

**Leicester City Standing Advisory Council on
Religious Education
(SACRE)**

ANNUAL REPORT 2017-18

From the Chair

SACRE met twice per term this year, totalling six times in all, to discuss a wide range of issues to support the teaching of RE and promote harmony among diverse communities. Representatives of faith communities work well together with the Consultant Adviser, Wendy Harrison, to achieve a high standard for Leicester City Schools. However, it has not always been easy to replace or secure representatives from some communities.

We have been regularly kept up to date by Wendy about national reports, including one entitled, 'The state of the Nation: A report on Religious Education provision within secondary schools in England', which raised concerns and made recommendations about the provision for RE in schools. Other reports emphasised the possible changing role of SACRE but still stressed its importance in supporting RE in schools.

During the year SACRE decided to simplify its Action Plan around three main areas, which included the revision of the Agreed Syllabus in 2019. Part of the previous plan came to fruition when Claire Plumb and Wendy Harrison held an informative evening session at Forest Lodge Education Centre where they launched the long awaited religion artefact boxes to support the teaching of RE. These were much appreciated by SACRE members and teachers attending the launch, for the accessibility and explanations for use of the artefacts provided. The overall Action Plan later had to be abandoned in its present form due to cuts in funding.

The Consultant RE Adviser has continued to visit schools to provide guidance and support for RE co-ordinators and subject leaders. Her valued reports have guided SACRE's work. Analysis of the spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspect of Ofsted inspection reports in Leicester schools reflect an overwhelmingly positive picture, with pupils well prepared for life in modern Britain.

Much thought was given to the review of the Agreed Syllabus. For reasons of good time management and production it was agreed to have the Agreed Syllabus Conference meetings following SACRE meetings. After a teacher consultation had taken place it was agreed not to produce a totally new syllabus but to produce non-statutory guidelines to enhance the current delivery of the RE curriculum.

A major concern for SACRE this year was the reduced funding for Leicester SACRE, despite assurances from the government that budgets would be protected. Much correspondence and meetings took place between LA officers and members of SACRE. The recently appointed Director for Learning and Inclusion, Paul Tinsley, attended a SACRE meeting to listen to and address concerns. Despite SACRE's best efforts, the cut to our funding went ahead, leaving members extremely concerned that we would no longer be able to meet our statutory duties. This will form a large part of future dialogue because it will affect everything that is done by SACRE and the Consultant RE Adviser.

Visiting speakers attended some meetings and gave presentations for subjects allied to the work of SACRE. As part of its responsibilities SACRE received presentations from a number of schools to support their application for determinations to ensure

that their acts of collective worship reflected diverse school populations. These were informative and helped SACRE make decisions.

As per the SACRE constitution Seema Ahmed was appointed Chair and Yolanda Morley McKay appointed as Vice Chair for the next two years. Together with the Consultant Adviser they will have the onerous duty of steering SACRE through reduced financial constraints whilst still seeking the best support in RE for the pupils of Leicester schools.

Jean Denton
Chair of Leicester SACRE 2017-18

General

There were six meetings of SACRE during 2017-18 – in October and November 2017 and in January, March, May and June in 2018. Meetings took place in schools, the Friends' Meeting House and City Hall.

1.National reports

During the year SACRE was kept informed about key national reports.

The State of the Nation: A report on RE provision within secondary schools in England published by NATRE/the REC/RE Today

This study concluded that many secondary schools are not fulfilling statutory requirements regarding RE. The report includes a number of recommendations for school leaders, parents/carers and DfE, etc. though nothing specifically for local authorities. The report is significant because it provides data which has not been previously available. Overall, the findings show that schools **with** a religious character are more likely to be meeting requirements and academies are the least likely type of school to meet statutory responsibilities at key stage 4.

Interim report from the Commission on RE (CORE).

The CORE report shares concerns over the number of state secondary schools not meeting the statutory requirements for RE. Both reports emphasise the importance of RE and the role of SACRE. The key recommendation of the interim report includes the introduction of a core entitlement for RE and a new role for SACREs. Overall, the report supports SACREs but also suggests ways in which their role might change.

