

Medway Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) Annual report for 2018/2019

1. Chair's introduction

I am pleased to introduce the Medway SACRE Annual Report for the year 2018/2019.

SACRE met three times during the year and the meetings were hosted by The Rochester Diocese, a local church and a local primary school.

Set within the current very challenging climate for religious education, Medway saw a decrease in the number of students sitting the GCSE examination in Religious Studies (full course) from 1,380 in 2016 to 560 in 2018. The number sitting the A level examination in Religious Studies has also decreased from 119 in 2016 to 75 in 2018. The percentage of students gaining an A*/A grade at A level decreased from 18% in 2016 to 13% in 2018.

SACRE has continued to offer free training for groups of schools and professional development for staff of both academy and local authority schools. Working with the Medway Teaching School Alliance (MTSA) the SACRE commissioned work with a local primary and a local secondary RE Subject Leader to offer further support to secondary RE departments and subject leaders in primary schools. SACRE has been working towards resourcing its own local RE Network Leaders Hub and in the meantime continues to both promote and support the Kent and Medway RE Hub organised by Canterbury Christ Church University.

Our principal work this year has been the production of a new Agreed Syllabus to replace the 2006 version. Rollout of the new Agreed Syllabus will continue throughout the coming months.

Regular contact has been maintained with all schools through the use of locally produced RE newsletters which are usually issued three times a year.

SACRE's work is only made possible by the generous financial support of Medway Council who recognise the positive value that well-delivered and well-resourced religious education can bring to pupils. SACRE continues to benefit from its partnership with the different faith groups on the SACRE and the Anglican Rochester Diocesan Board of Education.

Finally, I would like to thank my fellow members of SACRE who have given of their time voluntarily and ensured that Medway has had a strong, quorate Council at all its meetings. the professional support of our consultant, Ian Hartland, a former HMI, is also gratefully acknowledged especially in the production of our new Agreed Syllabus.

SACRE remains committed to the delivery of first-class religious education in all the area's schools.

Cllr Trevor Clarke
Chairman of Medway SACRE

2. Advice to statutory bodies

a) The SACRE has not offered any specific advice to the local authority apart from the recommendation to adopt a new Agreed Syllabus for RE.

b) The SACRE continues to offer much advice to schools. This has been achieved by different means.

- The SACRE continues to publish separate primary and secondary newsletters, three times each year, usually in March, June/July and November. They usually contain local and national news relating to religious education, collective worship and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They also usually include reviews of books for teachers, national reports on religion, belief, RE and collective worship and other suitable resources such as DVDs. Examples of some resources reviewed are to be found in Appendix A on page 8. The newsletter is sent to all RE subject leaders in local authority and other schools, including academies, in the local area. It is also available on the SACRE section of the local authority's website.
- The SACRE enables the RE consultant to undertake a full, day review of a school's provision for religious education and for collective worship when asked to do so by schools. This results in a brief written report which is sent solely to the school. SACRE members then receive an anonymised version of the report which enables them to gain an insight into the work of some individual schools. The SACRE does not charge schools for this service.
- The RE consultant also undertakes, when asked to do so by schools, shorter discussions (of around two hours) with RE subject leaders about their school's provision for religious education. This work does not usually result in a written report but may include follow up visits to check on developments. The SACRE does not charge schools for this service.
- The RE consultant provides advice via emails or the telephone to schools which make contact with him.

The SACRE commissioned work with a local primary and a secondary RE Subject Leader to offer further support to secondary RE departments and subject leaders in primary schools. These staff hold regular meetings with teachers of RE. At a meeting in November 2018 nine attended and at a meeting in March 2019 twelve teachers came along. The session in November was an introduction to the new Medway Agreed Syllabus for RE, and a draft of RE guidance written by the RE consultant. The session in March looked at curriculum mapping and how we could incorporate work on worldviews into schools' schemes of work syllabuses.

- There has been an increasing amount of information placed on the SACRE section of the local authority's website. This includes relevant publications from the Medway SACRE, including guidance on delivering the local Agreed Syllabus, the

primary and secondary newsletters, minutes of the SACRE meetings as well as relevant documents from bodies such as the Department for Education, Ofsted and the Religious Education Council.

