

**SOUTHEND-ON-SEA LOCAL AUTHORITY**

**STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (S.A.C.R.E.)**

**ANNUAL REPORT 2018 – 2019**

*Picture to be inserted*

Working to make  
lives better  
[www.southend.gov.uk](http://www.southend.gov.uk)



## **CONTENTS:**

<b>Section 1</b>	<b>Chair's Introduction: Mr. Kevin Ryan, Chair of SACRE</b>
<b>Section 2</b>	<b>Religious Education</b> <b>Locally Agreed Syllabus:</b> <b>Statement by Helen Boyd, Southend on Sea LA</b>
<b>Section 3</b>	<b>Locally Agreed Syllabus</b>
<b>Section 4</b>	<b>Collective Worship</b>
<b>Section 5</b>	<b>Links with other Agencies</b>
<b>Section 6</b>	<b>Other issues</b>
<b>Appendices</b>	
<b>Appendix 1</b>	Terms of Reference and Constitution
<b>Appendix 2</b>	Membership of Southend-on-Sea SACRE

## **BOROUGH OF SOUTHEND ON SEA**

### **Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) Annual Report 2018/19**

#### **1: INTRODUCTION FROM THE CHAIR OF SACRE: KEVIN RYAN**

As the Chairman of SACRE I am delighted to introduce the Annual Report for 2018 -2019.

This year members of SACRE have again been pleased to receive results of the GCSE, AS and Advanced Level Religious Studies examinations and have noted that these results are significantly above the national average in certain areas. There are a number of high performing Religious Education Departments within Southend-on-Sea, where achievement has been outstanding reflecting the high quality of teaching, however, members have raised concerns about schools not meeting statutory requirements to provide Religious Education for all students.

Work is underway on the Second revised Southend-on-Sea Locally Agreed Syllabus, which is focused on the context and the needs of the area covered by our Authority and was introduced to schools in January will be ready for the start of the Academic Year 2018-2019. This is a welcome and exciting prospect and the SACRE looks forward to working with schools and community groups to launch the syllabus.

Part of the role of the SACRE is to advise the LA upon the religious education to be given its schools in accordance with the locally agreed syllabus. In particular, it can offer support and guidance on methods of teaching, the selection of resources and materials and the provision of training for teachers of Religious Education. We are also required to advise the Authority upon matters connected with collective worship within its schools.

It is therefore important that we are able to reflect upon and celebrate the diverse religious make-up of the citizens within the Borough in our own membership.

The SACRE is concerned that representatives of all faith communities and those who hold non-religious world views participate in our decision-making through ensuring that their appointed representatives are proactively engaged in our work.

We look forward therefore to expanding and developing this representation during the next Year.

**Kevin Ryan**

**Chair of Southend-on-Sea SACRE**

## **2. ADVICE GIVEN BY SACRE**

We are pleased to confirm the Council's decision to adopt **REToday's** Syllabus for Religious Education to support high quality teaching of Religious Education for pupils and students within maintained schools and academies in the Local Authority's area as recommended by Southend's Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE).

A new Locally Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education for Southend on Sea Local Authority was launched in January 2019. The launch event, including initial training for schools, was well-attended and equally well-received. Many of the Lead RE Teachers who had taken part in the meetings to consider a new syllabus were present.

The new syllabus was made available for schools in a hard copy folder and via pdf downloads from Southend's Schools' Learning Network portal. The termly Subject Network Group for RE led by the RE Adviser, Frances Neil, hosted ongoing support and training opportunities and Teachers' Network meetings for RE Lead Teachers and primary, special and secondary schools to share views, ask questions and report back to SACRE.

## **3. RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (RE)**

### **3.1 STANDARDS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

The SACRE continues to fulfil its responsibility to monitor standards and quality in RE (Religious Education) Collective Worship and spiritual development.

Examination results at GCSE, A/S and A level are monitored and reported to SACRE as part of the LA's overall monitoring and evaluation of standards. An analysis is included in this report.

The nature of Southend's selective admissions at 11 years of age and the Catholicity of two secondary academies within the Borough also has an impact upon achievement and curriculum provision for RE. It is necessary to acknowledge this in any statement or analysis of a schools' figures.

