

# Annual SACRE Report 2016-7

The SACRE has several aspects to its role. These include:

- ❖ Advising the local authority on matters relating to collective worship and religious education
- ❖ Advising on methods of teaching and resources for religious education
- ❖ Considering requests for determinations from any schools which apply to have daily worship which is other than of a broadly Christian character
- ❖ Identifying and revising an Agreed Syllabus for religious education

*In principle, every pupil is entitled to RE of the highest quality... A core duty of the SACRE is to gain an overview of the quality of the RE provision in LA Maintained schools and to develop effective strategies to promote the highest standards." - National Association of SACREs (NASACRE)*

To help with this endeavour the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead SACRE works with NASACRE (the National Association of SACREs), the Diocese of Oxford and the five other SACREs in Berkshire.

This report sets out a summary of the work of the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead SACRE over the academic year 2016-17. The minutes of the meetings which give more detail can be found at [www.rbwm.gov.uk/web/ed\\_sacre\\_index.htm](http://www.rbwm.gov.uk/web/ed_sacre_index.htm)

The constitution and terms of reference can be found at:

[http://www.rbwm.gov.uk/web/members\\_constitution.htm](http://www.rbwm.gov.uk/web/members_constitution.htm)

For more information about the role and business of the SACRE please contact:

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## Introduction from the Chairman, Michael Gammage

Our SACRE has continued to do its best in the last year – but with a growing realisation if the SACRE is to be truly effective then something significant needs to change.

The vital importance of high quality RE teaching – and SACREs' involvement in enabling it - is increasingly recognised:

- The report of the Commission on Religion and Belief in British Public Life 'Living with Difference' identified good RE teaching as essential in developing religious literacy and a 'religiously astute' society
- The 'RE for Real' report, whose sponsors included Culham St Gabriel's, a charitable trust dedicated to excellence in RE, addressed the 'policy muddle about RE' and inter alia called for an urgent review of the role of SACREs
- A report by the National Association of Teachers of RE 'The State of the Nation' identifies the many deficiencies and challenges in providing high quality RE teaching in secondary schools in England
- The interim report for the Commission on Religious Education also catalogues the many inadequacies and inconsistencies in providing high quality RE in all schools. It too calls inter alia for an expanded role for SACREs.

There is a new interest too in another SACRE responsibility, collective worship. The statutory provisions for collective worship have been seen in many schools as appropriate for a former age and quietly forgotten. There is a new interest though in inclusive forms of collective worship which draw inspiration from all faiths. This year's winner of the Accord Coalition's award – Brent SACRE – provides one example: 'Rather than watching assemblies wither on the vine, Brent SACRE's approach helps secure for local pupils a valuable opportunity to communally explore and forge shared values, in a way that is respectful and workable'.

The Accord awards highlighted ways in which other SACREs have been innovative: Suffolk SACRE, for instance, provided its schools with a 'Teaching Controversial Issues Toolkit' intended to support teachers with respect to the Prevent programme, the promotion of pupils' SMSC development, and teaching 'British values'. The Toolkit had plans and resources organised around nine themes including extremism, tolerance, being British, and culture and faith.

So, these are rapidly-changing times in RE and collective worship - there is clearly plenty of valuable work that our SACRE could be doing. What is becoming obvious though is that SACRE as it is currently operating is not capable of providing the impetus and energy required to make a difference. This will be the subject of consultation: can SACRE meet more regularly? Should it instead create sub-committees to help widen and accelerate its impact? Should there be some elementary form of secretariat? And can volunteers be found to take on some or all of the work which needs to be done if SACRE is to fulfil its potential? These are some of the questions with which we will be grappling this year.

