



## Suffolk SACRE: Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education:

### Annual Report 2015 - 2016

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# **SUFFOLK SACRE ANNUAL REPORT 2015-2016**

## **1. Chairman's Report**

### **Chairman's Introduction from Elizabeth Sugarman**

#### **2015- 2016**

I am pleased to present this report on behalf of Suffolk SACRE. Suffolk SACRE brings together faith representatives, teachers and councillors, and I would like to thank all members for the way in which they have worked constructively together. Suffolk SACRE has had a busy year promoting excellence in RE and advising the schools, Head Teachers and Religious Studies teachers and the Local Authority about matters connected with collective worship and religious education in accordance with the Local Agreed Syllabus.

Suffolk SACRE is very aware that religious education can make an important contribution to a range of activities that help young people understand and respect the various faith traditions. There is an awareness of the special needs of many of our schools, especially those in rural areas with largely mono-cultural communities, and members remain committed to supporting every initiative which will give our young people a better awareness of the beliefs and practices of others in the wider world. Co-operation with the Diocese has been invaluable, and we are indebted to Helen Matter, Diocesan Advisor for all her time spent on developing resources and teacher training opportunities to which all schools in Suffolk have access.

The growth in the number of Suffolk schools seeking academy status has inescapably weakened SACRE's direct contact with them. Many still use the Agreed Syllabus as the basis of their work, and they are offered the opportunity of continuing to make use of training activities provided.

We welcomed Jan McGuire into the role of Servicing Officer in April 2015. I wish to thank her on behalf of Suffolk SACRE for her RE Advice, support and guidance over the past year, for organising the conference, RE school events and project managing commissioned project work across the county to support the Local Agreed Syllabus. This was my final year as the elected Chair. It has been a great privilege to lead on such a dynamic SACRE, and I look forward to supporting SACRE in the coming year as the Jewish representative on the committee. I would also like to thank Linden Pitcher for her sterling work as Clerk, keeping us informed and on the right track in the work completed.

The meetings of the Suffolk SACRE are open public meetings and agendas and minutes are published on the County Council's website. We are pleased to welcome members of the public who would like to attend our meetings.

I am pleased to commend this report to you.

Elizabeth Sugarman

## **2. The Purpose of the Report**

Religious Education is an important curriculum subject. It is important in its own right and also makes a unique contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development of pupils and supports wider community cohesion. The Government is keen to ensure all pupils receive high-quality Religious Education.

The Education Act 1996, Section 391 (6) and (7) requires that each year the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) from each Local Authority will publish a report as to the exercise of its functions and any action taken by the representative groups on the Council during the last preceding year.

This entails:

- advising the Local Authority on Religious Education given in accordance with the Agreed Syllabus;
- monitoring the provision and quality of Religious Education taught according to its Agreed Syllabus, together with the overall effectiveness of the syllabus;
- providing advice and support on the effective teaching of Religious Education in accordance with the locally Agreed Syllabus;
- providing advice to the Local Authority and its schools on methods of teaching, the choice of teaching material and the provision of teacher training;
- in partnership with its Local Authority, considering whether any changes need to be made in the Agreed Syllabus or in the support offered to schools in the implementation of the Agreed Syllabus, to improve the quality of teaching and learning of RE;
- offering advice to the Local Authority, and through the Local Authority to schools, concerning how an existing Agreed Syllabus can be interpreted so as to fit in with a broad, balanced and coherent curriculum.

## **3. Management of SACRE: LA Support, Governance & Membership**

### **LA Support 2015 - 2016**

The LA provides an experienced and well respected clerk, Linden Pitcher, to minute the meetings and provide the Chair and Servicing Officer with valuable, although limited support and guidance. In addition the LA provides a representative, currently the Strategic Lead in Resolution Education and Learning, Janice Lee, at Suffolk County Council.

There have been significant cutbacks in many Local Authorities. Whilst Suffolk County Council has continued to support SACRE and its work to encourage the development of quality Religious Education and SMSC in schools, Servicing Officer time currently operates on one paid hour per week. This limited time does impact on schools, and on the day to day running of SACRE business, and does not fully compensate the time provided by the Servicing Officer to meet the requirements of the current role.

