



SUFFOLK SACRE

ANNUAL REPORT 2020-2021

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1. INTRODUCTION

a. Words from the Chair – Helen Matter

I am pleased to present this report on the work of Suffolk SACRE for the year 2020-21. I would like to thank all members of SACRE, whether faith representatives, teachers, local authority representatives or councillors, for their commitment. Working continued to be largely virtual with a few smaller group meetings in person when allowed. I am grateful to members who gave time not only for meetings but for individual pieces of work which enhanced our knowledge of what was happening in schools. I think we ended the year very proud of the commitment and resilience of Suffolk schools – leaders, staff and pupils – during another difficult year.

We are grateful too for the continued support of the Local Authority (LA) and especially to Linden Pitcher for her highly efficient clerking of SACRE, throughout this time.

I am pleased to commend this report to you.

Helen Matter, Chair of Suffolk SACRE, 2020-2021

b. Overview

In a challenging year SACRE met four times – all virtually. At each meeting reports were received from the LA officer, Professional Advisory team (PAT), NATRE Ambassador and Diocesan Schools' Adviser and Committees met in their groups. Minutes were published on the SACRE website - [SACRE – Suffolk Learning](#).

On 1 December 2020, a very short meeting was held and

- The Annual Report (a three year report) was agreed and submitted.
- Roles of Chair and Vice Chair discussed and a review of all roles suggested.
- A meeting with Councillors was arranged and new ways of working with them discussed, including the return of training for being a SACRE member.
- Members discussed the Government's Faith Engagement consultation.
- DY reported on effects of the pandemic on exams in secondary.
- National Religious Education news was shared.
- Members were asked to look carefully at the current Agreed Syllabus and make sure they were familiar with it as we approached its review.

On 26 January 2021

- HM explored how the local WIRE (Widening Inclusivity in Religious Education) award had been modified to include virtual applications.
- KR displayed a new opening webpage to raise SACRE's profile.
- LA funding and the budget were discussed.
- Agreement was reached to add training for new SACRE members in the hour before a main SACRE meeting.
- SC was invited to write a paper on secondary collective worship for the SACRE website and also for circulation to schools.

- GK reported on RE support on the Diocesan website and the development of knowledge organisers for all units in the Emmanuel Project.
- HM presented on the legalities and purpose of an Agreed Syllabus in preparation for the vote on an Agreed Syllabus review. We noted that an Agreed syllabus is often confused with a scheme of work in primary schools.
- SACRE received research on Suffolk schools: 95 schools left which MUST follow it (3 secondary, 37 CE primary, 58 community primary – of these, all CE follow Emmanuel Project, and 30 of the community schools do the same, with 3 following Discovery RE).
- Review of Agreed Syllabus discussed, proposed and agreed.

On 20 April 2021:

- Two new members were welcomed and changes noted to group membership.
- A new chair was elected for Sept 2021 and a vice-chair with immediate effect.
- The NASACRE briefing was discussed and AG (Hindu) was asked to review and report back on the Insight document on Hinduism in schools. We noted sadly the closure of Clear Vision, a Buddhist educational charity.
- It was agreed to monitor school websites further for evidence of RE. HM and DJ (Humanist) to meet to discuss results. DJ had written up substantial research on all secondary websites.
- SC presented a paper on secondary collective worship for the SACRE website.
- GK (Diocesan Adviser) reported increased attendance at training as easier to access virtually. She announced an Emmanuel Project Facebook page, padlets on virtual visits and visitors, new assessment materials and a Farmington scholarship for a teacher researching materials for home learning in RE.
- The new vice-chair made a presentation on 'worldviews' as a part of our preparation for an Agreed Syllabus review. Plans were made for pre-ASC meetings to get a feeling for a way forward with the Agreed Syllabus.
- GK was asked to prepare a paper on collective worship for primary schools.
- Committees voted to increase the number of small groups meeting between the main SACRE meetings to enable work to be done.

Between these meetings:

- a self-selected group met virtually twice to discuss the current Agreed Syllabus, particularly from the practitioners' point of view. See below.
- a meeting took place to discuss the secondary school websites
- a meeting took place to discuss issues for the new chair
- four members attended the NASACRE conference

On 5 July 2021:

- SACRE welcomed new Buddhist and Muslim members and other Committee A members reported on local information on their faith to support schools and began to discuss ways forward for virtual support following the curtailment of much of the work of the East of England Faith Agency (EEFA).
- Report back on secondary schools and comparison with NATRE infographic.

