

Gloucestershire
Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education
Annual Report 2020-2021



Gloucestershire
COUNTY COUNCIL

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1. Introduction

a. Foreword

The year 2020-2021 has been a challenging one for schools. This annual report shows how SACRE has sought to support schools, such as by transferring training online. SACRE has also anticipated the review of the current agreed syllabus, which runs until summer 2022. There has never been a more important time for SACREs to be well informed and proactive in establishing an agreed syllabus that is both rigorous and relevant. The desire to produce a curriculum that is truly cocreated, draws on the best educators' thoughts about high quality RE at the same time as responding to the county's context through engaging with faith communities in meaningful ways remains at the heart of what we have done over the year.

Listening to the voices of teachers (and indeed students) as well as providing high quality training and support has sharpened our focus and redoubled our efforts. To that end, we are hugely grateful to Stephen Pett for his leadership, sheer hard work on our behalf but above all for his wisdom. Indeed, my sincere thanks to all the members of SACRE for their support through this time.

On behalf of members of SACRE, I would also like to extend our good wishes to representatives who left SACRE either to move on to pastures new or to retire and to thank them for their work.

I would like to record our sincere gratitude to Jane Lloyd Davies from Gloucestershire County Council for her unstinting support of the work of the committee and her commitment to Religious Education in Gloucestershire over more than a decade. We wish her well in her retirement. We wish to offer the same thanks to Debbie Glover, who has been a member of SACRE since 2009 and led SACRE as Chair from November 2015 to November 2020. Her commitment and calm leadership have been real assets to the Council.

There is no doubt that SACRE will continue to provide a strong message about the importance of Religious Education as our Agreed Syllabus Conference starts working to determine the very best opportunities for the children of Gloucestershire - we are looking forward to the challenges.

M Morgan

Chair of Gloucestershire SACRE

b. Overview of the work of SACRE

Since 1988, it has been a requirement that every local authority establish a Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE).

Though legislation sets out both the structure and the remit of a local SACRE - principally, overseeing religious education (RE) and collective worship - in practice every SACRE has developed its own particular style and character.

It is a legislative requirement that each SACRE produces an annual report of its work and that this is published, sent to the local authority, to NASACRE and to other interested parties such as the Department for Education.

The Chair of SACRE has met regularly with senior officers of the local authority to monitor and discuss future relationships and the work of SACRE. These have been productive meetings and have maintained the local authority's awareness and continuing commitment to fulfil its statutory role in supporting SACRE. With the retirement of the long-standing LA officer, Jane Lloyd Davies, Head of Education Performance and

Intervention in August 2021, SACRE looks forward to continuing its excellent relationship with the local authority.

SACRE met on three occasions during the academic year 2020/21. Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic all of these meetings have been held online. The management and access to these meetings has been in line with all regulations.

All of the meetings in 2020-21 were quorate with members of each of the four constituent groups in attendance. Detailed information on attendance at meetings can be found in Appendix A.

A brief overview of each meeting can be found below

Wednesday 4 November 2020 (via Microsoft Teams)

Support for teachers: updates

- SACRE heard from the teachers and headteachers on the council about how schools were managing in the light of pandemic challenges.
- The cancellation of the summer 2020 primary conference had meant that teachers who registered for the 2020 conference would have their registration transferred to the 2021 conference instead, and would also receive access to two recorded webinars and associated resources.
- The Diocese of Gloucester reported on how their hub leaders had continued to meet virtually to share resources.

Support for teachers: plans

- SACRE heard about plans for two free webinars for primary teachers:
 - 25 November - *RE to save the planet? Green issues in Primary RE* with Fiona Moss
 - 3 February 2021 - *RE, learning and the brain* with Stephen Pett
- SACRE discussed plans for the 2021 annual primary conference. It concluded that a virtual conference would be better than the uncertainty of planning a live event with the possibility of cancellation. A school could register for the conference and allow multiple staff members to attend for the whole day or part of it, so that schools could attend different workshops. The workshop topics and choices were discussed and agreed. This was to be advertised through the usual channels.
- SACRE discussed plans for the secondary Three Counties conference, in collaboration with Herefordshire and Worcestershire SACREs. Again, SACRE decided on an online conference and confirmed the choices of sessions, and approved the advertising strategy.

