

THIRTY FIRST REPORT OF THE BOLTON STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION 20201-2022



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Section 1 Introduction

1.1 Word from the Chair

It has been good to return to a little normality and this year all our SACRE meetings have been face to face. Bolton SACRE is really fortunate to be well attended and well represented and it is clear that Bolton children are at the heart of discussions and decisions.

As always, SACRE appropriately funded by Bolton Local Authority which enables it to carry out key functions and to support our young people. Particular thanks go to Marie Foley from Governance services. She provides the administrative support we rely on in an efficient and co-operative way.

We are also fortunate in having Georgina Ryding as its 'executive officer. She is passionate about religious education and sympathetic to the needs and challenges of schools and teachers in Bolton. Her leadership is invaluable. This year she has brought together a group of primary RE teachers, as leading teachers, to offer support and guidance to RE leads and school leaders across Bolton. This is a great opportunity for SACRE to offer practical support where it is needed as we work towards ensuring all our children have access to excellent RE teaching.

We look forward to the coming year as we plan for our first Religious Education conference in four years. This is always a great opportunity for RE leads and SACRE members to come together and develop their thinking.

Cllr Kevin McKeon

1.2 SACRE Arrangements

Bolton SACRE meet three times a year. During the pandemic meetings were held virtually although they are usually held at Bolton Science and Technology Centre (BSTC), Minerva Road.

Bolton SACRE is made up of four committees, observers, a Local Authority representative and administrative support is provided through the Bolton Governance Clerking Service.

Committee A : Christian and Other Denominations

Committee B : Church of England

Committee C: Teacher Associations

Committee D : Local Authority

1.3 Syllabus Arrangements including Agreed Syllabus Conference

The current Bolton Agreed Syllabus was launched in 2020 and is due for review in 2025. There is currently no Agreed Syllabus Conference in place. The syllabus was created by SACRE and approved by Bolton Council. SACRE secured the services of RE Today who developed the materials and provided the support and training at the time of the launch.

The syllabus is used by all maintained schools and those Academies and Voluntary Controlled Schools that have made a choice to use it. SACRE is not aware of any maintained school not using the Bolton Agreed Syllabus.

Section 2 Religious Education: Statutory Responsibilities

2.1 Locally Agreed Syllabus

The syllabus has been in place for three years. The syllabus links clearly to Understanding Christianity and as a resource it supports the teaching of the Christianity units in the syllabus. Schools that choose not to make use of Understanding Christianity can still deliver the syllabus fully. However, SACRE has funded, and will continue to fund the training and resource for any school wishing to use Understanding Christianity. This offer has been taken up by 6 maintained schools this year.

2.2 Standards and Monitoring of RE

Whilst SACRE's action plan for this year identified this as an area for development work in this area has been very limited. However, the creation of a Leading Teacher group will enable this work to develop more fully in the coming year.

In the academic year 2021-2022 no deep dives into RE were carried out in OFSTED Inspections in maintained schools in Bolton. Mrs Fletcher monitors this on behalf of SACRE.

2.3 Further information including training and requests for advice.

Leading Teachers

This year SACRE have brought together a small group of primary RE teachers to create a Leading Teacher group that can work directly with RE Leads in schools to offer support and advice on teaching and learning in RE. Georgina Ryding (Vice Chair) and Catriona Fletcher (School Improvement Officer and LA SACRE link) have led this work. SACRE are funding this work through their budget as this is likely to have the biggest impact on standards in RE in Bolton. In the Spring term, headteachers in Bolton were made aware of the offer available. Headteachers and RE Leads were then invited to request support and Georgina Ryding. By the end of this reporting period two schools have made use of this support and further schools have indicated that they would benefit from this support in the next academic year. To support the leading teachers SACRE have secured some external training which will take place in September 2022.

The coming year will give SACRE a clear indication of the impact that this project can have in teaching and learning in RE in Bolton.

God and the Big Bang

SACRE agreed to fund places for RE leads, Year 6 teachers and Science Leads at a twilight CPD event on June 2022 held at the Parish Church. The session was really well attended and generated some fantastic discussions.

