

**Reading**  
**Annual SACRE Report 2022-2023**  
**(Sep 2022-Aug 2023)**

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## 1. Introduction and Overview Chair's report

Our focus this year has been on preparing the way for the revision of the RE Syllabus, following surveys last year of teachers and stakeholders ascertaining their views about the current syllabus. Overall, we have determined that there is a desire for a more prescriptive content-full model.

This year we convened our Agreed Syllabus Conference, tacking this on to our usual SACRE meetings. We have begun to review types of syllabus and content, styles of question, and how to ensure that there is a broad range of faiths/world-views across the key stages. Our model is tending towards a 'worldviews' approach and there is a strong desire to create our own syllabus – drawn from the best of other examples – rather than rely on contracting in a private provider.

Local faith groups have now been canvassed across the Pan-Berkshire Hub regarding their ideas about syllabus content, although with mixed results. Christian contributions have been notably stronger than those of other faiths/worldviews, which may reflect the gulf between ordinary faith members/leaders and teacher practitioners/schools outside of Christian circles.

Alongside this, we have undertaken a small survey of school websites to determine the profile of RE. Of 22 primary school websites, only four make no mention of a syllabus. Those which do, however, frequently have material dated to the previous syllabus, which indicates that we have work to do in promoting awareness of the forthcoming revision.

Aside from the syllabus revision, following a promising report about the RE Quality Mark we have given some thought to offering a bursary towards teacher training costs. This local initiative accompanies national moves towards supporting the professional development of RE teaching (see the recent moves by the RE Council towards the issuing of a *National Content Standard for RE*). The cost of the REQM and our limited funds has meant that we have not so far committed to this particular scheme, but we are now decided upon offering three bursaries for teachers to attend the on-line Strictly RE conference.

Having been set up several years ago, our Hub blog has not been well maintained so this year we trained two of our members who (hopefully) will take on a role in updating and maintaining it as a useful resource for sharing RE materials. Work has also now started on revising the *Crossing the Bridges* directory to update local faith contact details.

The Pan Berkshire Hub's *Real People, Real Faith* films (towards which we have contributed both funds and local faith expertise) now include Buddhist, Bahai and Humanist faiths/worldviews and accompanying notes. Website monitoring indicates they have been accessed over 4000 times. (<https://www.natre.org.uk/about-natre/projects/real-people-real-faith/>)

We are aware of a need to get to grips with Collective Worship but so far this remains a future hope with a need for some provisional research to determine what current practice is within schools in our area.

I am delighted to say that our meetings have been quorate. We are blessed to have active participation from our Councillors, and also to have the wise guidance and support of our advisor, David Rees. SACRE membership has remained fairly steady; though we are sad to say goodbye to Robin Sharples, we are delighted to be joined by his replacement, Jo Williams. I would like to thank my deputy chair, Fiona Murray, with whom I have shared the task of leading our meetings. Having chaired Reading's SACRE since 2019, I have now indicated that I shall be standing down in Spring 2024.

## **2. Statutory Responsibilities in RE**

Our Locally Agreed Syllabus (LAS) is called the Pan-Berkshire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education, which we produce in conjunction with the other five SACREs in Berkshire once every five years. In Reading the LAS is well established in most of our schools, and most academies have also adopted it although SACRE recognises that it needs to find out more about how much it is adhered to.

We are currently engaging in the process of producing a new LAS for 2024. This gives time for the Pan-Berkshire Hub (consisting of the SACRE Chairs and Professional Consultants) to do the work of preparation thoroughly, and we have already started this process which has included looking at some syllabi from around the country and seeing how recent developments in RE/RW are being incorporated. This has stimulated some lively debate.

In 2022-23 we continued to monitor and support the teaching of RE regularly, although in the aftermath of Covid-19 many meetings were still held virtually. With the rise in fuel prices and environmental concerns also being factored in it is probable that virtual meetings will remain the preferred option for the time being. Professional advisor David Rees led half termly virtual primary network meetings for RE leads (although secondary colleagues were made welcome too) and produced a termly Newsletter which was sent to all schools. These newsletters signpost a combination of local and national events, cpd opportunities, new resources (particularly free ones) and feedback from events (for example NASACRE AGM and Strictly RE).

We did not receive any information about withdrawals from RE this year.

