

**ANNUAL REPORT OF THE OXFORDSHIRE
STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE)**

September 2021 – Aug 2022

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Section 1. Introduction

1.1 Welcome from the Chair

The academic year 2021 - 2022 was not straightforward by any means, but I am pleased to be able to present this Oxfordshire SACRE Report for that demanding period.

Since then, the composition of SACRE has altered but we acknowledge the thoughtful work of the then Chair, Councillor Charles Mathew. He served on SACRE as a local authority representative for many years, working doggedly and tirelessly to support it. His warm welcome for members at meetings and his expertise in liaising directly with the local authority were invaluable, and he is much missed. I want to thank all the members of SACRE over this period and afterward; individuals, despite their own challenges, remained committed to SACRE's work, as we became habituated to an online world in 20-21 and then readjusted to normality.

The work of teachers also needs reaffirming from these difficult times, in providing online and face-to-face teaching under challenging and changing circumstances. Our work as SACRE is only manifested in their professionalism and expertise, which was tested hard. We also want to applaud the many pupils who were also challenged to work in complex ways - whether in schools or online. We hope that their learning will never be disrupted on this manner again.

Finally, it is also with considerable sadness that I must report on the death of two SACRE members: Carol Worthington in April 2022, a Church of England Representative, and Margaret Godden, our Humanist representative, in January 2023. They were both passionately committed to addressing the challenges of and for religious education, and we feel their absence.

Dr Nigel Fancourt
Chair, Oxfordshire SACRE

1.2 SACRE Statutory Duties

The Education Reform Act 1988 required Local Education Authorities to convene a SACRE consisting of members appointed by the Authority to represent:

Group A Christian denominations and other religions and religious denominations

Group B The Church of England

Group C Teachers' Associations

Group D The Local Authority

Membership is for a period of three years and full members of the SACRE may co-opt non-voting members to the Council. **Membership and attendance for the period 2021-22 can be found in Appendix 1.** SACRE meetings are open to the public and Oxfordshire SACRE meets three times a year in County Hall. In the academic year 2020-21 all meetings were held on-line. As we have been reviewing our agreed syllabus, we also held three Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC) meetings on the same dates.

The SACRE can advise the Authority upon matters connected with RE and collective worship in county schools; matters such as teaching methods, materials and teacher training are mentioned in the Act. The advice offered by the SACRE carries no statutory force. In Hertfordshire, SACRE also works closely with many Academies and Free Schools to try to ensure that all children and young people in the County receive high quality RE and schools provide appropriate acts of collective worship.

SACRE has two responsibilities; it can require the LA to review its current Agreed Syllabus and it may determine, on application by a head teacher, that the requirement for collective worship in county schools to be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character, shall not apply to the collective worship provided for some or all the pupils in a school. Each SACRE must publish an annual report on its work. SACRE is an advisory committee, supported by but independent of the LA, and its main function is to advise the LA on matters to do with these areas of responsibility.

1.3 Purpose of the Report

The Education Act 1996, Section 391 (6) and (7) requires that each year the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) of each local education authority will 'publish a report as to the exercise of its functions and any action taken by representative groups on the Council during the last preceding year.'

In particular, the report shall:

- specify any matters in respect of which the Council has given advice to the Authority;
- broadly describe the nature of the advice given; and
- where any matter was not referred to the Council by the Authority, give the Council's reason for offering advice on the matter.

This report deals with these matters in summary, for the academic year September 2021 to August 2022. The full Oxfordshire SACRE met three times during the year and considered a diverse range of topics, The Agreed Syllabus Conference also met three times on the same dates.

1.4 Meetings 2021-22 (all meetings took place on-line)

24th Nov 2021

SACRE:

- Election of Chair (Nigel Fancourt) and Vice-Chair (Cllr Bob Johnston)
- Review of our Constitution, with proposal to review teacher representation that reflects developments in the designations of schools, academies and free schools; and with the recommendation to include Humanist representation in Group A. This was discussed and agreed and will be submitted to the LA for ratification.
- Discussion to address issues around attendance at meetings and appropriate representation (linked to the Constitution)
- We agreed to use NASACRE materials to help strengthen SACRE

ASC:

- This meeting was not quorate
- The suggestion was made to adapt work from the Bucks Agreed Syllabus as the two are closely linked. This will be agreed via any responses to the minutes. The adviser was instructed to take this suggestion to the writing panel of teachers.