Michael Gammage

Chairman

## Standard, Quality and Provision of RE

- The number of overall full course RE entries at state funded nation level is steady, but the number of entries in the full course GCSE is falling in RBWM due to entry pattern changes at an individual school level. Both RBWM schools of religious character (Church of England) enter almost the whole cohort for GCSE RE. One school in RBWM currently doesn't enter any pupils for RE GCSE, but the LA reports that this does not mean that RE is not being offered. RBWM is providing good quality RE GCSE teaching to pupils. 74% got A\* - C GCSE compared to 71% nationally in 2017 so the LA is performing at a slightly higher level than nationally.
- Although the LA, with assistance from the SACRE adviser, wrote to the schools that were not offering GCSE RE, no response has been reported to SACRE. This will be followed up when the next set of results are available if this remains the case.
- The A level results have been very slow to be released and both the schools and the LA seem reluctant to disclose much more than the numbers achieving certain grades. Until we have a comparison with last year it is impossible to grade the achievement of schools. However, it is clear that most secondary schools are not entering many or even any pupils for A-Level RS.
- SACRE was concerned that finding out about RE in schools was still proving difficult; teachers on SACRE have invited SACRE members to go and observe lessons. One of these visits has already taken place and SACRE received feedback on the experience. A proforma has been made to help others with lesson observations/information gathering.
- One of the community schools that had been receiving RE support had a change of staff and so further support was offered. An improvement in the quality and quantity of RE in this school has been observed.
- The Pan-Berkshire Hub offered "On Location" training at three places of worship and several teachers from the borough attended. Feedback at RE network meetings was positive and teachers were looking forward to using the resources.
- SACREs concern about the lack of school trips to places of worship because of the cost of transport led SACRE to spend a significant amount of time contacting local business and trusts to obtain funding. No companies were forthcoming and no further avenues for funding have been identified.
- Two complaints have been indirectly received from schools who paid for a Jewish group to visit to take RE lessons and lead CW. The complaint was received by the Synagogue in Maidenhead and passed to SACRE. SACRE investigated and then issued a caveat to all schools recommending that they take up references for all visitors and that SACRE cannot guarantee the quality of every group that visits schools, but requests that schools send in reports and reviews that can be used by other schools to ascertain the quality and appropriateness of visitors.

## Agreed Syllabus

- Further preparations have begun for the syllabus review that has started with a survey sent to all schools. The Pan-Berkshire hub co-ordinator will head up the review as part of the hub.
- The LA have paid the contribution to the Pan-Berkshire SACRE hub to fund the review.
- Subject leader meetings in the last year have focused on discussions about the current syllabus; teachers have expressed generally that they like the current syllabus but would

appreciate more guidance on what to teach. There have also been discussions about which faiths should be covered at which key stages.

- Conferences for Faith and Belief have been organised on 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> October to give members of groups A and B an opportunity to contribute to the appropriate sections of the syllabus.
- The Local Authority has convened the Agreed Syllabus Conference, appointing all members of SACRE to the group.
- The Syllabus review will be formally launched at the Joint SACRE conference on 28<sup>th</sup> September, to which all members of SACRE are invited. SACRE has agreed to fund 10 places in addition to the allocated 4 places and these are being offered to teachers of RE as well.

## Standard, Quality and Provision of Collective Worship

- No requests for determinations have been received, nor have there been any complaints regarding Collective worship, however there was discussion about whether a determination that had been granted over 5 years ago, was still operative. The school had changed name, changed demographic and largely changed staff and it was concluded that it had lapsed. Changes in SACRE membership and particularly of LA officer and clerks, highlighted the need for a revision of the procedures for determinations.
- A new determination procedure is in production and will hopefully be adopted at the next meeting.
- The Collective Worship section of the SACRE toolkit showed that this was an area that SACRE had not taken much note of recently and it was decided to add this to the agenda as a regular item.
- The LA has been asked to provide SACRE with a list of the schools for which SACRE has CW responsibility; a website trawl can then be conducted looking for CW policies. A proforma will be developed to help with this. Research has been conducted by the adviser on how other SACREs might do this.

## Advice and Training offered to Schools, LA and Governors

- The SACRE newsletter continues to offer support, resources and information about national developments in RE and CW and is distributed to all schools and SACRE members.
- SACRE advise the LA that complaints had been received about a visitor to a couple of schools. The LA made enquiries and offered support.
- RE network meetings have taken place each term, and have been well attended, covering a range of schools in different parts of the borough. Schools host the meetings and no charge is made to delegates.
- Schools and councillors were invited to attend the Joint SACRE conference in September 2016 and several took up the opportunity, participating in the faith debate that formed part of the evening.
- The LA was advised that the Agreed Syllabus Conference needed to be established and that the constitution needed to be amended with respect to Group C. These tasks have been done.

- Schools were involved in the Crossing the Bridges training days; and the LA has been advised that the Crossing the Bridges materials need to be hosted on the SACRE website or another borough wide website. For the moment, schools are recommended to find the materials on the Bracknell Forest website.
- The LA was advised that SACRE needed further information about the schools for which SACRE is responsible; the current list is out of date as some schools have recently converted to academy status. This information has not yet been received.

## Management of SACRE

RBWM SACRE returned to meeting 3 times per year and there were meetings on the following dates:

8<sup>th</sup> November 2016

13<sup>th</sup> March 2017

17<sup>th</sup> June 2017

- All the meetings have been quorate and membership has remained largely steady; chair and vice-chair continue in their roles and some new members have been appointed.
- Teacher numbers remain low and SACRE has proposed, and had accepted by the LA, a change to the constitution for Group C. The merger of the two unions, ATL and NUT was part of the driver for this, but additionally the changing educational landscape. The revised constitution requires a range of teachers across the first 4 Key stages, a Headteacher and an Academy representative. New members will be approached through the RE network meetings.
- SACRE has continued to engage with NASACRE, again sending a representative to the AGM in York and receiving feedback. SACRE also completed the NASACRE Big Survey.
- SACRE responded to the NASACRE letter “Building respectful schools and societies”, questioning some of the phraseology. No response was received.
- SACRE members requested training, as many of them were unable to attend the hub training sessions in Wokingham, so regular training will now be scheduled for each meeting. The NASACRE SACRE handbook has been distributed to all members.

