



Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE)

Annual Report 2019-2020

Status of this report

An annual report is prepared for Leeds Standing Advisory Council on RE (SACRE) as part of its statutory responsibility. It summarises support for Religious Education and Collective Worship over the school year and also outlines any advice SACRE has given to the local authority during the year, together with the response to such advice. The report is a public document which is also sent to the National Association of SACREs and the Department for Education. For further information on the report or on RE and Collective Worship in Leeds, please contact Alastair Ross at alastair.ross@leeds.gov.uk.

Introduction by the Chair of SACRE

Education has been severely impacted by the COVID pandemic and Leeds SACRE has moved to virtual meetings to allow continued safe operation. At this time of global crisis students and staff are having to cope with much additional stress. Many people have experienced personal loss and almost everyone knows someone who has done so. A global crisis of this kind raises big questions in students' minds, about right and wrong, about what is important and a priority in life and also who to believe.

Good quality RE can play a vital role in helping students to begin to answer these questions. The Black Lives Matter movement also raised some very significant challenges for all of us in society and as well as being pleased to support the statement that SACRE issued on this topic I am glad that the syllabus already provides a robust framework for such topics to be fully explored. Work is also now underway to review the modules of work provided as exemplars to ensure coverage of issues of racism and discrimination.

In these difficult times well taught and inclusive RE helps pupils to understand that we are all human and have far more in common than that which divides us. This is absolutely vital for the proper future development of our society. I am proud to say that the work Leeds SACRE and our syllabus strongly support the fundamental values of respect, understanding and inclusiveness.

Mark Edon

Chair of Leeds SACRE 2019-2020

Part 1: Responsibilities, membership and administration

SACRE's responsibilities

Every local authority is required to form and support a SACRE which has responsibility for advising on its schools:

- For Religious Education (RE), SACRE advises community, voluntary controlled and Trust and Foundation schools without a religious designation.
- For Collective Worship SACRE advises the LA on community, Trust and Foundation schools without a religious designation.

Although not part of its compulsory statutory role, Leeds SACRE also seeks to serve and support all schools and academies within the city and makes its agreed RE syllabus freely available to all.

The second half of the school year has been dominated by the impact of the worldwide pandemic and its effects on schools and education, as well as the broader life, health and economy of the City. Some of the impact will be outlined in the report and much is still unknown. Analysis of public examination results is also normally included in the annual report, although this year is understandably exceptional.

Through the work of Leeds Learning Partnership, the involvement of the RE consultant, and its own deliberations, SACRE can report with insight and authority on the matters included in this report. SACRE does not have the resources to comment in detail on every aspect of RE or collective worship in every school. Specific reports of individual visits and reviews in schools are outside the remit of this general report, but these have informed the overall picture offered.

Meetings

There were three meetings of Leeds SACRE during the year 2019-2020. Meetings are open to the public and minutes are also available. These meetings were held on 26th September 2019, 12th December 2019 and 18th June 2020. The joint West Yorkshire meeting due in

March was cancelled due to the onset of the pandemic. The June meeting was held 'virtually'.

During the year Theresa Falkingham completed her time as clerk to move on to other duties with the City Council. SACRE is grateful to Theresa for her stewardship of this role and welcomes back her replacement, Iram Mir, who was previously clerk to SACRE.

SACRE meetings for 2020-2021 have been provisionally arranged for these dates: 30th September, 3rd December 2020, 16th March 2021 and 16th June 2021. The March date is likely to be a joint West Yorkshire meeting. The September meeting will be held virtually. Details of arrangements for any SACRE meeting can be obtained from the clerk, Iram Mir (iram.mir@leeds.gov.uk).

As well as considering the general position of RE and collective worship in the city, SACRE discussed the following issues at its meetings during the year:

- **RE Syllabus:** monitoring its uptake and reception during the first year and ensuring support and resources were in place for schools;
- ***Celebrating Diversity*:** This guidance on sensitivity to faith in schools was reviewed and some minor amendments made to the 2016 version;
- **Relationships, Health and Sex Education (RSE):** SACRE welcomed Steven Body from the City's Health and Wellbeing service to outline the new statutory curriculum and requirements for schools;
- **COVID-19:** during the year the coronavirus pandemic had a major impact on schools and the impact and response was discussed;
- **Black Lives Matter:** SACRE asked for a statement to recognise historic and present injustices and to support equality for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people as part of dignity and respect for all minorities.

