



North

Yorkshire County Council

Annual report of the North Yorkshire Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education for the school year 2011/12



Children and Young People's Service

A responsive County Council providing excellent and efficient local services

Introduction

This has been an exciting year for the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) as it started the process with the local authority to review the religious education (RE) agreed syllabus. Following two conferences, consultation with teachers and pupils and extensive work behind the scenes, a draft of the new syllabus has now been approved and is awaiting publication. SACRE is confident that the new syllabus will support the delivery of high quality, engaging, relevant and challenging RE in North Yorkshire's schools. The syllabus will be available to schools from February 2013, with schools expected to teach it from September 2013.

At the end of the summer term we said goodbye to Ms Georgia Miller, one of the local authority advisers to SACRE, who has provided valuable professional advice and support over the last year. We extend to her our warmest thanks for her support.

Over the last academic year the SACRE has met three times, once each term. The members have received presentations about aspects of RE teaching in schools and settings. They have also debated a range of issues raised by different stakeholders arising from RE and collective worship in North Yorkshire schools. Thanks go to Margaret Gibson (head of RE) and pupils from Richmond School for hosting the spring

term meeting and giving us a valuable insight into RE learning at Richmond.

The report that follows provides more detailed information about examination results and the experiences that our pupils and young people are gaining from their learning. We are continuing with last year's inclusion of cameos of good practice in schools which have brought the report to life and helped us to celebrate the achievements of teachers of RE in schools across North Yorkshire.

None of what has been achieved would have been possible without the dedication, hard work, knowledge, skills and understanding of all those who have contributed to the SACRE's endeavours over the last year. My special thanks go to Phil Bennington, Rebecca Mason and to our SACRE members. It has been a very good team effort. I find the work of the SACRE fascinating and enjoyable and I am proud of the positive and mutually respectful way we conduct our business.

I am again very pleased to be able to commend this annual report to school governors, headteachers and their staff, and to members and officers of the County Council.

Nasr Emam

SACRE Chair 2011/12

The SACRE welcomes any comments on, or enquiries relating to, this report, which should be addressed to Ms. Rebecca Mason, Humanities Education Development Adviser, North Yorkshire County Council, Children and Young People's Service, County Hall, Northallerton, DL7 8AE.

Email: rebecca.mason@northyorks.gov.uk

The photographs used in this report were taken at Sowerby Community Primary School and the art work is winning entries from the competition to design the front cover of the new RE Agreed Syllabus.

Executive summary

There were no complaints registered with the local authority and SACRE in 2011/12 in respect of RE or collective worship.

No determinations¹ were requested by schools.

No school has been found to be failing in its statutory duties in respect of collective worship, whilst noting that a number of secondary schools continue to use their best endeavours to achieve full compliance.

The number of pupils entered for GCSE full course religious studies increased this year and the results also increased, rising above the national performance at grades A* to C.

GCSE short course numbers declined in total, but the percentage of the cohort entering the examination increased. There was an improvement in A*-C grades and results are well above the national level.

At A2 level there was an increase in the number of entries and 100 per cent of candidates entered for A2 level achieved a grade A*-E, 25.8 per cent at grades A*/A, which was higher than national average performance. At AS level there was an increase in the number of entries. 91.9 per cent of candidates achieved a grade A-E, 20.3 per cent at grade A. Both figures are again above the national average.

Teaching and learning in RE in North Yorkshire's primary schools and early years and foundation stage settings is at least satisfactory with some good and outstanding features.

At key stage 3 there is no evidence to suggest that teaching and learning in RE is anywhere less than satisfactory, much being good; whilst at key stage 4 and post-16 there is more variation.

Subject leader network meetings were re-established this year, initially with regional twilight meetings and then full day networks and have been reasonably well attended. From September 2012 as part of the quality and improvement service level agreement (Q&I SLA), these termly full day RE network meetings are held at Ripon Racecourse. Regional primary humanities network meetings were also established during the last year and were well attended. This year there will be a full days training on the new RE syllabus, offered at four locations across the county, in April 2013.

