

Public Document Pack

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17 February 2023

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education

A meeting of the Council will be held at **10.30 am** on **Monday, 27 February 2023** at **Committee Room 3, County Hall, Chichester, PO19 1RQ**.

Note: In response to the continuing public health measures, there will be limited public access to the meeting. Admission is by ticket only, bookable in advance via: democratic.services@westsussex.gov.uk

Tony Kershaw
Director of Law and Assurance

Agenda

1. **Chairman's Welcome and Introductions**

2. **Membership Updates**

Members are asked to note that three vacancies have been created, since the previous meeting, after the following members' resignation from SACRE:

- Committee A - Revd David Sheldon (Baptist)
- Committee A – Andrew Edmondson (Humanists UK)
- Committee B – Revd Sheila Higgins (Church of England)

3. **Members' Interests**

Members and officers must declare any pecuniary or personal interest in any business on the agenda. They should also make declarations at any stage such an interest becomes apparent during the meeting. Consideration should be given to leaving the meeting if the nature of the interest warrants it. If in doubt, contact Democratic Services before the meeting.

4. **Minutes of the Previous Meeting** (Pages 3 - 8)

Members to agree the minutes of the meeting held on 21 November 2022 as a correct record.

5. **Update from Assistant Director of Education and Skills** (Verbal Report)

Paul Wagstaff, Assistant Director of Education and Skills, to give a verbal update to SACRE.

6. **Draft Questionnaires on the delivery of Collective Worship in Primary and Secondary Schools** (Pages 9 - 20)

Members are asked to comment on and approve two draft questionnaires for West Sussex primary and secondary schools to feed back on their delivery of Collective Worship.

7. **West Sussex SACRE Draft Annual Report 2022/2023** (Pages 21 - 26)

Members of SACRE are asked to approve the draft annual report for 2022/2023, as presented by Mrs Karen Hammond, External Consultant.

8. **The Role of SACRE** (Pages 27 - 42)

Members will receive a presentation from Mrs Hammond on the individual and collective role and responsibilities of SACRE.

9. **Any Other Business**

10. **Dates of Future Meetings**

The date of the next meeting is 29 June 2023.

Future meeting dates are:

- 20 November 2023
- February 2024 – date to be confirmed.

To all members of the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education

21 November 2022 – At a hybrid meeting of the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education held at 10.30 am at County Hall, Chichester PO19 1RQ and via Microsoft Teams.

Virtual participants are indicated with an asterisk below.

Committee A

Mrs Bell – Jewish
Mr Edmondson – Humanist Society
*Mrs Flood – Roman Catholic
Mrs Ghundale - Sikh
Mrs Hock - Quaker
Mrs Jones – Baha'i
Rev Pitkeathly – Free Churches
Mr Soni - Hindu
Major Warner – Salvation Army

Committee B

Rev Higgins – Church of England
Mr Simpson – Church of England

Committee C

*Ms Barker – Teacher Representative
Mr Cornford – NASUWT, The Teachers' Union
Ms Elphick – Teacher Representative (Special)
Rev Millwood – Teacher Representative (Secondary)

Committee D

Cllr Ali – Local Education Authority
Cllr Burgess - Local Education Authority
Cllr Burrett (Chairman) - Local Education Authority
Cllr N Jupp - Local Education Authority
Cllr Lord - Local Education Authority
Cllr Nagel - Local Education Authority
Cllr Pendleton - Local Education Authority

Apologies for Absence:

Mr Sheldon (Baptist Union), Mr Syed (Muslim), Rev Higgin-Botham (United Reformed Church), Mrs Black (Church of England), Mrs Smith – Vice Chairman (Church of England).

Absent:

Rev Carn (Methodist)

Part I

14. Chairman's Welcome and Introductions

- 14.1 The Chairman welcomed all members of SACRE to the hybrid meeting being held in the Council Chamber and online.
- 14.2 The Chairman informed the Council that Item 12 would be deferred to a future meeting at Dr Hemming's request.

15. Membership Updates

- 15.1 Members of the Council noted that Cllr Quinn and Mr Bird have stood down from Committee D and Committee C respectively.

16. Members' Interests

- 16.1 Cllr Lord declared an interest in relation to Item 8 due to her children being pupils at Downlands Community School in Hassocks.

17. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

- 17.1 In respect of the action under 4.3, Mrs Hammond reported that a meeting with Ms Tulloch has yet to be arranged.
- 17.2 In respect of the action under 4.4, Mrs Hammond confirmed that she would be engaging the West Sussex Youth Cabinet once the self-evaluation form and development plan had been completed.
- 17.3 Resolved – that the minutes of the meeting held on 20 June 2022 be approved as a correct record and that they be signed by the Chairman.

18. Inclusive Assemblies and Collective Worship

- 18.1 Mr Wagstaff informed the Council that the Item 11 report should not be discussed as planned, but noted instead, following advice from the County Council's Director of Law and Assurance. It was explained that SACRE does not have a remit to make local arrangements and deviate from national guidance (Religious Education and Collective Worship, Circular 1/94) in relation to collective worship. The role of SACRE is to provide advice and guidance to schools on collective worship and to consider any requests from schools who wish to opt out. The matter was therefore determined to fall outside the terms of reference of SACRE and therefore the report would not be opened to discussion.
- 18.2 Mr Wagstaff also advised members that the report's supporting documents were intended to be proposed guidance, supplied by the

report author, and should not have included West Sussex County Council branding due to not being agreed policy. He added that County Council branding will be removed from the report and asked Mr Edmondson to remove all documents from published websites which reference WSCC.

