



SACRE
Annual
Report
2013

**Wirral Standing Advisory Council for
Religious Education**

Wirral Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education

Twenty Fourth Annual Report of Wirral SACRE

The Annual Report of the Wirral Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) 2013

Message from the Director of Children's Services, Julia Hassall, and the Chair of Wirral SACRE, Martin Dickson

We are pleased to send you this Annual Report of the Wirral Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) for 2013. Wirral SACRE's statutory role is to advise its local authority on religious education (RE) and collective worship in Wirral schools with the aim of supporting and improving both. Wirral SACRE aims to excite, enthuse and raise interest in the subject of RE by raising the profile of Wirral SACRE, forging links with Wirral's young people, and promoting the importance of RE so that it is seen as an exciting and interesting curriculum subject and one chosen at examination level by students in the majority of secondary schools across Wirral. Your feedback is vital in this and so too are the thoughts of our pupils and governing bodies. We always welcome suggestions as well as invitations and presentations from schools which will enable SACRE to work more closely and effectively.

During 2013 the review of the Wirral Agreed Syllabus for RE 2013 was completed and copies circulated to all Wirral schools. As well as the Programmes of Study for RE, from Early Years to Sixth Form, the Syllabus also contains updated guidance on the role of Wirral SACRE and on the law related to RE and Collective Worship. The launch of the syllabus, which is the statutory syllabus for RE for all Wirral maintained schools, took place on 20th June 2013. The Primary Schemes of Work for RE were also refreshed and circulated to schools in time for the commencement of the Autumn term 2013. All of these documents, along with further information on the role and responsibilities of SACRE, are available on the Religious Education section of WESCOM, and on the Wirral SACRE website, (wirral.sacre.org.uk) which provides online resources and hosts an RE Teachers' Forum. The publication of the 2013 Agreed Syllabus will help to ensure continuity of the high standard of teaching and of provision for RE in Wirral schools.

Wirral SACRE's annual analysis of standards and of examination results, which has hitherto appeared in this annual report, will in future be published on the above websites.

The report provides you with a detailed summary of the whole range of SACRE activities during 2013. We commend the report to you and hope that you and your colleagues and partners, will find it interesting and informative.



Martin Dickson
Chair of SACRE



Julia Hassall
Director of Children's Services

Part 1 What SACRE Does

The Twenty Third Annual Report of Wirral SACRE

The Annual Report of the Wirral Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education, 2012 - 2013

1.1 Responsibilities of SACRE

The SACRE has a statutory duty to advise the Local Authority (LA) on religious education and collective worship in maintained schools, with the aim of supporting and improving both.

The SACRE has two particular functions:

- It can require its LA to convene an Agreed Syllabus Conference to review its current Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education;
- It may determine, on application by the Headteacher that the requirement for collective worship in community schools be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character shall not apply to the collective worship provided for some or all of the pupils in a particular school. Wirral has not received any applications.

In addition the work of SACRE includes;

1. the monitoring and improvement of the standards, quality of teaching and provision in RE
2. the partnership between the SACRE, the LA and other key stakeholders
3. the effectiveness of the locally agreed syllabus
4. the monitoring and improvement of the provision and quality of collective worship
5. the contribution of the SACRE to the promotion of social and racial harmony.

Since the 1992 Education Act, all meetings of Wirral SACRE have been open to the public.

1.2 A summary of SACRE meetings during the period of this report

SACRE has met once in each school term at venues across the Borough.

The meeting of 17th October 2012 held at the Wirral Multi Cultural Centre considered an application from the British Humanist Association (BHA) to become a member of Wirral SACRE with the result that the BHA was granted full observer status as well as being the recipient of all SACRE meeting papers.

Mr Richard Evans, Vice Chair, gave a report on the annual St Gabriel's Trust Annual Wokefield Park Conference as to how radically education was changing with a return to more traditional education but he wondered where RE would then fit in?

He explained that the Government appeared to be undercutting the progress made in RE and of the issues arising from those many changes which deprived many children of any effective RE opportunities. Progress was well advanced with the revised Wirral Agreed Syllabus for RE.

The meeting of 7th February 2013 held at the Wirral Professional Excellence Centre saw Mr Martin Dickson elected as Wirral SACRE Chair.

