

**Leicester City Council
Standing Council on Religious Education (SACRE)**

Annual Report 2021-22



Introduction from the Chair (2021-22)

Leicester SACRE is made up of people from different backgrounds, including many volunteers, all of whom contribute to the work of SACRE in promoting high standards in Collective Worship and RE in Leicester's schools. This is important in many ways but particularly as it helps to promote community cohesion among the people of Leicester. The work of SACRE is strongly supported by the contributions of our Clerk, Beejal Madhvani, and our Consultant RE Adviser, Wendy Harrison. In November 2021 our Chair, Yolanda Morley-Mckay, left her post within the Diocese and stepped down from SACRE. Also, this year we said farewell to Farida Mansoor (Clerk) and Jean Denton (Salvation Army) after many years of service. All these people will be very much missed and they will be warmly welcome to attend SACRE social events in the future. The post of Chair was taken up by Stephanie Maude (Baha'i Faith) in November 2021 and Vice Chair by Anne Fishenden (Society of Friends). In the Spring term members welcomed Beejal Madhvani (Clerk) and the Rev Liz Wilson (CE). During 2021-22 Leicester SACRE has continued to receive the same low level of funding, which means that our Consultant RE Adviser, Wendy Harrison, is able to give us approximately two days per month. Thankfully, however, the challenges caused by Covid have decreased during this year. A very positive development this year has been the successful £4000 funding bid from Westhill to support the Leicester Schools Peace Project. Work has started on this already, including a very successful Peace Project Conference held at Leicester University. It is hoped that the Schools Peace Project may be linked into the newly reviewed Agreed Syllabus when that is produced in 2023/24. A revised version of the Determination application form has been developed this year and is being trialled with schools. SACRE has heard three applications for a determination from local schools who feel that acts of Collective Worship that are broadly Christian in nature would not be suitable for their pupil body. Two of these were granted immediately and the third was granted after SACRE's Consultant RE Adviser was able to visit the school and satisfy members regarding the issues that had been raised. Overall, despite the obstacles mentioned, Leicester SACRE has made great progress in its aim of serving the people of Leicester through promoting high quality RE and acts of Collective Worship. In doing so we continue to be more united than ever.

Stephanie Maude
Chair of Leicester SACRE
February 2023

Background Information

The Education Reform Act (1988) established compulsory Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education (SACRE) in all Local Authorities (LAs). The main function of a SACRE is to advise the LA on matters connected with RE and collective worship. SACREs also oversee the five-yearly revision of the locally agreed syllabus for Religious Education (RE) and consider any complaints about the provision and delivery of RE and collective worship referred to it by the LA. ¹

The membership of SACREs comprises four groups, together with nominated Advisers. The groups are:

Committee A: Christian denominations and other religions and religious denominations

Committee B: The Church of England

Committee C: Teachers' Associations

Committee D: The Local Authority.

[Please see Appendix, p.10 for membership of Leicester SACRE 2021-22]

Also in attendance at Leicester SACRE meetings

Clerk to SACRE: Beejal Madhvani

Melanie Gaiderman: LA

Allan Hayes: Co-opted Humanist member

Wendy Harrison (WH): Consultant RE Adviser

Meetings and Membership

Leicester SACRE met four times during 2021/22 – in November 2021, in January, March and June 2022. Meetings took place via Microsoft Teams.

During the autumn meeting members were informed that Stephanie Maude would be taking on the role of Chair of SACRE due to the previous incumbent leaving her post with the Diocese and stepping down from SACRE. It was proposed and seconded that Anne Fishenden would take on the role of Vice Chair. The previous Chair was thanked for all her hard work and dedication.

Jean Denton (Salvation Army) retired from SACRE during the summer term. She was hopeful that a replacement would be found. WH thanked her for her contribution to SACRE on behalf of all the members and said that she would be greatly missed.

SACRE also said farewell to the Clerk, Farida Mansoor, who had given many years of service to Leicester SACRE. Members thanked her for all her friendship, hard work, efficiency and professionalism.