- 18.3 Mr Wagstaff welcomed a member's proposal that SACRE should provide schools with the option to feed back on the delivery of collective worship and clearly communicate the flexibilities around this. Mr Wagstaff suggested that the Council could include this as part of the annual survey to schools. Schools would be approached as part of the development plan and syllabus review and therefore collective worship could form part of this.

Action: Mrs Hammond to lead on drafting the survey.

- 18.4 Members commented that there is room for improvement to support and resource the provision of collective worship in schools. It was also mentioned that collective worship had not been raised as an issue by union representatives.

- 18.5 Mr Edmondson felt that collective worship is within SACRE's remit given its inclusion within the draft development plan and therefore his report should have been opened to member discussion.

- 18.6 Resolved – the Council noted the report.

19. Agreed Syllabus Update

- 19.1 Mrs Hammond reported a low response rate from the survey issued regarding a review of school websites (10 respondents). The findings included the following:

- Statements of intent included on some sites but not consistent across the board.
- Unsure who is responsible for updating primary schools' sites
- Lack of information about faith schools.
- Faith reports are published on Church of England and Roman Catholic schools' websites.
- Unclear about the delivery of curriculum entitlement.
- Light on information about collective worship.

- 19.2 Mrs Hammond invited members to provide feedback on school websites as part of the discussions on the draft West Sussex SACRE development plan during the working lunch.

- 19.3 Mrs Hammond reported that 12 teachers attended a Judaism training session at the synagogue in Brighton, facilitated by Mrs Bell, and it received positive feedback. Members welcomed this introduction of training sessions for teachers in specific faiths as it enabled them to gain knowledge that they can pass on to young people. More teachers should be encouraged to attend training sessions in all faith areas.

- 19.4 Members' comments included an opinion that school children should be encouraged to receive a world view of all aspects of religious

education in addition to teachers. Mrs Hammond confirmed that the draft development plan addresses this matter and can therefore develop proposals to put to the local authority on this.

- 19.5 It was suggested that a statement of intent is drafted by SACRE for publication on schools' websites, recognising the pressures on schools and that SACRE is able to assist with this.

Action: Mr Wagstaff to take the lead on this with his Education and Skills Team.

- 19.6 Members' comments concluded that it was important to understand where knowledge gaps were so that details and training could be targeted to those areas. Teachers' needs and subject knowledge need to be supported to enable children to have the knowledge to make informed choices.

20. Results in Public Examinations

- 20.1 The Council considered unvalidated data on Religious Education exam results for West Sussex this year.

21. Update from Assistant Director of Education and Skills

- 21.1 Mr Wagstaff reported that WSCC is currently carrying out a major recruitment drive for roles at teacher, teaching assistant and learning support assistant level, in addition to specialist teachers.
- 21.2 Mr Wagstaff said that there was a focus on achievement and a broad curriculum offer for the most vulnerable children to ensure they are not disadvantaged.
- 21.3 Mr Wagstaff reflected on the work of SACRE this year and emphasised his team's willingness to continue working together and to take forward any issues raised by SACRE.
- 21.4 SACRE noted the update.

22. SACRE Annual Report

- 22.1 Mrs Hammond reiterated that the draft development plan required members' contribution through their working groups and reminded members of their group responsibilities.
- 22.2 Members' attention was drawn to the additional papers provided, which included two NASACRE presentations on collective worship and effective SACREs.

22.3 Mrs Hammond informed the Council that the deadline to submit SACRE's annual report was at the end of December and she requested each working group to email her detailed feedback following the meeting.

22.4 The meeting was adjourned for the working lunch at 11.50am.

22.5 The meeting re-convened at 1.00pm.

22.6 Several members expressed their desire for induction sessions to be provided for the benefit of new members of SACRE.

Action: Mrs Hammond agreed to deliver the induction sessions.

22.7 A summary of the brief feedback offered by the leads for each working group were as follows:

1. Management of the SACRE and partnership with the LA and other key stakeholders

- The importance of funding for teacher training and development.
- SACRE members required training on their roles and responsibilities (this was identified in the development plan).

2. Standards and quality of provision of Religious Education

- Good-quality learning and teaching.
- Links with academies requiring improvement, and consideration of having an academy rep on SACRE.
- Mrs Hammond included the consideration to appoint a SACRE representative from academies in the draft development plan.
- Recognise the budget, time and resources constraints on schools and that this can impact on how schools interact with SACRE.

3. The effectiveness of the locally Agreed Syllabus

- The Agreed Syllabus is good and detailed with regards to theory.
- A lot of work is required in terms of supporting non-qualified teachers.

4. Collective Worship

- SACRE could be more engaged with schools and suggested that SACRE members should visit schools to gain a better understanding of their provision.

5. Contribution of SACRE to promoting cohesion across the community

- SACRE's membership is a work in progress but has a broad membership that represents the community.
- It was important to be aware of local diversities and understand what community cohesion means. It was suggested that a video to explain community cohesion and where to go for support on

different faiths could be explored. A contact list for different faith groups was also suggested.

- It was important that SACRE's work was for schools and to help show the value of SACRE for teachers and therefore make them more able to engage with SACRE.
- Suggested that Mrs Smith looks to arrange the youth conference.

22.8 Mrs Hammond asked for members' support to finalise the development plan and invited members to consider volunteering to form a Development Working Group to take this forward. SACRE highlighted the value of working in informal groups and agreed to explore using more breakout sessions at future meetings.

