



# Swindon SACRE

(Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education)

## Annual Report 2013 - 14



## Before and After the Fall

Fun in RE Assessment at  
Orchid Vale Primary School

## Chair's Introduction

In this reporting year Swindon SACRE has lost a champion of Religious Education . Mark Cawte the Chair of Swindon SACRE died on the 20th July 2014 aged only 45. Mark was a person who was dedicated to seeing outstanding Religious Education in the schools of Swindon . He was tireless in his campaigning for RE and Collective Worship even through the difficulties of his illness in the last year of his life. He had only been chair of Swindon SACRE for a year but in his time he ensured the smooth running of meetings and focussed the council on its core purpose. He had a particularly useful eye for detail and was extremely well versed on the appropriate protocol for SACRE. We as a body are grateful for his dedicated service and will sorely miss his contributions to our body.

In this year SACRE managed on a limited budget to maintain its services to schools. As a whole the number of schools becoming academies in Swindon has increased, but the numbers of teachers accessing support through the tri-annual network meetings has remained constant in the secondary sector and increased for the primary phase. This remains the central way in which Swindon SACRE has supported its schools in the last year.

SACRE has also signposted teachers to other CPD many of whom have taken up opportunities in Bristol and Wiltshire.. Swindon has also worked towards creating units of work to help teachers to emphasise the local elements of RE and a new unit looking at the Food Bank in Swindon as an example of local Faith in Action was written by Janet French and Katy Staples . <https://swindonsacre.wordpress.com/distinctly-local/>

In the Academic year 2013 SACRE sought to address the problem of communicating its existence and services to this end a website has been devised although its population is in its infancy this represents a most positive step.

In the last year SACRE has also worked on communicating further afield as to the purposes of the council and how it can serve schools and to this end Steph Mordin wrote a very useful one page summary about the functions of SACRE entitled "What is SACRE?" which has been distributed in local religious publications and to schools. The Academic year 2013 and 14 saw some national events that have once again highlighted the importance of good Religious Education (the killing of Lee Rigby and the Trojan Horse enquiry). Swindon schools have been offered further support about the importance of good SMSC through training for Governors provided by the SACRE adviser and through modelling of good practice in RE teacher network meetings.

This has not been an easy year for Swindon SACRE but members have been committed to attending meetings and overseeing the continued support for RE in Swindon within the budget given.

Lottie O'Brien  
Acting Chair of Swindon SACRE

## Executive Summary

The report meets the requirements of the 1988 Education Act, which states that:

- 'The council shall in each year publish a report of their functions and any action taken by representative groups on the council during the preceding year.'
- The report is required to specify any matters in respect of which the council has given advice to the authority, and the nature of that advice.

The key function of SACRE is to advise the Local Authority on RE in accordance with the agreed syllabus.<sup>1</sup>

The composition of SACRE is set out in legislation.

The four groups or committees represent the following interests within the local community.

These are the people that have served for the year September 2013 to June 2014 or for a part of that period.

- **Committee A**  
**Christian Denominations, Other Religions or Religious Denominations**  
Mr Tony McAteer, Catholic Community  
Mr Arun Bedi, Sikh Community  
Mr David Burbidge, Baptist Church  
Mr Mark Cawte, Methodist Church (Chair from December 2012)  
Reverend David Howell, Swindon Evangelical Alliance  
Mr M S Khan, Muslim Community  
Mrs Sarah Lane Cawte, United Reformed Church  
Mr Dinesh Patel, Hindu Community,
- **Committee B**      **The Church of England**  
Reverend Beth Brown  
Miss Janet French  
Reverend Norma McKemey  
Ms Steph Mordin  
Mrs Penny Summers
- **Committee C**      **Teacher Association Representatives**  
Ms Catherine Lomax  
Mrs Tracy Mason  
Mrs Victoria Misselbrook  
Miss Lottie Rowe /O'Brien( married and changed name during the year)  
Mrs Mandy Sandleton  
Mrs Mel Shepherd  
Mr Paul Sunners

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<sup>1</sup> Section 391(1)(a), Education Act 1996

- **Committee D            The Local Authority.**

Councillor Alan Bishop  
Councillor Fionuala Foley  
Councillor John Haines  
Councillor Russell Holland  
Councillor Fay Howard  
Councillor Gemma McCracken  
Councillor Cindy Matthews  
Councillor James Robbins

- **Co-opted members**

Mr Freddy Pound (Humanist)

**Support Officers:**

Ms Katy Staples, SACRE Adviser, 0117 9175583,

[katy.staples@bristoldiocese.org](mailto:katy.staples@bristoldiocese.org)

Ms Sarah Foulkes, School Improvement Adviser

Mr Paddy Bradley, Director of Schools and Learning

Stuart Figini Committee Officer

Tel: 01793 463612

Email: [sfigini@swindon.gov.uk](mailto:sfigini@swindon.gov.uk)

Members are nominated by appropriate organisations and appointments confirmed by the Local Authority. Other members may be co-opted.

