



**The Merton  
Standing Advisory Council  
on  
Religious Education**

**Annual Report  
for 2016 - 2017**

**March 2018**

I am pleased to send you Merton SACRE's Annual Report for the academic year 2016-2017. Every SACRE is required to publish a report and make it available to schools and the wider public.

The main focus for SACRE over the last year has been:

- Getting the Directory of Places of Worship in Merton up and running and online.  
[www.merton.gov.uk/learning/directoryplacesworship.pdf](http://www.merton.gov.uk/learning/directoryplacesworship.pdf)
- Embedding the new Merton Locally Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education (link to new syllabus) after its launch in July 2016 through improving the quality of teachers support we offer,
- Broadening our role to support schools with a range of questions related to RE and the faith community in Merton.

Merton is a unique and religiously diverse community to grow up in. Our children need to be helped to navigate this local as well as global world. This year we have continued to see the challenges of global terrorism and parallel risk in stereotyping that RE as a subject, and RE teachers in particular, do so much to challenge. We have participated in the national conversation about the role of RE that has been ongoing for the last few years. We will seek to continue to help schools to understand and celebrate the diverse faith presence in Merton.

**We would particularly like to thank Peter Kendrick our phenomenally hardworking and committed Chair who retired in 2017. Peter led Merton SACRE expertly. He was the Free Church representative. His crowning work is our new syllabus to which he devoted hours of personal time, proofing and improving. He worked tirelessly to build a partnership between those of faith and belief in Merton as well championing the voice of his faith in so many Merton Schools. We would like to thank him for all his work over the years.**

**Cllr M Brunt  
Chair of Merton SACRE  
March 2018**

# SACRE MEETINGS

Peter Kendrick was re-elected chair at the autumn meeting of SACRE. Three meetings were held during the academic year and minutes are available from the LA and on the council website.

The SACRE had a very busy year establishing and embedding use of the Agreed Syllabus for Merton and discussing the next tasks for the SACRE.

The key issues debated were:

- How are Secondary School Academies in Merton delivering RE? In 2 out of 3 Academies all students take GCSE RE. They all offer GCSE RE.
- The Ahmadiyya Muslim Association (AMA) applied to be full members of Committee A. SACRE members took the view that SACRE should try to reflect the make up of the local faith and belief community locally. There is a large population represented by the AMA in Merton and particularly in Merton's schools. It was unanimous assent to the Local Authority's recommendation that the AMA should be full members of Committee A.
- VOICE union was removed from the membership list as there had been no contact.
- Responding to national discussion papers (CoRE and State of the Nation Reports and a briefing from the NASCRE conference) on the future of RE and SACREs
- Consulting RE teachers on how SACRE can better support teachers. Establishing that RE teachers' sessions should be held in places of worship if possible to help RE teachers get to know the local faith and belief landscape in Merton and encourage visits by schools. Establishing faith and belief leaders attending teacher's sessions to support the Religious literacy of the RE leads to better enable them to lead. The sessions will be planned to focus on the use of the materials contained in the RE syllabus.
- Merton Local Authority published guidance for schools on 'Understanding Islam'. SACRE members from the Sunni community and AMA advised on the content of the document and SACRE endorsed its publication. The Imam from the Wimbledon Mosque attended Primary and Secondary Headteacher's meetings to answer questions from Headteacher have to support the launch of the guidance.
- How to improve the offer of speakers of faith in school visits
- SACRE discussed the link between the Government's Prevent Strategy and RE. The local Police Prevent Officer attended the session and gave an overview of Prevent and answered questions from members of SACRE.
- Showcasing RE in one primary School. The Merton SACRE Agreed Syllabus launch video made by Pelham Primary School was seen by members which allowed them to listen to the voices of children about RE lessons and also the School's RE lead gave members examples of activities that children do in RE lessons.
- Response to continued acts of terrorism and how do our schools support children to understand.
- The Local Area Designated Officer for safeguarding attended to inform SACRE members how safeguarding allegations against adults working with children are dealt with.