22.9 The Chairman suggested that future meetings of SACRE take place in Committee Room 3 at County Hall, Chichester.

23. Dates of Future Meetings

23.1 It was agreed for Mrs Hammond to deliver an induction session to members explaining their role and responsibilities at the next meeting of the Council.

23.2 SACRE noted that the next meeting would be held on 27 February 2023 at County Hall, Chichester, with the hybrid option for joining being available to those who required it.

The meeting ended at 1.44 pm

Chairman

Questionnaire for primary schools on the delivery of Collective Worship

West Sussex SACRE has a statutory responsibility to monitor provision for Religious Education in the county and is required to submit an annual report to the Department of Education on the work of SACRE and the quality of Religious Education each year. West Sussex SACRE has developed an online questionnaire to support fulfilling this responsibility. Alongside input into the annual report SACRE can also use this information to make recommendations to West Sussex County Council about the strengths and weaknesses of that provision, how good practice might be shared and what support might be offered. This includes planning appropriate CPD opportunities for West Sussex schools.

We ask that senior leaders working in partnership with the RE subject leader would complete the online questionnaire by **XXXXX**.

1. Name of school

2. Name of subject leader

3. Contact email of subject leader

4. How long has this person been the subject leader in this school/federation? (tick the applicable box)

Up to 1 year	<input type="checkbox"/>
Up to 2 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
Up to 3 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
Up to 4 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
More than 4 years	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. Do you follow the WSCC Agreed Syllabus? (tick the applicable box)

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
Partly	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>

6. How does the school make a judgement on the quality and standards of RE in the school?

7. How accurate a picture do you think this gives?

8. What professional development has the subject leader taken part in over the last year and what was its impact?

9. What professional development have other teachers taken part in over the last year and what was its impact?

10. Is provision for RE combined with another subject, e.g. PSHEe, Citizenship?
(tick the applicable box)

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>

11. If yes, please explain how:

12. How much time on average does each pupil spend on RE-related work each week? (enter no. of hours)

EYFS	
KS1	
KS2	

13. Who delivers the RE in your school? Please describe any diversity between classes and year groups if appropriate:

Class teacher	
HLTA	
TA	
PPA teacher	
Other	

14. Does your curriculum and provision meet the requirements of the WSCC Agreed Syllabus? (tick the correct box)

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
Partly	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>

15. If your school is an academy and you have not chosen to adopt the WSCC Agreed Syllabus please can you indicate which syllabus you follow?

16. When was the current scheme of work drawn up or revised?

--

17. To what extent does it match the requirements of the WSCC Agreed Syllabus? (tick the correct box)

Fully	
Mostly	
Not at all	

18. How does the scheme of work ensure progression between the key stages - in respect of subject knowledge and the development of skills?

--

19. Are the resources sufficient to support the RE programme? (tick the correct box)

Yes	
No	

20. Are there any resources that you would recommend to other schools?

--

21. Are there any resources that you are lacking?

22. What are the strengths of your current provision and practice?

23. Where are the weaknesses/areas for improvement?

24. Is there something that is so good in your school that it could be shared with other schools? If so, please elaborate.

25. What are your priorities for development in RE?

26. Is there anything related to RE for which you would like external support?

27. Overall, how would you grade the quality of RE provision (including quality and standards achieved by pupils) in your school? (tick the correct box)

Outstanding	
Good	
Requires Improvement Inadequate	



Questionnaire for secondary schools on the delivery of Collective Worship

West Sussex SACRE has a statutory responsibility to monitor provision for Religious Education in the county. SACRE can use this information to make recommendations to West Sussex County Council about the strengths and weaknesses of that provision, how good practice might be shared and what support might be offered. **Completed online?**

1. Name of school

2. Name of subject leader

3. Contact email of subject leader

4. How long has this person been the subject leader in this school/federation? (tick the correct box)

Up to 1 year	<input type="checkbox"/>
Up to 2 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
Up to 3 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
Up to 4 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
More than 4 years	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. Do you follow the WSCC Agreed Syllabus? (tick the correct box)

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
Partly	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>

6. How does the school make a judgement on the quality and standards of RE in the school?



7. How accurate a picture do you think this gives?

8. What professional development has the subject leader taken part in over the last year and what was its impact?

9. What professional development have other teachers taken part in over the last year and what was its impact?

10. Is provision for RE combined with another subject e.g. PSHEe, Citizenship?
(tick the correct box)

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>

11. If yes, please explain how:



12. How much time on average does each pupil spend on RE-related work each week? (enter number of hours)

KS3	
KS4	
Post-16	

13. Does your curriculum and provision meet the requirements of the WSCC Agreed Syllabus? (tick the correct box)

Yes	
Partly	
No	

14. If your school is an academy and you have not chosen to adopt the WSCC Agreed Syllabus please can you indicate which syllabus you follow:

15. When was the current scheme of work drawn up or revised?

16. To what extent does it match the requirements of the WSCC Agreed Syllabus? (tick the correct box)

Fully	
Mostly	
Not at all	



17. How does the scheme of work ensure progression between the key stages – in respect of subject knowledge and development of skills?

18. Are the resources sufficient to support the RE programme? (tick the correct box)

19. Are there any resources that you would recommend to other schools?

20. Are there any resources that you are lacking?

21. What are the strengths of your current provision and practice?



22. What are the strengths of your current provision and practice?

23. Where are there weaknesses/areas for improvement?

24. Is there something that is so good in your school that it could be shared with other schools? If so, please elaborate.