Discussion took place on the arrangements for the launch of the revised Wirral Agreed Syllabus for RE.

A report was received about Wirral's National Commemoration of Holocaust Memorial Day, which took place on 6th February 2013 at the Floral Pavilion. This was well supported by 600 GCSE and A level students. The speaker was a holocaust survivor Mrs Joanna Millan who was an engaging speaker and believed what she said with a passion. Thanks were expressed to Don Williamson who provided a keynote speech about his family's experiences in the Holocaust and to Mrs Marion Landor who helped organise the event and the smooth running on the day. Ms Julia Hassall, Acting Director of Wirral Children's Services, Councillor Gerry Ellis, Right Honourable Mayor of Wirral, other members of the council and SACRE had attended the event. Joanna expressed her pleasure at the organisation of the event and said how impressed she was with the student's questions.

The meeting of 20th June 2013 held at St Andrew's CE Primary School received an excellent and challenging presentation on the changing nature of RE in the Curriculum and of new initiatives from Mrs Joy Schmack, member of Wirral SACRE and senior lecturer at Liverpool Hope University.

It was gratefully noted that Wirral Borough Council generously provides a £3400 SACRE annual budget, which includes funding for the Clerk's pay and for the annual Holocaust event.

Chair Mr Martin Dickson reported on his attendance at the May NASACRE annual meeting in Birmingham and made the point that while it could be seen as a 'doom and gloom' situation for RE it could also be a great time of opportunity and development.

The meeting of 9th October 2013 held at the Wirral Professional Excellence Centre noted that the launch of the revised Agreed Syllabus for RE had taken place and that copies had been sent to all schools with the document now also available on "WESCOM" (Wirral schools internal database).

A Wirral SACRE Website had been set up by Mr Martin Dickson under the domain name www.wirral.sacre.org.uk. It was hoped that the site would be an excellent source of resources for teachers and pupils – for both professional and personal interest. It was recognised that the site was very much work in progress and there was significant opportunity to develop it over time. It would need to be maintained and kept timely and there was a suggestion to introduce a feature to encourage interactivity and discussion since schools had expressed a wish to be able to exchange ideas e.g. regarding assessment.

OFSTED guidance relating to Pupils Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development was considered and it was noted that this was a very positive move towards increasing the focus on this area and evidencing impact on pupils. Members shared their recent experience of Ofsted inspections and urged colleagues to be able to demonstrate the impact of the curriculum in RE and PSHE and Citizenship areas of the curriculum on pupils SMSC development.

Members shared some school news. Very positive news was shared from the Bromborough “Churches Together” network and the links with local schools running assemblies and after school clubs and finally the “Open the Book” initiative in which teams from churches perform plays in schools based on stories from the Bible.

Part 2

Religious Education in Wirral Schools

2.1 Wirral Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education

2.1.1 There is a statutory requirement to review a locally Agreed Syllabus every five years. The revised Wirral Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education was introduced in 1999, and the Model Primary Scheme of Work was updated to support the introduction of the revised syllabus. In 2007 a further revised edition of the Wirral Agree Syllabus and Schemes of Work was published.

2.1.2 The **current** Wirral Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education was introduced in **2013**. The Wirral Agreed Syllabus for RE (2013) has been issued to all Wirral Schools and Governing Bodies for implementation as from September 2013. The Primary Schemes of Work for RE were also updated along with a section on assessment which included for the first time assessment levels for those with special educational needs.

2.1.3 This Five Yearly Review of the Wirral Agreed Syllabus for RE was commenced in the first half of the Summer Term 2012 with the convening of the Agreed Syllabus Conference and a consultation with schools on the degree of satisfaction with the Agreed Syllabus.

2.1.4 The Wirral Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education 2013 is available for schools on WESCOM and will also appear on the new Wirral SACRE website.

2.2 Working Groups

The SACRE Action Plan Working Group continued to meet during 2012 and 2013

2.3 Standards in RE

Wirral LA’s annual analysis of standards and of examination results for secondary schools will in future appear on the Wirral SACRE website.

2.4 Complaints

There were no complaints by parents referred to SACRE regarding RE or collective worship in 2012 - 2013. SACRE was consulted on a number of issues regarding RE, and appropriate support and advice was offered.

