



MANCHESTER  
CITY COUNCIL

# **Manchester SACRE Annual Report 2016- 2017**

## **Foreword**

Welcome to the Manchester SACRE Annual Report. It gives me great pleasure to write a brief introductory comment to this record of our activities in academic year 2016-2017.

Manchester SACRE continues to strengthen its links with the schools in our area, and is working to offer support to those schools whenever it is needed.

May 2017 was rather horrific and upsetting for people of Manchester and the whole country. We were mourning for the victims of the arena attack where 22 innocent people lost their lives and over a hundred people were injured. The perpetrator was born in Manchester of Libyan origin where the family was given refugee status. I am, like many of people of faith or no faith, incredibly saddened by the fact that the 22-year-old bomber having grown up here and attended our local primary and secondary schools didn't appreciate the importance of respecting others giving credence to social, moral and cultural values. It is however gratifying and encouraging to read in many OFSTED reports from Manchester schools that spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is a developing strength.

One of the highlights for the year is that we approved and provided all schools in Manchester with a Humanist Supplement which included full information on the Humanist perspective for 27 of the 40 units in the Agreed Syllabus. I hope that it will become a valuable and well used source of support for our schools.

I am pleased that our visits to hold meetings in other faith group premises in the area continue. This, amongst other things helps SACRE members increase their knowledge about other faiths, and we always receive a good welcome from the venues we visit. I am grateful for the help we have received from Nick Paul from the Manchester City Council particularly with regard to contact and communications between SACRE and the schools in the city.

In finishing, I would like to extend my heartiest and sincere thanks to all the members of SACRE for their contributions and making meetings interesting with often very thought provoking discussion.

**Cllr. Ahmed Ali JP**  
Chair Manchester SACRE

## Membership of Manchester SACRE at the end of year 2016-2017

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
Robin Grinter	Committee A	Humanist
Imran Naseem	Committee A	Islam
Vacant	Committee A	Roman Catholic
Heather Steward	Committee A	Methodist
Grange Williams	Committee A	Bahai
Rachel Kemp	Committee C (co-opted member)	RE Teacher
Rachel Skelton	Committee A	Unitarian and Free Christian Churches
Steven Mintz	Committee A	Jewish
Danielle Gordon-Lanes	Committee C	RE Teacher
Helen Tildesley	Committee C	NASUWT rep
Mike Chesterton	Committee A	Evangelical
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 made by a head teacher that the requirement for collective worship in Community schools or Schools which have not been designated as having a religious character to be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character shall not apply to the collective worship provided for some or all of the pupils at that particular school.

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

### **Meetings held:**

19th October 2016

15<sup>th</sup> March 2017

14th June 2017

Meetings held in the traditional venue of Manchester Town Hall in October and March. In June SACRE was welcomed by the Religious Society of Friends at their meeting house on Mount Street. This visit was organised by SACRE member Valerie Clark who gave an interesting and information talk on the history and values of the Quaker movement and a short tour of the building.

In attendance at the October meeting was Rebekah Turner, Regional Coordinator for Christian Aid who gave a short presentation on how the charity connects with both faith and non-faith schools across Manchester.

### **Comments from Rachel Kemp (Primary RE Specialist)**

Strong links have been established between myself, as Primary RE lead and MMU this year. Initial concerns were raised by a student about how up to date and its practices were in relation to the changing curriculum and status of the subject. 22 students and their tutor have been in school with me, observing good practice and working with the children on a practical level. Particularly working on Big Questions. I was also able to share the New RE Curriculum with their tutor, this has a positive impact on MMU teaching as it is current and up to date and they can see the real school context of the subject and its implications in the classroom. Observations were in KS1 and 2. The feedback was excellent from both the tutor and the students as to how useful it was. Future connections will be made when the students have to produce resources in their final year of university. It has been suggested that I also go and speak at the university in the future.

Reports, from MMU students, have filtered back to me and the lecturers now reflect what is going on in Manchester in terms of RE and is more reflective in relation to the new curriculum.

Successful and strong links have now been firmly made with both myself and with school. I am hoping that future students will use school and myself as a resource for keeping RE up to date with both the current curriculum and practical class room activities.

Pleasing progress and links made to ensure consistency of teacher training in the RE sector within the primary teaching.

## R.E Data

### Numbers

### Percentages

GCSE Full Course	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017		2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Pupils entered	2355	<b>2637</b>	2769	2732	2548						
A*	165	<b>224</b>	194	182	234		7.00	8.5	7.0%	6.7%	9.2%
A	323	<b>421</b>	412	404	435		13.7	16.0	14.9%	15.3%	17.1%
A* - C	1431	<b>1709</b>	1802	1808	1691		60.80	64.8	65.1%	66.2%	66.4%
A* - G	2255	<b>2529</b>	2691	2655	2470		95.80	95.9	97.2%	97.2%	96.9%

## Commentary

The national average has remained at circa 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.

## Commission on Religious Education

The Commission for Religious Education was set up to review the legal, policy and education frameworks for RE with the aim to 'improve the quality and rigour of RE and its capacity to prepare pupils for life in modern Britain'. The commission held a number of sessions nationwide as part of its call for evidence. One such session was held on 13th June at Trinity High school in Manchester and a number of SACRE members attended as observers. Rachel Kemp presented oral evidence on behalf of both Manchester SACRE and RE Teachers generally. At the June SCRE meeting Danielle Gordon-Lanes and Christine Howard gave some verbal feedback from their viewpoint as observers at the commission. The interim report of the Commission will be published in the autumn with an opportunity for interested parties to respond.

## SACRE communication with schools

Through the SACRE LA Officer schools continue to 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. The Manchester SACRE section on the Manchester City council website is now fully functional and the occasional enquiry from individuals outside of SACRE indicate that it is easily accessible.

### **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 up dates produced by NASACRE. Manchester SACRE are continue to be members of NASACRE and all members have access details to the website, including the regular briefings. Throughout the academic year SACRE members were provided with an up dated summary of OFSTED data and comments relating to RE (albeit in the context of SMRC). The lack of comments specific to RE possibly make these reports of limited practical value however they do serve to keep members fully apprised of the extent (and outcome of) the OFSTED inspection progress in Manchester schools.

### **SACRE membership**

During the academic year Manchester SACRE was pleased to welcome Imran Naseem representing Islam and Rachel Skelton representing the Unitarian and Christian Free Churches. Efforts were ongoing to secure new Roman Catholic and to further broaden faith representation more generally.

During the course of the year SACRE took the sensible step to elect a vice-chair. This role was taken up by Cedric Knipe.

### **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. Also to give details of the process of commissioning a new Agreed Syllabus for September 2016.

### **Humanist supplement**

By the end of the year following hard work from SACRE member Robin Grinter and colleagues and considerable and useful debate amongst SACRE members a new highly comprehensive Humanist Supplement was made available to all Manchester schools. This document will be very useful to schools by assisting teachers in the provision of information and guidance on the Humanist belief system. This document continues the recent work of SACRE members in improving the provision of useful information and teaching materials to schools.

### **Freedom of Information requests (FOI)**

SACRE received one FOI request during academic years 16-17. This was a press request for information concerning schools who may have requested an exemption from Christian collective worship. The response was that no such requests had been made.

### **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.

Nick Paul  
Manchester City council