

Annual Report of the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) Blackburn with Darwen September 2022

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Words from the Chair

SACRE has had an incredibly exciting year this year after the previous year, when we reported significant change. Together we have re-established a high quality SACRE, ensuring that the Local Authority has met its statutory duties. Together we have ensured that we remained focused on our aim of ensuring that our learning offer from Blackburn with Darwen is vibrant, relevant, and inspiring for the young people.

The membership continues to reflect the diversity of the wider religious and professional community. SACRE meetings continue to be representative, engaging, and productive. All members feel that their views are considered and respected. This year, when we focused on reviewing our Agreed Syllabus, we continued to make excellent use of co-option to ensure membership of the SACRE was well informed and highly representative of the diversity of the local community. The SACRE has now embedded a well-developed process of co-option of where local teachers of RE have been co-opted as well as representatives from each School Improvement Group. SACRE now has a broad representation from all types of school in the LA.

We have continued to engage the support of an external consultant to support the new Chair in the period of significant change.

As previously reported it is important to highlight also that Blackburn with Darwen (BwD) has faced immense COVID related challenges, which have been particularly unique to our area. Factors such as intergenerational living, range of housing stock, multiple community languages and digital literacy and access have all contributed to BwD presenting with consistently high infection rates and consequently prolonged tougher restrictions. Some of the areas most deprived communities and South Asian neighbourhoods have been affected disproportionately. Throughout these challenging times, SACRE has continued to meet successfully twice a term, digitally, via TEAMS, to ensure that the planned work continues. As Blackburn with Darwen has been identified as an area of “Enduring Transmission”, this arrangement continued for 2021 to 2022. As Chair I am incredibly grateful to all who have positively embraced the new ways of meeting and demonstrated their commitment to support SACRE through these the most challenging of times.

We look forward, to be able to report further progress of our work in our report next year.

Alison Ashworth-Taylor

2. SACRE meetings, 2021-22 venues and a brief overview of content of these meetings.

Date All meetings via Microsoft TEAMS	Brief overview of content of these meetings. Comprehensive copies of minutes can be found at: https://blackburn.gov.uk/search?search_api_fulltext=SACRE
21 st September 2021	<p>1. DT shared with the group a presentation regarding an Introduction to SACRE, Key points highlighted included. (PowerPoint was shared with the group prior to the meeting) Key functions of SACRE /Roles and Responsibilities /SACRE Structure Religious education and the Law/Review the Syllabus every 5 years/Collective worship and the law/The right to withdraw /Other places for information and support/What the SACRE must do</p> <p>2. Agreed Syllabus Consultation</p> <p>The data summary for the agreed syllabus consultation was sent out to colleagues prior to the meeting. The questionnaire was completed by a very high proportion of schools required to follow the Agreed Syllabus and it was noted that there was a marked difference between the responses of Primary and Secondary Schools. One special school response was received and came from an all through school. AAT added the aspects highlighted in red appear to be the most pertinent challenges for the agreed syllabus review. The comments highlighted in green could be quick wins linked to a professional launch and the focus and structure of the new syllabus.</p> <p>ATT took comments from the primary and secondary school reps. Primary training material to support high quality teaching was not available. Too much content to cover in each unit .Collecting subject specific vocabulary for each unit. Comprehensive consultation prior to the adoption of a syllabus AAT thanked DT for collating all the information received from questionnaires to present to SACRE.</p> <p>3. Next stage of the process DT outlined what the next steps would be for adopting a new syllabus.</p> <p>SACRE to agree if they are in a position ask the LA to start the Agreed Syllabus consultation as the current local agreed syllabus is no longer fit for purpose.</p> <p>All four committees agreed to start this process. Formal request to the LA to expand SACRE under its four committees to create a group called the Agreed Syllabus Conference. DT recommended that all members of the SACRE and other RE leads are involved in this group. The group would meet twice a term to look at a new syllabus and possibly trial some of the materials that will be suggested. The Agreed Syllabus conference will look at a new syllabus for BwD.</p> <p>The Syllabus will then go to the SACRE to approve SACRE will then send the Agreed Syllabus to the Local Authority and recommend that this Syllabus be adopted for the next five years.</p> <p>4. Action: AAT to write to the Leader of the Council and the Exec member for Children’s Services informing them of the need to review Agreed Syllabus which is up for renewal and establish an Agreed Syllabus Conference.</p> <p>5. Action: AAT to contact SIG leads to ask them nominate two RE subject leaders from maintained schools and one Secondary to sit on the Agreed Syllabus Conference group.</p> <p>6. Action: AAT to send out a pro-forma to all SIG leads to include the RE priority as part of their action plan.</p> <p>Timeline of the process established</p> <p>First meeting between 21st Sept 2021 and 9th Nov 2021 Second meeting between 9th Nov 2021 and 25th Jan 2022 Third meeting between 8th March 2022 and 17th May 2022 – with a view to recommending a syllabus after this date to the SACRE. Look at a possible launch date of September 2022 or January 2023.</p>

