

Medway Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) Annual Report for the academic year 2022/2023

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1. Management of SACRE

Introduction from the Chair of Medway SACRE

I am pleased to introduce the Medway SACRE Annual Report for the academic year 2022-2023. The SACRE met three times during the year 2022/2023 on 29 September 2022, 12 January 2023 and 27 April 2023. Some meetings were held online and others were a hybrid with some in attendance and others online. All meetings were quorate.

As GCSE and GCE A level examination results for 2022 were not all assessed in the usual way no rigorous analysis is possible by making comparisons with figures from previous years as well as national averages and so this exercise has not been undertaken for this report.

Training for groups of schools, both academies and local authority schools, has taken place both virtually and in person through the Medway RE Hub during the year 2022/2023. Contact has been maintained with schools through locally-produced RE newsletters, informally via email and by the use of Twitter and the SACRE website.

SACRE's work is only made possible by the generous financial support of Medway Council who recognise the positive value that well-delivered and well-resourced religious education can bring to pupils. SACRE continues to benefit from its good partnerships with the different faith groups on the SACRE, the Rochester Diocesan Board of Education (Anglican) and Rochester Cathedral.

Finally, I would like to thank my fellow members of SACRE who have given of their time voluntarily. The professional support of our consultant, Ian Hartland, a former HMI and subject specialist, is also gratefully acknowledged. SACRE remains committed to the delivery of first-class religious education in all the area's schools.

Cllr Trevor Clarke

Funding: Professional and financial support

The SACRE receives suitable funding from the local authority most of which is used to purchase professional support from a former HMI who is a subject specialist with experience in schools, higher education a local authority.

Medway SACRE meetings 2022-2023

Information about attendance at the Medway SACRE meetings is given in Appendix A on page 7

SACRE meeting on 29 September 2022

- This meeting was a hybrid with some in attendance at Rochester Cathedral with others online via Microsoft Teams.
- Copies of the agenda, minutes of the last meeting and any other material to be considered at the meeting were sent out a week before the meeting.
- The meeting began in the usual way, following any apologies, welcomes and introductions, with a brief moment of quiet reflection. A new vice chair was appointed.
- Minutes from the previous meeting on 9 June 2022 were considered and agreed along with a consideration of any matters arising not on the agenda.
- Reports were provided by different members of the SACRE. There was an update about work undertaken by the Rochester Diocesan Board of Education with local Church of England schools. There was a report from a local authority officer on the latest developments relating to the SACRE section of the authority's website. Members of SACRE made contributions, for example, about the national Inter-Faith week and about school visits to local places of worship.
- Two local RE subject leaders, who are SACRE members, gave information about the local RE Hub meetings on 27 June 2022 (with 10 attending in person) and on 26 September 2022 with 12 in attendance. These meetings provided an update for local teachers on teaching about world religions and Ofsted expectations
- The RE consultant gave his regular input on relevant local and national developments and on work he is undertaking for the SACRE and local schools. The main matter included was the new guidance being written on developing teachers' subject knowledge of different world religions with carefully selected, recommended books and other freely available material on the internet. Work had been completed on guidance teaching about Christianity and Judaism. Work was also begun on considering Section 1 of the NASACRE self-evaluation tool.
- The meeting ended with an update from the Chair and a consideration of the budget.

SACRE meeting on 12 January 2023

- This meeting took place online via Microsoft Teams.
- The meeting began in the usual way, following any apologies, welcomes and introductions, with a brief moment of quiet reflection.
- Minutes from the previous meeting in September 2022 were considered and agreed along with any matters arising, not on the agenda.
- The two local RE subject leaders gave details of plans for the RE Hub meeting in June 2023 with a possible focus on planning units of work.

- There was a detailed update about the SACRE section the local authority website. Links to the website were sent to schools and local teachers have been enabled to download resources.
- The RE consultant gave his regular input on relevant local and national developments and on other work he had been doing. This included: further information for the SACRE website with new subject guidance to be added on Sikhism; a draft Annual Report for 2021/2022; REC material on worldviews and working with the NASACRE self-evaluation tool. (The handout from the RE consultant used at the meeting can be found in Appendix B. It provides further information about these areas).
- There was input from members including the Rochester Diocesan Board of Education. Topics mentioned included: forthcoming dates of Holocaust Memorial Day on 26 January with an event at Rochester Cathedral, Martin Luther King Day and forthcoming Sikh celebrations.
- The meeting ended with an update from the Chair and a consideration of the budget.

SACRE meeting on 27 April 2023

- This meeting was a hybrid with some in attendance at Rochester Cathedral with others online via Microsoft Teams.
- The meeting began with apologies, welcomes and introductions, followed by a brief moment of quiet reflection.
- Minutes from the previous meeting in April 2023 were considered and agreed along with any matters arising.
- The two local RE subject leaders gave the date of recent work for example on the session on preparing for Ofsted. There was a planning meeting for teachers of years 5 and 6 on work on Islam
- There was a further update about the SACRE section the local authority website. Links to the website were sent to schools and local teachers have been enabled to download resources.