Part 3 Collective Worship

3.1 Advice on Collective Worship

Advice is provided to schools on the requirement to offer a daily act of collective worship for all pupils in Wirral maintained schools. Schools are provided with a monthly planner for collective worship which indicates any religious festivals which occur in that month and helps schools to ensure that the majority of those acts are 'in the main broadly Christian'. The planner is used by the majority of Wirral Schools. Model policy statements for Collective Worship and Guidance can be found in the Wirral Agreed Syllabus for RE 2013. The Wirral Code of Conduct for Schools for Religious Believers visiting schools can be found at Appendix 3.

3.2 Training

The RE Advisor to SACRE responded to requests for particular advice on Collective Worship.

3.3 Determinations

There are no determinations exempting schools from 'broadly Christian' Collective Worship in Wirral Schools. There have been no complaints received by Wirral SACRE regarding Collective Worship in 2012 – 2013. Concern expressed by one parent in 2010 about collective worship and the handling of a related complaint by the school, although closed due to the passing of time, was drawn to the attention of the Chair of SACRE by the LA. The Chair of SACRE responded to those concerns. Guidance for Parents on *Religious Education and Collective Worship in Wirral Schools: the role of Wirral SACRE* has been added to the local Authority's website. This clarifies the role of SACRE in considering complaints about the provision and delivery of religious education and collective worship referred to it by the LA.

Part 4 Links

4.1 SACRE links with other organisations

4.1.1 Wirral SACRE continues its links with several national bodies. Wirral SACRE continues to be affiliated with NASACRE.

The NASACRE website is a useful source of information on all matters connected to RE. The Chair of SACRE Mr Martin Dickson, and the Vice Chair Mr Richard Evans reported to SACRE on all NASACRE meetings attended during 2012 -2013. Wirral SACRE maintains close links with Liverpool SACRE.

4.1.2 Links continue with the Association for Religious Education Inspectors, Advisers and Consultants (AREIAC).

4.1.3 A link continues with Liverpool Hope University's RE Department and they have provided support to SACRE and to the LA by way of involvement with advice to schools on matters related to RE. Mrs Joy Schmack, Head of the RE Department at Liverpool Hope, is co-opted to Wirral SACRE and links have been made with The University of Chester and Liverpool SACRE.

4.1.4 Links continue with local associations. SACRE supports schools links with the voluntary sector in Wirral. These include the Council of Churches, Wirral 'Churches Together', Wirral Youth for Christ, the Wirral Multi-Cultural Organisation and the Merseyside Council of Faiths. Wirral Governors' Forum has regular agenda items on SACRE.

4.1.5 SACRE has appreciated the valued work done by the RE Council in providing guidance on standards and teaching and learning in RE. Similarly SACRE is kept informed of the work of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Religious Education. Wirral SACRE promoted the planning for the 2013 National Holocaust Memorial Day commemoration in Wirral at which Wirral hosted a commemoration for pupils of GCSE RE, History and Citizenship, teachers, Councillors and SACRE members and church leaders. Through this Wirral has strong links with Beth Shalom and the Holocaust Educational Trust.

4.1.6 SACRE receives regular correspondence from a range of organisations working in the field of RE and Collective Worship. These include: RE Services Today; Resources in Hinduism; The Humanist Association. The Association of RE Advisers, Inspectors and Consultants, Regional Subject Advisors and the Religious Education Council for England and Wales, Liverpool Hope University, and the Anglican Diocese of Chester and the RC Diocese of Shrewsbury.

Part 5 Training for Governing Bodies

- 5.1** All Chairs of governing bodies receive copies of the Wirral Agreed Syllabus for RE and the SACRE Annual Report. A briefing on the revised Wirral Agreed Syllabus for RE and the responsibilities of the Governing Body regarding RE has been provided for Chairs of Governing Bodies by members of Wirral SACRE. All governors are invited to SACRE's termly meetings.

RE subject leaders are often requested to provide presentations to governors on policy and practice in their schools, and governors are regularly invited to attend acts of Collective Worship.

Meetings each year are held in Wirral schools. In 2013 St Andrew's CE Primary School in Bebington hosted a meeting and made an informative presentation on RE and the ethos of the school.