<p>9th November 2021</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. SACRE Development Plan –September 2022 AAT went through key priorities in the action plan and gave a brief update: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Key Priority 1a To ascertain levels of compliance - AAT confirmed that this is still red as others priorities were more key at this time and this priority would be more timely during the Agreed Syllabus conference. b. Key Priority 1b The SACRE work in effective partnership with the LA to monitor and evaluate standards for RE in Blackburn with Darwen. The data report had been well received and this has now been incorporated in the annual report. c. Key Priority 2 To ensure that The SACRE is legally compliant ad effective in its partnership with the LA to enable the LA to carry out its responsibilities successfully. AAT has highlighted the vacancies in the report but was pleased that the SACRE reflects the diversity of the borough and thanked everyone for their attendance and support. We have co opted local teachers of RE and we have an annual budget £15000. d. Key Priority 3 To evaluate the effectiveness of the previous agreed syllabus. e. To establish a clear procedure to ensure an efficient response to request for determination. AAT reported a 98% response from the consultation process and it was clear that there is a mandate for change. AAT, DT and HS had met on 2nd November and dates had been sent out for the Agreed Syllabus Dates for the Agreed Syllabus conference are: 30th November 2021 via teams 11th January 2022 via team 8th March 2022 –venue tbc. It was agreed that there needs to be some pupil voice involvement in this process and AAT will confirm what the 8th March meeting will entail once the first two dates have taken place. DT confirmed that there has been a tentative agreement to hold a Pupil Voice conference on 11th March. DT is looking into appropriate venues to hold this conference. f. Key Priority 4 To establish a clear procedure to ensure an efficient response to request for determination. DT and AAT will looking at the procedure for determinations before Christmas. It was noted that the LA had appointed Michelle Smith (HT at the Redeemer) to the SEO post and she will take up post in the new year and support AAT in this process. g. Key Priority 5 To effectively link in with local authority and local initiatives which promote social and racial harmony It was noted that the LA had relaunched the Linking Classrooms project and currently 20 schools are taking part. It was agreed to invite the Linking Network to the SACRE meeting to speak to the board about this initiative. AAT confirmed that the Knife Angel and No More Knives initiative is going ahead. 12 secondary schools will be taking part in this. AAT also reported that Public Health had agreed to contribute £4,500 towards this project. AAT is due to meet with Mark Aspin who works for the local authority in the Community Safety team in a fortnight. They will look at how SACRE can support the various initiatives that his team will be involved in throughout the year.
<p>2nd February 2022</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Visiting Speaker <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emma Owen from the Message Trust attended the meeting to speak to the group about the success of the No More Knives initiative in which secondary schools in BWD had participated. (See Section 3 below for more details) 2. Agreed Syllabus Conference Update <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Agreed Syllabus Conference was held prior to this SACRE meeting and AAT reported that the group had all accepted the recommendations from the evaluation grid. • The group have also asked that Blackburn Diocese attend the next meeting to give a presentation on Questful RE and Illuminating Pathways.
<p>17th May 2022</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Visiting Speaker -Nahida Nazir <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Linking Schools Network Presentation b. Nahida Nazir from the Linking schools had been invited to the SACRE meeting to speak to the group about what the Linking Schools entails and how Blackburn with Darwen have been part of the project for a number of years. The Linking Project aims to support pupils to explore identity, understand diversity and promote equality and community. To promote achievement, including empathy, critical thinking, trust, self esteem, recovery and enjoyment for all pupils.

