

Annual Report of the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) Blackburn with Darwen September 2021

Contents

Pages Number	Contents
1	1 Words from the Chair of Blackburn with Darwen SACRE
2-3	2 SACRE meetings, 2020 venues and a brief overview of content of these meetings.
4-8	3 Religious Education
8	4 Collective Worship
8	5 Links with other bodies
8	Blackburn with Darwen SACRE
Appendices	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. SEF 2. Action plan March to December 2021 3. Membership List September 2021 4. Terms of Reference

Words from the Chair

SACRE has gone through a period of significant change in terms of leadership and membership over the last academic year. A firm commitment was made by leadership within the education department to re-establish and invigorate a high quality SACRE, to ensure that the Local Authority was able to meet its statutory duties. This commitment was borne out of the desire to provide high quality support advice and guidance for RE and collective worship and to breathe new life into the curriculum for our young people. Ultimately the aim was to ensure that the learning offer from Blackburn with Darwen was vibrant, relevant, and inspiring for the young people.

We began by reviewing the membership of SACRE to ensure that all major local religious communities were represented. The membership now strongly reflects the diversity of the wider religious and professional community. SACRE meetings are now representative, engaging, and productive. All members feel that their views are considered and respected. Moreover, every good use is now made of co-option to ensure membership of the SACRE is well informed and is highly representative of the diversity of the local community. The SACRE has a well-developed process of co-option of where local teachers of RE have been co-opted as well as representatives from each School Improvement Group. SACRE now has a broad representation from all types of school in the LA.

We have also engaged the support of an external consultant to support the new Chair in the period of significant change.

It is important to highlight also that Blackburn with Darwen (BwD) has faced immense COVID related challenges, which have been particularly unique to our area. Factors such as intergenerational living, range of housing stock, multiple community languages and digital literacy and access have all contributed to BwD presenting with consistently high infection rates and consequently prolonged tougher restrictions. Some of the areas most deprived communities and South Asian neighbourhoods have been affected disproportionately. Throughout these challenging times, SACRE has continued to meet successfully twice a term, digitally, via TEAMS, to ensure that the planned work continues. As Blackburn with Darwen has been identified as an area of "Enduring Transmission", this arrangement will continue for 2021 to 2022. As Chair I am incredibly grateful to all who have positively embraced the new ways of meeting and demonstrated their commitment to support SACRE through these the most challenging of times. We look forward, to be able to report further progress of our work in our report next year.

Alison Ashworth-Taylor

2. SACRE meetings, 2020 venues and a brief overview of content of these meetings.

Date All meetings via Microsoft TEAMS	Brief overview of content of these meetings. Comprehensive copies of minutes can be found at: https://blackburn.gov.uk/search?search_api_fulltext=SACRE
8th July 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome, Introductions and relaunch of SACRE, last meeting was February 2019. Priorities for the year were agreed: • Membership review, funding source, commissioning of a consultant, raising profile of SACRE.
12th February 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alison Ashworth-Taylor was appointed as the new Chair • Dot Thomson was commissioned as a Consultant to the Advisory Board and to the Chair. • Membership was clarified in relation to the Committees and gaps were clearly identified. • Terms of reference were discussed and amended for agreement at the next meeting. • Communication route with academies was clarified. • The Knife Angel project, planned for hosting in November 2021, was briefly introduced to the committee. This project was to be hosted at the Cathedral and was aimed at reducing knife crime and the prevention of it. Further details would be discussed at the next meeting. • The City of Sanctuary and Refugee Week were identified as future themes for SACRE. Brief discussion took place regarding the funding for SACRE and RE • Confirmation that the RE syllabus is due for review in 2022.
23rd March 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visiting speaker Chris Seddon City of Sanctuary/ School of Sanctuary/Refugee Week CS attended the meeting at the request of the SACRE board to speak to them about the above initiatives. CS explained to the group what this initiative entailed, how schools, colleges and even shops could be part of this initiative. It was noted that BCHS is the only School of Sanctuary in the borough. The Refugee Week will take place from 14th June – 20th June and the theme is “You’ll Never Walk Alone”. The group agreed that this would be an ideal opportunity for our schools to get involved in Refugee Week. • The SEF was distributed to the group prior to the meeting and the Chair gave an update on each of the points below: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Standards and quality of provision of religious education 2. Management of the SACRE and partnership with the LA and other key stakeholders 3. The effectiveness of the locally agreed syllabus 4. Collective worship 5. Contribution of the SACRE to the social and racial harmony agenda • Short Term Action Plan The Chair shared the short term action plan and went through the priorities in the plan which included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key Priority 1: to ascertain levels of compliance in time allocation for RE Key Priority 2: The SACRE work in effective partnership with the LA to monitor and evaluate standards for RE in Blackburn with Darwen Schools Key Priority 3: To ensure that The SACRE is legally compliant and effective in its partnership with the LA to enable the LA to carry out its responsibilities successfully. Key Priority 4: The SACRE has a clear procedure established to ensure an efficient response to request for determination. • It was noted that the LA had committed to £15,000 to the SACRE budget. The board accepted the SEF and the action points identified.
25 th May 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visiting Speaker: Emma Owen Message Trust Knife Angel visit in November to Blackburn Cathedral. ‘No More Knives’ A presentation was shared detailing the background of the “No More Knives initiative”. The pilot scheme that was set up and the positive feedback that they received was discussed.

