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Wokingham Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education

SECTION 1: Introduction

1.1 Words from the Chair of SACRE

I would like to begin by offering my thanks to all members of the Wokingham SACRE, who freely give up so much of their time to support the RE community across Wokingham. I would also like to extend my thanks to our LA link officer, Emily Waddilove, who provides stability to our SACRE and finally, Angela Hill, our RE advisor.

We must acknowledge that it has been another extraordinary year, in light of the pandemic. Over the course of the year the SACRE continued to fulfil its duties, and in the summer term we had our first face to face meeting since before the pandemic. Despite the challenges Covid-19 has presented, as a SACRE we have continued to look forward and embrace new opportunities. The Autumn term was exciting, as we held a 'Festival of RE CPD,' whereby schools were gifted FREE resources and twilight training sessions, which were well received. Our termly primary network teacher meetings have continued and are always well attended by our dedicated colleagues. Finally, we continue to support the Pan-Berkshire Hub and have supported in the production of a collection of films to be used in the classroom, 'Real People, Real Faith.'

As we look to the future, we will continue to work with our friends across Berkshire SACREs to review the locally agreed syllabus. We will also begin to review the work we do as SACRE so we can continue to improve and ensure the very best RE provision for children and young people in Wokingham.

I have great pleasure in commending this report to you.

Stephen Vegh, Chair: Wokingham SACRE

SECTION 1: Introduction *continued*

1.2 SACRE Overview

The Wokingham SACRE has met once each term to progress its work, structuring this through an agreed action plan. All meetings for the academic year 2021 – 2022 took place online, via Microsoft Teams. These meetings were livestreamed in accordance with Covid-19 protocols for public meetings. All meetings were quorate.

1.3 Working Groups Overview

The SACREs of the six unitary authorities across Berkshire, namely, West Berkshire, Reading, Bracknell Forest, The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead and Wokingham, have a well-established working group, called the Pan Berkshire SACRE Hub. Wokingham SACRE is an active member of the Hub. Wokingham SACRE's Chair and Vice Chair as well as its RE Advisor, attend Hub meetings, representing the SACRE. Hub meetings are usually held termly.

SECTION 2: Religious Education

2.1 The locally agreed syllabus and RE in schools

The SACRE believes that most, if not all, academies in the borough are using the Pan Berkshire Locally Agreed Syllabus. The syllabus is regularly discussed at teachers' network meetings, with the training elements of these meetings often focussing on aspects of the syllabus. The Pan Berkshire Hub Westhill Award project, 'Real People: Real Faith', produced videos and resources directly linking to key questions in the syllabus, and teachers have access to extensive resources, freely available, to support them to teach the syllabus effectively. The Hub continues to produce these resources, to enable engagement with a broader range of faiths in the local communities of Berkshire. Review of the locally agreed syllabus has been postponed due to the impact of the pandemic in schools, and also to enable proper consideration of the new thinking and debates around RE. Teachers were encouraged to complete a comprehensive survey, giving the SACRE greater insight into the extent to which the Pan Berkshire Locally Agreed Syllabus is being utilised to create RE curricula in Wokingham's schools, and this will inform the development of the new or revised locally agreed syllabus for RE.

2.2 Standards and monitoring of RE

Monitoring of Ofsted Inspection Reports

The SACRE monitors Ofsted reports for any comments about collective worship and RE. Our annual reports enable us to share any comments identifying good practice in Wokingham schools. During the academic year 2021-2022, a total of 16 Wokingham schools were inspected by Ofsted:

- 14 primary schools (**)
- 1 secondary school
- 1 maintained nursery

** Four of the primary schools that were inspected are Church of England schools. SACRE is not obliged to report on Religious Education or Collective Worship in Church of England schools as this comes under SIAMS, Section 35. However, Church of England schools are invited to participate in all of the support provided by the Wokingham SACRE, so it seems appropriate to include these schools in our monitoring of inspection reports.

