

ESSEX LOCAL AUTHORITY
STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
(SACRE)

ANNUAL REPORT
2015-2016

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Foreword by John Lee, Chair of Essex SACRE

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Foreword

Following the publication of the new syllabus last year a number of support materials have been produced to help Religious Education teachers to deliver the new curriculum. These have been developed by groups of working practitioners and it has been pleasing to receive some very positive feedback about how useful they are. I would like to thank all the people involved in their production.

The new syllabus and the support materials have also provided a very useful basis for developing some Religious Education “clusters” across the county. One of things that SACRE is aware of is that being the Religious Education specialist in a school can sometimes be quite an isolated role. With that in mind we have facilitated local meetings for teachers to come together to explore issues in Religious Education and share resources and approaches. Many of these have quickly embedded in the work of local areas and again I would like to offer my thanks to all the people that have organised, hosted or attended them. They will provide a network for Religious Education teachers for some time to come.

John Lee, Chair of Essex SACRE

1.1 Duty to establish SACRE

All Local Education Authorities (LAs) are required to constitute a Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) within their local area.

1.2 Composition of SACRE

Representation on SACRE is required as follows:-

- such Christian and other religious denominations as, in the opinion of the LEA, will appropriately reflect the principal religious traditions in the area
- associations representing teachers
- the Local Education Authority

The list of the members of Essex SACRE as of April 2015 is set out in Appendix 1

1.3 Functions of SACRE

- To advise the LA on worship and the religious education to be given in accordance with the agreed syllabus including methods of teaching, advice on materials and the provision of training for teachers
- To consider whether to recommend to the LA that its current agreed syllabus should be reviewed by convening an Agreed Syllabus Conference.
- To consider whether the requirement that collective worship in a county school should be ‘broadly Christian in nature’ should be varied (determinations)
- To report to the LA and the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) on its activities on an annual basis.

1.4 Meetings

SACRE met on three occasions during the academic year 2015- 2016.

24th September 2015

20th January 2016

22nd April 2016

Section 2 Advice on Religious Education

2.1 THE AGREED SYLLABUS FOR RE

Issue

To fulfil the legal requirement to review the agreed syllabus for RE on a five yearly basis and monitor its implementation.

Action

In 2015 Standing Conference endorsed and adopted a new agreed syllabus for the Authority's schools, "exploRE", which was implemented from September 2015. Copies of the syllabus were distributed to all Local Authority schools, academies and independent schools in the county.

SACRE has produced updated materials for teaching and learning in RE, through working parties of practising teachers, of each Key Stage to support delivery of the new syllabus.

2.2 STANDARDS IN RE

Examination Results

A detailed table of examination results was reviewed and discussed by representatives of SACRE. Figures that relate to results over the last three years were analysed to indicate trends in performance. Cohort entry numbers are also analysed and a comparison is made to national figures (where available).

In GCSE Religious Studies the number of Essex pupils entered fell slightly, which mirrored the national picture. After two years of being significantly below national in all grade measures in 2013 and 2014, the improvements of 2015 have continued in 2016. At A* & A grades and at A* to C grades outcomes were significantly above national averages.

At Advanced Level (code 111) 408 pupils were entered for the examination of which 75% achieved A* - C, and 13% achieved A* or A. The percentages achieving A* - C and A* - E were broadly in line with national outcomes. The percentage attaining the highest grade was below national. The significant increase in overall number of Essex pupils entered in 2015 has been broadly sustained.

Comparative tables of examination results are found in **Appendix 2**

2.3 APPLICATIONS FOR DETERMINATIONS

No applications were received from schools for determinations to be made on the lifting of the requirements for collective worship to be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character.

Section 3: SACRE in schools

3.1 Facilitating cooperative working between schools for RE/SACRE

This new initiative is supporting the leadership and teaching of RE across schools in Essex through cluster working. Representatives of SACRE have facilitated initial and subsequent meetings with local groups of practitioners. Through these groups discussions about delivery and assessment of RE have been initiated. The response from schools has been predominately positive and these clusters are now self-sustaining, determining their own leadership and focus for each meeting. The generic agenda for initial meetings is included as Appendix 3. A summary of the

outcomes of these initial cluster meetings was compiled and will be considered by SACRE in their Autumn meeting 2016.