	<p>The costs for the schools/groups to access the “No Knives More Knives Tour” were shared. It was agreed that it would be beneficial for our schools to hear directly from the Message Trust regarding the tour.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data report for R.E. presentation by Victoria Dugdale It was noted that there is no performance table data available for 2020 and there will be no data available for 2021. The latest available data is for 2019. See below for data detail. • SACRE agreed to raise awareness amongst schools regarding the Together Coalition and the Thank You day being organised on Sunday, 5th July. It was also noted that High schools within Blackburn Diocese had been invited to a service of thanksgiving at the Cathedral on 20th June. • The Agreed Syllabus consultation questionnaire was agreed by SACRE and would be sent to schools on 21st June. • The website address was launched for Bwd SACRE
6th July 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visiting Speaker Sheila Gewolb Sheila Gewolb is an elected member on the Board of Deputies of British Jews to the meeting and has been a member of the Cumbria SACRE since 2013, she is also a development worker for the National executive of NASACRE and has recently been re elected for another three years. SG explained that she and Jake Berger (staff officer) will work together to ensure there is Jewish representation on Bwd SACRE. SW highlighted key areas that she and Jake Berger will be working on including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensuring appropriate Jewish representation on SACRE boards ▪ Education Outreach work ▪ Jewish Living Experience Exhibition • SACRE received feedback from NASACRE conference • Determinations the LA have now identified which schools need a determination and which schools are up for renewal. This has been communicated to Headteachers. • Brief discussion took place regarding the involvement of young pupils in the work of the SACRE board. It was suggested to have a young people’s SACRE and tapping into the Student Council.
CPD	<p>Chair, Helen Sage, and Dot Thomson attended the NASACRE conference via Teams on Monday 24th Key points were highlighted for discussion in the SACRE meeting on the 6th of July, from the report that had been distributed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Finances pose a significant challenge ▪ Lack of expertise in RE was raised ▪ Importance of free thinking and personal perspective ▪ SACRE reports – things to include in the report, help develop our action plan and use the structure to write out the first annual SACRE report. ▪ Focus on areas that affect Bwd from a national perspective ▪ SACRE – look at how we develop our action plan, take on board the actions identified and how this will inform the review of the RE Syllabus ▪ Offering quality CPD ▪ Pupil voice is key going forward and student representation on the SACRE is something to consider ▪ Curriculum redesign ▪ World views
CPD for Chair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular, invaluable, meetings have taken place between the Chair, Dot Thomson, and Helen Sage to support the Chair’s development in her new role. Themes for these meetings have included the following areas: Minute taking/ensuring correct representation in membership/ action planning/ SEF/Annual report writing/post conference discussion/agreed syllabus consultation/determinations.

3. Religious Education

Local Agreed Syllabus

The Blackburn with Darwen agreed syllabus for religious education 2017-2022 was adopted from RE Today. It is the syllabus to be used by all community schools and has been adopted by all non-faith based academies and free schools. SACRE has begun the review cycle and will set a full review timetable in its September meeting, 2021.

Questionnaires have been distributed to school and responses collated. The response rate was 98% from schools and there was a clear mandate for change.

