

Annual SACRE Report

2019-2020

What is a SACRE?

The Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education has several aspects to its role. It:

- Advises the local authority on matters relating to collective worship and religious education
- Advises on methods of teaching and resources for religious education
- Decides whether or not to grant determinations to those schools which apply to have daily worship which is other than of a broadly Christian character
- Identifies the need for a revised religious education syllabus

To help with this endeavour the Slough SACRE works with NASACRE (the National Association of SACREs). It has also joined with five other neighbouring SACREs to form a hub in order to undertake more significant projects than it could manage alone.

This report sets out a brief summary of the work of the Slough SACRE over the academic year 2019-2020. The minutes of the meetings which give more detail can be found at [http://www.slough.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/standing-advisory-council-for-religious-education-\(sacre\).aspx](http://www.slough.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/standing-advisory-council-for-religious-education-(sacre).aspx)

The make-up and terms of reference can be found at the same address.

For more information about the role and business of the SACRE please contact:

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Slough SACRE report 2019-20

Chair's Comments

This year saw increased provision for teachers in Slough through virtual network meetings, SACRE newsletter and sharing of resources. Slough SACRE now has both primary and secondary school teachers in Committee 3. This year has been difficult due to lockdowns and changing working conditions in schools. Faith and non-faith charities have shown generosity and care in helping people in Slough. I would like to thank teachers in Slough for their RE provision in these challenging times and hope next year will be better.

Ashpreet Singh

Chair - Slough SACRE

2019-20: The Context

This year saw the embedding of the Pan Berkshire Agreed syllabus. Since its launch schools have become familiar with the requirements and should now be teaching challenging RE focussing on the key questions which were designed through a full consultation process. SACRE and schools continue to develop materials to support the new syllabus through networks and the activities of the Pan Berkshire Hub. Existing resources from the previous syllabus remain active but are being updated as an ongoing process.

National developments in RE have centred on looking at religion and worldviews through a variety of lenses and encouraging engagement with the voice of the believer and understanding the lived experience. World events show how important it is for children to ask challenging questions, develop understanding, empathy and respect for those around them and in the wider world.

Over the next few years, it is important that Slough SACRE is fully aware of any developments and takes opportunities to be heard and to encourage and facilitate high quality RE in the current and future educational landscape. With this in mind the SACRE keeps informed through the NASACRE newsletters and disseminates information through active involvement in the Pan Berkshire hub and in running teacher networks. Teacher conferences are proposed and these will feature teaching and learning development as a priority.

The SACRE attempts to keep in touch with schools and to support them to fulfil their students' entitlement to high quality RE, mindful of the pressures upon teachers and school timetables. The SACRE listens to teachers through the feedback from teacher representatives on the SACRE, and the support it offers is informed by these conversations. Positive steps have been made to reach out more to teachers and encourage more to become members of SACRE

The work of SACRE this year was adapted to respond to the challenging times for schools, businesses and families in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic which saw a national lockdown starting in early March 2019. This resulted in the Summer term meeting and the teacher networks becoming virtual. SACRE is pleased that their crucial work of supporting schools was able to

continue and the addition of virtual network meetings along with the introduction of a SACRE newsletter has meant that SACRE could reach out more than previously. Hopefully, this layer of support can continue from now on.

The SACRE has met once each term as required in November 2019, March 2020 and July 2020. The composition of the various groups within SACRE and attendance figures are included in this report as Appendix A

The work of the SACRE in 2019-20

Three meetings were held during the year: November 6th, 2019, March 4th, 2020 and 15th July 2020.

A Summary of issues raised over the year includes

- SACRE membership
- SACRE finances
- The Pan Berkshire Hub
- Responses to the Covid-19 pandemic
- The Annual SACRE report
- Interfaith week
- Antisemitism/Islamophobia
- Marking the 25th anniversary of the Srebrenica massacre in remembrance of the thousands of lives lost during the genocide.
- Exam results
- Resources for schools

Items concerning the running of SACRE are in ongoing discussion especially maintaining and refreshing the membership of SACRE and considering the action plan in the light of the available budget.

SACRE Members provided updates during the year and were encouraged to offer suggestions for the SACRE newsletter. As physical events were postponed due to the pandemic the need for communities to reach out virtually to offer support became more urgent

RE Resources

During the year the existing RE resources were discussed, an action being to locate them and catalogue them. Arrangements were made to begin this process but were sadly postponed due to the lockdown. It is hoped that further efforts can be made in the next academic year if it is deemed safe to do so.

The Pan-Berkshire SACRE Hub

Slough SACRE is fully committed to the Pan Berkshire hub. The Hub came into being in December 2014 and soon developed into an excellent way for the Pan Berkshire SACREs to communicate and plan events together. It was the natural vehicle for the Agreed Syllabus Conference meetings when reviewing and writing the new RE syllabus. The hub, chaired by Anne Andrews (Oxford diocese), continues to pursue ways of supporting teachers in the Pan Berkshire region.

The original focus was to facilitate the updating of the existing agreed syllabus materials to bring them in line with the new agreed syllabus. This resulted in Key Stage 1-3 materials being produced for the following religions and worldviews, Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Humanism, Islam, Judaism, and Sikhism. These materials were produced utilising adviser time, teacher writing groups and teacher network meetings. All schools and teachers were invited to be part of this process.

This year the Hub began a project with help from a Westhill grant and contributions from the 6 Hub SACREs. The project called 'Real People, Real Faith' is designed to engage with faith and worldview communities asking questions from the new agreed syllabus and producing short video clips for schools to use in RE classes. This project is now even more appropriate due to the fact that face to face visits to school have been reduced due to the pandemic. So far several places of worship have been involved across the region and all SACREs will be represented. More videos will be completed once restrictions are lifted. The films have been professionally filmed and edited and hopefully will be made available to schools very soon.

Slough SACRE is represented at the Hub by Christine Isles and Sue Elbrow. SACRE wishes to record thanks to them for their dedication and contribution to the hub

GCSE Examination Results – the importance

The Pan-Berkshire Agreed Syllabus for RE 2018 requires that "All pupils must receive Religious Education and should follow an externally accredited course for Religious Studies e.g. GCSE, or an alternative, well-structured and challenging programme of Religious Education. Schools are encouraged to facilitate examination entry for as many students as possible."

And post 16

'All students MUST receive Religious Education. Students should have the opportunity to follow a course, or modules, which lead to external accreditation e.g. A level Religious Studies'

RE Examination results: Summer 2020

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic the examination series planned was unable to run as normal, results instead were calculated using a variety of methods. This makes meaningful recording difficult for both Key Stages 4 and 5.



David Rees

RE Adviser to Slough SACRE

12th October 2020

David Rees wishes to record thanks to Nadia Williams Democratic Services Officer at Slough Borough Council for phone conversations and emails concerning the composition of this report.