

Worcestershire

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE)

Annual Report for the Academic Year 2021-2022

Worcestershire SACRE Annual Report 2021-2022

The Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) is a statutory body set up to advise the Local Authority on matters related to religious education and collective worship. Its members are drawn from teachers, Local Authority representatives including Councillors, faith representatives from the Church of England and a range of Christian denominations, and representatives from other religious groups represented in the region.

SACRE's key functions include monitoring the provision and quality of RE and providing advice and support on the effective teaching of RE in accordance with the agreed syllabus. This includes advice on methods of teaching, choice of teaching material and provision of teacher training. This is primarily done through the review and implementation of the locally agreed syllabus, a process which is required every five years. This is followed by on-going monitoring of its effectiveness in the light of changing national education policy.

1. Introduction and overview

Worcestershire Children First is responsible for delivering children's services across the county of Worcestershire. These services include children's social care, education, early help and fostering. The company is 100% owned by Worcestershire County Council and delivers its children's services on behalf of the local authority working with partners across the county to ensure children, young people and families receive the best possible service.

SACRE is grateful to Worcestershire County Council for its continuing support, via Worcestershire Children First. Its three-year funding arrangement has enabled SACRE to create a Development Plan for these three years. SACRE endeavours to offer maximum support to schools through its use of conferences, training opportunities and network meetings.

Worcestershire SACRE met three times in 2021-2022, at County Hall, Worcester

- 14 October 2021
- 10 February 2022
- 8 June 2022

The minutes of these meetings are available on the County Council Website.

The meetings included discussion of the following:

- Support for teachers, through local network meetings and annual conferences
- Gathering feedback on the new agreed syllabus
- National exam data
- RE provision in schools, including using school workforce data
- Draft Education White Paper and Draft Education Bill
- RE Council Draft Handbook on religion and worldviews
- National and local news updates

2. Membership

Membership is kept under review each year. In 2021-2022, membership was as follows:

Committee A: Christian denominations and other religions	Mrs L Thorne (Ba'hai) Mr G Bounds (Free Church Representative) Mrs T Khawaja (Muslim) Mrs C Parker (Methodist) Dr Y Stollard (Jewish) Mr A Couper (Quaker) Mr J Loyal (Sikh)
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Committee B: Church of England	Ms Danielle Evans Mr Duncan Hutchison
Committee C: Teachers	Ms C Betteridge Mr C Giles
Committee D: Local Authority elected representatives	Cllr M Jenkins Cllr M Allcott (Chair) Cllr E Marshall
Co-opted	Ms E Hill (University of Worcester)
Clerk to SACRE LA Officer Adviser	Ms K Griffiths Ms N Jones (Worcestershire Children First) Ms L Bradbury (Worcestershire Children First) Mr S Pett (RE Today)

SACRE would like to record its gratitude to Mrs Lindsay Thorne for her many years on SACRE, including as Chair from 2017 to 2020.

3. Supporting RE in Worcestershire: local groups

There are a number of active local groups, most affiliated to NATRE. The Rivers MAT holds a regular NATRE primary local group meeting each term, with up to 35 teachers attending. Diocesan primary Hubs are based in Malvern and South Bromsgrove, and a local group in Redditch has also started. The secondary NATRE group met in October 2021 and February 2022. Their plans for another GCSE conference with the University of Worcestershire are on-going.

Free training on multidisciplinary approaches to RE took place during the year, as part of the Templeton World Charity Foundation Big Questions in Classrooms programme. A group of 14 Worcestershire primary schools attended three and a half days of CPD over the year, as part of a research project led by RE Today, to examine the impact of multidisciplinary approaches. The material connects with the Ofsted use of 'ways of knowing', and supports them in delivering the Worcestershire agreed syllabus. Teachers' feedback is part of the national research project due to report in June 2023.

4. Supporting RE in Worcestershire: summer conferences

Primary Conference 2022:

The primary conference was held online on 22 June 2021. 76 teachers signed up; 67 attended, with some schools allowing a number of teachers and TAs to attend; 11 requested the recordings, as they were unable to attend on the day.

The conference was led by Fiona Moss and Stephen Pett, national advisers from RE Today, and included sessions on:

- 'Ways of knowing' in RE
- Ways in through art: encountering religions
- Words, words, words: improving pupils' writing in RE
- What in the world is a worldview?
- Meeting local faith and belief reps: Q&A

83% of delegates rated the conference as excellent overall.

