

Bristol SACRE Annual Report

2021-2022



Bristol SACRE

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education



Shabbat a special time
Has a special Meaning
About coming together as family no cooking or cleaning
But starts at a Friday sunset ends on Saturday
But when it happens we rest from drama
And we come together to see a praital challah bread
The screen locked up and away

Bristol SACRE's Annual Report 2021-22

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Thanks to Elmlea Junior School for the cover photos

1. Introduction

1.1 Words from the Chair

Welcome to our Annual Report 2021-22.

What a year we had over 2021-22, as we began to emerge from the restrictions of Covid and sought to reconnect in person in personal and professional contexts. Bristol SACRE also resumed in-person activities over the year as we continued to maintain our on-going support of our educational and civic communities. Notably, we were able to resume presenting the WIRE award in-person to our schools, celebrating the achievements of pupils across the city directly. We also held our own June meeting at the Bristol Hindu temple, which was a welcomed opportunity to engage tangibly with more of our diverse faith groups. To balance the time management ease of participation that a digital medium allows with our desire to return to face-to-face exchanges, we ran our conferences and training hybrid whenever possible.

In addition, we rolled out our revised Agreed Syllabus and refreshed our training on the curriculum to support our local teachers. SACRE members also participated in the development of new materials to support the creation of worldview materials, in recognition of the recommendations of the 2018 CoRE report (and reinforced by the 2021 Census faith data released in November 2022).

Bristol SACRE was also successful in obtaining a Westhill Grant, led by our Humanist member, Matt Evans, for a project entitled *Bristol Minds*. The aim of the project is to shed light on how our own worldview informs how we approach our professional lives. It connects individuals who have made a contribution to the city of Bristol with secondary school students to reflect upon the ways in which our worldviews intersect with other areas of our lives beyond the personal.

These and our other activities are explained in further detail in the rest of this report.

I write these words with great sadness, however, as this will be my last report as Chair of Bristol SACRE, for my own professional life is taking me away from Bristol after this academic year. When I first joined SACRE as a Jewish representative six years ago, I was pleasantly surprised to discover that what brought me to represent my faith in this personal-civic nexus is what had brought many others: to ensure that our faiths and non-faiths are fully represented in our schools' RE curriculum, and to support our city's educators to teach about different worldviews with equal confidence and ease.

As I learned more about our SACRE's activities, I also realised that SACRE has a role to play in Bristol's broader civic dialogues and should be involved in other discussions that promote our collective harmonious living. When I stepped up as Chair, therefore, I made this my champion goal. I signed Bristol's Equality Charter

on behalf of SACRE and we have participated in the city's Equality Network ever since. When Covid hit, I served as part of a group convened by Bishop Viv that directly connected Bristol City Council support services with faith community representatives to ensure Covid-related help reached our varied communities; in this forum, I was able to ensure that BCC considered school contexts, our teaching staff and our children, especially when preparations began for a return to in-person teaching. Since then, I have brought both the work and network of SACRE to the awareness of the Bristol History Commission, and more recently, I have linked us to a research project at University College London that explores ways to present the intersection between faith and migration experiences among children from the past to the present.

I was able to do this because throughout my tenure I have been exceptionally well supported by our fabulous Schools Liaison Officers, Katy Staples and Adam Robertson. Both were already extremely experienced before I came on board, and I have benefitted tremendously from their extensive knowledge and understanding of world religions and world views, honed from their respective academic, personal and professional experiences. Our SACRE would not be the vibrant, forward-thinking, collaborative entity it is without their dedication and hard work.

It has been my privilege and honour to work with Katy and Adam, as well as our colleagues at Bristol City Council, notably Jenny Brookes and Su Coombe, as well as our enthusiastic Councillors. It has also been a tremendous pleasure to collaborate with our SACRE members on various initiatives over the years. I thank you all for allowing me the opportunity to give back to our amazing city in such a meaningful way.

Tamar Hodos Lucas

Professor Tamar Hodos Lucas

Chair of Bristol SACRE

March 2023



1.2 Overview – SACRE

A Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) is legally constituted by a Local Authority with the responsibility for overseeing Religious Education and Collective Worship in community, VC (RE only not CW), foundation schools without a religious character and trust schools.

Academies, Free schools & VA schools lie outside the SACRE remit, but a good SACRE will try to establish links with any of these schools in its area.

SACRE has met three times in the last academic year. Two meetings were held online using video conferencing and one was held at Bristol Hindu Temple. All meetings were quorate and well attended. New members have been welcomed to join the various committees – detailed later.