## **SACRE going forward into 2018**

In 2016 – 17 Merton SACRE discussed what SACRE can do to better support RE in schools in Merton:

- The committee would review the impact of the syllabus and highlight good quality examples of work after a year of the syllabus being fully in place.
- The committee would support the RE teachers' network by providing venues and speakers on faith and belief at each session to enrich the RE leads knowledge and also make them aware of places of worship they can visit with school groups.
- A discussion would be held with Headteacher's and SACRE about potential projects such as:
  - a. An inter-community event whereby children of faith and belief might discussing faith with each other;
  - b. a youth SACRE linked to the youth parliament;
  - c. Celebrating RE;
  - d. Specialist support for secondary RE departments – discussion with Secondary heads about how they can be best supported.
  - e. Promoting the use of digital materials (RE leads session)
  - f. Capturing feedback on RE from within faith communities and feeding this back into SACRE meetings
  - g. Meeting the New LADO John Shelley.
  - h. A speed dating type event where schools send groups to one venue to meet a range of speakers from different faiths or beliefs groups represented at SACRE.
  - i. Promoting the Places of Worship Directory and increasing visits and visitors with schools
  - j. Are there teachers or sixth formers from particular faith background who might be a resource to other schools? – faith ambassadors?
  - k. To discuss with secondary heads how “counter narrative work” is best carried out in line with Councillor's Scrutiny Recommendations.

SACRE members wanted consideration or event to be open to those schools using the Agreed Syllabus and those using their own syllabus.

Meetings were held in the Civic Centre, and places of worship. SACRE members would like to thank all hosts for their hospitality. The aim of holding meetings in different education and faith or belief venues is to evidence the inter faith agreement of the SACRE: to support children of all faiths and beliefs or none to be educated about all the main local religions and belief groups. The chair and vice chair attended the NASCRE conference and have an annual meeting the Merton Director of Children Services to update on the work of Merton SACRE. In 2017 SACRE met in Pelham School, St Lawrence's Church Morden and Wimbledon Synagogue.

[www.merton.gov.uk/learning/schools/standing-advisory-council-on-religious-education.htm](http://www.merton.gov.uk/learning/schools/standing-advisory-council-on-religious-education.htm)

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

### **The Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education in Merton Schools**

[Link to Agreed Syllabus 2016](#)

[New 2017 syllabus](#)

# **STANDARDS**

## **SMSC, British Values, faith and culture references in school Ofsted reports inspected 16 - 17**

### **Harris Primary Merton (Academy)**

SMSC is a strength

The strong promotion of the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development encourages them to be thoughtful and caring

The school's values give pupils a strong moral and social code. This is supported by regularly visiting what it means to be British through assemblies and other events.

### **Rutlish High School**

Threaded through all the work of the school is the spiritual, moral, social and cultural education of the pupils. Pupils and parents appreciate the breadth of extra-curricular opportunities, particularly in sport, art, drama and music. Pupils demonstrate considerable knowledge and understanding of tolerance and democracy. Pupils are exceptionally well prepared for the challenges of life in modern Britain.

6<sup>th</sup> Form

Students have an extensive enrichment programme. A thriving debating club tackles engaging themes, such as the image of Islam in popular culture.

### **St Teresa's Primary School**

#### **Short report**

The school's Roman Catholic affiliation underpins all aspects of school life. It is reflected in the core values of love, trust, teamwork and ambition. You use the example of the school patron, St Teresa of Lisieux, to exemplify the importance of small acts of kindness to others. This clearly has had a strong impact on pupils who described to me how they feel safe at school and how they appreciate helping each other.

### **William Morris Primary School**

The range of experiences offered by the school and the involvement of pupils and their families ensure that pupils are prepared well for life in modern Britain. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted effectively.

### **Aargon Primary School**

No longer available as school have converted to an Academy

### **Pelham Primary School**

No comments made in the short report letter

### **Hatfield Primary School**

No comments made in the short report letter

### **Joseph Hood Primary School**

No comments made in the short report letter

### **St Thomas of Canterbury RC School**

You and your leadership team have continued to improve the school to fulfil your vision for pupils'

education, academic success and personal development within the Catholic faith.

### **Park Community School (Free School)**

SMSC is a strength

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. The broad curriculum broadens pupils' horizons and prepares pupils for life in modern Britain.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well promoted in school. Pupils have a good knowledge of other religions and enjoy visiting places of worship, such as the local Buddhist temple. Pupils like raising money for different charities and they understand that everyone must be treated equally. The house system, named after British saints, is an important part of the school. Pupils work in their houses on creative projects, such as a display on all the nationalities represented in the school.

The shared ethos of 'grace, fellowship and love' has developed a school community where everyone feels valued and included, regardless of their background, race or religion.