3rd March 2022

SACRE:

(The meeting was not quorate and it was noted that any decisions will require ratification in due course.)

- The SACRE budget was discussed alongside the LA/SACRE response to the NASACRE Fol request, which had been submitted in 2021.
- The impact of Covid on schools (with consequent impact on being able to attend SACRE) was discussed and how this also impacted on our work.
- The Annual Report was discussed, questions raised and amendments suggested. On the basis of the amendments being made, SACRE agreed the report for submission.
- Monitoring of school websites was discussed and allocations set.
- It was agreed that we would seek to ally our strategic plan to the LA where possible and also to the School Improvement strategic priorities.

ASC:

(The meeting was not quorate and it was noted that any decisions will require ratification in due course.)

- The ASC had a report stating that the writing panel agreed to adapt the Bucks Agreed Syllabus and an update on progress was given. It was agreed to pass this over to the writing panel for completion. It was noted, however, that the teachers were finding it increasingly challenging to attend these meetings due to the pressures of their school commitments in the light of Covid.

7th June 2022

SACRE:

- SACRE completed the NASACRE RETool to enable us to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of our work and structures. Overall it was recognised that there are significant weaknesses, especially in relation to:

- Representation and attendance
- Communication with schools
- Partner agencies' awareness and understanding of the role of SACRE
- Supporting and monitoring collective worship in schools
- (Many of these issues had been caused or exacerbated by Covid-19)
- Discussion on how to take forward the strategic plan in the light of the SACRE SEF and corporate plans. To be finalised in 2022-23.
- SACRE also discussed the potential implications of the 2022 Schools White Paper and the recently published RE Report Card and how that might be used.

ASC

(The meeting was not quorate and it was noted that any decisions will require ratification in due course.)

- The ASC discussed the final production and agreement of the syllabus, which would be finalised and recommended to the LA in the Autumn meeting 2022 and be ready for implementation in September 2023.

1.5 SACRE Budget

The SACRE budget continues to be £6,000 as it has been since 2010. This mainly provides adviser support. SACRE will liaise with the LA to link funding to the strategic plan. In the light of the

The government's guidance is clear:

An LA should fund and support a SACRE and an ASC satisfactorily in line with the duty to constitute or convene each of these bodies and to enable them effectively to carry out their functions.

(Religious Education in English schools: Non-statutory guidance 2010, page 11)

The following can be reasonably expected to be funded from the CSSB:

- a clerk
- a professional officer who has expertise in RE curriculum design;
- a publicly accessible place to meet;
- the reasonable expenses of members;
- publishing the agreed syllabus and other SACRE materials (including agendas and minutes), most usually on the LA website.
- NASACRE subscription and AGM attendance

*The national recommendation is that an LA should allocate **at least 2%** of the CSSB to SACRE in order that SACRE can carry out its statutory duties.*

Discussions with the LA are on-going.

1.6 Some key priorities for the next two years are:

1. Establish membership that is active and fit-for-purpose

2. Establish a secured SACRE budget, linked to LA and School Improvement priorities, from which to plan and monitor effectiveness
3. To work and build partnerships with:
 - a. our schools
 - b. our faith communities
 - c. our Local Authority
4. Membership:
 - a. Representation
 - b. Training
 - c. Engagement and involvement
5. Publish the new Agreed Syllabus and support schools in its implementation
6. Monitor the provision and quality of RE and collective worship through:
 - a. School questionnaires
 - b. Website scrutiny
 - c. Examination data
 - d. Workforce data
 - e. External reports (Ofsted, SIAMS –public documents and therefore named for SACRE reference)
7. Communication with schools
 - a. Website(s) that suit OUR purpose
 - b. Newsletter
 - c. Training
8. Links with key partners
 - a. Secondary Headteachers
 - b. Primary Headteachers
 - c. Special Education
 - d. Governors
 - e. Teaching School Hubs
- 9. To be proud champions for quality religious education and collective worship, to be and feel valued, and to value our own work and the work of school leaders, teachers and pupils.**