During the spring term members welcomed Beejal Madhvani as the new Clerk and Rev Liz Wilson (Church of England).

1

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/281929/Collective_worship_in_schools.pdf

It was noted that a member of the CE Committee would be retiring after 34 years in teaching. She intended to remain a SACRE member and would continue to be involved in the Leicester Schools Peace Project.

The WIRE Project (Widening Inclusivity in Religious Education)

Due to the pandemic there were delays in moving this forward. The continued low funding for SACRE had also had an impact. A small number of schools had shown an interest. A teacher member advised that although this is a good initiative which would raise the profile of RE in some schools, many teachers were feeling overwhelmed generally. This was partly due to the after-effects of lockdown. Another teacher advised that schools were working hard on the recovery curriculum as well as preparing for Ofsted. The general feeling was that this might not be the right time to launch the initiative, especially without additional funding. The majority of SACRE members agreed to postpone the launch.

Research Review from Ofsted on RE.

WH presented a PowerPoint on the Ofsted RE Research Review from May 2021. This was one of Ofsted's research papers on different curriculum subjects. The main difference about the 2019 Inspection Framework is that the curriculum, including RE, now takes centre stage. The RE Research Review is not simply a checklist of activities that Ofsted expects to see in schools, but an outline of ways in which RE can be improved and made more ambitious. The report recommends that sufficient support is made available for RE but does not say where this will come from. Regarding the curriculum, it is not enough for schools to simply plan straight from the Agreed Syllabus without thinking about rationale, coherence and sequencing. The point was made by members that subject leaders and heads of department should have access to high quality CPD, especially as they prepare for deep dives. Some members noted that the paper had a 'secondary feel' to it and wondered how relevant it would be for non-specialist RE teachers in primary schools. As with many national reports, it was unclear whether this one would bring about any real change.

Leicester Schools Peace Project

SACRE received regular updates during the year from Andrew Bolton (AB) the director of this project. These included a presentation on peace and justice, remembrance and the links to the University of Leicester. AB discussed various ways that war is remembered in Leicester, mentioning his work with the University and the established peace tours. It was noted that pupils from Charnwood Primary School had taken part in the peace tour and really benefited from this. Regarding the curriculum, work began on producing written materials for schools, e.g. peace assemblies and lesson plans. More broadly, it is hoped to incorporate the Peace Project into the new Leicester RE agreed syllabus. The model is framed around Four Concepts of Peace which are constantly kept under review. It is envisaged that SACRE's involvement will include helping to involve leaders of faith communities in order to get broad perspectives on the concept of peace. Members also advised working with St Philip's Centre, an inter-faith organisation based in Leicester as the Peace Project is a form of inter-faith dialogue. One SACRE member spoke about a link between climate education and peace education. In terms of funding, £2000 had been raised from different peace organisations in Leicester and an additional £2000 grant from Leicester University to host the 21st April event (See below). A bid for funding from Westhill was successful and £4000 was secured to support the project.

Peace Project Conference April 21st, 2022

This conference at Leicester University was very successful. As part of the day attendees were able to take part in the Peace Tour led by AB. Other items on the agenda included exploring different types of citizenship, defining peace, laying the foundations for work in schools, considering different perspectives of remembrance. It was agreed that this was an encouraging start to the project.

Meeting at Soar Valley College, June 16th 2022

This established an overall goal of the project, i.e. to produce a programme for peace education in schools, including schemes of work and lesson plans, with progression built in from key stages one to four. The group started to look at aims:

1. Beliefs, values, and ethics.
2. Developing skills of justice and peace- making.
3. Ability to understand, evaluate practises and actions that make for justice and peace.

The next step would be to look at how this will work in practical terms e.g., specific curriculum units for all the key stages. WH was thanked for her ongoing support.