¹ In respect of requests for exemptions from the legal requirement for broadly Christian collective worship.

Statutory compliance in respect of religious education and collective worship

The SACRE is pleased to report that it has no evidence to suggest that RE provision in schools within the jurisdiction of the local authority is not compliant with the locally agreed syllabus. However, as in previous years, there is some evidence to suggest that too little time may be judged to be allocated to RE teaching and that timetabling arrangements in a number of secondary schools may make compliance difficult. Evidence is based on visits to schools by the humanities education development advisers (EDAs) and advanced skills teachers (ASTs) for RE, Ofsted reports and feedback from network meetings.

National curriculum and public examination requirements continue to change in order to create more flexibility for schools to address their individual needs. There is an increasing range of ways to judge school performance, including the English Baccalaureate. The climate in which schools are operating is becoming more challenging and provision for subjects like RE is increasingly under pressure. SACRE has an important role in ensuring that schools comply with their statutory duties regarding provision of RE

There were no complaints registered with the local authority and SACRE in 2011/12 in respect of RE or collective worship.

In the period 2011/12 no North Yorkshire school has been found to be failing in its

statutory duties in respect of collective worship. A number of secondary schools are using their best endeavours to achieve full compliance faced with logistical difficulties.

As in previous years, no determinations were requested by schools¹.

Standards and achievement in religious education²

Foundation stage

Whilst the statutory requirements in respect of RE do not apply to pupils who are under compulsory school age, the statutory framework for the early years foundation stage highlights a number of requirements in relation to their personal, emotional and social development, and their knowledge and understanding of the world, which prepare them for the RE they will follow in key stage 1. On the basis of the general monitoring visits made by the local authority to early years and foundation stage settings, there is no evidence to suggest that standards and achievement are in any way significantly different to those nationally expected.

Key stages 1 and 2

On the basis of evidence acquired through subject Ofsted inspections, a number of school visits by advisers and discussions with headteachers and subject leaders, standards in RE in primary schools are on the whole satisfactory, whilst in many schools they are good. Overall pupil progress in RE is at least satisfactory in the majority of North Yorkshire primary schools, with some good and outstanding features.

² Public examinations leading to approved qualifications are entitled religious studies.

Key stage 3

Visits made to a number of secondary schools on the basis of advice and support requests and targeted interventions indicate that standards in RE at key stage 3 are broadly in line with national expectations. Overall pupil progress in RE at key stage 3 is rarely less than satisfactory and is often good, with some outstanding features.

Key stage 4

In 2012, 2298 students were entered for the GCSE full course in religious studies, 41 per cent of the cohort (an increase of 10 per cent of the cohort on the previous year), and 2184 for the short course, 39 per cent of the cohort (an increase of 9 per cent of the cohort on the previous year). The performance in the full course improved by 1.1 per cent from the previous year and the short course results improved by 1.6 per cent. Overall, 80 per cent of the North Yorkshire year group were entered for a GCSE in religious studies.

GCSE Grades A*-C			
	2012	2011	2010
Full GCSE	73.1%	72.0%	77.6%
Short GCSE	59.1%	57.5%	52.3%

In the absence of nationally validated data at the time of writing, it is estimated on the basis of interim data that North Yorkshire's GCSE results for the full course at grades A*-C are just above national performance, whilst for the short course results are significantly above national performance.

Post-16

In 2012, 163 students were entered for A2 level religious studies, compared to 157 in the previous year. 100 per cent of candidates entered achieved a grade, 25.8 per cent a grade A*/A. A2 religious studies was studied in thirteen local authority schools.

At AS level, there were 74 candidates, compared to 55 in the previous year. 91.9 per cent achieved an A-E grade with 20.3 per cent achieving a grade A.

In the absence of nationally validated data at the time of writing, it is estimated on the basis of interim data that North Yorkshire's A and AS level results remain broadly consistent with national performance.