**SACRE met on four occasions during the Academic year 2013 - 14**

All meetings were quorate.

Tuesday 1st October 2013

Committee Room 3, Civic Offices

Key Agenda items were:

- Membership and the inclusion of a Humanist co-opted member
- Debate on the Future of SACREs
- Examples of work undertaken at Network meetings
- Development plan
- National Developments

Tuesday 3rd December 2013

Committee Room 6, Civic Offices

Key Agenda items were:

- An example of Good Practice : How to monitor the progress of RE in Primary School from Steph Munda St Francis CofE VA Primary School
- RE Ofsted Report : Realising the Potential
- Feedback from the Network Meetings
- REC RE review discussion

- Progress reports from SACRE sub committees : Communications (website) and Swindon Distinctively Local RE
- Feedback from members sitting on other committees

Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> March 2014  
Committee Room 6, Civic Offices  
Key Agenda items were

- SACRE Annual Report and Development Plan
- Website Development
- Examination results for RE within Swindon
- Progress reports from working parties
- National developments in RE
- Proposal for a Charitable bid to support RE in Swindon
- Feedback from Network meetings

Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> June 2014  
Dorcan Academy, St. Paul's Drive, Covingham, Swindon SN3 5DA

- Dorcan Academy's approach to RE and the constraints placed upon them.
- Progress reports from the sub committees
- Feedback from the Network meetings
- Feedback from the Governor training

### **Challenges and opportunities that lie ahead**

#### **Challenges** for SACRE include

- Offering continuing support for RE within a limited budget.
- Keeping alive a local community of shared best practice and enthusiasm amongst a changing landscape of school providers
- Meeting the needs of RE in a changing and globally charged context
- On going need to monitor achievements in RE effectively
- Succession planning for the leadership of RE and the continuity of SACRE
- To ensure that the work of SACRE is understood by different stakeholders in Swindon.

#### **Opportunities** include

- The enthusiasm and professionalism of SACRE members. This is exemplified by members who have volunteered and worked on sub-committees.
- Refreshing our vision and ensuring we offer full support to teachers of RE
- Continued commitment and dedication of teachers as shown by attendance at Network meetings and other CPD opportunities offered by SACRE

## 1. Standards and quality of Religious Education (RE) Provision

### 1a. Compliance and time allocation for RE

The Locally Agreed Syllabus sets out the required number of hours for each pupil in relation to the delivery of RE, which is 36 hours in Key Stage 1 and is 45 hours per year for Key Stage 2, 3 and 4.

With the lack of information available through Ofsted reporting, it is very difficult to determine whether community schools and academies are fully compliant with the statutory requirements for RE.

## Religious Studies at GCSE (Key Stage 4) and A-Levels, 2013/14

### GCSE results (end of Key Stage 4 results)

*Important note: In 2013/14 significant reforms were introduced at Key Stage 4. One of these reforms - the changes to qualifications that count in the performance tables - restricted non-full GCSE qualifications that are included in the key stage 4 performance tables (around 3,000 qualifications were removed from performance measures). That means that GCSE short courses no longer count in the performance tables, and as the local authority only receives results that are counted in the performance tables, we are not able to report on entries and results for Religious Studies in GCSE short courses. Schools may be able to provide further information on Religious Studies' entries and results.*

A total of 344 end of Year 11 pupils were entered for Religious Studies at GCSEs (Full courses), fewer than in the previous year but still higher than 2009/10.

Religious Studies GCSEs entries in Swindon	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
GCSE Full course	286	323	370	393	344

8 of 11 secondary schools entered students for full GCSE Religious Studies examinations in 2013/14. The largest numbers of examination entries were from St Joseph's, followed by Kingsdown and Churchfields. There were no entries from Commonweal, Nova Hreod and Warneford.

The proportion of pupils that were entered for full GCSE Religious Studies in 2013/14 was 15% in Swindon, much lower than the 42% across England.

In terms of achievement by those that were entered for full Religious Studies, slightly fewer pupils achieved an A\*-C GCSE grade in Swindon in 2013/14 when compared to the previous year. The positive difference to the national average has remained roughly the same as in the previous year.

Achieved A*-C	GCSE Full Course				
	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
Swindon	79%	84%	73%	79%	77%
England	72%	72%	73%	72%	71%

*As a percentage of pupils at the end of key stage 4 entering the subject*

## GCE A and AS Level Religious Studies

A total of 48 students were entered for Religious Studies at A level and AS level, lower than in the previous year. The largest number of examination entries came from New College.