SACRE has been encouraging schools to consider going for an REQM award and was delighted when a local school presented to SACRE and subsequently went on to be awarded Gold by REQM. The adviser continues to discuss the REQM with schools through networks and SACRE has considered subsidising some schools who would find the award cost prohibitive. Hopefully now the REQM website is refreshed the map will help us identify local schools who have been through the award process.

## **3. Statutory Responsibilities in Collective Worship**

SACRE is aware of the need to monitor collective worship and has been actively trying to engage with local religion and worldview communities to provide appropriate speakers to help schools hear the lived experience and lead reflections. Schools are now in more of a position to welcome visitors inside now post the first covid outbreak so hopefully progress on monitoring will be made. SACRE members have been looking to share the responsibility of contacting schools. Reading SACRE is in communication with other SACREs who have produced materials and advice to help schools with collective worship including suggested themes, a code of conduct for visitors and tie ins with the curriculum.

It has not been necessary to renew any determinations during this year. (A determination is permission for a school to provide daily collective worship which is not 'wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character'.) We have not considered our Determination Process in recent years.

#### **4. Links with Other Bodies**

As mentioned above Reading SACRE works closely with our partner SACREs in the Pan-Berkshire Hub. SACRE adviser David Rees and SACRE chair Mark Laynesmith regularly attend meetings of the Hub. We include membership of NASACRE in our budget each year. The professional advisor helps Reading SACRE stay in touch with providers like RE Online and the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust and events like Strictly RE. Links to other organisations are actively being sought and SACRE members are encouraged to investigate local and national contacts. We made diversity and equality an agenda item at every meeting in 2021 and will be inviting speakers in from the LA and external service providers to speak to SACRE. This will be extended and further outreach will be made.

#### **5. Local Involvement**

In previous years we have circulated advice about Ramadan to schools. Recently some SACRE religion and worldview representatives have begun to engage with teachers through RE network meetings. This will hopefully be continued. As Reading has a good range of diversity there are many opportunities which could be developed as well as nurturing other links through the other 5 SACREs in the Pan Berkshire hub. Covid 19 put the 'crossing the bridges' project on hold but recent discussions have shown that this work will be picked up again and an updated database produced. The Crossing the bridges project was designed to help provide contact details for places of worship in the Pan Berkshire Hub area giving advice on visits and teaching materials to accompany visits to places of worship. These materials are still in use but do need regular checking to ensure contact details are still current. Some SACRE members have agreed to take more of a lead on this.

#### **6. SACRE Arrangements**

David Rees continued to serve as our Professional Adviser, and we benefit hugely from. Deborah Talbot at Reading Council who served as SACRE Clerk. Both of them keep in contact with the Chair between SACRE meetings in order to share relevant information.

All four membership groups are regularly represented at meetings, and there were no issues with quoracy this year. We made efforts to recruit a wider range of faith representatives, this will continue on the next year

There was little formal training for SACRE members this year due to work commitments although interest has recently been shown in some of the NASACRE run sessions

In the financial year beginning April 2023 SACRE was granted £6000. SACRE is grateful for the support of Mo Galway and Reading Council particularly in these days of stretched resources and budgets.

## **Appendix 1 - Public Examination Results**

At the time of writing the exam results are unvalidated and have not been made available.

## **Appendix 2 – CPD Provided to Schools**

Primary RE leader network meetings were organised every half term and led by the SACRE adviser – these were relatively well attended considering the difficult circumstances. We have a core group of people who regularly attend and are making efforts to reach schools where engagement has previously been sporadic. Materials were always circulated afterwards, and the focus always has a key focus on teaching and learning, resources, new developments, support and the opportunity to share wows and worries. A Pan Berkshire RE teachers' conference will hopefully be arranged in the next year and there will definitely be a launch event when the new syllabus is produced.

Appendix 3

Reading SACRE action plan: 2022-3 – Updated June 2022 – draft							
Aim	Actions	Timescales	People Responsible	Cost	Autumn 2022	Spring 2023	Summer 2023
A. CORE BUSINESS  To be a supportive and proactive SACRE enjoying full and well-informed membership	1. Fill membership vacancies	Ongoing	SACRE Chair SACRE Clerk		This is an ongoing issue – reviewed at each meeting		
	2. SACRE members attend termly SACRE meetings (3 per year) and, when possible, teacher meetings and training events	Termly SACRE meetings:  Autumn 2022  Spring 2023 Summer 2023	SACRE Chair/SACRE Adviser  SACRE members  SACRE Clerk	SACRE Adviser to prepare and attend 3 x1 day  SACRE Clerk to administer each meeting	4th October 2022 6.30pm	8 <sup>th</sup> March 6.30pm	TBC
	3. Produce annual SACRE Report	Autumn Term 2022	SACRE Adviser and clerk with foreword by SACRE Chair (input welcome from members)	SACRE Adviser x ½ day		Bring draft to Autumn 2022 meeting Send to NASACRE by Jan/Feb 2023	
	4. Review the action plan at each meeting and discuss updates	At each SACRE meeting	SACRE Adviser and SACRE	SACRE Adviser time	At each SACRE meeting	At each SACRE meeting	At each SACRE meeting