3.2 SCHOOL VISITS

Some members of SACRE are regular visitors to schools, most often representing their particular group within SACRE. It is the intention for more members of SACRE to visit schools, with a particular focus on Collective Worship, during 2016/17 determining their own leadership and focus for each meeting.

APPENDIX 1

Group A Christian denominations and other religions/groups;

Revd John Allison	Methodist
Richard McIntosh	Salvation Army
Revd Prof Stephen Dray	Baptist
Prof Graham Handscomb	URC
Mr Ray White	Humanist
Mrs Sushila Karia	Hindu
Mr Arnold Klein	Jewish
Mrs Sidra Naeem	Muslim
Ms Jane Ward	Buddhist
Mr Chris Thompson	Roman Catholic

Group B The Church of England;

Mr Andrew Merchant
Revd Susan Ives
Mrs Christine Horton
Mrs Ruth Everett

Group C Teachers' Associations;

Mr Steve Wood	NASUWT
Mrs Caroline L'strange	NAHT
Mrs Margot Spurling	ATL
Mr David Barrs	ASCL

Group D The Local Authority.

Mr John Lee	Co-optee	Deputy Headteacher (Secondary) - Chairperson
Mr Graham Lancaster		LA Lead Officer for RE
Cllr Andy Wood		
Cllr Malcolm Maddocks		
Cllr Theresa Higgins		
Cllr Keith Bobbin		
Cathie Bonich		Additional LA Officer
Mrs Jane Rice		Clerk to SACRE
Mr Andrew Scott		Adviser to SACRE

APPENDIX 2

KS4 Religious Studies								
Year		Number of entries	Entry as a percentage of cohort	% A*-A	% A*-C	% A*-G	% Fail	Average Point Score
2013	Essex	4719	30.0	27.2	69.9	97.9	2.1	40.8
	National	211870	36.7	28.8	72.1	98.4	1.6	41.7
2014	Essex	5235	33.8	27.2	66.3	96.9	3.1	40.1
	National	241442	42.7	27.9	70.0	97.9	2.1	41.2
2015	Essex	5277	34.6	28.8	71.3	98.3	1.7	41.6
	National	252221	45.1	27.6	70.7	98.2	1.8	41.4
2016	Essex	5058	34.5	28.7	71.2	98.5	1.5	5.3
	National	251370	46.0	27.5	70.3	98.0	2.0	5.2

Source : RAISEonline LA Populated. 2013, 2014 & 2015 validated, 2016 unvalidated.

NB. RAISE now present columns as 7 points or above (equivalent to A or above), 4.5 points or above (equivalent to C or above) and 1 point or above (equivalent to G or above)

KS5 Religious Studies - Essex only				
Year	Pupils	Average Points Score	% A*-C	% A*-A
2013	339	34	76%	23%
2014	333	35	79%	21%
2015	413	33	75%	20%
2016	408	33	75%	13%

Source : FFTAspire

The blue shading above indicates outcomes that are below National outcomes and below outcomes of the previous year for the same measure.

The green shading above indicates outcomes that are above National outcomes and above outcomes of the previous year for the same measure.

APPENDIX 3

**Generic Agenda
ESSEX SACRE
INITIAL RE CLUSTER MEETINGS**

	Agenda Item	Any actions/issues for SACRE
1	Introductions and a brief snapshot of RE in each other's schools <i>Role of facilitator</i> <i>Purpose of the group</i>	
2	How well exploRE is working thus far – sharing approaches to curriculum coverage/planning etc	
3	Consideration of one of the latest support materials – probably KS2 (for this it would be useful to have access to Infolink on a screen.) <i>Overview</i> <i>Judaism</i>	
4	Assessment <i>How do you assess RE?</i> <i>In how much detail?</i> <i>What is a reasonable expectation for a class teacher?</i>	
5	Sharing resources – visits/visitors	
6	The RE quality mark	
7	The future of the group <i>Was the meeting useful?</i> <i>Would you like to meet again? If so, how often?</i> <i>Who might be willing to host?</i> <i>What would you like on the agenda?</i>	