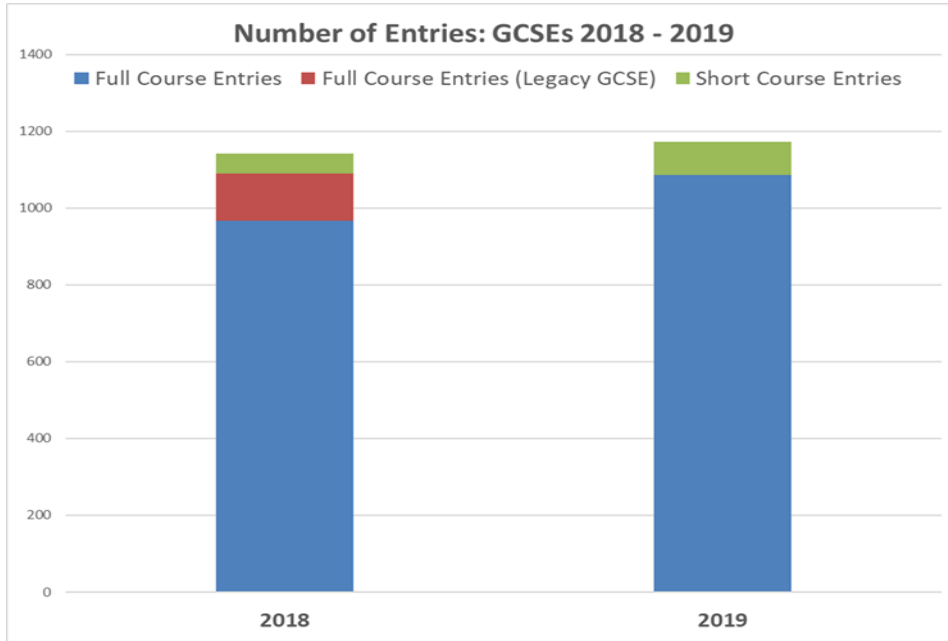
Standards and monitoring of RE

There is no performance table data available for 2020 and there will be no data available for 2021.

The latest available data is for 2019.

Key Stage 4

2019 was the first year where all the legacy GCSE courses had been phased out and all pupils were graded on the new 9-1 scale.



Faith schools generally had the higher number of entrants, with the exception of Pleckgate, where 98.7% of all pupils were entered. St Wilfrid's was the only school entering pupils for the short course in 2019, all others undertook the full course. The average grade (using the new 9-1 scale) was 5.5, significantly above the national average of 5.1. 76% of pupils entered achieved at least a standard pass (Grade 4 and above) compared with 71% nationally.

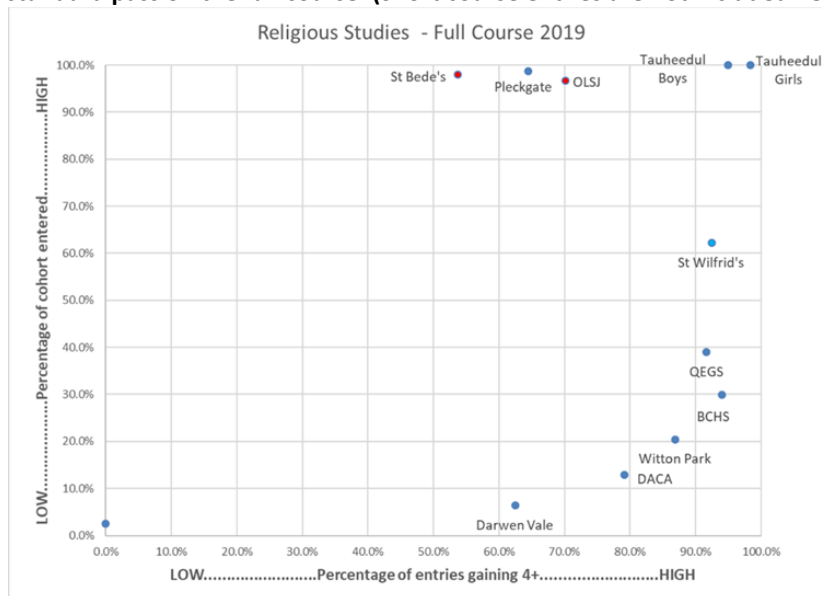
Summary of 2019 entries:

FULL COURSE	2019		SHORT COURSE	2019
	Academy	Voluntary Aided		St Wilfrid's
NOR	1510	334	NOR	235
Number of entries	761	325	Number of entries	86
Number of 5+	587	135	Number of 5+	47
% Entered Gaining 5+	77.1%	41.5%	% Entered Gaining 5+	54.7%
Number of 4+	641	198	Number of 4+	58
% Entered Gaining 4+	84.2%	60.9%	% Entered Gaining 4+	67.4%
% of NOR entered	50.4%	97.3%	% of NOR entered	36.6%

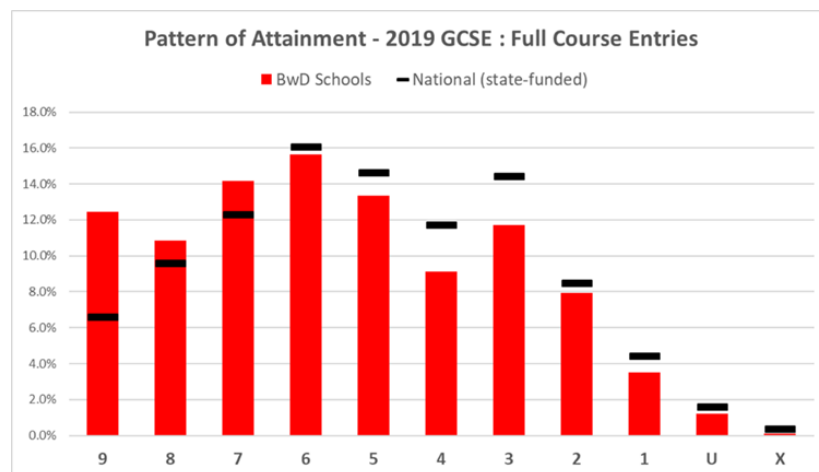
The two remaining VA schools are highlighted on the school by school breakdown below.

	2019 FULL												2019 SHORT
	Darwen Vale	QEGS	St Wilfrid's	Tauheedul Boys	Tauheedul Girls	The Heights	BCHS	OLSJ	Witton Park	DACA	Pleckgate	St Bede's	St Wilfrid's
NOR	126	123	235	98	120	39	167	146	186	185	231	188	235
Number of entries	8	48	146	98	120	1	50	141	38	24	228	184	86
Number of 5+	4	41	130	91	115	0	45	65	27	19	115	70	47
% Entered Gaining 5+	50.0%	85.4%	89.0%	92.9%	95.8%	0.0%	90.0%	46.1%	71.1%	79.2%	50.4%	38.0%	54.7%
Number of 4+	5	44	135	93	118	0	47	99	33	19	147	99	58
% Entered Gaining 4+	62.5%	91.7%	92.5%	94.9%	98.3%	0.0%	94.0%	70.2%	86.8%	79.2%	64.5%	53.8%	67.4%
% of NOR entered	6.3%	39.0%	62.1%	100.0%	100.0%	2.6%	29.9%	96.6%	20.4%	13.0%	98.7%	97.9%	36.6%

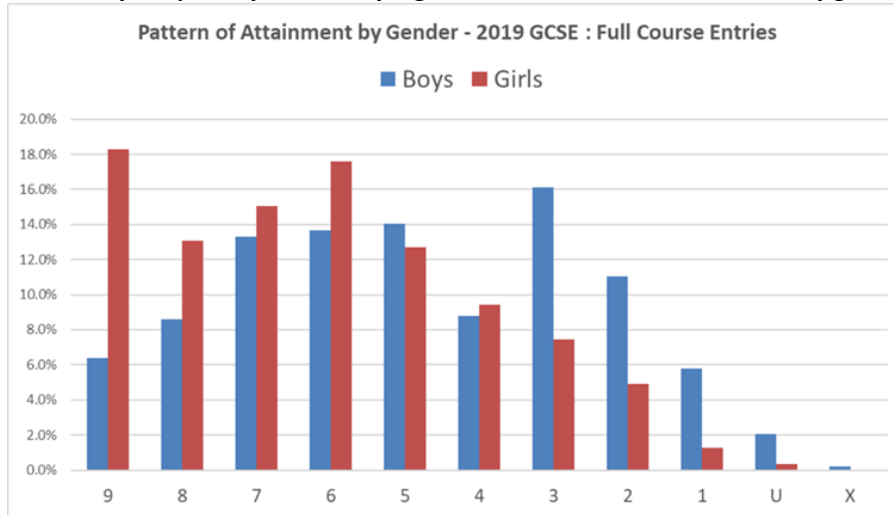
The below graph shows the relationship between the percentage of the cohort entered and the percentage achieving at least a standard pass on the full course. (Short course entries are not included here)



The below graph shows the distribution of grades in BwD compared with the national average. This shows that not only did schools in Blackburn with Darwen achieve well in the threshold measures, they also had many more pupils achieving the highest grades, with nearly twice as many achieving a Grade 9 as the national average.