2.Leicester SACRE Action Plan

This was discussed at the beginning of the year and the Consultant RE Adviser suggested it should have fewer objectives than previously, for example:

- Promotion to schools and the role of SACRE members in supporting schools
- Teaching and Learning of RE including revision of Agreed Syllabus (2019).
- Recognising and diversity in Leicester schools.

The Action Plan had to be abandoned later in the year due to lack of funding.

3.Religion boxes

The boxes were launched on 5th September at Forest Lodge Education Centre. The session was led by Claire Plumb and the Consultant RE Adviser. A number of teachers and SACRE members attended the event and feedback was extremely positive.

4.School visits

These continue to be an important aspect of the role of the Consultant RE Adviser, along with regular network meetings. Both help to inform SACRE about the quality of RE in Leicester schools. Visits are now well established and welcomed by schools.

5.Acts of collective worship project

During the November meeting the Rev Tom Wilson, Director of St Philip's Centre, talked about the mini research project he was undertaking on collective worship in secondary schools without a religious character. He explained that he would be working with Wendy Harrison and Ian Jones (St Peter's Saltley Trust) and the

research team would visit approximately 30 schools in Leicester and the West Midlands. The purpose was to find out what is happening in schools and provide resources to improve practice.

While every effort was made subsequently to engage schools in this project, the response was poor and it had to be abandoned.

6.Ofsted inspections: Analysis of Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development and British values

Reports show overwhelmingly positive comments, with some outstanding. They state that pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

'The school promotes British values strongly.....British values form a key part of several lessons and assemblies.'

[Infant School]

'Pupils are prepared well for life in modern Britain. They speak confidently regarding British values.'

[Primary School]

'Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a real strength of the school.....Consequently, pupils' preparation for life in modern Britain, including their rights and responsibilities, is excellent.'

[Secondary School]

'The school actively promotes British values. This helps to prepare pupils very well for life in modern Britain.'

[Special School]

6.Assessment in primary schools

A group of primary teachers which was set up to work with the Consultant RE Adviser to produce guidelines for schools. This was distributed to all primary schools.

7.Review of the agreed syllabus

A teachers' working party (TWP) made up of seven experienced primary school teachers was set up to carry out the review. After some discussion it was agreed that all SACRE members should be part of the Agreed Syllabus Conference and that ASC meetings should be held at the end of the full SACRE meeting - it was felt this would be more productive. The ASC has to agree on any decisions made by the TWP. Secondary school teachers would be consulted through CLARET. The TWP met in April and agreed that whilst working on the AS the following need to be taken into account:

- Different rules for different schools.
- The right to withdraw.
- The state of the nation report.
- The importance of religious literacy (the belief, thinking and practice)

Following consultations with teachers it was felt that it would not be necessary to produce a completely new agreed syllabus. Instead, non-statutory guidelines would be drawn up to help improve planning and assessment.

8.SACRE budget

The Consultant RE Adviser provided SACRE with details about her contractual hours and a breakdown of all her activities. Early on in the year it was explained that in 2018-2019 there was likely to be a drastic cut to the budget. Reassurance was given that members that the cost of reviewing the Agreed Syllabus would still be met and it would receive due attention. However, any additional projects would not go ahead. JD referred to NATRE's bulletin on SACRE funding, which stated that SACREs and ASCs would continue to be funded by central government once the Education Services Grant is abolished at the end of this financial year (2016-17). SACRE members were anxious that due to the lack of funding WH and SACRE might not be able to fulfil their statutory responsibilities to the highest standard.

During the May 2018 meeting WH (Consultant RE Adviser) notified members that the SACRE RE budget was to be reduced by around 75% from October 2018. She gave a power-point presentation on the breakdown of the budget and the potential impact it could have on SACRE and RE. It appeared that WH's contract was to end on 30th Sept 2018 rather than what had been anticipated, October 2019. From October 2018, the LA proposed to cut the RE/SACRE budget to £9,500. This would equate to approximately 2 days a month for WH to carry out very basic work for SACRE. Mentoring and support for schools would only be available if schools paid for it. WH highlighted the importance of RE, the effect the revised budget might have upon schools, children and the community. RE could be marginalised or not taught at all, standards might fall and without the direct link to schools the role of Leicester SACRE would be diminished. Members were disheartened by this news. In response, WH and SACRE members produced a draft letter to be sent from the Chair of SACRE to the LA Head of Finance, highlighting SACRE's concerns and to ask that his decision be reviewed.

