

# Swindon Borough Council

## Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education

**Tuesday, 27 June 2017**

Oliver Tomkins CE VA Schools, Beaumaris Road, Toothill, Swindon,  
Wiltshire SN5 8LW

**Please Note – The meeting will be held in the Infant School Hall**

At 6.00 p.m.

<b>Group A: Christian Denominations and Other Religions or Religious Denominations</b>	Jo Backus, Buddhist Community Mr Gurchoran Singh Lyal, Sikh Community Mr David Burbidge, Baptist Church Reverend David Howell, Swindon Evangelical Alliance Mr M S Khan, Muslim Community Mr Tony McAteer, Catholic Community Mr Dinesh Patel, Hindu Community Vacancy – Jewish Community Vacancy – United Reformed Church Vacancy – Methodist Church
<b>Group B: The Church of England</b>	Reverend Clive Deverell Miss Janet French Reverend Norma McKemey Ms Steph Mundin Vacancy
<b>Group C: Teacher Associations</b>	Mrs Tracy Mason, NUT Mrs Lottie O'Brien, NASUWT Mrs Mandy Sandleton, NASUWT Mrs Emma McCarthy, NUSUWT Vacancy Vacancy Vacancy Vacancy
<b>Group D: The Local Authority</b>	Councillor Fionuala Foley Councillor Fay Howard Councillor Barbara Parry Councillor Matthew Courtliff Councillor Gary Sumner
<b>Co-Opted:</b>	Jo Garton, Swindon Humanists Fidelma Meehan, Baha'i Community

Support Officers: Peter Nathan  
Katy Staples, SACRE Advisor  
Sarah Foulkes, Commissioner for Education

**Committee Officer:** Stuart Figini (Telephone 01793 463612)  
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## ***AGENDA***

- 1. Appointment of Chair**
- 2. Appointment of Vice-Chair**
- 3. Apologies for Absence**
- 4. Welcome from Oliver Tomkins School**
- 5. Declarations of Interest**  
Members are reminded that at the start of the meeting they should declare any known interests in any matter to be considered, and also during the meeting if it becomes apparent that they have an interest in the matters being discussed.
- 6. Public Question Time**  
See explanatory note below. Please phone the Committee Officer whose name and number appears at the top of this agenda if you need further guidance.
- 7. Minutes** (Pages 5 - 8)  
To receive the minutes of the meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> March 2017.
- 8. Development Plan - 2016-2018** (Pages 9 - 18)
- 9. NASACRE AGM Report and National Developments** (Pages 19 - 30)  
SACRE response - giving evidence to CORE.
- 10. Feedback from Hub Meetings** (Pages 31 - 32)
- 11. Thanks to Sarah Lane Cawte**
- 12. Date and Time of the Next Meeting**  
The next meeting of the SACRE is on 5<sup>th</sup> December 2017. Members of the SACRE are asked to suggest venues or indicate where this and future meetings of the Panel should be held.

**Date of Despatch:** 15 June 2017

**Public Question Time** - Swindon Borough Council is committed to increasing its accountability to the public and to promoting active citizenship. Up to 15 minutes will be allowed at the start of all Council meetings for questions to the Chair from members of the public about the work of the Committee (except for confidential matters and specific planning applications). Questions must be relevant, clear and concise. Because of time constraints Public Question Time is not an opportunity to make speeches or statements. Prior notice of a question to the Director of Law and Democratic Services is desirable - particularly if detailed background information is needed.

**Access Arrangements** – The Venue is wheelchair accessible and an infrared receiver hearing system is provided. If you would wish to attend the meeting but have any special requirement to enable you to do so please contact the Committee Clerk above, as soon as possible prior to the date of the meeting.

If you would like to receive any of the pages contained in this agenda in a larger print size please contact the Committee Officer whose name appears on the first page of this agenda.