In meetings the following aspects were discussed:

- Agreed syllabus; new resources and training for teachers and schools
- Religion and Worldviews (and its potential impact on teaching of RE)
- What makes an effective SACRE?
- Workforce data for Religious Studies in Secondary schools
- Work to support 'We are Bristol History' project
- Westhill Award for the 'Bristol Minds' project
- Planning for the annual conference

2. Religious Education

2.1 Locally Agreed Syllabus

The locally agreed syllabus in schools is Awareness Mystery Value. This is shared by Bath and North East Somerset, North Somerset and the London Borough of Haringey. The syllabus was renewed for a further five years from 2021 – 2026. The syllabus is utilised by many schools across the authority, including academies. A significant number of Primary Schools and Secondary Schools use other resources as well (such as "Discovery RE" or elements of the South Glos. Agreed Syllabus). A large number of Church of England Schools (VC and VA) also use the "Understanding Christianity" resource which is recommended by their Diocese.

During the period of this report, our new Hindu representatives have worked with Sarah Bateau to look at improving the teaching of Hindu Dharma in the agreed syllabus.

In March 2022, online training sessions were held to introduce teachers to the revisions made to the new Agreed syllabus. These sessions were led by Katy

Staples, Laura Harris and Jan McGuire. 27 Bristol teachers attended these sessions which aimed to set out how to plan from the revised syllabus to teach high quality RE in the classroom.

2.2 Monitoring

For the last 2 years, we have not been able to report on examination data due to the Covid pandemic. However, students sat examinations in Religious Studies in Summer 2022 and the GCSE results are produced below:

Name of school	Percentage of cohort entered for RS GCSE	Percentage of pupils achieving Grade 9-4	Percentage of pupils achieving Grade 9-5
St Mary Redcliffe and Temple School	97.7	90.1	78.3
St Bernadette Catholic Secondary School	97.1	70.4	62.2
Bristol Brunel Academy	12.8	75.9	62.1
Bristol Cathedral Choir School	39.7	88.3	88.3
Montpelier High School	21.5	86.2	79.3
Merchant's Academy	0	0	0
Oasis John Williams Academy	8.4	42.9	28.6
Oasis Academy Brightstowe	14.4	75	50
Bristol Metropolitan Academy	14.1	68	56
Bristol Free School	16.1	80.6	80.6
Cotham School	0.5	100	100
St Bede's Catholic College	87.2	90.9	84.0
Bedminster Down School	5.9	50	50
Orchard School	14.4	72.7	54.5
Redland Green School	12.6	86.2	75.9
Bridge Learning Campus	7.7	50	50
Oasis Academy Brislington	29.4	78.6	64.3
Fairfield High School	98.1	83.8	73.8
Venturer's Academy	0	0	0
City Academy School	87.8	63.6	47.3
Ashton Park School	19.6	85.4	68.3
Blaise High School	21.7	69.7	57.6
Bristol average	28.1	79.5	68.8
National average	34	76.8	66.1

The data shows a mixed picture for Bristol Schools. In terms of positive news:

- Bristol achieved above the national average in terms of GCSE results – 3% above for Grades 9-4 and 2.7% above for Grades 9-5.
- Congratulations to St Mary Redcliffe and Temple, Bristol Cathedral Choir School, Montpelier High, Bristol Free, St Bede's Catholic College and

Redland Green School who achieved significantly above the national average. A huge thanks to the hard work of teachers and students.

- Schools such as Fairfield High, City Academy, St Bede's, St Bernadette's and St Mary Redcliffe offer GCSE to virtually all students in the cohort. Their efforts and achievements should be celebrated.

Other areas for further exploration are:

- Overall, Bristol enters fewer students than the national average for RS GCSE. Bristol ranks 140 out of 165 for local authorities. This is despite having a diverse range of worldviews in the city. It is worth investigating why these entries are so low.
- If schools are not entering students for a GCSE in Religious Studies, they still need to be offering some form of RE provision to meet the legal requirement to teach RE throughout Key Stage 4. SACRE will be writing to schools with low entries for GCSE RS to find out what provision is being made for those students not taking a GCSE course.
- As part of its monitoring role, SACRE looks at the workforce data which shows the number of hours being taught in terms of RE in all secondary schools. This data is used to guide the conversations with schools.
- SACRE recognises that there is a national issue with Religious Studies not being part of the English Baccalaureate and therefore disincentivising schools to teach it. It supports the work being done nationally by the Religious Education Council, National Association of SACREs and the National Association of Teachers of RE (NATRE) to raise this issue. In addition to this, it recognises the shortages of specialist RE teachers being trained in the UK presently.

