



THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF WINDSOR AND MAIDENHEAD

Annual SACRE Report 2015-6

The SACRE has several aspects to its role. It:

- ❖ Advises the local authority on matters relating to collective worship and religious education
- ❖ Advises on methods of teaching and resources for religious education
- ❖ Decides whether or not to grant determinations to those schools which apply to have daily worship which is other than of a broadly Christian character
- ❖ Identifies the need for a revised religious education syllabus

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) and The Diocese of Oxford and the 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 2015-2016. The minutes of the meetings which give more detail can be found at 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

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Introduction from the Chairman, Michael Gammage

It's easy to be disappointed. There is so much that could be done; good quality RE teaching can be transformative; and progress can seem glacial. But there have thankfully also been notable successes this year.

SACRE has endeavoured above all to provide RE teachers with access to events, training and knowledge sharing sessions that will assist them to deliver RE teaching at its best. SACRE launched a termly newsletter to reach RE Heads and teachers, and this year, for the first time, surveyed RE Heads and teachers to better understand their needs and how SACRE might help. Their feedback has been invaluable in setting our priorities.

Our biggest step forward though, after careful consideration, has been our decision to join with other local SACREs in the Hub, a strategic collaboration bringing together several SACREs across Berkshire. We have cooperated in the past but the Hub takes us into a much closer collaboration, one to which we are committing a significant proportion of the SACRE budget.

The fruits of this collaboration are already apparent, in particular in the Crossing the Bridges project which aims to enable high quality learning experiences for young people through well-structured and thoughtfully arranged visits to local places of worship. The project is focussed on nurturing richer RE learning but by improving awareness and understanding it contributes as well to building community cohesion.

Which brings us to our biggest challenge at this time: how to remove the financial barrier that prevents many schools from taking advantage of the opportunities being developed by the Crossing the Bridges project. Places of worship are signing up for training in how to provide educationally rich learning experiences for visiting schools; and many teachers would like to arrange visits. But most schools simply don't have the resources to cover the transport costs.

In its search for a sponsor, SACRE has reached out to WAM Get Involved and to the Rotary Club – so far without success. We remain hopeful that a sponsor can be found in the coming months so the young people in the Royal Borough are able to take advantage of these enrichment opportunities.

It is fitting to close by paying tribute to those whose enthusiastic voluntary service makes SACRE's work possible. We are fortunate, in particular, to have a Vice Chair, Karen Butler, who continues to commit a great deal of time and effort to nurturing our involvement with the Hub initiative. We are well served too by the RE Adviser to SACRE and the Royal Borough, Anne Andrews, who has been an invaluable resource and catalyst.

Michael Gammage

Chairman

Standard, Quality and Provision of RE

- GCSE Results. The LA was requested to provide the GCSE results, for SACRE to review and data from 2014-2016 has allowed SACRE to see that there has been a slight increase in both take up of GCSE RS and grade distribution. In 2014 the LA average was slightly below national on both these scores, whereas in 2016 it sits slightly above. This improvement must be balanced against the schools that have fewer entrants for the exam and one school that had no entrants at all in 2016. SACRE intends to follow these schools up in the next academic year, with a letter requesting information about the current situation and plans for RE/RS in the future.
- A & AS results. The number of entrants for A & AS is relatively low and no comparison with the national average has been offered in the statistics, but at A level the local average points score was slightly above average, while at AS it was slightly below. The situation will be monitored and more analytical data will be requested for the 2017 exam season.
- Subject leader training continues to be well attended and subject leaders contact the adviser outside of sessions to seek advice. The decision was made to move the meetings around the Borough to widen attendance. This is having some positive impact.
- Assessment is one of the areas in which SACRE is aware that schools may need to improve on RE and this is included regularly in Subject leader meetings.
- OFSTED reports are made available to SACRE where they make mention of RE, which is rarely and SIAMS reports are used as a useful benchmark for what can be achieved in RE.
- No complaints have been received by SACRE about either the quality or provision of RE.
- The following concerns were discussed by SACRE:
 - RE not looked at separately in Ofsted reports.
 - RE not greatly taught in community schools.
 - Difficult to compare schools as RE taught differently in all schools.
 - Ofsted reports not specific to RE.
 - Difficulty in capturing information.
 - Sign up for recent training, mainly from faith schools, not many from community schools.
- Schools were surveyed to see what resources they used and what their preferred training methods were. The results are attached below.