	5. Subscribe to NASACRE  Representation at annual NASACRE conference &AGM  Attend other relevant and useful events	Ongoing	SACRE members  SACRE Adviser  Adviser to find out and inform	Subscription to NASACRE £105 - <i>NASACRE Conference and AGM</i>  <i>SACRE Adviser time to attend NASACRE conference x1 day</i>	Annual Subscription rate £105	SACRE RE Adviser attended NASACRE AGM Monday 23 May 2022 Virtual  <i>NASACRE AGM 2023 TBA</i>	
	6. Monitor and offer guidance on Collective Worship in schools	ongoing	SACRE	TBD	After the pandemic it is expected that Collective Worship provision will be easier to monitor – SACRE to decide on how to do this		
B. To support teachers of RE to continually improve RE learning in their schools	1. Provide a termly RE network meeting for Reading teachers	ongoing	SACRE RE Adviser	Adviser time – prep and delivery  3x ½ days	Tuesday 4 <sup>th</sup> October & 15 <sup>th</sup> November	TBD	TBD
	2. Produce an RE newsletter combining events, info and good practice – absorb NASACRE info	Termly	SACRE Adviser – SACRE members to offer suggestions	Adviser time to organise and design 3x ½ day	Sept 2022	Jan 2023	April 2023
	3. <i>Maintain a database of school RE leaders</i>	<i>Ongoing but instigated in Autumn term as leadership roles will</i>	<i>TBD</i>  <i>Adviser will keep a copy too for direct distribution</i>	<i>TBD – admin role?</i>	<i>An update could be given at each meeting – discussion needed as to how to obtain the information. Requests sent out to schools via newsletter</i>		

		<i>have changed</i>	<i>of RE resources and updates.</i>		
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**Reading SACRE action plan: 2022-23 – Updated September 2022 – draft**

<b>Aim</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Timescales</b>	<b>People Responsible</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Autumn 2022</b>	<b>Spring 2023</b>	<b>Summer 2023</b>
C. To support the ongoing work of the Pan Berkshire Hub	Consolidate and develop the Pan-Berkshire SACRE Hub.	Recent hub meetings 5 <sup>th</sup> Sept 2022	Reading SACRE members to attend where possible	Part of the hub commitment - £ paid to Oxford diocese – reviewed yearly	To become a SACRE agenda item at each meeting		
	Monitor agreed syllabus and prepare for new syllabus review	5-year cycle	ASC formed as part of the Hub	Advisor time? Or SACRE members on ASC?	Falls under the remit of the Pan Berks Hub as of writing		
	Consolidate and develop the Crossing the Bridges directory	ongoing	SACRE members to link with faith communities (E Munro)	Hub will need someone to take charge of this.	To become a SACRE agenda item at each meeting  This could be housed on the Pan Berkshire blog		
	Contribute to the development of the 'Real People, Real faith' video clips	Ongoing (extended due to lockdown)	SACRE members	Part of the hub contribution – follow up work could be commissioned	Updates at each meeting as part of Hub update  Videos now hosted by NATRE – new clips to be made		



	Inform schools and contribute to /participate in Hub conference	Potentially TBD	SACRE members Hub links SACRE Adviser	Unknown?	Updates at each meeting  'Real People Real Faith' successfully launched – advertised in networks and newsletters – more clips to be added
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*Italicised points are up for consideration.*

## **Sacre Members**

### **Group A** Christian Denominations and other religions

Free Churches	1
Roman Catholic Church	1
Buddhism	1
Hinduism	1
Islam	2
Judaism	1
Sikhism	1

### **Group B** The Church of England 4

### **Group C** Associations representing teachers 5

Five teachers representing schools in the Borough of whom at least two shall be nominated by teaching unions/associations

### **Group D** The Authority 5

- Grant Maintained Schools (non-voting) 1
- Co-opted members (non-voting) 2