25. What are your priorities for development in RE?

26. Is there anything related to RE for which you would like external support?



27. Overall, how would you grade the quality of RE provision (including quality and standards achieved by pupils) in your school? (tick the correct box)

Outstanding	
Good	
Requires Improvement Inadequate	

DRAFT

West Sussex SACRE's Draft Annual Report 2022/2023

Welcome to the draft annual report for the West Sussex SACRE, covering the year 2022/2023. The report sets out the matters that have been covered by SACRE during the academic year, plus the advice and support given to schools. It has been my privilege to continue being the Chairman during this time.

The school year saw continued disruption, due to the various restrictions necessary to deal with the on-going Covid situation; and I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those involved in education across West Sussex, be they head teachers, teachers, governors, administrators, classroom assistants or parents, for the dedication and determination they have shown to continue to provide an excellent educational experience for all our children and young people.

Thanks to excellent administrative and technical support from West Sussex County Council's Democratic Services, SACRE was able to meet in hybrid form for each of the three agreed meetings throughout the year. Our attendance improved during the year and members became adept at participating in the online meetings, which were broadcast live.

We have had a few changes of personnel in SACRE during the year. A special mention to Charles Gauntlett and Ann Little from Democratic Services, whose advice and support have been invaluable. We welcome Katherine Delamora (Senior Advisor) and Jack Bacon (Clerk) as their replacements. Many thanks to Paul Wagstaff, Assistant Director of Education and Skills (LEA - Local Education Authority) for his continued support and to Karen Hammond, External Consultant.

During our extended November meeting, time was spent familiarising ourselves with and reviewing the NASACRE (National Association of SACREs) Self-Evaluation Form (SEF). A working group was established to produce the SACRE Development Plan and lead on actions from the SEF review. Also, during the year, a number of members have accessed the online training available through NASACRE. We have been working through our Development Plan and have been successful in creating active links between the LEA and SACRE and in beginning to increase member participation. However, we still have considerable work to do to operate effectively in our relationship with schools and in increasing and utilising our members' skills.

My sincere thanks go to all our members and officers for the work that has been accomplished during the year.

I commend this report to all its readers.

Richard Burrett, Chairman of West Sussex SACRE

Introduction

SACRE's 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
- Group B: Church of England
- Group C: Associations representing teachers
- Group D: Local Education Authority

The main functions of SACRE include:

- Addressing issues relating to RE and Collective Worship in local schools and other educational establishments.
- Developing ways of supporting schools with the delivery of the Local Agreed Syllabus and RE curriculum as well as monitoring this delivery.
- Developing and maintaining links with local and national faith communities.
- Considering applications for determinations from head teachers. This is an application that the school be released from the requirements for Collective Worship to be of a mainly Christian character.
- Producing an annual report of its work.

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.'

West Sussex SACRE

SACRE met three times in 2022/2023.

The attendance by Committee, is set out below:

Committee	Meeting date - 21 March 2022	Meeting date - 20 June 2022	Meeting date - 21 November 2022	Possible maximum attendances at each meeting
Committee A	8	7	9	13
Committee B	3	4	2	4
Committee C	3	5	4	7
Committee D	7	6	7	8
Co-optees	1	1	0	1
Total Members	21	23	22	33

External Consultant to SACRE	1	1	1	1
Local Authority Officers	2	2	3	3

We have a broad membership that represents the religious diversity within the local community. This is regularly reviewed, and communities are contacted in order to increase their representation when necessary. SACRE members of faith communities visit schools and are involved in individual projects.

Each meeting contains updates from the Local Authority Officers and the External Consultant for SACRE. Through the latter's reports the committee has been appraised of various national updates.

The Committee has also reviewed or discussed:

- The Development Plan
- Local draft GCSE results
- Support and training for schools
- Updates on the Agreed Syllabus
- School Workforce Data (2020)
- Ofsted Research Review Series paper on RE
- Department for Education research into the resourcing of RE
- Still Standing Report
- 2022 RE Report Card
- White Paper on Education
- School web-site review in relation to RE and Collective Worship

SACRE undertook a self-evaluation on 21 November 2022.

SACRE members found this a valuable exercise and led to action points being included in the Development Plan.

Since the COVID pandemic, all meetings have been hybrid, although members are encouraged to attend in person.

The number of schools within West Sussex are as follows:

	Primary	Secondary	Special	Alternative Provision College
Community	86	12	10	2
Foundation	1	1	0	0
Voluntary Controlled	44	1	0	0
Academy	56	17	1	0
Free	3	3	0	0

The Local Agreed Syllabus

The Local Agreed Syllabus was reviewed and updated in 2020 but publication was delayed until 22 April 2021 due to the COVID pandemic. The syllabus is available online for all schools in West Sussex.

Standards and monitoring of RE

SACRE has been unable in the past academic year to actively monitor the use of the Local Agreed Syllabus across the schools in West Sussex due to the COVID pandemic and the additional pressures on schools. This will be a focus for 2023/2024. However, updates have been received from the teacher representation of Group C.

SACRE has received no formal complaints regarding RE provision or quality this year.

Collective Worship

SACRE encourages all schools to comply with their legal duty to provide a daily act of Collective Worship for their pupils. This may take place at any time of day and in class, year group, or whole school settings. West Sussex SACRE believes that acts of collective worship or spiritual reflection should be meaningful and relevant to all those present.

Schools may apply to SACRE for a determination in order to provide Collective Worship of a non-Christian or other form. No schools have done so during this academic year.

There were no complaints registered with the local authority or SACRE in 2022/2023 in respect of collective worship. As in previous years, no determinations were requested by schools.

No work was undertaken to monitor Collective Worship in 2022/2023. Schools were reminded of the legal requirement in the Agreed Syllabus.

