

The Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education for Bath and
North East Somerset

Bath and North East Somerset SACRE Annual Report September 2022- August 2023

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1. Introduction

1.1 Welcome from the Chair

I am delighted to introduce the Annual Report for Bath and North East Somerset SACRE, for the period September 2022 to August 2023.

We have had another successful year of SACRE, working with meetings on-line and now able to visit schools in person. Towards the end of this period, as life was returning to normal following the pandemic, some of the online activities adopted during the COVID restrictions were continued, e.g. the monitoring of school's RE activities via surveying their websites, and also for some of our SACRE meetings.

Adam Robertson continued as our RE Advisor and Clerk, however he moved to a new opportunity towards the end of the period, and is replaced by Rebekah Guy. We have made sure that our meetings are available to the public by reinstating the presence of SACRE on the LA website (<https://thehub.bathnes.gov.uk/Services/6414>) and also the Bath & Wells Diocese website. As we have a representative of the diocese on SACRE, we can also access information about Diocesan CPD information which is put on our own B&NES SACRE website (<http://www.banes-sacre.com>) and so is available for teachers.

The SACRE continued to meet during the year, with good attendance at all three meetings, and we agreed to hold one of these 'in person' each year. We continue to have a diverse membership, particularly in respect of representatives of different local faith communities, and actively seek to recruit when vacancies arise. There is a good link with the local Bath Interfaith Group which has been active in the area for over 30 years, and is represented on the SACRE by myself. There is thus a valuable link for local RE teachers who are kept informed of local interfaith events, and can access visitors for their schools. We currently have more teachers on the SACRE.

SACRE continued to offer the Widening Inclusivity in Religious Education (WIRE) Award for schools (publicised via our regular newsletter to schools and also the local Learn Teach Lead RE (LTLRE) Hub, and was delighted to report that St Julian's Church school had become the first in B&NES to achieve the Wire Award, with two others following later in the year (Chew Stoke Church School, and St John's CE Midsomer Norton). We continued to look into ways we can proactively support schools, especially in relation to reports from Ofsted, SIAMS and our own website reviews. In support of this we decided to bid for extra money from the LA earmarked for 'school improvement' activities, and I am delighted to say we were successful. We are hoping also the local MAT RE Leads will join us in our SACRE work.

Aiming to improve the working of SACRE, we instituted time for discussion within the SACRE meetings, considering questions such as the characteristics of a successful SACRE. On another occasion we studied the Religion and Belief Census Data 2021 to better understand the situation in our area: it seems that B&NES has one of the highest numbers of people identifying as non-religious in the country (47.9%), and has relatively

lower numbers of Christians (42%), which must have an impact on the delivery of RE in schools. While we congratulated 3 schools in the area which did extremely well in GCSE exams, it was noted that B&NES is fifth from bottom in terms of numbers of students entered nationally (only 17.5% entered, compared to 34% nationally). This further justified the need for additional resources noted above. We had a discussion on the 'Nones' (those identifying as no religion in the census), recognising this does not mean no belief in God, and may have more to do with changing ideas on spirituality, which we need to learn from as we approach the next agreed syllabus review in 5 years.

We have started looking at our guidance on Collective Worship to see if it needs updating, and formed a working group to address this. In addition SACRE started a review of its Constitution.

We look forward to further work with the local schools, developing our SACRE membership and continuing to maintain the high profile and importance of RE and CW.



Jane O'Hara

Chair of Bath and North East Somerset SACRE

January 2024

1.2 Overview – SACRE

A Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) is legally constituted by the Local Authority with the responsibility for overseeing Religious Education and Collective Worship in the community, Voluntary Controlled foundation schools without a religious character and trust schools.

Academies, Free schools & Voluntary Aided schools lie outside the SACRE remit, but a good SACRE will try to establish links with any of these schools in its area. In Bath & NE Somerset (B&NES), we actively seek a working relationship with these schools as nearly all schools are academies and most lie within Multi-Academy Trusts (MATs) – some of which spread across boundaries for other SACREs. We are endeavouring to work with the RE Leads of the MATs and hopefully bring them onto B&NES SACRE.

SACRE has met three times in the last academic year. Two meetings were held online and one was held 'in person' at Bath Spa University. All meetings were quorate and well attended.

