

City of Stoke-on-Trent

**Standing Advisory Council on
Religious Education**

Eighteenth Annual Report – November 2015

Message from the Chair of SACRE

This eighteenth annual report of the Stoke-on-Trent SACRE covers the period of the academic year 2014 - 2015.

During this time, SACRE have continued to work with schools in a variety of ways to support teaching and learning in Religious Education, and to support Collective Worship. SACRE has maintained a regular pattern of meetings, been proactive in their work, attracted new members and supported the use of high quality resources in our cities schools.

Following on from the review of the Agreed Syllabus, SACRE have now completed the work to produce the Agreed Syllabus, and this is due to be launched in 2016. This is an exciting time for Stoke-on-Trent and is a very positive step forward.

I would like to thank all members of Stoke-on-Trent SACRE and our RE Consultants for their positive contributions, advice and guidance and for the time and commitment they have devoted to SACRE throughout the year. We approach the new school year in good heart, and with an ongoing commitment to support Religious Education in our cities schools with our new Agreed Syllabus.

Councillor Gurmeet Singh Kallar

Chair

Stoke-on-Trent SACRE



Contents

Paragraphs

Executive summary

1. Standards and quality of Religious Education (RE) provision

- Compliance and time allocation for RE 1a
- Primary RE 1b
- Secondary RE 1c
- Public examination entries in RE/RS 1d
- Resources 1e

2. Managing the SACRE and partnership with the Local Authority (LA) and other key stakeholders

- SACRE meetings 2a
- Membership and training 2b
- SACRE development 2c
- Financial support 2d
- Information and advice 2e
- Professional development opportunities 2f

3. The local agreed syllabus

3

4. Collective worship

4

Appendices

- A. SACRE: terms of reference
- B. GCSE results for Religious Studies (2013)
- C. Membership of SACRE
- D. Contact addresses of SACRE officers

Summary

SACRE met on three occasions during the academic year 2014/2015: 9 October 2014; 5 March 2015; 18 June 2015. Meetings were held in the Civic Centre from 4pm – 6pm. All meetings were quorate. The agendas and minutes are available on the local authority's website.

The Local Authority provided funding to support SACRE activity 2014/15 by contracting with RE Today Services of an RE Consultant for 14 days per year. These days include servicing SACRE, working with schools and the local authority, provision of a pupil day and first response consultancy. Fiona Moss from RE Today continued in the role of RE consultant.

There were no formal complaints to SACRE about RE during the year.

There were no determinations in force and no requests for determinations were presented to SACRE during the year.

1 Standards and quality of Religious Education (RE) provision

1a Compliance and time allocation for RE

Evidence from teachers attending professional development opportunities provided by SACRE and contact with schools suggest that the City's primary schools are continuing to develop a variety of curriculum approaches to RE. Teachers are showing concern that the syllabus is not fit for purpose and needs updating. SACRE have taken account of this. Some schools are still using Higher level teaching assistants to teach RE. SACRE have expressed some concern about this. The allocation of curriculum time and access to teachers feeling confident to support RE have led to some schools reporting that time for RE in schools has been squeezed.

SACRE are still extremely concerned about the situation in some Stoke secondary schools despite the slight improvement in number of pupils entered for GCSE full and short course. The SACRE have expressed strong concerns about this to the local authority and have asked for opportunities to liaise with local secondary schools to ensure that they are compliant with the law and are offering religious education for all students.

The Stoke-on-Trent Agreed Syllabus for RE is used as the basis for planning the RE curriculum in the City's primary schools.

Issues of compliance with regard to RE relate mainly to the secondary phase, and remain more an issue in key stage 4 than in key stage 3. Some primary schools do not allocate enough curriculum time to fully cover the themes specified in the syllabus.

Delivery of RE by Higher Level Teaching Assistants (HLTAs), with teachers taking this time as their Preparation and Assessment (PPA) time, continues in Primary schools. Several HLTAs regularly attend the termly network meetings. We continue to hear that some primary schools are reporting that although RE had been taught by HLTAs this subject is now taught by class teachers. Where this decision has been made it is usually led by a confident subject leader and a supportive senior leadership team.