In 2015 – 2016 SACRE called three formal meetings that were attended by Committee A, B, C and D members. £2,000 is allocated by the LA for the purpose of covering the expenses of the attendees at these meetings, as well as for covering venue, refreshment and additional training costs. In addition SACRE receives an additional £4,000 (2015-2016), allocated to cover the role of the Servicing Officer who provides specialist RE advice and governance support, writes the Government reports and commissioned bids, organises the conference, attends county and AREIAC/ NASACRE meetings or conferences and deals with day to day matters. This is considered to be insufficient time by the SACRE members. The current situation allows for only 12 paid days of time per year.

The LA made the decision to cease funding the termly Religious Education network meetings in 2015. Previously the network meetings were held in the north, south and west of Suffolk. The networks were to share resources and materials for the agreed syllabus. In addition the Key practitioners are no longer funded for projects to develop curriculum units to support the agreed syllabus. This does raise issues for RE in the county. Traditionally, qualified RE teachers are often working alone in a school to develop curriculum and RE lesson plans. Network opportunities that were coordinated in order to provide focused development opportunities were valuable, and provided much needed support. SACRE has approached the LA with regards to funding the networks in the future, however, this seems unlikely in the current financial climate.

SACRE has promoted the value of schools continuing to network and there have been some successful partnerships formed. In addition Suffolk SACRE are supporting a funded RE REQM Secondary Hub project in the county that also encourages networking.

### **Governance**

In 2015 – 2016 SACRE called three formal meetings that were attended by Committee A, B, C and D members.

The Suffolk Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education 2012-2017 provides statutory requirements for planning, teaching and assessment procedures. Updates regarding learning without levels were discussed in 2015 - 2016 where it was recommended that the levels in the Agreed Syllabus would remain statutory until their review in 2017. Continued professional development sessions are offered to all schools to ensure the effective implementation of the syllabus. Training is not well attended by secondary colleagues, however primary colleagues are regularly provided with professional advice through training events provided by the Diocese, SACRE and teaching colleagues in the county. Co-operation with the Diocese has been invaluable, and we are indebted to Helen Matter, Diocesan Advisor for all her time spent on developing primary school resources and primary RE teacher training opportunities.

The Review process: The syllabus is due for review in 2017. SACRE will be planning an outline of the review process with clear deadlines, actions and costing that can be considered and adopted by members in March 2017. SACRE aims to be awarded an adequate budget from the LA to ensure that the agreed syllabus review and implementation will be successfully reviewed in 2017. (Counties have declared that this is in the region of £15,000 for a review commissioned in 2017).

### **Membership 2015 - 2016**

Every Local Authority has to convene a Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE). Suffolk SACRE, which has met three times this year, comprises of four statutory groups. Attendance at meetings has been variable. We continue to ensure the membership reflects the demographic.

The four groups that make up SACRE are as follows:

- Committee A – representatives of Christian denominations and other religions and their religious denominations reflecting the principal religious traditions of the area
- Committee B - representatives of the Church of England;
- Committee C - representatives of the teachers' associations;
- Committee D – representatives of the Local Authority.

This was our current Chair, Elizabeth Sagerman's, final year as the elected Chair. Suffolk SACRE would like to extend their thanks to Elizabeth Sugarman for her commitment to supporting SACRE, Religious Education in schools, providing advice on Judaism, taking a leading role in supporting the Jewish Living Exhibition and providing leadership to a dynamic SACRE. SACRE are pleased that she has agreed to continue to support SACRE in the coming year as the Jewish representative on the committee.

