

City of Stoke-on-Trent

**Standing Advisory Council on
Religious Education**

Nineteenth Annual Report – 2016

Message from the Chair of SACRE

This nineteenth annual report of the Stoke-on-Trent SACRE covers the period of the academic year 2015 - 2016.

SACRE had a successful year which saw continued work with schools in a variety of ways, including the launch of an Agreed Syllabus in April 2016. The syllabus will be fully taught from September 2017. Feedback has told us that the planning stages are working well. Training on the new syllabus was provided in schools following the April full day launch and schools were grateful for the investment by the Local Authority and SACRE, providing a comprehensive syllabus, units of work and a full day of training.

Termly briefings continued to provide a regular input of professional support and development for those who attended (usually subject leaders). This year termly briefings have taken place on RE and links to English and Literacy, British Values and using the new Agreed Syllabus. There has been increase in the numbers of teachers attending.

In March 2016, SACRE funded a pupil day for year 5 pupils which was offered to all City schools. One hundred pupils from seventeen primary schools and two secondary schools attended the 'Respect For All' day at Birches Head Academy. Pupils and teachers went on to recreate a similar day with groups of pupils in their own schools. This day was such a success that it will be repeated in March 2017.

SACRE has maintained its regular pattern of meetings, has been proactive in their work, attracted new members and supported the use of high quality resources in our cities schools.

I would like to thank all members of Stoke-on-Trent SACRE and our RE Consultant for their continued positive contributions, advice, guidance and for the time and commitment they have all devoted to SACRE throughout the year. I would also like to thank the Local Authority for the support received for the work of SACRE.

We approach another year feeling positive about our work and the difference it makes, with our continued ongoing commitment to supporting Religious Education in our cities schools and the use of our new Agreed Syllabus.

Councillor Gurmeet Singh Kallar
Chair
Stoke-on-Trent SACRE



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Summary

SACRE met on three occasions during the academic year 2015/2016: 12 November 2015; 10 March 2016; 16 June 2016. 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 2015/16 by contracting with RE Today Services of an RE Consultant for 13.5 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 that the City's primary schools are continuing to teach RE but are increasingly finding there is pressure to fit it into the curriculum. However links with British Values and SMSC have led to a renewed understanding of the importance of RE in some schools. Teachers have been delighted with the new Agreed Syllabus launched in April and many began teaching from it during the summer term. There are initial reports of teachers being pleased at how easy it is to plan from and that the units of the work purchased for each school are already being used successfully. Pupils are engaging with the new questions and are enjoying learning in RE. Some primary schools are reporting an increase in the time spent teaching RE as a result of the new Agreed Syllabus.

All bar four primary schools attended the Agreed Syllabus launch and half the secondary schools attended the secondary launch. The syllabus and units have been provided for all schools and academies in the city with primary age pupils. The syllabus has been delivered to all schools and academies with secondary age pupils.

SACRE are still extremely concerned about the situation in some Stoke secondary schools not only has the amount of students entered for short course crashed to only 4 pupils there has also been a decrease in the number of pupils entered for GCSE full course. The new locally Agreed Syllabus states that;

'All students can reasonably expect their learning will be accredited, and this agreed syllabus requires that all students should pursue an accredited course leading to a qualification approved under Section 96¹⁰. These modes of accreditation include nationally accredited courses in RE such as GCSE and A level RS, and a wide range of enrichment courses and opportunities, such as the Extended Project Qualification. Good practice examples include many schools where all students take GCSE RS courses at 16.'

The SACRE are collecting information from local secondary schools to ensure that they are compliant with the law and are offering religious education for all students. If schools that are academies are choosing not to follow an agreed syllabus they must still teach RE to all their pupils. Currently SACRE is struggling to find out how RE is being taught in schools who are not entering the majority of their cohort for GCSE.

The new Stoke-on-Trent Agreed Syllabus for RE 2016-2021 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 we believe remain more an issue in key stage 4 than in key stage 3.

