



Swindon SACRE Annual Report 2021-2022



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1. Introduction

Words from the Chair

Welcome to the 2023 annual report of the Swindon Sacre. We are a diverse and committed group of representatives from a broad range of faith and worldview communities who meet with the shared aim of enhancing the work and scope of Religious Education teaching in Swindon schools. We aim to support schools by fulfilling the role of critical friend in evaluating and monitoring RE provision and outcomes in Swindon. We regularly receive reports from those working in the field of RE in Swindon schools and colleges and offer support, advice and resources to support the provision and development of RE locally. This year we have been working to improve our website and to signpost helpful resources and good practice. We encourage members to attend local RE training and conferencing opportunities and report back on these to our wider body.

Following the retirement of Katy Staples from the role, we have been pleased to welcome Laura Harris to the role of diocesan advisor to SACRE. Katy has been an invaluable help to us over many years as a SACRE leader and will be greatly missed.

Laura's wealth of expertise and knowledge has been the catalyst for many helpful developments in our focus and work this year as a body. We are grateful to be able to call on her wide experience to guide our process throughout the year.

This year has also seen the retirement of our long-standing clerk to the SACRE, Rita Glen Gallo. We would like to record our grateful thanks to Rita for her excellent work over many years and wish her a happy retirement. We welcome Lesley Toogood as our new Clerk to SACRE.

We are well represented by members of the local council, in addition to teachers from a variety of schools, representatives from a range of major world faiths and by members of the Swindon Interfaith and Humanist groups. We actively seek to recruit new representatives as vacancies arise and this year have been pleased to welcome eight new members to our committee.

Following the constraints of the pandemic, it has been good to be able to meet in person again this year and we anticipate being able to resume our visits as SACRE members to local schools, as life returns to normal once more.

We also hope to encourage schools to re-establish visits to local places of worship. This has been an excellent provision prior to the pandemic, and we are seeking to re-establish links and contacts to support schools in providing these first-hand opportunities to visit faith communities and learn from their lived experiences of faith.

As part of our regular cycle of monitoring, we are currently undertaking a major review of RE provision and priorities in Swindon, via an examination of RE on school websites. We aim to publish our findings and offer further support to schools as a result.

We are pleased to be able to serve on the Swindon SACRE and to celebrate the many good things that are happening locally in the RE world. It is our hope going forward, that we will continue to provide a vital role and to further raise the profile of RE locally, as we maintain and develop a vibrant partnership with Swindon schools.

Ruth Williams

Chair of Swindon SACRE

Overview - SACRE

SACRE met three times in this academic year.

In November, ten members of the group met at Crowdys Hill School. The meeting was quorate. Thanks and goodbyes were shared for the departing adviser, Katy Staples. Visitors from the Hindu Temple and a local school spoke about the current situation with lacking a venue for the temple, and Alana Walch presented a spirituality project she had completed as part of her leadership training. (appendix a, minutes)

The Spring meeting was held at the civic offices, in March. Twelve members attended but the group was not quorate due to no Councillor members (group C) being present. SACRE discussed the CORE report on RE and how it should impact their work and received updates on various projects including the improvement of the SACRE website. (appendix b, minutes)

The SACRE meeting in July was attended by nineteen members and was quorate. The committee discussed the recent NASACRE self-evaluation training and agreed a plan for self-evaluation and creation of a development plan next year. Updates on the agreed syllabus review training were shared and teachers gave feedback from the LTLRE hub and summer conference. (appendix c, minutes)

Overview – Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC)

In line with decisions made by the Agreed Syllabus working party, the revised RE Today Syllabus was launched for schools in September 2022. In the academic year 2021-22, the RE adviser developed ‘refresher’ training for schools, which ran over various sessions in April, May, June and September. In total 51 delegates from Swindon schools attended this training. Teachers and leaders were overwhelmingly positive in their feedback from these sessions. They reported that they looked forward to incorporating the new units and other elements that were commented on positively included; the vocabulary progression grid, new assessment guidance, Humanism materials and guidance on cultural capital. Some comments from teachers:

“As a new RE co-ordinator this has been great for me to take away and consider.”