Agreed Syllabus

- Preparations have begun for the syllabus review that needs to begin in 2017. The Pan-Berkshire hub co-ordinator will head up the review as part of the hub.
- The LA have been advised that extra funding will need to be made available in the financial year 17-18 for the review.

Standard, Quality and Provision of Collective Worship

- No requests for determinations have been received, nor have there been any complaints regarding Collective worship.

Advice and Training offered to Schools, LA and Governors

- The LA was advised that SACRE needed an extra meeting each year to enhance its effectiveness and the extra funding and clerking time was made available.
- Subject leader meetings continue to be held termly; topics this year have included age-related expectations, teaching about prayer and a visit to the Gurdwara. These network meetings are linked to NATRE and NATRE resources are shared.
- Sufficient funding has been made available on advice to enable RBWM SACRE to fully engage with the Pan-Berkshire hub and the Crossing the Bridges project.
- All secondary schools were surveyed with regards to the religions that will be offered under the new GCSE specifications and training on Islam was offered at the Mosque in Maidenhead as a response to the survey. One of the secondary schools also invited all the others to attend a session led by one of the exam boards on the new specification.
- RBWM joined in the RE and British Values conference hosted by Bracknell Forest and SACRE agreed to fund 14 places for teachers. 13 of these were taken up and the conference was well received, feedback being positive.
- As a result of SACRE discussion the LA invited the RE Adviser to lead some sessions on Respect and Tolerance for NQTs and School Direct Trainees. These visits included trips to the Mosque and a chance to meet with the Imam and other members of the Muslim community.
- SACRE has advised the LA that trips to places of worship could be facilitated by some financial assistance and the LA is engaging with SACRE in discussions on this theme and suggesting organisations that may be able to help. These discussions are ongoing.
- One community school has been receiving additional RE input, supported by the LA to raise the standard of RE and that school has in turn been offering support to other schools.
- The termly SACRE news continues to offer advice, support and resource suggestions to teachers on RE and Collective Worship and is circulated to all schools and each SACRE member.

Management of SACRE

RBWM SACRE decided that more could be achieved by meeting 4 times per year and so there were meetings on the following dates:

2nd November

13th January

14th March

15th June

- The LA agreed to make sufficient funding available to enable the extra meeting to happen.
- Most of the meetings have been quorate, although none of the councillors were available for the meeting in March. The constitution was consulted and the minimum number of people were present so the meeting continued, but without taking any decisions of a financial nature. Membership has remained steady; chair and vice-chair continue in their roles, but there has been a change of Muslim rep and a new clerk has just been appointed for 2016-7. (Andy Carswell)

- SACRE has continued to engage with NASACRE, again sending a representative to the AGM in London. SACRE then engaged in the activity that delegates to the conference undertook and will in due course feedback their responses to NASACRE.
- SACRE has agreed to support the Pan-Berkshire hub to develop the Crossing the Bridges materials and develop a directory of all the places of worship in Berkshire that are happy to receive school visits.
- Members of SACRE attended the joint SACRE conference that launched the Pan-Berkshire Crossing the Bridges hub and also the training sessions that were offered for teachers and hosts to produce the draft materials.
- The additional hub meetings, scheduled to take place a couple of weeks before SACRE meetings will be attended by the vice-chair, who will report back to the main meeting.

Contribution of SACRE to LA Agenda

- SACRE members were invited to and engaged with a series of Interfaith discussions
- The adviser to SACRE has been running sessions for NQTs and Schools Direct Trainees on Respect and tolerance in the classroom and this agenda is set to continue next year.
- Discussions are underway between SACRE and some LA groups such as the Big Society Panel and the One Borough Meeting.

Conclusion

RBWM SACRE is aware of the challenges facing SACREs, RE and Collective Worship and is working to connect with teachers with the borough and help them with the issues that they are facing. The exciting development is the Pan-Berkshire hub and the Crossing the Bridges Project. The increased contact with schools through the training provided will hopefully create more opportunities to evaluate RE in schools. The additional training offered to the hosts in places of worship may also help to fill some of the current vacancies.