Part 6 Conclusion

- 6.1** Wirral SACRE wishes to thank Wirral teachers for their continued commitment and hard work which is making teaching and learning in RE increasingly effective and is effectively raising standards in many Wirral schools. Thanks also go to the members of the working groups (mentioned in 2.2).

Thanks also to the new Wirral Children & Young People's Department and its Director, M/s Julia Hassall as well as to Wirral Education Quality (EQ) for their support for the work of SACRE; to Deirdre Smith, Principal Manager and RE Adviser for SACRE, and to Clerk Jayne McMorrان who in turn was succeeded by Anne Lightfoot during the year.

SACRE is grateful to Wirral LA which provides funding for all matters requested by SACRE, e.g. attendance at meetings of NASACRE; and has funded and provided LA support for meetings of SACRE, and support for events provided for schools noted above.

Appendix 1

The Legal Framework

1.1 Overview, the Legal Framework

1.1.1 Section 11 of the Education Reform Act 1988 requires every Local Education Authority to have a Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE). Each SACRE must publish an annual report indicating the issues on which the SACRE has advised the LA, summarising the advice given, and explaining why advice has been offered on matters which were not referred to it by the LA. Copies of the report must be sent to NASACRE, to schools and ideally to local teacher training institutions. These functions are carried out by Wirral's clerk to SACRE.

1.1.2 The Wirral SACRE was established and met for the first time in 1988.

1.1.3 At the meeting in October 2013, Mr K Tsering who represented the Buddhist Community (Group A, Christian and other Religious Denominations other than the Church of England), confirmed his resignation due to work commitments. His resignation was accepted and SACRE would like to place on record its thanks for his support during his tenure. Unfortunately no replacement has yet been found from the Buddhist community.

In January 2014 SACRE accepted, with regret, the resignation of Mr Richard Evans (Group C, Teacher Representatives). Mr Evans had been a member of SACRE for a decade and he was a dedicated and highly respected member of the group whose experience and wisdom will be missed. It was recognised that SACRE should actively seek representation from the Academy sector of Wirral Schools.

SACRE did not receive any new members during the period of reporting.

1.1.4 The Standing Advisory Council comprises four committees as defined by Education Reform Act (ERA) 1988.

SACRE Membership 2013

<p>The names of current representatives are:</p> <p>Committee A Christian denominations other than the Church of England and other faith groups</p> <p>Free Churches Mrs E Large Roman Catholic Mrs E McGunigal Jewish Mr H Cohen Chinese/Vietnamese Community Vacancy Muslim Mr S Syed Mr Choudhury Sikh Mr H Sohal Hindu Vacancy Buddhist Mr K Tsering Wirral Youth for Christ Mr M Dickson</p> <p>Committee B The Church of England: Ms K Leighton Mr R Neale Rev D Newstead Mr I McKenzie Vacancy Rev C Coverley Co-opted Member Mrs J Schmack</p>	<p>Committee C</p> <p>Teacher Representatives:</p> <p>ASCL Mr S Duggan NAHT Mrs C Hibbard WTP Mrs M Landor WTP Mrs R Razbully WTP Miss J Lewtas (VOICE) PAT Vacancy</p> <p>Co-opted Mr R Evans</p> <p>Committee D Local Education Authority: Councillor P A Smith Councillor C Meaden Councillor W Smith Councillor W Clements Councillor B Mooney Councillor P Kearney</p>
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1.2 Administrative Matters

SACRE has had one meeting per term in 2013. The average attendance at meetings has been (10). Members who are not able to attend a meeting are empowered to arrange for a substitute. SACRE is keen to increase participation during 2014. Educational advice has been provided by Deirdre Smith, Principal Manager and from Marion Landor, AST for Citizenship, Committee C.

The SACRE Annual Report has been circulated to:

- All SACRE members
- All schools (1 copy)
- All Chairs of Governors in Wirral schools
- University of Liverpool, John Moores University, Liverpool Hope University
- Colleges of HE: LIPA, University College Chester, Warrington Collegiate Institute, Edge Hill, University College of St. Martins, Lancaster.
- All members of the CYPD Department Management Team, Wirral's Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Executive.
- The Chester Anglican Diocese, the Shrewsbury Roman Catholic Diocese.
- Local MPs, Liverpool SACRE and NASACRE