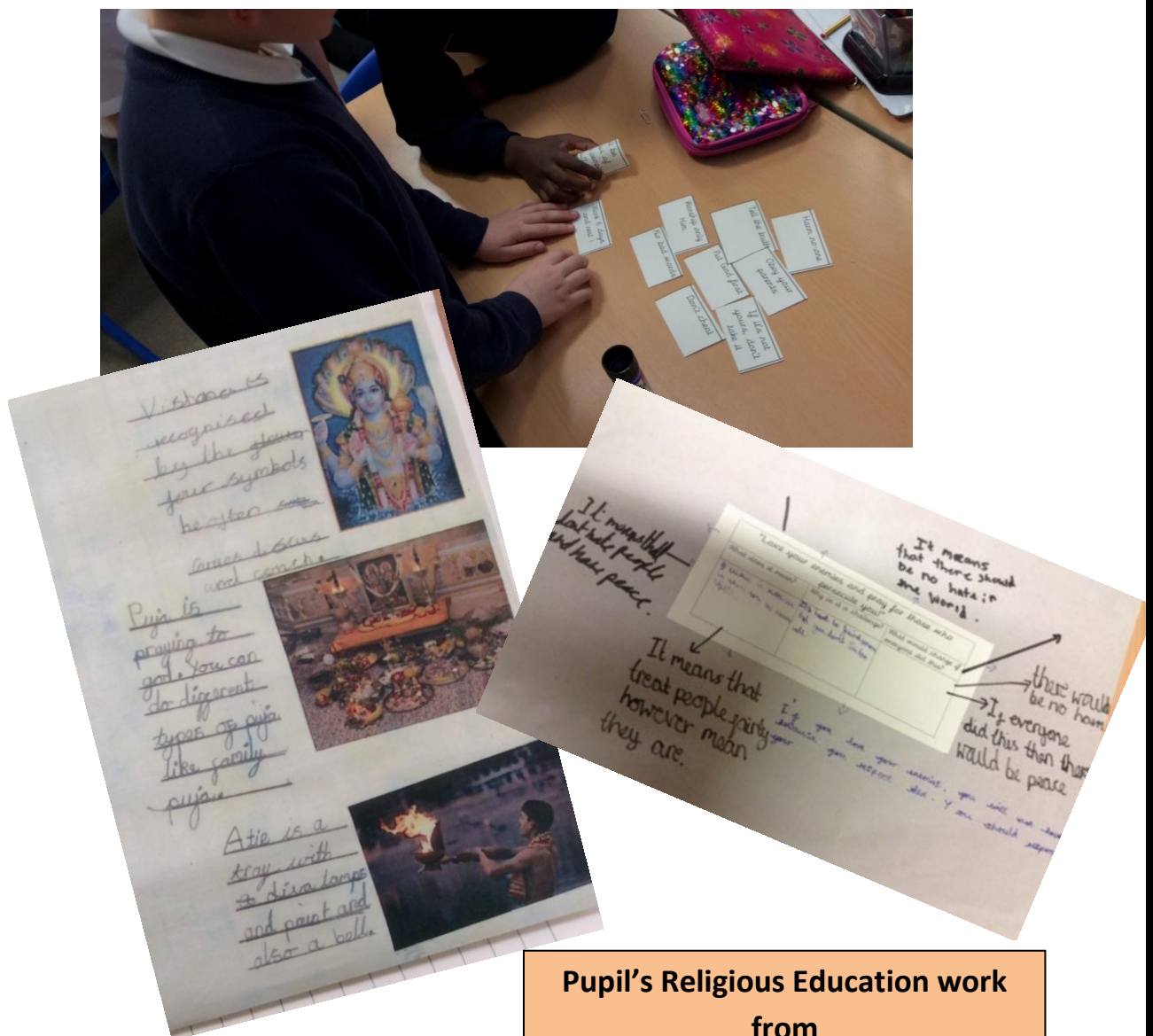


# Swindon SACRE Annual Report 2017 - 2018



**Pupil's Religious Education work  
from  
Even Primary School, Swindon**

## Chair's Introduction

Welcome to our annual report 2017 -18

Swindon SACRE has continued to meet regularly and work enthusiastically to support RE in Swindon Schools

## Supporting Good RE through CPD

Once again we were able to support schools through signposting excellent, well attended and evaluated conferences.