All inspections during the year were Section 8 inspections, so there were no 'deep dives' into Religious Education. Seven of the inspection reports mention Religious Education or refer to learning closely connected to Religious Education. Where RE is mentioned, comments are overwhelmingly positive. There are two comments highlighting the need for better planned provision for RE, alongside other subjects in the curriculum. Where there are comments about the need for improvements relating to Religious Education, SACRE contacts schools to ensure they are aware of the support available. None of the inspection reports indicate non-compliance in terms of Religious Education or Collective worship.

Comments relating to Religious Education include:

"Pupils benefit from carefully planned opportunities to study different cultures and religions."

"The curriculum promotes topics that capture the imagination of pupils and inspire creativity. Teachers plan topics carefully so that pupils can link different areas of learning. For example, in art, pupils make Diya lamps to link with their religious education study of Diwali. Learning is sequenced across the curriculum so that pupils learn the right skills and knowledge in the right order"

"Pupils enjoy the chance to learn about, and celebrate, difference... Pupils are fascinated by different lifestyles and religions".

"Leaders make sure that pupils learn about different cultures and religions."

"Speakers visit to talk to children about different cultures and faiths, and children learn about festivals, such as Diwali and Christmas."

Two of the reports mention collective worship, and both in a positive light:

"The provision for pupils' personal development is shaped by the school's values. These values, including ownership, determination, kindness and self-belief, are woven through lessons and assemblies."

"The daily collective worship provides an opportunity for pupils to explore topical issues around equality. They are encouraged to reflect on the school's values, including this term's focus on 'thankfulness'. This is demonstrated in the prayers that the pupils write and share with the school community." (Report for a Church of England School)

Results of External Religious Studies examinations - summer 2022

NB Comparisons are not made with 2021 or 2020 outcomes when centre assessment grades or teacher assessed grades were used in place of examinations due to the coronavirus pandemic. In 2022, students were given some advance information about the content of exams, and grading was more lenient than in 2019.

GCSE RS: (2019 data)

	Wokingham	National
Grade 4 and above	91% (74%)	88% (71%)
Grade 5 and above	81% (62%)	64% (59%)
Grade 7 and above	47% (28%)	33% (29%)
% of students entered for the GCSE	45% (66%)	30% (33%)

Wokingham GCSE RS outcomes for 2022 were strong compared to national outcomes, and compared to 2019 outcomes for the borough. The percentage of students who were entered for the GCSE was higher in Wokingham than nationally, but significantly lower than the percentage of students entered in the borough in 2019. All entries in Wokingham were for full course GCSE, rather than the short course. All Wokingham secondary schools entered some students for the GCSE, with some schools entering all Year 11 students.

It is a legal requirement for schools to teach RE at KS4, but schools are not obliged to enter students for an accredited examination. The Pan-Berkshire Agreed Syllabus for RE states that, during KS4: "All pupils must receive Religious Education and should follow an externally accredited course for Religious Studies e.g. GCSE, or an alternative, well-structured and challenging programme of Religious Education. Schools are encouraged to facilitate examination entry for as many students as possible."

A Level RS: (2019 data)

	Wokingham	National
Percent achieving grade A*	9.4%	9.8%
Percent achieving grade A*-A	34.4%	31.4%
Percent achieving grade A*-B	68.8%	64.1%
Percent achieving grade A*-C	90.6% (65%)	85.8%
Percent achieving grade A*-D	96.9%	95.1%
Percent achieving grade A*-E	96.9%	98.5%
Total number of students	32 (48)	

Three Wokingham schools entered a total of 32 students for A Level RS in 2022. 29 out of the 32 students achieved grades C+ (90.6%). Outcomes are strong when compared to 2019, and in comparison to national outcomes in 2022.



▶ Question 1 - What Symbols are important to you?

▶ Question 2 - What stories are important to you?

2.3 Teacher training and materials and advice for schools Training and networking opportunities for teachers provided by Wokingham SACRE

Teacher network meetings

Primary teachers have continued to attend termly network meetings online. In addition, a network for secondary teachers was held in the spring term. The summer term network meeting was cross-phase. It was held face-to-face at St Crispin's School and was attended by primary and secondary teachers. At this network, teachers from both phases had the opportunity to discuss the Wokingham 'Conceptual Understanding' document. This document was co-constructed by primary and secondary teachers during the previous academic year and is intended to aid pupils' transition from primary to secondary school by clearly and concisely articulating the key concepts that pupils should understand before moving on to secondary education. All network meetings offer updates on both national and local developments in RE, as well as providing a training focus for teachers based on their present needs and priorities. Teachers continue to appreciate the network meetings which are well attended.

