



Swindon SACRE Annual Report 2018 - 2019



**Pupil's Religious Education work
from
Greenmeadow Primary School**

Chair's Introduction

Welcome to our annual report 2018 - 19

Swindon SACRE has continued to meet regularly and work efficiently 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:

"Telling Tales" - and the keynote speaker was **Lat Blaylock**. 10 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 June at Bath Spa University and 12 Swindon teachers attended.

The conference title was

'Don't fence me in'

Religion and Worldviews: beyond stereotypes towards lived experiences where the keynote speakers were **Helen John and Chris Hewer**

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 Teaching Humanism led by Jo Garton, Reflective Story Telling in RE led by Katherine Taylor and Sharing Good GCSE practice. Hub meetings are free and open to all schools and attract from between 8 to 35 attendees.

Initiatives that have had some Impact

During this reporting period we have had some considerable impact on schools through introducing **The WIRE Award** (Widening Inclusion in RE) this is an award that schools can be given if they attend CPD, take pupils in any year group to a place of worship that is not Christian and either put on an RE day or enter an RE competition such as Spirited Arts organized by NATRE. 3 schools were given this award during this last year but many more are working towards it in this coming year.

The other initiative taken was in response to SACRE's need to monitor standards and compliance with little funding or capacity. As a result we decided to undertake a **simple**

website scrutiny exercise which gave each SACRE member around 6 schools websites to scrutinize and a simple criteria to evaluate them and then we placed each school in the red, amber or green categories and sent the appropriate letter to the Headteacher and COG of each school. This ensured mixed responses and greater engagement and seeking of support to improve.

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 the role of SACRE members and in the last year. Janet French stepped down as one of the CofE reps, she had contributed so much to SACRE through writing materials and sharing her understanding of KS1 RE.

‘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” has continued to be circulated signposted and recommended. This can be found by approaching the adviser katy.staples@bristoldiocese.org.

I have been SACRE Chair for over a year now and look forward to continuing to serve 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. We are a body committed to ensuring that the pupils in our area know and understand the complexity of religion and world views so they can live well in our diverse 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-belief 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

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

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 Lat Blaylock from RE Today Services. He spoke about "Telling Tales" in RE and helped teachers to gain confidence in their subject knowledge by inspiring them with new ideas to explore stories and texts in RE. There were excellent workshops including one led by Katy Staples about "Talk to the Animals" and exploring religious stories which feature animals in KS1. Mary Read led a workshop about how to manage a safe space in RE, and Katherine Taylor led a workshop about How to tell Wondering stories. 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 2018-19 an average of 8 -19 per session. The variety of the Hub meetings ensured that RE leaders and teachers in Swindon were able to receive the support that they needed. This years meetings centred on Humanism, Exploring stories and text and Creative Islam. 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 at Bath Spa University. It was held on June 28th and the theme was:

“Don’t fence me in” Religion and Worldviews: beyond stereotypes towards lived experiences.

The keynote speakers were **Helen Johns and Chris Hewer and Juliet Lyal.**

Workshops included: Handling your own beliefs in the classroom as a teacher, What sex is God? Creating spaces so minority belief children feel free to share ,Islam for Secondary Schools, RE and the New Ofsted Framework 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 , 8 delegates from 7 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.

Public Examination Results

Swindon Schools entered 510 Students for GCSE Religious Studies out of a possible 2,000 Key Stage 4 pupils (23.3%).The average % of entries in England is 38.8%. This is a decline from the previous years when 34% of Swindon pupils were entered for a GCSE.

The average number of pupils being entered for Religious Studies has declined rapidly in Swindon in the last year. Over 75% of Swindon students are not being entered for a public examination in RE, which begs the question of what entitlement to Religious Education are those pupils in those schools gaining, and are those schools flouting the law.

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.

Two schools enter the majority of their cohorts for a GCSE in Religious Studies : Warneford 103/183 St Joseph’s 224/234, In the last year two schools who were entering the majority of their cohort for RE have ceased to do so : Lydiard Park and Nova Hreod .Dorcan School

enters 127/147 students for a short course in Religious Studies. So eight schools enter between 6- 59 students for some kind of public accreditation (short course or long course),

Lydiard Park is not entering any pupils for a public examination in Religious Studies.

GCSE Religious Studies at end of KS4

School/provider	Number of entries	Number of pupils	% entered	
Warneford	103	183	56%	
Nova Hreod	9	147	6%	
Lydiard Park	0	194	0%	
Abbey Park	14	194	7%	
Kingsdown	48	209	23%	Plus 1 pupils on short course
St Joseph's	224	234	96%	
Commonweal	59	224	26%	
Ridgeway	26	234	11%	
Swindon Academy	6	99	6%	
Dorcan	10	147	7%	Plus 127 pupils on short course
Lawn Manor Academy	11	135	8%	

	Number of entries	Number at grades 9-4	Number of pupils	% entered	% of those entered achieving 9-4
Swindon	510	381	2102	24.3%	74.7%
England (state funded pupils)	210793	149605	542831	38.8%	71.0%

At A level,

We do not have any data about the entries for A 'Level Religious Studies from New College Swindon, which last year had the largest cohort of entries . We also have not been supplied with anything other than the numbers entered from the other centres so no analysis of this is possible.

A-level Religious Studies

Provider	Number of entries
New College	n/a
St Joseph's	0
Swindon Academy	5
Commonweal	6
Ridgeway	11

We are grateful to Martin Bell Performance Analyst (Education)

Data Intelligence Team Swindon Borough Council for this information

South West Regional SACRE conference

Two SACRE members Jo Backus (Humanist rep) and Katy Staples (adviser) attended the March 2019 conference of South West SACREs held in Dillington Somerset and reported back to the following SACRE meeting.

The topic was the Commission on RE and its implications for SACRES keynote speakers were Paul Smalley (Chair of NASACRE), Rudi Eliot Lockhart (CEO of REC), Joyce Miller (RE Commissioner), Claire Clinton (Adviser to Newham SACRE) and Deborah Weston (Adviser to 4 London SACREs).

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 Swindon 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 2018 -19

Committee A: Christian and
other religious denominations

8 Members

Mr David Burbidge (Baptist Church),

Reverend David Howell (Swindon Evangelical Alliance),

Mr Malkit Babbra (Sikh Community)

Mr Atiff Ghafar (Muslim Community)

Mrs Clare-Marie Burchall (Catholic Community)

Mr Dinesh Patel (Hindu)

	Jo Backus (Buddhist)
	Ms Michelle Howard (United Reform Church)
Committee B – Church of England –	Reverend Clive Deverell, Miss Janet French Reverend Norma McKemey 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 Matthew Courtliff Roger Smith Nick Martin Fay Howard Barbara Parry
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 4th 2019

Main agenda items were :

1. Website Review

2. The CORE Report
3. Feedback from Hub meetings ,
4. The WIRE Award
5. Development Plan

Gorse Hill Baptist Church, Swindon, 26th March 2019

Main agenda items were :

1. A talk about the worship and work of Gorse Hill Baptists
2. The Annual Report
3. Feedback from Schools after the Website Review
4. Development Plan
5. Feedback from Hub meetings

Committee Room 6, Civic Offices, Euclid Street Swindon 26th June 2018

Main agenda items were:

1. Ice lollies provided by the Chair !
2. Feedback from LTLRE conference and need to offer schools support re New Ofsted feedback
3. Feedback from Hub Meetings
4. The crisis at KS4 RE - what can we do as SACRE
5. The WIRE award

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