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**STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

**TUESDAY, 7 MARCH 2017**

**PRESENT:-**

**Group A:**  
Christian Denominations and  
Other Religions or Religious  
Denominations

Jo Backus (Buddhist Community), Mr David  
Burbidge (Baptist Church), Mrs Sarah Lane  
Cawte (United Reformed Church), Reverend  
David Howell (Swindon Evangelical Alliance), Mr  
M S Khan (Muslim Community), Mr Tony  
McAteer (Catholic Community) and Mr Dinesh  
Patel (Hindu Community)

**Group B:**  
Church of England

Miss Janet French and Reverend Norma  
McKemey

**Group C:**  
Teacher Organisations

Mrs Tracy Mason and Mrs Emma McCarthy

**Group D:**  
Councillors

Councillors Fionuala Foley, Fay Howard,  
Teresa Page and Barbara Parry

Also in attendance:

Katy Staples (SACRE Advisor) and Sarah  
Foulkes (School Improvement Adviser)

Apologies for absence were received from Teresa Clerck, Fidelma Meehan, Peter Nathan, Reverend Clive Deverell, Ms Steph Mundin, Mrs Lottie O'Brien and Councillor Gemma McCracken.

**22. Welcome from Holy Cross Catholic Primary School**

The Deputy Headteacher, Robin Christian welcomed the SACRE to Holy Cross Catholic Primary School, and offered SACRE an interesting explanation about how Collective Worship is planned in the school.

**23. Declarations of Interest**

The Chair reminded Members of the need to declare any known interests in any matters to be considered at the meeting. No declarations were made.

**24. Public Question Time**

Mr Brian Cockbill, a local resident, asked a question about homelessness in Swindon. The Chair explained that the question was not within the remit of the SACRE and suggested that the question was referred to a more appropriate Council committee.

Mr Cockbill, asked an additional question about Homelessness in Swindon. The Chair explained that the question was not within the remit of the SACRE and

suggested that the question was referred to a more appropriate Council committee.

## **25. Minutes and Matters Arising**

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> November 2016, be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

## **26. The Agreed Syllabus Launch and Feedback from SACRE Members**

The SACRE Advisor reported that the launch of the new Agreed Syllabus for Swindon had taken place at Tadpole Farm C of E Primary School on 8<sup>th</sup> November 2016 and had proven very successful.

The conference launch was attended by 82 people and was considered by many of whom attended to be an excellent event, providing relevant training and resources and an opportunity for networking. The SACRE Advisor thanked Tracy Mason for stepping in at the last minute to open the conference and welcome the delegates.

The SACRE noted that although a large number of schools attended the launch, there would have been a number of schools that were unable to attend. It was suggested that the SACRE Advisor approaches the Chair of the Head Teachers Association with a view to attend a future Association meeting to discuss the Agreed Syllabus.

The SACRE Advisor reminded members that the Agreed Syllabus needed to be hosted on a website that would allow it to be password protected, and provide Swindon schools with the ability to download it. Discussions were on-going between the SACRE Advisor and Swindon Borough Council to resolve the issue and in the interim, Bristol Diocese would be hosting the Syllabus on its website.

## **27. Annual Report 2015/16**

The SACRE received its draft Annual Report covering the period September 2015 to August 2016.

The Annual Report provided information in relation to the following areas:

- Support for schools
- Key events during the academic year 2015/16
- Best Practice Forum
- Learn Teach Lead Religious Education
- SACRE website
- Agreed Syllabus for RE in Swindon
- Monitoring of RE Provision in Swindon
- Public Exam Results
- Attendance by SACRE members at outside events
- Statutory Matters
- Membership
- Funding and administration issues
- Meetings held

In considering the Annual Report, the SACRE noted that Swindon no longer had the lowest percentage of entries nationally for their Key Stage 4 RE exams, mainly due to Lydiard Park Academy (LPA) entering all of its RE students to undertake the GCSE RE exam. The SACRE Advisor had been informed that LPA would not be offering GCSE RE in future years as a consequence of the school not achieving good results in the subject this year. This was due to entering a full cohort (not all of whom are choosing to study the subject) and being only offered a small allocation of curriculum time rather than the 5 hours a fortnight that is recommended for an option GCSE. It was noted that the SACRE would consider how to address these issues in its Development Plan 2016/18.

The SACRE was informed that the Annual Report, once finalised, would be submitted to the National Association of SACREs along with a copy to all schools and academies.

Resolved – 1) That the draft SACRE Annual Report is approved, subject to typographical amendments and that the SACRE Advisor be authorised to finalise the report and submit it to the National Association of SACREs (NASACRE).

