

# Herefordshire Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education

Annual Report Sept 2023-August 2024

Draft



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## Foreword

Chair of SACRE (to follow)

Including reference to work of Lama Choesang, Chair until Nov 2023

Draft

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Overview of the work of SACRE

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.

SACRE endeavours to offer maximum support to schools through its use of conferences and local groups. This year, SACRE held three meetings at Herefordshire Council Offices, Plough Lane, Hereford: Friday 17 November 2023, Friday 15 March 2024 and Friday 5 July 2024. On two of these dates the Agreed Syllabus conference also met.

The Local Authority officer is Pamela Howell, School Improvement Advisor

Standing items in meetings:

- Welcome and Thought for the Day
- Apologies for absence
- Named substitutes (if any)
- Minutes and matters arising
- Response to written public questions
- AOB

A brief overview of each meeting can be found below:

#### *17 November 2023*

- *SACRE finances*
- *Draft annual report*
- *School Workforce Data*
- *SACRE constitution*
- *Proposed primary and secondary conferences*
- *Updates on any new national RE initiatives*
- *Election of Chair and Vice Chair*

#### *15 March 2024*

*Agreed syllabus Conference*

- *Herefordshire Agreed Syllabus Review*

*SACRE meeting*

- *Election of Chair*
- *SACRE budget*
- *School workforce data*
- *SACRE constitution*
- *Primary and secondary conference update*

- *Support for primary and secondary schools*
- *Teacher support, network meetings*

5 July 2024

*Agreed syllabus Conference*

- *Considering the updated syllabus for launch in 2025*

*SACRE meeting*

- *Feedback on primary and secondary RE conferences*
- *Updates on any new RE initiatives*
- *Teacher support, network meetings*

## 2. Religious Education

### 2.1 The locally agreed syllabus and RE in schools

The Herefordshire agreed syllabus was launched in 2020, during the pandemic and is due for renewal for September 2025. The current syllabus is one of the models developed by RE Today and licensed to the Local Authority for use in their schools. It is built around a purpose, aims and a pedagogy that enables pupils to make sense of religious and non-religious beliefs, understand their impact in people's lives, and make connections between their learning and their own lives. It offers a spiral curriculum model, where pupils build on prior learning, with a particular focus on core concepts at the heart of religious (and non-religious) traditions.

SACRE formed an Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC) in March 2024. The syllabus has been in place for four years, and conversations with teachers informed SACRE/ASC that there was no appetite for wholesale changes, especially as the Covid pandemic had disrupted the amount of time the syllabus was able to be taught in schools. However, SACRE members have been keeping track of the developments in RE around the Ofsted categories of knowledge (substantive, ways of knowing and personal) and also around the religion and worldviews approach advocated by the RE Council and its 2024 Handbook for Curriculum Writers. Members of the ASC felt it was important to maintain continuity as far as possible, to enable schools to embed the syllabus in their curriculums so that pupils could make progress through the school. The ASC also wanted teachers to be made aware of some of the developments, and prepared and supported for inspections.

The ASC heard from RE Today about their update to the syllabus model currently used in Herefordshire, and looked closely at the changes. These draw attention to different ways of knowing, offer guidance on a religion and worldviews approach, updates information (e.g. census data) and expands the local links. The ASC recommended that the LA relicence with RE Today for their updated syllabus for 2025-2020. The launch will take place in summer 2025.

### 2.2 Standards and monitoring of RE

Herefordshire SACRE does not ask for schools to report on attainment in RE at Key Stages 1-3. However, formative assessment should be ongoing and schools should have their own individual summative assessment procedures termly, at the end of each year and Key Stage to inform their reports and school development plan.

The syllabus contains a section on assessment, which is related to end of Key Stage expectations. Learning outcomes within the syllabus support teachers to judge whether pupils are on track to meet these expectations.

GCSE and A level Religious Studies examinations data can be seen in Appendix 3 below. At present, exam results from 2024 are unvalidated. SACRE thanks teachers who have supported students and taught them in extremely difficult circumstances.

SACRE regularly reviews school workforce survey data when it is available, reviewing school websites and surveying schools to explore provision further.

OFSTED reports can also provide a way of monitoring RE. The new OFSTED inspection framework and RE research review appear to be bringing a renewed focus on RE in schools where RE was struggling to get sufficient curriculum time.

### 2.3 Teacher training and materials and advice for schools

#### Network meetings

SACRE teacher representative, Tracy Westlake, has been running a NATRE-affiliated local group each term. These are held online to allow for maximum participation, given the distance for travel across the county. Sessions have included the following items:

- ECT training provision
- Using visual resources in the classroom
- Exploring the RE Hubs website
- Multidisciplinary RE

The Diocese of Hereford runs regular online and in-person training sessions throughout the year.

[More detail here?](#)

#### SACRE primary RE conference, 1 July 2024

The annual primary RE conference took place in person at the Hereford Academy. 25 teachers attended, along with 6 SACRE members. It was led by Stephen Pett from RE Today, and Tracy Westlake, primary head teacher and SACRE member.