2 RE in Oxfordshire Schools

2.1 Standards and Quality of provision of RE

This is the first year since the Pandemic that examination data have been made publicly available. SACRE appreciates all the work since 2020 that pupils and staff have put into ensuring the continuation of examination RS during extremely challenging times. We can now make some comparisons between 2019, the year before the pandemic, and this year's achievements; clearly, however, we cannot ignore the continuing impact of Covid-19 on individuals, cohorts and schools themselves. Direct comparisons would not be appropriate, but we now have some indication of the direction of travel in terms of examination RS in Oxfordshire's publicly-funded schools.

GCSE

It is encouraging to see that many schools (25%) entered over 50% of the KS4 cohort and 7 of these entered over 90%, only 2 of which are schools with a religious character. This shows what can be done to help students make the most of their statutory entitlement to RE.

However, only 33% of all Y11 students across the county were entered for GCSE RS. This is a 13% drop from 2019.

25% of schools (10 schools) did not enter any students for a recognised public examination in RS, and of these, 9 did not enter any students in 2019. Whilst it is not statutory to enter students for examination RS, it is the responsibility of all publicly funded schools to provide RE to all pupils.

Clearly, it is too soon to draw any conclusions or identify any trend, but given the statutory nature of RE for all registered pupils in state-funded schools, SACRE and the LA will need to monitor future developments.

Of those schools that entered students, the standards achieved saw a marked improvement and were significantly above the national results. Taken as a percentage of all eligible students, however, the data show Oxfordshire schools underperforming in relation to the national picture. SACRE encourages all secondary schools to enable students to achieve a recognised qualification in RS, equivalent to a GCSE, so that they can gain from their statutory entitlement to RE.

A Level

Examination entries have fallen slightly since 2019 and whereas then 23 schools entered candidates for A Level, only 18 did so in 2022.

Students entered achieved broadly in line national attainment, and the students and teachers should be applauded for improving on the standards of 2019.

Examination results 2018-22

GCSE 2022	% entry			%9-7			%9-5			%9-1		
	2018	2019	2022	2018	2019	2022	2018	2019	2022	2018	2019	2022
Oxfordshire	39%	46%	33	21	23	23 (33% of those actually entered)	53.3	55	47 (71% of those actually entered)	98.3	99	68 (98% of those actually entered)
National	-	-		30	31	32	60	61	60	98	98	90

A Level 2022	% entries			% A*-A			% A*-C			% A*-E		
	2018	2019	2022	2018	2019	2022	2018	2019	2022	2018	2019	2022
Oxfordshire	5.0	7.0	5.0	17	21	33	71	70	88	98	97	99
National				23	22	36	70	76	88	98	98	99

Plans to develop the monitoring of RE further were delayed by both Covid and the development of the new Agreed Syllabus. With exam data to hand SACRE, with the support of the LA, will be better able to triangulate information across schools, especially in the secondary phase.

2.2 The effectiveness of the agreed syllabus

Much of this year was spent developing the new agreed syllabus. This was hampered by Covid and the availability of teachers on the writing panel.

3. Collective Worship

3.1 Determinations

SACRE has not received any requests for determinations with regard to Collective Worship.

3.2 Complaints

There have been no formal complaints under the statutory complaints relating to Collective Worship or RE.

4 Links with other bodies

SACRE is subscribed to The National Association of SACREs (NASACRE) and to its training programme. Members attended the Annual Conference.

5 Other work of SACRE

No training or support has been provided this year. Planning for the launch of and training for the new Agreed Syllabus is in place.

