



**Standing Advisory Council on Religious
Education
(SACRE)**

Annual Report 2020-21

Introduction by the Chair of SACRE

This will be my last annual report as Chair and I want to take the opportunity, as a secular member, to stand back and highlight the positive outcomes that can be achieved with a good RE syllabus delivered by well trained and properly supported RE teachers. These include:

- Analysis, critical thinking and logical thought processes.
- Understanding of and empathy for others.
- An appreciation that there are more important things in life than money.
- Valuing difference and diversity based on an understanding of how they contribute to better teamwork and results, and how they enrich the experience of life.

As we look around the world at the current myriad of military, political and environmental crises, many with active forces striving to win our support for actions that history tells us will simply make things worse, we can appreciate that these skills are not just an optional extra or a nice to have. Instead, they will be an absolute necessity as the human race struggles to survive through the next few decades.

Mark Edon

Chair of Leeds SACRE 2020-21 and Humanist representative

Introduction and status of this report

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.

An annual report is prepared by 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.

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.

For further information on the report or on RE and Collective Worship in Leeds, contact Helen Rivers at helen.rivers@leeds.gov.uk or Alastair Ross at alastair.ross@leeds.gov.uk. For information on SACRE please contact the clerk, Iram Mir at iram.mir@leeds.gov.uk.

Priorities for 2020-21

In the development plan for 2020-21, the priorities for SACRE are outlined below. Clearly, the impact of the coronavirus pandemic affected all work in education and SACRE was no exception. However, through continued communication and the use of technology training, advice and support all continued. For example, effective CPD was delivered electronically and the possibilities for on-line 'virtual' visits to faith communities were exploited.

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.

The report outlines how these priorities have been put in place this year.

Meetings

There were four meetings of Leeds SACRE during the year 2020-21, all held via Zoom. Meetings are open to the public and minutes are also available on-line. These meetings were held on 30th September 2020, 3rd December 2020, 16th March 2021 and 16th June 2021.

SACRE meetings for 2020-2021 have been provisionally arranged for these dates: 21st September 2021, 16th November 2021, 22nd March 2022 and 7th June 2022. 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:

- The Local Agreed syllabus;
- Application to Westhill Trust for grant for educational resources, including films of places of worship for use by schools;
- RE subject review prepared by Ofsted and written by RE lead, Richard Kueh, published in May;
- National Association of SACREs (NASACRE) – items of interest or action, including report from NASACRE on SACRE funding. This report was compiled following freedom of information requests to all local authorities in England;
- Discrimination and prejudice, including Black Lives Matter, islamophobia and antisemitism;
- Future joint meetings of chairs and vice chairs across West Yorkshire (WYSACRE);
- Faith and education project to encourage engagement between faith communities and schools;
- Relationships, Sex and Health Education and the production of support materials for schools.

Further detail on all these areas is included in this report.

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

A full list of members is appended to this report.

Funding of SACRE

In 2021 the National Association of SACREs (NASACRE) prepared a report on the funding of SACREs. The information was based on a Freedom of Information Request to all local authorities in England. The key findings were:

- The majority of SACREs in England do not get a sufficient share of the CSSB to enable them to carry out their duties well.
- Only 12 Local Authorities in 2019-2020 stated that they used 2% or more of CSSB funds on SACRE business, meaning 92% of SACREs were allocated less than 2% of the CSSB. 25 Authorities (18%) claim to use no funding on SACRE business in contravention of statutory responsibilities.
- Over a quarter (27%) of Authorities stated they allocate no funds to professional support for the SACRE.
- More than half of LAs (42, 53%) disclosed that they do not use any funds to support RE in schools. Due to lack of adequate support it is increasingly difficult for some SACREs to fulfil their statutory duties;
- 7 LAs said that their Agreed Syllabus was over 6 years old. One syllabus was last reviewed in 2010

Leeds City Council funded RE with £17164 during 2019-20. Most of this provided payment to consultants, together with the costs of clerking. Training is provided on a traded basis to schools. This contribution is paid from the General Fund, not the CSSB.

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 constructive partnerships with a range of stakeholders and communities, including: local schools and teachers; neighbouring SACREs in the region, other departments of the 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 is given by SACRE to the local authority:

1. To review the funding of SACRE to ensure it is in line with national recommendations and good practice;
2. To review the membership of SACRE to ensure it reflects the breadth and diversity of the city in terms of faiths and beliefs.
3. To ensure SACRE's annual report is considered carefully by the Scrutiny Panel of the Council and any of its content noted.

Complaints

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

West Yorkshire Collaboration

For a few years, regional SACREs have held an annual joint meeting but we have aspired to develop closer collaboration across West Yorkshire, maintaining the diversity across the local areas but also recognising our shared interests and experiences. The two projects of the Syllabus and Voices and Viewpoints underline this opportunity.