- 2) That the draft Annual Report be forwarded to all schools and academies in Swindon to heighten the awareness within the Council of the work of Swindon SACRE.
- 3) That the SACRE Advisor be thanked for the work undertaken in the preparation of the Annual Report.

## **28. Development Plan - 2016/18**

The SACRE received the updated Swindon SACRE Development Plan 2016-18, which was due to be developed further taking into account the suggested vision statement and goals for Swindon SACRE.

The SACRE divided into groups and considered the vision statements and analysed each of the four goals in relation to the Person Responsible and expected timescales for action required. The SACRE then received feedback from each Group, which would be collated into a workable draft Development Plan.

Resolved - That the SACRE Clerk collates the points raised and responses received in relation to the draft Development Plan 2016-18 and produce a workable draft document for further consideration at the next meeting in June/July 2017.

## **29. Feedback from Hub Meetings**

The SACRE received an update from Emma McCarthy, Hub Leader, about the recent RE Hub meeting. The Hub Leader explained that both primary and secondary schools attended the meeting and many activities were held during the meeting to help energise and grow RE teachers in Swindon.

The next meeting was arranged for 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2017 at the Hindu Temple and all SACRE members were invited to attend.

**30.**

**Date and Time of the Next Meeting**

That the timetable of meetings of the SACRE in 2017/18 would be:

- 27<sup>th</sup> June 2017
- 5 December 2017
- 26<sup>th</sup> March 2018



# **Swindon Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education Development Plan 2016-18**

## **Vision Statement**

### **Swindon SACRE Aims to:**

- Enhance the quality of Religious Education and Collective Worship in Swindon Schools / Academies through supporting teachers.
- Ensure the effective management of the SACRE in partnership with the LA and other key stakeholders, such as other Education Providers.
- Monitoring and supporting schools' in the provision for RE and Collective Worship and as the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils, through hubs (and LTRE) and the Primary Heads and Secondary Heads Network meetings.
- Encourage Schools, Academies and Colleges to celebrate the religious and cultural diversity found in Swindon.

# **Improvement Plan 16 - 18**

## **Goals**

1. To improve standards of pupil attainment in Religious Education to equate with national expectations of performance levels in other core subjects through offering high quality CPD and monitoring outcomes
2. To evaluate the effectiveness of SACRE's partnership with the Local Authority and to assess the impact of the new locally agreed syllabus launched November 2016
3. To develop and enhance the possibilities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC) offered through Collective Worship (Assemblies).
4. To enhance the vital role that RE must play in contributing to understanding diversity, including through offering direct opportunities for engagement events for pupils.

**Goal I** To improve standards of pupil attainment in Religious Education to equate with national expectations of performance levels in other core subjects through offering high quality CPD and monitoring outcomes

Team Leader

<b>What needs changing/ developing/ Sustaining?</b>	<b>What Actions are needed?</b>	<b>Time/ Cost</b>	<b>Persons responsible</b>	<b>KPI Key performance indicators</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>
<b>A</b> Better monitoring of the quality of Religious Education in Schools  Public Exams  Other data?	1. Ensuring reps attend SASH etc. for feedback.  2. Hubs etc. to meet with teachers to receive feedback.  3. Collection of exam data.		Representative from SACRE to meet with Headteachers and introduce the new Syllabus and statutory requirements.  Also to gather information about sharing of data/exams.  Raise profile of RE with Headteachers.	1. More time given in all schools to RE 2. More school teachers responding to questionnaires and data requests 3. More students taking RE at KS 3 and 4 including GCSE's	Give out questionnaires to teachers attending hub meetings for instant feedback.  Gather information from teachers about exams.  Sharing of information between teachers.  High quality input and sharing of ideas at Hub meetings will improve quality of RE.	
<b>B</b> More Effective support offered to schools to improve the quality of	1. Network meetings  2. CPD days/conferen			1. Teachers more equipped to teach RE 2. More teachers		

Religious Education	ces 3. Online forum 4. Resources to support the Agreed Syllabus			at CPD courses and hub meetings etc.		
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## 5. Goal 2