“Thank you so much. This has really made things clearer and was so helpful.”

“Thank you! I will be re-thinking our work in school regarding humanism and world faith teaching.”

When asked to grade their confidence at the beginning of the session, and then again at the end, 58 delegates (from two local authorities) reported themselves as feeling a ‘1’ for the usefulness of the session and their confidence to move forward with their RE. Several schools booked 1:1 visits with the RE adviser as a result of these syllabus sessions.

The new syllabus does not involve any changes to the statutory elements of the syllabus. As such, the training gave staff a recap of the key elements of the syllabus that remained the same, and a detailed breakdown of what non-statutory materials and resources had been provided in the new version. This includes four new potential enquiry units, a large number of new documents around long-term planning and progression, and new sections for Special schools and EYFS practitioners.

In the year ahead (2022-2023) the Agreed Syllabus Conference will reconvene to begin to consider the options for the next syllabus review which will be due in 2027.

2. Religious Education

Locally Agreed Syllabus and RE provision – it continues to be the case that the majority of schools, including academies and Church of England schools, are using the Locally Agreed Syllabus for all or part of their RE curriculum. Many schools also use the resource Understanding Christianity to supplement teaching about Christianity.

In response to the DfE workforce data (which summarises the average hours taught for each curriculum area over a two week sample period), information was requested from secondary schools on their RE provision in Autumn 2021. In letters from SACRE, schools were thanked for their data reflecting good priority given to RE, and others were offered support in response to a concern with their hours for RE. Responses from 9/11 schools were returned detailing the curriculum offer for KS3-5 and commenting on their RE provision. As a result of this contact, the RE adviser has met with RS staff in two of these schools to offer further support and encourage statutory requirements to be met. There is a clear reflection that in most secondary schools in the area, many KS4 and 5 students are not receiving the required teaching of RE. In those that are working to rectify this, different solutions are being trialled; such as students taking the GCSE as a compulsory exam in Year 10 (studied for during year 9/10), students receiving cross-curricular teaching of additional RE through links with other exam subjects (eg. science) and the linking of RS with PSHE, citizenship or additional timetabled spaces for personal development. None of these options is ideal, and the syllabus continues to recommend that all students take a GCSE in RS at KS4.

Monitoring - As in the previous reporting period, Covid 19 has posed a considerable challenge to SACRE's usual monitoring processes. Exam data for the last academic year will not be available for analysis until Spring 2022. The main elements of RE monitoring that took place this year were through the above secondary school engagement, and through discussion with schools facilitated by the syllabus training sessions, LTLRE hubs, HIVE hubs and 1:1 sessions.

Exam outcomes KS4 Summer 2022 –

SWINDON GCSE RS results 2022	Exam board	NOR (number on roll)	NOE (number entered)	% entered	grades 9-5	grades 9-1	average points
ABBEY PARK SCHOOL	AQA	199	20	10	45.0	100.0	4.4
COMMONWEAL SCHOOL		230	57	25	56.1	94.7	4.8
KINGSDOWN SCHOOL (RLT)	AQA	179	19	10.6	73.7	100.0	6.1
LAWN MANOR ACADEMY	AQA	141	14	9.9	57.1	92.9	4.6
SWINDON ACADEMY	AQA	169	15	8.8	93.3	100.0	8.0
THE DORCAN ACADEMY	AQA	116	5	4.3	80.0	100.0	5.6
THE RIDGEWAY SCHOOL	AQA	299	54	18	85.2	100.0	6.5
THE LYDIARD PARK ACADEMY	OCR	218	70	32	72.9	100.0	5.5
HIGHWORTH WARNEFORD SCHOOL	EDUCAS	182	24	13.2	75.0	100.0	6.2
NOVA HREOD ACADEMY	EDEXCEL	145	11	7.6	63.6	100.0	5.5
ST JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC COLLEGE	PEARSON	270	262	97	67.9	99.6	5.5