### 3.2 Analysis of GCSE, AS and ‘A’ level entries for 2019

There are again some extremely impressive achievements among students at Southend’s schools in their 2019 RS at GCSE, both maintained and academy, at AS and A-Level examinations which must, once again, reflect the continued high quality of teaching within Southend’s schools.

Entry policies for full GCSE Religious Studies (RS) will differ from school to school, depending on the arrangements for RS within the Key Stage 4 curriculum and the provision of RS within the school’s AS and ‘A’ Level examination option choices.

The comments on achievement that follow will clearly be affected by the overall patterns of entry which vary considerably between schools. The selective nature of four of the secondary academies within the LA skews their and the LA’s figures somewhat and therefore comparisons between schools must be considered with this in mind. The arrangement for 6<sup>th</sup> form entry and subjects offered also mean students often transfer from school to school for 6<sup>th</sup> Form programmes of study so tracking of cohorts from GCSE to GCE AS / A level examinations, is not possible and linear comparison between school’s achievements from GCSE to AS and A Level cannot be made.

Just three schools entered close to 100% of students for the Full Course GCSE in 2019 but the declining history of these entry figures are shown in Table 1 below:

**Table 1. Percentages of entries into GCSE 2016 – 2019**

Academic year	No of school with 100% entries
2019	3
2018	4
2017	6
2016	4

Against the decline in schools entering whole or close to whole cohorts it remains pleasing to see the following data:

- St Thomas More High School 146/146
- St Bernard’s High School entered 142/144 students
- Westcliff High School for Girls entered all 178 students

In other schools in the Borough entries ranged from 20 (from a cohort of 271) to 68 (of a cohort of 150). Disappointingly there were no entries into GCSE RS Full Course from a large number of the LA’s secondary schools, and some for the second year in succession even after good results in 2017.

This situation would bear investigation into reasons for this decline and the questions as to what factors may be driving this, such as the availability of teaching staff, the changes to the course itself or other factors. SCARE must also ensure the students not being entered into examinations for RS are receiving their entitlement to Religious Education within the curriculum, as per the statutory requirement.

If external factors are involved SACRE should offer support.

### 3.21 Achievement at GCSE Religious Studies GCSE Full Course

The considered views of experienced teachers of GCSE RS that this examination continues to be more difficult than under pre-2018 GCSE courses of study and this may have influenced the number of entries made in some schools.

Sadly the steep decline in the number of schools entering students into the GCSE RS Full Course in 2018, with 10 schools entered (down from 11 schools with entries in 2017) has continued with just seven schools in 2019. This is less than in 2016 (in which only 9 schools out of the 14 in the Borough entered students).

- Southend High School Girls achieved a pass rate of 100% at grades 9-6 with an impressive average points score of 7.9.
- For students of Westcliff High School for Girls results were significantly above the national scores of 7.8% at grade 9 (at 45.7%) where an impressive 100% achieved grades 9-5.
- Impressively, 83.8% of Westcliff High School for Boys Academy students achieved grades 9-7 with a 100% pass rate and an average points score of 7.7pts, well above the national points' score of 5.5pts.
- Also impressive were the results achieved by of students of Southend High School for Boys. 76.9% of students achieved a grade 9-7 with 100% achieving grades 9-4. Their average points were 7.5pts well above the national point score of 5.5pts.
- Students entered from the non-selective Shoeburyness High School achieved another impressive set of results with 100% of students gaining a pass between 9-1. The 7.6 average points per student achieved, was above the national of 5.1. 80% of students achieved 9-5 grades which was above national score of 60.2%. Similarly, 85% of students achieved grades 9-4, again this was above the national scores of 71.4%.
- Impressive data showed 71% of students entered at St Thomas More High School achieved grades 9—5 (well above the national scores of 59.7%) while 81.4% of students achieved grades 9-4 which was also above national scores of 71.8%. Students' average point score was 5.4pts above the national score at 5.1pts.
- It is worthy of mention that St Bernard's High School entered the whole cohort of students on role and all pupils passed. It is creditable that 76.2% achieved grades 9-4 with a points score of 5.1 pts which is just above the national point score of 6pts.

