

# Swindon SACRE Annual Report 2019 - 2020

## Annual RE Conference 2020

Friday 31st January 2020 9.30 am - 3.30 pm  
Engineers House, Bristol BS8 3NB

“RE to save the Planet?”



Our Annual RE Conference  
and examples of Religious  
Education from Even  
Swindon Primary School

## **Chair's Introduction**

Welcome to our annual report 2019 - 20

This was the most difficult year in most of our living memories for teachers and for Swindon SACRE. We only managed to meet twice this Academic year as the Summer Term meeting was cancelled due to the impact of the pandemic. Nevertheless we have managed to offer support and encouragement to Swindon Schools.

## **Supporting Good RE through CPD**

Once again we were able to serve schools through signposting an excellent, well attended and evaluated conference.

The Annual RE Conference organized jointly between Swindon, South Glos and Bristol SACREs was held on 31st January 2019 at Engineers House in Clifton, Bristol.

The theme was:

**“RE to Save the Planet”** and the keynote speaker was **Fiona Moss**. 11 Swindon teachers attended this event.

We unfortunately had to postpone the **“Assemblies SMSC British Values and Character Development for All Schools”** training planned for May the 5th and the summer **LTLRE conference** on June 26th (both to have been held at The Deanery CE Academy) due to Covid 19 restrictions.

We were able to signpost teachers to online materials for home learning for RE and guidance for Collective Worship at home and in small groups. These can be downloaded [here](#)

The Learn Teach Lead Initiative funded by the Jerusalem Trust and the St Matthias trust has also injected life into RE in the region by training and offering support to **Hub Leaders Emma McCarthy from Orchid Vale Primary School has been the Primary Swindon RE Hub leader during this reporting period. Emma Ainsley-King from Commonweal Secondary Hub** meetings are free and open to all schools and attract from between 8 to 35. The meeting in the autumn and the summer were held - the meeting in the spring was postponed. The Meeting held on the 19th October was led by **Adam Robertson** who is the LTLRE hub leader for Bristol and Adviser to South Glos SACRE and his subject was **Ideas to teach Islam**. The meeting held on the 22nd June was jointly held with Taunton LTLRE and arranged by their Hub leader Kathryn.

## **Suspended Initiatives that have had impact in previous years**

During this reporting period we have had to suspend **The WIRE Award** (Widening Inclusion in RE) as schools could not go on visits or have people to visit the school. The award recognises that a teacher from the school has attended CPD, pupils in any year group have visited a place of worship that is not Christian and either put on an RE day or enter an RE

competition such as Spirited Arts organized by NATRE. Some schools may have fulfilled some elements of the criteria during 2019 - 20 and this can be carried over to a future time.

The other initiative taken in previous years was in response to SACRE's need to monitor standards and compliance with little funding or capacity, we undertook a simple website scrutiny. With the pressure that senior leaders have been under this year it was deemed insensitive to continue with this scrutiny, but we hope to return to this in Academic year 2021-22

We have been able to continue to employ **Katy Staples as the adviser to SACRE** and, through her, individual bespoke support has been given to several schools. SACRE is grateful to Swindon Unitary Authority for its continuing support to Swindon SACRE through funding an adviser and ensuring timely and accurate clerking to the body through the work of Rita Glen-Gallo.

Our thanks go to those who have served us in the role of SACRE members and in the last year.

### **'Meaningful relationships'**

We have meaningful relationships with LA schools, academies, faith groups, and other local SACREs to ensure that we can offer our schools the best support possible. We continue to work closely with faith communities in Swindon and ensure that teachers can access faith speakers and people to help ensure visits to places of worship run well.

Our Collective Worship Guidance "Time to Breathe" 2016 has continued to be circulated signposted and recommended. This can be found by approaching the adviser [katy.staples@bristoldiocese.org](mailto:katy.staples@bristoldiocese.org).

**I have been SACRE Chair for over two years now** and have been privileged to serve this body through this exhausting and trying time. I am proud that through the engagement of teachers and committed SACRE members we have continued to be able to offer some advice to beleaguered colleagues. SACRE is a body committed to ensuring that the pupils in our area know and understand the complexity of religion and world views so they can live well in our diverse world and face all that life may place in their path..

*Fay Howard*

Councillor Fay Howard

**Chair of Swindon SACRE.**



## **What is SACRE?**

SACRE is the abbreviation for the **Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education**. Its composition is specifically multi-belief/ worldview and includes serving primary and secondary school teachers. There is also representation from the British Humanist Association.

It is a statutory requirement for every Local Authority to have a SACRE and to support its work. The purpose of SACRE is to advise on the effective provision of RE and Collective Worship.