The RE consultant gave his regular input on relevant local and national developments and on other work he had been doing. (a) There was further information for the website on world religions with work being undertaken on Islam and Buddhism. A detailed glossary of general terms used in the study of religion such as theist or sacred which are used by a number of religious traditions was added along with a glossary of subject specific terms for 6 religions produced by the School Curriculum and Assessment Authority some years ago. (b) The SACRE Annual Report for 2021/2022 is complete and work has started on the report for 2022/2023. (c) it was pointed out that there is still work to do completing all the sections of the NASACRE self evaluation tool. A new summary form for whole of the self evaluation tool has been produced to provide a single page overview of Medway SACRE's view of itself. (The handout from the RE consultant used at the meeting can be found in Appendix C which provides further information about these three areas).

- It was decided to look into setting up a working group on Collective Worship which will involve finding out what schools are doing and what support the SACRE may be able to give to the schools.
- The meeting ended with an update from the Chair with the hope that the budget for next year would be similar to that of the current year.

See page 7 for information about attendance at the three SACRE meetings, by members of each of the four committees and others.

2. Religious Education

Almost all secondary schools in Medway are now academies and an increasing number of primary schools are seeking and gaining academisation. SACRE has no information about which academies are using the Medway Agreed Syllabus for RE. SACRE has not monitored the use of the local Agreed Syllabus for RE in locally maintained schools.

The latest Medway Agreed Syllabus for RE was issued in November 2018. The official launch of the new Medway Agreed Syllabus took place in July 2019 in the crypt in Rochester Cathedral. It was attended by over 20 schools and included six headteachers. There was input from the chairman of the Medway SACRE, the RE consultant and the two local subject leaders who have led training on RE locally. Refreshments were provided. Two key features of the new Agreed Syllabus are:

- The introduction of a new, single, principal aim for RE which seeks to incorporate the twin aims of *learning about* and *learning from* religions.
- The use of end-of-key-stage outcomes instead of level descriptions and attainment targets.

As there is often very little in Ofsted reports about standards and the provision for RE for Key Stages 1, 2 and 3, it is not possible to provide a clear and comprehensive overview of standards and the quality of provision in the Medway area.

As GCSE and GCE A level examination results for 2022 were not assessed in the usual way no rigorous analysis is possible by making comparisons with figures from previous years as well as national averages and so this exercise has not been undertaken for this report.

The SACRE has only limited information about the quality of RE provision in schools in addition to the information about the outcomes of public examinations in secondary schools. The SACRE does not make local authority-wide checks on the extent to which all schools comply fully with the legal requirements for RE. Information mostly comes from the two SACRE RE subject leaders, informally from staff at local schools and via contact with RE subject leaders on the SACRE. Very little information is provided in recent Ofsted reports about RE in the local area.

Training for groups of schools, both academies and local authority schools, has taken place both virtually and in person through the RE Hub during the year 2022/2023. Contact has been maintained with schools through locally produced RE newsletters, informally via email and by the use of Twitter and the SACRE website.

The SACRE provides support to all local schools with regular RE newsletters two or three times each year. They contain local and national news relating to religious education, collective worship and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They sometimes include reviews of books for teachers, information about national reports on religion and belief, RE and collective worship and on suitable resources. The newsletters are sent to all RE subject leaders in local authority and other schools, including academies, in the local area. They are also available on the SACRE section of the local authority's

website. There are also meetings of the RE Hub and the provision of resources and guidance on the dedicated SACRE website.

SACRE have received no information about any withdrawals from RE lessons nor any complaints.

It advises the local authority via the chair and the local councillors on the SACRE.

3. Collective Worship

Scrutiny of some recent Ofsted reports have found that there are few references to collective worship in these reports and that they are of limited value as they rarely indicate if a school's collective worship is good or if schools fails to ensure that it occurs daily. There have been no requests for a determination. SACRE have received no information about any withdrawals from collective worship nor any complaints. There has been no recent training provided.

4. Links with other bodies

Medway SACRE receives relevant information about documents and developments at the REC, AREIAC, NATRE, NASACRE, universities and Ofsted along with any key material related to faith/religious groups from the RE Consultant. One member of the SACRE is much involved with the local Inter-Faith group and keeps SACRE updated about significant local and national developments. There is usually input from the Rochester Diocese and Rochester Cathedral at each SACRE meeting and from members of different religious traditions as appropriate, for example, what events will be taking place at the annual Holocaust Memorial Day. Medway SACRE is affiliated to NASACRE.

5. SACRE's involvement locally

The SACRE has not been directly involved recently in any governor training. It issues guidance to schools on an ad hoc basis should any issues arise locally.

6. SACRE's own arrangements

The SACRE receives professional and administrative support. There has been some difficulty in recruiting individuals from a few of the non-Christian religions represented locally. The SACRE receives a suitable remuneration for its work which enables it to have professional support and to pay for cover for the two subject leaders on the SACRE who undertake additional work.

