



Swindon's SACRE's Annual Report 2016 -17



Bridlewood Primary School year 4 pupils visit the Church at Christmas



Chair's foreword

2016 - 17 was an extremely productive year for Swindon SACRE as we launched a New Agreed Syllabus (an RE Today Services Model Syllabus) and the hub meetings for teachers grew. The sense of a shared RE community created through the hard work of hub leaders Emma McCarthy (Primary leader from Orchid Vale School) and Emma Ainsley-King (Secondary leader from Commonweal School) represents an enhanced service to schools. This is organised through the "Learn, Teach, Lead RE" programme funded by the Jerusalem Trust and St Matthias Trust. The hub meetings have taken place in the schools of the hub leaders and at the Hindu Temple.

This was a year of stability for Swindon SACRE, as thankfully the key positions of chair, clerk and adviser saw no changes and so we could consolidate our work and support.

It has also been another year where we worryingly, have to report paucity in GCSE RE entries compared to national figures. Four schools entered no students at all for a public examination as far as we can tell. Of the seven schools that did enter students, only three centres entered the majority of their cohort. We have written to those schools to enquire what and how much RE the pupils in their schools are being offered.

As retiring Chair of Swindon SACRE, I am grateful that SACRE continues to work as a body that takes its duties seriously and is striving to ensure outstanding Religious Education is taught to the children and young people in Swindon schools in the months and years to come. I am also particularly grateful for the hard work and services offered by Stuart Figini (retiring clerk) and Katy Staples (adviser).

Sarah Lane-Cawte

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 a representative 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 2016-17 we launched a new Agreed Syllabus which was 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 and South Glos. SACRE and has extensive expertise in education and working in schools. During this period, the Local Authority was represented at SACRE meetings by both Elected Members, Sarah Foulkes, Commissioner for Education and Peter Nathan, Head of Education.

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'.

South Gloucestershire 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

A new agreed syllabus for RE in Swindon

During 2016 a wholesale review was held of the agreed syllabus. This is a key responsibility of SACRE, and therefore the key activity for this period. After discussion with members of SACRE, and teachers more widely, it was decided to move to a new model of syllabus provision. Rather than revise the current syllabus, which had been in place since 2005 with some revisions in 2011, SACRE decided to work with the organisation '*RE Today*' to develop a bespoke syllabus for the authority. The following reasons guided SACRE's decision in this matter:

- Feedback from teachers (particularly in the primary sector) for more detailed plans and resources to address lack of subject knowledge and confidence in teaching RE.
- The changing landscape of RE in the future, particularly in terms of the development of a national entitlement for RE, or even a national curriculum. Therefore a wish to work with a national organisation to create an agreed syllabus that is 'future proof' and will serve the needs of Swindon teachers and pupils for the next five years.

To this end, SACRE and RE Today have together developed a wholly new syllabus that will guide religious education from Early Years – Key Stage 3. It is based on an enquiry-led pedagogy that enables children to answer complex and detailed questions about the nature of religion and belief, whilst also developing their own responses. This syllabus specifically introduces children to religion and non-religious viewpoints. It also includes a Swindon specific unit about Swindon Food Bank.

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 2016 – 2017:

Launch of agreed syllabus

The agreed syllabus was launched at a special conference held on 8th November 2016 at the Tadpole Farm CofE Primary Academy. The keynote speakers were Fiona Moss and Stephen Pett, who are the main authors of the syllabus and have a national profile in RE. 86 delegates attended the launch, with 100% of respondents saying the event was 'good or excellent'.

A further session to target schools that had not been able to attend the initial launch was held in December 2016. 5 teachers from Swindon attended that session. The response to the agreed syllabus has been very positive, with teachers specifically commenting that they can see the improvement in the quality of children's engagement and learning about religion and belief.

Best Practice Forums and Learn, Teach, Lead RE

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 external sources 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 inaugural conference for the LTLRE project was held from 30th June – 1st July 2016 at Tortworth Court in Gloucestershire and a second conference at Bailbrook Hotel in Bath on the 29th - 30th June 2017. 62 delegates attended the first conference and 103, the second, with a good cohort from Swindon schools. Speakers had a national profile and the conferences which are a one night residential were very well reviewed and helped to forge a tighter RE community.

The Best Practice Network meetings, run by SACRE for many years, have now been rebranded as the 'Swindon RE Hubs'. It meets 3 times per year and is 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 supporting and briefing delegates. The new hub met three times over 2016 - 2017 an average of 15-19 per session, which is an increase on previous years. Thanks go to both Emmas for their drive and organisation!

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 February 10th 2017 Katy Staples led a Governor training evening, 20 delegates from 16 schools attended, the feedback was 98% Good or Outstanding.