The Annual RE Conference organized jointly between Swindon, South Glos and Bristol SACREs was held on 26th January 2018 at Engineers House in Clifton, Bristol.

The theme was:

**“Clearing the Fog” - Demystifying key beliefs of world faiths** and the keynote speaker was **Helen Matters**. 12 Swindon teachers attended this event.

We were also able to signpost teachers to the LTLRE (Learn Teach Lead Religious Education) conference held on the 28th and 29th June at Bailbrook Hotel in Bath and 11 Swindon teachers attended.

The conference title was

**“Different voices: engaging with similarity and diversity in RE”** where the keynote speakers were **Sushma Sahajpal, Janet Orchard and Katie Freeman**

The Learn Teach Lead Initiative funded by the Jerusalem Trust and the St Matthias trust has also injected life into RE in the region by training and offering support to **Hub Leaders** Emma McCarthy from Orchid Vale Primary School has been the Primary Swindon RE Hub leader during this reporting period. Emma Ainsley-King from Commonweal Secondary School has been the Secondary Hub leader. Hub meetings are cross phase and have covered topics such as “Understanding Islam through Visiting a Mosque”, “Encountering Humanism in the classroom” and “Diversity within Hinduism through visiting a Hindu Temple”. Hub meetings are free and open to all schools and attract from between 8 to 35 attendees.

We have been able to continue to employ Katy Staples as the adviser to SACRE and, through her, individual bespoke support has been given to several schools. SACRE is grateful to Swindon Unitary Authority for its continuing support to Swindon SACRE through funding an adviser and ensuring timely and accurate clerking to the body.

Our thanks go to those who have served us in these roles this past year. Sadly Steph Munding, who had served as a member of the SACRE since June 2006 died on 19th February 2018. We started our following meeting with a candle of remembrance and members of the SACRE paid tribute to Steph for her passion and work with children. The SACRE heard that children at St Francis Church of England School would greatly miss her

commitment to their well-being. Steph was welcoming and generous to people, and with a strength of character, authenticity and commitment to the SACRE.

### **‘Meaningful relationships’**

We have meaningful relationships with LA schools, academies, faith groups, and other local SACREs to ensure that we can offer our schools the best support possible. We continue to work closely with faith communities in Swindon and ensure that teachers can access faith speakers and people to help ensure visits to places of worship run well.

Our Collective Worship Guidance “Time to Breathe” was also reviewed and updated in this reporting year and can be accessed by e-mailing the adviser:

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

**In July 2017 our Chair Sarah Lane Cawte stepped down as she moved to Essex** after 3 years of service as Chair and 5 years of membership on Swindon SACRE. We are very grateful for her commitment and passion for Religious Education in the Authority. She has been a great advocate for good RE and SACRE is in the robust body it currently is, partly due to her generous commitment or time and interest.

**I took on the mantle of Chair in December 2018** and look forward to serving this body and working to ensure the children and young people of Swindon gain access to a high quality of Religious Education to enable them to flourish and understand others more fully in our diverse and complex world.

*Fay Howard*

Councillor Fay Howard

**Chair of Swindon SACRE.**



## **What is SACRE?**

SACRE is the abbreviation for the **Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education**. Its composition is specifically multi-faith and includes serving primary and secondary school teachers. There is also representation from the British Humanist Association.

It is a statutory requirement for every Local Authority to have a SACRE and to support its work. The purpose of SACRE is to advise on the effective provision of RE and Collective Worship.

Swindon SACRE believes that Religious Education is unique because it is the only subject where the curriculum is not prescribed nationally but agreed locally. This means that we can ensure that the syllabus we offer children and young people gives examples of belief lived and practiced by people who have lived and currently live in their locality.