During the year Leeds SACRE agreed to join with the other four SACREs in West Yorkshire in establishing a joint meeting for chairs and vice chairs, along with advisers, each term. We have called this WYSACRE. This will probably normally be held on on-line, even once the pandemic subsides, though we may choose to meet face to face on occasions. For the first time it was good to include Wakefield in this partnership so it includes the whole region. Perhaps this is particularly significant in the year in which West Yorkshire has elected its first 'Metro Mayor'.

All the legal responsibilities of local SACREs remain but WYSACRE will enable the sharing and pooling of ideas in a regional group. The group first met in June 2021

In general, WYSACRE meetings will:

- Be a forum for regular communication between local SACREs, sharing common issues for RE and possible responses;
- Be able, as appropriate, to produce common materials such as guidance on specific areas;
- Explore possibilities of regional SACRE events or professional development for teachers;
- Provide a common voice for SACREs across West Yorkshire;
- Evaluate and support the RE syllabus and suggest future developments [for the four SACREs that share a common syllabus].

Religious Education

The Local Agreed Syllabus

During 2020 our neighbours in Bradford reviewed their local agreed syllabus and, after due consideration and consultation, decided to adopt the syllabus shared by Leeds, Calderdale and Kirklees, 'Believing and Belonging.' Leeds SACRE welcomed this development as an important collaboration across the region. As a result, some tweaks and adjustments were made to the syllabus and its resources to ensure it was inclusive to all four authorities now using the curriculum.

This was also used as an opportunity to refresh some supporting content to take account of national changes since 2019. There are revised sections, aimed at helping schools plan their curriculum intent and ensuring that a broad, balanced and robust RE curriculum is delivered.

The main changes include:

- A new section on designing an RE curriculum, including advice on Intent, Implementation and Impact;
- A revised section on Early Years and Foundation Stage to take account of the EYFS reforms framework 2020-21;
- Some updating of the guidance for RE and special educational needs;
- A new section summarising support for RE in West Yorkshire (p 81).

The 'refreshed' syllabus was agreed by Leeds SACRE but there are no changes to the statutory requirements, nor to the expected coverage of the curriculum. It is not a new syllabus. However, it has been a chance to remind schools about the syllabus and to offer support and information through networks and links with headteachers.

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.

Professional Support

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 continued through two consultants, Alastair Ross (SACRE and secondary schools) and Helen Rivers (primary schools, training and general RE enquiries), who are contracted through Pennine Learning, a small local company specialising in RE and community cohesion. 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 each term, virtually. In the summer term the SLDM welcomed Dr Richard Kueh, HMI and Ofsted lead for RE.

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;

A range of guidance continues to be available to Leeds schools on a wide range of related areas, including:

- 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.

Provision of Training

SACRE does not directly provide other training but recognises and encourages the comprehensive provision of training and support through Leeds Learning Improvement's traded offer. This has included a termly primary network meeting and a day course for new RE coordinators. A successful series of webinars on subject knowledge of world faiths took place during the summer and included guests from faith communities. These were held in cooperation with partner local authorities and it is planned to repeat and extend these in the year ahead. In addition, a full range of CPD and consultancy will be available through Leeds for Learning.

RE Reviews and City of Leeds RE Award

The review and award continue to be available on line and we expect and hope that face-to-face reviews will begin early in 2021-22.



Examinations

In January 2021, the prime minister announced that for the second year in a row, exams would not be taking place. Following a joint consultation between Ofsted and the DfE, the following process for generating teacher assessed grades (TAGs) was agreed:

- Students' performance would be judged on the content they have been taught, whether this was in the classroom or via remote learning.
- The grades submitted would be a fair, reasonable and carefully considered judgement across a broad range of evidence.
- Types of evidence which could be used included past papers, coursework, centre devised tasks relating to the specification and records of the standard of work produced over the course of study.
- More recent work would more likely to be representative of student performance.
- To ensure this was a robust principle it was also determined that:

- Heads of centre would need to confirm that students had been taught sufficient content to provide the basis of a grade.

Each centre would put in place an internal quality assurance process.

- Exam boards would check a sample of evidence used to award grades in some centres.
- Heads of centre would confirm that the exam board requirements had been met.
- Each grade for a subject would be signed off by 2 teachers in that subject, one of whom would be the subject lead.

The DfE made it clear that the outcomes from this process would not be used in performance tables or by Ofsted. As a result, the local authority made the decision that it would not collect school level data.

This means that there is no internal or external way of knowing the RE results in Leeds this year. Even if this information were available, comparisons with last year and previous year would not be valid as a different process was used to generate the grades.

Collective Worship

Through the consultant SACRE is always ready to advise or support schools on request though the scope of 'live' support has been limited during the past year.

A half day course has been held on-line to support schools in developing an effective and inspiring programme.

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 rest with the Schools Funding Agency.