Governing Bodies will generally want to satisfy themselves that:

- The statutory requirements for schools to provide Religious Education for **all** students are being met at Key Stage 3 and 4 and not only for those studying RS external examinations which, of course will not necessarily be followed by all students.

- That school websites state the school’s arrangements for teaching RE, whether or not the school / academy follows the local agreed syllabus or states which other such syllabus it follows:
  - In their curriculum information on school websites, in general, secondary schools include only a minimal mention, if any, of RE provision for KS 3 students and for KS 4 and 5 students (which includes those in 6<sup>th</sup> forms) not following any RS examination syllabi
  - If secondary schools do mention RS it is generally as part of their examination syllabi only and not referred to as being provided within the general curriculum

While good teaching is being received by a small percentage of Southend’s schools entering this examination perhaps more students could be encouraged to choose RS as an option to take advantage of this good teaching and reverse the decline in entry levels across the Borough.

Some learners, understandably, will not be entered for examinations in Religious Studies for a variety of reasons, however, SACRE and school governing bodies should satisfy themselves that all learners’ entitlement to receive Religious Education is being met at Key Stages 3 – 5.

### 3.23 Achievement at GCE AS and Advanced Level in Religious Studies

#### GCE AS Level Religious Studies examinations:

AS Level RS entries:

Academic year	Number of schools submitting entries	Number of entries
2019	2	65
2018	7	102
2017	8	83
2016	9	n/k

- Unlike years prior to 2018, AS level results *no longer* count towards an A-level grade although a direct cause and effect link cannot be assumed without valid research.
- This changing status of AS-levels appear to have been accompanied with a decline in Southend schools entering students into this exam.
- Students can continue to take a separate AS-level qualification at the end of Year 12 before either dropping the subject or going on to take the full A-level in Year 13 but this decline in entries in Southend schools is disappointing.
- The two cohorts entered were 61 and four students, respectively.
- Achievement in AS-level in the two schools was very good, with students in Southend High School for Boys and non-selective Shoeburyness High School achieving passes at an impressive 100% of A-E grades. AS levels have retained the A-E grading system which is now replaced in GCSE and A levels by 9-1 grading (with 9 the highest).
- With national percentages of passes at 87.8% the 100% achieved by Southend students is significantly above that achieved by ‘all schools’ nationally and is to be celebrated by both schools and their students.

#### GCE ‘A’ Level Religious Studies examinations:

There continues to be a very positive picture for A Level across the Borough in 2018-2019 with schools and students achieving an impressive set of results which reflects the high quality of teaching. Eight schools entered students for A Level RS.

Table 3: Number of entries into RE A level examinations

Academic year	Number of schools entering students	Number of students entered
2019	9	125
2018	8	115
2017	9	146
2016		149

The decline in entries in 2017-2018 was reversed in 2018-2019. The number of entries from individual schools ranged from 6 to 35 students.

Students in eight of the nine schools achieved 100% passes in A\*-E grades which is above the national figure of 98%.

Also

- Westcliff High School for Boys Academy achieved a very impressive 64.3% of A\*-A grades while the national percentage was 22.2%
- Westcliff High School for Girls achieving similarly impressive results, at 35% grade A\*-A
- Southend High school for Boys achieved 40% grade A\*-A

Also achieving above national figures:

- Southend High School for Girls achieving 25% grade A\*-A

It is worth noting that:

- 16.7% students entered from non-selective school Cecil Jones Academy achieved A\*-A grades.
- 11.1% of students from non-selective Belfairs Academy achieved A\*-B passes
  - a creditable set of results achieved by students from Shoeburyness High School, from eight entries and 100% of students achieving A\*-D grades
  - 40% students at St Bernard's High School achieved A\*-B grades.
  - Students at St Thomas More High School 21.1% of students achieving grade A\*-A grades and 63.2% achieving A\*-B grades

**Governors should consider the following points:**

- Where number of students entered for GCE A level was smaller than their total cohort (excepting where students themselves have withdrawn) that provision is made for meeting the statutory requirements to teach RE to **all students**:
  - This question applies in **all** the schools where the GCE external examination cohorts are less than the full cohort of students in that particular year
  - That provision for Religious Education should be stated on the websites of secondary schools and academies within the LA to inform prospective/parents and students.