The training focus for each meeting continues to be decided democratically by the teachers attending the previous network meeting. Teachers attending the network meetings are always enthusiastic. They openly share good practice with one another as well as exchanging ideas and discussing concerns. Teachers of varying experience continue to participate at network meetings, which provide a constructive and supportive forum for teachers to develop their practice in the teaching of RE and engagement with collective worship.

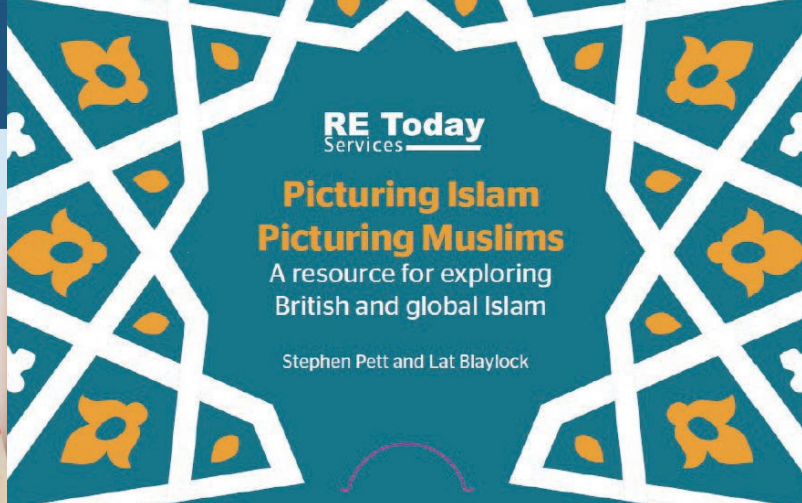
Primary RE Subject Leader training

Training for Primary RE subject leaders was very well-attended, with 13 teachers participating in March 2022. Teachers reported that the training was of a high standard and equipped them with useful information and resources for embarking upon or developing their role as RE subject leader at their school, or as a reminder of the main responsibilities of the role. Some teachers expressed the view that this training would be even more useful nearer the start of the academic year. In the following academic year, the training will be held on 23rd September 2022.

The Role of the RE Subject Leader

Angela Hill
angela@retoday.org.uk

Thursday, 21st March 2022



Autumn 'Festival of RE CPD'

At the end of the previous academic year, Wokingham SACRE provided all schools in the Local Authority with highly regarded RE resources published by RE Today for its schools. These were the resources, provided free of charge:

- The 'What Happens In...?' primary RE resource was provided to all primary schools
- The 'Picturing Islam, Picturing Muslims' resource was provided to all secondary schools

This year, an Autumn Festival of RE was made available to all teachers in the local authority. This consisted of a series of twilight webinars. Some of these webinars specifically explored practical strategies for employing the resources provided to schools by the SACRE to the best effect in RE lessons. In addition, a series of live and recorded webinars, aimed at secondary school teachers, were made available later in the year. A Q and A session was provided in the summer term for teachers who had engaged with the pre-recorded webinars on Buddhism, Hinduism and Sikhism.

SECTION 3: Collective Worship (CW)

3.1 Standards and monitoring of CW

Ofsted have not raised any concerns with regards to the compliance with the law or standards in relation to collective worship in Wokingham's schools.

3.2 Determinations

Wokingham SACRE has not received any applications for determinations.

3.3 Teacher training provided (locally, or national training circulated to schools)

Wokingham SACRE provides extensive training and networking opportunities to its schools. Training requirements are determined by teacher requests at network meetings. As teachers have indicated that their training needs relate to RE, no specific training has been provided this year relating to collective worship.