In meetings the following aspects were discussed:

- SACRE membership
- the characteristics of a successful SACRE
- Religion and Belief Census Data 2021
- The 'Nones'
- Developing the 'WIRE' Award
- Religion and Worldviews (and its potential impact on teaching of RE)
- Revision of Collective Worship Guidance

1.3 Overview – Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC)

Bath and North East Somerset SACRE has developed and shares a locally Agreed Syllabus with partner SACREs in Bristol, North Somerset, and the London Borough of Haringey. The current syllabus (Awareness Mystery and Value) had been reviewed and updated in the previous report period, and was launched in March 2022.

There was therefore no ASC in this report period.

2. Religious Education

2.1 Locally Agreed Syllabus

The locally agreed syllabus in schools is Awareness Mystery Value (<https://www.awarenessmysteryvalue.org/>). This is shared by Bristol, North Somerset and the London Borough of Haringey. It is used by many schools across the authority, including some Academies.

2.2 Agreed Syllabus Review

The next review of the agreed syllabus will be held in 2026. Meanwhile, SACRE agreed that we should plan ahead for key dates / points to review, especially as we feel the syllabus is likely to be revised in the light of Worldviews, pilot 'national' syllabi' and new units of work developed through the 'Westhill Award' on 'Big Ideas'. To this end the Agreed Syllabus often appears on the SACRE Agenda.

2.3 Standards and monitoring of Religious Education: Ofsted and SIAMS reports

SACRE accesses Ofsted reports on local schools throughout the year. During the period of this report (2022-23), 14 schools received inspections. Two schools were graded as 'Outstanding' all others were graded as 'Good'. The following table highlights where RE or Collective Worship was noted.

School	Date of inspection	Grade	Mention of RE or Collective Worship
St Gregory's Catholic College	8 and 9 November 2022	Good	VA school so RE not inspected.
Hayesfield Girls School	15 and 16 November 2022	Good	Mentions pupils have positive attitude and tolerance towards others.
Bathwick St Mary Primary School	22 and 23 November 2022	Good	Essential knowledge not sequenced in some areas of curriculum – however RE not identified explicitly.
Mulberry Park Educate Together	30 November and 1 December 2022	Good	Strong ethical curriculum. Areas of wider curriculum knowledge not identified. RE not a deep dive.
Twerton Infant School	13 and 14 March 2023	Good	No specific mention of RE.
East Harptree CE Primary	8 February 2023	Good	No specific mention of RE
Fosse Way School	15 – 17 March 2023	Outstanding	Mentions personal and spiritual development of pupils.

School	Date of inspection	Grade	Mention of RE or Collective Worship
Longvernal Primary School	2 and 3 February 2023	Good	Curriculum in RE was discussed. 'Planned trips and visits support pupils' understanding of cultures and religions beyond their own community.'
Moorlands Junior School	28 February and 1 March 2023	Good	Deep dive in RE. Report mentions some areas of the curriculum not as well planned as others.
Norton Hill Academy	21 and 22 March 2023	Good	No specific mention of RE. Praise for pupils preparation for modern Britain.
Saltford CE Primary	28 Feb and 1 March 2023	Outstanding	Praise explore beliefs and cultures different to their own.
St John's CE Primary, Midsomer Norton	28 and 29 March 2023	Good	Mentions pupil's knowledge of other faiths and beliefs.
St Julian's Church School	19 April 2023	Good	Mentions that pupils value difference and learn about different religions.
Westfield Primary	24 and 25 January 2023	Good	No specific mention of RE

In addition to Ofsted inspections, all Church of England schools are inspected as a designated church school through the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS). The schools inspected during the timescale of the annual report are detailed below: we have been informed that 4 Church of England schools have had SIAMS so far this year. Three have had the top 'Excellent' grade (two of which were an improvement on their previous outcomes). The other was rated 'Good'.