Links with other bodies

West Sussex SACRE is a member of the National Association of SACREs (NASACRE). Through the year, SACRE members were informed of developments in RE from NASACRE, several members of SACRE have attended training sessions. One member of SACRE attended the NASACRE conference and reported back to members.

WSSC arrangements for SACRE

During the academic year 2022/2023, the Local Education Authority has financially supported SACRE through the allocation of officers and other resources.

Staffing costs have been covered to provide officers from Democratic Services to fulfil the administrative preparation and clerking of SACRE meetings. Additional officer and technology resource has also been allocated to ensure that SACRE meetings could be held via video conference and live streamed.

The costs of the Professional RE Advisor, an external consultant, are met through Local Authority funds.

An officer in the Local Education Authority's Democratic Services department acts as Clerk to SACRE; advising on governance matters and acting as a link between the Local Education Authority and SACRE.

In addition, a Senior Advisor from Democratic Services provides professional support and advice to SACRE, principally on matters of governance and matters relating to the work of the Council and its Committees.

Membership

Committee A – Faith Group Representatives:

Baha'i – Mrs Meenou Jones
Baptist – Vacancy
Free Churches – Rev David Pitkeathly
Hindu – Mr Ashwin Soni
Humanists UK – Vacancy
Jewish – Mrs Barbara Bell
Methodist – Rev Dawn Carn
Muslim – Mr Arif Syed
Quaker – Ms Maria Hock
Roman Catholic – Mrs Anna Flood
Salvation Army – Major Mike Warner
Sikh – Mrs Divinder Kaur Ghundale
United Reformed Church – Rev Helen Higgin-Botham

Committee B - Church of England Representatives

Mrs Rosie Black
Mr Andrew Simpson
Mrs Angela Smith (Vice-Chairman)
Vacancy

Committee C - Teachers of Religious Education

Rev Chrissie Millwood, The Holy Trinity CofE Secondary School, Crawley
Ms Helen Elphick – Queen Elizabeth II Silver Jubilee School
Teachers – Vacancy
National Education Union – Ms Anne Barker
NASUWT, The Teachers' Union, Mr Ben Cornford
Two union vacancies

Committee D - elected Members of West Sussex County Council

Cllr Zack Ali
Cllr Brenda Burgess
Cllr Richard Burrett (Chairman)
Cllr Nigel Jupp
Cllr Kirsty Lord
Cllr Katie Nagel

Cllr Jacky Pendleton
Vacancy

Co-opted members

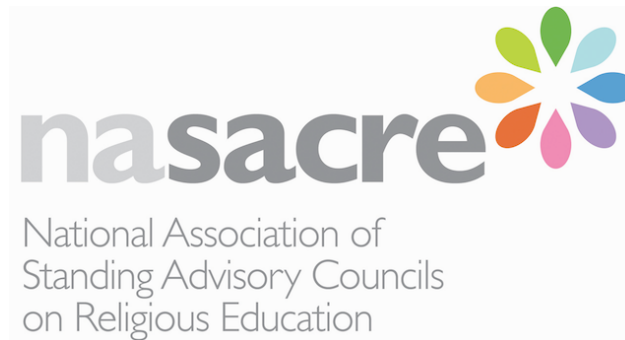
Ms Joanna Tulloch

SACRE visits to schools

The Jewish representative on SACRE (Mrs Barbara Bell) organised a visit to Brighton and Hove Shul on 12 October 2022 led by Rabbi Gabriel, a Shul guide and Mrs Bell. Twelve teachers attended an 'Introduction to Judaism' session.

Evaluation comments:

- Left with positive image of Judaism
- It was interactive, extremely welcoming and allowed participants to reflect on Judaism
- Speakers were knowledgeable
- Good use of resources to inspire and share with staff
- Good response to questions we asked
- The use of different speakers was very effective
- Good links to other religions such as Christianity
- Some practical ideas were shared
- The session was quite inspirational and even made some staff consider their own religious journeys.



A reference handbook for SACRE members

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Introduction

Joining your local SACRE

This is a handbook for all SACRE members, new or experienced. It is designed to:

- help SACREs become more effective through the informed participation of their members
- introduce you to the context and work of a SACRE
- be a point of reference

As a member of a SACRE you are serving your local community in an important way. Whichever group you represent, your active participation makes a valuable contribution to the quality of religious education and collective worship that pupils experience in schools in your local area and also contributes to the coherence of your local community.

What is this handbook for?

The handbook is designed to be a point of reference for all SACRE members, and in particular to be of interest and support to those who are new to the role.

It:

- explains the work of a SACRE and the roles of its individual members;
- will help you to understand the nature and purpose of religious education (RE) and collective worship;
- explains clearly what the law says about RE and collective worship;
- will help you to work within your SACRE to support and encourage local schools to ensure high standards in RE and collective worship;

It is also designed to help SACREs become more effective through the informed participation of their members.

SECTION 1

SACREs: duties, roles and responsibilities

What is a SACRE?

The acronym SACRE stands for: **Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education**

Why is there a SACRE?

Every local authority (LA) has to have a SACRE by law. It is often the Children's Services division of the LA that takes responsibility for making sure SACRE works well and SACRE's work is related to schools and their curriculum.

What does a SACRE do?

There is no other group anywhere else like the SACRE; it is unique. The law says that RE must be taught in all schools and a SACRE's role is to advise its local authority on what needs to be done to improve religious education (RE) and collective worship for schools in its area. This is because RE is not part of the National Curriculum; it is a local responsibility. Through the SACRE, local communities and teachers have the opportunity to influence and support what pupils learn in RE.

