

BOROUGH OF SOUTHEND-ON-SEA

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

ANNUAL REPORT 2015

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INTRODUCTION FROM THE CHAIR OF SACRE

KEVIN RYAN

Once again I am pleased to introduce the Annual Report on the work of the Southend-on-Sea SACRE. This has been a year of change with our previous RE Advisor retiring and a new Advisor taking over. It has been an exciting and rewarding time to be involved in Religious Education both locally and nationally.

The Borough's Agreed Syllabus, *Improving Learning Together in Religious Education*, is now well established within schools following its launch in 2013. Feedback from schools is positive with teachers reporting that they value the flexibility in the syllabus that enables them to plan and deliver RE that is relevant to the contexts of their schools.

The Agreed Syllabus sets out to develop a range of skills and ideas including, reflection, empathy, creativity and the ability to engage in investigation, analysis, interpretation, evaluation and synthesis. SACRE believes that RE which is well taught can improve the wellbeing of all students and makes an important contribution to good community relations and to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. By exploring questions of identity and community and helping young people to gain a deeper understanding about themselves and others it also promotes British Values, a key focus of the Department for Education. It is good to see that the network groups for primary and secondary teachers are flourishing.

Part of the SACRE's responsibility is to support and monitor the provision of RE in the Borough's schools. RE is a statutory requirement for all children in full time education, under the provision of the 1944 Education Act. The analysis of GCSE results presented in this report highlights some considerable achievements but also evidence of underachievement.

Governors are reminded of their responsibility to ensure that RE is delivered in accordance with statutory requirements. SACRE also encourages a strong Spiritual, Moral, Social, and Cultural ethos to be evident within all our schools.

There continues to be a number of significant national reports published during the last year, all of which highlight the need for high quality training to enable teachers to teach RE that is engaging and effective. SACRE members have discussed and noted the issues raised in the reports and their implications for the Borough's schools.

I would like to acknowledge the support and guidance given to SACRE for a number of years by our Adviser, Janet Dyson, who has now retired. Janet has also supported the induction of a new RE Adviser, Frances Neil, in a handover period, which Frances and I much appreciated. Janet's contributions, particularly when writing and compiling the Borough's RE Syllabus, will continue to be supportive for all those in the Borough, teachers and learners together, whose Religious Education will be enriched through her work. On behalf of all members of SACRE, the Clerk, Robert Harris and Frances Neil I wish to thank Janet and wish her well in the future.

This report provides an overview of RE in the Borough's schools and the work of SACRE. I commend it to you.

Kevin Ryan
Chair, SACRE, 15th March 2015

1. RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (RE)

1.1. STANDARDS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The SACRE continues to fulfil its responsibility to monitor standards and quality in RE, collective worship and spiritual development. Examination results at GCSE, A/S and A level are monitored as part of the Borough's overall monitoring and evaluation of standards.

Analysis of GCSE and A level results for 2015

There are *some* extremely impressive achievements in RS at GCSE and A level in some schools which must reflect the high quality of teaching. School entry policies for full GCSE Religious Studies (RS) differ from school to school, depending on the arrangements for statutory RE within the Key Stage 4 curriculum and the availability of RE within the school's Key Stage 4 option choices. Patterns of entry vary considerably between schools.

All Southend schools entered students for GCSE RS with cohort numbers ranging from 10 (11%), at Futures Academy to 178 (79%) at Cecil Jones College. Three schools entered close to 100% of students for the full GCSE. The comments on achievement that follow will clearly be affected by the overall patterns of entry. The selective nature of four of the academies and schools and their figures skew the borough figures somewhat and therefore comparisons must be considered with this in mind.

Achievement at GSCE Religious Studies

- 49% of students sat a GCSE course in Religious Studies which is slightly above the national figure of 44%
- Overall 76.4% of those pupils achieved A*-C grades at GSCE, which is above the national figure of 70.9%
- Six schools, exceeded this national picture significantly with students in three schools achieving 100% A*- C grades and one achieving 99.3%
- Achievement at the higher grades (A*/A) for GCSE RS, at 37.6% (= 15.8 + 21.8) is significantly above the corresponding national figures of 27.9% (= 9.7+18.2)
- These figures are equalled at Shoeburyness High, and are exceeded by St Bernard's and Belfairs, and exceeded significantly so in the four 'selective' schools/academies
- At Westcliff High School for Boys Academy 100% of students achieved A*/A grades in a cohort of 53 students
- The non-selective Eastwood Academy is notable for entering almost the entire cohort of students of 163 with 73.5% of students achieving A*- C grades, which is slightly above the figure for the national average of 71%
- Belfair's Academy achieved a pass rate of 85% at A*- C grades and 100% on A*-G on an entry of 14 students out of a cohort of 220
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- Passes at A*- G of between 98.3% - 100% were achieved by all schools which is an average across all schools of 99.4% which, again, is slightly above the national average of 97.8% and is to be celebrated

