

SACRE Annual Report 2023 - 2024

1. Introduction and Overview

David Taylor was re-elected as Chair for Academic Year 2023/24. David Taylor has said that he would be stepping down as Chair in 2025.

Clare Hawkins stepped down from West Berks SACRE and Amanda Bedding was re-elected as Vice-Chair. Many new members joined West Berks SACRE. Councillor Tony Vickers, Robin Launder (Humanists UK), Rev Angela Brennan (Church of England), Mel Higgs (LA Advisor) and Councillor Clive Taylor were all accepted as members of West Berks SACRE.

Val Bolan resigned from West Berks SACRE. Val was thanked for all of her help and support to West Berks SACRE during her time on the committee.

2. Statutory Responsibilities in RE

In West Berkshire we produce our Locally Agreed Syllabus (LAS) in conjunction with the other five SACREs in Berkshire once every five years. The LAS is well established in most of our schools, and most academies have also adopted it. The LAS has been developed over the past year by Anne Andrews, David Rees and Angela Hill, with contributions made by many members across Berkshire. Some concerns have been raised about the content for some religions. Advice has been sought and amendments have been made following the advice. It is hoped that the new LAC will be adopted by the SACREs in the Pan-Berkshire Hub in Autumn 2024. The launch event for the new LAC has been arranged for March 2025, for it to be adopted from September 2025.

3. Statutory Responsibilities in Collective Worship

SACRE has continued to monitor Collective Worship and to engage with local religion and worldview communities to provide appropriate speakers to help schools hear the lived experience and lead reflections. Several members have been in contact with schools regarding Collective Worship and have had mixed results and feedback from schools. West Berks SACRE will continue to contact and support schools with Collective Worship.

4. Links with Other Bodies

As mentioned above West Berkshire SACRE works closely with our sister SACREs in the Pan-Berkshire Hub. We include membership of NASACRE in our budget each year. David Rees helps us stay in touch with RE Online and the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust. Links to other organisations are actively being sought and SACRE members are encouraged to investigate local and national contacts.

5. Local Involvement

As well as our teacher members, our Chairman David Taylor and other members of SACRE are involved in a number of local schools in various ways, for example organising and chairing panel discussions with faith and worldview representatives in secondary schools. David Rees and Amanda Bedding host three RE network meetings across the school year that continue to be well attended. David Rees authors a newsletter that is emailed out three times a year.

6. SACRE Arrangements

David Rees continued to serve as our Professional Adviser, and we benefit hugely from his expertise and involvement. Thomas Radbourne from West Berkshire Council now serves as our Clerk. Both of them keep in contact with the Chair and Vice Chair between SACRE meetings in order to share relevant information. In the financial year beginning April 2024, SACRE was granted £4840, the same figure as the previous year. The autumn 2023 and spring 2024 meetings were online, but the summer 2024 was one face-to-face and hosted by Amanda Bedding at Calcot Junior School. It will continue that two meetings a year will be online/hybrid and one will be face to face.