### **3.3 COMPLAINTS CONCERNING RE**

TO BE COMPLETED WITH ADVICE FROM LA/RE TODAY WHO ARE NOT AVAILABLE CURRENTLY.

### **3.4 WITHDRAWAL FROM RE**

There are no figures provided from schools in respect of withdrawal from Religious Education Southend's schools. The opportunity was taken to collect such data, informally, when Lead RE teachers assembled for CPD recently. This leads SACRE to believe that across the whole Borough this figure was very low. Most teachers reported no withdrawals in their schools; three teachers reported single families or single pupils who were withdrawn. It is not believed these families were related, nor that they belonged to the same faith, belief or worshipping group.

It is considered that SACRE may need to ascertain, on a more formal basis in the coming year, how many pupils/students are withdrawn or, for students over 16 years of age, withdraw themselves from RE. SACRE considered it necessary to repeat the 2015 survey of provision for Religious Education and Collective Worship within the Borough, both of academies and maintained schools, to ascertain the current situation but this work has yet to be completed.

### **4.0 AGREED SYLLABUS for RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

The Local Authority's Agreed Syllabus, in place since September 2013, was replaced in January 2019.

#### **Locally Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education, 2018-2023**

#### **Southend on Sea Local Authority: Statement by Helen Boyd**

I am pleased to present this our new Locally Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education for Southend on Sea. This syllabus builds upon the strengths of its immediate predecessor. It has been reviewed and recommended by local teachers and is welcomed by members of Southend's Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE). This syllabus will enable teachers to introduce their pupils and students to the richness and diversity of faiths and worldviews not only as represented within the Borough of Southend but within the United Kingdom and across the wider world.

Good RE is essential in supporting young people as they come to understand this community in which they live and the wider world in which our community exists. It is the vehicle through which young people can encounter and discuss difficult ideas, question established wisdom and moral ambiguities and discover their world in collaboration with their peers, teachers, writers and thinkers, within a space that is safe and that welcomes such exploration.

When reviewing the previous syllabus teachers made it clear that it had supported their teaching, especially in primary classrooms, but more guidance and direction for what to teach and how to teach it, would be welcomed. Many RE Lead Teachers have spent valuable time supporting their school colleagues in these areas by writing units of work for them, interpreting the content of the previous syllabus. They sought more support and good resources for this important element of their work within schools.

The key elements of this syllabus are that it provides more practical classroom materials and ideas for teachers and coherent progression across the ages and key stages. Within the new syllabus are detailed units of work with associated resources, clear and focussed learning outcomes and related assessment

opportunities; this is a complete syllabus, with practical suggestions to meet the learning outcomes and develop the values, set out below, from early years to secondary school Key Stage 3 and supporting teachers within schools of all phases of education.

The values underpinning this syllabus are that pupils will gain knowledge and understanding of key religious concepts and their expression, as well as non-religious ethical worldviews. Pupils will also have the chance to express their developing ideas about the nature of the religions, beliefs, or worldviews they are introduced to or they encounter. Space is made for evaluation and reflection as pupils engage with the ideas they have learned. Through the RE curriculum, forged by this new syllabus, pupils will gain an increasingly sophisticated understanding of the basis and impact of the world's major religions, beliefs and worldviews.

This syllabus offers practical help and guidance within a coherent structure to enable Southend's teachers to celebrate, explore, develop and foster understanding of religion and belief in their pupils and students, as these young people grow and embrace the 21<sup>st</sup> Century within this richly and culturally diverse and historic Borough, which is uniquely placed at the confluence of the North Sea and the mouth of the River Thames.

I thank the teachers in the LAs schools who teach our young people so well and especially those who contributed to the review and evaluation of the previous RE Syllabus and who shared their views of this, its replacement, thus assisting SACRE to make this its chosen RE Syllabus for the next five years.