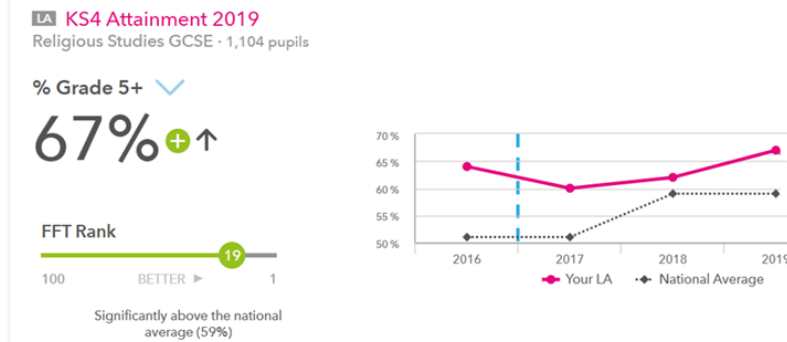
Girls generally outperformed boys, especially at the very highest level, with three times as many girls achieving the top grade.



However, both boys and girls outperformed their counterparts nationally. In fact, every group of pupils in the borough (with one exception) did better, and often significantly better than similar pupils nationally regardless of prior attainment, deprivation, or gender. Only White British heritage pupils underperformed compared to similar pupils, with both attainment and progress significantly below the national average.

Although it is difficult to compare year-on-year attainment due to the change to 9-1 grades, it is clear the pupils in the borough have consistently outperformed the national average over time.

2016 – 2019 Religious Studies GCSE

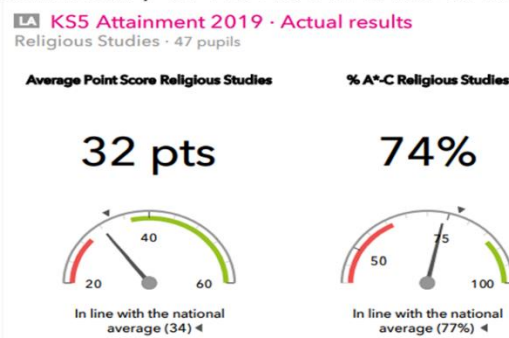


Includes Full course and Short course entries. The time series should be treated as indicative only. FFT Aspire have recalculated previous years taking legacy GCSE grades into account.

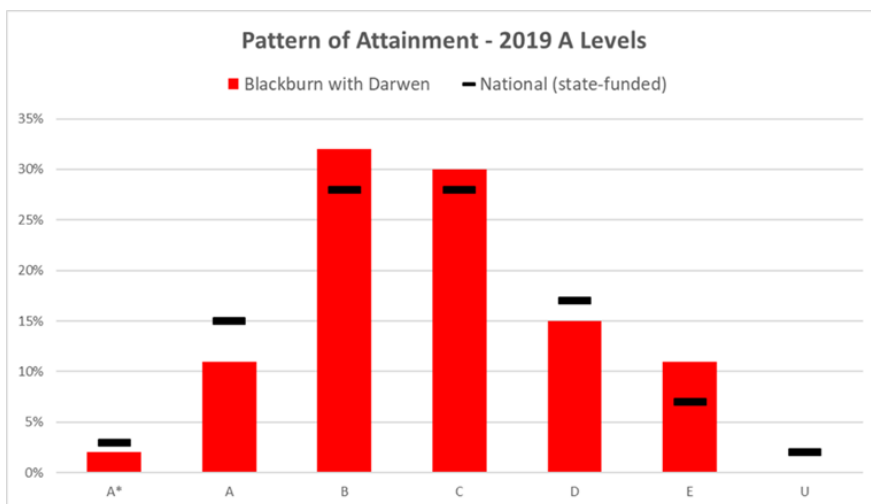
Key Stage 5

At Key Stage 5, performance is in line with the national average. There were 47 entries in 2019 for the Religious Studies A level, and 74% of those students achieved an A*-C grade.