Annex 1 SACRE Attendance 2021 - 22

Member's name/ group represented	24 November 2021	3 March 2022	7 June 2022
Committee A (World faiths/Christian denominations)			
Rose Westwood (Methodist)	absent	absent	absent
Nicholas Wood (Baptist)	apology	absent	absent
Steve Beegoo (Oxfordshire Community Churches)	✓	apology	apology
Fraser Long (Roman Catholic)	✓	absent	absent
Sarah Montagu (Judaism)	apology	✓	absent
Sheikh Ramzy (Islam)	apology	✓	✓
Chandra Vadivale/Sathya Vadivale (Hinduism)	absent	absent	absent
Committee B (Church of England)			
Helen Norman	✓	apology	✓
Christine Price-Smith	apology	apology	apology
Carol Worthington	✓	absent	n/a
Committee C (Teachers)			
Giles Beck	✓	✓	apology
Nigel Fancourt (Chair)	✓	✓	✓
Rae Hancock	n/a	apology	✓
Christian McGuinness	apology	apology	apology
Committee D (Local authority)			
Bob Johnston (Vice Chair)	✓	✓	✓
Nigel Simpson	✓	apology	✓
Co-opted members			
Arzhia Habibi (Baha'is)	✓	✓	✓
Shahin Bekhradnia (Zoroastrianism)	apology	✓	absent
Margaret Godden (Humanists)	✓	✓	✓

Member's name/ group represented	24 November 2021	3 March 2022	7 June 2022
Officers in attendance			
Jane Ratcliffe (Local Authority)	apology	✓	✓
Bill Moore (SACRE Advisor)	✓	✓	✓
Helen Batten (Clerk)	✓	✓	✓

Appendix 2

KS4 GCSE 2022 Religious Studies results Oxfordshire Schools

Source - DfE Performance Tables Data

URN	School Name	School Type	Number of pupils at the end of KS4	GCSE Full Course			
				% KS4 pupils entered for Full GCSE RS	% Grades 7 to 9	% Grades 5 to 9	% Grades 1 to 9
140653	Aureus School	AC	75	11%	50%	75%	100%
142024	The Bicester School	AC	221	7%	13%	53%	100%
146103	Maiden Erlegh Chiltern Edge	AC	57	0%	NE	NE	NE
135365	North Oxfordshire Academy	AC	166	12%	40%	80%	100%
148354	The Oxford Academy	AC	185	0%	NE	NE	NE
136261	Oxford Spires Academy	AC	216	95%	29%	54%	95%
138499	Wykham Park	AC	122	0%	NE	NE	NE
137919	Bartholomew School	ACC	201	11%	27%	82%	100%
141146	Blessed George Napier Catholic School and Sixth Form	ACC	138	97%	36%	70%	100%
138289	Burford School	ACC	266	0%	NE	NE	NE
139146	Cheney School	ACC	266	95%	?	61%	100%
13790	The Cherwell School	ACC	280	15%	63%	88%	98%
137936	Chipping Norton School	ACC	136	28%	50%	82%	97%
141069	The Cooper School	ACC	217	0%	NE	NE	NE
138490	Didcot Girls' School	ACC	260	12%	41%	88%	100%
137993	Faringdon Community College	ACC	203	49%	?	76%	100%
146392	Fitzharrys School	ACC	89	0%	NE	NE	NE
137921	Gillotts School	ACC	168	98%	32%	70%	98%
138897	Gosford Hill School	ACC	145	48%	25%	68%	100%
146800	Greyfriars Catholic School	ACC	117	98%	16%	49%	91%
138210	The Henry Box School	ACC	153	12%	44%	89%	100%
143984	Icknield Community College	ACC	159	15%	50%	92%	100%
140580	John Mason School	ACC	178	0%	NE	NE	NE
137140	King Alfred's	ACC	251	95%	?	61%	98%
137976	Langtree School	ACC	118	88%	31%	74%	99%
143890	Larkmead School	ACC	131	0%	NE	NE	NE
138667	Lord Williams's School	ACC	346	6%	45%	65%	100%
138817	The Marlborough Church of England School	ACC	182	64%	46%	79%	99%
142104	Matthew Arnold School	ACC	209	96%	23%	63%	100%
13872	St Birinus School	ACC	134	14%	53%	84%	95%
137357	Wallingford School	ACC	206	6%	38%	69%	85%
142218	The Warriner School	ACC	251	12%	45%	65%	97%
140875	Wheatley Park School	ACC	178	8%	60%	93%	100%
144008	Wood Green School	ACC	170	30%	37%	69%	100%
123236	Carterton Community College	CY	83	98%	?	51%	91%
138269	Europa School UK	F	48	0%	NE	NE	NE
148353	Heyford Park School	F	52	88%	24%	48%	100%
140886	Futures Institute Banbury	SS	51	0%	NE	NE	NE

