

Sheffield SACRE Annual Report 2020-21

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Words from the Chair and Vice Chair

I was unable to attend and chair the SACRE meetings, during academic year 2020-2021, as my LA role necessitated the prioritisation of my time to the front line of Sheffield City Council's response to the pandemic. I am very grateful to Helen for undertaking the role of acting Chair, during this time.

The situation also necessitated a temporary change of clerk. We were therefore extremely grateful to Lisa Spalding who took on this role whilst Debbie Royles was supporting the LA response to the pandemic. Lisa, quickly got to grips with the workings of SACRE and ensured that our remote meetings ran smoothly.

This was a challenging year, for Sheffield SACRE, in other ways. As there is no RE advisor or paid support for RE in Sheffield, all development work is usually led by members of SACRE and/or local teachers with the support of Learn Sheffield. However, in the midst of the pandemic, these colleagues, on whom we rely, found themselves in a position where they needed to prioritise their paid roles, their families and their wellbeing.

We were also unable to obtain any subject level examination data because of the impact of COVID on GCSE and A level provision. As a result, we didn't make as much progress with our developmental work as we hope to in an average year. However, we did continue to support teachers who approached SACRE and undertook to revise our constitution. The latter was a large piece of work, but we feel that this puts us on a stronger footing as we emerge from the pandemic.

Moving forward into 2021-2022 we have attempted, through the self-evaluation process, to set ourselves clear goals for the development of Sheffield SACRE going forward. We feel that 2020-2021 was very much a year where we needed to hold things together and support teachers in Sheffield in whatever ways we could. However, mindful of the impact, on the RE community, of the idea that RE should move to a religions and worldviews approach and given 'food for thought' by the Ofsted review of research for religions education, we hope that the thinking we have engaged in about next steps (particularly in relation to our agreed syllabus) and the review of our constitution put us in a strong position for the coming academic year.

Mr Andrew Jones
(Chair of SACRE, 2020-21)

Dr Helen Sheehan
(Acting Chair of SACRE, 2020-21)

Meetings 2020-21

All meetings during this academic year were held remotely (via zoom). They were chaired by Helen Sheehan (vice chair) with clerking support provided by Lisa Spalding and Debbie Royles from Sheffield LA.

The three meetings were held – in November 2020, February 2021 and June 2021. All had reasonable attendance although it was felt that this was lower than usual, and concerns were expressed that this might be due to the fact that the meetings were held remotely. Attendance at these meetings was recorded as follows:

19 November 2020

Name	Faith/Organisation	Name	Faith/Organisation
Paul Bellingham	Baptist	Michelle Hutchinson	Pathways
Greg Nettleship	The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints	Mary Hearnshaw	Methodist
Alison Dallman	ATL	Kevin O Grady	Co-Opted
Dr V Patel	Hindu	Heather Bower	Secondary Teacher
Helen Sheehan (Vice Chair)	Sheffield Hallam PGCE RE	Lisa Spalding	SCC SACRE Clerk

11 February 2021

Name	Faith/Organisation	Name	Faith/Organisation
Helen Sheehan (Vice Chair)	Sheffield Hallam University	Lisa Spalding	SCC SACRE Clerk
Stephen Betts	Learn Sheffield	Margaret Langrish	Church of England
Fiona Walton	Church of England	Richard Selby Foster	Governor Rep
Alison Dallman	NEU	Michael Granville	Sheffield Humanist Society
Mary Hearnshaw	Methodist	Cllr Woodcraft	Liberal Democrat Councillor
Greg Nettleship	The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints	Abdool Goolijar	Muslim

10 June 2021

Name	Faith/Organisation	Name	Faith/Organisation
Stephen Betts	Learn Sheffield	Margaret Langrish	Church of England
Fiona Walton	Church of England	Abdool Gooljar	Muslim
Alison Dallman	NEU	Heather Bower	Secondary Teacher
Mary Hearnshaw	Methodist	Cllr Woodcraft	Liberal Democrat Councillor
Greg Nettleship	The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints	Vithal Patel	Hindu
Kevin O'Grady	Cohesion Sheffield	Debbie Royles	SCC, SACRE Clerk
Helen Sheehan (Vice Chair)	Sheffield Hallam University		