I would also like to thank the members of SACRE and their Chair, Kevin Ryan, for their work, the LA RE Adviser, Frances Neil for supporting SACRE and local teachers, and Kate Christopher for her support in this process.

### **Contents of the Syllabus**

SACRE Members, Councillors and head teachers attended the launch to meet with and discuss with Lead Teachers and the presenters from RE Today to contents and application of the new syllabus which includes support for:

- whole school curriculum planning
  - key stage and termly planning
  - classroom planning and activities
  - Assessment and reporting foci
- while offering in depth planning for:
    - Christianity at all Key stages from Early Years/ Foundation Stage
  - Major religions are present within the United Kingdom, these being (in no particular order):
    - Islam
    - Judaism
    - Hinduism
    - Sikhism
    - Buddhism
    - Non-religious world views such as humanism

The Agreed Syllabus for religious education is the legal and statutory basis for religious education in Southend-on-Sea's non-aided schools. At a meeting of the Agreed Syllabus Conference on 5th July 2018, the formal means by which SACRE determine their decision, the SACRE unanimously agreed to adopt as the Locally Agreed Syllabus that published by **REToday** which was also recommended to them by teachers of the Borough.

Southend Borough Council have endorsed the decision of SACRE, and adopted the RE Today Syllabus as the new Agreed Syllabus for Southend from 2018-2023 to support high quality teaching of Religious Education for all pupils and students in non-aided maintained schools in the Borough of Southend (all other schools in Southend are required to follow a locally agreed syllabus (LAS) and, as is the current situation many choose to follow the Southend LAS. Faith Schools follow the syllabus from their own Diocese. The Church of England Diocese of Chelmsford has agreed that St Marys C of E Primary will follow Southend's LAS for its study of 'other faiths'.

#### **4.1 TEACHER TRAINING AND SUPPORT FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND SOCIAL, MORAL, SPIRITUAL AND CULTURAL EDUCATION**

During the academic year 2018-2019, the number of teachers who attended the Primary and Secondary Network Meetings grew once again. The meetings were led by RE Adviser, Frances Neil, and a consistent group of secondary school teachers attended or maintained contact with the RE Adviser throughout the year.

The dates for the 2018-2019 Network Meetings were published on the South Essex Teaching Schools Alliance (SETSAs) website ([www.setsa.info](http://www.setsa.info)) entitled "School to School Support" and *most* of the Subject Network Meetings are held on the same day at Westcliff High School for Girls at 4pm to 5.45pm in the afternoon so teachers can schedule their attendance avoiding school based Staff Inset meetings. Lead RE teachers and other teachers of RE are interested in the group's work and contribute and receive information from the adviser and the other members of the group.

This important professional network enhances the in-school training and provision for those with lead-teacher responsibilities and has been successful over the last three to four academic years. Due to scheduling difficulties and the busy diaries of teachers and schools it was decided to continue hold the Primary and Secondary Networks together on the published day, however, this has not been entirely successful and other approaches such as online meetings are to be investigated.

This also facilitated good discussion concerning the adoption of a new RE Syllabus. Membership of the Teachers' networks has resulted in a core-group of teachers who either attend each term's meeting or share attendance with a member of their departmental team or who keep contact with Frances Neil, the RE Adviser, for ongoing support, guidance and resources and more often to share their own work with colleagues.

SACRE funded the attendance of the adviser to SACRE to attend the National Association of Teachers of Religious Education (NATRE) "Strictly RE" Conference in London in January, 2019. This was an opportunity for networking and to undertake excellent Continuing Professional Development on a variety of subjects concerning RE, RS and the legalities surrounding the place of RE in schools' curriculum. Other teachers from Southend also attended often self-funding. It is heartening to experience the dedication and professionalism of teachers in our within the LA.