The SACRE's main function is to advise the local authority on matters related to the religious education, which follows the locally agreed syllabus, and on collective worship in schools.

It:

- can require the LA to review its agreed syllabus;
- must consider applications from a head teacher that the school be allowed to modify the 'wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character' requirement for collective worship. (This is known as a determination.);
- must publish an annual report of its work.

What else can a SACRE do?

A SACRE's broad role is to support good RE and collective worship within its schools by:

- giving advice on ways of teaching agreed syllabus RE, including the choice of teaching materials;
- monitoring schools' provision for RE and collective worship as well as the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC) of pupils;
- advising the LA on the provision of training for teachers in RE;
- considering complaints about the provision and delivery of religious education or collective worship referred to it by the LA.

Assessment and testing

SACREs should monitor school approaches to assessing pupils' progress in RE. They should also be aware of the uptake of external examinations in RE and religious studies and monitor or review the standards achieved.

RE and SMSC

SACREs should be aware of the contribution RE and collective worship can make to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Members of Groups A and B have the opportunity to indicate awareness that pupils should have about religious beliefs and the influence these have on the formation of attitudes and values.

SACREs may

- monitor good practice in the delivery of the agreed syllabus in a range of ways and take note of any difficulties;
- disseminate good practice in the teaching of RE;
- review provision for in-service training and development;
- receive school inspection reports or sections of these reports.

SECTION 2

SACRE membership, composition, group representation, roles and responsibilities

Who attends the SACRE meetings?

A SACRE is set up to represent a balance of all the interests of the local community. You are likely to find elected councillors, representatives of faith communities and members of the education community (including teachers and head teachers) at a SACRE meeting. There may also be people representing teacher training in RE and local Academies.

SACRE members join one of four groups as a full member or if you have been co-opted to serve on SACRE, you will not be formally linked to any of the groups.

How is the membership of a SACRE decided?

The structure of the SACRE is defined by law. It is made up of four groups, sometimes referred to by some SACREs as committees.

Details such as the specific numbers of members in each of the groups will usually be set out in the individual SACRE's constitution. These are frequently decided by the LA, depending on local circumstances and in collaboration with the organisations and communities represented.

The composition of a SACRE

Group A	The Christian denominations and other religions and their denomination, reflecting the principal religions of the area.
Group B	The Church of England
Group C	Teacher and head teacher associations and often others representing education interests
Group D	The Local Authority

On the rare occasions when a formal vote is required, each of these groups has equal voting rights; there is one vote per group.

Co-options

SACREs may co-opt other members who have a particular expertise or represent a small local faith or belief community. Many bring in a Humanist representative, currently technically prevented by law from becoming full members of Group A. Co-opted members do not have voting rights.

Who are the representatives?

Group A

This group is made up of representatives of Christian denominations, (other than the Church of England). It may include, for example, representatives of the Roman Catholic Church, the Orthodox Churches, the Free Churches (e.g. Baptist, Methodist, United Reformed Church, Pentecostal, The Salvation Army) and The Society of Friends. It also has representatives from other faiths in the area, e.g. Buddhists, Baha'is, Hindus, Jains, Jews, Muslims, Parsees, Sikhs.

The make-up of Group A will vary from SACRE to SACRE as by law, it should reflect the diversity of the various faith communities in the locality.

Group B

This is made up of representatives nominated by the local Church of England diocese or dioceses.

Group C

The members of this group are usually representatives of professional teacher associations. It is usual for there to be representation also from the head teacher associations. It is the local authority that decides which associations will be invited to be represented. They will usually approach the teacher unions, but local associations of RE teachers may also be asked to provide a representative. Sometimes someone from a local teacher training establishment is also invited to be a member of this group, or someone representing the interests of local Academies or Free schools.

Group D

It is the local authority's responsibility to provide their own representatives for this committee. Usually these are elected members or other political nominees and also a representative of the Director of Children's Services. The LA may wish to have all parties and viewpoints from across the political spectrum represented on the SACRE. In some LAs, a representative of school governors may also be in this group.

What will be my responsibilities as a SACRE member?

As a SACRE member, you should be committed to education and to respecting the views of others. You have a responsibility to support children's learning in RE and collective worship, and to work for the highest standards in both. You should represent the perspective of your community or sponsoring group in the work of SACRE and communicate the interests and the work of the SACRE back to them. You should be able to network effectively in order to contribute to the relationship and dialogue between the SACRE, your sponsorship group, your local community and schools. The specific opportunities you have will also depend on the interest group you represent. Remember that how you present yourself and work with others will be seen as reflecting on the values and ethos of the group you represent.

This is a unique opportunity to serve your local community and influence the attitudes of others more widely. Social cohesion is recognised as being important to our society, now and in the future. The effective SACRE is in itself a model of social cohesion in which every member is heard and respected, even when there are many different positions or opinions on particular issues under discussion. In an effective SACRE potential conflict is managed harmoniously. By the same token, SACREs have the potential to promote social cohesion more widely, in schools and in the local community.

Do we all have the same responsibilities?

Everyone shares the responsibility to put children's' learning before personal interest.

Members of **Groups A and B**, each of whom represents a faith community within the locality:

- should present and foster a positive image of their religion, so that negative stereotyping is avoided. They must also make clear any grounds on which they may differ from each other, whilst showing respect for each other's viewpoints, since such convictions and mutual understanding both lie at the heart of effective classroom RE;
- can create opportunities within SACRE meetings to raise awareness of issues of sensitivity in the teaching of RE to the children of their faith community, and also in the presentation of their particular faith and religious tradition within school RE, always taking an educational approach;
- should appreciate the difficulties schools are facing in the area, support their best endeavours, and act, where necessary, as a link between schools and the faith communities;
- should be aware of other local minority faith communities not represented amongst their number. Some SACREs address this by co-opting representatives from these communities.