REaction award

In 2019-2020, SACRE launched the REaction award, for schools to get recognition for their work in RE. The entry requirements are simple, allowing schools to raise the profile of RE without being too onerous. 26 schools have entered.

Westhill/NASACRE award

SACRE discussed the award, received to create video and related resources to support SEND teachers in Gloucestershire and beyond. Pandemic challenges have been particularly acute on special school settings, and so progress was slow.

Chair of SACRE

Debbie Glover, Chair of SACRE, advised the council that she would be stepping down and that SACRE should consider a successor. David Crunkhurn, Vice Chair, was invited to consider returning as Chair as an interim measure.

National RE news update

Each meeting, SACRE hears about current national issues and their implications for Gloucestershire schools and SACRE. These included national and local RE and art competitions, NATRE conferences, questions in Parliament, GCSE results, worldviews in RE, and issues around secondary initial teacher training. SACRE agreed that a teacher-friendly version of the news update should go out via the Heads Up bulletin.

Monday 8 February 2021 (via Zoom)

Election of Chair

Matthew Morgan, headteacher representative on Committee C, was nominated as Chair and voted unanimously. David Crunkhurn continued as Vice Chair.

Support for teachers: updates

- SACRE heard about attendance at the two free webinars. 26 teachers attended Green RE in November, and 27 attended RE, learning and the brain in February.
- SACRE heard about the challenges faced by hub leaders, who were drained as a result. SACRE passed on its thanks to hub leaders for doing a tremendous job.
- SACRE heard that the Westhill/NASACRE award project had been further delayed, due to pandemic pressures and changes in SEND group leadership.
- REaction award: SACRE heard about the excellent entries for the award and discussed how to respond to those that had not met the requirements. Schools were to be offered more time to send evidence.

Support for teachers: plans

SACRE received updates on recruitment for the primary and secondary conferences and agreed to keep pushing these through the usual channels.

Religion and worldviews

Having received the REC's Worldview Project Discussion Papers in advance, SACRE heard an update on the project. They asked questions, then discussed it in mixed committee breakout rooms, and fed back key points.

Agreed Syllabus review timeline

The current agreed syllabus runs 2017-2022. SACRE looked at a timeline for revision, including reviewing the 2019 survey of schools, and selecting from a range of options. More information below.

National RE news update

News updates for this meeting included Ofqual changes to 2021 exam arrangements, subject knowledge enhancement courses, free resources for schools (e.g. anti-racist RE resources from NATRE), national and local art competitions and the Culham St Gabriel's Leadership Programme

Wednesday 16 June 2021 (via Zoom)

Support for teachers: updates

- SACRE heard reports on the primary conference, including evaluations (92% rated it as excellent) and SACRE member comments. More details are below, but SACRE were delighted at how well the virtual conferences had run, and the excellent attendance at the primary conference in particular.
- The Diocese of Gloucester-led RE hubs had been meeting again, mostly virtual rather than in-person. Hub leaders had received training on Ofsted deep dives, and on spirituality and reflectiveness. This was used for developing their own hub sessions.
- Westhill/NASACRE award project: SACRE heard that this is currently on a pause, as we try to reengage with SEND teachers as schools respond to the changing pandemic impact.
- REaction Bronze award: SACRE looked at the list of schools and comments from judging. Schools who had achieved the award were announced at the May primary conference. SACRE discussed how to encourage more schools to apply, and started thinking about criteria for a Silver award for those who had already achieved Bronze.

National RE updates

- SACRE discussed the NASACRE report on funding for SACREs
- SACRE heard a report on the NASACRE 2021 annual conference from the Chair and adviser, and asked questions about it.
- SACRE heard an introduction to the Ofsted Research Review May 2021 and discussed its implications for RE in Gloucestershire.