The agendas for the meetings focussed on the following areas:

- Minutes of the previous meeting
- RSE Implementation Project
- Absence for religious observance from school/festival calendar
- Review of SACRE Constitution
- Interfaith week
- RE training plan
- SACRE Development Plan
- SACRE Annual Report
- Local and national news

Religious Education (Statutory responsibilities)

Sheffield Agreed Syllabus 2019-2024

The Agreed Syllabus (available [here](#)) was revised in 2019. We had plans in place for development work that focused on the provision of planned units to accompany the syllabus. However, as the intention was that this would be teacher-led, the pandemic meant that we had to halt this work. During the year we dealt with some enquiries, particularly from primary RE co-ordinators, looking for additional guidance in using the syllabus (particularly following the publication of the Ofsted Review of Research). Therefore, returning to this work is a key priority (as identified in the SACRE Development Plan, appendix 1) for 2021-2022.

Standards and monitoring of RE

Again, the pandemic made it difficult for us to focus on our monitoring responsibilities and changes to the GCSE and A level provision, in response to COVID, meant that we did not have the usual data to review. We have continued to engage in conversation with schools. Schools in the primary phase tend to approach SACRE via Learn Sheffield; information from secondary schools tends to come via SACREs links with Sheffield Hallam University. However, we are aware that there are some schools with whom we find it difficult to engage and this is identified as an area for development in our 2021-2022 development plan (appendix 1).

Teacher Training Materials and Advice for Schools

Due to COVID our own programme of CPD had to be suspended. Instead, all schools were encouraged to support the NATRE Curriculum Conversations CPD event organised for the region. In addition to this, after each SACRE meeting, schools are emailed with any suggested resources or updates (e.g., links to resources from Good News for Everyone, information about the Ofsted Research Review for RE).

Other information (withdrawals and how the SACRE monitors, advises or supports schools with this, complaints)

SACRE did not deal with any complaints during this academic year. We continued to support schools in the midst of the pandemic by sharing pertinent information (e.g., the publication of the Ofsted review, information about resources) via email communications organised by Learn Sheffield.

Advice to the LA

We have worked through the year with the LA authority on two ongoing projects:

- Religious Observance – see below (local involvement)
- RSE Curriculum development – see below (local involvement)

Collective Worship (statutory responsibilities)

Standards and monitoring of collective worship

During this academic year we have not done anything to actively monitor collective worship and we have not had any approaches from schools, in relation to this. It is our intention to place more focus on this aspect of our work during 2021-2022 (as indicated in the development plan).

Determinations

Details of the determinations process for Sheffield can be found [here](#). We are not aware of any school in Sheffield who currently has a determination. We have highlighted this lack of intelligence in our SACRE self-assessment, and it will be a focus of next year's development plan (appendix 1).

Teacher training

We have not organised or promoted any training in relation to collective worship.

Other information (withdrawals and how the SACRE monitors, advises or supports schools with this, complaints)

We have not received any requests for withdrawals or any complaints during this academic year.

Advice to the LA

We have not communicated with the local authority on this issue.

Links with other bodies

National

We continue to be members of NASACRE, although we were not able to send a representative to the 2021 conference. We have also encouraged local teachers to engage with remote CPD organised by NATRE through the pandemic.

Local

SACRE continues to have strong links with Sheffield Hallam University and has developed links with Cohesion Sheffield during this academic year. We maintain a working relationship with the Sheffield Diocese. Whilst there is room for this to develop, there are plans for more collaborative work on CPD outlined in the development plan for 2021-2022.

Local Involvement

SACRE continues to have a strong working relationship with the local authority. Through this we have worked together to agree a list of religious festivals to support schools in dealing with requests for absence (appendix 2). This is becoming an annual piece of work.

2020-2021 also saw the continuation of our work with the LA to develop their schemes of work and resources for the provision of RSE across the city. SACRE has been a key stakeholder in the development of this work, and this represents a broadening in the local role of SACRE to provide educational advice in any aspect that has a faith dimension.