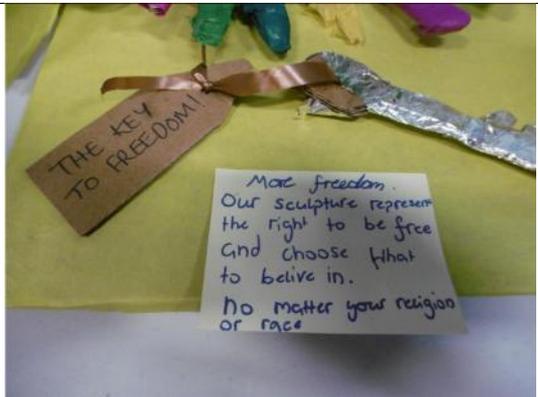
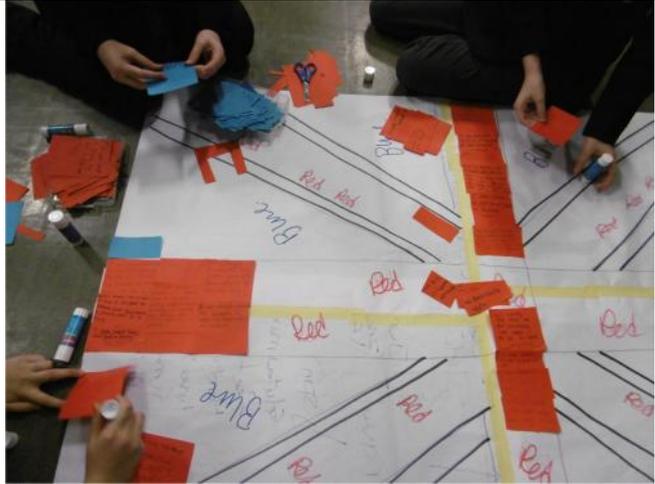
Delivery of RE by Higher Level Teaching Assistants (HLTAs), with teachers taking this time as their Preparation and Assessment (PPA) time, continues in Primary schools. Several HLTAs still regularly attend the termly network meetings. We continue to hear that some primary schools are reporting that although 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. There are early signs that training as a result of the new syllabus is increasing the number of teachers delivering RE.

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 is striving to collect information about 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:

- 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 briefings have taken place on RE and links to English and literacy, British Values and using the new Agreed Syllabus. There has been increase in the number of teachers attending meetings.
- Teachers are beginning to work with the new Agreed Syllabus launched in April and have reported that the planning steps are working well. Long term plans are being adapted and training on the new syllabus is being delivered in schools following the April full day launch. Schools were grateful for the investment by the local authority and SACRE providing a comprehensive syllabus, units of work and a full day of training.
- Ensuring that sufficient time is given to RE is an ongoing difficulty for some schools although there are reports that the new syllabus is bringing a renewed focus on RE. The pupil day is also supporting some schools to run RE focus days in addition to other teaching of RE.
- In March 2016 SACRE funded a pupil day for year 5 pupils this was offered to all city schools. One hundred pupils from seventeen primary schools and two secondary attended the Respect for all day schools at Birches Head Academy. 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 2017. Places were offered to pupils in year 8 and we were delighted that pupils from two schools acted as RE leaders for the day supporting younger pupils.
- Teachers were able to access an increased amount of professional development opportunities to support their planning and teaching of RE. The free full day training for the agreed syllabus was attended by all apart from 4 primary schools.



Stoke SACRE Respect for All Pupil Day March 2016

1c

Secondary RE

- There has been a very significant decrease in the number of students entered for examination RE. Two Stoke school still enters no students for GCSE RS (Discovery Academy and Ormiston Horizon Academy). Also four schools enter less than 25% of their cohort (Ormiston Sir Stanley Matthew's Academy, Sandon Business & Enterprise College, Thistley Hough Academy and Trentham High School) and a further two schools enter less than 50% (Haywood Academy and The Co-Operative Academy of SOT). On a positive note 6 out of 14 Stoke Secondary School entered more than 65% 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 2016 GCE and GCSE examinations are summarised in Appendix B together with comparative data from 2015.
- Results from the 2016 Full Course GCSE were 63.6% A* - C which is below the national average of 71.7%.
- 1,080 students, 49.1% of all students at the end of KS4 in Stoke-on-Trent schools in 2016, were entered for the full GCSE religious studies course, showing a marked decrease from the 1,278 students, 55.2% of all students in 2015.
- A further 4 students took the religious studies short course GCSE in 2016 compared to 98 in 2015. This low number is extremely worrying.

GCE A and AS Level Religious Studies

- 97 students took religious studies A level in 2016 (less than in 2015 when there were 98 entries).
- No students gained the A* grade but 2.1% gained the A grade. 95.9% of students achieved A* - E.
- The numbers taking AS level increased from 129 in 2015 to 167 in 2016. 15% of students achieved an A grade. 88% of students achieved A - E which is a decline compared to 2015.