Some teachers appreciated the flexibility offered by online training, where more than one teacher could attend, and added travel time was avoided. Others yearn to return to face-to-face interactions with colleague. Representative feedback comments:

- *It was an uplifting and informative day and introduced fantastic teaching strategies and resources to bring RE up to date and relevant*
- *Content and delivery was excellent. Very engaging and lots of ideas to use in the classroom. Hearing the speakers at the end of the day was a lovely touch and very thought provoking. Thank you.*
- *The sessions were very useful and presented excellently. There were lots of resources and teaching ideas shared that have given me a lot to take back to school.*
- *A brilliant day! Very informative, useful and interesting! Thank you to everyone involved. I really enjoyed it.*
- *Very informative and engaging. Thank you.*
- *Some great ideas to take away and it's useful to know things are being delivered by clearly very knowledgeable and well researched presenters*
- *This was a well organised conference. Although there was a lot of information and plenty of teaching ideas, I didn't feel overloaded or overwhelmed.*

Secondary Conference 2022:

The annual secondary conference saw the three counties of Herefordshire, Worcestershire and Gloucestershire join together once again. Held in person at Puckrup Hall Hotel, Tewkesbury on 23 June, the conference was attended by only 13 teachers. Led by Lat Blaylock and Stephen Pett, national advisers from RE Today, the programme included:

- Religion and worldviews
- Approaches to Sikh worldviews
- Ways of knowing
- TeachMeet

100% rated the conference as excellent overall.

Teachers valued the opportunity to meet face to face, sharing experiences and talking through ways to apply the ideas they encountered in the training sessions. Representative feedback comments include:

- *Thank you so much for giving up your time. Really enjoy/interested in research behind worldviews and how to explore worldviews. Practical examples modelled by Lat - thank you! Loved how we explored ideas and turned methods upside down.*
- *Engaging. informative and progressive. Excellent!*
- *Excellent day with amazing resource is that can be adapted and taken into the classroom. Great to see some different approaches to how to deliver resources to students.*
- *Superb as usual. Inspirational and directly relevant to RE now. Lovely update on current dialogue and looking ahead.*
- *Ways of knowing: this is such a huge, complex area. Very much appreciate the CPD on it, but feel a little overwhelmed with trying to include them across KS3.*
- *Excellent day full of useful ideas and links to learning. Good to be able to plan in some more up to date ideas. Good to share with others, making links.*
- *Fantastic day to really 'hone in' on key skills. Great content on both pedagogy and faith / worldview. World views was great to get to grips with. I liked the practical suggestions for use in the classroom.*
- *So good to be able to work collectively and in the real world again. I met some stimulating and supportive colleagues which is vital.*
- *Really enjoyed the segment on world views and excited to see how this develops. The venue was excellent! Really enjoyed the depth of the content on Sikhi.*
- *Brilliant conference with so many activities that can be used in my RE classroom. Doesn't always SACRE conferences are thought provoking and full of practical ideas.*
- *As always inspirational and informative.*

5. Monitoring secondary provision

One of the regular discussions at SACRE is around provision at secondary schools. This is prompted by data from the school workforce survey. Previously, SACRE has reviewed all secondary school websites to check the data, leading to contact from SACRE to two secondary schools. In response to the 2020 SWF data, SACRE has undertaken its own survey of secondary school provision. Results will be scrutinised in autumn 2022 to corroborate the most recent SWF data and to enable discussion on targeted school support.

6. Exam results summer 2022

This is the first time since 2019 that externally marked GCSE examinations have been sat by students. In 2020 and 2021, grades were determined by teachers as externally marked examinations could not take place due to the disruption caused by the Coronavirus pandemic.

Worcestershire GCSE results

No of pupils	Number of GCSE entries	% Full Course GCSE Entries	% 9-4 grades	% Short Course GCSE Entries	% 9-4 grades
5798	1722	29.7%	76.9%	0	0

National GCSE results

No of pupils	Number of GCSE entries	% Full Course GCSE Entries	% 9-4 grades	% Short Course GCSE Entries	% 9-4 grades
650366	221124	34%	76.8%	2.6%	65.5%

7. Future support for RE

On-going support for teachers, developing their ability to plan, using the new agreed syllabus planning steps, and for improving teaching and learning in RE, is planned for 2022-2023, including:

- Annual SACRE conference for primary teachers, focusing on ideas for teaching and learning, based on the new syllabus, including planning, Ofsted's types of knowledge, and the worldviews approach.
- Annual SACRE secondary conference, in partnership with Herefordshire and Gloucestershire SACREs. This will focus on supporting teachers in exploring ways of knowing, Muslim and non-religious worldviews, and global Christianity.
- Making use of school surveys to assess impact and value of revised agreed syllabus.

Cllr Mel Allcott
Chair of SACRE
October 2022