Swindon SACRE believes that Religious Education is unique because it is the only subject where the curriculum is not prescribed nationally but agreed locally. This means that we can ensure that the syllabus we offer children and young people gives examples of belief lived and practiced by people who have lived and currently live in their locality.

## **The Agreed Syllabus for Swindon**

SACRE takes an active part in the review of the Locally Agreed Syllabus every five years by convening an Agreed Syllabus Conference. This Academic year 2019 - 20 we started to turn our attention to the need to renew our Agreed Syllabus during the Academic Year 2021-22 and to that end a time line was agreed in the March 2019 meeting. The current Agreed Syllabus was first adopted in 2016 and is written by RE Today Services to receive a copy please contact: [katy.staples@bristoldiocese.org](mailto:katy.staples@bristoldiocese.org)

## **How SACRE is funded and administered**

SACRE receives funding of £5,000 per annum from Swindon Council. As a statutory board SACRE is clerked through the council's services.

All SACRE's members are volunteers who give up their time freely and enthusiastically to help SACRE with its work.

## **SACRE Adviser**

The SACRE Adviser advises SACRE and enacts its decisions. Since 2009 Katy Staples (Bristol Diocese) has provided the advice and support for Swindon SACRE. She invoices the local authority three times a year and keeps within the budget set. This has provided SACRE with a dedicated and experienced resource. Katy also advises Bristol SACRE and has extensive expertise in education and working in schools. During this period, the Local Authority Elected Members, Steve Bogg and Senior Primary Commissioner, and Gareth Cheal Interim SEND lead were able to offer oversight of this council. Steve Bogg attended the November meeting.

SACRE works to the non-statutory guidance in the 1994 document: Circular 1/94. Parts of that document have been replaced with the guidance: 'Religious Education in English Schools: Non- statutory guidance 2010'.

Swindon Council has approved a constitution for SACRE. A copy of the constitution may be obtained from the Clerk to SACRE Rita Glen-Gallo [RGlen-Gallo@swindon.gov.uk](mailto:RGlen-Gallo@swindon.gov.uk)

## **Support for schools**

In line with its key priority to raise attainment in RE through advising and training teachers, SACRE undertook the following work in 2019-20

## **Annual RE Conference**

Teachers in Swindon were offered the opportunity to attend the Bristol South Glos and Swindon SACRE Annual RE conference. 11 teachers from Swindon Schools attended this conference. This year the Key Note speaker was Fiona Moss from RE Today Services. She spoke about **“RE to save the Planet”** and helped teachers to gain confidence in their subject knowledge by inspiring them with new ideas to investigate what religions teach about humans relationship and responsibilities towards the natural world. There were excellent workshops including: **“Hands on Creation for EYFS”** led by Claire Hawkins and Elinor Watt from Fishponds CE Academy, **“Stewards or Vandals”** led by Adam Robertson, Laura Harris (NATRE Regional Ambassador for RE) with Callum Humphries from Christian Aid.

There were two secondary workshops. One focussed on **“Buddhism and the Environment”** and was led by Emma Woodshaw from Gordano School and Advayamati from the Bristol Buddhist Centre. **“Christianity, Climate Change and Poverty”** was led by Jill Dickinson, former head of Religious Studies at Saint Mary Redcliffe and Temple School.

All the materials from this conference can be downloaded [here](#)

## **Best Practice Forums and Learn, Teach, Lead RE Conference**

A very exciting development in RE has been the *Learn, Teach, Lead RE (LTLRE)* project. This is a project that ran successfully in Devon and Cornwall, this was extended to include Somerset, Bristol, South Gloucestershire and Swindon. It has secured funding from the Jerusalem Trust and the St Matthias Trust with the aim of creating a network of RE ‘hubs’ that will train ‘hub leaders’ to offer support and training to all teachers, both primary and secondary to improve the teaching of RE. This project has been running and serving Swindon Schools since 2015 and has ably and consistently run by Emma McCarthy (Primary) from Orchid Vale Academy and Emma Ainsley-King (Secondary) Commonweal School. During this reporting period they have continued to receive training, both in person and online and have held hub meetings both in person and online.

The SACRE adviser, Katy Staples, assists in training the hub leaders. The new hub met twice during the 2019 - 20 year, one meeting held at Orchid Vale Primary Academy attracted 25 attendees, the Zoom training shared with the Taunton Hub attracted around 9 teachers of RE.. The variety of the Hub meetings ensured that RE leaders and teachers in Swindon were able to receive the support that they needed. This years meetings centred on Islam. Thanks go to both hub leaders for their drive and organisation!

## **Support for schools through Governor training**

As part of its role to offer advice on effective RE, SMSC and Collective Worship SACRE runs training for Governors who serve Swindon schools on an annual basis

On February 6th 2020 Katy Staples led a Governor training evening, 11 delegates from 9 schools attended , the feedback was 100% Good or Outstanding.