SACRE takes an active part in the review of the Locally Agreed Syllabus every five years. This Academic year 2017-18 we continued to embed our positively reviewed new Agreed Syllabus which was adopted in 2018, written by RE Today Services. This agreed syllabus will be reviewed in 2021 and is available on request from Katy Staples :

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

## **How SACRE is funded and administered**

SACRE receives funding of £5,000 per annum from Swindon Council. As a statutory board SACRE is clerked through the council's services.

All SACRE's members are volunteers who give up their time freely and enthusiastically to help SACRE with its work.

## **SACRE Adviser**

The SACRE Adviser advises SACRE and enacts its decisions. Since 2009 Katy Staples (Bristol Diocese) has provided the advice and support for Swindon SACRE. She invoices the local authority three times a year and keeps within the budget set. This has provided SACRE with a dedicated and experienced resource. Katy also advises Bristol SACRE and has extensive expertise in education and working in schools. During this period, the Local Authority Elected Members, Sarah Foulkes, Commissioner for Education and Peter Nathan, Head of Education were unable to attend any meetings, but offered oversight.

SACRE works to the non-statutory guidance in the 1994 document: Circular 1/94. Parts of that document have been replaced with the guidance: 'Religious Education in English Schools: Non- statutory guidance 2010'.

Swindon Council has approved a constitution for SACRE. A copy of the constitution may be obtained from the Clerk to SACRE Rita Glen-Gallo [RGlen-Gallo@swindon.gov.uk](mailto:RGlen-Gallo@swindon.gov.uk)

## **The agreed syllabus for RE in Swindon**

During 2016 a wholesale review was held of the agreed syllabus, as a result Swindon SACRE adopted an '*RE Today*' syllabus which was made bespoke for the authority. 2017-18 has seen a period of consolidation and embedding, where, through hub meetings and Conferences, teachers have been able to gain in confidence in their planning and delivery of exciting RE

## **Support for schools**

In line with its key priority to raise attainment in RE through advising and training teachers, SACRE undertook the following work in 2017-18

### **Annual RE Conference**

Teachers in Swindon were signposted to the Bristol and South Glos SACRE Annual RE conference held in Bristol. This year the Key Note speaker was Helen Matter from Suffolk SACRE. She spoke about "Clearing the Fog" in RE and helped teachers to gain confidence in their subject knowledge by explaining the key concepts in each of the major religions. There were excellent workshops including one led by Adam Robertson and Nassir Muhammed about teaching Islam for KS2. The day was extremely well evaluated and the Swindon teachers who attended spoke of using the ideas and strategies in their teaching and being able to communicate them to other teachers in their school.

### **Best Practice Forums and Learn, Teach, Lead RE Conference**

A very exciting development in RE has been the *Learn, Teach, Lead RE (LTLRE)* project. This is a project that has run successfully in Devon and Cornwall, and has been extended to include Somerset, Bristol, South Gloucestershire and Swindon. It has secured funding from the Jerusalem Trust and the St Matthias Trust with the aim of creating a network of RE 'hubs' that will train 'hub leaders' to offer support and training to all teachers, both primary and secondary to improve the teaching of RE.

The Best Practice Network meetings, run by SACRE for many years, have now been rebranded as the 'Swindon RE Hubs'. They meet 3 times per year and are free for all primary and secondary Swindon teachers and teaching assistants. Swindon SACRE has used some of its budget to support these hubs and is delighted that a member of SACRE and teacher at Orchid Vale Primary School, Emma McCarthy, has become an accredited hub leader for the Primary phase. Emma Ainsley-King, a Secondary RE teacher at Commonweal School, co-ordinates the secondary group. The SACRE adviser, Katy Staples, assists in training the hub leaders. The new hub met three times over 2017-18 an average of 8 -19 per session. Thanks go to both hub leaders for their drive and organisation!