Members of **Group C**, representing teacher associations and education, should:

- have a real and positive interest in RE in primary, secondary or special schools;
- ensure that the needs of schools and teachers are considered by the SACRE in their discussions;
- provide the SACRE with information about the context in which RE is taught in the schools in the local authority;
- ensure that the bodies they represent are informed about the work of the SACRE and about RE in local schools;
- create opportunities for other teachers to learn more about the work of the SACRE and give them the opportunity to have their views expressed at SACRE meetings;
- consult their colleagues on matters of particular importance to the work of the SACRE;
- can bring ‘public’ dimensions to the debate about RE provision and support.

Members of **Group D**, representing the local authority:

- can bring to the meeting the breadth of educational issues and concerns which elected members are wrestling with, and place RE’s role within it;
- can be the supporters of RE within the various committees and structures of the local authority;
- can give political support to enable locally determined RE to flourish within each LA, including advisory support etc.;
- can appreciate the issues raised by a multi-faith, multi-cultural society for the education of children in RE, and reflect these issues in support of RE in the relevant council structures, including Scrutiny Committee, Cabinet, etc.;
- can particularly support the efforts of the SACRE to be effective through publicising its work with fellow elected members and officers of the local authority, ensuring it is taken seriously and is appropriately funded and supported.

SECTION 3

Religious education and collective worship

What is a locally agreed syllabus?

The locally agreed syllabus is the statutory document for RE in the local authority. It sets out what should be taught to pupils in all key stages and the standards expected of them at the end of each key stage. It is produced by an agreed syllabus conference (ASC).

The agreed syllabus has to be reviewed every five years. If, at some other time, a majority of the groups of the SACRE asks the LA in writing to reconsider its agreed syllabus, it must convene a conference for that purpose. *Education Act 1996, Chapter III*

What is the Agreed Syllabus Conference?

An agreed syllabus conference (ASC) is a statutory body brought together in order to produce an agreed syllabus for RE. It is a separate legal entity from a SACRE. An ASC:

- has the same committee structure as the SACRE;
- can be made up of SACRE members but need not be so. There is no provision for co-opted members.

In some LAs, the Chair of the ASC is appointed by the local authority whilst in others, the ASC chooses its own Chair. The LA's responsibility to convene the ASC includes the duty to provide funds and support for its work.

RE and collective worship in school

Type of school	Religious education	Collective worship
Community schools	is taught according to the local authority's agreed syllabus and comes within SACRE's remit.	follows the 1996 Education Act and is 'wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character'.
Voluntary controlled (VC) schools	is taught according to the local authority's agreed syllabus and comes within SACRE's remit. ²	reflects the Christian character of the school.
Voluntary aided (VA) schools	is determined by the governors in accordance with the trust deed and reflects the religious character of the school. ¹	reflects the Christian character of the school.
Foundation schools without a religious character	is taught according to the local authority's agreed syllabus.	follows the 1996 Education Act and is 'wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character'.
Foundation schools with a religious character	is taught according to the local authority's agreed syllabus. ²	reflects the Christian character of the school.
Trust schools	is taught according to the local authority's agreed syllabus.	follows the 1996 Education Act and is 'wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character'.
Academies	must be part of the curriculum, but is taught according to the school's finding agreement.	must be offered to every pupil every day, but provision is determined by the schools funding agreement.

What should I know about religious education?

Religious education is a statutory element of the school curriculum although it is not part of the national curriculum; it is therefore part of every pupil's entitlement.

Agreed syllabus RE does not seek to nurture religious faith, but 'provokes challenging questions about the ultimate meaning and purpose of life, beliefs about God, the self and the nature of reality, issues of right and wrong and what it means to be human'.

What should I know about collective worship?

The schools where collective worship comes within the remit of the SACRE are required to provide a daily act of collective worship the majority of which would be 'wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character'. This means that it 'reflects the broad traditions of Christian belief without being distinctive of any particular Christian denomination'. It does not mean it has to be exclusively Christian. It must, however, be educational and appropriate to the age, aptitude and family background of pupils. When done well, collective worship provides an excellent opportunity for schools to contribute to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils and to the ethos of the school community.

Education Act 1996, Chapter III

In relation to collective worship, SACREs should :

- receive inspection reports, noting any references to the quality of collective worship in the context of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development;
- monitor the quality of provision where possible and share good practice;
- offer advice to head teachers and governing bodies, including where there may be difficulties.

Many SACREs produce their own statements and advice on collective worship. The SACRE may also be involved in providing training to teachers, head teachers and governors or other people who are involved in leading collective worship in school as visitors.

What should I know about determinations?

Schools apply for a determination if they feel that the proportion of collective worship which reflects the broad traditions of Christian belief as required by law is not appropriate for their pupils. That does not mean they do not have to offer collective worship at all.

The determination procedure allows this requirement to be lifted in respect of some or all of the pupils in a school.

They are called determinations because SACRE 'determines' whether the case being made in an application to modify the law for all or a group of pupils in a school is appropriate.

Applications for determinations are made to the SACRE by the head teacher of any community school after consultation with the school's governing body.

Determinations are only possible for schools that do not have a religious character. Many SACREs have an agreed process to enable such an application to take place.

The SACRE should review each determination every five years.

Parents' rights

Parents have the right, on conscience grounds, to withdraw their children, in any school, from RE and collective worship. Sixth form students may withdraw themselves from collective worship.