Monitoring of RE provision in Swindon

A key task for SACRE is to monitor the overall provision of RE in South Gloucestershire 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 623 Students for GCSE Religious Studies out of a possible 2,039 Key Stage 4 pupils (31%). The average % of entries in England is 47%. This is an improvement from last year when only 23% of Swindon pupils were entered for a GCSE.

426 of these students gained a C grade or above (68% of entries). This is slightly lower than the national average for the subject (71%)

It should be noted that performance measures for RE now only include full course results and not short course.

The entries were from eight schools, with the largest cohorts from St Joseph's, Lydiard Park and Warneford. The remaining six schools entered between 6 students and 62 candidates.

GCSE Religious Studies at end of KS4

School/provider	Number of entries	Number of pupils	% entered
Warneford	173	175	99%
Nova Hreod	6	147	4%
Lydiard Park	147	170	86%
Abbey Park	11	213	5%
Kingsdown	15	228	7%
St Joseph's	192	221	87%
Commonweal	62	226	27%
Ridgeway	17	187	9%

UTC Swindon, Dorcan, Lawn Manor, Swindon Academy and the special schools had no entries in RE qualifications included in KS4 performance measures.

At A level, 55 students entered Religious Studies, of whom 98% gained A*- E and 22 (40%) students achieved A*- B. This compares with the national average which is 55%

A-level Religious Studies (LA figures provisional only)

Provider	Number of entries			
New College	26			
St Joseph's	14			
Swindon Academy	3			
Commonweal	2			

Ridgeway	10			
		A*-A	A*-B	A*-E
Swindon	55	9.1%	30.9%	98.2%
England	22066	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

Attendance by SACRE members at outside events

South West Regional SACRE conference

Two SACRE members Sarah Lane Cawte (Chair) 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 Rudolph Elliott the chief Executive officer of the REC (the Religious Education Council) he was speaking about the possible need for a new settlement for Religious Education.

National Association of SACREs (NASACRE) Annual General Meeting,

17th May 2016:

This was attended by our SACRE members: and Katy Staples.

The keynote speech was by **Rt. Hon. Baroness Elizabeth Butler-Schloss**, chair of the recently commissioned Commission on Religions and Belief in British Public Life. This is a key piece of work that may have significant ramifications for the state of religious education in the UK, and the role of SACREs in the future.

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.

National Association of SACREs (NASACRE) Annual General Meeting,

The keynote speech was given by **The Rt Hon Baroness Elizabeth Butler-Sloss GBE** speaking on Religion in Public life and the impact historical changes should have on the teaching of RE.

This was attended by the SACRE adviser who offered SACRE a report about the conference and the possible repercussions for RE in Swindon.

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From time to time, local authorities receive Freedom of Information requests from national journalists about the work of their SACREs. During 2014-15 Swindon Council had received two Freedom of Information requests asking how many schools in our area have an exemption from the legal requirement to hold a daily act of collective worship of a "wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character". SACRE sent a nil return.

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 would then seek SACRE's advice on any such complaint. There have been no formal complaints within this reporting period.

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Members of SACRE September 2016 - 2016

Committee A: Christian and
other religious denominations

9 Members

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)

	Dinesh Patel (Hindu)
	Mr Gurchoran Singh Lyal, (Sikh)
	Teresa Clerck (Jewish)
	Jo Backus (Buddhist)
Committee B – Church of England –	Reverend Clive Deverell,
	Miss Janet French
	Ms Steph Mundin
	Reverend Norma McKeeney
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
	Fionuala Foley,
	Matthew Courtliff
	Gemma McCracken
	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 Sarah Lane Cawte and Lottie O'Brien was vice chair. SACRE was supported by Katy Staples (SACRE Advisor), Peter Nathan (Head of Education), Sarah Foulkes (School Improvement Adviser)

The three SACRE meetings in 2016-17 were held at:

Tadpole Farm CofE Academy November 1st 2016

Main agenda items were :

1. RE and Collective Worship at Tadpole Farm,
2. The launch of the Agreed Syllabus,
3. The Development Plan ,
4. National Developments

Holy Cross RC Primary School March 7th 2017

Main agenda items were :

1. Collective Worship at Holycross
2. The Agreed Syllabus launch - feedback
3. The Annual Report
4. The Development Plan

Oliver Tomkins CofE VA Infant and Junior Schools 27th June 2017

Main agenda items were:

1. Welcome from Oliver Tomkins
2. Development Plan
3. Commission of Religious Education - collating Swindon SACRE evidence
4. Feedback from Hub Meetings
5. Thanks and farewell to our chair Sarah Lane-Cawte

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