Membership

SACRE membership includes representatives from all four constituent committees.

Committee A	Faith communities except for the Church of England
Committee B	Anglican representatives
Committee C	Teachers and schools
Committee D	Leeds City Council

At the end of the year, Margaret Halsey, one of the representatives from the Anglican Diocese of Leeds, retired from SACRE. Members paid tribute to her commitment and contributions over a number of years. A full list of members is appended to this report.

Financial support

Leeds SACRE is financed by the City Council as part of its statutory role. Most of these resources fund RE training and consultancy and other statutory roles.

Partners, Support and advice

SACRE is grateful for the expertise of its members. Teacher and governor representatives continue to advise on the needs and progress of schools. Local authority representatives have shown an active interest in the work of SACRE.

SACRE receives advice and information from many sources, among them Leeds City Council, NATRE (National Association of Teachers of RE), NASACRE (National Association of SACREs), the RE Council of England and Wales and Ofsted.

Advice to the Local authority

The following advice has been given by SACRE and the RE Consultant to the local authority over the past year:

1. To ensure the continuance of **robust support for RE** in schools.

The Council has maintained the present budget and provision over the next five years as part of its support for RE and community cohesion.

2. To further develop and encourage **engagement between schools and faith communities** in the city. Engagement with people of different faiths is an important element of religious education and wider understanding of diversity.

A programme has been built into the priorities for RE in the next few years. This will aim to broaden pupils' perspectives, develop their critical thinking skills, build bridges in local communities and enrich the provision for religious education.

3. To provide a **programme of training and support** for teachers and schools.

This is in place for 2020-21, subject to flexibility in delivery during the pandemic and its aftermath.

Complaints

There were no formal complaints registered to SACRE throughout the academic year.

Part 2: Strategy and Priorities

Priorities in 2019-20

The priorities for 2019-20 were included in last year's report. Progress on these is briefly outlined here:

1. Embedding the new RE syllabus and providing further appropriate support
The syllabus is now in use across the authority and support and advice has been given to many schools about its application and resources. The Resource Hub has been particularly popular with schools, enabling them to have a bank of planning ready to adapt to their own circumstances.
2. Monitoring provision of RE in secondary schools and offering support to improve
Information and encouragement have been shared with heads and individual schools, though the effectiveness of this has been limited in the latter half of the year.
3. Planning an appropriate RE training programme for primary schools
A programme was planned and delivered until Easter. Training since Easter has been suspended but a full provision has been planned for 2020-21 and is summarised later. This will be held virtually or on-line depending on the situation. Teachers from Leeds can access similar training in Kirklees and Calderdale (and vice versa) so there has been some flexibility available. In addition, resource folders of interactive teaching materials have been made available to support distance teaching of RE in schools.
4. Supporting teachers in creating a 'safe space' for discussion of sensitive issues
Guidance has been updated and revised in a number of areas and a new audit to support schools has been produced.
5. Investigating how SACRE (and joint West Yorkshire SACREs) can be more effective
The March meeting was cancelled but SACRE is exploring the possibility of a Yorkshire SACRE Hub, with regular meetings of chairs and vice-chairs of regional SACREs. In a separate development, an RE regional ambassador has been appointed with funding

from Culham St Gabriels. Olivia Seymour, from the Archdiocese of York and NATRE, has attended network meetings in Leeds and elsewhere.

Priorities for 2020-21

The main priorities for SACRE during 2020-21 will include these elements in SACRE's work plan. Uppermost in the autumn of 2020 is the impact of the coronavirus threat and the uncertainties for the future. As a result all these priorities will be shaped accordingly. For example, including effective CPD shared electronically and the possibilities for on-line 'virtual' visits to faith communities.

1. Communication, information and guidance.
 - Produce regular information for schools, including regular updating of intranet for schools and half termly newsletter;
 - Provide updated guidance on key areas: RE, Collective Worship, Celebrating diversity, and nurturing tolerance of different faiths and beliefs.
2. Professional development and support
 - Provision of CPD and consultancy for schools;
 - Ensuring RE syllabus and resources are further developed.
3. Strategy and priorities
 - Widening participation and involvement in SACRE;
 - Exploring a Yorkshire SACRE Hub;
 - Forming a joint working group on faith and RSE.
4. Promoting understanding and tolerance
 - Developing a project to encourage visits and visitors to and from faith communities;
 - Offering free training to faith communities;
 - Designing an audit tool and consultancy support for promoting tolerance and understanding of different faiths in schools.