Libby Hickson, age 11, Scalby School



Quality of teaching and learning in religious education

Foundation stage and key stages 1 and 2

Teaching and learning in RE in North Yorkshire's primary schools and early years and foundation stage settings is at least satisfactory with some good and outstanding features. Supported by the current 64 planning units, primary schools are continually developing their strategies for enjoyable and challenging RE experiences. As well as focusing on the explicit RE curriculum, many schools successfully

forge links with other subjects, such as in history and geography, thus creating a more meaningful context for RE. Exciting and lively opportunities for pupils to extend and display their RE learning are also provided through, for example, music, art and information technology. Many primary schools are also enriching their study of world faiths through UK and international links and global school partnerships.

RE at Forest of Galtres Anglican Methodist Voluntary Controlled (VC) Primary School

Village primary school with 190 pupils on roll

Leading the way in RE:

Forest of Galtres Anglican Methodist VC Primary School always strives to be a happy, caring community school rooted in the Christian faith. Every individual is encouraged to achieve his or her full potential for learning and living. The school encourages pupils to be kind, self-disciplined and respectful of other people and our environment. The school is dedicated to excellence in all they do.

Within the framework of the law and the agreed syllabus, the aims in RE are for pupils to:

- be provided with the highest standard of RE teaching and learning, always striving for excellence;
- reflect the school's distinctive Anglican Methodist Christian character; and
- enhance and contribute to life in the Church School and the contribution it makes to the ethos and spiritual dimension of school life.

RE is integral to the school's outstanding curriculum (Ofsted 2009). They continue to develop new ways to be at the fore of good practice including: Finalist in the Church Schools Award 2011, winner of Spirited Arts category 2011 (NATRE/RE Today), attending RE Diocese Networks, featuring on prayer spaces for schools website and RE Today,

and will this year apply for the new RE Quality Mark awarded by the RE Council of England and Wales.

Through RE in the school, excellent opportunities for spiritual development are provided. Children consider and respond to questions concerning the meaning and purpose of life. Teachers help them to recognise the difference between right and wrong, through the study of moral and ethical questions. Social development is enhanced by helping them to build a sense of identity in a multi-cultural society. Children explore issues of religious faith and values and, in so doing; they develop their knowledge and understanding of the cultural context of their own lives.

Following a very successful spiritual development day last year the school aims to embed their Christian values of love, friendship, forgiveness, reconciliation and hope through explicit links in high quality teaching and learning of RE and collective worship themes throughout the year. The values will be further developed with pupils being able to express the impact those values have on them during a 'Christian Values Day' in the spring term. This will be an interactive experience of music, dance, art and drama that will involve the local church community, youth workers and whole school community, enhancing the children's spiritual development.

In many primary schools, higher level teaching assistants continue to make a valuable contribution to the teaching of RE. In these schools consideration should be made

to their individual professional development needs in order to ensure the maintenance of standards, achievement and quality within RE provision and teaching and learning.

RE at Hutton Rudby Primary School

A village primary school with 210 on roll.

A week of RE: Festivals and Celebrations. Y2 class, July 2012

In this class RE was planned so that it was taught during a whole week. It was incorporated into literacy and was delivered within a focused week. This was successful with this age group as it gave them the opportunity to become involved with the topic and to have both thinking, planning and exploring time.

The class spent the start of the week watching a range of festivals and celebrations and looking for common elements across the festivals and celebrations. They sorted a range of celebration cards and created a special class area where they incorporated items such as special clothes, stories, food, music etc. A place to go where you could think quietly and remember special times.

The children listened to the story of 'The Miraculous Orange Tree' by Jamila Gavin. In the story, an orange tree miraculously appears for a short time and the community wanted to celebrate the special event. The class then planned and organized their own orange tree celebration, incorporating many of the areas of celebrations they had learnt about earlier in the week.