- Although most local secondary schools, along with a few primary schools, have become academies, the Medway SACRE provides advice and support to both types of school.

c) The SACRE has not offered any specific advice to the government or other statutory bodies.

3. Standards and quality of provision of RE

- a) Lists of the number of entrants and public examinations results from 2013 to 2018 can be found in Appendix C and D on pages 9 and 10.
- b) The SACRE does not regularly collect information about attainment in RE from its schools apart from the results of public examinations.
- c) The SACRE has only limited information about the quality of RE provision in schools in addition to the information about the outcomes of public examinations in secondary schools. The SACRE does not make local-authority-wide checks on the extent to which all schools comply fully with the legal requirements for RE. Information mostly comes from any visits made to schools each year by the RE consultant, from the commissioned RE Subject Leaders and informally from staff at the local schools. Very little information is provided in current Ofsted reports about RE or collective worship in the local area. The SACRE continues to believe that it is a matter of considerable regret that Ofsted no longer makes rigorous checks on the extent of compliance with statutory requirements for RE and collective worship when schools, especially secondary schools, are inspected.
- d) There have been no withdrawals from RE that have been brought to the attention of the Medway SACRE.
- e) There have been no complaints about RE that have been brought to the attention of the Medway SACRE.

4. The local Agreed Syllabus for RE

The Agreed Syllabus Conference was previously convened and began a review of the current local agreed syllabus for RE which was issued in 2006. Drafts of a new agreed syllabus were produced by the RE consultant and these were then considered by the SACRE and Conference. A new Medway Agreed Syllabus for RE was finalised and issued in November 2018.

The introduction to the new syllabus states:

The Medway Agreed Syllabus 2018 is intended to replace the earlier agreed syllabus of 2006. The fundamental legal requirements for RE remain, in the main, the same as in 2006. However, understandings of the nature and purpose of RE and of what the government expects of English maintained schools have changed over time. The syllabus seeks to reflect new requirements and expectations. It should be implemented in full by September 2019.

The new agreed syllabus seeks not only to ensure that the fundamental legal requirements for RE are met but also to reflect best practice recommended across a number of other local authorities in recent years. A number of other agreed syllabuses for RE along with documents and reports produced by the Religious Education Council, the Commission on Religious Education, the National Association of Teachers of Religious Education, Ofsted, the Department for Education, universities and other RE specialists and practitioners have all been consulted. Some older material has also been consulted such as the Model Syllabuses produced some years ago by the (then) School Curriculum and Assessment Authority.

The new agreed syllabus seeks to be brief, clear, direct and user friendly. Thus, unnecessary jargon is avoided where possible and, where technical or specialist terms are used, they are mostly explained. The Medway SACRE are very aware that most users of this agreed syllabus will be those with specialisms in other subjects and areas apart from RE.

The main similarities to the 2006 Agreed Syllabus are:

- The major religions to be studied at key stages 1-3 are very similar.
- The time expected to be allocated for RE for key stages 1-4 is very similar.

The main differences from the 2006 Agreed Syllabus are:

- A new single principal aim for RE (which however seeks to incorporate the twin aims of *learning about* and *learning from* religions in the 2006 Agreed Syllabus).
- The use of end-of-key-stage outcomes instead of level descriptions and attainment targets.
- Removal of information about the contribution of RE to learning across the curriculum in relation to: promoting spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, citizenship, inclusion, personal social and health education, key skills, language, ICT and other areas such as thinking skills.
- Programmes of study no longer identify the specific knowledge, skills and understanding involved related to *learning about* and *learning from* religion.
- Programmes of study no longer use the three headings of (a) religions and beliefs, (b) themes, (c) experiences and opportunities.

5. Collective Worship

- a) The SACRE does not make local-authority-wide checks on the extent to which all schools comply fully with the legal requirements for collective worship. The SACRE continues to think that Ofsted should do so during its inspection of schools.
- b) The SACRE has received no requests for a determination in the current year and none at all in previous years.

- c) There have been no complaints about collective worship that have been brought to the attention of the Medway SACRE.

