

Stockton-on-Tees SACRE Annual Report 2020-21

INTRODUCTION

This report includes SACRE work and successes from the 2019-20 year in addition to any 2020-21 updates due to the very limited work SACRE undertook in the academic year 2020-21 as a result of COVID disruption. No formal meetings took place that year as the capacity of the Chair was extremely limited due to her responsibilities for managing an ITT provision and Appropriate Body at a time of severe disruption in the education world and some members of the body were categorised as vulnerable. Not all members were able to securely access virtual means of communication such as Zoom. Therefore the body agreed not to meet formally and that the Chair would forward anything of importance to members.

SACRE has resumed normal business this academic year (2021-22) and is planning for the future. This will be reported in more detail in next year's annual report.

As always, a huge thank you goes to all our teachers who have worked tirelessly, under great strain and, often with little appreciation for their efforts under very difficult circumstances.

STATUTORY RESPONSIBILITIES

Agreed Syllabus

SACRE launched a new Agreed Syllabus September 2019 for all primary schools. The launch was a great success with every type of school in the borough represented bar the Catholic schools. Whilst academies and voluntary aided schools are not obliged to follow our syllabus, they were invited to attend and the vast majority did so.

Feedback from the launch indicated that the new syllabus had been received very well and the launch event was overwhelmingly rated very good or excellent.

Teacher suggestions from the launch event for ongoing SACRE support for teachers were:

- Half termly newsletters
- CPD focusing on identified religious traditions
- A section on the SACRE website where teacher resources could be shared

All were actioned and were well underway until the first lockdown removed the opportunity for the planned and scheduled CPD. The newsletters and CPD were put on hold. SACRE is now planning to resurrect the newsletters to restore active communication between SACRE and schools in order to provide RE updates and outline SACRE's plans for the next two years. CPD will resume once COVID uncertainties subside. Realistically, this is likely to constitute a planned CPD programme from Autumn 2022. The SACRE website teacher resource section has been retained though this is in its infancy; it was just beginning to gain some traction at the point of the first lockdown. To date, 14 additional resources have been added by teachers.

Now that SACRE has re-convened, there are plans to devise and launch a new secondary syllabus within the next 18 months.

Monitoring

Plans to monitor the implementation of the syllabus and standards more generally, temporarily paused in March 2020 as schools faced the challenges of the first lockdown and identified ways to maintain effective learning for their pupils. Instead, SACRE focused on support in the form of regular signposting to colleagues of publications, useful online RE teaching resources and CPD opportunities.

This included:

- Barnabas in Schools ideas for remote learning
- Resources from Muslim Learner Services in lieu of the planned but sadly cancelled CPD
- NATRE newsletter with ideas and resources for remote learning
- RE Today CPD offer to access a series of pre-recorded and live webinars including RE and the Brain
- Promoting the annual Farmington Scholarship offer and the Holocaust Education Trust's educational programmes
- Facilitating a request from teachers to share ideas to mark harvest festival during the pandemic
- Sharing Ofsted's Research Report for Religious Education

And more recently:

- Gill Vaisey's latest early years resources
- Virtual CPD from Muslim Learner Services including video recordings related to the Five Pillars of Islam, the Six Articles of Faith, what it means to be a Muslim in Britain today, Islamic artefacts and how to use the Qur'an in the classroom
- A Durham University project invitation focusing on God and the Big Bang – the lead of this project has been invited to meet with SACRE 2021-22 to discuss the possibilities further.

There has been no national externally marked GCSE data to review for the past two years so no useful comparison of standards across time has been possible.

Initial Teacher Training

During the pandemic, SACRE was able to work with Stockton-on-Tees Teacher Training Partnership (Stockton SCITT) to increase the amount of RE training available to their primary trainees. Trainees now receive 12 hours of training as opposed to the original 3 hrs. This new programme was able to be delivered successfully remotely during 2020-21 and has been retained for the 2021-22 academic year. In their Ofsted inspection, June 2021, primary RE was subject to a focused review, where the subject expertise and quality of the training was recognised.

The ITT RE programme now includes:

- RE Subject Knowledge and Curriculum
- Teaching RE
- An introduction to Islam
- An introduction to Judaism

Other

- SACRE maintains an information document which provides advice for schools in relation to withdrawals. Schools can access this by request and will soon be able to access this and other such documentation via the SACRE Agreed Syllabus website. There were no queries in relation to withdrawal 2020-21.
- No applications for a determination were received by SACRE 2020-21; indeed none has ever been received.
- No complaints about RE in schools were received by SACRE 2020-21.

THE ADMINISTRATION OF SACRE

Professional and Administrative Support

Chair of SACRE: Kirsten Webber (LA Officer)

Clerk to SACRE: Emily Cheesman (Assistant School and Governor Support Officer)

Membership

2020-21 membership comprised:

- Chair - Miss Kirsten Webber (Officer)
- Vice Chair – Mrs Kate Craven
- Governance Professional – Miss Emily Cheesman

Representatives from Christian Denominations and Other Religions Reflecting the Principal Religious Traditions of the Area.

- Ms Gill McCleave Free Church
- Mrs Kate Craven Methodist Church
- Dr Gurmit Randhawa NEU & Sikh Representative
- Mrs Megan Lowis Roman Catholic
- Major Nicola Barker Salvation Army
- *8 vacancies*

Church of England Representatives

- Rev Martin Anderson Church of England
- Mrs Louise Probets Church of England
- *1 vacancy*

Teacher Association Representatives

- *6 vacancies*

Stockton Borough Council Elected Members

- Cllr Evaline Cunningham
- Cllr Lynn Hall
- Cllr Barbara Inman
- Cllr Ted Strike
- Cllr Carol Clark (Resigned 20.01.2021)
- Cllr Tony Hampton (Resigned 08.03.2021)

Co-opted Members (Non-Voting)

- Mr Craig Marshall
- Mr Victor Watton

Meetings

No meetings took place in the academic year 2020-21.

Usually meetings take place three times a year each lasting at least 2hrs. Meetings are held at the Education Centre, Bishopton Road West, Stockton-on-Tees, TS19 0QD.

Future meetings are planned to be held at the Education Centre, Stockton-on-Tees:

- Thursday 11th November 2021 4-6pm
- Thursday 20th January 2022 4-6pm
- Thursday 9th June 4-6pm

Finance

No identifiable budget is provided for SACRE. However, clerking is provided by the LA's Governor Support Services, the Chair of SACRE is an LA officer and a venue for the meeting are all provided by the LA. These costs are all borne by the LA. Sufficient funding was provided to develop and launch the primary Agreed Syllabus and agreement in principle to fund the secondary Agreed Syllabus is in place.

Do you have any comments on this SACRE Report?

Responses to this Annual Report from school governors, elected members, head teachers, teachers or members of the public are welcomed by SACRE. Please email Emily Cheesman, Clerk to SACRE emily.cheesman@stockton.gov.uk