- c. Schools Linking deepens knowledge and understanding of different beliefs by creating a safe space for children and young people to engage directly with peers from different backgrounds and reflect on how to become more open minded, respectful and self-aware.
- d. Schools Linking offers pupils powerful learning experiences, ones that they will probably never forget.
- e. Schools Linking gives pupils a purpose for reading and writing because children write for a real audience. They write about subjects which matter to them and they read post and information about and from their link class.
- f. Schools Linking gives pupils the chance to explore identity, diversity, equality and community with depth and sensitivity in a well-structured curriculum.
- g. To build confidence in contact to enable pupils to help build a kinder and more connected community. More information can be found at <https://thelinkingnetwork.org.uk/school-linking/>

2. Agreed Syllabus Conference Recommendation

a. Presentation from Blackburn Diocese

Helen Sage from Blackburn Diocese gave a brief overview of the presentation given to attendees at the last Agreed Syllabus conference.

Members of the meeting were moved into their respective committee groups to vote on the following two recommendations:

To agree/disagree with the recommendations of the Agreed Syllabus Conference that Blackburn with Darwen LA be asked to adopt Questful RE and Illuminating Pathways as the Locally Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education

SACRE agreed to commit to the cost of purchase which include access to network meetings, curriculum resources and online platforms

The committees were in unanimous agreement to request that the Local Authority should adopt Questful RE (Primary) and Illuminating Pathways (Secondary) as the Local Agreed Syllabus for Blackburn with Darwen schools.

The Chair to formally write to the Director of Children's Services with the recommendation and ask that this be forwarded to elected members for formal adoption.

3. The Chair Of SACRE was asked to send a formal invite to all SACRE members to the KS2 & KS3 Conference Programme for Years 6 & 7. It will be held at Blackburn Cathedral, Cathedral Close, Blackburn BB1 5AA on the 17th June 2022 9:30 – 14:30

The theme will be:

"What is the impact of walking a spiritual and sacred pathway?"

Members of SACRE were invited to support the conference by agreeing to share their stories of walking spiritual and sacred pathways with pupils attending the conference.

3. SACRE Funded Initiatives

No More Knives Tour

<https://www.message.org.uk/nomoreknives/>

On the 25th May 2021 SACRE had a visiting speaker Emma Owen from the Message Trust who presented a proposal linked in with the Knife Angel visit in November to Blackburn Cathedral. 'No More Knives' The presentation was shared detailing the background of the "No More Knives initiative". The pilot scheme that was set up and the positive feedback that they received was discussed. The costs for the schools/groups to access the "No Knives More Knives Tour" were shared. It was agreed that it would be beneficial for our schools and SCARE agreed to fund the initiative. Our High Schools received the following...

"Knife crime and the devastating impact this is having on lives is never far from the headlines today. Something must change, so the No More Knives tour is heading into high schools across the North West to show young people there is another way. We will be coming to 17 schools across Blackburn and Darwen between 8 and 26 November 2021, with the tour finishing with an epic gig at Blackburn Cathedral from 7:30pm on 26 November. On the day of the final gig, the 'Knife Angel' will be featured outside the cathedral. Made out of 100,000 seized knives, the 'Knife Angel' aims facilitate conversations and raise awareness of the importance of tackling knife crime."



Emma Owen reported attended SACRE in February to report that they had seventeen schools sign up for the tour and they visited sixteen schools and one joined virtually.



The Trust sent out evaluation forms to all the pupils and they received over four thousand and six hundred completed evaluation forms. The results were collated and EO gave a breakdown of the evaluation figures;

- 94.5% Agreed and Strongly Agreed it was a useful session
- 94.6% Agreed and Strongly Agreed that the session will help them make the right choice to not carry a knife.