In response to correspondence from the Chair of SACRE (JD), Paul Tinsley (Director of Learning & Inclusion, Leicester City Council) attended the SACRE meeting on June 2018. JD had submitted questions to Paul Tinsley (PT) on behalf of SACRE in advance of the SACRE meeting.

During the meeting the following issues were covered:

- More information was requested regarding exactly how much money had been allocated to RE/SACRE from the Central School Services Block compared to other services.
- Information was requested about whether a consultation had been carried out prior to the decision about the reduction to funding - as far as JD and WH were aware, there had been no consultation.
- PT was relatively new to post – he had not been aware of the full implications of such a significant cut to the RE/SACRE budget. It was not clear whether the person who had made the decision had any understanding about the statutory functions of SACRE.
- GB had spoken to the City Mayor about the budget cut. He is happy for a discussion to take place about this at the next Faith and Community Forum meeting on 24th July. WH would make a presentation at that meeting. GB also questioned whether an equality assessment had been carried out, as this would reveal if a decision worked unfairly against a group and if so, it could be challenged.

- PT asked SACRE to produce a report summarising the detail of what SACRE actually does, how the reduction of the budget would impact on SACRE and what funding was needed to carry out the statutory duties. He asked that the report highlighted all SACRE's concerns.
- SACRE would need to consider if/how it could operate under a reduced budget. The implications might include fewer meetings and less time for determinations. The point was made that SACRE still has an obligation to all schools, including academies.

Councillors said they would take this matter to their council meetings.

9. Visiting speaker

Helena Ahsan is a child Sexual Exploitation Community Champion working for EngageMe, an organisation that helps to raise awareness about child sexual exploitation in Black Minority Ethnic communities. Helena gave a brief presentation during one of the meetings about her role and the aim of the organisation.

10. Determinations

10.1: Mayflower Primary School

The headteacher gave a power-point presentation in which he provided information about the context of the school and the role of collective worship. He provided an outline of what takes place in assemblies/acts of worship. The school has strong links with the local community and faith representatives, who make valuable contributions to acts of worship. SACRE agreed to renew the determination but said the renewal letter should stress that more thought needed to be given to assembly themes and the place of worship and reflection. Support would also be offered from SACRE members.

10.2: Abbey Primary School

A presentation was given by the headteacher. She explained that the ethos of the school was based on human values, respect and tolerance. The determination was important to promote the school's commitment to inclusivity at all levels. Information was provided about the religious backgrounds of the pupils. The headteacher described the format of assemblies. Pupils of all faiths take part in all religious festival celebrations and the presentation included examples of these. The emphasis is always on spirituality, in its broadest sense. SACRE members responded very positively to the presentation and it was suggested the school's good practice should be shared with other schools. SACRE agreed to renew the determination.

10.3: Highfields Primary School

The headteacher presented her determination on a powerpoint. She listed the aims of collective worship at the school such as promoting a sense of community, being educational, promoting SMSC and ensuring it is seen as a special time. She explained that she has the full support of parents. This was not always been the case and the school has worked hard to build up relationships. No pupils are withdrawn from RE or collective worship. Children and some parents have visited places of worship, they have festival dinners and participate in assemblies for different festivals.

11. Election of Chair and Vice-Chair

Seema Ahmed was elected as Chair for the next two years. Yolanda Morley-McKay was duly elected as Vice Chair

12. 2018 Examination results

National overview from the National Association of Teachers of Religious Education (NATRE) ¹

The number of pupils in England and Wales taking GCSE Religious Studies full course has fallen for the second year in a row, down 10.4% against 2017 to 241,749. In addition, the number of pupils in England and Wales taking the short course GCSE in Religious Studies has fallen even more sharply, down 35.8% from last year to 34,087. The decline is greater in England than in Wales. In England the number of entries for GCSE Religious Studies full course has fallen by 10.7% to 229,189. In Wales the equivalent figures are down by 4.2% to 12,560, although these come after last year's record high.