Cards celebrating the happy event were exchanged and invitations to the Friday's festival given out. Special clothes, hats, hairpieces and decorations were found or made. Mysterious music was composed and played and a special orange song was performed to the class.

An orange dance with coloured ribbons was a central part of the celebration as it represented the orange tree (around the school netball post!). Celebration games and fun followed. Even gifts of oranges were shared around.

Finally, the celebration food arrived - a delicious orange cake accompanied with orange juice.

By the end of the RE week the class had had great fun and many skills were developed when making their own 'orange' games. The teacher said: "The class both respected and were interested in the different reasons for celebrations and festivals. They had developed a much clearer understanding of why people celebrate and hold festivals".

Some schools continue to make good use of resource boxes provided by the Development Education Centres, Diocese and Faith groups. In the context of the largest county in England, mostly rural in character, it is recognised that it is often difficult for pupils in some schools to experience a range of religious places of worship first hand or to host visits from members of faith communities other than Christian. This situation is often made worse by the high transport costs involved in providing educational visits where longer journeys are required.



*Stephanie Jackson,
aged 12, Scalby
School*

Key stages 3, 4 and post-16

At key stage 3, there is no evidence to suggest from RE advanced skills teacher school visits and observations by humanities educational development advisers, that teaching and learning in RE is anywhere less than satisfactory, whilst there is evidence of much good and some outstanding practice.

At key stage 4 and post-16 there is more variation in the quality of teaching and learning in RE. In the public examination courses offered within student options, it is largely good with some outstanding features. The quality is sometimes less secure in non-examination situations where statutory RE is provided through integrated courses or during tutor group or form time. In these situations there are often high levels of non-RE specialist teaching, often compounded by shortage of time to deliver a meaningful learning experience.



Tadcaster Grammar School

An 11-18 comprehensive school with 1600 students on roll.

Within the humanities faculty, religious studies is a popular subject at Tadcaster and the department has a high profile throughout the school with good exam results at GCSE and A Level.

The department consists of three full-time specialist teachers who have designed and resourced an engaging, stimulating and challenging KS3 and 4 scheme of learning. All students follow the GCSE short course in religious studies (Religion and Morality AQA B) with many taking the full course, adding the philosophy and ultimate questions paper.

The GCSE focuses on relevant and up to date issues relating to ethics and then applies religious perspectives, particularly focusing on Christianity and Buddhism. The philosophy paper stretches and challenges students to consider the existence of God.

Students are encouraged to participate through active and engaging learning opportunities and the department is always adding contemporary and relevant resources. The syllabus places equal weighting on knowledge and evaluation and the department has worked hard to develop ways of teaching this skill through regular skills lessons built into the schemes of learning and detailed and specific written feedback. Displays in the classroom also support the application of this skill. The subject leader said: "We are providing our students with excellent skills in order to achieve high grades in their GCSEs, but equally important we are giving them the

ability to see both points of view, ensuring our students leave Tadcaster as confident and well-rounded individuals."

The impact of these skills lessons has been significant in raising GCSE levels. In 2012 100 per cent of students taking full course gained A*-C and 70 per cent were A*-A. In the short course 70 per cent of students achieved A*-C.

The department also has a successful uptake at AS/A2 demonstrating the enjoyment which students gain throughout KS3 and KS4. One A Level student said: "As well as being interested in philosophy, the reason I took religious studies was because throughout my whole school life RE has also challenged and motivated me."

The headteacher also said: "The skills developed through this curriculum entitlement equips students with a broader level of thinking and awareness. It has enabled students to more fully appreciate local, national and global agendas with sensitivity and confidence."

In the recent Ofsted inspection (in May 2012) it was said that there were, "Planned opportunities for discussion of ethical issues to ensure students foster empathy and develop the skills to articulate their opposition to injustice... students listened and watched attentively to a challenging presentation allowing them to reflect on the effects of globalisation on traditional world cultures."

There are a number of secondary schools offering a rich and diverse programme of educational visits to support their RE curriculum, as well as global partnership links to enrich the wider curriculum.