The Chair of the SACRE is a local councillor. The SACRE is supported by a clerk from the local authority and by an RE subject specialist consultant. The consultant is commissioned to provide around 15-20 days each year to support SACRE meetings, to write guidance for schools, the local newsletters and the annual report, to add information to the website, to update SACRE members on national developments and to provide advice and training to schools.

The SACRE usually meets three times each year and meetings are usually held in schools, rooms provided at different places of worship or at Rochester Cathedral. The agenda, along with relevant attachments, are distributed to members before the meetings take

place. The annual budget for the SACRE for 2022-2023 was approximately £15,000.00 which is similar to the sum allocated by the local authority in previous years.

7. Appendices

Appendix A

Figures for the attendance at the three SACRE meetings either in person or via Teams, by members of each of the four committees and others.

Groups on SACRE	29 September 2022	12 January 2023	27 April 2023
Group A: Christian denominations and members of world faiths			
Stephen Bello	Yes	Yes	Yes
Irina Fridman	No	NA	NA
Kulwat Jhita Singh	Yes	Yes	No
Faran Forghani	Yes	Yes	No
Dean Collins	No	No	No
Joanne Burford	Yes	Yes	Yes
Sharon Millar	Yes	Yes	No
Group B: Church of England			
Helen Bradshaw	Yes	Yes	Yes
Virginia Corbyn	No	Yes	NA
Tristan Thorpe	No	No	No
Ruth Gooch	NA	NA	Yes
Group C: Teacher associations			
Carolyn Burch	Yes	Yes	Yes
Lisa Humphries	Yes	Yes	Yes
Emily Calder-Evans	No	No	NA
Caroline Beadle	Yes	Yes	Yes
Group D: Local authority			
Cllr Trevor Clarke	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cllr Elizabeth Turpin	Yes	No	Yes
Cllr Jo Howcroft-Scott	No	Yes	Yes
Cllr Gloria Opara	Yes	Yes	No
Others			
Ian Hartland (consultant)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Ruth Wells (local authority)	Yes	Yes	Yes

Appendix B

Medway SACRE: Update 17 January 2023

Areas to consider:

1. Information for the website: Subject Guidance on Sikhism
2. Draft Annual Report 2021/2022
3. REC material on worldviews
4. NASACRE self evaluation tool

1. Information for the website

- Guidance on teaching and learning, especially on developing subject knowledge - already material on Judaism and Christianity.
- Now new draft subject guidance on Sikhism. I have received helpful comments from Kulwant on this draft and will be revising it accordingly.
- Will be bringing to SACRE further work on Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism and other subject areas, yet to be decided.
- Added the QCA schemes of work from 2000 and 2007 to website - a few units missing.
- Any comments?

2. Draft Annual Report 2021/2022

- Format different from previous reports as there is new template from NASACRE.
- As with last year's report - no analysis on examination results because of changes to assessment systems in summer.
- Any comments on draft - still bits to be added.

3. REC material on worldviews

- Much recent writing and research on the term worldviews - so useful for SACRE members to see the current FAQs from the REC on the subject.
- Any comments?

4. NASACRE self evaluation tool

- Looked at this before but need to work through this document to get a full picture of how well we think the Medway SACRE is doing.
- Only looked at 1a and 1b so far.
- Would be good to try to finish the first section so 1c-1g today if possible.

Appendix C

Medway SACRE: Update 18 April 2023

Areas to consider:

1. Information for the website
2. SACRE Annual Reports
3. NASACRE self evaluation tool

1. Information produced for the Medway SACRE website

- Guidance on teaching and learning, especially on developing accurate subject knowledge about different religions - already material issued on Judaism, Christianity and Sikhism.
- There are many different text books recommended but also short accounts on different religions (ranging from 3-20 pages of A4) are listed which are freely available on the internet.
- Now, new draft subject guidance on Hinduism which was sent out with the mailing for this meeting.
- There will be further work on Islam and Buddhism and possibly other traditions yet to be decided.
- Other guidance recently sent for uploading:
 - A detailed glossary of general terms used in the study of religion such as theist or sacred which are used by a number of religious traditions
 - A glossary of subject specific terms for 6 religions (produced by the *School Curriculum and Assessment Authority* some years ago but still useful).

2. SACRE Annual Reports

- Format is different from previous reports as there is new template from NASACRE which it hopes SACREs will use.
- As with last year's report - no analysis on examination results because of changes to assessment systems in summer.
- Report for 2021/2022 complete.
- Working on report for 2022/2023.

3. NASACRE self evaluation tool

- Still a need to work through all the sections of this document to get a full picture of how well we think the Medway SACRE is doing.
- Only looked at 1a and 1b so far.
- Perhaps look at sections 1c-1g today?
- Summary form for whole of the self evaluation tool was sent out with the mailing. This can provide a single page overview of Medway SACRE's view of itself. It may be helpful if members seek to fill this in for themselves before we consider the various questions at a SACRE meeting.