Teachers in Swindon were also invited to attend the Learn Teach Lead RE Conference which was held for the second year running at Bailbrook Hotel in Bath. It was held June 28th - 29th and the theme was:

## **“Different voices: engaging with similarity and diversity in RE” .**

The keynote speakers were **Sushma Sahajpal, Janet Orchard and Katie Freeman.**

Hub leaders led workshops: Emma McCarthy (Swindon Primary Hub leader) co-led a workshop about teaching festivals at KS2 and Emma Ainslie- King (Swindon Secondary Hub leader) co-led one about “Conflict Resolution : Learning lessons from Corymeela” for KS4. This gave both teachers the experience of leading training at a regional level and helped them to grow their expertise. Once again the conference was extremely well evaluated.

### **Support for schools through Governor training**

As part of its role to offer advice on effective RE, SMSC and Collective Worship SACRE runs training for Governors who serve Swindon schools on an annual basis

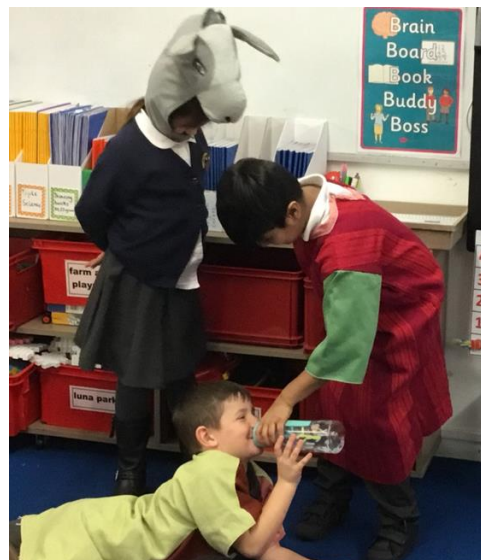
On February 26th 2018 Katy Staples led a Governor training evening , 15 delegates from 12 schools attended , the feedback was 100% Good or Outstanding.

### **Monitoring of RE provision in Swindon**

A key task for SACRE is to monitor the overall provision of RE in Swindon schools. This is quite a difficult task, as it is some years since individual school Ofsted reports specifically commented on RE. The main evidence base that SACRE has to work from is the data from examinations. The data is presented and analysed below.



Making Chapattis in Early years RE



Re-enacting the Good Samaritan

**Religious Education at  
Beechcroft Infant School**



## Public Examination Results

Swindon Schools entered 735 Students for GCSE Religious Studies out of a possible 2,029 Key Stage 4 pupils (36.2%). The average % of entries in England is 38.5%. This is an improvement from the previous 2 years when only 23% and 31% of Swindon pupils were entered for a GCSE.

The average number of pupils being entered for Religious Studies is declining but in Swindon it is increasing (from a low base) but this is encouraging.

67.2% of these students gained a 9-4 grade which is slightly lower than last year's C grade or above achievements (68% of entries). This is slightly lower than the national average for the subject (70.5%)

It should be noted that performance measures for RE now only include full course results and not short course however we now do have data on the numbers entered for short courses, but not on the grades awarded.

Four schools enter the majority of their cohorts for a GCSE in Religious Studies : Warneford 143/173 St Joseph's 210/221, Lydiard Park 114/185 and Nova Hreod 129/134. Dorcan School enters 133/143 students for a short course in Religious Studies. The remaining five schools entered between 1- 60 students for some kind of public accreditation (short course or long course). .

### GCSE Religious Studies at end of KS4

School/provider	Number of entries	Number of pupils	% entered	
Warneford	143	173	83%	
Nova Hreod	129	134	96%	
Lydiard Park	114	185	62%	
Abbey Park	30	187	16%	
Kingsdown	26	223	12%	Plus 6 pupils on short course
St Joseph's	210	221	95%	Plus 2 pupils on short course
Commonweal	60	232	26%	Plus 1 pupil on short course
Ridgeway	23	159	14%	
Swindon Academy	0	92	0%	Plus 1 pupil on short course
Dorcan	0	143	0%	Plus 133 pupils on short course

If not listed, a school had no entries in any Religious Studies or Religious Education qualification for which we receive data. UTC and Lawn Manor have no such entries