Religious Education Council Report - Still Standing (the future of SACREs)

WH outlined the key features of the report: outcomes of the work of Commission on RE; recommendations for what the government should do; the impact of academisation on SACREs; SACRE's membership and the composition of different SACRE committees.

Time allocation for RE in secondary schools

WH's analysis was based on data provided by Deborah Weston, Research Officer for NATRE (National Association of Teachers of Religious Education). While it appeared that some schools were not meeting statutory requirements, it was agreed that caution had to be applied when interpreting data. WH made the point that since funding had been reduced, it had been difficult for her to monitor what was happening in schools in terms of compliance – added to which, Ofsted did not necessarily report on this.

Ofsted

WH advised that school inspections had returned, and reports were available on the Ofsted website. They were not as detailed as previously, following the introduction of the new Framework in 2019. An analysis of reports would re-commence once they had been running for at least six months. WH provided an explanation of subject deep dives and said she would keep a record of how often RE was chosen. The outcomes of a deep dive would help to build up a picture of RE in Leicester schools. She also made the point that inspectors were still required to comment on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development mainly under the 'Personal Development' section.

Leicester Agreed Syllabus 2024-2029

The current syllabus was due for review in 2019 but at the time there was no desire for substantial changes. These will be required when the syllabus next goes through a full review which will need to begin in 2023. The LA has a legal obligation to fund the review.

Revised Determination application form

A number of changes were made to improve the document and make it clearer for headteachers. The new document would be trialled during the next year.

Annual Report 2020-21

WH thanked members for their contributions. The report had been submitted to NASACRE and accepted.

Examination results 2022

There were no summer exams in 2020 or 2021.

National Averages (brackets Leicester)

Gender	9-4	9-5
Male	70.4% (71.8%)	58.2% (60.2%)
Female	82.2% (88.3%)	72.8% (97.4%)
All	76.8% (76.5%)	61.1% (68.5%)

Caution must be applied when drawing conclusions about the above in terms of gender as some data was missing or unclear. Overall, Leicester results were close to the NA, with girls out-performing boys (which mirrors the national picture).

Other issues

Future Meetings: 'Real' meetings vs Teams. It was agreed that ideally, face to face meetings were preferred. One of the problems with this is the clerking situation. There is a legal requirement that the LA provides clerking for SACRE. This issue is that SACRE meetings are held in the evening and this does not fit in with clerking hours. Options include continuing to use Teams or move to daytime meetings. The latter is unlikely to work due to membership commitments (teachers would be working). It would be difficult to return to evening meetings in 'real' venues due to the problems around clerking hours beyond 4.30pm. Members agreed that it might be best to stay with Teams or hybrid meetings but the issue would continue to be discussed.

Social events

SACRE members' meal would take place during the summer break. Members agreed that Leicester City SACRE was much more than just a committee, so it was hoped to make social events a regular feature. These would also be open to members who had retired from the group.

Links with other bodies and organisations

Leicester SACRE has links with organisations such as the National Association of SACREs (NASACRE), RE Today/National Association of Teachers of Religious Education (NATRE), Association of RE Inspectors, Advisers and Consultants (AREIAC), the Religious Education Council (REC) as well as local faith communities.

Training for SACRE

Members are kept up to date about local and national initiatives through regular training in meetings delivered by the Consultant RE Adviser.

LA Budget

This continues to support the work of the Consultant RE Adviser for approximately two days per month.

Determinations during 2021-22

Determination follow up: Herrick Primary School.

During the autumn term WH visited the school to follow up issues raised during the previous meeting. The headteacher made the point that he and the deputy headteacher had been kept waiting for an unacceptably long period of time prior to giving their presentation. However, he accepted that the presentation was not up to

standard and did not provide a fair representation of what happens in school. A discussion took place about how the school differentiates between RE and collective worship. WH also attended a staff meeting at the school and heard a presentation on RE and collective worship. As a result she felt confident that the school was clear about the difference. WH advised members that she believed Herrick's assemblies met statutory requirements. It was therefore proposed that the determination was renewed, and this was agreed by members. The headteacher has welcomed visits from any members from SACRE who would like to observe assemblies.