SACRE continues to keep itself up-to-date with the latest developments in RE and all the recent reports – RE for Real, the Woolf Institute report and the New Settlement – have been distributed to all SACRE members. The difficulties of monitoring RE and CW in schools continue, as OFSTED often makes no mention of them and lack of sufficient funding makes it hard for SACRE to carry out the monitoring itself.

SACRE membership and Attendance

Group Represented	Name	2 nd Nov 15	13 th Jan 16	March 16	July 16
Baptist	<i>Vacancy</i>				
Free Church	Melody Erasmus	X	X	X	X
Methodist	Gary Homewood	X	Apologies	Apologies	Apologies
Roman Catholic Church	Barbara Meaney	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Hindu	Ila Gongotra	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Islam	Usman Bhally	X	X	Saghir Ahmed - Yes	Yes
Judaism	Hilary Harris	X	Yes	Yes	Yes
Sikh	Ravinder Singh	Yes	Yes	Apologies	Yes
Buddhist	Anthea West	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Baha'i	Mike Gammage (Chair)	Yes	Yes	Apologies	Yes
Church of England	Felicity Gunn	X	Yes	Apologies	Yes
Church of England	Rev Joan Hicks	Yes	Yes	Apologies	Yes
Church of England	Karen Butler (vice-chair)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
NASUWT	<i>Vacancy</i>				
NAHT	<i>Vacancy</i>				
ATL	Liz Jenkins	X	Yes	Apologies	Yes
VOICE	<i>Vacancy</i>				
BASH	Louise Ceska	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
NUT	Deborah Firth	X	X	Apologies	Apologies
RBWM	Cllr Dee Quick	X	X	Apologies	x
RBWM	Cllr Natasha Airey	Yes	X	Apologies	Yes
RBWM	Cllr Richard Kellaway	Yes	Yes	Apologies	Apologies
Local Authority Officer	Clive Haines	Yes	X	X	Yes
Professional Advisor	Anne Andrews	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Clerk:	Shilpa Manek	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Teacher Survey Results

How Can SACRE Best Support RE Teachers?

Results of a SACRE survey of RE Teachers in the Royal Borough

1. Survey Objectives and Methods

- **Objective:** to ask RE Teachers what they need, as a way to identify where and how SACRE might be able to assist them
- **Method:** RE Teachers were invited to respond online to a set of six questions posed by SACRE teachers and others
- **Response:** between 10th and 25th November, 18 RE Teachers completed the survey.

2. Where Do You Currently Go for RE Resources?

Taken together, RE Teachers seem to have access to a wide range of RE Resources already

In reality, most RE teachers mentioned only one or two sources for RE Resources

Conclusion: SACRE might have a useful role in spreading awareness of the range of RE Resources, and removing barriers to using them

3. What is your preferred method of receiving training?

On average, RE Teachers prefer conferences to webinars

In reality, preferences vary significantly

A One-Day Conference is:

the *most* favourite option for 28% of RE teachers

but also the *least* favourite option for 33% of RE teachers

Conclusion: *on average,* teachers seem to prefer conferences to webinars - but teacher's circumstances and preferences vary hugely. So training and support has to cater for this spectrum of requirements.

4. If you have to choose, which do you prefer?

Face-to-face meetings with other RE Teachers were not as popular as online resources

5. What time of day is best for meetings?

For RE events, weekday afternoons work best

6. What else can SACRE Do?

RE Teachers' Suggestions...

"Arrange for speakers to come into schools - currently we have Christian but no other faiths, even just at assembly would be lovely. Muslim speaker for GCSE would be super. Thanks."

"Artefacts."

“Have a list of contacts from different religions who are comfortable with visiting schools, or responding to questions from teachers.”

“Visiting different Places of Worship is a great way to become more familiar with the world faiths: customs, history, worship methods and practices etc.”

“The idea of a forum to share resources and lesson plans is a really good idea Conference is a good idea but if I attended I would expect to see experienced teachers talking about their successes in teaching RE and ways they have inspired their children to love learning about other religions and cultures.”

7. Questions and Conclusions

RE Resources

- Why is it that some teachers seem to have access to a wide range of sources while others seem to use only one?
- TES, RE Online and RE Today seem to be clearly the most popular online resources. Do *all* teachers have access to them?

RE Teacher Training Events

- Teachers' circumstances vary. We need to continue to develop a range of events, from local twilight sessions to half day or occasional full day conferences