Observations –

- No schools are following the locally agreed syllabus recommendation of all students taking an exam in RS at KS4
- Highest uptake at GCSE is at Lydiard Park Academy, 32% / 70 students.
- 6/10 schools have 10% or less population taking GCSE RS
- Although some schools have low uptake, in these schools outcomes are often high

The Wire Award - the Widening Diversity in Religious Education (WIRE) award is an opportunity available to all schools in the Swindon SACRE area. To achieve the Wire award a school must:

- Send a teacher to at least one continuing professional development (CPD) opportunity for RE. This could be the conference, or a local RE hub.
- Put on a 'faith day' or a celebration of RE to which a local SACRE member can be invited. Or a school might enter a national RE competition.
- Take pupils on a visit to a place of worship that is not the majority religion of their school. For most schools in Swindon, this will be from a faith other than Christianity.

The reward has been created to further SACRE's priority to encourage mutual understanding of different faiths, and to break down stereotypes and barriers. In the year 21-22, four schools have met the criteria for the award.

During this period it has been difficult for schools to apply for the WIRE award, due to limitations for school visits and engagement with religious communities in the post-Covid context. However, one school has received the award (Abbotswood Primary School) and the programme appears to be resuming with promise for this academic year.

For those schools having already received the WIRE award, the WIRE award 'Gold' has now been created. (Appendix D) To achieve the gold award schools will extend their already good practice in RE to complete tasks to do with extending their impact, working with parents, communities and other schools and teachers. Several teachers in the area have expressed an interest and enthusiasm for taking on this challenge in the year ahead.

Swindon Learn, Teach, Lead RE Hub - This project has been running for many years now and aims to develop leaders of RE in both primary and secondary schools, as well as providing networking and CPD for all local teachers of RE. Hub leaders get access to high quality training and facilitate three hubs per year aimed at both primary and secondary teachers, and teaching assistants.

Swindon SACRE as uses some of its budget through the adviser to support the development of the hubs. Emma Ainslie-King, RE teacher at Commonweal School, is the Hub leader and convenor. Three meetings took place this year online. The group explored the RE research review, the new Worldviews handbook and shared resources for improving diversity within worldviews.

Annual conference – the annual RE conference, titled 'How interesting are you?!' was held at Engineers' House in January 2022, with delegates both online and in person. Seven Swindon schools attended. Keynote speaker Lat Blaylock spoke about the 'fascinations of others', sharing six ideas for the classroom in different key stages. Teachers attended workshops on subjects including identity and values, worldviews at GCSE and approaches for the EYFS classroom. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with 98% of delegates commenting positively on the keynote, and 98% positive about the general organisation of the day. Next year's event will take place once again at Engineers' House, on February 2nd. The number of Swindon schools in attendance is very low. SACRE will need to consider seeking additional funding and the location of future events, if we want greater impact from the annual conference in Swindon.

Communication - termly newsletters have continued, with all schools receiving a SACRE newsletter three times per year (Appendix E)) The newsletter contains contact details for various communities and resources, as well as ideas for the classroom and information on upcoming events and CPD.

3. Collective worship

Policies, guidance and support - SACRE developed the current collective worship guidance in 2018. As part of the self-evaluation and development process next academic year, SACRE will survey schools and review guidance on collective worship. No work has been undertaken in this area in 2021-22.

Determinations - During this reporting period there were no determinations applied for.

4. Links with other organisations

NASACRE – Swindon SACRE continues to maintain its membership to the National Association of SACREs. This provides access to important updates on national issues and the use of recommended templates for policies and guidance documents.