- SACRE watched the Theos animation on Worldviews, and then split into breakout rooms to discuss the key changes, the opportunities on offer and the main challenges, before joining together to give feedback and continue the discussion.
- SACRE members were encouraged to read the termly news updates.

Agreed syllabus review

SACRE continued its conversation around the review of the agreed syllabus. Feedback from primary teachers was considered. SACRE discussed the implications of the REC's Worldviews project, and looked at the option of extending the current syllabus for two years, to allow for the work of the REC Worldviews Project to inform our process.

2. Religious Education

a. The locally agreed syllabus and RE in schools

The Gloucestershire agreed syllabus was launched in 2017, with over 180 primary schools attending launch training. Around 100 primary schools regularly attend annual SACRE conferences, with a focus on implementing the syllabus and developing teaching and learning. SACRE believes that most, if not all, primary academies are using the Gloucestershire agreed syllabus. Not all secondary academies are using it in full, although many use it to inform their practice.

Conversations have already begun about the review of the agreed syllabus, including the option to extend the current syllabus past 2022. One reason for this option is to take into account the challenge of the pandemic, with its impact on how much RE time has realistically been given during lockdowns and during catchup. A second reason is to allow for more progress in the REC's Worldviews Project, so that it can inform the review.

Schools will be consulted through surveys and during attendance at forthcoming conferences and hub meetings.

b. Standards and monitoring of RE

The new OFSTED inspection framework and RE research review is bringing a renewed focus on RE in schools where RE was struggling to get sufficient curriculum time.

Since no examinations were held in 2021 it has been agreed nationally that no individual school data will be shared. SACRE was therefore unable to make comment on examination RE. SACRE also thanked teachers who have supported students and taught them in extremely difficult circumstances.

SACRE regularly reviews school workforce survey data when it is available.

OFSTED reports can also provide a way of monitoring RE. With inspections suspended during the year, due to the pandemic, there have not been reports to analyse. SACRE intends to look at future OFSTED reports for local schools.

c. Teacher training and materials and advice for schools

Network meetings

The Diocese of Gloucester runs eight regional hub groups for primary schools, run by hub leaders who are supported with training by the Diocesan adviser, Debbie Helme. The groups meet termly and are attended by teachers from Church of England schools and community schools and academies. The Diocese runs its own annual art competition and has held public exhibitions of the winning art in the past.

SACRE primary RE conference, 16 May 2021

The annual primary RE conference returned after its cancellation in May 2020. Held online, via Zoom, 119 schools attended. Multiple teachers attended from some schools.

The programme was as follows:

Keynote 1: RE and climate justice Lat Blaylock

Workshop A

A1. Knowledge-rich strategies Fiona Moss	A2. Virtual visits and visitors Julia Diamond-Conway	A3 Multidisciplinary RE Stephen Pett
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Workshop B

B1. Teaching about Hinduism in KS2 Fiona Moss	B2. Teaching Jesus Lat Blaylock	B3. RE, learning and the brain Stephen Pett
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Workshop C

C1. Ofsted and RE Fiona Moss	C2. Using poetry in RE Lat Blaylock	C3. Picturing Islam, Picturing Muslims Stephen Pett
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Keynote 2 RE updated! Stephen Pett

59 teacher evaluations were collected. 92% of respondents rated the conference as Excellent, and 8% as Good. Representative comments include the following:

- *Because the conference was online, other staff were able to access sessions, which raised the profile of RE in the school. All responded positively to the sessions.*
- *I have always enjoyed attending these conferences as they are inspirational for RE Teaching in schools. I was concerned that the experience would be lacking a dimension being taught online but it was delivered excellently and thoughtfully as usual. The only deficit being able to network as freely and share ideas in wider group.*
- *Very good, ran very smoothly and despite being virtual still took away great ideas. Great use of breakout groups and interaction.*
- *It was a really uplifting day much needed as we near the end of two very disrupted years. So many good ideas and thought-provoking sessions. Thank you*
- *First time at an RE conference and although I know this was different to normal, it was run really well, smoothly and the talks myself and another member of staff went to were fantastic and gave us a lot to think about in how we can implement more of these things in school.*
- *It was my first conference and I am new to headship - lots to think about and some ideas I can use in the classroom straight away*
- *Being a new RE lead (1 month in) it was lovely to have some input into alternate ways to teach RE - especially in EYFS/KS1*
- *Brilliant, as always! Useful and informative. Thank you so much.*
- *Would have liked to have had more time for the OFSTED and RE. The online conference really worked well for us here as we could have multiple people attending without added cost, supply, driving etc. Is this going to continue as it would probably my preferred option going forward. Or even a hybrid so people can attend and this can then be streamed at the same time??*
- *I was surprised at how well it worked. I had expected lots of technical glitches and happily didn't encounter any! Within the constraints of Zoom meetings it was a positive and useful learning experience that built confidence, knowledge and skills, with practical ideas to take away. Thank you.*
- *All great. I am fairly new to RE as a subject lead, so this is really helping me to feel confident about that.*
- *Fast paced but got so much from it. Especially the Ofsted and knowledge rich strategies.*
- *Very knowledgeable presenters, deep understanding of subject and requirements from Ofsted/government. Great ideas to use in class to engage and assess knowledge that can be used across all subjects.*

Teacher evaluations included details of what they planned to do as a result of the conference, some requests for future training, and feedback on questions about the agreed syllabus (to inform SACRE conversations about the syllabus review).

SACRE secondary RE conference, 25 June 2021

Gloucestershire SACRE collaborates with Herefordshire and Worcestershire SACREs in putting on a secondary conference each year. This year it was online, and 22 teachers attended.

The programme, and evaluations, were as follows:

	excellent	good
Session 1: Anti-racist RE Lat Blaylock	100%	
Session 2: Multidisciplinary RE Stephen Pett	82%	18%
Session 3: Picturing Islam, Picturing Muslims Lat Blaylock	95%	5%
Session 4: TeachMeet Local teachers	57%	43%
Overall value of the conference	90%	10%

Representative comments include:

- *Although very different - zoom! - still a fantastic day. As always I feel refreshed and positive about the future of RE. The ideas and topics were excellent and I will definitely be using many of the activities.*
- *I was surprised how close it came to the joy of attending a face-to-face conference. Lots of fantastic and inspiring ideas. Thank you both.*
- *As always, fantastic resources, ideas and new perspectives to explore. This conference reinvigorates me and at the end of this year, that has been especially needed! I particularly enjoyed the Anti-racist RS session. Thanks to all involved, brilliant.*
- *Wonderful day- great resources and really user-friendly ideas. Marvellous.*
- *Love the approach where schools buy the day and can all get involved!*
- *Very well run, professional, friendly and incredibly useful. I will be using so much from this day as inspiration!*
- *I can actually use all the ideas and resources in the classroom!*
- *Inspiring- it made me rethink my plans and critically examine my thinking on Islam*

d. Other information

There were no formal complaints to SACRE about RE during the year.

e. Advice given to the local authority

No specific advice was given to the local authority during this academic year.

3. Collective worship

a. Standards and monitoring of Collective Worship

SACRE has found it hard to monitor collective worship over the past few years. It is noted that schools found different ways of delivering Collective worship virtually during the last difficult year.

b. Determinations

No determinations have been requested in the year 2020-21.

c. Teacher training provided

No SACRE training on collective worship has been provided in 2020-21, although the Diocese of Gloucester continues to support its schools in this area.

d. Other information

There were no formal complaints to SACRE about collective worship during the year.

e. Advice to the Local Authority

No advice was given to the local authority around the provision of collective worship.

4. Links with other bodies

a. National Bodies

- Gloucestershire SACRE is a member of NASACRE. Its newsletters are circulated to all members, and the Chair and adviser attended the 2021 annual conference.
- Stephen Pett, RE Today, connects SACRE with NATRE, and provides national updates at each meeting. Reports from NATRE, including the School Workforce Data and regular primary and secondary surveys have proved useful to SACRE when monitoring schools. Further resources, such as those for home learning, from NATRE have been shared with schools.
- Information from the RE Council has been used in meetings and shared with schools where appropriate.
- The OFSTED Research Review for RE 2021 provided good guidance and discussion for SACRE and this was shared with schools.

b. Local bodies

Gloucestershire diocese provides excellent support to SACRE.