The local authority's two advanced skills teachers (ASTs) for RE (secondary) continue to work closely with schools providing advice, support and training to good effect. All schools can request support from them at no cost until the end of the summer term 2013, when changes to the government's school funding rules mean that the LA can no longer fund ASTs. Alternative ways to provide this valuable support are being explored. Each AST has one day per week for outreach work and they also contribute to subject development network meetings and represent teachers at SACRE meetings. In addition to the two secondary ASTs we

also have one primary AST supporting all three humanities subjects. She also provides support for RE in primary schools and represents primary teachers at SACRE meetings.

Special schools

Separate regulations covering maintained special schools require them to ensure that as far as practicable a pupil receives opportunities to explore RE. There is no evidence to suggest that this is not the case in special schools within the local authority's control. There are examples of good practice in both the teaching and learning experiences. Special schools make good use of the planning units in their planning and assessing progress in RE using the local authority guidance accompanying the P Scales.



Francesca Drury, age 9, Wistow Primary School

Quality of leadership and management in religious education

The local authority continues to support the leadership and management of RE, and thus teaching and learning in all schools through facilitating the subject leader termly network days. These are provided free to all schools in the Q&I SLA and at a charge to other schools.

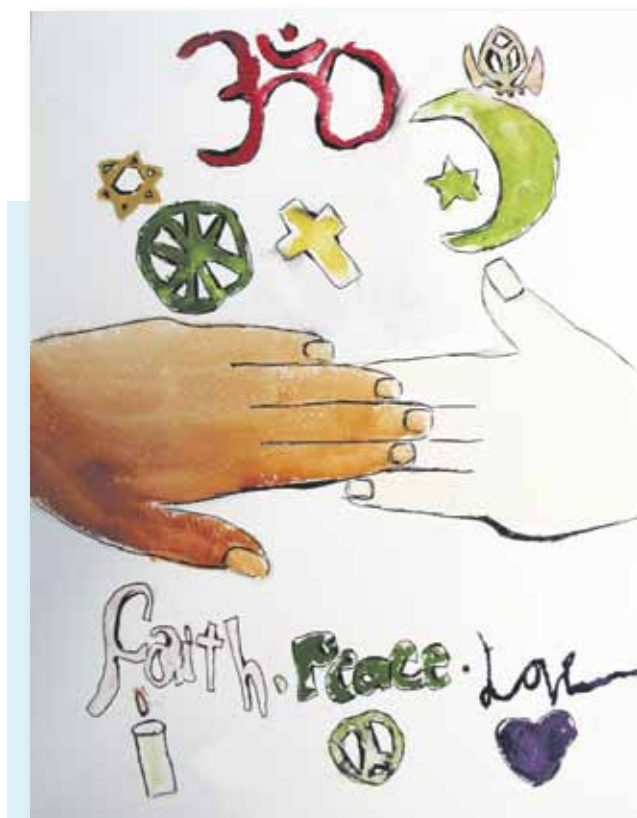
Agendas have included:

- updates on local and national issues and developments;
- RE and the 2012 Ofsted inspection framework;
- subject self-evaluation and leadership;
- developing assessment at KS3;
- developing the enquiry approach; and
- sharing good practice.

In addition to the support provided by its advanced skills teachers, the local authority employs a humanities education development adviser who provides valuable support to schools at a time when other authorities are cutting back support.

RE subject leadership in many primary schools, particularly the smaller primary schools, is carried out by a teacher or headteacher with other leadership and management responsibilities. In some schools where this happens this can give the subject a high profile and this is associated with successful outcomes, in others RE can become less of a priority.

Subject leaders in many secondary schools continue to face an increasing challenge in securing the place of RE within the curriculum. The introduction of the English Baccalaureate has put pressure on optional subjects with the inclusion of modern foreign languages and history/geography, but not RE. In some schools this can lead to time allocations for RE putting pressure on teachers to cover too much in too little time.