Emma shared with the group feedback from teachers which was extremely positive and commended the trust on the delivery of the session and how relevant the content was. They have also had feedback from parents via the schools with similar compliments and how it has had a really positive impact on the students in the school and empowering young people to make the right choice.



EO thanked SACRE for financially supporting the tour and is looking forward to working with schools on further tours. EO shared a video of the tour with the group and members of the group gave their feedback of the event and how well it had been received by all. HS reiterated her thanks to the Trust and the SACRE for supporting the event and also the Pupil Voice Conference that took place alongside the No More Knives Tour. It was acknowledged that the feedback and the impact that the tour had was very positive. It was noted that over a hundred knives were handed in!



4. Religious Education

Local Agreed Syllabus

The Blackburn with Darwen agreed syllabus for religious education 2017-2022 was adopted from RE Today. It was the syllabus to be used by all community schools and has been adopted by all non-faith based academies and free schools. SACRE completed the review cycle having set a full review timetable in its September meeting, 2021.

Questionnaires were distributed to school and responses collated. The response rate was 98% from schools and there was a clear mandate for change.

See Section 2 above 17th May 2022 for details. The committees were in unanimous agreement to request that the Local Authority should adopt Questful RE (Primary) and Illuminating Pathways (Secondary) as the Local Agreed Syllabus for Blackburn with Darwen schools.

Pupil Conference

A KS2 & KS3 Conference Programme for Years 6 & 7 was held at Blackburn Cathedral, Cathedral Close, Blackburn BB1 5AA on the 17th June 2022 9:30 – 14:30.

The theme was:

“What is the impact of walking a spiritual and sacred pathway?”



Members of SACRE were invited to support the conference by agreeing to share their stories of walking spiritual and sacred pathways with pupils attending the conference.

Conference Objectives

- To capture pupil and student voice to support development of the Blackburn with Darwen Draft Agreed Syllabus
- Empower children and young people to identify why people walk a spiritual pathway and what impact that has on them individually, their family and the local and global community
- Explore a quality religious education unit from the draft Blackburn with Darwen Agreed Syllabus at KS2 & KS3 and engage with how it impacts on the delivery of the provision of religious education within the local borough.
- Inspire and exemplify new ways to deliver Christianity lessons in accordance with the Draft Locally Agreed Syllabus under development at KS2 & KS3 and illustrate how those units feed and contribute to a spiral curriculum



Comments and Feedback received from attendees...

This is a brilliant opportunity for our students who would not normally be able to get involved in an experience like this. –
Darwen Vale

The second quote comes from a faith visitor who couldn't bring her school as they did not fit into the criteria but would like to be invited in the future. Had this to say - The atmosphere at the conference, in the sunshine of the cathedral gardens was awe inspiring.

Pupils from different backgrounds and faiths listening to each other's stories of discovery and understanding was a powerful moment to observe.

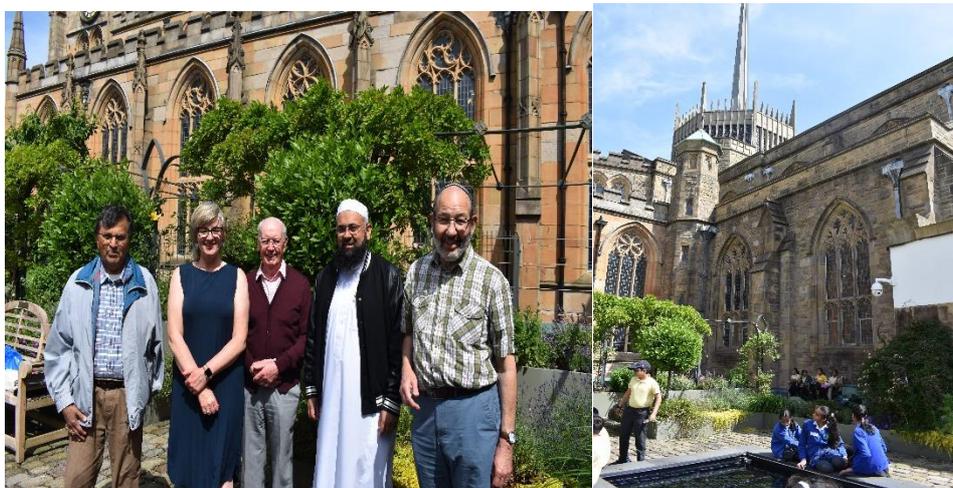
A particular strength of the conference was the range of presenters who offered an insight into their lived experiences and the respectful and thought-provoking way in which children engaged. The carousel activity was a compelling safe and secure space to explore pilgrimage using story.