Summary of 2019 A Level entries



The grade distribution below shows the percentage of entries achieving each grade in red compared with the national average (black line).



The table below outlines performance by setting, with DACA performing particularly well; all four entries achieved a B grade or higher, followed by Tauheedul Girls with 72.7% achieving a B or higher.

Religious Studies				
A Level	2019			
	Number of entries	% A*-B	% A*-E	Avg Pts
National	15840	50.5%	98.0%	34.3
Blackburn College	10	40.0%	100.0%	31
Darwen Aldridge Community Academy	4	100.0%	100.0%	42.5
St Mary's College	10	30.0%	100.0%	26
St Wilfrid's Church of England Academy	12	16.7%	100.0%	26.7
Tauheedul Islam Girls' High School	11	72.7%	100.0%	41.8
TOTAL	47	44.7%	100.0%	32.3

Summary of 2019 AS Level entries

AS Level	2019			
	Number of entries	% A-B	% A-E	Avg Pts
National	7010	36.4%	87.8%	13.7
Blackburn College	1	0.0%	0.0%	0
Darwen Aldridge Community Academy	11	45.5%	72.7%	12.7
Tauheedul Islam Girls' High School	34	79.4%	97.1%	19.9
TOTAL	46	69.6%	87.2%	17.7
AS Level (taken at Key Stage 4)	Number of entries	% A-B	% A-E	Avg Pts
Witton Park Academy	19	31.6%	89.5%	6.0

There were also 65 AS level entries in 2019. 6th form students at DACA and Tauheedul Girls again significantly outperformed the national average in the percentage achieving A*-B grades.

General Comments

It is our intention in 2021-2022 to:

- Promote the achievement of the RE quality mark in our schools.
- Audit our school websites and share good practice regarding RE in schools.
- Commit to invite ITT representation to SACRE to engage in both partnership and dialogue. This will be pertinent as the agreed syllabus is redesigned and launched and will be a vehicle for delivery. Engagement will be with Teaching School Hubs, TEAMS School Direct and STAR RE PGCE together with our Universities, Edge Hill, and Cumbria.

4. Collective Worship

The current collective worship policy and materials were launched 2009. We intend to update the secondary collective worship guidance in 2021 and the primary in 2022.

This year our SACRE have worked tirelessly to review and relaunch the clear procedure already established, to ensure an efficient response to any request for determination. The procedure and protocol for dealing with any requests for determination is now in place. All maintained schools currently who have a determination or may need to renew have been identified. The RSC and ESFA have also been contacted to ascertain the status of worship included in the agreements of academies and free schools.

In Autumn Term 2021 the Consultant will be working with the Chair of SACRE to model the process of review with the identified maintained schools who wish to apply for a determination.

SACRE have not received any withdrawals by phase or complaints.

5. Links with other bodies

SACRE is a member of NATRE, NASACRE and members actively attend conferences. We are currently planning our CPD engagement for 21-22.

The Chair of SACRE is currently the commissioned lead for School Effectiveness in Blackburn with Darwen and was previously teaching school lead and a system leader. As School Effectiveness lead and current Chair of the School Improvement Board, she has regular communication opportunities with teaching School hubs, Diocesan representatives, headteachers, CEO's, Professional Association representatives. In all these meetings she can and does promote SACRE.

In 2021 the Chair has been given opportunities to communicate with the headteachers to generate interest around SACRE through face to face meetings, termly presentations and bulletin inserts. There is a real "buzz and chat" around the potential for new developments.

Governors too are being kept informed via bulletin updates and Director's Reports.

6. Blackburn with Darwen, SACRE's local arrangements

At the beginning of the academic year the deputy director of children's services, Jo Siddle, made a firm commitment to re-establish a high quality SACRE, to ensure that the Local Authority was properly able to meet its statutory duties. To demonstrate this commitment, they have appointed a Clerk, Sharifa Valli to SACRE. They are funding the independent consultant Dot Thomson and provide support for the website design and upkeep from IT services. Legal Support is also provided each meeting by either Paula Johnson, Solicitor, or Gillian Emmott, Solicitor, from Democratic Services. They have also allocated £15,000 as budget for 21-22.

Induction support will be provided each September to all new members who have joined and will be a refresher for existing members.

The Agreed Syllabus review, as previously stated, has begun in earnest. We have established a timetable to be discussed by SACRE in September. We will then devise a schedule of work to be undertaken.