To evaluate the effectiveness of SACRE's partnership with the Local Authority and other education providers in the Swindon Area and to review the impact of the new locally agreed syllabus launched November 2016

Team Leaders:

What needs changing/ developing/ Sustaining?	What Actions are needed?	Time/ Cost	Persons responsible	KPI Key performance indicators	2017	2018
<b>A</b> Improve the working relationship between SACRE and the Local Authority.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Clerk to ask for the Agreed Syllabus to go on-line along with SACRE pages.</li> <li>2. Maintain current good practice.</li> <li>3. Timely exam data. SACRE Advisor to attend Heads meetings</li> </ol>			<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Agreed Syllabus online</li> <li>2. Good Clerking services</li> <li>3. Good engagement from Councillors</li> <li>4. Exam data given in a timely manner</li> </ol>	<p>Online Link Go evaluate</p> <p>In hand – have SASH conversation protocol – September 2017</p>	

<b>AI</b> Improve the working relationships with school providers.	1. Find out who the education providers are and write to them – NS and Networks			1. Good engagement with local RE from Academies 2. Data of numbers engaged.	These not engaged Identify Audited	
<b>B</b> Ensure the effectiveness of the New Agreed Syllabus as it is taught in schools from September 2017	1. Questionnaire before and after one year 2. Two case studies from the Primary and Secondary sectors to SACRE			1. Schools using the Agreed Syllabus 2. Raising pupils engagement and enjoyment of the New Agreed Syllabus 3. Case studies presented	Summer meeting at Commonweal and Orchid Vale give presentations on case studies.	Send questionnaires in 2018

### Goal 3

To develop and enhance the possibilities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development offered through Collective Worship (Assemblies)

Team Leader:

What needs changing/ developing/ Sustaining?	What Actions are needed?	Time/ Cost	Persons responsible	KPI Key performance indicators	2017	2018
<b>A</b> The quality of pupils' access to high quality SMSC through well led Collective Worship/ Assemblies across the Local Authority needs greater consistency.	1. Pupils voice questionnaire 2. Awareness of national and local guidelines i.e 'Time to Breathe' 3. Network meetings feeding back – Hubs			1. Good collective worship should reflect and add to what is already delivered in SMSC. 2. Opportunities – liturgical singing in KS 1 and 2.	Hub meeting to focus on 'Time to Breathe' document and Collective Worship i.e. Pupil Voice training for Collective Worship creative worship ideas.  NATRE Guidance for visitors to schools.	Bring one idea to Hub meeting of something done in Collective Worship that worked well.

**Goal 4** To enhance the vital role that RE plays in contributing to understanding diversity, including through offering direct opportunities for pupil engagement

Leader

What needs changing/ developing/ Sustaining?	What Actions are needed?	Time/ Cost	Persons responsible	KPI Key performance indicators	2017	2018
<b>A</b> Pupils need to have greater access to a Religious Education that will help them engage with local and regional, national and global diversity	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contact list and list of suitable speakers on different faiths</li> <li>Improved communication from KS 2 and 3 (hubs)</li> <li>Organisation of meetings</li> <li>'Sharing' space for good practice examples</li> <li>To develop Children's voice</li> <li>Interfaith opportunities e.g. conference</li> </ol>			<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student visits – monitoring / blogs</li> <li>Guest speakers – monitoring / blogs</li> <li>Hub meeting speakers or visits for links/networking</li> <li>Database of local contacts – shared / website</li> <li>Virtual videos experience / technology to share further</li> </ol>		
<b>B</b> Students developing	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop</li> </ol>			<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Exam results</li> </ol>		



religious literacy through learning about diversity	creative assessments which allow this to be demonstrated			2. Assessments 3. Activities happening and reporting back = conference takes place.		
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**Report for SACRE Summer 2017**

**Purpose of Paper:** To Update Swindon SACRE on National Developments with regard to RE and in particular to feedback from the NASACRE AGM

**SACRE is being asked to:** Consider this report and ask if there are any actions for SACRE as a result of this report

**NASACRE AGM and Conference 2017**

**York Hilton**

**Dr Joyce Miller - Keynote Speaker**

retired Head of Diversity and Cohesion at Education Bradford.