2.3 LTLRE (Learn Teach Lead RE) Hub in Bristol

Learn, Teach, Lead RE is a regional programme to support RE that stretches from Cornwall to Wiltshire. Each local authority area has a Primary lead and a Secondary lead. Hub leaders are classroom teachers who get access to high quality training and facilitate three hubs per year aimed at both primary and secondary teachers, and teaching assistants.

The Bristol LTLRE Hub is very strong and well led; Sarah Bateau from Elmlea Junior School has continued as the Primary lead and the Secondary lead was shared by Merryn Evans (Redland Green) Claire Anderton (Colston Girls/ Montpellier High School) and Hannah Fox (St Bernadette's RE Secondary School, Whitchurch).

All meetings have happened online and have been very well attended (between 15 – 32 attendees – which is many more than used to attend when we met in person).

Feedback has been incredibly positive and there is a real sense of a shared RE community in this group with some innovative exciting ideas shared.

2.4 Conferences

The annual SACRE RE conference was held on 28th January 2022 and it was a blended conference – online and at Engineer’s House. The theme was ‘How interesting are you?’ and was focussed on developing curiosity about religion and worldviews. The keynote speaker was Lat Blaylock from RE Today. There were also other workshops led by Merryn Evans from Redland Green School and Pollyanna Pearman from Avonmouth CE Primary – both SACRE teacher representatives. 28 Bristol teachers attended, alongside colleagues from South Gloucestershire, Swindon and Wiltshire. Feedback on the conference was very positive and teachers were keen to take the ideas and suggestions back their classrooms. Some quotes below:

‘I found this very inspiring. It’s made me think about the RE lesson content and I will be discussing with the deputy head teacher at my school about ways we can make our RE lessons more fun and engaging.’

‘I found Lat engaging, passionate, and generous in sharing his ideas. If only every RE teacher could spend time with him! The depth of learning with the use of questions and exploration is something I will talk to our schools about.’

‘Loved the practical ideas and cross curricular links to other subjects with RE – love the idea of planning fantasy pilgrimage and 5 thoughts about GOD.’

LTLRE conference

This blended conference was held at Engineers’ House in 1st July 2022, with 28 delegates attending in person and 20 online. There were 15 delegates from Bristol Schools, in person and 12 online. The title was ‘Connected Curriculum’, with presentations from keynote speaker Adam Robertson, together with workshops from Laura Ford (Brentry Primary) on her recent experience of an Ofsted deep dive in RE, Joe Kinnaird on writing in RE, Sarah Bareau from Elmlea Junior, and Katy Thomas on diversity in the RE curriculum. Those able to attend in person were grateful of the opportunity to meet with colleagues in the same space, and those online were appreciative of the chance to receive presentations and workshops despite being unable to attend the event physically. Some quotes from teachers below:

‘All really helpful and inspiring. Deep dive tips were so helpful’

‘Loved Sarah Bareau and Adam Robertson. So practical and inspiring. You want to go and try things out.’

2.4 Westhill Grant

SACRE was delighted to receive an award of £4,000 for its project entitled 'Bristol Minds'. The project is the brilliant idea of Matt Evans, Humanist representative on SACRE, in partnership with other members. Focusing on individuals who have made a contribution to the city of Bristol, it aims to inspire youngsters to reflect upon how their worldviews can inform their approach to their future. It does so by connecting secondary schools pupils with adult individuals of diverse worldviews who have made a contribution to the city of Bristol, the so-called Bristol Minds, who may be academic, industrial, political, or social action leaders, for example. Pairs of pupils interview a Bristol Mind to consider how worldviews might shape life decisions and how they have informed the Mind's approach to their work.

The project is being piloted during 2022/23 and will be rolled out over 2023/24.

2.5 Communication

Termly newsletters have continued, with all schools receiving a SACRE newsletter three times per year. The newsletter contains contact details for various communities and resources, as well as ideas for the classroom and information on upcoming events and CPD.

2.6 School support

During Covid times and ongoing, all schools have been offered the opportunity of 1:1 support from the adviser. 10 schools have accessed a 1.5 hour adviser-led session supporting them with the development of RE and/or collective worship,

At the beginning of the academic year in September and repeated in December, new RE subject leaders were signposted to training about how to be an effective subject leader that was jointly led by the SACRE adviser. 20 teachers from Bristol schools attended this training.