We also continue to maintain a close working relationship with Learn Sheffield, a not-for-profit organisation owned by Sheffield schools and colleges and Sheffield City Council. This relationship facilitates both a connection between SACRE and the education community, and a route into effective communication with all schools and academies. They also host our webspace.

SACRE Statutory Responsibilities

SACRE continues to receive administrative support from the LA in the form of a clerk to manage the administrative aspects of our meetings. The LA also pays the annual NASACRE membership fee. However, there is no subject advisor provision for RE in Sheffield.

As part of a focus on addressing issues of quoracy (which were highlighted in some meetings during this year) work was done in 2020-2021 to review our constitution in consultation with the legal team from the LA. This reviewed the way that teachers are recruited to SACRE (in an effort to ensure provision from all phases) and clarified the membership of some other committees. The development plan highlights our intention to build on this in 2021-2022 by tackling issues of attendance and, where appropriate, recruiting and training new members of SACRE (appendix 1).

Appendices

Appendix 1: Sheffield SACRE Development Plan 2021-2022

Section 1: Management of the SACRE and partnership with the LA and other key stakeholders <i>How far does the SACREs partnership with the LA enable it to carry out its responsibilities effectively?</i>				
Objectives	Lead	Timescale	Success criteria	Review
The membership of SACRE accurately reflects and represents all key stakeholders			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee A reflects the demographics of the city • Attendance across all 4 committees is improved • Partnership with key stakeholders is productive 	
Members of SACRE receive appropriate training to enable them to fulfil their duties.			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New SACRE members receive an induction. • SACRE members are offered the chance to attend regular training 	

Section 2: Standards and quality of provision of Religious Education <i>How effectively does the SACRE in partnership with the LA evaluate standards and the quality of provision for RE in schools? How effective are the strategies to improve standards and the quality of provision?</i>				
Objectives	Lead	Timescale	Success criteria	Review
Ensure that SACRE has sufficient systems and processes to monitor and evaluate provision, teaching and attainment in Sheffield schools			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A systematic process is established to understand provision, teaching and attainment • Monitoring of provision is a standing item within the SACRE agenda. 	
The SACRE development offer to schools supports improved standards and quality of provision			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The SACRE website is fully utilised to communicate opportunities to schools • A training and development offer to schools includes both universal and targeted provision. 	

Section 3: The effectiveness of the locally agreed syllabus				
<i>How effectively does the SACRE, in partnership with the LA, monitor the impact and evaluate the effectiveness of the agreed syllabus in raising standards? How effectively does the Agreed Syllabus Conference, in partnership with SACRE, make decisions about the use of national guidance and exemplar material in a review of the agreed syllabus?</i>				
Objectives	Lead	Timescale	Success criteria	Review
Complete an early review of the Agreed Syllabus			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A costed action plan to review the Agreed Syllabus is in place. A new agreed syllabus which reflects latest thinking and includes supporting materials has been considered and planned for. 	

Section 4: Collective Worship				
<i>How effectively does the SACRE fulfil its responsibilities for the provision and practice of collective worship?</i>				
Objectives	Lead	Timescale	Success criteria	Review
SACRE fulfils its responsibilities in relation to collective worship			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SACRE has sufficient intelligence to describe the provision of collective worship in Sheffield schools, including determinations. SACRE agendas consider collective worship and the use of determinations as a standing item. 	

Section 5: Contribution of SACRE to promoting cohesion across the community				
<i>How effectively does SACRE, in partnership with the Local Authority and the faith communities, contribute to the promoting of cohesion across the community?</i>				
Objectives	Lead	Timescale	Success criteria	Review
SACRE makes a clear contribution to civic community cohesion in Sheffield			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Membership and attendance enable diverse perspectives to contribute to decision making. SACRE agendas include strategic discussion of educational issues and initiatives which have a faith dimension. 	

Appendix 2: Religious Observance Calendar
[Key Documents | SACRE \(learnsheffield.co.uk\)](#)