6. Management of SACRE

Membership and training. All recent meetings of the SACRE have been quorate. Training has been mostly undertaken at the full SACRE meetings. This has included:

- a consideration of the information in the primary and secondary newsletters, with an opportunity to look at the resources that have been reviewed
- updates, for example, any key information from the Department for Education, the RE Council, NASACRE and AREIAC is provided by the RE consultant
- group activities which have included learning about aspects of different world religions.

7. SACRE meetings during the year 2018/2019

There were three meetings during the school year. The following text provides some information about the key matters considered at these three meetings. Details about members' attendance are to be found in Appendix B on page 8.

First full SACRE meeting on 14 June 2018

- This meeting took place at the Rochester Diocesan offices.
- The SACRE meeting started at 4pm.
- The RE consultant gave his regular input on relevant local and national developments and on work he is undertaking for the SACRE and local schools.
- The SACRE was reconstituted as the Medway Agreed Syllabus Conference and reviewed the fourth draft of the new agreed syllabus. Members carefully reviewed the draft and further changes were made.
- The four constituent groups on the Conference were each asked to vote to accept the revised draft. All four groups voted to accept it and so it was formally adopted as the new Medway Agreed syllabus for RE for 2018. The Conference thanked the RE consultant for his work in writing and revising the different drafts of the new syllabus.
- The SACRE has worked for some time with The Family Trust and has provided funding for them to create lesson plans for primary schools.

Second full SACRE meeting on 19 November 2018

- This meeting took place at St Justus Church of England Church, in Rochester.
- The SACRE meeting started at 4pm
- A moment of silence was observed.
- The Chairman and Vice Chairman were re-elected
- The RE consultant was absent and so did not give his regular input on relevant local and national developments and on other work he had been doing.

- There was input from local authority staff on fostering and respite care so that any networks could be made aware of the different arrangements for fostering.
- There was feedback about a recent RE teachers network meeting.
- A copy of non-statutory Medway RE guidance written by the RE consultant to support schools, with the implementation of the new Medway Agreed Syllabus for RE was issued.

Third full SACRE meeting on 14 March 2019

- This meeting took place at a local primary school.
- A moment of silence was observed.
- There was input from the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) on education and safeguarding and the process which should be followed in all relevant cases.
- There was a report on the latest RE teachers local network meeting. Fifteen RE subject leaders had attended the meeting. The main focus of the meeting was on the requirements of the new Medway Agreed Syllabus for RE, especially in relation to primary schools.
- There was a discussion about a launch date for the new Medway Agreed Syllabus for RE.
- The RE consultant provided his usual overview of key developments both locally and nationally. He spoke about the new emphasis on worldviews especially evident in the recent major report issued by the Commission on RE entitled *Religion and Worldviews: The Way Forward*. There was a movement for RE to go beyond the focus on 'the big six' religions and to include non-religious worldviews. It was reported that there had been a rather lukewarm response from the Secretary of State for the report's recommendations.
- The consultant had produced new local guidance on the new Medway Agreed Syllabus for RE with a particular focus on ultimate questions as this would be a new area and probably a demanding area for teachers. The guidance concentrated on two central issues which are traditionally central topics in the philosophy of Religion, i.e. the nature and existence of God. There was to be further guidance on ideas about life after death.

8. Contribution of SACRE to the wider Local Authority agenda

- a) The SACRE has not produced any further guidance which would support the local authority's wider agenda.
- b) Individual SACRE members have supported individual schools and inter-faith activities locally.

9. Summary

The Medway SACRE functions well and does as much as it can, given a limited budget, in providing advice, training and support to schools including local academies, in promoting effective RE and collective worship. The SACRE has good local links, for example, with Rochester Cathedral, the local Inter-Faith Network and with some local religious communities. The SACRE has a good national link with NASACRE. The SACRE is suitably

supported by an RE consultant who is an RE subject specialist with experience in schools, higher education, a local authority and as an Ofsted inspector.

10. Membership of SACRE, local authority officers who attend, clerk and professional advice.

The Chair of the SACRE is a local councillor and the vice-chair is a member from Group B. The SACRE is supported by a clerk from the local authority and by an RE subject specialist who was formerly a county inspector for RE and one of Her Majesty's Inspectors. He is commissioned to provide around 15-20 days each year to support SACRE meetings, to write the newsletters and the annual report, to add information to the website and to provide advice and training to schools.