Religious Studies A/AS level entries in Swindon	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
A level	36	49	47	36	31
AS level	12	19	20	19	17
Total	48	68	67	55	48

In terms of pupils achieving A\*-B in A level, Swindon had slightly lower results in 2013/14 than in the previous year. Swindon is slightly above the national average in 2013/14. In terms of pupils achieving A\*-B in AS level, Swindon had lower results in 2013/14 than in the previous year and lower than the national average. Please note that percentages can be affected by the small number of A/AS level entries in Religious Studies each year.

Achieved A*-B	A level					AS level				
	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
Swindon	36%	39%	32%	58%	55%	17%	42%	40%	16%	12%
England	50%	53%	52%	52%	52%	30%	30%	30%	29%	27%

*As a percentage of pupils at the end of A/AS level study entering the subject*



Staff Training - Understanding the Muslim Call to Prayer in EYFS

### **1c Standards and achievement quality of teaching and quality of leadership and management of RE**

There are no methods for collecting verifiable evidence of levels of achievement in RE, other than through public examination results. There are no opportunities to access sufficient information to make a well-substantiated judgement on the quality of RE teaching or leadership and management of RE in Swindon schools.

Support has been offered to both Primary and Secondary RE teachers about the management of RE and key national documents have been shared, modelled and discussed during network meetings.

### **2. Managing the SACRE and partnership with the local authority and other key stakeholders**

SACRE members have been offered training at the SW SACRE conference in Dillington House and one member as well as the adviser were able to attend. The adviser also attended the NASACRE AGM (National Association of SACREs annual general meeting) where she gave a workshop about the Locally Distinctive RE that was being undertaken by Swindon (and Bristol) SACREs.

The LA officers Sarah Foulkes and Paddy Bradley have attended SACRE meetings and have been kept informed of national and local developments in RE.

Local councillors play an informed and supportive role in all SACRE meetings.

The diverse constituents of SACRE ensure that the breadths of beliefs held in Swindon are represented and links to those key stakeholders are sustained.

#### **2a SACRE development**

##### **CPD offered.**

All Secondary Schools in Swindon are now academies, network meetings are financially supported by SACRE and attendance at these meetings by RE colleagues has remained at a level constant to the time prior to these schools becoming academies.

Three of these meetings were held in the academic year 2011 – 12.

Three network meetings were also held for primary colleagues.

<b>Primary /Secondary/Venue</b>	<b>Date/Topic</b>
Lydiard Park Secondary Academy	25/9/13  How to make Rapid Progress in RE : Raising Standards for GCSE
Lydiard Park Secondary Academy	30/4/13 Transition from KS2 - KS3 Moderation of GCSE
Lydiard Park Secondary Academy	
Primary St Francis CofE VA Primary	7/11/13 Subject management and Monitoring Progress
Primary Orchid Vale Primary School	13/3/14 Assessment - How can we make it creative and Fun?
Primary Tregoze Primary Academy	19/6/13 Teaching Islam and Hinduism with confidence .

## **Further Training signposted for teachers**

Three secondary colleagues attended the Wiltshire Secondary RE Conference

Eight colleagues both primary and secondary accessed the Bristol and South Gloucestershire annual RE conference for RE teachers

### **3. The Effectiveness of the Local Agreed Syllabus**

#### **3a**

The update for the Local Agreed Syllabus was launched in June 2011 and so in Academic year 2015 - 16 a review will be undertaken. There has been an increasing pressures on schools and for the delivery of core subjects at the cost of teaching sufficient RE and in some contexts schools are using syllabuses or schemes of work other than the locally agreed syllabus (such as "Discovery RE" in the Primary phase and starting GCSE in year 9 in the Secondary phase). However the evidence for this is anecdotal from network meetings and further evidence will have to be garnered before the next Agreed Syllabus review. It would seem there is less demand for the locally determined agreed syllabus; this may be a reflection on the quality of the locally agreed syllabus or it may be an indicator of the current disparate academy educational landscape.

### **4. Collective Worship**

"A Time to Breathe" Swindon's guidance on Collective worship was written and circulated in 2012 and continues to be a document that many schools find useful.

There were no determinations in force during the reporting year.  
No formal complaints or other matters were referred to SACRE this year.

### **5. SACRE as a representative effective diverse community**

Members of Swindon SACRE are respectful and participatory, the quality of debate and spiritual insight has been observed throughout full committee meetings and in working parties.

SACRE has with resilience and changes in staff and illness of members continued to serve Swindon well, making reasoned decisions to support the children of Swindon in their understanding and appreciation of the place of belief in our world.

It is still of some considerable concern that the take up for Religious Education Full course GCSE in Swindon Schools is so much less than the national average and further questions and analysis and action needs to be taken to increase the status and the importance of Religious education within Swindon Schools and Academies.