

Annual SACRE Report

2020-2021

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1. Introduction and Overview

This year saw the continued effects of the Covid-19 pandemic impact schools and our wider community. As a SACRE we are all grateful for the hard work done by teachers, parents, teaching assistants and other members of the school body who have ensured students receive quality first teaching during these difficult times. We continued to work with other SACREs across Berkshire in launching the Real People, Real Faith videos in April. We have warmly welcomed new member to the SACRE and continue to look to fill all the vacancies. I am grateful to our Professional Consultant David Rees whose contribution during meeting are extremely valuable and his work outside meeting exemplary. I am thankful to our clerk Nadia Williams who continues to provide brilliant support during and outside of meeting in support of our SACRE

2. Statutory Responsibilities in RE

Our Locally Agreed Syllabus (LAS) is called the Pan-Berkshire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education, which we produce in conjunction with the other five SACREs in Berkshire once every five years. In Slough the LAS is well established in most of our schools, and most academies have also adopted it although SACRE recognises that it needs to find out more about how much it is adhered to.

We are due to produce a new LAS in 2023. However, because of Covid-19 we are regularly in conversation with our partner SACREs with a view to delaying the launch until 2024. This gives time for the Pan-Berkshire Hub (consisting of the SACRE Chairs and Professional Consultants) to do the work of preparation thoroughly, and we have already started this process.

In 2021-22 we continued to monitor and support the teaching of RE regularly, under the constraints imposed by Covid-19 conditions and in the aftermath of this many meetings were still held virtually. With the rise in fuel prices and environmental concerns also being factored in it is possible that virtual meetings will remain the preferred option for the time being. Professional advisor David Rees led half termly virtual primary network meetings for RE leads (although secondary colleagues were made welcome too) and produced a termly Newsletter which was sent to all schools. These newsletters signpost a combination of local and national events, cpd opportunities, new resources (particularly free ones) and feedback from events (for example NASACRE AGM and Strictly RE).

We did not receive any information about withdrawals from RE this year.

SACRE is not aware of any REQM awards this year but did have an excellent presentation from a secondary school who are planning on applying for the gold award in the next year. SACRE RE adviser, David Rees, will be in regular contact with the school concerned and the process will be keenly monitored by SACRE. SACRE is keen to promote the REQM. The professional adviser is an assessor and often includes information about the REQM to teachers at network meetings. Hopefully when the REQM website is refreshed the map will help us identify local schools who have been through the award process.

3. Statutory Responsibilities in Collective Worship

Schools were recovering from working remotely for much of the previous year consequently we were not able to monitor their ability to provide Collective Worship apart from some anecdotal evidence. SACRE is aware of the need to monitor collective worship and has been actively trying to engage with local religion and worldview communities to provide appropriate speakers to help schools hear the lived experience and lead reflections. Slough SACRE is in communication with other SACREs who have produced materials and advice to help schools with collective worship including suggested themes, a code of conduct for visitors and tie-ins with the curriculum. Slough SACRE hopes that with 'a return to normality' this work can be stepped up.

It has not been necessary to renew any determinations during this year. (A determination is permission for a school to provide daily collective worship which is not 'wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character'.) We have not considered our Determination Process in recent years.

4. Links with Other Bodies

As mentioned above Slough SACRE works closely with our partner SACREs in the Pan-Berkshire Hub. David Rees and SACRE members Sue Elbrow and Christine Isles regularly attend meetings of the Hub and feedback to SACRE. We include membership of NASACRE in our budget each year. The professional advisor helps Slough SACRE stay in touch with providers and events like RE Online and the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust. Links to other organisations are actively being sought and SACRE members are encouraged to investigate local and national contacts. We have recently made diversity and equality an agenda item and will be inviting speakers in from the LA and external service providers to speak to SACRE. This will be extended and further outreach will be made.

5. Local Involvement

In previous years we have circulated advice about Ramadan to schools. Recently some SACRE religion and worldview representatives have begun to engage with teachers through RE network meetings. This will hopefully be continued. As Slough has a good range of diversity there are many opportunities which could be developed as well as nurturing other links through the other 5 SACREs in the Pan Berkshire hub. Covid 19 put the 'crossing the bridges' project on hold but the intention is to reignite interest. The Crossing the bridges project was designed to help provide contact details for places of worship in the Pan Berkshire Hub area giving advice on visits and teaching materials to accompany visits to places of worship. These materials are still in use but do need regular checking to ensure contact details are still current.

6. SACRE Arrangements

David Rees continued to serve as our Professional Adviser, and we benefit hugely from Nadia Williams at Slough Council who served as SACRE Clerk and Jo Curd, senior school effectiveness officer. Both of them work hard to keep lines of communication open and provide essential support to the adviser and SACRE as a whole.

All four membership groups are regularly represented at meetings, however unfortunately one meeting was inquorate this year. We made efforts to recruit a wider range of faith representatives, this will continue on the next year

No formal training for SACRE members was accessed this year although adverts and updates from NASACRE were circulated. It is hoped that some training may be undertaken in the next year.

In the financial year beginning April 2022 SACRE was granted £5,000 SACRE is grateful for the support of Slough borough Council particularly in these days of stretched resources and budgets.

Public Examination Results

Examination results continued to be in an unsettled situation due to the aftermath of the - pandemic- hopefully next year there will be a return to the previous recording and reporting.

CPD Provided to School

Primary RE leader network meetings were organised every half term and led by the SACRE adviser – these were relatively well attended considering the difficult circumstances. Materials were always circulated afterwards and the focus always has a key focus on teaching and learning, resources, new developments, support and the opportunity to share wows and worries. A Pan Berkshire RE teachers' conference was planned but sadly postponed – moves are in place to arrange another one this year whether face to face or virtual.

7. Appendices

- 1) Slough SACRE Action Plan: 2021-22 – Updated February 2022 - draft
- 2) Membership of Slough Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education 2020-2021