**Membership of Suffolk SACRE the standing advisory council on Religious Education:**

**Committee A: Christian denominations and other religions and their religious denominations reflecting the principal religious traditions of the area**

Prabjot Kaur: Sikh

Dr Andrew Marfleet: Baptist

Manwar Ali: Muslim

Ian Prettyman: Methodist

Elizabeth Sugarman: Jewish (CHAIR)

Denis Johnston: Humanist

Janus van Helvert: Buddhist

Sanjaya Martin Spettigue: Hindu

Alison Pentreath: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints

**Committee B: Church of England**

Helen Matter: Schools' Adviser, Diocese of St Edmundsbury & Ipswich

Jane Sheat: Diocesan Director of Education, Diocese of St Edmundsbury & Ipswich

Helen Moore: Church of England

**Committee C: representatives of the teachers' associations /Teachers**

Steph Crossley: St Albans Catholic High School, Ipswich

Trina Rankin: Hearing Impaired Unit, Westgate Primary School, Bury St Edmunds

Sarah Cobbold: St Benedict's Catholic Upper School Bury St Edmunds

Wayne Buissett: Ormiston Denes, Lowestoft

Gemma Kingston: St Mary's Primary, Mildenhall

David Yaroslow: Debenham High School

**Committee D: Local Authority**

Joanna Spicer: County Councillor, Conservative

Derek Hackett: County Councillor, UKIP

Sonia Barker: County Councillor, Labour

Janice Lee: LA representative, the Strategic Lead in Resolution Education and Learning at Suffolk County Council.

## Servicing Officers

Jan McGuire: Independent Adviser for RE & LA Servicing Officer for Governance (from April 2015)

Linden Pitcher: Business Support Officer - (Clerk to SACRE)

Cynthia Capey: Suffolk Interfaith Resource (regular observer)

## 4. Standards and Quality of Provision of Religious Education

DATE	EXAM	STUDENTS ENTERED	% A* - B	% A - C	Comment
2013	A LEVEL	182	55		Entry maintained.
2014	A LEVEL	186	50		5% lower may reflect grade boundary changes
2015	A LEVEL	183	60.7		10.7% increase on last years A*-B grades
2013	A/S LEVEL	53	34		Marked increase in A/S
2014	A/S LEVEL	272	43		9% increase in grades
2015	A/S LEVEL	266	37		Uptake maintained
2013	GCSE FULL COURSE	1877		64	Marked increase in entry
2014	GCSE FULL COURSE	1956		63.8	Grades maintained
2015	GCSE FULL COURSE	2313		61.8	Trend for increased entry
2013	GCSE SHORT COURSE	2621		52	Marked decrease in entry reflects increase in full course
2014	GCSE SHORT COURSE	1920		51	Grades maintained
2015	GCSE SHORT COURSE	1366		59	8% improvement on grades achieved A-C

### 2015 RE Examinations:

RE has remained a popular examination subject in the county. There is a marked improvement in A Level where there is a 10.7% improvement in the A\* - B grades. Most grades have been maintained, although the A/S A\*-B Level grades were 6% lower than the previous year. There has been slight increase in students being entered for the short course, with 308 additional students taking the course in 2015 compared to 2014, although this is considerably lower than the 2013 cohort. This will need to be monitored. In 2015 the full course entry has increased by 357 students, and indicates that there is a growing trend for students to take the full course.

**2015:**

A Level - 183 entered, 60.7% A\*-B

A/S Level - 266 entered, 37.6% A\*-B

GCSE Full Course - 2313 entered, 61.8% A\*-C

GCSE Short Course - 1366 entered, 59% A\*-C

**Attainment in RE not covered by public examination**

In addition to the data provided, information is also gathered during school visits, continuing professional development (CPD) and local teachers' network meetings.