Where there is a strong subject leader, curriculum planning is more likely, particularly in Primary schools, to meet the needs of RE in terms of compliance and time allocation, and ensure RE's

contribution to the education of the whole child.

There were no formal complaints to SACRE about RE during the year. However SACRE has raised concerns to the local authority about potential compliance issues in Key Stage 4. The SACRE does not have enough information to know whether suitable RE is being taught to all pupils.

1b Primary RE

Evidence from teachers attending termly briefing meetings and the RE consultant's visits to schools suggested that:

- in the primary phase the trend of RE being taught by TAs and HLTAs in PPA time has continued, in some cases with great skill and commitment. Some primary schools are reporting that although RE had been taught by HLTAs this subject is now taught by class teachers.
- termly briefings provided a regular input of professional support and development for those who attend (usually subject leaders) and those in their own to school to whom they disseminate learning. Termly briefing and training sessions continue to support non-specialist TAs, HLTAs and teachers in primary schools to increase their confidence leading, managing and teaching RE. This year termly briefing have taken place on commemoration and celebration, using sacred story and creative approaches to teaching RE.
- teachers continue to work with the Agreed Syllabus and continue to develop their thinking and planning for RE based on it. There have been requests for further units of worked but as the SACRE is adopting a new agreed syllabus this is not appropriate. With the new agreed syllabus primary schools will be provided with a complete set of units of work.
- ensuring that sufficient time is given to RE is an ongoing difficulty for some schools. The comprehensive guidance on developing RE focus days provided by SACRE in still proving 2013 is proving useful.
- In March 2015 SACRE funded a pupil day for year 5 pupils this was offered to all city schools. Eighty pupils from thirteen primary schools attended the Respect for all day and pupils and teachers went on to recreate a similar day with groups of pupils in their schools. This day was such a success that it will be repeated in March 2016. Places were offered to pupils in year 8 but none were taken up. Teachers are aware that used on their own such focus days (or weeks) do not enable the delivery of the Agreed Syllabus or support progression in learning.
- teachers continue to find difficulty accessing professional development opportunities to support their planning and teaching of RE. The move to holding the termly briefings in hub areas in 2014-15 encouraged more teachers to attend. There will be training for all schools at the launch on the new agreed syllabus in Summer 2016.



Stoke SACRE Respect for All Pupil Day March 2015

1c

Secondary RE

- There has been a rise in the number of students entered for examination RE. However 1 Stoke school still enters no students for GCSE RS, 1 school enters less than 5%, 3 schools less than 25% and a further school enters less than 50% of their Cohort. It is pleasing to note that some schools are entering some students for Short course a small increase from the position last year when no pupils were entered. On a positive note 7 out of 14 Stoke Secondary School entered more than 80% of their cohort for Full course GCSE, thereby providing external accreditation for most of their students of their studies in RE.
- Most secondary schools are now assessing without levels, some are using GCSE grades down to year 7 and others are creating their own bespoke systems. The new agreed syllabus will not use levels and will allow recording of progression to mesh with individual school systems.

1d Public examination entries in RE/RS

Examination results

- Results for the 2015 GCE and GCSE examinations are summarised in Appendix B together with comparative data from 2014.
- Results from the 2015 Full Course GCSE were 63.4% A* - C which is below the national average of 72.1%.

- 1,279 students, 53.5% of all students at the end of KS4 in Stoke-on-Trent schools in 2015, were entered for the full GCSE religious studies course, showing a marked increase from the 1,155 students, 48.4% of all students in 2014.
- A further 98 students took the religious studies short course GCSE in 2015 compared to none in 2014.

GCE A and AS Level Religious Studies

- 98 students took religious studies A level in 2015 (less than in 2014 when there were 131 entries). 3.1% of students gained the A* grade which is slightly below the national average of 5.5%. 100% of students achieved A* - E which is above the national average of 98.9%
- The numbers taking AS level increased from 27 in 2014 to 129 in 2015. 19.4% of students achieved an A grade which is slightly lower than national average of 20.4%. However, 93.8% of students achieved A - E which is above the national average of 92.1% and an improvement compared to 2014.