The programme included workshops on the following workshops:

- Ways of knowing in RE
- Adaptive teaching in RE
- Sequencing for progression

The final session involved teachers meeting SACRE representatives from five different traditions - Bahá'í, Buddhist, Humanist, Muslim and Sikh.

Representative feedback included:

- *It was really helpful to listen to Tracy talk about how just simply using questioning to adapt can deepen and extend learning. Love the do less, better quote and the boxes to connect learning.*
- *Informative, interesting, lots of practical ideas that can be used across key stages. Thank you. Projector was difficult to see from the back, but great paper and online resource is.*
- *Great, informative day allowing us to share ideas with others who are passionate about RE.*
- *Well run, full of practical ideas to take straight back to school. Really inspiring. I really enjoyed seeing the real life examples from Tracy's classroom. Super venue - good lunch!*
- *The whole day has been very informative and really useful. I have taken away lots of useful strategies and ideas.*
- *All parts of the conference have been extremely useful and have given me lots of ideas to try out myself and to share with colleagues. It was also a great opportunity to network with other RE leaders.*
- *All parts of the conference have been well delivered and helpful. The venue has been great. A really enjoyable day. Thank you! I will look forward to receiving the slides so that I can share that day with colleagues.*
- *Really important for RE. The teaching, learning and our professionalism. Friendly. Supportive - sense of 'we are here alongside you... you might like to try coming this way'. Glad the local*

authority were there to see it - would be worth them endorsing this work, though, at events like this.

- *Well organised and informative day! The only downside was not enough time to ask questions during the speed dating activity!*
- *Lots of useful ideas to feedback at school, especially ways to help with sticky knowledge. Will fit in with our action from Ofsted. The meeting worldview reps was extremely useful play some really informative.*
- *A really well organised conference with a mixture of discussion and activities which can be used back in the classroom. Being face to face has been useful to talk to other teachers of RE. Will help to develop next steps of the curriculum.*

### **SACRE secondary RE conference, 22 June 2023**

Herefordshire SACRE collaborates with Gloucestershire and Worcestershire SACREs in putting on a secondary conference each year. The venue was Puckrup Hall Hotel near Tewkesbury. 30 delegates attended from the three counties.

The programme, and evaluations, were as follows:

	<b>excellent</b>	<b>good</b>	<b>satisfactory</b>
Explaining atheism: getting to grips with non-religion <i>Stephen Pett</i>	95%	5%	
Rich study of Islam at KS3 for exam excellence at GCSE and beyond... <i>Ian Nicholson</i>	75%	20%	5%
Worldviews: current research, excellent practice <i>Dr Chris Hancock</i>	58%	42%	
Beyond the spec: developing a coherent GCSE curriculum <i>Ian Nicholson</i>	65%	30%	5%
Encountering Jews, Hindus, Christians and Sikhs at KS3: real lives, real living <i>Stephen Pett</i>	67%	28%	5%
Venue: how do you rate it?	100%		
Overall value of the conference	95%	5%	

Representative feedback included:

- *Lovely opportunity to meet and reflect on our practice. Resources from RE Today are great.*
- *It has been fantastic for a non-specialist – everyone has been amazingly helpful*
- *The level of knowledge assumed re Islam was too academic! As a newbie, it lost me so I didn't manage to access this bit.*
- *This has been really interesting for meeting other professionals in RE, and thinking about curriculum design through a worldview perspective was particularly helpful.*
- *Excellent – really insightful. My brain hurts, but in a good way! I'm excited to take this on as I start my teaching career. Thank you to everyone for such a great day.*
- *Really positive – affirming, encouraging and motivational*
- *Really inspiring! Lots of new ideas which are easily accessible and will really engage students. The speakers made me think outside of the box, and want to go back to school and evaluate the curriculum.*
- *A day of reflection, inspiration and networking. So lovely to have face to face training again! RE is experiential and cannot always be delivered over a screen. Final session was exceptional.*
- *Wow! Could we please have more on Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhi, etc?*
- *Amazing content! The only issue is the applicability to groups with low ability/lack of basic knowledge*

- *Always useful to meet others. And interact and share ideas. Such a wealth of ideas and knowledge among us.*

## 2.4 Other information

There were no formal complaints to SACRE about RE during the year.

## 2.5 Advice given to the local authority

No advice was given to the Local Authority.

## 3. Collective worship

### 3.1 Standards and monitoring of Collective Worship

SACRE has found it hard to monitor collective worship over the past few years. It is noted that schools found different ways of delivering Collective worship virtually during the last difficult year.

### 3.2 Determinations

No applications for a Determination (to alter the character of Collective Worship for some of all pupils in a school) have been requested in the year 2023-24.

### 3.3 Teacher training provided

No SACRE training on collective worship has been provided in 2023-24, although the Diocese of Hereford continues to support its schools in this area.

### 3.4 Other information

There were no formal complaints to SACRE about collective worship during the year.

### 3.5 Advice to the Local Authority

No advice was given to the local authority around the provision of collective worship.