All schools, including academies, have a legal requirement to offer RE at all key stages, but figures suggest that this is not sufficient to ensure that all pupils in England get to study the subject at Key Stage 4. In too many cases, there are no consequences for those schools that decide to flout their legal obligation, with RE not featuring in measures such as the EBacc that are used to hold them to account.

At a time when greater religious literacy is even more necessary than ever before, the decline across England and Wales in pupils taking GCSE Religious Studies is troubling.

The fall in entries comes despite pupils emphasising how much they value and enjoy studying RE (underlined by the overall rise in entries at A-Level and GCSE over the past decade) and despite the fact that the government is rightly emphasising the importance for young people to have knowledge and understanding of religions and non-religious beliefs.

This year's drop in entries should not detract from a decade of strong growth for Religious Studies GCSE. In 2008 there were 166,628 entries for Religious Studies in England and Wales. The number of entries increased every year until reaching a peak in 2016. While there has been a decline this year, the number of pupils receiving a full course GCSE in Religious Studies is still 45.1% greater than in 2008.

It has been encouraging to hear that Ofsted intend to pay closer attention to whether schools are meeting their requirements to teach Religious Education. Today's figures show how important it will be for Ofsted to do this.

The key outcomes for Religious Education in England and Wales at KS4 in 2018 are as follows:

- There were 241,749 entries for the full course in GCSE RS, a fall of 10.4% from 2017 (269,839)
- There were 34,087 entries for the short course in GCSE RS, a decline of 35.8% from 2017 (53,071)

¹ <https://www.natre.org.uk/news/archived-news/falling-numbers-of-religious-studies-gcse-entries-suggests-schools-struggling-to-meet-legal-obligations-1/>

- There were 275,836 entries for GCSE RS (combined short and full courses), a **decline of 14.6%** from 2017 (322,910). Entries for GCSE RS (combined short and full courses) peaked in 2011 at 461,795. Today's figures show a decline in entries of 40.3% in seven years with 186,000 fewer pupils achieving a qualification in RS at the end of KS4.
- 29.7% of entries for the full course in GCSE RS were awarded at least an A or 7
- 22.7% of entries for the short course in GCSE RS were awarded an A or an A*

The new grading system

This new scale is aligned to key grades on the current A* to G scale.

Grades 9, 8 and 7 are broadly equivalent to an A* and an A.

Grades 6, 5 and 4 are in line with B and C grades.

A grade 4 is broadly equivalent to a C grade.

A 3 would be broadly similar to a D grade, with 2 and 1 taking in grades E, F and G.

There is still a U - ungraded - mark.

Grade 4 will be known as a 'standard pass'. Grade 5 will be known as a 'strong pass' and will be equivalent to a high C and low B on the old grading system.

Results in Leicester schools

GCSE Full Course

Number of entries: 1067 (508 girls, 559 boys) compared to 2250 in 2017.

	National 2018	Leicester 2018		
9-5				
All	60.4	57.9		
Girls	68.6	68.6		
Boys	50.8	34.3		
9-4				
All	71.9	73.1		
Girls	79.0	80.9		
Boys	63.5	66.2		
9-1				
All	98.3	98.0		
Girls	99.3	99.3		
Boys	97.3	96.6		

This shows that Leicester results are almost in line with national but girls are out-performing boys.

Schools achieving above the national average for 9-5

1. Rushey Mead Academy
2. City of Leicester College
3. St Paul's Catholic School

4. Fullhurst Community College
5. Madani Boys' School
6. Madani Girls' School

Membership of Leicester SACRE 2017-18

Composition of SACRE

Group A		Christian denominations and other religions (excluding Church of England)
Group B	up to 7 Members	Church of England
Group C	up to 7 Members	Teacher Associations
Group D	up to 7 members	Local Authority (LA)