**At A level**, 60 students entered Religious Studies, of whom 98% gained A\*- E and (28 %) students achieved A\*- B. This compares poorly with the national average which is 55%

<b>A-level Religious Studies (LA figures provisional only)</b>				
Provider	Number of entries			
New College	39			
St Joseph's	5			
Swindon Academy	2			
Commonweal	8			
Ridgeway	6			
		A*-A	A*-B	A*-E
Swindon	60	8%	28%	100%
England	16490	24.3%	55.1%	98.7%

We are grateful to Hannah Twitchell Senior Performance Analyst (Education)

Data Intelligence Team Swindon Borough Council for this information

### **South West Regional SACRE conference**

Two SACRE members Jo Garton (Humanist rep) and Katy Staples (adviser) attended the March 2016 conference of South West SACREs held in Dillington Somerset and reported back to the following SACRE meeting.

The keynote speaker was Stephen Pett from RE Today Services and Denise Cush from the Commission on Religious Education (CORE).

### **Statutory matters**

SACRE has a statutory role to decide on any determinations. These are requests by schools to move away from the requirement for collective worship to be wholly, broadly or mainly of a Christian character. During the period of this report, there have been no requests for determinations.



Where a complaint has been made about the RE curriculum in a South Gloucestershire school, it should be referred to Swindon Council for it to deal with. Swindon Council has undertaken to seek SACRE's advice on any such complaint. There have been no formal complaints within this reporting period.

SACRE has a complaints procedure to deal with any complaints made against SACRE. There were no such complaints in the reporting period.

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### **Members of SACRE September 2017 - 2018**

Committee A: Christian and  
other religious denominations

9 Members

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)

Mr Gurchoran Singh Lyal, (Sikh)

Jo Backus (Buddhist)

Clare-Marie Burchall (Catholic Community)

Committee B – Church of  
England –

Reverend Clive Deverell,

Miss Janet French

Ms Steph Mundin

Reverend Norma McKeeney

Ruth Williams

Committee C – teachers  
nominated by the South  
Gloucestershire TCC

Mrs Tracy Mason,  
Mrs Lottie O'Brien,  
Mrs Mandy Sandleton  
Mrs Emma McCarthy

Committee D – Local Authority  
representatives

Councillors  
Roger Smith  
Nick Martin  
Alan Bishop  
Fay Howard  
Barbara Parry  
Gary Sumner

Committee E – non voting Co-  
opted

Fidelma Meehan (Baha'i Community)  
Jo Garton (Humanist)

During the reporting period, SACRE was chaired by Fay Howard and the vice chair position was under discussion. At the June meeting Emma McCarthy agreed to be the vice chair. SACRE was supported by Katy Staples (SACRE Advisor), Peter Nathan (Head of Education), Sarah Foulkes (School Improvement Adviser)

Meetings were held at the following places on these dates:

**Committee Room 6, Civic Offices, Euclid Street on December 5th 2017**

Main agenda items were :

1. Interim CoRE Report and SACREs response
2. The Development Plan
3. Feedback from Hub meetings ,
4. National Developments

## **Gateway Church , Swindon, 28th March 2018**

Main agenda items were :

1. A talk about the worship and work of Gateway Church
2. A remembrance of Steph Mordin (a valued member of SACRE)
3. The Annual Report
4. The Collective Worship Guidance Development
5. School website checking for evidence of RE
6. Feedback from Hub meetings

## **Al- Habib Islamic Centre, Swindon 26th June 2018**

Main agenda items were:

1. A talk about the work and worship at the Islamic centre
2. Vice Chair legal developments - election of new vice chair
3. Feedback from Hub Meetings
4. Local Radio Coverage about RE and the work of SACRE
5. Website checking

All SACRE meetings are open to members of the public who should contact the Clerk for details of forthcoming meetings.

The Swindon SACRE can be contacted via its Clerk:

Rita Glen-Gallo [RGlen-Gallo@swindon.gov.uk](mailto:RGlen-Gallo@swindon.gov.uk)



Jo Garton speaking about  
Humanism at the  
Swindon LTLRE Hub  
meeting