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 4
- the overall proportion of students being entered for any accreditation in RS at GCSE is appropriate given the number of students on role in the Borough (NOR) is declared as 2118 and number of entries (NOE) is declared as 1036
- that, while good teaching is being received by a small percentage of a cohort should more students be encouraged to choose RS as an option
 - Some learners will not be entered for accreditation for a variety of understandable reasons, however, SACRE should satisfy itself that learners' entitlement to receive Religious Education is being met at Key Stage 4.
- the achievement of pupils in GCSE RS at A*- C and A*/A is sufficiently good

Achievement at Advanced Level in Religious Studies

Nine schools entered students for A Level RS, a total of 141 students. The number of students in the cohorts varied from 1 to 29. This is a very positive picture for A Level across the borough.

- Overall, students in Southend schools achieved well above the national figure at A*/A grades with 31.9% achieving this compared with the national figure of 24.4%.
- Similarly, 63.1% students achieved A* - B grades, compared with a national score of 54.5%.
- In eight out of nine schools 100% of students achieved A*- E grades, including the small cohorts of the non-selective schools: Cecil Jones, Belfairs Academy and Shoeburyness High School
- St Bernard's achieved a pass rate of 93.1% but included within that figure 37.9% achieved a pass at 'A' grade which is significantly above the national figure of 18.9%
- At Southend High School for Boys, in a cohort of 17 students, 76.5% achieved A*- A, significantly above the national figure of 24.4%.
- Westcliff High school for Girls 16% achieved A*, which is three times the national figure
- A*- B grades exceeded national figures in five of the nine schools

Governors should consider the following points:

- The viability of A level cohorts which are very small in some schools
- Where number of students entered for GCSE A level is small, e.g. Belfairs, Cecil Jones, Futures, what provision is made for meeting the statutory requirements to teach RE to **all** pupils?
 - This question applies in **all** the schools where the GCSE cohort is less than the full cohort of students in that particular year.
- SACRE has commissioned a survey to engage with schools, including the growing number with academy status, to access the information it needs to continue to support schools in the Borough to sustain and improve upon the successes achieved this year.

Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education

The Borough's Agrees Syllabus has only been in place for one full and one part academic year, having been launched in September 2013, followed by a Teacher and Pupil Conference which was well-attended, evaluations show that teachers and schools were pleased with the new syllabus. There are no plans for a review until schools have had the opportunity to engage with it, teach the elements therein and then share their views through consultation, which will be sought during the academic year 2015 - 2016.

There are no figures provided from schools in respect of withdrawal from Religious Education and this is a question to be raised of schools in the next academic year 2015 – 2016. No complaints have been received by SACRE concerning Religious Education.

1.2. Teacher training and support

An experienced RE teacher/head of department supports the secondary RE network, which meets termly, on a voluntary basis. The Primary Network was restarted but following the completion of the 'Excellent RE' training programme provided by Culham St Gabriel's and led by RE Today Advisers. The core of teachers who attended expressed a wish to reinstate the Primary Network which will be led by Frances Neil as from September 2015, who will also attend the Secondary Network to make links between primary and secondary schools and teachers.

Links with other Agencies

We have been delighted to have been supported by RE Today, whose adviser, Kate Christopher has attended SACRE to support them in their work.

1.4. GOVERNOR TRAINING

No governor training on RE or collective worship was held during the year.

1.5. TEACHER TRAINING

Specialist advice and support is available for schools through the Primary and Secondary termly network meetings and through training courses run in conjunction with NATRE.

1.6. COMPLAINTS CONCERNING RE

No formal complaints were made about religious education under the local statutory complaints procedure during 2014 - 15.

2 COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

2.1. MONITORING

THE SACRE HAS HIGHLIGHTED MONITORING OF THE PROVISION AND QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP AND THE PROVISION OF TRAINING FOR SCHOOLS AS A PRIORITY FOR 2015 - 16.

2.2. TRAINING

There has been no training for schools on collective worship during the year.

2.3. DETERMINATIONS

There were no applications for determinations to alter the character of collective worship for all or some pupils in a particular school during 2014-15.