SACRE A

Baha'i	Stephanie Maude
Free Evangelical	Pastor Brian Niblock
Hindu	Dipak Kumar Fakey
Hindu	Hiten Bhatt
Hindu	Vibhooti Acharya
Orthodox Jewish	Sheila Markham
Methodist	Stephen Thompson
Muslim	Seema Ahmad
Quakers	Anne Fishenden
Salvation Army	Jean Denton
Sikh	Kartar Singh Bring

SACRE B

Church of England	Elizabeth Wayne
Church of England	Jill Carr
Church of England	Revd Liz Rawlings
Church of England	Yolanda Morley McKay

SACRE C

ATL Primary	Ken Wheatley
CLARET Secondary	Jill Patterson
NAHT Primary	Nazma Jassat
NATRE Primary	Nausheen Aziz
NUT/NEU Primary	Emma Wright

SACRE D

LA	Cllr Deepak Bajaj
LA	Cllr Inderjit Gugnani
LA	George Ballantyne
LA	Michel Laurent-Regisse
LA	Melanie Gaiderman

NON-VOTING MEMBERS

Humanist	Allan Hayes
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Record of Attendance of Members of the Leicester City SACRE

Group A

Faith	Name	04/10/17	21/11/17	23/01/18	15/03/18	02/05/18	27/06/18
Baha'i	Mrs Stephanie Maude	A	A	P	P	A	P
Baha'i	Minou Cortazzi substitute for Stephanie Maude		P				
Free Evangelical	Pastor Brian Niblock	P	A	P	-	A	-
Hindu	Dipak Fakey	-	A	P	P	P	P
Hindu	Hiten Bhatt	-	-	-	-	-	-
Hindu	Vibhooti Acharya	-	-	P	P	P	-
Orthodox Jewish	Sheila Markham	P	P	P			
Methodist Church	Stephen Thompson	A	P	P	P	P	P
Muslim	Seema Ahmad	P	P	P	P	P	P
Quakers Religious	Ann Fishenden	P	A	P	A	P	A
Salvation Army	Jean Denton	P	A	P	P	P	P
Sikh	Kartar Singh Bring	A	-	-	-	-	-

Group B

Faith	Name	04/10/17	21/11/17	23/01/18	15/03/18	02/05/18	27/06/18
Church of England	Elizabeth Wayne	P	A	P	P	P	P
Church of England	Jill Carr	P	A	-	P	P	A
Church of England	Revd Liz Rawlings	P	A	P	P	P	P
Church of England	Yolanda Morley-McKay	P	P	A	A	P	P

Group C

Teacher Associations	Name	04/10/17	21/11/17	23/01/18	15/03/18	02/05/18	27/06/18
ATL	Ken Wheatley	A	-	-	-	P	A
CLARET and NATRE	Jill Patterson	A	-	P	P	P	P
NAHT Primary	Nazma Jassat	A	P	P	A	P	A
NATRE Primary	Nausheen Aziz	P	P	P	A	P	-
NUT/NEU Primary	Emma Wright						P

Group D

Members from the Local Authority	04/10/17	21/11/17	23/01/18	15/03/18	02/05/18	27/06/18
Cllr Deepak Bajaj	P	-	-	-	A	P
Cllr Inderjit Gugnani	A	P	A	-	A	P
George Ballantyne	P	P	P	P	A	P
Michel Laurent-Regisse	A	A	A	A	P	-
Melanie Gaiderman	A	-	P	A	A	P

Co-opted Non-Voting

Faith	Name	04/10/17	21/11/17	23/01/18	15/03/18	02/05/18	27/06/18
Humanist	Allan Hayes	P	P	P	P	P	A

Visitors

School/Establishment	Name	04/10/17	21/11/17	23/01/18	15/03/18	02/05/18	27/06/18
Director at St Philips Centre	Tim Wilson		P				
EngageMe	Hena Ahsan			P			
Head teacher Mayflower PS	Luke Whitney			P			
Head teacher Abbey PS	Ellie Green				P		
Head teacher Highfields PS	Jane Ridgewell					P	


Director of Learning & Inclusion	Paul Tinsley						P
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Key to Attendance:

P Present

A Absent with apologies

– Absent

 Attended for a session to present determinations or an item on the Agenda / observer / new member or resigning member