141111	UTC Oxfordshire	UTC	101	1%	suppressed	suppressed	suppressed
146683	Bardwell School	ACCS	9	0%	NE	NE	NE
139322	Fitzwaryn School	ACCS	12	0%	NE	NE	NE
139312	The Iffley Academy	ACCS	26	0%	NE	NE	NE
147821	Mabel Prichard School	ACCS	4	0%	NE	NE	NE
147127	Springfield School	ACCS	7	0%	NE	NE	NE
140217	Endeavour Academy, Oxford	ACS	6	0%	NE	NE	NE
139079	Kingfisher School	ACS	6	0%	NE	NE	NE
147728	Orion Academy	ACS	11	0%	NE	NE	NE
123345	Bishopswood School	CYS	4	0%	NE	NE	NE
123332	Frank Wise School	CYS	11	0%	NE	NE	NE
123333	John Watson School	CYS	7	0%	NE	NE	NE
123329	Woodeaton Manor School	FDS	16	0%	NE	NE	NE
123331	Swalcliffe Park School CIO	NMSS	10	0%	NE	NE	NE

KS5 A Level 2022 Religious Studies Results - Oxfordshire

Source - DfE Performance Tables Data

School Name	School Type	A LEVEL			
		% Entries	% A*-A	% A*-C	% A*-E
Wykham Park	AC	0%	NE	NE	NE
The Bicester School	AC	13%	0%	86%	100%
The Oxford Academy	AC	0%	NE	NE	NE
North Oxfordshire Academy	AC	15%	25%	88%	100%
Oxford Spires Academy	AC	11%	10%	100%	100%
The Warriner School	ACC	14%	30%	90%	100%
Chipping Norton School	ACC	17%	21%	100%	100%
Greyfriars Catholic School	ACC	0%	NE	NE	NE
The Cooper School	ACC	7%	83%	100%	100%
Burford School	ACC	0%	NE	NE	NE
The Henry Box School	ACC	11%	30%	90%	100%
Wood Green School	ACC	9%	33%	67%	89%
Bartholomew School	ACC	4%	suppressed	suppressed	suppressed
Gosford Hill School	ACC	0%	NE	NE	NE
Wheatley Park School	ACC	0%	NE	NE	NE
The Cherwell School	ACC	9%	41%	93%	100%
Cheney School	ACC	0%	NE	NE	NE
Larkmead School	ACC	0%	NE	NE	NE
John Mason School	ACC	0%	NE	NE	NE
Fitzharrys School	ACC	0%	NE	NE	NE
Matthew Arnold School	ACC	0%	NE	NE	NE
St Birinus School	ACC	2%	suppressed	suppressed	suppressed
Didcot Girls' School	ACC	8%	50%	100%	100%
Wallingford School	ACC	0%	NE	NE	NE
Faringdon Community College	ACC	11%	89%	100%	100%
King Alfred's	ACC	0%	NE	NE	NE
The Marlborough Church of England School	ACC	8%	50%	67%	100%
Lord Williams's School	ACC	5%	25%	75%	92%
Blessed George Napier Catholic School and Sixth Form	ACC	15%	0%	100%	100%
Carterton Community College	CY	0%	NE	NE	NE
Europa School UK	F	0%	NE	NE	NE
Activate Learning	General Further Education College	7%	6%	22%	78%
Abingdon and Witney College	General Further Education College	0%	NE	NE	NE
The Henley College	Sixth Form College	3%	0%	60%	100%
Futures Institute Banbury	SS	0%	NE	NE	NE
UTC Oxfordshire	UTC	0%	NE	NE	NE
Didcot Sixth Form College		0%	NE	NE	NE
16-19 Abingdon		0%	NE	NE	NE