Catherine Junior School

Jo Badge (JB), headteacher, shared a presentation for a new determination for collective worship. This included the following points:

- What the school's collective worship entails, i.e. providing children with the opportunity for personal development, reflection and spiritual development; the reinforcement of school and life values; personal beliefs and values.
- Daily collective worship consists of a mixture of approaches including whole school celebration of festivals; half termly links to different religions; class and year group assemblies based around the Catherine Code; British values and character themes. Some links are made to PSHE (personal, social and health education).
- Examples of specific assemblies were shared. Due to COVID, Vaisakhi, Christmas and Diwali assemblies were pre-recorded and shared with parents. This was popular and feedback was excellent.
- JB stated that the school makes a clear distinction between acts of worship and assemblies.
- The 'pupil of the week' assembly is an opportunity for pupils to celebrate and share achievements. A clear visual aid towards the end of the assembly in the form of a PowerPoint slide is shown to prompt a peaceful pause to encourage reflection.
- The school uses that PSHE Jigsaw scheme. This mindful approach makes a positive contribution to collective worship. It helps to bring about a sense of calm and creates an element of spirituality and relaxation.
- Photographs of Catherine Junior school's 'peaceful spaces' were shared. Many pupils lost someone during COVID so the school has a dedicated a special peace garden which has fruit trees that the children have planted.
- JB shared consultation feedback received from the schools' stakeholders regarding the SACRE determination application. Children also provided positive feedback saying how much they enjoyed and valued the different assemblies and would like to continue with the current multi-faith format for their acts of worship. Staff feedback concurred. 100% of staff felt that the current multi-faith approach to collective worship was relevant and respectful of children's faith traditions. Governors agreed - as a group, they also represent diversity.
- Everyone is aware that if the determination is renewed Christianity must still be included.
- JB shared they have a strong working partnership with Catherine Infant School. This has enabled children to transition smoothly.

JB was thanked for the presentation which was followed by a Q & A session.

1. How does the school use religious teachings in acts of worship, e.g. parables, stories, and equivalents from different religions? The school does use different faith examples and teachings.
2. Could parents visit the peace garden? JB agreed that this was a very good idea and perhaps could be considered.
3. Are revealed prayers from different faiths used in acts of worship? The Lord's Prayer is an example which has been used. JB welcomed the offer of sending a collection of prayers which would be incorporated into future assemblies.

Members were happy with the application and the presentation and the determination was agreed by all.

Evington Valley Primary School

The application was presented by Rachel Langley (RL), recently appointed headteacher. Before her presentation, the following points were noted:

- The make-up of the school was 96% Muslim with a small number from the Sikh faith, one secular, one or two from other faiths and a Humanist.
- It had proved useful to approach some parents about the determination while in the playground setting. This may have helped those who may not have completed their questionnaire, especially if there were issues around language.
- Query about the degree to which acts of worship contained a spiritual element.

This was followed by the headteacher's presentation. She explained that staff, governors and parents supported the renewal of the determination. 98% of parents responded that they would like the daily act of collective worship to remain representative of all faiths of the community and they wanted the school to renew the determination. RL provided some background to the application form and outlined the main points; EVPS is a multicultural, diverse school. Two welcome displays located at reception share the school's ethos of caring and learning together. Another art piece, reflecting different cultures and beliefs from around the world, was completed by pupils and an artist in residence. Photos of the school artwork were shared with members. RL explained that they reflect the pride pupils feel about their diverse school and city. She shared the emphasis that is placed on celebrating humanity and the goals of trust, kindness, friendship, family, as well as individuality and the right for all to celebrate both similarities along with their differences.