#### **Continuing Professional Development through Teacher Networks**

Specialist advice and support is available for schools through training sessions held during the Primary and Secondary termly network meetings. These are affiliated to NATREs "*Local RE Groups Network*". Frances Neil, has led primary RE Networks, often supported by a co-opted member of SACRE. The following were shared with RE Lead Teachers:

- Interim statement on the Consultation on Religious Education (*CoRE*)
- NATRE Local Group Power Point presentations, Newsletters, and resources
- Details of the RE “Webchat” Program (a question and answer/ ideas sharing broadcast in which any teacher can participate)
- Information of local and national importance (such as circulating the RE Survey, information about the RE Curriculum, and Ofsted updates)
- Details of discussion points (such as examination reforms and legalities surrounding withdrawal from RE, classroom and curriculum provision)
- Resources that are available such as sharing details of visiting speakers / places of interest and worship to visit
- An opportunity to share ideas, resources and teaching points

## **5. COLLECTIVE WORSHIP**

### **5.1 MONITORING**

SACRE has highlighted the need to monitor provision and quality of collective worship in schools within the LA. Frances Neil has attended worship in primary schools within the LA and found standards to be high, pupils attentive and interested and the content well prepared, well presented and supportive of the LA’s aims for respect, promoting community values and celebrating a richness of diversity and difference that is present within the wider community of Southend on Sea.

### **5.2 TRAINING**

There has been no training for schools on collective worship during the year although relevant documentation was shared.

Training for SACRE was undertaken to inform them of the legal processes for agreeing a Locally Agreed Syllabus so members felt they could contribute to discussions and were informed in order to make decisions.

### **5.3 DETERMINATIONS**

There were no applications for determinations to alter the character of collective worship for all or some pupils in a particular school during 2018-2019.

### **5.4 COMPLAINTS CONCERNING COLLECTIVE WORSHIP**

No complaints were made about collective worship under the local statutory complaints procedure during 2018-2019.

## **6 LINKS WITH OTHER AGENCIES**

### **6.1 NATIONAL**

Southend SACRE membership of the National Association of SACREs (NASACRE) has not been renewed. Frances Neil is a member of National Association of Teachers of Religious Education (NATRE).

Mrs K Christopher attended an RE network to provide high quality CPD to support teachers in their work as the deployment of RE Today’s Syllabus approached. SACRE has also been supported by The South Essex Teaching School Alliance (SETSA) who have provided accommodation and refreshments for the termly RE Network meetings under their “School to School Support” section.

## **6.2 LOCAL**

During the year SACRE meetings have been held at the Civic Centre. SACRE continued to link with the LA's 'Healthy Schools Partnership' through attending the 'Difference and Diversity Group' meetings and the Southend Interfaith Working Group (SWIG) both of which Frances Neil attended on SACRE's behalf.

The membership of this group involves schools and young people and other local groups such as Southend Youth Council, Essex Police, the Fire Services and Southend United's Community Foundation which leads on "Show Racism the Red Card". The LA's 'Healthy Schools' Lead, Chair of the Difference and Diversity Group, has attended SACRE as an observer and continues an interest in SACRE's work.

## **7 OTHER ISSUES**

### **7.1 BUDGET**

The Local Authority has delegated a reasonable sum of money to SACRE to enable the group to function independently and effectively. The funds are allocated carefully to support SACRE to meet and continue its work effectively. Expenditure included clerking, contracting an Adviser for RE, national association affiliation fees and incidental expenses, for example, venue costs.

As previously discussed during the 2018-2019 academic year SACRE funded the following:

- Places for the adviser to SACRE, to attend the excellent National Conference, held by NATRE, in January 2019.
- Other CPD opportunities through supporting the work of the RE Adviser with the RE Networks, described above, which are aimed at supporting student and pupil achievement in the schools within the LA.
- Clerking through the Borough Democratic Services and hosting SACRE meetings at the Civic Centre

### **7.2 ATTENDANCE AND MEMBERSHIP of SACRE**

It is pleasing to report that some historical membership issues have been successfully resolved during the year and members' attendance at SACRE meetings was again consistent and supportive during the 2018-2019 year.

SACRE was pleased to welcome new members at the beginning of the year but more work is needed to continue to sustain this level of involvement.

## **APPENDICES**

### **APPENDIX A**

CONSTITUTION, TERMS OF REFERENCE AND

### **APPENDIX B**

MEMBERSHIP OF SOUTHEND SACRE FOR 2018 -2019