3.4 Materials and advice for schools

The SACRE has distributed all relevant information relating to supporting collective worship in schools via termly network meetings, and via the Local Authority's newsletter for schools.

SECTION 4: Links with other bodies

4.1 National bodies

Wokingham SACRE is an active member of NASACRE (National Association of SACREs). SACRE members are given the opportunity each year, paid for by SACRE, to attend the NASACRE Conference and AGM, as well as NASACRE's programme of online training events. The SACRE's RE Advisor, Angela Hill, represents Wokingham SACRE at NASACRE's Annual Conference and AGM. Wokingham SACRE has worked closely with RE Today to provide a varied and extensive programme of training to teachers. It actively encourages teachers and schools to become members of NATRE (National Association for Teachers of RE).



Wokingham SACRE supports Stop Ecocide International. This campaign is led by a group of international lawyers, researchers and diplomats who are working to make ecocide (damage or destruction of ecosystems) an international crime.

4.2 Local bodies

The Wokingham SACRE has established and active links with the Pan Berkshire SACREs Hub.

SECTION 5: Other areas of SACRE involvement locally

Through its members, in addition to links with places of worship and faith groups, schools and the Local Authority, the SACRE has links with the local Primary Headteachers' association; with 'RE Inspired', a local organisation teaching Christianity in schools; and 'Soulscapes', a charity working in partnership with local schools to give young people the space to reflect, and to ask big questions.

SECTION 6: SACRE's own arrangements

6.1 Professional and administrative support and how the LA supports the SACRE

The LA provides the SACRE with an annual budget to fund its work, enabling it to fulfil its statutory duties as well as deliver training and network meetings free of charge to teachers, and contribute funding to the Berkshire SACRE Hub. The LA provides a clerk to the SACRE, who does much

work to support the committee between meetings, including sharing useful information with teachers of RE; helping to recruit new members to the SACRE; and keeping the SACRE/RE area of the Wokingham Schools Hub website updated with training materials and guidance documents. An LA officer who is part of the school improvement team also provides much support to the SACRE and liaises with the RE advisor to support her work. The RE advisor is recruited by the LA in partnership with the SACRE chair and vice-chair. Our current adviser, Angela Hill, is a national adviser for RE Today and a highly experienced and knowledgeable RE teacher and teacher trainer. Two elected councillors, Cllr Jackie Rance and Cllr David Hare, have been proactive members of the SACRE this year, and have whole-heartedly support the SACRE's work. Cllr Hare was replaced by Cllr Adrian Mather in June of this year.

6.2 Membership, representation & recruitment

The SACRE is active in recruiting members to represent all groups. It also considers co-opting those with skills, knowledge and experience who can help to develop its work.

Membership vacancies are discussed at meetings alongside the SACRE development plan. At the start of this academic year there were three vacancies in Group A: two for Christian denominations other than the Church of England and one for a Buddhist member. During the year the SACRE recruited a member to represent Christian denominations other than the Church of England, but was not successful in filling the other two vacancies in Group A. At the start of the year there was

also one vacancy in Group B – The Church of England. Unfortunately, another member of Group B moved away from the area in March, leaving two vacancies in this group. At the start of the year there were also two vacancies in Group C – educationalists; however, two new members were recruited to the group.

All SACRE meetings during the year were quorate, with all groups represented according to the terms of the SACRE's constitution at each meeting.

6.3 Training for SACRE members

All new SACRE members receive a guide to SACRE and the responsibilities associated with SACRE membership. The SACRE Clerk, LA Officer and RE Advisor are on hand to advise SACRE members.

All members are invited to attend all training provided for schools. They are also offered a place at the NASACRE Conference and AGM, paid for by the SACRE, and are also encouraged to attend the online training events provided by NASACRE throughout the academic year. In addition, SACRE meetings sometimes incorporate presentations from the SACRE's RE advisor, as in the case of the Summer 2022 meeting, where there was an item on 'worldviews'.

6.4 Finance given to SACRE for its work

The LA provides an annual budget to the SACRE. Members shape the use of this funding, and are provided with budget updates by the LA Officer at each SACRE meeting.



The Pan-Berkshire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education 2018- 2023