**RE Quality Mark (REQM)**

The Religious Education Quality Mark (REQM) was introduced in 2014 to acknowledge and celebrate outstanding RE. The Suffolk SACRE has been represented from the outset, as the previous Servicing Officer, Mary Myatt, was instrumental in founding the award programme. Suffolk SACRE is keen to promote this award across schools and actively includes workshops at the annual conference as well as offering additional support from trained REQM assessors and RE advisors based in Suffolk. REQM award schools are celebrated by SACRE and Gold award teachers are actively invited to be represented on the SACRE committee as well as delivering training and presentations at the annual conference. Currently there are 18 Suffolk schools that have achieved the REQM award:

<b><u>Name and Address of the school:</u></b>	<b><u>Date of Award given:</u></b>	<b><u>Award:</u></b>
Sidegate Primary School, Sidegate Lane, Ipswich, IP44JD	05/10/2016	Gold
Walsham-le-Willows CEVC Primary School, Wattisfield Road, Walsham-le-Willows, Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk, IP31 3BD	23/06/2016	Gold
St Alban's Catholic High School, Digby Road Ipswich IP4 3NJ	22/06/2016	Gold
Elveden C of E Primary Academy, London road, Elveden, Thetford, IP24 3TN	24/11/2015	Gold
St John's CEVA Primary School, Victory Road, Ipswich IP4 4LE	02/12/2015	Gold
IES Breckland, Crown Street, Brandon, IP27 0NJ	20/07/2015	Silver
St Edmunds Catholic Primary School, Westgate Street, Bury St, Edmunds, Suffolk IP33 1QG	10/07/2015	Gold
St Benedict's Catholic School, Beetons Way, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk IP32 6RH	29/04/2015	Gold
St Mary's Church of England Academy, Trinity Avenue, Mildenhall, Suffolk, IP28 7LR	23/03/2015	Gold
Ormiston Denes Academy, Yarmouth Road, Lowestoft, NR32 4AH	09/03/2015	Gold
Debenham High School, Gracechurch Street, Suffolk, IP14 6BL	01/12/2014	Gold

St Felix Roman Catholic Primary School, School Lane, Haverhill, Suffolk, CB9 9DE	19/06/2014	Gold
St Edmundsbury CEVA Primary School, Grove Road, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, IP33 3BJ	06/05/2014	Gold
Thomas Gainsborough School Head Lane, Great Cornard, Suffolk CO10 0JU	21/07/2014	Silver
Stradbroke High School, Wilby Rd Stradbroke, Suffolk IP21 5JN	27/06/2014	Gold

2013-14 REQM Pilot schools  
Chilton Primary School  
Felixstowe Academy  
Thomas Wolsey Special School

\*\* This data has been kindly provide by the REQM team  
A number of other schools are being supported to apply for the award.

### **Monitoring of provision**

#### **2015- 2016 Monitoring of Primary Schools:**

SACRE still has very active links with primary schools throughout the county. SACRE continues to offer training, consultations, events and an annual conference to support schools and monitor the delivery of RE. The Servicing Officer works closely with the Diocesan Religious Education Primary Adviser who delivers training and provides evidence of progress within schools. NQTs from three schools were also identified in 2015-16 and they were contacted and invited to attend 'Developing Confidence in RE' training. There is a growing concern for SACRE's ability to report on progress in the future if schools all use their own assessment systems. It will be difficult to standardise these for the purpose of analysis and comparison at Primary level. This is a development area for SACRE in the next academic year, alongside the Suffolk Agreed Syllabus review process.

#### **2015- 2016 Monitoring of Secondary Schools:**

Academies bring new challenges in terms of accountability – however, SACRE has continued to have positive working relationships with some academies that continue to use the locally agreed syllabus. One formal partnership has been established with an Academy, and a representative from the Academy sits on the Suffolk SACRE committee. SACRE also invited the coordinator of the Teaching Schools Alliance to a SACRE meeting to discuss how we could best support and monitor the quality of RE in the county going forward.

SACRE also monitors the Ofsted reports and the Religious Education Quality Mark awards for progress and excellence in SMSC and RE delivery.

## **5.Ofsted Reports**

The SACRE Servicing Officer monitored the 2015 – 16 Ofsted Reports in Suffolk for information and comment made on the provision and quality of Religious Education and SMSC. Generally the picture for RE reflects the overall picture and grading for a school.



Mostly, the reports do not make specific reference to RE but report on social, moral, spiritual and cultural development.

Where it has been made known that a school is not meeting statutory advice, SACRE will contact the school and offer support.