In this period, SACRE members attended training on:

How to be an effective SACRE – September 2021

How to apply for a Westhill grant – December 2021

SACRE Self-evaluation – May 2022

LTLRE – as outlined above, Swindon SACRE continues to have significant commitment and practical involvement with the Learn, Teach, Lead RE programme. The adviser to SACRE assists in the planning and running of meetings, and communicates with hub members regularly with RE updates and information via email. She is also on the steering committee for the project across the wider region.

Diocese – SACRE maintains strong working relationships with the Church of England Bristol Diocese. Through contractual agreements, the adviser to SACRE is also a schools adviser for Bristol Diocese and as such a large amount of goodwill and RE development takes place in Swindon through this connection. Church schools are able to ensure continuity and consistency in their support and advice for RE, and community schools are able, through contractual arrangements to access 2 hour sessions of support time as requested and arranged.

Local religious and non-religious communities – SACRE are seeking to review and re-write the local communities contact document for schools to access visits and visitors with faith representatives. Good links are maintained with the Hindu Centre and the Swindon Gurdwara, SACRE will seek to grow further connections next academic year.

Other local involvement

Governor training – SACRE has previously provided training for Swindon governors on RE, SMSC and collective worship. No training has taken place this academic year, but arrangements have been made for 22-23.

Regional SACRE conference – this year's event, 'working towards a high quality education in religion and worldviews', was once again held online. The Swindon adviser led a workshop on how SACRE can support effective RE leadership, as well as attending workshops on diversity and BIG ideas for RE.

SWARE (South West Advisers of RE) – the adviser continues to be an active member of this cross-authority group. Meeting three times a year, advisers across the South West are able

to share resources, policies and processes for effective and impactful advisory work. In the year 2021-22 advisers were able to discuss; responses to DfE workforce data, the Templeton national Worldviews project, the impact of the OFSTED research review and research papers on syllabus development.

5. SACRE arrangements

Organisation -

Chair – Emma McCarthy (Chair September 2022 – Ruth Williams)

Clerk – Rita Glen-Gallo (Clerks September 2022 – Lesley Toogood/Amy Peace)

Local Authority link officer - Steve Bogg (sbogg@swindon.gov.uk)

Adviser – Laura Harris (laura.harris@bristoldiocese.org)

- The revision of the SACRE constitution was finalised in Autumn 2021. (appendix f)
- A new SLA was finalised with Swindon Borough Council to ensure some funding for SACRE in 21-22 (appendix g)
- SACRE is seeking to establish a new website, as the ownership of the previous website is unknown. Swindon Council have confirmed they are able to host a webpage for SACRE work and it is hoped this will be in place next year.

Membership – as reported in the introduction, one meeting in this period was inquorate due to in attendance of Group C – councillors. Other meetings were quorate.

Members of SACRE 2021 - 2022:

<p>Group A: Christian Denominations and Other Religions or Religious Denominations (12)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Jo Backus, Buddhist Community 2. David Burbidge, Baptist Church Reverend 3. Brian Whittaker Swindon Evangelical Alliance 4. Dinesh Patel, Hindu Community 5. Malkit Babbra, Sikh Community 	<p>Group C: Teacher Associations (8)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tracy Mason, NEU (special school) 2. Helen Redhead, NEU (primary) 3. Lottie O'Brien, NASUWT (secondary) 4. Emma McCarthy, NASUWT 5. Alana Walch, Headteacher (primary) 6. Sarah Gallagher (secondary)
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6. Kelly Kordula Roman Catholic Community 6x vacancies	2x vacancies
Group B: The Church of England (3) 1. Ruth Williams (Chair) 2. Mark Tubey 1x vacancy	Group D: The Local Authority (5) 1. Councillor Dan Smith (also Jewish representative) 2. Councillor Sudha Nukana 3. Councillor Bazil Solomon 4. Councillor Paul Dixon 5. Councillor Adorabelle Shaikh
Co-Opted: Fidelma Meehan, Baha'i Community Pradeep Bharwaj, Hindu Community	Support Officers: Laura Harris, SACRE Advisor Steve Bogg, Commissioner for Education