## **Monitoring of RE provision in Swindon**

A key task for SACRE is to monitor the overall provision of RE in Swindon schools. This is quite a difficult task, as it is some years since individual school Ofsted reports specifically commented on RE. The main evidence base that SACRE has to work from is the data from examinations. In the Year 2019-20 due to the pandemic no public examinations took place as a result we have no examination results to use to help us monitor the standards and entitlement to RE that pupils are receiving in Swindon Schools.

## **South West Regional SACRE conference**

Two SACRE members Jo Backus (Buddhist rep) and Katy Staples (adviser) attended this conference for SACRE members on March 2nd 2020 held at Dillington House, Ilminster.

The topic was **SACRE Futures**

**Professor Trevor Cooling**, Chair of the Religious Education Council provided a keynote address: "The Commission on RE - where to next?"

Other workshops included were

- The crisis in RE at KS4 and the offer being made in Bristol, Jill Dickinson and Ed Pawson
- The new 2019 Ofsted framework and the monitoring of RE, Laura Harris Regional Ambassador for RE
- Engagement and monitoring of RE provision in Schools using website checking as a tool for SACREs, Katy Staples shared Swindon SACRE's good practice
- Reviewing an Agreed Syllabus in the light of the national entitlement and Big Ideas for RE, Dave Francis and Barbara Wintersgill
- REQM: Celebrating your RE: One of the region's REQM assessors will explain the possibilities for SACREs and schools presented by the RE Quality Mark. The workshop will present new criteria for the award and explore how REQM can transform the subject and have a positive impact on wider school improvement issues. Jane Kelly.



## **Statutory matters**

SACRE has a statutory role to decide on any determinations. These are requests by schools to move away from the requirement for collective worship to be wholly, broadly or mainly of a Christian character. During the period of this report, there have been no requests for determinations.

Where a complaint has been made about the RE curriculum in a Swindon school, it should be referred to Swindon Council for it to deal with. Swindon Council has undertaken to seek SACRE's advice on any such complaint. There have been no formal complaints within this reporting period.

SACRE has a complaints procedure to deal with any complaints made against SACRE. There were no such complaints in the reporting period.

## **Members of SACRE September 2019 -20**

<b>Committee A:</b>	David Burbidge (Baptist Church)
Christian and other religious denominations	Jo Backus (Buddhist Community)
	Dinesh Patel (Hindu Community)
9 Members	Reverend David Howell (Swindon Evangelical Alliance)
	Atiff Ghafar (Muslim Community)
	M S Khan (Muslim Community)
	Malkit Babbra , (Sikh)
	Clare-Marie Burchall (Roman Catholic Community)
	Michelle Howard (United Reformed Church)
<b>Committee B</b>	Ruth Williams
Church of England	Reverend Clive Deverell
	Reverend Norma McKemey
<b>Committee C</b>	
teachers nominated by the South Gloucestershire TCC	Mrs Tracy Mason
	Mrs Lottie O'Brien
	Mrs Helen Redhead
	Mrs Emma McCarthy

**Committee D** Councillor Matthew Courtliff

Local Authority representatives Councillor Fay Howard  
Councillor Oladapo Ibitoye  
Councillor Garry Perkins  
Councillor Bazil Solomon

**Committee E** Fidelma Meehan (Baha'i Community)

Non voting Co-opted Jo Garton (Humanist)

During the reporting period, SACRE was chaired by Fay Howard and the vice chair was Emma McCarthy.

The Clerk was Rita Glen-Gallo.

Meetings were held at the following places on these dates:

**Commonweal Secondary School, The Mall, Swindon, SN1 4JE**

**26th November 2019**

Main agenda items were:

1. A presentation from Emma Ainslie-King about RE at Commonweal School
2. KS4 Working Party - non exam RE SACRE guidance
3. Religious Education and the New Ofsted Framework
4. Feedback from Hub meetings ,
5. The WIRE Gold Award

**The Deanery CE Academy, Peglars Way, Swindon SN1 7DA**

1. Presentation from Sarah Stewart about RE at The Deanery CE Academy
2. Draft SACRE Annual Report
3. Development Plan
4. Suggested Timeline for the Agreed Syllabus Review process
5. Feedback from RE conference held in Bristol and from SACRE conference held at Dillington House in Illminster.

**The meeting of the July 21st 2020 was cancelled due to the Covid Pandemic.**

All SACRE meetings are open to members of the public who should contact the Clerk for details of forthcoming meetings.

The Swindon SACRE can be contacted via its Clerk: Rita Glen-Gallo [RGlen-Gallo@swindon.gov.uk](mailto:RGlen-Gallo@swindon.gov.uk)