Further issues

Black Lives Matter

During the year the Black Lives Matter movement made an important impact within the city and across the world. It presents a challenge and opportunity to re-think the narrative of history and the threat of both deliberate and semi-conscious racism. These are questions that have a place in religious education as well as in the wider curriculum. SACRE has made the following statement and commitments:

Religious Education can and does make a significant contribution to understanding diversity and nurturing tolerance of difference. Our present RE syllabus, 'Believing and Belonging', reflects this in its title and is unequivocal promoting the dignity, equality and value of all human beings through the RE curriculum.

However, we also acknowledge that for too long minorities have also been hidden, unheard and underrepresented in RE. Religion itself has sometimes been used as a cloak for complicity in prejudice and discrimination. The Black Lives Matter movement, and the cruel events that engendered it, call us to reflect on the shameful, endemic racism for which we all bear some responsibility.

As the Standing Council on RE we therefore reaffirm our commitment to challenge racism and, indeed, all forms of prejudice which negate human dignity and opportunity.

We will do this through:

- *Ensuring our curriculum reflects a genuine diversity and openness, including a fairer representation of ethnicity;*
- *Encouraging critical and analytical thinking in RE, so helping students to question presuppositions in religion, history and culture;*
- *Listening and responding to the voices and concerns of BAME people, including young people, in our city, and doing all we can to make SACRE truly representative.*

Relationships, Health and Sex Education

RSE becomes statutory for all schools, in different ways, in September 2020. The law provides that this should be delivered in a way that affirms the legal framework of equality in the UK and also the right and need of young people to receive RSE as part of their entitlement to a broad and balanced curriculum. At the same time, guidance recognises the need to respect the religious background of students. This is a sensitive and critical area of interest for pupils, parents and teachers and there are particular, and varied, interests from the perspective of faith. During the past year SACRE was briefed on the new guidance and in the early part of the next school year will seek to establish a small joint working group with neighbouring SACREs to outline some relevant, positive and helpful material.

Part 3: Supporting RE and Collective Worship

Professional support for RE in Leeds

SACRE advises and supports the work of the Learning Partnership and the RE Consultants. Inevitably most of the day to day work is undertaken by these professionals as employees and contractors of the Council. During the year this professional support was provided through by two consultants, Alastair Ross (SACRE and secondary schools) and Helen Rivers (primary schools, training and general RE enquiries). They can be contacted at alastair.ross@leeds.gov.uk and helen.rivers@leeds.gov.uk. Together the two consultants provide forty days support per year in total, though this is arranged as flexibly as possible to facilitate effective working with schools and others. They also support SACREs and RE in Calderdale and Kirklees, enabling appropriate collaboration and partnership.

A secondary Subject Leaders Development Meeting (SLDM) is organised by the Learning Partnership and organised by two leading teachers, supported by Liz Smith from the Learning Partnership. SLDMs took place during the autumn and spring terms although the summer conference was cancelled due to the pandemic.

The Impact of COVID-19

The emergence of COVID-19 led to the closure of schools and the arrangement of home learning for, effectively, the period from March until the end of the school year. The ramifications and conclusion to this hiatus are uncertain but have clearly had radical effects on education, including RE. Schools, through senior leaders, teachers and governors, as well as local authorities, have had to adapt to emerging guidance and complex situations. The stress and challenge of this has been palpable but through it the hallmarks of dedication, creativity and kindness have been evident. Feedback from teachers has indicated they have discovered many resources and strategies, but remote learning has still, inevitably, presented limitations. There has been a perception that RE has been marginalised by a focus on core subjects; it will be important to ensure this does not become embedded and that a broad and balanced curriculum is maintained for the future. Secondary teachers have reported that engaging students has sometimes been a challenge. This has been particularly observed with some groups of economically disadvantaged pupils, but also with some

students who have parents in particularly demanding professional situations. At the same time, there have been opportunities to develop new resources and strategies as well as to nurture a culture of independent learning. One specific challenge for RE is how to enable the direct engagement and communication with faith communities that can enrich RE – through visits and visitors. There will be ways of enabling this to happen on-line and these will be explored in the year ahead. Apart from being a response to the pandemic, this may enable communication to be wider.