Section 3 Collective Worship : Statutory Responsibilities

3.1 Standards and Monitoring

SACRE have discussed Collective Worship extensively at SACRE meetings and are aware of their statutory responsibilities. A SACRE member shared the work that Cumbria SACRE had done in this area. "Best Practice in Collective Worship Updated Autumn 2020 - Guidance from Cumbria SACRE", Mrs Ryding Cumbria SACRE to check if Bolton could share this document and they were delighted that we wanted to do this.

Actions around this were set for this year but have been moved into 2022-2023

3.2 Determinations

There is currently one determination in Bolton. This was sought and approved in March 2018 and is due for renewal in March 2023.

3.3 Further information including training and requests for advice and complaints

Bolton SACRE have not received any other requests for advice or complaints.

Section 4 SACRE Links

4.1 Links to National bodies

Bolton SACRE is a member of NASACRE and makes use of the advice and guidance they provide.

4.2 Links to Local groups

Bolton has an effective and well attended RE Hub led by a local headteacher, Matt Harding. This brings together RE Leads from across Bolton. He attended a SACRE meeting to explain the work that the hub does and there was a discussion about how SACRE could best support this work. Georgina Ryding attends the meetings and used this platform to advertise for teachers to join the leading teacher team. Bolton SACRE may be able to support this group in the future by sourcing speakers for the meetings. Bolton SACRE is also a member of the North North West (NNW) SACRE Hub, which brings together SACRE's from across the North West to share ideas and issues.

4.3 Further local involvement

Bolton SACRE supports the work of organisations promoting cohesion and understanding across the borough. Recently this has included promoting events organised by Bolton Christian Cohesion and circulating flyers regarding Anti Semitism.

Keith Armstrong, who is an observer on Bolton SACRE provides regular updates on community cohesion activities on Bolton. Over the year he has shared information about

- the Holocaust memorial service which took place in January 2022
- the work of Hiren Patel in project managing this event as well as future Faith Trails.
- The Bolton Unity Project which organised events designed to bring the community together, for example, community walks and community cohesion events.
- Christmas event organised by Christian Community Cohesion

Individual SACRE members have had a great deal of involvement in developing educational resources around climate change and environmental issues and it has been agreed that this will be a key part of the SACRE conference for RE Leads in June 2023.

Section 5 Bolton SACRE's Arrangements

5.1 Professional and Administrative Support

Support is provided by Bolton Governance Services, funded through the SACRE budget. This includes support for meetings, membership, Freedom of information requests and general enquiries.

5.2 Membership information and recruitment

Committee A : Christian and Other Denomination – 13 members, 8 vacancies

Committee B : Church of England – 4 members , 1 vacancy

Committee C: Teacher Associations – 6 members , 4 vacancies

Committee D : Local Authority – 3 members, 0 vacancies

It has been agreed that there will be a review of membership in 2022-2023 when the new census data is available.

5.3 Training for SACRE Members

The OFSTED research review into RE has been shared with all members and discussed.

SACRE Members were invited to the God and the Big Bang twilight training session held at Bolton Parish Church in June 2022

At the Summer meeting SACRE discussed the Religion and Worldview Handbook in some detail. SACRE are aware that no action is required by them at this time but it will be useful to keep an eye on developments in this area.

SACRE members attended the NASACRE national conference and some members have sought their own training.

5.4 Finance give to SACRE for its work.

For the year 2020-2021 , Bolton Council provide SACRE with a budget of £11,800 which is the full allocation based on the DfE formula. SACRE is well supported by Bolton Council.

Section 6 Future Developments and Planning

6.1 Developments and Planning for the coming year

- Continue to strengthen the leading teacher group.
- Explore ways to monitor worship
- Monitoring standards in RE
- Review the constitution and Terms of Reference for Bolton SACRE – this was postponed until the new census data is available.
- Use the NASACRE Evaluation and Action Planning Toolkit to identify more effectively areas for development.