Wider perspectives: collaboration and understanding

Welcoming Schools

Visits to local places of worship and links with faith communities 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 schools and faith communities have adapted to make use of conferencing technology in order to carry out 'virtual visits'. It is anticipated that 'virtual' sessions, including tours, will continue to be offered and promoted. A directory of faith visits and visitors is circulated to all schools – this includes the offer of online 'visits'. Partnership work across West Yorkshire, combined with conferencing technology, has enabled contact with a wider range of faith communities including an increased number of Jewish communities and Islamic organisations offering visits.



Free training is offered to faith communities in order to inform them of the requirements of the Leeds RE Syllabus, and to support them in hosting visits from schools. The training sessions moved online last year. Training will continue to be offered online in the coming year to enable participants from across the region to attend.

Primary schools from Leeds and Kirklees participated in an online interfaith conference. A morning of learning and activities focused on the importance and deeper meanings behind well-known Spring festivals such as Pesach, Holi, Easter, Ramadan and Vaisakhi. This was followed by afternoon sessions on Zoom to give pupils the chance to meet and question faith representatives from Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Sikh and Jewish communities.

An audit tool and consultancy support has been made available for promoting tolerance and understanding of different faiths in schools. This has been promoted via Leeds for Learning and in RE networks.

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.

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 organisations.

Westhill Project

Leeds SACRE has been awarded a Westhill grant to support Religious Education in the local area. Alongside some additional funding from Kirklees and Calderdale SACREs, this grant will fund the production of two professionally produced films to introduce young people to local faith communities. The first film will focus on a synagogue in Leeds; this will widen access to the Jewish community across the city and to other areas of West Yorkshire with no local synagogue. A similar, second film will be created in conjunction with the local Sikh community to introduce the gurdwara. The films will be offered to schools, alongside supporting materials and the option of a live session online or in person with representatives of the faith community.

Relationships, Sex and Health Education

Since September 2020 schools have been required to follow statutory guidance on teaching Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) in English schools. These are deeply personal areas of human life, where facts, feelings, values and experiences all intertwine. Accuracy, sensitivity and safety are all key ingredients in helping children and young people understand how to live healthy and fulfilled lives with integrity and respect. This has always been a sensitive area and perhaps nowhere more so than at the interface between beliefs, sex and relationships. Standing Advisory Councils on RE (SACREs) are responsible for what

their title says, Religious Education. We do not have a remit for RSHE and point schools and parents to the national and local guidance provided. However, recognising the links between RSHE and beliefs, Leeds SACRE, in partnership with Calderdale, Kirklees and Bradford, felt it would be helpful to offer some signposts and support to schools, teachers, parents and governors. In September, they formed a small working group of SACRE members and local authority advisers to prepare an anthology of authentic and diverse faith perspectives on the areas covered in RSHE, along with some basic background information. Over the year the group presided over the compilation of these materials and involved over 40 members of faith communities, including SACRE members.

The aims were:

- To offer a range of viewpoints from people of faith about the specific areas covered in the RSHE curriculum. (Not all of these are covered at every key stage);
- To support teachers with background information, so building knowledge, sensitivity and confidence;
- To reassure parents that faith perspectives are recognised;
- To signpost appropriate sources of guidance.

The document, 'Voices and Viewpoints', was published in July 2021 after the agreement of all four SACREs and is being sent to all schools, along with the offer of coordinated training and briefing through local networks.

There are diverse approaches within and between faith communities and they cannot usually be typecast within a convenient religious or denominational label. 'Voices and Viewpoints' therefore represents a range of personal perspectives rather than a summary of 'official' teaching.

Appendix: Membership of SACRE 2020-21

This the membership list for SACRE during 2020-21

Committee A - Faith Representatives	
Vacancy	Bah'ai Community
K Papagiannopoulos	Orthodox Church
Saroj Chauhan	Hindu Community
Gail Taylor	Jewish Community
Ruth Barlow	Methodist Church
Shazia Mahmood	Muslim Community
Mahbuh Nazir	Muslim Community
Harvinder Sagoo	Sikh Community
Nessa Nedd	Roman Catholic Church
Russell Trudgeon	Pentecostal Church
Mr Mark Edon (Chair)	Humanist Society of West Yorkshire
Pauline Leonard	Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)
Sarah Leach	Buddhist Community
Kerry Prest (does not attend meetings)	Buddhist Community
Committee B: Anglican Church	
Janet Buttanshaw	Anglican Diocese of Leeds
Denise Brogden	Anglican Diocese of Leeds
Ann Nicholl	Anglican Diocese of Leeds
Committee C: Teacher Associations/Other	
Leanne Ward	
Lisa Walsh	NEU

Committee D: Local Authority	
Cllr Ryk Downes	Liberal Democrat
Cllr Barry Anderson	Conservative
Cllr Mohammad Iqbal	Labour
Cllr A Scopes	Labour



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