Standards in RE at GCSE (full course)

- Standards in RE at GCSE (full course) declined this year.
- 63.4% of students attained Grade A*- C which is a decline from last year (72.3%). This is 8.7% below the national average (72.1%).
- 97.5% of students attained Grades A*-G which is slightly below the national figure (97.9%).
- 6.3% of higher attaining students achieved the A* grade compared to 9.8% in 2014.

Standards in RE at GCSE (short course)

- 40.8% of students attained Grade A*- C which is a decline from last year (63.4%).
- 93.9% of students attained Grades A*-G which is a decline from last year (97.5%).
- No students achieved an A* grade compared to 6.3% in 2015.

Standards in RE at GCE (A2 and AS)

- Standards in GCE A Level (A2) showed that 100% of students achieved an A* - E grade which is above the national average (98.9%). 3.1% of higher attaining students achieved A* grade in comparison with 5.6% nationally.

Standards in GCE AS Level (A2) showed that 93.8% of students achieved an A* - E grade which is above the national average (92.1%). 19.4% of higher attaining students achieved A grade in comparison with 20.4% nationally.

1e Resources

Additional guidance materials were written for schools on RE and British Values; these were issued to schools in the Autumn Term 2014 and the summer term 2015.

2 Managing the SACRE and partnership with the LA and other key stakeholders

2a SACRE meetings

SACRE meetings were held termly. Main agenda items are given below; full agendas and minutes are available on the Local Authority's website.

- **9 October 2014**, 4pm – 6pm - Civic Centre, Stoke-on-Trent
 - SMSC in the new OFSTED framework
 - Revision of Stoke Agreed Syllabus in the light of the National Curriculum Framework for RE
 - ITT Bursaries
 - NASACRE AGM

- **5 March, 2015**, 4pm – 6pm – Civic Centre, Stoke-on-Trent
 - Membership- Welcome and ratification of new members
 - Letter from Lord Nash
 - GCSE and A Level Exam criteria update
 - Arrangements for training and supporting teachers of RE
 - Approval of the Annual report
 - Proposal for adopting model RE Syllabus

- **18 June, 2015**, 4pm – 6pm – Civic Centre, Stoke-on-Trent
 - Appointment of officers
 - Annual review of the SACRE constitution and membership and appointment of members
 - Report from NASACRE AGM and conference
 - Response from the office of Lord Nash
 - RE pupil day feedback
 - Agreed syllabus update

Each meeting was quorate.

2b **Membership and training**

The following faith groups were represented on SACRE: Church of England, Muslim Community, Methodist Community, Elim Pentecostal Community, Hindu Community, Roman Catholic Community & Sikh Community.

SACRE considered and discussed a range of topics relevant to the changing context in education as this affects RE e.g. Changes to examinations at GCSE and A level

SACRE also viewed and discussed some materials on SMSC and British values in RE to understand their use in the classroom, how they support the delivery of the Stoke-on-Trent Agreed Syllabus and prepare pupils for life in modern Britain.

2c **SACRE development**

SACRE supported a range of initiatives during the year. These included:

- Attending NASACRE's AGM (May 2015)
- Supporting the National Association of Teachers of Religious Education's (NATRE) survey to schools

- Identifying new members to join SACRE.

2d **Financial support for SACRE**

The Local Authority provided funding to support SACRE activity 2014/15 by contracting with RE Today Services for provision of an RE Consultant for 14 days per year. This is for servicing SACRE and supporting RE in Stoke schools.

2e **Information and advice**

Specialist consultancy was provided by Fiona Moss of RE Today Professional Services. This guidance was for up to 14 days per year. As in previous years this advice and support proved to be of the highest standard and was greatly appreciated by teachers, the Local Authority and SACRE.