- Diocesan Schools' Adviser presented on the Collective Worship support document she wrote for SACRE.
- Reports on NASACRE conference and Agreed Syllabus Review arrangements.

Before the end of term:

- a self-selected group met to discuss secondary examination data, including results from the work of Deborah Weston.
- HM and JC discussed workings of SACRE.

c. Agreed Syllabus Review

- An open forum in May was attended by a number of SACRE members who were able to discuss classroom experience of the Suffolk Syllabus. It was clear the syllabus itself needed a rewrite to reflect developments in understanding of RE, including religious literacy and a disciplinary approach. It was also clear that most primary schools (63%) have been working with the conceptually-driven Emmanuel Project for the last 4 or 5 years, and that this could not be ignored in the rewrite. Assessment issues were also discussed.
- A questionnaire was planned by the LA Officer and sent to all schools.
- Accessible, flexible, compatible - were the key words which emerged from initial discussion of the kind of syllabus needed.

2. RE

a. Agreed Syllabus - take up

Using school websites as evidence, HM and JC looked for use of the Agreed Syllabus.

- Take-up in primaries was reported on in the April meeting – see above.
- Take-up in secondaries was looked at as part of monitoring provision and a detailed report submitted to SACRE. Only 3 secondaries had to follow the Agreed Syllabus but more said they were doing so. SACRE agreed to invite these schools to be part of Agreed Syllabus revision.
- A questionnaire was sent to schools from the LA / SACRE to capture their opinions on the Agreed Syllabus. These provided limited evidence of take-up. Some schools confused the Agreed Syllabus with a purchased scheme and only commented on the scheme.

b. Monitoring RE

- School websites were trawled for evidence of RE provision i.e. details of what was being taught in each year group as required by law. In secondaries, this was made more complex by the fact that many schools include RE under different headings. Some secondary findings were quite disturbing and were followed up.
- Academies were not always complying with Funding Agreements. One academy was contacted and, following an unsatisfactory reply, and a check of the funding

agreement, a letter was sent to the CEO. The issue was on-going at the time of this report.

- It was agreed that schools which did not have evidence of their RE curriculum on their websites would receive a letter from SACRE and would be re-checked as the pandemic eased and letters sent asking for their provision to be uploaded onto the website. Schools were reminded of this requirement by a note in Suffolk Headlines.

REQM awards

We do not know of REQM awards which have been made this year and it has proved difficult to access the website for details of award winners.

Our local WIRE award, based on the Bristol award was adapted for the covid situation and five awards were made.

GCSE/A Level Results 2021

Due to the ongoing upheaval caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, exams were changed to attempt to account for the challenges as a result of missed schooling and restricted time to teach full courses. As a result, students were tested in their own schools, on the material that they had studied, which would be different for each school dependent upon the amount of time missed.

As an example, at Debenham High School, students were taught 90% of the course, yet examined in smaller papers – using exam questions from the exam boards. These were then marked by the subject specialists in school and then quality assured by subject specialists at both St Benedict's Catholic School and Holbrook High. This practice mirrors the guidance reflected in the report that can be found here <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/guide-to-gcse-results-for-england-2021>.

Unlike usual years, many schools decided not to publish their results in the usual manner and exam entries are also less readily available, making comparisons to previous years much less insightful. It will be interesting to see the impact of the pandemic on entries at both GCSE and A Levels in the coming years, especially as some schools may have chosen to reduce options in the light of creating a 'catch-up curriculum.' Yet if schools do choose to do so, RE must remain part of the curriculum, even if non-examined.

c. Teacher training and advice for RE

- The WIRE award was adapted for life post-covid, and briefing papers on Collective Worship added to the SACRE website.
- KG, a NATRE ambassador for RE, and member of SACRE has run network meetings for local schools.
- MC has been involved in work with individual schools and heads of department through his work with Suffolk and Norfolk School Centred Initial Teacher Training (SCITT).
- The Diocesan schools' adviser produced a RE newsletter sent to RE subject leaders half termly. Knowledge organisers for the Emmanuel Project scheme of work have

been completed for all units as have additional assessment materials. A range of padlets, including those highlighting virtual visits to places of worship, are now available. Training courses for those new to RE teaching and for new or experienced subject leaders.

d. Advice to the LA on RE

- The LA was advised of the need to rewrite the Agreed Syllabus.

3. COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

a. Monitoring

b. Determinations

- There were no determinations.

c. Teacher training and advice on Collective Worship

- SACRE members have received Collective Worship (CW) training from the Chair. A CW support document has been written for both primary and secondary teachers and is available on the website.

d. Complaints

- No complaints were made to the Suffolk SACRE during the year 2020-2021.

e. Advice to LA on Collective Worship

- No specific advice was given but briefing papers for collective worship in both secondary and primary schools were prepared.

4. LINKS WITH OTHER BODIES

a. National bodies

- Suffolk SACRE is a subscribed member of NASACRE.

b. Local bodies

- SACRE is linked to various other bodies through individual memberships of organisations such as NATRE.
- KG is an active ambassador for RE working with NATRE.
- MC trains with Suffolk and Norfolk SCITT.
- GK is the Diocesan Schools' Adviser.

5. LOCAL INVOLVEMENT

a. Governor training

- No direct training was offered to governors.

b. Community Issues

- Holocaust Memorial Day was discussed at the January meeting and members invited to the virtual memorial on Suffolk CC website.
- Inter-faith week was also discussed but no definite plans were made.

6. SACRE'S INTERNAL ARRANGEMENTS

a. Professional and administrative support

- Administrative support is fully funded by the local authority and is provided by Linden Pitcher, SACRE clerk.

b. Membership

Committee A

Christian denominations and other religions and their religious denominations reflecting the principal religious traditions of the area

Elizabeth Sugarman (ES)	Jewish
Denis Johnston (DJ)	Humanist
Alison Pentreath (AP)	The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints
M.Munwar Ali (MA) (Abu Muntasir)	Muslim
Donna-Marie Solker (DMS)	Muslim (from July 21)
Anita Gopinath (AG)	Hindu
Avtar Athwall (AA)	Sikh
Karen Harman (KH)	United Reformed Church (from April 2021)
David Yaroslaw (DY)	Independent Free Church
Martin Cobbold (MC)	Independent Free Church
Janus van Helvert (JH)	Buddhist (until March 2021)
Amy Austen (AmA)	Buddhist (from July 2021)

Committee B

Church of England

Helen Matter (HM)	SACRE Chair
Helen Moore (HMo)	
John Cox (JC)	

Ruth Dennigan (RD)

Committee C

Teachers

Sarah Cobbold (SC)	St Benedicts Catholic Upper School
Katie Gooch (KG)	Sidegate Primary, NATRE East Anglia Regional Ambassador
Wendy Rayner (WR)	Kingsfleet Primary

Paul Widdowson (PW)	Suffolk Branch NEU, secretary (from April 2021)
Karen Mills (KM)	Suffolk Primary Headteachers Association (from July 2021)

Committee D

Local Education Authority

Karen Soons (KS)	County Councillor (ended April 2021)
Joanna Spicer (JS)	County Councillor (ended April 2021)
Caroline Page (CP)	County Councillor (ended April 2021)
Rachel Hood (RH)	County Councillor (from July 2021)
Simon Harley (SH)	County Councillor (from July 2021)
James Finch (JF)	County Councillor (from July 2021)
Kathryn Roper (KR)	Senior Standards & Excellence Officer (Curriculum)

Diocese

Gemma Kingston (GK)	Diocesan Schools' Adviser
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Servicing Officers

Linden Pitcher (LP)	Business Support Officer - (Clerk to SACRE)
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c. Training

- Training was given for SACRE members on Collective Worship and on the Agreed Syllabus, both during main meetings and in specially arranged pre-meetings.
- Four members of SACRE were able to attend the virtual NASACRE conference and several other NASACRE training e.g. on secondary data.
- Members of SACRE invited to Diocesan training on the Emmanuel Project.

d. LA funding

- Suffolk SACRE is fully funded by Suffolk County Council to fulfil its statutory duties from the Central Services School Block allocated by central government. This covers the cost of clerking, annual membership to NATRE and NASACRE, as well as a subscription to NASACRE's online training for all SACRE members and to reimburse the chair and other SACRE members for their time, for example supply cover for

schools. Additional funding has been secured to support the rewriting of the Agreed Syllabus for RE and training for schools, due to be launched in September 2022.