



MANCHESTER
CITY COUNCIL

Manchester SACRE Annual Report 2015- 2016

Foreword

In a progressive diverse society few things matter more than the education of our young people. As such Manchester SACRE continues to strengthen in terms of working proactively and supportively with its schools and community to ensure it is representative of the City of Manchester.

Our hardworking teachers not only impart information, they also help shape the views of the next generation. The importance of mutual respect and understanding, for faiths and belief, and in some non-belief, is crucial in a contemporary society where there are so many different religions and cultures. Our city is one of the most linguistically diverse in Europe with over 200 languages and dialects spoken across our neighbourhoods.

This is why I believe religious education is so important and Manchester SACRE plays a crucial part in helping our schools to steer the learning process.

As per SACRE's constitutional requirement we have reviewed our agreed syllabus for the next five years and the new Manchester SACRE Agreed Syllabus for 2016-2021 was launched in Manchester Town Hall on 21st June 2016.

I am grateful to Lat Blaylock of RE today who carried out the review for us enabling the syllabus to be distributed to all our schools before the end of the summer term.

The aim of the new RE Syllabus is to give balance, practical ideas and inspiration to both teachers and pupils through a number of key areas:

- Being clear about expected knowledge and understanding
- Supporting and empowering teachers to plan effectively
- Offering coherent progression across the ages and key stages
- Supporting clear and focused assessment
- Encouraging enquiry based RE

Religious education I believe should never be about telling young people what to believe in, but instead it should be about informing them what others believe and for them to actively engage and develop a positive understanding of different religions and cultures. In this pragmatic approach our faith communities can nurture their own faith and at the same time give respect to others, including those who have no belief.

I would like to thank all members of our SACRE and also Manchester City Council for its continued support in respect of its administration/servicing and occasional costs in running our AGM and workshops. As ever I would like to thank Nick Paul and Lydia Smith for providing us with expert knowledge and timely advice in making sure SACRE meets all its legal obligations.

Cllr. Ahmed Ali JP
Chair Manchester SACRE

Membership of Manchester SACRE at the end of year 2015-2016

Name	Committee	Representing
Cllr Ahmed Ali	Committee D (Chair)	LA
Nick Paul	Committee D	LA
Maureen Curley	Committee B	C of E
Erik Keasberry	Committee A	Chinese Christian
Liz Roper	Committee A	Unitarian
Robin Grinter	Committee A	Humanist
Vacant	Committee A	Roman Catholic
Heather Steward	Committee A	Methodist
Grange Williams	Committee A	Bahai
Rachel Kemp	Committee C (co-opted member)	RE Teacher
Rabbi David Braunold	Committee A	Jewish
Danielle Gordon-Lanes	Committee C	RE Teacher
Joanna Dowey	Committee A	Buddhist
Helen Tildesley	Committee C	NASUWT rep
Mike Chesterton	Committee A	Evangelical
Katie Cowley	Committee C	RE Teacher
Valerie Clark	Committee A	Quaker
Cedric Knipe	Committee A	Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
Majella Dalton-Bartley	Committee C	Further education
Christine Howard	Committee A	Baptist denomination
Revd Ruth Watson	Committee A	Utd Reformed Church

Clerk: Lydia Smith (One Education)

The role of the SACRE

The SACRE is independent of the Local Authority and its main function is to advise the Local Authority upon such matters connected with religious worship in Community and Voluntary Controlled schools.

Also it:-

- can require the Authority to review its current agreed syllabus
- and must consider applications for what are commonly known as determinations. This is where a head teacher of a community school (which does not have a designation of having a religious character) applies for an exemption from the requirement for collective worship to be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character for all or some of the pupils.

The broad role of the SACRE therefore is to support the effective provision of Religious Education and collective worship in schools.

Meetings held:

22nd October 2015

15th March 2016

21st June 2016

Meetings held in October and March were at the traditional venue of Manchester Town Hall, however in June SACRE were welcomed to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints on York Street in central Manchester. This visit is part of the aim of Manchester SACRE to take at least one meeting a year out into the community and thanks are due to SACRE member Cedric Knipe for arranging for Manchester SACRE to use this venue.

Comments from Rachel Kemp (Primary RE Specialist)

I have attended NW RE Conference Beyond words, in Bolton. Here 175 delegates from a broad spectrum (teachers, lecturers and academics) all gave up a weekend and attended this conference. It was academic, informative and the enthusiasm and the importance of RE was clearly show by the fact that people were there voluntarily over a weekend. This event was hosted by NATRE, AULRE and ARIEAC and funded by Culham St Gabriel's. The event was designed to bring together the wider RE community. It was full of presentations, workshops, discussions and presentations that helped develop candidates on all levels.

Since the last report, I have hosted two RE Network meetings, in which teachers shared and discussed current events, support and resources. This has included a Peace Mala presentation, from Manchester Faith Network and a practical presentation from Ann Angel about her role in presenting accessible Judaism in the primary school.

Again, as last year my concern is for lack of school support. I have delivered two insets, in my own time and have constant emails regarding implementation and resources. In 2016-2017 when a new syllabus is in place, schools (especially those using TA's and HLTA's for whom training is less comprehensive than fully trained teachers) will need both reassurance and training – something I cannot do given my full time teaching role.

Regular meetings, over the last five years, have taken place, initially through the Greater Manchester Challenge, to being together a primary and secondary teacher from the five GM authorities. These have successfully held meetings and delivered conferences. This year, no conference was held, although each member of the group supported their own LA in the launch of

the New Agreed Syllabus. Due to a number of reasons, this group has now changed its name to GMRE Network. A statement was released to emphasise that we, as a group, are supporting a facilitating quality RE across the network. A statement was sent from the group to the LA's to that affect.