Through the Learning Service and the RE consultants, support has been available to schools, and used by teachers, in a number of ways, including:

- The provision of a range of on-line resources for remote RE teaching;
- Maintenance of the syllabus and its schemes of work, including prompt response to queries or difficulties;
- On-line consultancy over specific or general RE issues;
- Availability by phone, email or virtual meetings throughout the crisis.

The Local RE syllabus

A revised RE syllabus for Leeds along with Calderdale and Kirklees was produced and published in 2019. This is available free to all schools and is the authorised curriculum for maintained schools and any others who have the option to adopt it. This has been the first year of its use. The syllabus is entitled, 'Believing and Belonging', both developing pupils' understanding of world faiths and other beliefs and nurturing awareness of diversity and sensitivity that different views and cultures can present. The syllabus reflects Leeds Children and Young People's Plan 2018-23, and in particular to do well at all levels of learning, have skills for life and to become active citizens who feel they have a voice and influence.

This syllabus is the statutory curriculum for all maintained schools in the city. Other academies and free schools must teach RE according to the requirements of their trust deed or funding agreement. Although SACREs and local authorities do not have any responsibility or authority for their curriculum, it welcomes use of these resources by all local schools.

Guidance

A half-termly newsletter is prepared for schools in Leeds and sent directly to schools.

A range of guidance is available to Leeds schools and this has been updated during the year.

Guidance covers the following topics:

- RE Policy
- Withdrawal from RE
- Collective Worship
- Celebrating Diversity
- Engaging with faith communities

In addition, a half termly newsletter and index of resources is available to all schools, together with a directory of possible visits and visitors. Guidance has also been produced to help schools engage parents in supporting visits to places of worship, including a template letter that can be adapted for situations where there is reluctance to consent.

Provision of Training

SACRE does not directly provide other training but recognises and encourages the comprehensive provision of training and support through Leeds Learning Partnership. This has included a termly primary network meeting and a day course for new RE coordinators. Courses in the summer term had to be cancelled, including a new course on Teaching Christianity Well. The Partnership provides termly Subject Leader and Development Meetings (SLDM) for secondary RE lead teachers across the authority. Tailored training, consultancy and staff training has been provided to schools, subject to demand and the constraints of capacity, and the consultants have attended meetings of headteachers during the year.

The following courses are planned for 2020-21:

- RE coordinators

- Primary RE network
- Teaching Christianity Well
- Collective Worship
- Curriculum design

RE Reviews and City of Leeds RE Award



The City of Leeds RE Award has been developed as an opportunity to review the quality and provision of their religious education and to discover their strengths and priorities for future improvement. It can be used as an internal self-assessment tool or it can be the focus for a review with the RE Consultant, leading to recognition by a badge and award. This will continue to be offered and will be adapted as needed. Like the Leeds RE Agreed Syllabus, the criteria emphasise the importance of RE in community cohesion, SMSC and the fundamental values that we seek to encourage among young people as citizens of Leeds, Yorkshire and the UK. The award has also been designed to dovetail with the national RE Quality Mark and it can act as a stepping stone towards achievement of that national recognition.

Engaging with faith communities and developing tolerance

Many schools find it invaluable to arrange links and visits to help broaden understanding and experience of our communities and world. These occasions can contribute to our obligation to promote fundamental values of respect and tolerance. They also broaden pupils' experience and perspectives and develop their critical thinking skills.

During the past year there have been several 'three faiths' days organised by Leeds Minster, Sinai Synagogue and Equilibria Experience (a social enterprise helping schools learn about Islam). These days have involved a school visiting three places of worship and having the opportunity to meet members of faith communities. Feedback has been very positive and it is hoped to build on this during the coming year. There has also been a training day for teachers based on the same model.

During the coming year, it is hoped to further develop this project and extend links, also continuing to offer free training to faith communities. An audit tool and consultancy support will also be made available for promoting tolerance and understanding of different faiths in schools.



organisations.