**Where RE is today: the work of the REC Commission & considerations for SACREs ?**

**REC Commission work**

Major reports 2015

- A new Settlement
- Living Difference
- RE for Real

Do we really need another report / commission

The most important and responsible thing she has ever been involved in

Make up of Commission:

Chair Very Rev Dr John Hall, 5 academics ,teachers, headteachers, advisers  
lawyer - 14 in total

The Remit for the commission can be found on the CORE website  
<http://www.commissiononre.org.uk/>

**Key questions ?**

Key issues -no surprises.

Quality of RE ?

Legal settlement ?

The public profile?

The question of entitlement?

Progress So far -

## **Public evidence gathering .**

Online evidence

What is evidence - also opinion. Hard evidence - any data useful?

State of the Nation report - REC and NATRE - to give up to date information as much as possible.

Hard to know the state of RE these days - so the more information they can glean the better.

There are 3 more regional meetings - Manchester, Exeter and North East at which evidence will be garnered.

They are also visiting schools, SACREs and collecting other evidence

There will be an Interim report Sept 2017 with a final report in 2018

*Joyce gave a succinct summary of the history of RE since 1980s and then focussed on where we are in RE today*

## **Life in Britain Today and RE's contribution today**

Easy to see binaries and divisions - clash of civilisations Islam and Western Democracies

How do we find a clear way forward?

The past - to the future ?

David Cannadine talks about a “clash of civilisations”

Is history not a series of clashes - but similarities and co-existences + collaboration

Importance of intellectual collaboration across the religions with shifts and collaborations across centuries

## **How does it impact on RE ?**

- How do we avoid generalisations ie : Religion causes all wars
- Avoid religion and belief as separate silos - just one religion adherents
- Address conflict between and within religions
- Examine perceptions and misperceptions
- Focus on commonalities as well as the differences

## **Some of the key questions for RE?**

How do we live together well?

Civil societies that allows conflicting ideologies ?

Equipping Intercultural navigation

Inclusivity -RE for those who do not belong to any institutional religion and for atheists

Homo Deus - The future ? - death overcome - artificial intelligence - computers and technology

Humans conquer the world because we are capable of social cooperation warm should.

What does it mean to be human in the face of rapid change - how do we make it better?

Does this have anImpact on pedagogy

- Should RE include more collaboration and cooperation and more multi-disciplinary approaches?

### **SACREs -AS/ RE/ CW ?**

The purpose of RE is core - policy and power - people - training , support and resources

Local Agreed Syllabuses - some of best RE is done at local level BUT not all AS syllabuses are as good as each other - quality of agreed syllabus?

Is National better? But where is the power?

People - training , support and resources

Future - Distributed power ?

SACRE - is about Religion and Belief across school life and RE is a sub section of this.

Hopes to contribute to the CORE commission to improve RE for every child in the nation.

### **Questions**

Q. What is the clout of these recommendations from CORE ?

A. John Hall as Dean of Westminster as Chair and that has some clout. Need to have politicians on board to see RE as important . **Through Councillors and writing to MPs** - how we get DFE on board .

If this report just went the way of all reports = dispiriting - **needs to impact on policy.**

Q. What is the independence of the commission ? A strong centralist presence - strongly secularists. Is it open to all possibilities?

A. Commission is very far from any decisions. There is a wide range of opinions within the commission. Independent - no funding - secretariat supplied by REC. Dividing line between secularity and religiosity. What areas will be commented on is yet to be decided (ie Faith Schools)

Q. Why is anti-semitism so prevalent in 21st century ?

A. Could also ask why is there so much Islamaphobia - has there been any decline in religious hatred since world religions being taught. No decline - does teaching other faiths actually impact towards people of difference. No evidence. We have to teach more than just religion - people are more than religion - people as humans with multi-dimensions. Teaching children about Islam does not help Community Cohesion - Why ? **How do we teach anti racism and anti- religious hatred too.**

Q. Will the commission speak to the local landscape where Academies and Free Schools sit outside the remit of SACREs - can do any syllabus.