Date of inspection	School	Previous outcome	Outcome
8 March 2023	Swainswick Primary	Good	Excellent
17 March 2023	Combe Down Primary	Outstanding	Excellent
12 May 2023	Widcombe Juniors	Good	Excellent
5 July 2023	Batheaston Primary	Outstanding	Good

2.4 Standards and monitoring of Religious Education: Analysis of school websites

Each year SACRE monitors school websites to examine the RE curriculum and to ensure schools are meeting their legal obligations. Due to the number of schools, this is done over a 3-year cycle. In 2022-23 SACRE members reviewed a total of 19 websites. A simple 'traffic-light' system is being used to indicate whether each website contains information about the legal requirements for RE and collective worship, and to credit them where further information had been uploaded regarding aspects of programmes of study and contributions to pupils' understanding of British Values and to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Results of the surveys showed that 8 of the schools were rated 'green' for evidence that RE is being taught and offered and 7 were rated 'amber'. 4 schools were rated 'red' and letters were sent to them setting out how essential this information is and recommending they make changes. 10 of the 19 schools also did not set out their Religious Education policy or information on the right to withdrawal. SACRE would like to congratulate those schools who have improved their websites this year, and monitoring will continue annually. In addition, guidance on 'good practice' is being shared with the schools as needed, and also via the CEOs of local MATs.

2.5 Standards and monitoring of Religious Education: Public Examination results in Religious Studies

The GCSE results for 2023 are detailed below:

School Name	Number on Role	Number of Entries	Pass 9-5 %Pass	Pass 9-4 %Pass
Broadlands Academy	n/a	0	n/a	n/a
Mendip Studio School	n/a	0	n/a	n/a
Isambard Kingdom Brunel Studio School	n/a	0	n/a	n/a
Beechen Cliff School	179	57	49	67
Hayesfield Girls' School & Mixed Sixth Form	224	25	84	88
Norton Hill School	276	52	65	73
Chew Valley School	189	12	83	83
Ralph Allen School	211	48	63	91
Somervale School	109	13	38	46
Writhlington	178	19	47	52
Wellsway School	218	15	93	93
St Mark's Church of England School	80	47	77	85
Saint Gregory's Catholic College	171	162	57	69

Oldfield School	222	23	87	91
Aspire Academy	n/a	0	n/a	n/a
Fosse Way School	n/a	0	n/a	n/a
Three Ways School	n/a	0	n/a	n/a
LA Total	n/a	473	65	79

SACRE notes the following from the results:

- The national pass rate was 62% for Grades 9-5 and 76% for Grades 9-4.
- St Mark's attained pass rates of 77% 9-5 and 85% 9-4.
- Wellsway obtained a pass rate of 93% 9-5 from a 6% cohort entry, Oldfield obtained 87% from a 10% cohort entry Hayesfield obtained 84% from a 11% cohort entry, Chew Valley obtained 82% from a 6% cohort entry. All these are significantly higher than the national average.
- 6 schools did not enter any students for GCSE RS

As part of its monitoring role, SACRE will be congratulating those schools who have achieved excellent results, whilst working with other schools to ensure that – even if they are not offering all students the chance to study for GCSE – they are meeting the legal requirements to teach RE in Key Stage 4.

We also looked at Workforce Data for 2022. This has been abstracted from the Department of Education yearly workforce census which now includes a curriculum census. It offers a way of analysing the percentage of time offered for Religious Studies in Secondary schools, relative to the cohort size. The results we looked at show the results submitted to the DfE by schools for years 7 to 11. We noted a possible correlation between time spent on RE teaching and GCSE results in 2022, and also that there was great variation between the schools, with some submitting no data.

It will be worth looking in some detail at similar data in the current period, so that we can develop questioning around RE provision and school support,

2.6 Support for Teachers and schools: Syllabus teaching materials

The Agreed Syllabus website <http://awarenessmysteryvalue.org/> contains a wealth of resources for teachers as well as the statutory programmes of study. There are plans to update and add more resources for teachers and school, including support for progression.

2.7 Support for Teachers and schools: RE Resources

SACRE continues to maintain a collection of artefacts for all of the major religions at Saltford Primary School. A member of staff there receives a small stipend for managing the resources and arranging free loans to Bath & North East Somerset schools. During the period of this report there was some discussion at SACRE meetings about whether to

continue with this, as the artefacts are in need of refreshment and also there are not many loans taking place. During this year, the resources have been borrowed by four different schools.

2.8 Support for Teachers and schools: SACRE website

The SACRE website <http://banes-sacre.com/> was maintained and updated during the year. A co-opted member of SACRE receives a small stipend for managing the site and ensuring it is kept up to date. As well as information about SACRE, the site contains ideas for RE specifically for Bath and North-East Somerset schools, including lists of resources available to borrow, and reports on the use of local visits and visitors to support the agreed syllabus for RE.