## 4. Links with other bodies

### 4.1 National Bodies

- Herefordshire SACRE is a member of NASACRE. Its newsletters are circulated to all members.
- Stephen Pett, RE Today, connects SACRE with NATRE, and provides national updates at each meeting. Reports from NATRE, including the School Workforce Data and primary and secondary surveys have proved useful to SACRE when monitoring schools.
- Information from the RE Council has been used in meetings and shared with schools where appropriate.

### 4.2 Local bodies

Hereford Diocese provides excellent support to SACRE and local schools.

Several members of SACRE are members of Herefordshire Interfaith Group, which runs a number of events each term, as well as organising a biennial Interfaith Peace Service for International Day of Peace at Hereford Cathedral.

## 5. SACRE involvement in the Local Area

SACRE updates governors and headteachers on resources and training via a bulletin.

## 6. Managing the SACRE and partnership with the Local Authority

### 6.1 Professional and administrative support

*Clerk to SACRE:*

Simon Cann (November 2022-March 2023)



Henry Merricks-Murgatroyd (March 2023-November 2024)  
Ben Baugh (November 2024-)  
Democratic Services Officer(s)  
Herefordshire Council  
Plough Lane | Hereford | HR4 0LE

*Local authority officer:*

Alison Naylor has been the nominated LA officer, but has been unable to attend for some time, represented at meetings by different members of her team. From Summer 2024, Pamela Howell has now taken the LA officer role.

Pam Howell  
School Improvement Advisor  
Children and Families  
Herefordshire Council  
Plough Lane | Hereford | HR4 0LE

*Adviser to SACRE:*

The LA has a contract with RE Today Services. Stephen Pett is the RE Today national adviser who delivers the contract to Herefordshire LA and SACRE.

RE Today Services, S5-S6 1 Devon Way, Longbridge, Birmingham B31 2TS

## 6.2 Membership, representation and attendance

SACRE regularly reviews membership and seeks representation from local communities. Current vacancies, and repeated absences are discussed by the Chair and LA Officer.

All groups have been represented according to SACRE's terms of reference at each meeting.

## 6.3 Training for SACRE members

The SACRE Clerk, Chair, LA Officer and RE adviser are on hand to advise SACRE members.

All members are invited to attend the training provided for schools. Several SACRE members attend the primary conference each year, providing support to the RE adviser and spending time meeting and supporting teachers. Members often attend NASACRE CPD and the Southwest SACRE conference, reporting back to members.

## 6.4 Finance

Herefordshire County Council supports SACRE with an annual budget of £5000. This covers the cost of the support from RE Today Services, who have supported Herefordshire SACRE for over a decade, and 20% of it accumulates to cover the cost of agreed syllabus renewals every five years.

## Appendices

### 1. SACRE membership

Friday 17 November 2023, Friday 15 March 2024 and Friday 5 July 2024

<b>Group A - Organisation</b>		17 Nov 2023	15 March 2024	5 July 2024
Baha' i community	Carolyn Ault		✓	✓
Buddhist community	Lama Tenzin Choesang (Chair to Nov 2023)	✓		
Free Churches	<i>Currently no representative</i>			
Humanist	Geoff Sallis (Chair from March 2024)		✓	✓
Hindu community	<i>Currently no representative</i>			
Jewish community	<i>Currently no representative</i>			
Muslim community	Samira Kairo		Observing	✓
Quaker community	Ruth Stanier	✓	✓	
Roman Catholic Church	Peter Fawcett	✓		✓
Sikh community	<i>Currently no representative</i>			
<b>Group B: Church of England</b>				
	Barry Stevens (July 2024-)			✓
	Mark Harrington		✓	✓
	Jonathan Nicholas			✓
<b>Group C: Teacher representatives</b>				
Primary teacher	Tracy Westlake	✓		
Secondary teacher	Louise Barker (Vice Chair)	✓	✓	
Special school	<i>Currently no representative</i>			
<b>Group D: Local Authority</b>				
	Cllr Rob Owens (Spring 2024)		✓	✓
	Cllr John Stone	✓	✓	✓
	Cllr Justine Peberdy	✓	✓	✓
<b>In attendance</b>				
Clerk to SACRE	Simin Cann (March 2022- March 2023) Henry Merricks-Murgatroyd (March 2023-Nov 2024)	✓	✓	✓
LA Officer	Ms A Naylor (-March 2024) Pam Howell (July 2024-)	Mr I Sockett (substitute)	Ms L Tanner (substitute)	✓
Adviser to SACRE	Stephen Pett, RE Today	✓	✓	✓

### 2. Circulation details for this Annual Report

Copies will be sent electronically to the relevant bodies.

- Darryl Freeman, Corporate Director of Children and Young People, Herefordshire LA
- Cllr Ivan Powell, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, Herefordshire LA
- The Department for Education (Central Government)
- NASACRE (National Association of Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education)
- Headteachers and Governing Bodies of Herefordshire schools
- All members of Herefordshire SACRE, for distribution to the bodies/communities they represent

### 3. Herefordshire examination results

To follow

Draft