A. All is a mess. All chaotic. Who should be on a SACRE ? Over Anglican representations . Committee structures ? No one on CORE is representative of anything - based on skills and expertise. Problem for National representation of religions on any board - can't be done

Q. Gaps that need addressing in RE?

A. Cant add to that - but there are needs in RE - bringing researchers and RE teachers together. Deeper questions of philosophy and pedagogy needed

Q. Who owns RE ? Teachers not valued in the same way as when Working paper 36 was written. **Who owns education now - and RE is within that? SACREs at least hold some accountability for RE.**

Teachers want RE to be the same as other subjects - but which subjects - Music and art - parity with which subjects. Basic curriculum? Not National Conference. Is local energy important ? Who should own it? NO unanimity in RE world - and that is not possible - we have a variety of aims and objectives - we will not all teach it in the same way.

Q. John Hull felt that RE should not be owned by anyone - instead a diversification of power.

**Is SACRE system broken? Is this actually true?**

A. We need evidence as to the effectiveness of SACREs and invite commissioners to SACRE meetings?

## **Key Note Speaker 2**

**Prof Aaqil Ahmed (Prof of School of Media and Performing Arts at Bolton University)**

### **Why religious Literacy is important for community cohesion?**

Professor Ahmed was Head of Religion and Ethics for BBC before that at Channel 4 - before that editor of Everyman.

What is the Media - very complex "Media" is a lazy label?

Papers etc regulate themselves Radio + TV regulated by Ofcom

If you want to see excessive bias go to Fox (USA) etc

### **Post Christian Europe?**

Our world is all media connected

5% population is Muslim

Decline in Christianity but Cathedrals , Pentecostals and RC growing (migration is a factor)

Demographic change - Europe is changing

By 2050 40% will be of a migrant background - several generations ?

Rise of intolerance rise in extremism and rise of far right.

What is it adding up to?

Societies not at ease with themselves - what do we believe in - and how do we navigate that - how do we struggle with more polarised communities. Traditional views distort.

So we have poor religious literacy - in the past it did not matter - people say "I know nothing about religion" as a badge of honour - not acceptable in other fields.

Example at Ch4 Don't do any religion - its easier.

Not to do with fairness - where there is a vacuum prejudice can kick in.

Example : Tommy Robinson (lead of EDL) film introduced to Quilliam - gets on with them - he leaves EDL by Monday press conference .

Scene in the film where he is going the worship, stands outside a Mosque and says:

"These are not places of worship but a command and control centre for terrorism".

Through real encounter he changes his mind and leaves the EDL

We have to plan for poor religious literacy. Religiosity of Young Muslims - more religious than their parents (Cardiff Uni)

Festivals/ Events, Issues and Religious Literacy

Songs of Praise - dying population -changed it to be multi-denominational - see a greater diversity.

Church in the Jungle in Calais - showing faith in crisis . Who-Ha Express said should not be done - did not think we should be doing it . Audience know this is an important support to give refugees. Some newspapers thinking because they had headscarves not Christians but Muslims. Christians support to due to refugees in Biblical narrative - ignorance .

Need to be able to take people on a learning journey - important - and a great shelf life.

Religion is important to broadcasting - not possible to keep the status quo - should have religious literacy strategy which should be regulated.

Spent 10 years on committees trying to deliver diversity - include religion - not heard - institutions can can monitor race but not religion.

Teaching about belief has no impact without understanding communities - safe places to study - are required in a hyper- diverse society some basic knowledge is essential.

There are too many opportunities to make too many mistakes.

Narrative around religion is very negative - changing that can can make a huge difference

Made a film called "The Muslim Premier league"

Club doctor of Liverpool was a Muslim - people were constantly asking questions about his faith. Liverpool wins league club - we will spray Champagne in changing room

Dr. Zafar -player arranged to place the doctors bag outside the changing room so it wouldn't get splashed.

Steven Gerrard arranged to take the bag outside. He knew enough to show care and respect. He was sufficiently religiously literate to care.

Footballers are now surrounded by Muslims - good players in a squad as they bring discipline and self care.

World Post 9/11 - religion means much more - offering comfort and confidence to be who they want to be - a huge comfort.



Religion is not irrelevant - in public spaces - how do we deliver it by authentic means

Inspirational teachings - protected and invested - a structure that says this is a must have Religion and Belief in a context of modernity - conversations in the UK and part of other subjects - politics, arts , English etc.