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Parents also have certain rights with regard to the provision of RE in different categories of school. (However, these rights are rarely exercised.)

- In these schools^{1*}, parents can opt for their children to receive Agreed Syllabus RE.
- In these schools^{2*}, parents can opt for their children to receive RE in accordance with the religious character of the school.

In community schools and foundation schools without a religious character, where parents ask to withdraw their child from religious education alternative RE provision for that child can be made elsewhere by the parents.

The school continues to have responsibility for ensuring any pupil withdrawn from RE is supervised and safe.

(*See RE and collective worship in school table, page 9)

Religious teaching from within the faith community

SACRE members should be aware that some pupils will be formally receiving teaching about their own religion from their parents or through attendance at classes at or sponsored by their place of worship. The purpose of this teaching will differ from that of the religious education delivered in their schools, and the approach to learning may differ quite significantly from that in school.

There is a clear distinction between this religious nurture, which is the responsibility of the family and community, and religious education, by nature an open and explorative activity, appropriate in schools. It is important that the home and community background of the pupils is recognised and respected in school, but also that the educational approach is understood to promote reflection on faith and belief stances. SACREs might consider how they will support schools and communities in understanding each other's different roles and ensuring that any potential tension is creative rather than threatening.

SECTION 4

Local Authorities and SACREs

What are the local authority's responsibilities regarding its SACRE?

Every local authority has a duty to ensure that:

- there is a SACRE;
- all four groups are represented on it;
- there is an agreed syllabus, reviewed every five years;
- support is in place to enable SACRE to fulfil its duties, which includes providing appropriate clerking and specialist advice;
- it takes note of and responds to advice from the SACRE.

Does SACRE's remit cover all schools in the local authority?

The answer to that question is no. SACRE's responsibility covers the majority of schools, but there are some exemptions, depending entirely on the category of school. Some schools have a specific religious character and these are either voluntary aided (VA) ie: voluntary schools, aided by the LA but controlled by a religious body, or voluntary controlled (VC) ie: voluntary schools, controlled by the local authority and aided by a religious body; the difference, from SACRE's perspective, is crucial. There are also some non-religious schools for which SACRE has no responsibility, including new academies (*See RE and collective worship in school table, page 9*).

How does a SACRE make its work known?

1. Local Authorities

The relationship between SACREs, local authority officers and elected members is important. SACRE's proceedings need to be reported to the appropriate council committee in the LA where decisions are made about the education service and schools. The agreed minutes of meetings should be brought to their attention and the SACRE's Annual Report should be formally presented. Where such a person is in post, the local RE adviser is a vital source of professional guidance, support, advice, information, and practical expertise for the SACRE. His or her attendance at SACRE meetings is essential.

Local authority representatives on SACRE also have a role in ensuring SACRE's work, and any issues of concern it raises, are brought to the attention of the relevant sections of the council and the local authority.

2. Schools

Many schools seem unaware of the responsibilities and activities of their local SACRE. The specialist expertise on different faiths represented on a SACRE may be a source of advice to schools, which is reliably representative of the religion or denomination concerned. Some SACREs also hold their meetings in schools where they can meet and hear from teachers working in that school who have responsibility for RE or collective worship.

3. Faith communities

Sometimes SACREs hold meetings in local places of worship to build relationships. Individual faith community members have a responsibility to inform those they represent about the activities of the SACRE. They should also be available to receive the views of their community to feed into SACRE discussions.

It is good practice to send the SACRE annual report to the faith communities represented on the SACRE. It should also routinely be sent to local libraries and be on the agenda of the local Inter Faith Group or Faith Forum.

4. General public

SACRE meetings are by law open to the general public and notice of all meetings should be given, usually on the council's website. In the event of anyone requesting them, relevant documents should be made available.

SECTION 5

Frequently asked questions for new SACRE members

How often does a SACRE meet?

There is no hard and fast rule about the number of meetings a SACRE should hold each year. It must, however, meet sufficient times to fulfil its statutory duties. Almost all SACREs meet at least three times a year, i.e. once a term, and some are more active and meet more frequently. Sometimes working groups made up of SACRE members meet between full meetings to move forward specific areas of the SACRE's work.

Will I be asked to chair the meeting?

The law does not state how the Chair of a SACRE should be appointed. The local authority can appoint the Chair or it can allow the SACRE to elect the Chair from amongst its members. As a member of the SACRE you could, therefore, be appointed Chair of the SACRE, but not against your will!

Will I be asked to take the minutes?

The local authority's responsibility to set up a SACRE carries with it a duty to fund it and make sure it can function efficiently. This means the LA should provide a clerk for the SACRE who would attend and minute each meeting. The clerk is usually the point of contact for SACRE matters within the local authority.

If I'm not there, will it matter?

Your SACRE has a right to expect a level of commitment from its members that is reflected in regular attendance at meetings. When this is not possible, it is common practice and polite convention to send apologies for absence.

Some SACREs invite members from whom they have not received apologies for non-attendance on three consecutive occasions to confirm their interest in continuing to serve. Some SACREs allow members who cannot attend to send someone else on their behalf.

Remember that when you are not able to be present no-one else will be able to provide your special knowledge in any discussions or make connections to your specialist networks to support the SACRE's work.

Rules about quoracy are usually laid down in the individual SACRE's constitution, but generally, at each meeting:

- each committee should have a least one member present;
- decisions cannot be made unless there is a least one person present to cast the committee's single vote;
- co-opted members do not have a vote.

This applies particularly to meetings at which decisions are to be made.

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