To support schools and faith communities a directory of possible visits and visitors is regularly updated. It includes individuals who are willing to come into school and bring some direct engagement with faith communities. It also includes some general information about places and

Examinations

Due to the coronavirus pandemic, all examinations were cancelled this year and therefore no data is available.

Collective Worship

The current law on Collective Worship is determined by the Education Reform Act 1988, with some requirements deriving from the Education Regulations 1981. In summary the law says this:

- All pupils must attend a daily act of collective worship, except for sixth formers who are allowed to decide for themselves whether to attend;
- The legal framework outlined here applies to maintained LA schools. In schools with a religious character collective worship is governed by the trust deed. Arrangements in free schools and academies is determined by the funding agreement.
- There is no need for an act of collective worship to include the whole school all at once. It may be through year groups, classes, key stages or in any combination.
- It may take place at any time during the school day and should normally be on school premises.
- It must be appropriate to the age, aptitude and family background of pupils.

- Responsibility lies with the head and governors, though the precise duties may vary according to the type of school.
- Details of arrangements for collective worship, including the policy, must be documented and available to the public.

Through the consultant SACRE is always ready to advise or support schools on request.

These questions may be helpful in reflecting on the value and effectiveness of collective worship in school:

1. Collective: How does the assembly celebrate and promote a sense of community within the whole school (or group)?
2. Educational: Is there a clear aim and focus, with appropriate learning? Does it engage and interest pupils and staff?
3. Spiritual: How does the assembly nurture pupils' awareness of their beliefs and values - and those of others (including non-religious beliefs)? How does it develop a sense of the meaning, purpose and value in their lives?
4. Reflective: Is there space and opportunity for thoughtful reflection, in the assembly or as a follow up? If prayers are used do these allow for different approaches and responses?
5. Inclusive: How does the assembly programme develop understanding of different perspectives and cultures? How does it promote values of tolerance, diversity and equality?
6. Responsive: How did pupils respond and participate?

Parents have a statutory right to withdraw their children from collective worship. During the year guidance on good practice and protocols for withdrawal has been prepared and is available to schools. SACRE recognises parents' legal rights but hopes all children will be enabled to receive stimulating and balanced RE as part of their entitlement to a broad curriculum. Guidance is also provided to schools in fulfilling statutory obligations over collective worship and promoting good SMSC development.

Complaints and determinations

There were no complaints made during the year to SACRE about Collective Worship.

There are no determinations to vary statutory requirements in any maintained school in Leeds. Responsibility for determinations in English academies and free schools rests with the Schools Funding Agency.

Appendix: Membership of SACRE 2020-21

This the membership list for SACRE during 2020-21

Faiths Represented in the Locality	
Vacancy	Baptist Church
Kerry Prest **	Buddhist Community
K Papagiannoupolos	Orthodox
Saroj Chauhan	Hindu Community
Gail Taylor	Jewish Community
Ruth Barlow	Methodist Church
Shazia Mahmood	Muslim Community
Mahbub Nazir	Muslim Community
Harvy Sagoo	Sikh Community
Pauline Leonard	Quakers
Nessa Nedd	Roman Catholic Church
Vacancy	Bah'ai Community
Russell Trudgeon	Pentecostal Church
Mark Edon (Chair)	Humanist Society of West Yorkshire
Local Authority	
Cllr Mohammed Iqbal	Labour
Cllr Barry Anderson	Conservative
Cllr Ryk Downes	Liberal Democrat
Cllr Andrew Scopes	Labour
Vacancy	
Church of England	
Janet Buttanshaw	Anglican Diocese of Leeds
Margaret Halsey ++	Anglican Diocese of Leeds
Diane Norton ++	Anglican Diocese of Leeds
A Nicholl	Anglican Diocese of Leeds
Rev Mrs T Anslow	Anglican Diocese of York
Teacher Associations/Other	
Lisa Walsh	NUT

Leanne Ward	NUT
Vacancy	
Vacancy	
Co-opted Representatives	
Denise Brogden	Co-opted Member
In Attendance	
Alastair Ross	RE Consultant
Helen Rivers	RE consultant
Erica Hiorns	Secondary Adviser
Kevin Paynes	Lead Secondary Adviser
Iram Mir	Clerk

** Joined during the year

++ resigned during the year



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