We need to explore the intersection where “Religion is and how it impacts on the world today”. It doesn’t have to be difficult it just to be interesting - engaging.

**As there any other subject as important as Religion today?**

No more important subject than that.

**Future of Religious Broadcasting?**

He was based in Salford - Dept of Religion and Ethics at BBC - over the last few years Independent production Companies - and gone over to a commissioning model was 50% commissioned - the system is now broken - Now a system of no commissioning a free for all - but can pitch for foreign broadcasting - have to put programmes out to tender - goes to outside production companies. Songs of Praise now gone out to a Production Company - so now gone out to lots of different companies. To be able to offer balanced offer for religious literacy whereas there is a super-serving for certain groups - all overlapping and repetitious across networks.

**Muslim concentrations in HE**

Higher % of young Muslims stay at home to go to University than before which has an impact and Universities becoming segregated in areas where there are larger numbers of Muslims.

**Question Time Panel : Joyce Miller, Aaqil Ahmed and Charles Clarke**

**Where are the boundaries for fudgy edges for RE?**

Overall range of areas of learning philosophy etc and religions , content and knowledge verses personal development and a searching for meaning.

What takes place in RE and the conduct of the school and the way it operates .

The role of HT and Govs - ensuring the place of RE - and how RE effects the rest of the curriculum.

Why do we want RE - Community Cohesion and Understanding Culture?

RE does not hold responsibility for these but contributes to them . Exploring belief, culture and controversy

**What are the most important steps that we can take right now to improve the quality of RE right now.**

Use the networks you have between schools and faith communities where you are.

Trying to develop religious literacy for all teachers not just teachers of RE.

Celebrating Good RE - and congratulating it and sharing good practice - press releases and getting PR right - using success and sharing good practice.

Enabling use of religious buildings.

Help develop a strategy for Religious Literacy - people want to do things but they don't know how.

### **How do we persuade those who control education to value RE? (Charles Clarke)**

Who do we think controls education - key issue is to raise the standards and interest in RE - it is a critical area - but that is not how the National Curriculum works. The status of RE is not high enough - leads to a patchy state of affairs . The subject does not have enough status - need to push forward .

Politicians see it is a risky topic for electability. Needs to be a collective endeavour.

### **If you had a million pounds to spend on religious literacy how would you spend it.**

Make it integral in education - important to get it right. Invest heavily religion embedded - make it interesting - less about visits less about dogma - learning about the impact on lives so you respect them - all money spent on kids.

ITT and CPD vital - something deeper - how pupils are viewed - we are not pupil centred but curriculum focused - need to open our eyes and be religion aware - equalities means treating people differently and serving them.

### **Student teachers not receiving RE and then teachers not seeing it as a priority**

Universities only meet the regulated market - need to change the market and the regulation.

Would make a difference if Part 2 of the teachers expectations included "developing religious literacy"

But we don't have a common understanding of religious literacy - we don't all agree.

Religious Literacy needs to be entertaining to be effective.

### **Business Meeting**

**Payment from SACREs** - when payment is made - notification needs to be made as well as payment **Westhill Awards** the successful SACRE bids were announced

## Swindon SACRE 27th June 2017

### Commission on Religious Education Call for Evidence

**Purpose of Paper:** To ask SACRE to consider what evidence Swindon SACRE wishes to offer to the Commission on Religious Education

**SACRE being asked to:** Read a proposal from the Adviser and decide whether this evidence should be submitted on behalf of SACRE and what amendments might be needed

“We hope that you will illustrate your responses with reference to your own work, observations and experiences over the years”

The terms of reference for the commission are:

- To consider the nature, purposes, and scope of religious education.
- To identify the enabling factors that currently promote high quality RE, and the barriers that currently limit it.
- To identify what changes are needed to ensure the highest quality provision of RE.
- To ensure that recommendations focus on realistic and specific proposals aimed at both immediate and long-term implementation in the context of continuing educational reform.