The SACRE usually meets three times each year and meetings are mostly held in schools or in rooms provided at different places of worship. The agenda, along with relevant attachments, are distributed to members a week before the meetings take place. At each meeting the RE consultant provides information about relevant local and national developments. The annual budget for the SACRE for 2018/2019 was approximately £15,000.00 which is similar to the sum allocated by the local authority in previous years.

Appendix A

Resources reviewed in recent editions of the Medway SACRE newsletters

| Primary newsletters | Secondary newsletters |
|---|---|
| Ed. Moss F & Pett S (2019) <i>Assessment in RE a Practical Guide.</i> RE Today Services. 74 pages. ISBN 978-1910 261293. £25.00 | Ed. Moss F & Pett S (2019) <i>Assessment in RE a Practical Guide.</i> RE Today Services. 74 pages. ISBN 978-1910 261293. £25.00 |
| Ed. Pett S (2019) <i>Religious Education The Teacher's Guide</i> (2015) RE Today Services. 121 pages. ISBN 978 1910 261002. £25.00 | Ed. Pett S (2019) <i>Religious Education The Teacher's Guide</i> (2015) RE Today Services. 121 pages. ISBN 978 1910 261002. £25.00 |

Appendix B

Figures for the attendance at SACRE meetings, by members of each of the four committees and others.

| Membership | 14 June 2018 | 22 November 2018 | 14 March 2019 |
|--|--------------|------------------|---------------|
| Group A: Christians and other religions | | | |
| Margaret McDowall | Yes | No | No |
| Faran Forghani | Yes | No | No |
| Stuart McLeod | No | No | No |
| Stephen Bello | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Irina Fridman | No | No | No |
| Ayaz Iqbal | Yes | No | No |
| Kulwat Jhita Singh | No | Yes | Yes |
| | | | |
| Group B: Church of England | | | |
| Helen Bradshaw | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Virginia Corbyn | Yes | Yes | No |
| Helen Burn | No | Yes | Yes |
| Anna Pattenden | No | Yes | Yes |
| | | | |
| Group C: Teacher associations | | | |
| Carolyn Scott | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Lisa Humphries | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| John Gray | NA | Yes | Yes |
| | | | |
| Group D: Local authority | | | |
| Cllr Trevor Clarke | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Cllr Rupert Turpin | No | No | Yes |
| Cllr Pat Cooper | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Cllr Gloria Opara | No | Yes | Yes |
| | | | |
| Others | | | |
| Ian Hartland | Yes | No | Yes |
| Alex Clark | Yes | No | Yes |
| | | | |

Appendix C: MEDWAY SCHOOLS EXAMINATION RESULTS DATA 2013-2015

These tables give (a) the number of candidates entered for GCSE and A level examinations from 2013 to 2015 and (b) the percentage of entrants achieving different grades.

2013

| Key Stage | Subject | Entered | A*-A | A*-C | A*-G |
|-----------|------------------------|---------|-------|-------|-------|
| 4 | Religious Studies GCSE | 891 | 25.8% | 74.7% | 98.9% |
| | Religious Education | 1183 | 21.3% | 50.3% | 92.2% |
| 5 | A Level | 95 | 23.2% | 76.8% | 97.9% |
| | AS Level | 172 | 22.7% | 66.3% | 92.4% |

2014

| Key Stage | Subject | Entered | A*-A | A*-C | A*-G |
|-----------|------------------------|---------|-------|-------|-------|
| 4 | Religious Studies GCSE | 1388 | 24.0% | 66.8% | 97.3% |
| | Religious Education | 0 | | | |
| 5 | A Level | 130 | 22.3% | 74.6% | 99.2% |
| | AS Level | 137 | 21.2% | 58.4% | 89.1% |

Difference between 2014-2013 results

| Key Stage | Subject | A*-A | A*-C | A*-G |
|-----------|------------------------|-------|-------|-------|
| 4 | Religious Studies GCSE | -1.8% | -7.9% | -1.6% |
| | Religious Education | - | - | - |
| 5 | A Level | -0.9% | -2.2% | 1.3% |
| | AS Level | -1.5% | -7.9% | -3.3% |