2.4. COMPLAINTS CONCERNING COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

No formal complaints were made about collective worship under the local statutory complaints procedure during 2014-15.

3. LINKS WITH OTHER AGENCIES

3.1. NATIONAL

Southend SACRE is a member of the National Association of SACREs (NASACRE). Members attend conferences and other events and report to full SACRE meetings.

3.2. LOCAL

During the year SACRE meetings have been held at local schools and places of worship, including St Lawrence and All Saints Church. Meetings in schools have included contributions from the Headteachers and teaching staff followed by opportunities for members of SACRE to discuss their provision for RE and collective worship.

4. OTHER ISSUES

4.1. 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. Expenditure includes national association affiliation fees and incidental expenses, for example, travel and venue costs.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

CONSTITUTION, TERMS OF REFERENCE AND & MEMBERSHIP OF SOUTHEND SACRE FOR 2014-15

APPENDIX A

Constitution, Terms of Reference and Membership of the Southend SACRE

Constitution of the Southend SACRE

Role and Functions

i. To advise the LEA upon matters connected with religious worship in its schools.

ii. To advise the Authority upon the religious education to be given in its schools in accordance with the Southend Agreed Syllabus. In particular it can offer advice on methods of teaching, the choice of materials and the provision of training for teachers.

iii. To determine and review the cases in which the requirement for Christian collective worship is not to apply.

iv. To review the Local Authority's Agreed Syllabus.

v. To write an annual report on its work which will:

- specify any matters in respect of which the SACRE has given advice to the Authority;
- broadly describe the nature of the advice given;
- Where any such matter was not referred to the SACRE by the Authority, give the SACRE's reasons for offering advice on that matter.

Copies of the report must be sent to schools, the Schools' Curriculum Assessment Authority and the local teacher training institutions.

vi. At the discretion of the Authority the SACRE may:

- monitor RE provision to inform their advice and reporting;
- be involved in the Complaints Procedure;
- Arbitrate, as necessary, whether acts of worship provided for withdrawal groups meet the requirement of Section 351 of the Education Act 1996.

For i. and ii. above the Authority may refer matters to the SACRE or the SACRE may decide its own areas of work.

Officers

i The Chief Executive and Town Clerk of Southend-on-Sea Borough Council shall be the Clerk to the SACRE.

ii. The Corporate Director for People shall attend and participate in discussions of the SACRE as professional adviser.

Membership

In accordance with the provisions of the Education Act 1996 (Section 390);

i. the SACRE is to comprise four groups representing respectively:

a. such Christian and other religious denominations as, in the opinion of the Authority, will appropriately reflect the principle religious traditions in the area;

b. the Church of England;

c. such associations representing teachers as, in the opinion of the Authority, ought to be represented, having regard to the circumstances of the area;

d. the Local Education Authority;

- ii. The Authority has to take all reasonable steps to assure itself that the persons appointed under i. are representative of the denominations or association in question;
- iii. the Authority may remove a member of the SACRE if in the opinion of the Authority that member ceases to be representative of the denomination or association which he/she was appointed to represent;
- iv. Any member may resign at any time.

The composition of Southend-on-Sea Borough Council SACRE is set out in Annex A.

Term of Office of Members

The term of office for members of the SACRE shall be for four years from the date of appointment by the relevant body.

Disqualification from Membership

Where a nominated representative fails to attend three consecutive meetings of the SACRE she/he shall cease to be a member of the SACRE and the nominating body shall be invited to nominate another representative. See also 3 iii. above.

Vacancies

A member appointed to fill a vacancy shall hold office only for the unexpired term of office of the member in whose place he/she is appointed.

Any vacancy occurring within three months of the expiration of the term of office of a member need not be filled.

Deputies

- i. Each nominating body* having not more than 5 representatives on the SACRE may nominate one named deputy.
- ii. Nominating bodies having 6 or more representatives may appoint 2 named deputies.
- iii. Only named deputies may attend or vote in place of a member.

Chairman & Vice-Chairman

i. The Chairman shall be elected annually for a period of one academic year. The election of Chairman shall be the first item of business on the agenda for the ordinary meeting held every Autumn Term. The election will be by a simple majority of those members of the SACRE present at the quorate meeting.

ii. The Vice-Chairman shall be elected annually for a period of one academic year. The election of Vice-Chairman shall be the second item of business on the agenda for the ordinary meeting held every Autumn Term. The election will be by a simple majority of those members of the SACRE present at the quorate meeting.