R.E Data

GCSE Full Course	Numbers					Percentages				
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Pupils entered	2244	2355	2637	2769	2732					
A*	120	165	224	194	182	5.35	7.00	8.5	7.0%	6.7%
A	311	323	421	412	404	13.86	13.7	16.0	14.9%	15.3%
A* - C	1251	1431	1709	1802	1808	55.75	60.80	64.8	65.1%	66.2%
A* - G	2129	2255	2529	2691	2655	94.88	95.80	95.9	97.2%	97.2%

Commentary

The national average has remained steady at 72% (A* - C) over the last two years. Members will however note that despite a steady increase the corresponding figure for Manchester remains below the national average. The rate of improvement in Manchester is noticeably slower than from 2012 – 2014. GCSE short courses have not been available since 2014.

New locally agreed RE syllabus

Working in collaboration with colleagues in Tameside, Trafford, Salford and Stockport and in particular Lat Blaylock and his team at RE Today we had a new agreed syllabus in schools before the end of the academic year.

Representatives of the five SACREs in the GM RE Hub met with Lat who presented a model agreed syllabus written by RE Today based on the National Curriculum Framework for RE (NCFRE) published in October 2013. This syllabus also reflected Ofsted's Subject specialist RE reports for 2010 and 2013. This model was accepted and approved by the full SACRE sitting as an agreed syllabus conference in March 2016.

Additionally the syllabus comes with on-going support with potential upgrades within its five year lifetime if legislation or statutory guidance dictates. Support materials are also available up to and including complete planned schemes of work.

The syllabus was launched through separate events for Secondary and

Primary schools in May and June 2016 held jointly with our colleagues in Trafford. The full syllabus was made available to all schools regardless of faith and an abridged version is also publically available via the SACRE section of the MCC site.

In academic year 2017-2018 SACRE will be discussing and formulating plans regarding the monitoring of the use of the new syllabus.

SACRE communication with schools

During that last academic year a Manchester SACRE section was established on the Manchester City council website. This gives members and any interested individuals or organisations easy access to the SACRE membership list, key contacts, constitution, meeting agenda, minutes and current agreed syllabus. The previous (and very much outdated MEWAN site) is no longer in use. Access to an abridged version of the 2016-2021 Agreed Syllabus is available to all interested parties, with the full detailed version available to all schools via their Schools Hub.

Through the SACRE LA Officer schools receive regular communications via the Children and Families Directorate Circular letter system. These communications include notification of events, requests for contact details and training /support materials from SACRE members or other faith organisations.

Provision of information for SACRE members

During the last academic year the provision of information for members was improved through sending the link to the regular updates produced by NASACRE. Manchester SACRE are members of NASACRE and all members have access details to the website. OFSTED data and comments relating to RE (albeit in the context of SMSC) have been compiled with the first summary going to members in October 2016.

SACRE membership

During the academic year Manchester SACRE is pleased to have welcomed representation from the Ba'hai faith and the Chinese Christian Community. Members of SACRE continue to seek contacts in order to ensure that the membership is as diverse as possible.

Raising the profile of SACRE

This remains an issue of concern with the chair highlighting the need for SACRE to assume a more catalytic role than in the past and to focus on enabling and encouraging RE development in schools. A presentation was made at the first head teacher briefing of the academic year to update colleagues on the role and membership of SACRE, and also to give details of the process of commissioning a new Agreed Syllabus for September 2016.

Humanism as an option in GCSE and A level syllabuses.

There was general agreement with Rowan Williams' stated regret at the decision by the Department of Education to remove Humanism from the RE curriculum, and support for the inclusion of a non-religious belief system in the new curriculum. Robin Grinter prepared a statement of support to be submitted to the Secretary of State for school reform on behalf of Manchester SACRE.

Guidance documentation

During the past year colleagues in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints have been drafting a guidance document on their beliefs. Once approved by Lat Blaylock of RE Today this will then be made available to teaching staff in all LAs that have adopted the RE Today model RE Syllabus. SACRE member Robin Grinter along with Tameside RE Advisor Maurice Smith has also been working on a similar document on Humanism and again following approval from the British Humanist Association and Lat Blaylock this will be distributed to schools during academic year 2016-2017.

Freedom of Information requests (FOI)

SACRE received no FOI request during academic years 15-16.

Requests for a determination

SACRE did not receive any requests for determinations with regard to Collective Worship during the last academic year. Any school wishing to explore the relevance of a determination (daily collective worship which is other than 'wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character') in their context should contact SACRE via the local authority officer, Nick Paul (n.paul@manchester.gov.uk). Church schools are not eligible for a determination and for an academy wishing to apply for a determination the correct process is for the Trust to apply through the Education Funding Agency (EFA) to the Secretary of State.

Complaints concerning RE

There have been no complaints concerning RE.

Complaints concerning Collective Worship

There have been no complaints received about collective worship.

Finance

SACRE does not have a dedicated budget; however the LA covers the costs of a professional clerk, meeting costs and the membership of NASACRE. The LA representative on SACRE has the authority to consider requests for financial support for SACRE activities and to authorise payment where funds exist and there is a clear benefit to the role of SACRE. In the academic year 2015-2016 the LA provided funds in the region of £8,000 to support the provision of a new agreed syllabus

Nick Paul
Manchester City Council