Standards in RE at GCSE (full course)

- Standards in RE at GCSE (full course) increased this year.
- 63.6% of students attained Grade A* - C which is a slight increase from last year (63.4%).
- 96.7% of students attained Grades A* - G which is a slight decrease from last year (97.5%).
- 7.4% of higher attaining students achieved the A* grade compared to 6.3% in 2015.

Standards in RE at GCSE (short course)

- Only 4 students were entered for the RE short course in 2016.
- 33.3% of students attained Grade A* - C which is a decline from last year (40.8%).
- 75% of students attained Grades A*-G which is a decline from last year (93.9%).
- No students achieved an A* grade compared to no students also in 2015.

Standards in RE at GCE (A2 and AS)

- Standards in GCE A Level (A2) showed that 95.9% of students achieved an A* - E grade which is below last year's figures (100%). No students achieved A* grade but 2.1% achieved grade A.
- Standards in GCE AS Level (A2) showed that 88% of students achieved an A* - E grade which is below last year's figures (93.8%). 15% of higher attaining students achieved A grade.

1e Resources

The agreed syllabus was delivered in to schools both in hard copy and electronic form. This provides a substantial amount of support and guidance for teachers. Primary schools also received a full set of units of work to support teaching of the new Agreed Syllabus.

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.

- **12 November 2015**, 4pm – 6pm - Civic Centre, Stoke-on-Trent
 - Recruitment of RE teachers
 - A new settlement in schools: Charles Clarke/Linda Woodhead report: a discussion
 - Appointment of members
 - Annual report
 - Agreed Syllabus conference
- **10 March, 2016**, 4pm – 6pm – Civic Centre, Stoke-on-Trent
 - New initiatives in RE
 - Judicial review
 - Approval of the Agreed syllabus
 - Launch of the Agreed Syllabus

- **16 June, 2016**, 4pm – 6pm – Civic Centre, Stoke-on-Trent
 - Annual review of the SACRE constitution and membership and appointment of members
 - REQM
 - BHA and the DFE
 - RE pupil day feedback
 - Agreed syllabus launch update
 - RS GCSE in Stoke schools
 - 2016/17 priorities

Each meeting was quorate.

2b **Membership and training**

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

SACRE considered and discussed a range of topics throughout the academic year, relevant to the changing context in education. These included a variety of papers & reports such as 'A New Settlement in Schools', 'New Initiatives in RE', 'Judicial Review on the Legality of the Department for Education's GCSE Subject Content for Religious Studies', 'RE Quality Mark' and the New Agreed Syllabus for Stoke-on-Trent.

SACRE also viewed and discussed materials regarding SMSC and British Values in RE to understand their use in the classroom, how they supported the delivery of the Stoke-on-Trent Agreed Syllabus and prepared 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 2016)
- Supporting the National Association of Teachers of Religious Education's (NATRE) survey to schools
- Identifying new members to join SACRE.
- Launching the New agreed Syllabus

2d **Financial support for SACRE**

The Local Authority provided funding to support SACRE activity 2015/16 by contracting with RE Today Services for provision of an RE Consultant for 13.5 days per year. This is for servicing SACRE and supporting RE in Stoke schools.

Funds were also provided for the new Agreed Syllabus.

2e Information and advice

Specialist consultancy was provided by Fiona Moss of RE Today Professional Services. This guidance was for up to 13.5 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, professional development, Guidance and support on the adoption of the new agreed syllabus, 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 RE network meetings, Training days of the new Agreed Syllabus 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.
- The new Agreed Syllabus

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.

There was excellent attendance at the full day launch of the Agreed Syllabus all bar four primary schools attended and half the secondary schools attended the secondary launch. The syllabus and units have been provided for all schools and academies in the city with primary age pupils. The syllabus has been delivered to all schools and academies with secondary age pupils.

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 an increase in numbers from last year, 2 briefing had attendance of approximately 25 and the briefing on British values had over 40 attendees. One primary network 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.

NATRE affiliated local groups also run in the city. Having achieved the silver RE quality Mark Sandford Hill Primary have started a network for the Stoke 6 local primary schools.