## **6. Support for Improving Teaching of the Local Agreed Syllabus**

### **Locally agreed syllabus**

The Suffolk Locally Agreed Syllabus for RE was reviewed in 2012 and is available through [www.suffolklearning.co.uk](http://www.suffolklearning.co.uk) Hard copies of the syllabus were made available for those attending the Suffolk RE Conference June 2016. The annual Suffolk RE Conference is the principal event for promoting the principles and expectations for the RE syllabus.

The Agreed Syllabus is due for review in 2017.

### **Commissioned Projects: 2015-2016**

A number of Suffolk schools Ofsted comments had identified a need for a greater awareness of diversity and enrichment activities that broaden the experience of the pupils and students in our care. Therefore, SACRE actively offered opportunities to schools to attend activities that enabled the staff and students to engage with diverse communities and the wider SMSC and British Values agenda.

### **Suffolk SACRE Event: Jewish Living Experience Exhibition: October 2015**

Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup>- Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> of October 2015 Suffolk SACRE (Elizabeth Sugarman and Jan McGuire) hosted the Board of Deputies of British Jews: Jewish Living Experience Exhibition at Endeavour House, Ipswich.

The Jewish Living Experience Exhibition was a wonderful opportunity to:

- Enhance pupil and teacher experience
- Raise awareness of different cultures, religions and values
- Explore 'sameness' and 'differences' in British society
- Meet a member of the Jewish community and to hear their story and to learn from them first hand
- Meet some of the needs of our schools/ students with regards to SMSC and FBV Curriculum objectives
- Support your Suffolk Agreed Syllabus, Examination Curriculum and enhance school RE provision

In excess of 730 students, staff and visitors experienced Judaism through beautifully illustrated 6ft display panels covering core Jewish values, festivals, and the synagogue, kashrut and life-cycle events. Visitors were encouraged to engage with and examine the authentic artefact tables and hands-on educational activities manned by volunteers from the local Jewish community, led by Elizabeth Sugarman the Chair and Jewish representative on Suffolk SACRE. [www.bod.org.uk](http://www.bod.org.uk)

## **Suffolk SACRE Prevent Project: Teaching controversial issues in the classroom: 2015-16**

The Suffolk Prevent team commissioned project had permission to proceed at the end of January 2016. It was successfully completed within the April deadline and launched at the Suffolk SACRE Conference in June 2016. Suffolk SACRE was chosen as a delivery partner based on a respected historical relationship between the local authority and the members of faith, the Religious Education advisors and the active classroom teachers. There was an agreed and shared will to support teachers and a genuine expertise and interest in teaching about controversial and sensitive issues.

SACRE (Manwar Ali and Jan McGuire) project managed the commissioned work and the final outcome was 'The Teaching Controversial Issues Toolkit' a flexible, non-prescriptive framework written by teachers for teachers as a result of a comprehensive consultation process at six education hubs across Suffolk. The Toolkit provides a new and simple '6 Step Plan' methodology; a practical and successful way to structure the delivery of sensitive and controversial issues.

It is accompanied by a bank of accessible **exemplar resources** to support teachers delivering controversial or sensitive issues; with a focus on 9 themes related to Prevent:

1. Sense of belonging
2. Terrorism
3. Extremism
4. Hate Crime
5. Tolerance
6. Being British
7. Radicalisation
8. World Events
9. Culture and faith

The teaching resources and toolkit can be accessed through the following link:

**'Teaching Controversial Issues Toolkit'** - <http://www.suffolklearning.co.uk/11-19-learning-teaching/religious-education/sacre/prevent>

The Suffolk SACRE team are continuing to work on the materials. The toolkit has been well received by teachers locally and at a national level.

## **Suffolk SACRE Conference June 2016**

The Local Agreed syllabus is supported through the materials, speakers and workshops provided at the annual Suffolk RE Conference. Support materials were provided to enable the implementation of the agreed syllabus.

The SACRE conference in June 2016 focused on 'RE Deep Teaching', updating practising teachers on the national headlines and strategic RE developments as well as presenting practical materials and resources to support teachers in delivering RE in the classroom.