Collective worship is important to EVPS because it allows pupils to come together in different classes, groups, key stages and as the whole school when able to do so. Due to COVID this has not been possible for the last two years. Collective worship provides opportunities to celebrate and reflect upon the school community and its place within the local, national and worldwide communities. The assemblies and acts of worship encourage and support the children's spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development within a context which is meaningful to them. SEAL (Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning) themes are used to form the spine of their plan amongst other ways in which they extend and develop the school's themes. The school is looking for ways to re-introduce visitors into school. RL shared the different ways in which children and staff have been involved with the community, e.g. in the autumn term the Chair of governors lead the remembrance assembly jointly with pupils.

A range of strategies is used to deliver collective worship, e.g. stories, artefacts, art, music, current news, reflection time. Moral and religious stories are shared through the use of abridged and age-appropriate versions to support themes. RL provided examples of how pupils' active participation is encouraged. Singing together also helps to promote and enhance the school's sense of community and has also contributed to well-being. The introduction of Daily News into collective worship has enabled children to reflect on their own choices and make links between their cultural and religious beliefs, with assistance from their teachers.

The headteacher's presentation was followed by a Q/A session.

- How does the school use collective worship as an opportunity to address any misconceptions that pupils may have about other religions, considering that the majority are from a strong Muslim community? RL responded that the school addresses this through different strategies, making links between similarities and differences.
- How is music used? The school uses a programme called 'Sing up' where the range of songs are themed or linked to a moral issue and emphasise issues such as coming together, joining in, getting on or falling out. Music is used as a way of centring and includes different genres ranging from pop, classical, psalms, spirituality/ nature.

Members enjoyed the presentation and were pleased to see evidence of planning and that there had been consultation with senior members of staff about bringing back 'real' assemblies which had stopped because of COVID. Members were happy that there was a clear distinction between RE and collective worship.

Members agreed to renew the determination.

Appendix 1: SACRE Membership and Attendance 2021-22

Group A

Faith	Name	23.09.21	16.11.21	11.01.22	10.03.22	10.05.22 Cancelled	28.06.22
Baha'i	Stephanie Maude	P	P	P	P		P
Free Evangelical	Pastor Brian Niblock	-					
Hindu	Dipak Kumar Fakey	-					A
Hindu	Hiten Bhatt	-					
Hindu	Vibhooti Acharya	P	P	P			
Methodist	Stephen Thompson	P	P	P	A		P
Muslim	Seema Ahmad	P	P	P			
Ahmadiyya Muslim	Iman Zartasht	-					
Quakers	Anne Fishenden	P	P	P	P		P
Salvation Army	Jean Denton	P	P	P	P		P
Jewish	Sarah Cohen	-					

Group B

Faith	Name	23.09.21	16.11.21	11.01.22	10.03.22	10.05.22 Cancelled	28.06.22	
Church of England	Elizabeth Wayne	A	P	P	P		P	
	Jill Carr	A	A	P	P		P	
	Rev Elizabeth (Liz) Wilson			P- 1 st meeting	P		A	
	Kim Peake	A	A	A				
	Tracey Manns							P
	Yolanda Morley-McKay	P	P					

Group C

Faith	Name	23.09.21	16.11.21	11.01.22	10.03.22	10.05.22 Cancelled	28.06.22	
CLARET Secondary	Jill Patterson	P	P				P	
NAHT Primary	Nazma Jassat	P	P	P	P			
NATRE Primary	Nausheen Aziz	-						
NUT/NEU Primary	Emma Wright	-						
Secondary	Mayuri Parekh	A	A					
NATRE Primary	Rachel Buckby		P					P

Group D

	Name	23.09.21	16.11.21	11.01.22	10.03.22	10.05.22 Cancelled	28.06.22
Members of the Local authority LCC	Cllr Deepak Bajaj	P	P	P	P		P
	Manjula Sood	P	P	P	P		P
	Melanie Gaiderman						

Faith	Name	23.09.21	16.11.21	11.01.22	10.03.22	10.05.22 Cancelled	28.06.22
Humanist	Allan Hayes	P	P				P