3 The local agreed syllabus

An Agreed syllabus conference was convened and a new syllabus was launched in schools in April 2016. After much discussion it was decided to adopt the RE Today model syllabus as this offered the clearest support and guidance for teachers and promoted extremely high standards for pupils. Using this syllabus meant that units of work could be purchased for Primary schools. This responded to the feedback from primary schools that units of work were needed to support the teaching of RE. 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 2016

GCSE results for Religious Studies (2016) with comparative data from 2015

GCSE (Full Course)

	A*	A	B	C	Total A*-C	D	E	F	G	Total A* - G	Ungraded
Stoke-on-Trent 2016	7.4%	14.5%	22.1%	19.7%	63.6%	6%	8.5%	7.6%	4.4%	96.7%	3.3%
<i>Stoke-on-Trent 2015</i>	<i>6.3%</i>	<i>13.5%</i>	<i>23.1%</i>	<i>20.5%</i>	<i>63.4%</i>	<i>13%</i>	<i>10.9%</i>	<i>7.3%</i>	<i>2.9%</i>	<i>97.5%</i>	<i>2.1%</i>
National 2016	10.6%	19.1%	23.5%	18.5%	71.7%	11.9%	7.2%	4.5%	2.7%	98.1%	1.9%
<i>National 2015</i>	<i>11.1%</i>	<i>19%</i>	<i>23.3%</i>	<i>18.8%</i>	<i>72.2%</i>	<i>11.6%</i>	<i>7.2%</i>	<i>4.4%</i>	<i>2.6%</i>	<i>97.9%</i>	<i>1.7%</i>

GCSE (Short Course)

	A*	A	B	C	Total A*-C	D	E	F	G	Total A* - G	Ungraded
Stoke-on-Trent 2016	0%	0%	0%	33.3%	33.3%	33.3%	0%	0%	33.3%	100%	0%
<i>Stoke-on-Trent 2015</i>	<i>0%</i>	<i>2%</i>	<i>12.2%</i>	<i>26.5%</i>	<i>40.8%</i>	<i>21.4%</i>	<i>18.4%</i>	<i>3.1%</i>	<i>10.2%</i>	<i>93.9%</i>	<i>3.1%</i>
National 2016	7.6%	14.2%	20.2%	19%	61%	13.4%	9.9%	6.6%	4.6%	95.5%	4.5%
<i>National 2015</i>	<i>6.9%</i>	<i>11.1%</i>	<i>17.9%</i>	<i>17.9%</i>	<i>53.7%</i>	<i>15.4%</i>	<i>11.9%</i>	<i>8.1%</i>	<i>5.4%</i>	<i>94.5%</i>	<i>4.2%</i>

GCE results for Religious Studies (2016) with comparative data from 2015

GCE A Level (A2)

	A*	A	B	C	D	E	U
Stoke-on-Trent 2016	1%	13.4%	21.6%	33%	19.6%	8.2%	3.1%
<i>Stoke-on-Trent 2015</i>	<i>3.1%</i>	<i>13.3%</i>	<i>30.6%</i>	<i>33.7%</i>	<i>13.3%</i>	<i>6.1%</i>	<i>0%</i>
National 2016	5.6%	18.5%	30.3%	25.8%	13.7%	5%	1.4%
<i>National 2015</i>	<i>5.6%</i>	<i>19.1%</i>	<i>30.1%</i>	<i>25.3%</i>	<i>13.7%</i>	<i>5.1%</i>	<i>1.1%</i>

GCE AS Level

	A*	A	B	C	D	E	U
Stoke-on-Trent 2016	N/A	15%	21%	24%	17.4%	10.8%	12%
<i>Stoke-on-Trent 2015</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>19.4%</i>	<i>21.7%</i>	<i>32.6%</i>	<i>14%</i>	<i>6.2%</i>	<i>6.1%</i>
National 2016	N/A	20.4%	24.6%	23.5%	15.5%	8.7%	6.9%
<i>National 2015</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>20.4%</i>	<i>22.7%</i>	<i>23.3%</i>	<i>16.1%</i>	<i>9.6%</i>	<i>7.9%</i>

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 (until 5th August 2016)

Pastor H Drummond Elim Pentecostal Community

Shahzad Tahir Muslim Community

Alex Wolvers Methodist Community

Saravanabavan Atputhan Hindu Community

Miss M Hewetson Roman Catholic Community

Chris Eyre Methodist Community

Paul Lewis Jewish Community

Committee B: The Church of England

Mrs J Furlong Diocese of Lichfield (until 04 January 2016)

Revd W Slater Diocese of Lichfield (until 04 January 2016)

Mrs A Stone Diocese of Lichfield

Gareth Davies 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 G Singh Kallar (Chair)

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

Councillor P Hayward (until 07 May 2015)

Cllr R Irving

Cllr M Khan

Co-Optees

Mr P Such

Officer Support

Mr R Johnstone

Mrs C Bray

Mr C Sands

Appendix D: Contact addresses of SACRE officers

Clerk to SACRE

Craig Sands
Democratic Services Officer
Democratic & Committee Support
Resources Directorate
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