2015

| Key Stage | Subject | Entered | A*-A | A*-C | A*-G |
|-----------|------------------------|---------|-------|-------|-------|
| 4 | Religious Studies GCSE | 1666 | 22.4% | 66.2% | 97.6% |
| | Religious Education | 0 | | | |
| 5 | A Level | 95 | 28.4% | 87.4% | 100% |
| | AS Level | 214 | 16.4% | 53.3% | 87.4% |

Difference between 2015-2014 results

| Key Stage | Subject | A*-A | A*-C | A*-G |
|-----------|------------------------|-------|-------|-------|
| 4 | Religious Studies GCSE | -1.6% | -0.6% | 0.3% |
| | Religious Education | - | - | - |
| 5 | A Level | 6.1% | 12.8% | 0.8% |
| | AS Level | -4.8% | -5.1% | -1.7% |

Difference between 2013 and 2015 entrants and results

| Key Stage | Subject | Entered | A*-A | A*-C | A*-G |
|-----------|------------------------|---------|-------|-------|-------|
| 4 in 2013 | Religious Studies GCSE | 891 | 25.8% | 74.7% | 98.9% |
| 4 in 2015 | Religious Studies GCSE | 1666 | 22.4% | 66.2% | 97.6% |
| 5 in 2013 | A Level | 95 | 23.2% | 76.8% | 97.9% |
| 5 in 2015 | A Level | 95 | 28.4% | 87.4% | 100% |

Appendix D: MEDWAY SCHOOLS EXAMINATION RESULTS DATA 2016 - 2018

These tables give (a) the number of candidates entered for GCSE and A level examinations from 2015 to 2018 and (b) the percentage of entrants achieving different grades.

2016

| Key Stage | Subject | Entered | A*-A | A*-C | A*-G |
|-----------|------------------------|---------|------|------|------|
| 4 | Religious Studies GCSE | 1380 | 20% | 69% | 98% |
| | Religious Education | - | - | - | - |
| 5 | A Level | 119 | 18% | 70% | 97% |
| | AS Level | 172 | 17% | 63% | 92% |

* No A* for AS level, KS5 only goes to E not G

2017

| Key Stage | Subject | Entered | A*-A | A*-C | A*-G |
|-----------|------------------------|---------|------|------|------|
| 4 | Religious Studies GCSE | 1229 | 24% | 74% | 97% |
| | Religious Education | - | - | - | - |
| 5 | A Level | 117 | 25% | 74% | 97% |
| | AS Level | 50 | 22% | 60% | 86% |

* No A* for AS level, KS5 only goes to E not G

Difference between 2016-2017 results

| Key Stage | Subject | A*-A | A*-C | A*-G |
|-----------|------------------------|------|------|------|
| 4 | Religious Studies GCSE | +4pp | +5pp | -1pp |
| | Religious Education | - | - | - |
| 5 | A Level | +7pp | +4pp | 0 |
| | AS Level | +5pp | -3pp | -6pp |

* No A* for AS level, KS5 only goes to E not G

2018 - students took exams for new GCSEs, graded 9 to 1, in Religious Studies

Grade 4 = Pass; Grade 5 = Good Pass

| Key Stage | Subject | Entered | 5+ | 4+ | 1+ |
|-----------|------------------------|----------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| 4 | Religious Studies GCSE | 560 | 48% | 61% | 98% |
| | | Entered | A*-A | A*-C | A*-E |
| 5 | A Level | 75 | 13% | 69% | 95% |
| | AS Level | 44 | 14% | 34% | 66% |

* No A* for AS level

Difference between 2017-2018 results

Due to changes in grading, comparisons cannot be made between 2018 and previous years

| Key Stage | Subject | A*-A | A*-C | A*-E |
|-----------|----------|-------|-------|-------|
| 5 | A Level | -12pp | -5pp | -2pp |
| | AS Level | -8pp | -26pp | -20pp |

Difference between 2016 and 2018 entrants and results

Due to changes in grading, comparisons cannot be made between 2018 and previous years

| Key Stage | Subject | A*-A | A*-C | A*-E |
|-----------|----------|------|-------|-------|
| 5 | A Level | -5pp | -1pp | -2pp |
| | AS Level | -3pp | -29pp | -26pp |