## Contribution of SACRE to LA Agenda

- SACRE members were invited to and engaged with a series of Interfaith discussions and they are advertised in the SACRE newsletter.
- The adviser to SACRE continues to run sessions for NQTs and Schools Direct Trainees on Respect and tolerance in the classroom and this agenda is set to continue next year.

## Conclusion

SACRE in the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead continues to address the issues surrounding Religious Education and Collective Worship, engaging with the national debate about the place and purpose of RE in schools. SACRE continues to explore ways to improve the monitoring of RE and CW, and the adviser has been attending AREIAC meetings to gather wider experience.

There is frustration with the continual changes to the educational landscape in England and concern over the role of SACRE as more schools move out of Local Authority Control. This is tempered though

by encouragement from the numbers of teachers who continue to attend RE training and respond to SACREs requests to schools.

There is also concern over the lack of funding for schools and the impact that this has on the ability of schools to engage in trips to places of worship or pay for extra-curricular enhancements. The consequences of the EBACC on the place of RE are still working their way through the system, and the impact of other curricular changes remain to be seen.

SACRE hopes that the report of the Commission on RE (CoRE) will provide a positive way forward for SACREs and RE for the future.

Anne Andrews

Adviser to SACRE

## SACRE membership and Attendance 2016-17

Group Represented	Name	8 <sup>th</sup> November	13 <sup>th</sup> March	17 <sup>th</sup> June
Baptist (A)	Vacancy			
Free Church (A)	Ceri Neil	Yes	Apologies	Yes
Methodist (A)	Gary Homewood	ill	ill	ill
Roman Catholic Church (A)	Barbara Meaney	Apologies	Yes	Yes
Hindu (A)	Ila Gongotra	Apologies	Yes	Yes
Islam (A)	Saghir Ahmed	X	X	X
Judaism (A)	Hilary Harris	Yes	Yes	Yes
Sikh (A)	Ravinder Singh	Apologies	Yes	Yes
Buddhist (A)	Anthea West	Yes	Apologies	Resigned
Baha'i (A)	Mike Gammage (Chair)	Yes	Yes	Yes
C of E (B)	Felicity Gunn	Apologies	Resigned	Resigned
C of E (B)	Rev Sally Lynch			Yes
C of E (B)	Rev Joan Hicks	Apologies	Yes	Apologies
C of E (B)	Karen Butler (vice-chair)	Yes	Yes	Yes
NASUWT (C)	Vacancy			
NAHT(C)	Vacancy			
ATL (C)	Liz Jenkins	Apologies	Apologies	Resigned
VOICE (C)	Vacancy			
BASH (C)	Louise Ceska	Yes	Yes	X
NUT (C)	Deborah Firth	Apologies	Yes	Yes
Councillor (D)	Cllr Asghar Majeed	Yes	X	Apologies
Councillor (D)	Cllr Natasha Airey	Yes	Yes	Apologies
Councillor (D)	Cllr Richard Kellaway	Yes	Yes	Yes
Local Authority Officers:	Clive Haines	Yes	Yes	Apologies
Professional Advisor:	Anne Andrews	Yes	Yes	Yes
Clerk:	Andy Carswell	Yes	Yes	Yes

Key:

Yes = present	X= no apologies	Apologies given	Vacancy
Left/resigned	Observer	New member	

## GCSE Results

RS GCSE	2015		2016		2017	
School	% cohort taking	% A*-C	% cohort taking	% A*-C	% cohort taking	% A*-C
****	96%	66%	98%	73%	96%	73%
****	16%	85%	19%	89%	41%	83%
****	97%	64%	99%	74%	98%	48%
****	32%	53%	32%	93%	5%	86%
****	1%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%
****	95%	57%	95%	63%	95%	76%
****					30%	69%
****	66%	85%	66%	93%	21%	97%
****	8%	72%	11%	79%	14%	84%
****	15%	100%	15%	89%	18%	88%
RBWM	45%	68%	45%	78%	40%	74%
National (state funded)	46%	71%	47%	71%	48%	71%

## A Level results

*Level Religious Studies	A*-B	A* - E
School A	16	40
School B	9	13
School C	0	1
School D	2	9
School E	14	24
School F	3	6
School G	2	9
Total	46	102