The RE Consultant provide termly briefing meetings for primary subject leaders, teachers and HLTAs, first response consultancy by phone and email, consultancy to schools on request (either by the LA or by individual schools) and email support and guidance. The professional development opportunities for primary teachers of RE have been limited to RE network meetings and the RE pupil day. Secondary teachers organise their own RE meetings, Fiona or one of her colleagues have offered to attend one of these meetings.

The RE Consultant also provided guidance to SACRE to support its role in giving advice to the Local Authority concerning:

- RE, British Values and preparation for life in Modern Britain
- RE and KS4 compliance.

2f **Professional development opportunities**

Topics for one-day professional development opportunities continued to be identified in feedback from teachers. However, it remained the case that teachers found it difficult to attend courses which required them to be absent from school during the school day.

This year SACRE encouraged its teachers to attend NATRE's North of England Conference, held in Bolton May 2014. Three primary teachers attended and found this an inspirational and informative event.

SACRE remained concerned at the continuing downward trend in teachers accessing national professional development opportunities in Religious Education. Local findings resonated with the results of NATRE's national surveys of RE in secondary schools.

Termly teacher meetings

Termly briefing meetings (twilight) were held for primary RE subject leaders. Primary meetings were led by Fiona Moss (RE Today);

The local authority charges for attendance at termly briefings; this had led to a reduction in the number of teachers accessing this support. However moving these meetings to a hub model has increased attendance from RE Subject leaders and class teachers.

Primary briefings saw steady numbers over the year, with one opportunity per term being made available. There remained a need for regular face-to-face contact with an RE specialist to provide focused support. A number of schools requested email and phone consultancy from the consultant and all requests were met.

The Lichfield Diocese provided similar opportunities for its subject leaders (primary), led by the Diocesan Adviser for RE. Attendance at the diocesan-led meetings was good. Some aided schools attended both meetings.

3 The local agreed syllabus

It was agreed to replace the Locally agreed syllabus in the light of changes in education and the REC National Curriculum Framework for RE. An Agreed syllabus conference will be convened and a new syllabus will be launched in schools in Summer 2016. The syllabus will be fully taught from September 2017, the year 2016-17 will be a year of implementation.

4 Collective worship

Support for Collective Worship was provided to individual schools on request during the year, by advisers from the Diocese of Lichfield and RE Today Services.

There were no determinations in force during the reporting year. There were no requests for a determination submitted to SACRE.

No formal complaints or other matters concerning RE were referred to SACRE during the year.

Appendix A: Terms of reference of SACRE

Terms of reference of SACRE

The composition of SACRE is set out in legislation. The four groups or committees represent the following interests within the local community.

- a. Christian denominations and non-Christian religions, broadly representing their relative strength in the area;
- b. The Church of England
- c. Teachers' associations
- d. The local authority (LA)

Members may be nominated by appropriate organisations but are appointed by the council. Other members may be co-opted.

Terms of reference

1. To support the effective provision of religious education (RE) and collective worship (CW) in schools.
2. Except in specified circumstances, to hold meetings in public and to ensure that notices, agendas and reports are publicly available.
3. To advise the LA on matters connected with daily collective worship in community schools and with the RE provided in accordance with an agreed syllabus for RE.
4. Such matters may be referred to SACRE by the LA or be raised by SACRE on its own initiative. They may include methods of teaching, the choice of materials, the provision of training for teachers and school inspection reports.
5. To determine whether to require the LA to review its agreed syllabus for RE.
6. To consider any applications from Head teachers of community schools after consultation with governors, to disapply the requirement for collective worship to be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character, and to review any 'determination' after five years.
7. To publish an annual report on its work which should:
 - specify any matters on which it has been advised the LA;
 - broadly describe the nature of that advice, and
 - set out reasons for offering advice on any matters which were not referred to it initially by the LA.
8. Circulate annual reports to schools and other interested parties, including the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority which publishes a national analysis of SACRE reports.
9. Upon any question being put to the vote, each committee shall have one vote only. Co-opted members have no vote.