The main themes were 1) Deep Teaching Christianity: key note speakers Jane Brooke and Helen Matter, 2) Deep Teaching Islam: key note speaker Manwar Ali and 3) 'From Home Office to the Suffolk Classroom' teaching controversial and sensitive issues: launch of the Suffolk SACRE toolkit for teachers (SMSC and British Values): Jan McGuire and Manwar Ali.

55 delegates attended: 8 Secondary and 47 Primary attendees. The conference was well received and the teachers were positive about attending the planned 2017 SACRE Conference. Teachers were also consulted on training and events that they would require in supporting the delivery of the Suffolk Agreed Syllabus, and it was decided by SACRE to host some visits to some multi-cultural schools in Suffolk in order to offer some of the mono-cultural rural schools an opportunity to experience living faiths in the community.

This was the first conference organised and presented by the new SACRE Servicing Officer Jan McGuire and the Suffolk Schools Choice management team, alongside a team of Religious Education advisors and specialists that work with SACRE.

### **Relevant Links with other agencies**

Suffolk SACRE has links with other agencies including the Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich, Suffolk Interfaith Resource, University of Suffolk, University of East Anglia, AREIAC, NASACRE, REC and the Suffolk Community Foundation.

### **Suffolk SACRE and Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich**

Suffolk SACRE is particularly appreciative of the support and partnership it has with the Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich. Co-operation with the Diocese has been invaluable, and we are indebted to Helen Matter, Diocesan Advisor, and respected SACRE member for the Church of England, for all her time spent on developing primary school resources and teacher training (Primary and SCITT) opportunities that directly support the Suffolk Agreed Syllabus. SACRE members continue to critique and support the development of the high quality Diocesan resources. The Christianity, and the Religious Education EYFS, materials released in 2015-6 have brought the Suffolk Diocesan team national recognition, and Suffolk SACRE benefit from this involvement.

## **7. Compliance with the Statutory Requirement**

### **Determinations: Suffolk SACRE's Statutory Role 2015-16**

Suffolk SACRE has a statutory role in considering and granting determinations.

Determinations are made where a school, on behalf of a number of parents, requests Collective Worship other than that set down by statute.

There were no determinations in 2015-16 for Suffolk SACRE to consider.

Suffolk SACRE has a role in investigating complaints against schools in relation to RE and Collective Worship.

In 2015-16 there were no such formal complaints to deal with.

### **Collective Worship**

Suffolk SACRE reminds schools of the importance of collective worship and they are directed to resources prepared by the Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich. Links to resources are provided on the Suffolk SACRE area of the LA website. Links and contacts for support in collective worship are also shared at the annual conference.

### **Research Awards**

Suffolk SACRE collective Worship Assembly project was funded by Westhill and the SACRE member project managing the work presented the conclusions of the project, along with an accessible webpage with practical assembly ideas, at the Suffolk SACRE conference in June 2016.

## **8. Contribution of SACRE to the wider Local Authority agenda**

SACRE members continue to generously offer schools their time and expertise. Representatives from the Muslim, Jewish, Sikh, Buddhist and Christian faith have delivered assemblies and supported curriculum planning, and teachers, with individual requests.

SACRE has delivered on two projects of immense worth in 2015-16. The 'Jewish Living Exhibition' and the 'Teaching Controversial Issues Toolkit', based on the Prevent agenda, both broaden and enrich the experience of pupils and students in Suffolk schools. Both projects have helped to support the LA with their social and racial harmony, SMSC, British Values and Prevent agenda as well as providing social bridging opportunities and enrichment of diversity and faith awareness experiences. Social bridging and wider diversity and faith experience still remains an Ofsted concern, and it can be particularly difficult for mono-cultural rural schools to access relevant opportunities. SACRE remains a key partner in offering such opportunities to Suffolk schools, through their committed work in raising the quality of Religious Education in the classroom.

**If you have any comments about this report, please contact the Suffolk SACRE Clerk via e-mail at [linden.pitcher@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:linden.pitcher@suffolk.gov.uk)**