The Commission on Religious Education has suggested that people submitting evidence consider the following questions

1. What should be included in the scope and content of RE?
2. What changes (if any) should there be to the current legal framework for RE?
3. Should there be a common baseline entitlement for RE which applies to all types of school?
4. How should the development of RE standards, curricula, or syllabuses be best organised?
5. Are there changes to primary and secondary teacher education that could improve the delivery of high quality RE?
6. What factors lead to high quality learning and teaching in RE, and what are the main obstacles to this?

You are at complete liberty to address only those issues above which most concern you or in which you have expertise.

The adviser suggests that we submit evidence about the issue that most concerns us as a SACRE which at this time is to do with:

### **3) Common baseline entitlement to RE**

Currently the as the legal framework stands there is a legal requirement for all schools to teach RE to all pupils registered in maintained schools in England from KS1 - 5.

For sometime this has been flouted in 6th forms and the legal requirement for RE at post 16 in non religious foundation schools is probably a necessity that should be dropped from any legal expectations.

However with the introduction of the EBacc and the pressure on schools to help students achieve high standards in English and Maths and to have high achievements in the “bucket of 8” subjects as a published indicator of school success, Religious Education has suffered.

The Academic content of the new GCSE curriculum is weighty and cannot be successfully be taught in the limited time that has in the past been afforded RE when short course RE still counted as a performance indicator. Therefore RE for all at GCSE has suffered and schools have cut curriculum time and in some instances have dropped RE totally except for occasional “drop down days”.

RE teachers in Secondary Schools in Swindon have reported that their curriculum has been cut and staff have lost jobs and find themselves isolated and teaching RE to the whole school with less resources.

One member of staff from Nova Hreod Academy has been asked to teach the whole year at a time : “I have been given the role of planning fortnightly drop down time (non examination) for year 10 (current year 9) next academic year. The idea is that it will be delivered to the whole of the year group for one lesson (75 minutes) a fortnight (a total of 15 across the year).

At Lydiard Park Academy the only RE specialist teacher has resigned “I am no longer head of RS. I handed in my notice as they have got rid of RE at KS4. They are going to do a unit of it in year 10 PSHE: 6, one hour lessons,(which is taught in tutor time by non-specialists). I didn’t want to be part of that so I handed in my notice as a non- violent protest!”

At Isambard Academy the school to be renamed in September 2017, as “Abbey Park School.” In partnership with the Park Academies (who also run Lydiard Park Academy) both RE teachers are actively looking for new jobs as “....in a nutshell; RE isn't going to exist in its current format from September onwards.”

In 2015 and 2016 Swindon had the lowest levels of public examination entries for RE nationally.

Therefore as Swindon SACRE, we are hugely concerned about the entitlement to RE for KS4 pupils. Evidence is showing that several Academies or Academy chains in their struggle to deliver measurable outcomes are not meeting their legal requirement for RE or are complying in such a cursory manner that no depth of religious literacy can possibly be achieved.

We would like there to be an enforced curriculum entitlement to RE that is part of a limiting judgement in the Ofsted framework in order to pupils to be able to properly understand the religions and beliefs of modern Britain.

Katy Staples Adviser to SACRE

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### Report on LTLRE Swindon Hub Meetings

Our second LTLRE hub meeting took place at the Hindu and Community Centre in March. We had over thirty teachers attend. We were welcomed to the temple by Pradeep who gave us an informative talk about how the Hindu community in Swindon worked together to transform the office units on the Cheney Manor Industrial Estate into a multi-functional community centre. Dinesh then explained the basics of the Hindu faith and showed teachers the Hindu units of work in the new agreed syllabus. We were given a tour of the temple and meditation room and teachers had an opportunity to ask questions. Finally, we were treated to a feast of Indian snacks and refreshments for those who could stay.



Our last hub meeting of the year took place in June at Commonweal School. We had a much smaller number of teachers attend due to the busy time of the year. The benefit of this was it allowed primary and secondary colleagues an opportunity to talk together and ask questions of each other about transition from key stage two to three. Emma shared a helpful information pack containing examples of work and the expected levels which created lots of discussion. Lottie O'Brien talked about refugee week and we all enjoyed a cream tea before separating into primary and secondary groups. Teachers shared ideas and examples of work from the new agreed syllabus. We also asked teacher for feedback on the sessions this year and asked them what they would like to do in the future.



Emma McCarthy June 2017

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