

Annual SACRE Report

2015-2016

What is a SACRE?

The Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education has several aspects to its role. It:

- Advises the local authority on matters relating to collective worship and religious education
- Advises on methods of teaching and resources for religious education
- Decides whether or not to grant determinations to those schools which apply to have daily worship which is other than of a broadly Christian character
- Identifies the need for a revised religious education syllabus

To help with this endeavour the Slough SACRE works with NASACRE (the National Association of SACREs). It has also joined with five other neighbouring SACREs to form a hub in order to undertake more significant projects than it could manage alone.

This report sets out a brief summary of the work of the Slough SACRE over the academic year 2015-2016. The minutes of the meetings which give more detail can be found at [http://www.slough.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/standing-advisory-council-for-religious-education-\(sacre\).aspx](http://www.slough.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/standing-advisory-council-for-religious-education-(sacre).aspx)

The make up and terms of reference can be found at the same address.

For more information about the role and business of the SACRE please contact:

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The Slough SACRE

Julie Siddiqi and Lynda Bussley continued during the academic year of this report to serve as Chair and Vice Chair respectively. They were both re-elected at the first meeting of the municipal year in June. Members expressed appreciation of their work and commitment and the continuity this provides for the SACRE

The SACRE was pleased to welcome Mr Rob Simpson to the autumn meeting as a new Church of England representative. Unfortunately during the summer term he took up a new job elsewhere and had to resign his membership. The number and nature of vacancies continues to cause concern.

Three meetings were held during the year: 12 October, 24 February and 8 June. At the start of the financial year subcommittee was established to plan the work of the SACRE for the financial year 2015-2017 with the initial plan including the following elements:

- 3 termly twilight meetings for leaders of RE in primary schools
- Research and share information about GCSE specifications used in Slough schools
- NASACRE membership
- 2 members of the SACRE to attend the NASACRE AGM
- SACRE newsletter to be published 3 times during the year
- One sixth of the cost of the coordinated working with five other SACREs in a subsidized hub initiative
- A training session on collective worship which was carried over from last year
- A training session on combatting radicalization, carried over from last year
- Preparation of the Annual SACRE report

This plan was costed and enabled regular review.

Members take seriously their responsibility to keep up to date with developments in religious education. As a consequence, following the publication of the report entitled *A New Settlement: Religion and Belief in Schools* a sub-committee was formed to consider its implications in detail and formally respond to NASACRE's invitation to do so. The response contained positive points as well as questions and challenging comments. Members received a report on the high court ruling about the new GCSE specifications together with the response of the British Humanist Association and counter interpretations. It was agreed in discussion that the implications of these ideas might need to be considered when the Pan-Berkshire RE syllabus is reviewed starting in 2017.

The SACRE was also alerted to the publication of the *Understanding Christianity* project in May 2016. This is major resource for teaching about Christianity in Key Stages 1-3 and training is likely to be available within the area. Sikh members, in particular, expressed interest in learning more about the project to see if comparable resources about Sikhism might be possible for the future.

Jo Fageant attended the autumn term conference of the South East England Faith Forum. Councillor Brooker visited the Eden Muslim Girls School. Sue Elbrow attended, with the Chair, a 'Cup of Tea' event, hosted in the home of a Muslim family, designed to break down barriers between different groups of people. All these initiatives were reported to and discussed by SACRE members.

Resources

Following the closure of Slough Religious Studies Resource Centre many resources have been stored at St Mary's CE Primary School and are available for loan to other Slough schools. However, many are unaware of what the collection comprises. Work on photographing, cataloguing and publishing this information started during but will continue during the next academic year.

Updating the SACRE section of the Slough Borough Council website, however, made better progress. It is now easier to find information about the SACRE and its work:

[http://www.slough.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/standing-advisory-council-for-religious-education-\(sacre\).aspx](http://www.slough.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/standing-advisory-council-for-religious-education-(sacre).aspx) Members continue to be very grateful to the Clerk for his ongoing work on this.

The SACRE agreed to continue to fund the hard copy publication to all schools of a newsletter three times a year.

Partnership working

Jo Fageant attended the NASACRE AGM in May. Once again this was a very beneficial experience of meeting with members of other SACREs throughout the country. Baroness Butler-Sloss was the keynote speaker and spoke about the report *Living with Difference: community, diversity and the common good*

<https://corablivingwithdifference.files.wordpress.com/2015/12/living-with-difference-online.pdf>)

There was lively debate in the room about this with several members reporting that SACREs and teachers of RE had for years been addressing some of the issues raised in the report. A full report of the AGM was provided to members at the June meeting.

This year saw enormous progress made with the plan for the six 'Berkshire' SACREs to work in partnership. This cooperative working started in the previous year with the development of the 'Crossing the Bridges' project which had received a £2000 grant from the Culham St Gabriel's Trust. The project focused on ways of enriching schools' engagement with faith communities through visiting places of worship and inviting speakers into RE lessons. Subsequently, discussions took place about the merits of formalizing the joint working. It was agreed that this would enable a continuation of the 'Crossing the Bridges' project as well as preparing for the syllabus review required to start in the summer of 2017. Meetings of the Chairs of the SACREs along with the professional advisers were scheduled and a business plan explored to include the appointment of a hub coordinator. When it was costed it was shared with all six SACREs and Slough, along with all the other five, agreed to fund the formalized hub agreement. A grant of £4000 was also secured from the Westhill Awards programme administered by NASACRE. This enabled the appointment of a teacher to work on the compilation of a directory of participating places of worship, a subsidized conference to be held in September 2016 and training days in November 2016 of people who host visits to places of worship. To assist the coordinated working of all six SACREs it was agreed that hub meetings would take place three times a year in the first half of each term and SACRE meetings would take place in the first two weeks after the mid-term break in each term.

Collective Worship

It has not been necessary to renew any determinations during this year. Training to include the legal requirements for collective worship and a range of stimulating ways for its delivery is included in the plan for the year 2016-2017. To develop their own understanding of the support available for collective worship, members received a report on the *Open the Book* initiative that some local churches are involved in and has been well received at Lent Rise School.

Not yet updated

**Membership of Slough Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education
2015-2016**

Representing	Member	Meetings attended
Group A	Christian denominations and other religions	
Free churches	Sue Elbrow	/3
Black Free Churches	Vacancy	
The Roman Catholic Church	Vacancy	
Baha'i	Vacancy	
Hinduism	Naresh Saraswat	/3
Islam	Julie Siddiqi	/3
	Zubayr Abbas Bowkan	/3
	Waqar Bhatti	/2
	Vacancy	
Judaism	Vacancy	
Sikhism	Hardip Singh Sohal	/3
	Ashpreet Singh Nainu	/3
Group B	The Church of England	
	Rev Andrew Allen	/3
	Christine Isles	/3
	Andrea Sparrow	/3
Group C	Associations representing teachers	
ASCL	Vacancy	
ATL	Vacancy	
NAHT	Vacancy	
NAS/UWT	Vacancy	
NUT	Lynda Bussley	/3
VOICE	Linda Lewis	/3
Group D	The Local Authority	
	Cllr Ajaib	/2
	Cllr Brooker	/3
	Cllr Cheema	/2
	Cllr Dhaliwal	/1
	Cllr Rana	/3
	Cllr Zarait	/1
Clerk	Neil Fraser	3/3
Professional Adviser	Jo Fageant	3/3
Officer	Robin Crofts	3/3

Also in attendance