



**Bury**

**Standing Advisory Council on  
Religious Education  
(SACRE)**

**SACRE Annual Report  
for the Academic Year 2020/21**

# **Bury SACRE Annual Report 2020-2021**

## **1 Overview**

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 and non-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.

Bury Council supports SACRE with an annual budget that covers the cost of the support from RE Today Services, including provision for termly support via network groups and webinars. Plans are in place for annual conferences to support schools with the most up to date and inspiring teaching and learning ideas.

The Local Authority officer is Paul Cooke, Strategic Lead (Education Services).

SACRE met four times in 2020-2021, all online; three meetings also included the Agreed Syllabus Conference:

- 30 September 2020 Agreed Syllabus Conference/SACRE
- 16 November 2020 Agreed Syllabus Conference/SACRE
- 8 February 2021 Agreed Syllabus Conference/SACRE
- 26 April 2021 SACRE

## **2 Supporting RE in Bury: background**

Bury SACRE has a long history of support for RE. Over the years it has had RE advisors, both from Manchester Diocese and Bury LA, and is an active SACRE who supported the development of the agreed syllabus 2007 and the subsequent support, via network groups and teacher training. More recently the SACRE has been enhanced by a renewed membership and has also been supported very effectively by the local authority in providing both financial and officer support for the members. In 2020 a concerted effort was made by the local authority to address the need for a new agreed syllabus and to acquire RE advisory support.

In March 2020, the local authority requested advice from RE Today services, who advised on the syllabus and offered two syllabus models in order to support schools with a new direction as soon as possible. Consultations were planned with schools, and these were held online, with the onset of the COVID pandemic.

## **3 Agreed Syllabus for RE 2021-2026**

After extensive discussions and consultations, the Agreed Syllabus Conference opted for a syllabus that incorporated the Understanding Christianity resource, in order to encourage consistency across the local schools, many of whom were already using the resource.

The Local Authority supported the process with funding to provide licences for all schools in the Borough, including academies, to encourage this consistency in approach. It also supported schools in purchasing a support scheme of work and training for schools in the Understanding Christianity resource.

Two syllabus launches were held online:

- Primary: 10 June 2021
- Secondary: 21 June 2021

The revised agreed syllabus was distributed to schools in the summer term 2021, along with access to recordings of the online launch sessions, the scheme of work and support resources.

#### **4 Support for teachers: conference launches**

##### **Primary syllabus launch conference 2021**

The launch was held online on 10 June 2021. 46 teachers attended from 30 schools. The conference supported schools in implementing the new agreed syllabus. It was led by Fiona Moss and Stephen Pett, national advisers from RE Today, and the sessions covered the following essential introduction to the new syllabus and how to use it:

- Intent: introducing the syllabus
- Implementation: teaching and learning ideas
- Impact: curriculum and assessment

A small number of evaluation forms were returned (12). 100% of teachers who returned forms rated the conference as excellent value. The following feedback comments were made:

- *I found it really helpful and inspiring. It kept my attention all day despite being on a screen!*
- *Thank you, a really useful day allowing me to really begin to think about our school journey using the new syllabus. Some really amazing documents have been written and I have already begun to produce our school long term plan.*
- *This new curriculum seems fresh and relevant.*
- *Very useful and informative. I enjoyed the breakout room sessions as they helped to share ideas and meet other teachers. Nice change for a virtual meeting.*
- *Really useful thank you, covered many aspects of both teaching and coordinating RE in school*
- *Huge thanks - the examples used were excellent. The training and materials are very inspiring and the children will love learning through these materials!*
- *It was good to have some clear direction on what we should be doing for RE in Bury.*
- *Great ideas! The resources for religions other than Christianity will be especially useful.*
- *A comprehensive exploration of the new agreed syllabus - thank you*
- *Very informative and covered everything I wanted to know*

Teachers were asked for their initial response to the new syllabus. Representative comments include:

- *I'm impressed at how user-friendly it looks. I'm also struck by how it encourages debate about personal beliefs- encourages this to be taught so children learn how to debate sensitively without causing upset.*
- *The new syllabus looks very detailed for the teaching RE. The idea of embedding non-religious and worldwide views is needed for children in this present climate.*
- *The syllabus is really comprehensive and feels fresh and new, I'm excited to start using in school*
- *I like particularly how at the end of each year group you are looking at the similarities and differences – this is what our scheme was lacking!*

Teachers also gave extensive comments on what they were now planning to do, in response to the new syllabus. Most were planning to meet together to share with colleagues, to consider long term planning and assessment, in particular in relation to Ofsted thinking around coherent curriculum planning.

The local authority continues to follow up on the schools who did not attend the launch, providing an online link to the syllabus, recordings of all launch sessions, the scheme of work and additional resources.

### **Secondary conference 2021**

The secondary launch took place online on 22 June 2021. 15 teachers attended from 9 schools. A small number of evaluation forms was received (4) who rated the whole day 100% excellent. Comments were very positive about the training and resources, and about the new syllabus.

The local authority continues to follow up on schools who did not attend, sharing the syllabus and resources with all schools. Teachers are working on their networks to encourage more school-to-school support for implementing the syllabus

## **5 Local groups and other CPD**

Local primary headteachers have met to plan regular network meetings for on-going support in local hubs and clusters.

### **Understanding Christianity**

Bury LA has provided funds for all community schools and academies to attend training in Understanding Christianity from RE Today in 2021-2022. Three cohorts are planned over the next 18 months.

Manchester Diocesan Board of Education provided a range of training for teachers, subject leaders and head teachers, including e.g., preparation for SIAMS, wellbeing training.

## **6 SACRE membership**

The local authority and SACRE continue to work to increase representation and membership on SACRE. Current membership is as follows:

Committee A	Roman Catholic: Bec Hyndman, Anne Walsh Free Church Federal Council: Alan Beedie, Alison Knott Jewish community: Russell Conn Muslim community: Fatima Zubair
Committee B	Sheryl Farnworth Bethany Rothwell Claire Clark
Committee C	NEU: Kate Stedman NAS/UWT Gail Branch (Chair) NAHT: Sarah Jones (Primary) NAHT: Jude Fair-Lawton (Secondary)
Committee D	Cllr Khalid Hussain

SACRE Clerk: Rebecca Hoyle, Governor Support, Bury LA

SACRE Officer: Paul Cooke, Strategic Lead (Education Services).

SACRE support: Stephen Pett, RE Today

## **7 Exam results summer 2021**

Due to the pandemic, GCSE and A level exams were cancelled this summer. Instead, centre assessed grades (CAG) were awarded to pupils who sat GCSE and A level RS this year. However, in line with DFE guidance, these should not be used for analysis so there is no examination data to report on.

Gail Branch

Chair of SACRE

December 2021