Another witness had this to say: I enjoyed it very much, a rare opportunity to spend time with children and share my story. They were all so interested it surprised me! This generation are of such a different and distanced cultural experience to that of their parents and grandparents (the focus of my pilgrimage) but I hope they remember to talk about it at home. Those generations of their families still make regular pilgrimages to Pakistani villages they left behind. It's given me so much food for thought since the conference. Of course, I agree we could have done with more time with the groups.



Legacy in the Cathedral for the Christian Pilgrims response: “Wow- touch my heart – what wonderful children”

Pupils said : “*honoured to be here today*” and another left a message which ended “*best day ever*”



Standards and monitoring of RE

There is no performance table data available for 2020 and there will be no data available for 2021. The latest available data is for 2019. We will publish the data from 2022 in next years report.

General Comments

It is our intention in 2022-2023 to continue to :

- Promote the achievement of the RE quality mark in our schools.
- Audit our school websites and share good practice regarding RE in schools.
- Commit to invite ITT representation to SACRE to engage in both partnership and dialogue. This will be pertinent as the agreed syllabus is redesigned and launched and will be a vehicle for delivery. Engagement will be with Teaching School Hubs, TEAMS School Direct and STAR RE PGCE together with our Universities, Edge Hill, and Cumbria.

5. Collective Worship

The current collective worship policy and materials were launched in 2009. Following previous adoption of new worship materials SACRE propose the following roll out:

1. Guiding Light materials
Invitations sent out September 2022
Formal launch October/November 2023
Phased implementation with support and training 2023
2. WOW for worship payment July 2023
Formal launch 2024

This year our SACRE have worked tirelessly to review and relaunch the clear procedure already established, to ensure an efficient response to any request for determination. The procedure and protocol for dealing with any requests for determination is now in place. All maintained schools currently who have a determination or may need to renew have been identified. The RSC and ESFA have also been contacted to ascertain the status of worship included in the agreements of academies and free schools.

In Autumn Term 2022 the Consultant will be working with the Chair of SACRE to model the process of review with the identified maintained schools who wish to apply for a determination.

SACRE have not received any withdrawals by phase or complaints.

6. Links with other bodies

SACRE is a member of NATRE, NASACRE and members actively attend conferences. We are currently planning our CPD engagement for 22-23.

The Chair of SACRE was until recently the lead for School Effectiveness and SEND in Blackburn with Darwen and was previously teaching school lead and a system leader. As School Effectiveness lead and current Chair of the School Improvement Board, she has regular communication opportunities with teaching School hubs, Diocesan representatives, headteachers, CEO's, Professional Association representatives. In all these meetings she can and does promote SACRE.

In 2022 the Chair has been given opportunities to communicate with the headteachers to generate interest around SACRE through face to face meetings, termly presentations and bulletin inserts. There is a real "buzz and chat" around the potential for new developments.

Governors too are being kept informed via bulletin updates and Director's Reports.

7. Blackburn with Darwen, SACRE's local arrangements

At the beginning of the academic year 2020 the deputy director of children's services, Jo Siddle, made a firm commitment to re-establish a high quality SACRE, to ensure that the Local Authority was properly able to meet its statutory duties. To demonstrate this commitment, they have appointed a Clerk, Sharifa Valli to SACRE. They are funding the independent consultant Dot Thomson and provide support for the website design and upkeep from IT services. Legal Support is also provided each meeting by either Paula Johnson, Solicitor, or Gillian Emmott, Solicitor, from Democratic Services. They have also allocated £15,000 as budget for 21-22 and again for 22-23.

Induction support will be provided each September to all new members who have joined and will be a refresher for existing members.