Appendix B: Summary of GCSE and GCE results 2015

GCSE results for Religious Studies (2015) with comparative data from 2014

GCSE (Full Course)

	A*	A	B	C	Total A*-C	D	E	F	G	Total A* - G	Ungraded
Stoke-on-Trent 2015	6.3%	13.5%	23.1%	20.5%	63.4%	13%	10.9%	7.3%	2.9%	97.5%	2.1%
Stoke-on-Trent 2014	9.8%	16.7%	25.9%	19.9%	72.3%	13.4%	7.3%	4.4%	1.6%	99%	1%
National 2015	11.1%	19%	23.3%	18.8%	72.2%	11.6%	7.2%	4.4%	2.6%	97.9%	1.7%
National 2014	9.8%	18.7%	23.1%	19.2%	70.7%	11.9%	7.6%	4.7%	3%	97.9%	2.1%

GCSE (Short Course)

	A*	A	B	C	Total A*-C	D	E	F	G	Total A* - G	Ungraded
Stoke-on-Trent 2015	0%	2%	12.2%	26.5%	40.8%	21.4%	18.4%	3.1%	10.2%	93.9%	3.1%
Stoke-on-Trent 2014	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
National 2015	6.9%	11.1%	17.9%	17.9%	53.7%	15.4%	11.9%	8.1%	5.4%	94.5%	4.2%
National 2014	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

GCE results for Religious Studies (2014) with comparative data from 2013

GCE A Level (A2)

	A*	A	B	C	D	E	U
Stoke-on-Trent 2015	3.1%	13.3%	30.6%	33.7%	13.3%	6.1%	N/A
Stoke-on-Trent 2014	4.6%	12.2%	22.9%	32.1%	21.4%	6.1%	0.8%
National 2015	5.6%	19.1%	30.1%	25.3%	13.7%	5.1%	N/A
National 2014	5.7%	16.8%	29.2%	26.7%	15.5%	6%	0.2%

GCE AS Level

	A*	A	B	C	D	E	U
Stoke-on-Trent 2015	N/A	19.4%	21.7%	32.6%	14%	6.2%	N/A
Stoke-on-Trent 2014	N/A	11.1%	7.4%	14.8%	7.4%	40.7%	18.5%
National 2015	N/A	20.4%	22.7%	23.3%	16.1%	9.6%	N/A
National 2014	N/A	11.1%	16.1%	22%	20.1%	17.2%	13.6%

Appendix C: SACRE Representatives

Committee A: Christian denominations and non-Christian religions

Mr W Butt Muslim Community

Mr B Singh Devgon Sikh Community

Mr M Drew Methodist Community

Pastor H Drummond Elim Pentecostal Community

Shahzad Tahir Muslim Community

Alex Wolvers Methodist Community

Saravanabavan Atputhan Hindu Community

Miss M Hewetson Roman Catholic Community

Committee B: The Church of England

Mrs J Furlong Diocese of Lichfield

Revd W Slater Diocese of Lichfield

Mrs A Stone Diocese of Lichfield

Committee C: Teachers Associations

Mrs N Groves Primary School Teacher (Vice Chair from 18 June 2015)

Miss N Kirkham Primary School Teacher

Mrs E Preston Maintained School Headteacher (Primary)

Mrs A Mallard Secondary Academy Teacher

Committee D: Local Authority

Councillor K Clarke (Vice-Chair until 07 May 2015)

Councillor P Hayward

Councillor J Garner

Councillor G Singh Kallar (Chair)

Cllr R Irving

Cllr M Khan

Co-optees

Mr P Such

Officer Support

Mr R Johnstone

Mrs C Bray

Appendix D: Contact addresses of SACRE officers

Clerk to SACRE

Craig Sands
Democratic Services Officer
Democratic & Committee Support
Resources Directorate
Civic Centre
Glebe Street
Stoke-on-Trent
ST4 1HH

Religious Education Consultant

Fiona Moss
RE Today Services
40 Imperial Court
Kings Norton Business Centre
Sovereign Road
Birmingham
B30 3ES
fiona@retoday.org.uk