Success is celebrated in many different ways and pupils feel motivated to do their best as a result. Parents are invited to attend the weekly celebration assemblies where pupils receive rewards and have the chance to show off their work.

### **The Sherwood School**

SMSC is a strength

Pupils talk confidently about their own spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This is a strength of the school. Pupils are well prepared to take on their roles as citizens in the diverse British society.

The school's work to support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is effective and a strength of the school. For example, pupils confidently talked to inspectors about the importance of democracy, referring to the elections of the chair and vice-chair of the school council. Leaders provide many opportunities for pupils to develop their social and leadership skills.

Pupils are self-assured learners and talk eagerly about their learning experiences. For example, some pupils talked enthusiastically to inspectors about their learning on different religions. They say, 'It is important to know about different religions, so we learn to respect what other people's beliefs are.'

### **Gorrington Park Primary School**

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school. Pupils have a tremendous amount of respect for one another and are genuinely interested in learning from each other.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. Leaders ensure that pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. They regularly teach the importance of British values through effective assemblies which the pupils talk about confidently. When asked about what British values meant to him, one pupil said, 'To be fair and follow the law. We use democracy when we vote for the school council and for the ecowarriors.' Pupils shared an example of showing respect for supporters of different football teams and how they had been taught to do this. v Pupils' respect for one another is a strength of the school, particularly with regard to different religions. Pupils learn about a range of faiths. Teachers use pupils as specialists to support learning. One pupil said that she enjoyed talking about her faith with other pupils, but that she also learned things that she didn't know before. Trips to places of worship support learning. One pupil spoke of how a trip to the mosque had developed his understanding of prayer.

### **Merton Abbey Primary School**

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong.

School leaders prepare pupils well for life in modern Britain. The ethos of the school supports pupils' understanding of fundamental British values and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural is promoted effectively.

## St Marks Church of England Academy

The school's provision for the personal development and welfare of pupils is outstanding. It is highly enriching and supportive and focuses on 'values in action'. Pupils are confident, thoughtful and articulate.

Leaders' work to promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural education of pupils is well developed. Pupils are tolerant and value the education they receive. They are thoughtful, well prepared and ambitious for their futures. They value the diversity in the school and are proud to be part of the school. Pupils have access to a wide range of enrichment activities, such as trips and events, which complement the taught curriculum well and support their wider learning.

Leaders and teachers strongly advocate the school's core values of love, hope and trust. These values permeate the school. The promotion of pupils' understanding of 'values in action' and 'values in Britain' is embedded in daily coaching time. Pupils respect different views and said that they value their education and appreciate what teachers do for them. Pupils are proud of the inclusive nature of the school. v Leaders and teachers ensure that pupils receive high-quality, appropriate and relevant guidance on personal and social development. This is delivered through well-planned coaching time, assemblies, extra-curricular activities, trips and 'drop-down days'. As a result, pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. v Leaders and teachers plan engaging and thought-provoking experiences for pupils. For example, during an assembly on remembrance, pupils heard personal reflections and considered the difference between right and wrong. Consequently, pupils show a high degree of respect and understanding of moral viewpoints.

## **RELIGIOUS STUDIES EXAMINATIONS 2016 - 17**

### GCSE

In 2017 there were 1075 entries for RE GCSE in Merton, up from previous year (a rise of 1.6% with a flat secondary school population) this is in line with a national rise. The end of GCSE short course counting on league tables has meant that nationally there is a decline in schools offering short course GCSE and a rise in some schools not offering GCSE RE at all. Merton has one secondary school where that is the case. It should be noted that in most Merton secondary schools are entering all their pupils, not just those who have opted for RE

The GCSE pass rate at A - C grades is well above the national average. The national average for A-C has been falling slightly over the last 4 years whilst Merton's average has been rising.

The grade breakdown shows that higher proportions of Merton students achieved the A grades than nationally (this has been the case for over 4 years), however we are just below or in line with national for A\* grades (the number and percentage of A\*s has fallen nationally).

Numbers achieving at each grade (2016/17)	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U	Total Number of Entries
Merton	94	251	334	215	99	52	19	11	0	1075

Percentages achieving at each grade	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U	A*-C	A*-G
Merton 16/17	8.6	23.0	30.6	19.7	9.1	4.8	1.7	1.0	0.9	82.0	98.6
National 16/17	8.8	18.6	23.5	19.0	12.6	7.6	4.8	2.8	1.8	70.0	97.9

## **A level**

Entries have dropped slightly from a high in 14/15, but have remained higher than 2013. Pass rate have fallen slightly with less than 5 A level students not passing. A\*/A grades are also lower than national, whereas B – C are higher.