3. Collective worship

3.1 Policies and guidance

SACRE has not reviewed its CW or SMSC policy or guidance during this period.

3.2 Monitoring and support

During this reporting period it has only been appropriate for SACRE to provide guidance and support and not monitoring and scrutiny of Collective Worship. Schools have shared their appreciation for the support offered. Monitoring will recommence in 2022/23.

3.3 Determinations

During this reporting period there were no determinations applied for.

4. Links with other organisations

4.1 NASACRE

Bristol SACRE continues to maintain its membership to the National Association of SACREs. This provides access to important updates on national issues and the use of recommended templates for policies and guidance documents. SACRE members were invited to attend the NASACRE AGM on 23rd May 2022. The theme of the event was 'Ambitious SACREs', with keynote speakers Ed Pawson and Richard Kueh presenting on 'working together for high quality RE' and "The curriculum and Ofsted". A variety of workshops were available on subjects such as using artefacts and vocabulary, interfaith encounters and dealing with determinations. 2 members attended this conference.

4.2 LTLRE

As outlined above, Bristol SACRE continues to have significant commitment and practical involvement with the Learn, Teach, Lead RE programme. The Adviser to SACRE assists in the planning and running of meetings and communicates with hub members regularly with RE updates and information via email. The Adviser also chairs the steering committee for the project, and works very closely with Ed Pawson the project manager and manages the finances for this project.

4.3. Diocese

SACRE maintains strong working relationships with the Church of England (Bristol diocese). Through contractual agreements, the adviser to SACRE is also a school's adviser for Bristol Diocese and a large amount of goodwill and RE development takes place in Bristol through this relationship.

4.4 Other local involvement

Regional SACRE conference: 28th February 2022

This was held online again this year. Bristol SACRE representatives played a lead role this year. The keynote was by Stephen Pett – outlining the latest thinking from

the Religious Education Council on Religion and Worldviews. Our Chair, Tamar Hodos Lucas, ran a workshop on leading SACREs, in collaboration with Duncan Struthers, Bristol SACRE Vice-Chair and former Hillingdon SACRE Chair, and Annette Earl, Wiltshire SACRE Chair. In addition, Katy Staples and Ruth Pickersgill ran a workshop on how SACREs can contribute to EDI education. It is great to see SACRE representatives playing such a key role regionally. 4 members of Bristol SACRE attended the conference.

5. SACRE arrangements

5.1 Organisation

Chair – Tamar Hodos Lucas

Vice-Chair - Duncan Struthers

Clerk – Steve Gregory

Local Authority link officers – Jenny Brookes

Adviser – Katy Staples katy.staples@bristoldiocese.org (until Summer 2022)

5.2 Membership

As reported in the introduction, all meetings in this period were quorate.

In the October 2021 meeting we welcomed Aditya Raghunath and Shweta Iyengar as Hindu representatives to Committee A.

SACRE used the NASACRE template to consider the features of an effective SACRE and looked at workforce data as part of its monitoring role.

In the March 2022 meeting, SACRE considered a presentation from Tim Coles about the 'We are Bristol History Commission' and how SACRE could contribute. It also reviewed the Annual Report.

At this meeting we also said a farewell to Advayamati as the Buddhist representative and Daniel Leiblich as the Roman Catholic representative on Committee A.

In the June meeting we met at the Hindu mandir and were generously shown around by Aditya and Shweta. Tamar Hodos Lucas was re-elected as Chair for another term (four years).

Matt Evans informed members of the Westhill Grant award and plans for how to take it forward.

Members of SACRE September 2021 – July 2022:

Committee A: Christian and other religious denominations

Tamar Hodos Lucas (Chair)

Progressive Jewish

Matthew Evans (June Meeting)

Humanist

Daniel Leiblich (resigned)

Roman Catholic

Mohammad – Nassir Miah

Muslim

Rachel Noyce

Independent Church

Dh Advayamati (resigned)

Buddhist

Reissa Beth Perring

Bahai

Aditya Raghunath

Shweta Iyengar

Hindu

Committee B – Church of England

Duncan Struthers

Jill Dickinson

Fiona Dorman

Committee C – teachers nominated by the
Bristol TCC

Simon Parminter
Pollyanna Pearman
Alice Sarbicki

Committee D – Local Authority representatives

Cllr Liz Radford
Cllr Sharon Scott
Cllr Christine Townsend

Committee E – non voting co-opted

Ruth Pickersgill
Community
Teresa Griffiths
University of Bristol
Clive Lawton
Orthodox Jewish