In addition, we have a presence on the Bath and North-East Somerset local authority website – which enables members of the public to have access to SACRE information via the link to our website. [Standing Advisory Council on RE \(SACRE\) | The HUB \(bathnes.gov.uk\).](http://Standing Advisory Council on RE (SACRE) | The HUB (bathnes.gov.uk).)

2.9 Support for Teachers and schools: Communication and Complaints

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

The Local Authority / SACRE received no formal complaints concerning RE nor was it notified of any disputes relating to withdrawal for RE. However, it should be noted from our earlier report on school websites (see 2.4 and also below), that information about the Right for Withdrawal is rarely obvious.

3. Collective Worship

3.1 Analysis of school websites

As for religious education (see 2.4), SACRE analysed the websites of 19 schools using a simple ‘traffic-light’ system. It was found that 6 schools included a substantial reference to Collective Worship on their websites, which is considerably less than the previous year. Six of the sites included a partial mention. Despite the legal requirement to let parents know of the right to withdraw their children from the daily act of worship, however, 10 of the sites failed to mention this. As for RE, SACRE has provided feedback for schools about its findings on Collective Worship on school websites.

3.2 Training and support

No training on Collective Worship was organised by SACRE during the year but information from other local providers, such as the Diocese of Bath & Wells was circulated to all schools through the newsletter.

3.3 Complaints and Determinations

As noted earlier (see 2.9), The Local Authority/SACRE received no formal complaints, and there were no requests from schools to vary the legal requirement for Collective Worship. Information for schools on how to do this can be found at: <http://www.banes-sacre.com/collective-worship>

4. Links with other organisations

4.1 National

The SACRE retains an annual membership of the National Association of Standing Advisory Councils on RE (NASACRE), which provides access to important updates on national issues, a variety of training and the use of recommended templates for policies and guidance documents.

The annual NASACRE Conference took place on Monday 22nd May 2023 at Fishmongers Hall in London, with the theme *Celebrating 30 years: SACREs for the Future*. This was attended by one member of SACRE and a report was provided to SACRE members. Two Keynote Addresses were given:

- *An education in religion and worldviews - the next 30 years?* Dr Kathryn Wright (Chief Executive of Culham St Gabriel's Trust)
- *The role of SACREs in the emerging educational landscape*, by NASACRE Patron, Rt Hon Charles Clarke

4.2 Regional

The South-West Conference for SACREs was held online on 6th March 2023, with the theme *SACREs - working to develop high quality curricula for the study of Religion and*

Worldviews. The keynote address was given by Trevor Cooling, former Chair of the Religious Education Council. Five members of SACRE signed up to attend.

Five SACRE members attended the online meeting in February, which featured a full report on the conference that was shared with SACRE members and implications for future SACRE work and Agreed Syllabus review was noted.

Bath and North East Somerset SACRE continued to take part in the regional Learn Teach Lead RE (LTLRE) project, with funding from Diocesan and other charities, aiming to provide training in religious education, especially through the building of communities of RE teachers across the region. The annual conference in June 2023 featured keynote addresses by Lat Blaylock, from RE Today.

4.3 Local: Learn, Teach, Lead RE

The Bath and North East Somerset local LTLRE Hub is led jointly by Mary Patterson (Hayesfield School) and Paul Marvin (Farrington Gurney Primary school). Hub leaders get access to high quality training and facilitate three Hubs per year aimed at both primary and secondary teachers, and teaching assistants.

Two out of three meetings have happened online and have been mostly well attended. Feedback has been incredibly positive and there is a real sense of a shared RE community in this group with some innovative exciting ideas shared.

On 6th March, a meeting was held at the Hindu Temple in Bath and it had over 30 attendees with very positive feedback. On 13th June an online session was held with Anna Silver from the Board of Deputies – 38 attendees from Bristol and Bath. It is really encouraging to see high levels of engagement.

4.4 Local: Faith Communities

We are fortunate to have representatives from a diversity of local Faith communities sitting on SACRE: Baha'i, Roman Catholic, Salvation Army, Jewish, Hindu, Muslim and now Humanist. We are in the process of seeking to fill vacancies for Sikh and Buddhist representatives.

The current Secretary of Bath Inter Faith Group sits on SACRE and gives regular updates on local activities which are circulated. This is a useful resource for RE teachers, and has also been invaluable as a resource for review of materials in the revised Agreed Syllabus.