5. SACRE involvement in the Local Area

SACRE updates governors and headteachers on resources and training via briefings and bulletins

6. Managing the SACRE and partnership with the Local Authority

a. Professional and administrative support

Clerk to SACRE:

Rosalind Ellinor
Executive Support Assistant
Executive Support Team
Gloucestershire County Council
Shire Hall, Westgate Street, Gloucester GL1 2TP

Local authority officer:

Jane Lloyd Davies (until summer 2021)
Head of Education Outcomes and Intervention
Gloucestershire County Council
Shire Hall, Westgate Street, Gloucester GL1 2TP

Adviser to SACRE:

The LA has a contract with RE Today Services. Stephen Pett is the RE Today national adviser who delivers the contract to Gloucestershire LA and SACRE.

RE Today Services
Imperial Court, Sovereign Road, Birmingham B30 3FH

b. Membership, representation and attendance

SACRE has been active in recruiting members to represent all groups. It also considers co-opting those with skills, knowledge and experience who can help to develop SACRE's work. Current vacancies, and repeated absences are discussed by the Chair and LA Officer.

SACRE meetings have all been quorate for the period covered by this report. All groups have been represented according to SACRE's terms of reference at each meeting.

Group A - Organisation		4 Nov 2020	8 Feb 2021	16 June
Baha' i community	Jenny Lockwood	y	n	y
Baha' i community	Stephen Vickers		Substitute for Jenny Lockwood	
Baptist community	David Crunkhurn***	y	y	n
Buddhist community	<i>Currently no representative</i>			
Community Churches	<i>Currently no representative</i>			
Gloucestershire Humanists	Sarah Pinegar	y	y	y
Hindu community	Daxa Mehta	y	y	y
Jewish community	Jennifer Silverston	y	y	y
Methodist community	Neil Grecian	y	y	y
Muslim community	Atique Miah	n	n	n
Muslim community	Salma Kaka	y	n	n
Pentecostal community	Howard Padley	n	y	y
Quaker community	Chris Lee	n	y	n
Roman Catholic Church	<i>Currently no representative</i>			
Salvation Army	Cliff Matthews	n	n	n
Sikh community	<i>Currently no representative</i>			
Unitarians	Helen Parsons	n	n	n
United Reformed Church	Julie Jefferies	y	y	y
Group B: Church of England				
	Debbie Helme	y	y	y
	Debbie Glover*	y	y	y
	Matthew Pinless	n	y	y
Group C: Teacher representatives				
ATL (NEU)	Lynda Britton	n	n	n
NUT (NEU)	Mohammed Hussain	n	n	n
NASUWT	Angie Lamburn	y	y	y
NAHT	Julia Matson	y	y	y
ASCL	Matthew Morgan**	y	y	y
Group D: Local Authority				
	Jane Lloyd Davies	y	y	y
In attendance				
Clerk to SACRE	Ros Ellinor	y	y	y
Adviser to SACRE	Stephen Pett, RE Today	y	y	y

*Chair until autumn 2020

** Chair from spring 2021

*** Vice Chair

c. Training for SACRE (and ASC) members

The SACRE Clerk, Chair, LA Officer and RE adviser are on hand to advise SACRE members.

All members are invited to attend the training provided for schools. Members often attend NASACRE and Southwest SACRE conferences, reporting back to members.

7. Appendix

a. Circulation details for this Annual Report

Copies will be sent electronically to the relevant bodies.

- Kirsten Harrison, Director of Children's Services, Gloucestershire LA
- Cllr Philip Robinson, Cabinet Member for Education, Gloucestershire LA
- The Department for Education (Central Government)
- NASACRE (National Association of Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education)
- Headteachers and Governing Bodies of Gloucestershire schools
- All members of Gloucestershire SACRE, for distribution to the bodies/communities they represent