Voting

- i. With the exception of the appointment of Chairman and Vice Chairman, on any question to be decided by the SACRE only the representative groups on the SACRE shall be entitled to

vote, and each group shall have a single vote. Decisions made within each group require a majority vote as do decisions made by the SACRE.

ii. Each representative group has a single vote on the question of whether to require a review of the Authority's agreed syllabus except the Authority group (See 1 iv).

Co-options

The SACRE may co-opt members on the nomination of any of the groups. Such co-opted members may participate fully in the discussions of the SACRE but may not vote.

Quorum

The meeting of the SACRE shall be quorate only if each of the four groups is individually quorate as follows. A quorum shall consist of 5 members of each group or one third of the members of each group, rounded to the nearest whole number, whichever is the lower, i.e. a quorum shall consist of:

Church of England Group 2

Other Faiths Group 3

Teachers' Associations Group 2

Local Education Authority Group 2

* Note: Individual teacher associations within Group C and individual political parties within Group D are to be regarded as "nominating bodies" for this purpose.

Frequency of Meetings

The SACRE shall normally meet at least once in every school term. The four Groups may meet beforehand if they wish.

Notice of Meetings

At least 7 clear days before each meeting of the SACRE the clerk shall send notices to every member setting out the business to be transacted. Items for the agenda may be submitted by any of the four groups, and such items should be sent to the Clerk and at the same time to the Corporate Director for People, not less than 14 days before a meeting.

Meetings of Four Groups

Each of the committees of the SACRE may hold its own meetings, and shall make its own arrangements to appoint a Chairman and Vice-Chairman.

Sub-Committees

The SACRE may constitute sub-committees to deal with particular matters as and when it sees fit. Seven clear days' notice of meetings of any such sub-committees should be given to the members thereof.

Minutes

Minutes of each meeting shall be sent by the clerk to each member as soon as practical after a meeting. The minutes shall be confirmed and signed at the next meeting.

Submission of Minutes to the Local Authority's Cabinet

Decisions which cannot be made by the SACRE shall be referred to the Local Authority's Executive decision making body (The Cabinet) and shall be eligible for call-in to the People Scrutiny Committee. The Clerk shall submit the minutes of SACRE meetings

Availability of Papers to the Public

- i. All papers of the SACRE shall be available to the public, except in relation to any information defined as confidential in regulation 9 of the Religious Education (Meetings of Local Conferences and Councils) Regulations 1994.
- ii. All meetings of the SACRE and of any sub-committee of the SACRE including the four groups which constitute the SACRE, shall be open to the public, except that the public may be excluded from any meeting during an item of business whenever it is likely that, if members of the public were present, confidential information as defined in regulation 9 of the Religious Education (Meetings of Local Conferences and Councils) Regulations 1994 would be disclosed.

Annex A

Composition of the Southend-on-Sea SACRE

Group	Membership
A. The Church of England Nominated by the Diocese of Chelmsford	5
B. Other Faiths Comprising:	12
Representatives of the Free Churches Nominated by the Free Churches Council	(3)
Representatives of the Roman Catholic Church Nominated by the Diocese of Brentwood	(2)
A representative of the Jewish Community	(1)
A representative of the Hindu Community	(1)
A representative of the Muslim Community	(1)
A representative of the Sikh Community	(1)
A representative of the Buddhist Community	(1)
A representative of the Humanist Community	(1)
A representative of the Salvation Army	(1)
C. Associations representing Teachers Nominated by the recognised Teachers' Associations	7
D. Southend-on-Sea LEA Elected Members of the Borough Council	7
	Total: 31

Group A: Representatives of the Church of England:

Ms M Larkin

Ms P Draycott

Mr M Buckley

VACANCY x 2

Group B: Other Faith Group Representatives:

Free Churches (3):

Mr C Pegler (Vice-Chairman)

VACANCY x 2

Roman Catholic (2):

Ms L Hopkinson

VACANCY x 1

Jewish Community

Mr J Greenstein

Hindu Community

VACANCY x 1

Muslim Community

Dr N Khokha

Salvation Army

Ms S Hart

Sikh Community

VACANCY x 1

Humanist Community

Mr G Licence

Buddhist Community

VACANCY x 1

Group C: Representatives of the Teachers' Associations:

Mr K Ryan (NASUWT) - (Chairman),

VACANCY (PAT),

VACANCY (UCU)

Mr B Maddison (NUT)

VACANCY x 3 – NAHT, SHA, ATL

Group D: Representatives of the LEA:

Cllr Betson

Cllr Davidson

Cllr Evans

Cllr Davies

Cllr Borton

Cllr Ware-Lane

Cllr McGlone

