



BEDFORD
BOROUGH COUNCIL

SACRE

Annual Report 2019-20

Message from the Chair

It is a pleasure for me to be able to introduce this annual report of the Bedford Borough Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) for 2019-20. The aim of this report is to update readers about the work of the members of SACRE. Our function is to advise the Local Authority (LA) on matters relating to collective worship in community schools and on religious education delivered in accordance with the locally agreed syllabus.

This has been an unusual year to say the least. The issues that the Covid 19 virus has caused to our schools since the outbreak in the UK in March this year have been severe with examinations cancelled and schooling disrupted. Nevertheless, Bedford SACRE have remained active in continuing to promote RE and Collective Worship in our schools and organising and hosting training sessions for school teachers based around the teachings of a number of prominent religions. We continue to meet on a termly basis, albeit virtually this year, and enjoy lively and useful discussions around the way that RE and Collective Worship can best be delivered to the children in our schools. We have seen the retirement of our School Improvement Advisor, Pam Heath, and we would like to thank her for her contribution to SACRE over the short period of time that she was a member. As a result, we have been able to welcome another School Improvement Advisor, Ian Lindsay, who is now firmly established in the SACRE fold.

A lot of information and suggestions for agenda items comes from the National Association of SACREs (NASACRE). The organisation produces very helpful briefing papers which enable us to become aware of relevant nationally commissioned reports. Each year, in May, a representative from SACRE attends the NASACRE AGM and produces a report for members to consider at a subsequent meeting.

I am pleased to commend this report to you.

Councillor Jane Walker

(Chair of the Bedford SACRE)

Bedford Borough RE Examination Results in 2020

Religious Studies: Exam: GCSE

Religious Studies: Exam: A Level (A2)

Due to the Covid19 situation, there were no examinations this year at either of these levels.

Cllr Jane Walker (Chair of SACRE)

SACRE visits to talk to RE Subject Leaders in the Borough secondary schools

It was planned that a series of school visits would take place this year but, due to the Covid situation we were unable to allow any SACRE members to visit schools due to the risk of spreading the virus.

Queens Park Faith Tour

Each year, as part of the SACRE Development Plan, we agree to subsidise by £50 each Bedford Borough community school's visit to the Queens Park Faith Tour.

We are very fortunate to have such a well-established faith tour in the town, which promotes racial harmony, develops understanding between faiths and builds excellent community cohesion. The Queens Park Faith Tour has been recognised as a

centre of excellence, attracting a wide variety of schools from Bedford and across the Herts/Bucks/Cambs/Northants areas, where many children come from a mono-cultural area and do not have the wonderful multi faith educational facility that is on offer in Queens Park.

A tour for up to 60 children includes visits of one hour each to the Gurdwara, the Mosque and a church. The payments are divided four ways, between the 3 places of worship, and Faith in Queens Park, the overarching charity which runs Faith Tours. The cost of a tour is normally £150 but Borough Maintained schools, being subsidised by SACRE, pay just £100.

Again, due to the Covid situation, the Queen's Park Faith Tour was put on hold for schools in the Borough.

Support for SACRE

SACRE wishes to express its appreciation for the support given by Bedford Borough in terms of funding for SACRE's work and for enabling the Council to benefit from the services of Jeremy Welch from Members' Services and Ian Lindsay from the School Improvement Team.

Your comments on any aspects of SACRE's work and areas of interest are welcomed. Please contact:

Jeremy Welch

Clerk to Bedford Borough SACRE

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Bedford Borough SACRE Membership as of January 2020

Group (A) representing Christian and other Major Faiths

- Rev. Chris Damp, Free Churches
- Susanne Combe, Judaism
- Virendra Soni, Hinduism
- Tirath Singh Bhavra, Sikhism
- Rubina Shaikh, Islam
- Venerable Akurula Samitha, Buddhism

Group (B) representing the Church of England

- Ryan Parker
 - David Dyson
 - Reverend Stephen Holroyd
-

Group (C) representing Teachers' Associations

- Victoria Morrall, Head teachers
- Ruth Wilkes, Secondary Schools
- Rachel Francis, Special School

Group (D) representing the Local Authority (LA)

- Borough Councillor Mohammad Masud
- Borough Councillor Patrick Solomon
- Borough Councillor Jane Walker

Group (E) Others on SACRE (No voting powers)

- The Rev. Cassandra Howes, Co-opted (Higher Education & Bedford Council of Faiths)
- Dr. Graham McFarlane, Co-opted
- Ben Rowlands, Co-opted (Independent Schools), interim maternity cover for Rachel Gleeson
- Charles Baily, Co-opted (Bedfordshire Humanists)



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