They commented on his dedication, hard work and unstinting commitment to his role, which he fulfilled with wisdom and courtesy. They also noted his active involvement in annual conferences, encouraging and supporting teachers to value RE and pupils' personal development. Members of SACRE echo these appreciations and thank Cllr Stone for this service to SACRE.

SACRE appointed the new Chair, Lama Tenzin Choesang.

At the Spring 2020 meeting, SACRE voted to amend the constitution to allow for the election of a Vice Chair, to be able to stand in for the Chair as required. Ms Lou Barker, secondary teacher representative, was elected as Vice Chair.

7 Exam results summer 2020

Owing to the cancellation of exams due to the pandemic, there are no school results to report here.

9 Other matters:

[Any additional information?]

Venerable Tsultrim Tenzin Choesang
Chair of SACRE
November 2020

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