Centre	NOE	A*	A	B	C	D	E	A*-A	A*-B	A*-E
Merton 16/17	48	2.1	16.7	31.2	29.2	14.6	4.2	18.75	50.00	96
National 16/17		5.7	18.5	30.7	25.7	13.0	4.8	24.2	54.9	98.4

**Source: Statistical First Releases/LA summary data**

## **CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (CPD) FOR TEACHERS**

Penny Smith- Orr has been commissioned by the Local Authority to provide sessions for RE leads. Training workshops were run for RE subject leads, and SACRE members attended. Four sessions were run in the year. These covered: the launch of the syllabus with RE teachers; the use of the syllabus; assessment of RE and new units in the syllabus. SACRE members organized for Faith Leaders to attend the sessions for “Question and Answers” sessions on their faith. The Wimbledon Mosque Imam and the Vicar from Emmanuel Church have attended in 2016-17. SACRE would like to thank them for their support.

RE teachers were consulted as to what they would like to see in these sessions in future. They would like the sessions to continue to focus on their role as coordinators and to be delivered in Merton places of worship.

Average attendances at the Network meetings are 17. Moving forward we aim to record which schools have attended across the year. Feedback on the sessions goes to the organizer of the session. We aim next year to ensure that these are passed back to the LA to report to SACRE members on teacher’s feedback on their sessions. General feedback on teacher’s sessions run by the LA is usually between 90 - 100% Excellent.

## **COMPLAINTS CONCERNING RE**

No complaints were received under Section 23 of the Education Reform Act 1988 regarding Religious Education in Merton schools.

## **COLLECTIVE WORSHIP**

### **Determinations**

There are no determinations in Merton

## **GENERAL**

### **Links with other agencies**



Merton SACRE is a member of NASACRE and a representative attends national meetings. Full reports are given at the SACRE meetings so that all members are aware of current topics and issues. Members of SACRE are also representatives on the Merton Faith and Belief Forum and this facilitates communication between the two committees. A member of SACRE attended the NASACRE AGM meeting in Birmingham and reported back to SACRE

### **List of organisations to which the SACRE report is sent**

A copy of this report will be placed on the SACRE section of the Merton LA website and relevant officers will be informed [www.merton.gov.uk/learning/schools/standing-advisory-council-on-religious-education.htm](http://www.merton.gov.uk/learning/schools/standing-advisory-council-on-religious-education.htm)  
The National Association of SACREs) NASACRE will also receive a copy.

### **Contacts**

If you have any issues that you would like to raise with the Merton SACRE, please contact the Merton LA Advisor to the SACRE [keith.shipman@merton.gov.uk](mailto:keith.shipman@merton.gov.uk).

## Appendix 1: SACRE Membership

### STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE)

MEMBERSHIP- between September 2016 and September 2017 (amendments in October added to clarify vacancies)

#### Group A – Christian, Other Faiths & Beliefs

Buddhism	Mr P Lom (resigned July 2017) Colin Perry attended as substitute
Free Churches	Mr P Kendrick (resigned July 2017) Vacancy
Hinduism	Ms G Maheshwaran
Humanism	Ms Audrey King
Islam	Mr S Sheikh (Deputy Mr M Khan)
Judaism	Mr M Freedman
Roman Catholic Church	VACANCY (resigned October 2016)
Sikhism	Mr A Singh Bahra
Ahmadiyya Muslim Association	Mr Waleed Ahmad

#### Group B – Church of England

C of E	Mr C Powell (resigned Sept 2017)	Jane Savill October 2017
C of E	Ms J Powell (resignation noted at meeting 10.10.17)	Andrew Williams October 2017
C of E	Rev K Tuckett (resigned June 2017)	Mr Marcus Cooper October 2017

#### Group C – Teacher Associations

ATL	Mark Yelland
NAHT/SHA	Ms M Keenan
NASUWT	Vacancy
NUT	Debra Beale

#### Group D – Local Authority

Conservative Group	Cllr A Latif	
Labour Group	resigned July 2017	Cllr Mike Brunt October 2017
Labour Group	Cllr L Attawar	

#### Others

Local Authority Adviser	Mr K Shipman
Clerk	Ms E Nasse