Another member of SACRE represents the C of E Diocese of Bath and Wells and ensures we are updated on current training available from this source, as well as news of the SIAMS inspections of local Church schools.

5. SACRE arrangements

5.1 Organisation and support

Bath and North East Somerset Council contract with RE Today Services for an Adviser who offers professional advice to SACRE, arranges and clerks the meetings, organises monitoring of RE and Collective Worship, and writes the Annual Report. Adam Robertson continued as adviser during the 2022 – 23 reporting period. It should be noted here that Rebekah Guy will replace Adam in this role from November 2023.

5.2 Membership and recruitment

Chair – Jane O’Hara

Vice-Chairs – Kevin Burnett and Cllr Dr Yuktेशwar Kumar

Local Authority link officer – Olwyn Donnelly, Head of Education Commissioning

Jane O’Hara and Kevin Burnett were both re-elected in October 2023.

SACRE recorded its grateful thanks to the following members who left its service this year, Chris Nuttall (Buddhist representative), Rob Hardy (Humanist) and also Tony Bradley, who had served on SACRE from 1997.

Further recruitment for representation is needed for Committee A, as there are a couple of faith communities locally that would benefit from representation on SACRE.

We recruited several new members: Mark Caney (Humanist), Rupert Kaye (Committee A, Chaplain at Ammerdown), Karen Miles (Committee C), Kate Pilkington (Committee B), Patrick Haviland (Committee B), and Andrew Fraser (Committee B). In addition YK Kumar moved from Committee D to Committee A (Hindu representative) when no longer a Councillor following local Election changes.

5.3 Financial report

SACRE Financial Statement 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023

There was a budget of £9,500 for SACRE to meet its responsibilities.

Expenditure

Agreed Syllabus Review & Development	800
Resource Centre	200

Members' training, expenses, fees & NASACRE subscription	280
Support for Primary and Secondary Schools	450
Monitoring of RE and collective worship and production of newsletters and annual report	1700
SACRE and Agreed Syllabus websites hosting and management	440
Professional fees	5,630
TOTAL	9500

The current Development Plan for 2022-2023 is in Appendix A.

Rebekah Guy

SACRE Adviser

December 2023

Appendix A

Bath & North East Somerset SACRE Development Plan 2022-23

Priorities	Targets	Payment	Cost £
A. To maintain and develop the Agreed Syllabus and began the review process	.Clerking tasks: attend and minute agenda-setting and full SACRE meetings; prepare agendas, financial statements and book venues; distribute minutes, agendas and papers to members; liaise with Chair, Senior advisers and Support assistant; correspond with schools, partner and representative organisations; respond to inquiries on SACRE matters. Arrange members' attendance at training events and make payments to schools and members	AR	5,630
	i. To work with the AMV family of SACREs in the development of materials and online resources for the Agreed Syllabus	AR	800
B. To improve teaching and learning of RE within the authority	.To provide support for Primary and Secondary schools, through a choice of activities	Venue, presenters, admin, schools	450
	i. To maintain, review and develop the RE Resource Centre	Robert Jenkins, Saltford Sch	150
	ii. To update and improve items in the RE Resource Centre	Resources	50
C To develop the capacity of SACRE to monitor RE, CW, the effectiveness of the Agreed Syllabus and standards of teaching and learning	.To fill the vacancies on the council	Members	0
	i. To develop the capacity of SACRE members to participate in the work of the council [Training, NASACRE subscription, travel expenses, room hire]	Members, venues	280
	ii. To continue the cycle of regular monitoring of RE teaching and collective worship across the authority using self-evaluation and website surveys and to follow-up with schools as required	AR	700
	iii. To Inform and update schools about local and national RE developments through the Annual Report and the SACRE website	AR	1000
	iv. To develop and maintain the SACRE & Agreed Syllabus websites [Sam Cavender £120; SACRE Domain £193; Management £127]	MP / AR / Sam Cavender / Domains	440
TOTAL Development Plan			9,500.00

SACRE budget before deductions	10,000.00
Bath & North East Somerset 'Matrix' fees & charges @ 5%	- 500.00
Total:	9,500.00
Brought forward from 2021-22	0.00
TOTAL available for SACRE:	9,500.00

Based on a budget of £10,000.