“

I did this to show that it doesn't matter what colour or religion you are. We can all be faithful, peaceful and show respect to each other.”

Helen Edgeworth, Age 11, Thirsk School

Effectiveness of the North Yorkshire agreed syllabus

The North Yorkshire agreed syllabus was written shortly before the non-statutory national framework for religious education was published. However, account was taken of the key issues in the framework relating to the breadth of study and the North Yorkshire agreed syllabus includes the national 8-level assessment scale.

In December 2011 steps were taken to begin the establishment of an agreed syllabus conference to undertake the statutory review. This has been delayed upon receiving advice from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority³ indicating the benefits of waiting for the publication of the new primary national curriculum and new RE guidance. As the timescales for these have now changed it was agreed that SACRE should not delay a statutory review any longer.

The review of the syllabus began with the appointment of Lat Blaylock from RE Today Services as a consultant to support the process. Teachers' views were sought through an online questionnaire and nearly 80 responses were received. Pupils' views were also gathered by the RE advanced skills teachers (ASTs), through school visits. A working party was established, made up of the ASTs, LA advisers and two other SACRE members and was led by the external consultant. The working group produced some initial thoughts and ideas, based on the information gathered from teachers and

pupils and by looking at best practice in other local authorities.

The first agreed syllabus conference was held in March 2012, where a range of teachers, headteachers, faith representatives and local authority advisers met to debate and discuss the key principles behind the new syllabus. Two post-16 students from Richmond School gave a powerful account of the importance of RE to them and the value they saw in good RE learning.

Following the conference the working group continued to develop a draft for the syllabus and a pupil art competition was launched to design the front cover of the new syllabus. The winners will be invited to attend the launch event in February 2013.

A second agreed syllabus conference was held in June 2012 where a draft syllabus was discussed, moderated and finally voted on. All three of the representative groups: Church of England; other faiths; and teachers, voted to accept the new syllabus.

The SACRE meeting in July gave the opportunity for local authority elected members to review the proposed new syllabus and they voted in favour of adopting it.

The new syllabus will be launched at an event in February 2013 and a hard copy will then be sent to all local authority maintained schools. Training for secondary RE subject leaders is on March 21 2013 at Ripon Race Course and there are four training days in April for primary subject co-ordinators at four venues across the county. Schools can book on the training through the North Yorkshire learning zone.

³ *QCA advice on the timing of agreed syllabus revisions in 2009-2010. Non-statutory guidance for local authorities, SACREs and Agreed Syllabus Conferences (December 2008).*

The new syllabus will be supported by a range of guidance materials which will be available to schools in the service level agreement through Fronter and will include:

- good learning in RE: guidance for teachers;
- beginners guides to the religions and beliefs recommended for learning;
- glossary of terms;
- a SACRE tool for using the 8 level scale of expectation in RE;
- RE and assessment: six sample tasks;
- 19 units of learning; and
- a blank 'unit of learning' planning template.

Collective worship

The revised and updated SACRE guidance on collective worship published in 2007 remains in place in schools. A number of schools have indicated how useful they have found this and SACRE continue to keep it under review.

In some schools collective worship is linked to the RE curriculum and in many schools members of different faith groups, preserving the statutory requirement for a predominantly Christian character, have been involved. Links between collective worship and social, moral, spiritual and cultural development are well established in many schools, but care needs to be taken on occasions where 'celebration', 'sharing' and/or 'golden' assemblies are mistakenly regarded as acts of collective worship.



Frances Davenport, age 11, Scalby School

Management of the SACRE and partnership with the local authority

SACRE. meetings

The SACRE maintained its normal annual pattern of three meetings during the school year 2011/12. Two meetings were held at County Hall and the third at Richmond School, where there was an opportunity to observe a lesson, talk to students and have a tour of the department. SACRE wishes to express our thanks to the pupils and staff at Richmond School for providing us with this opportunity. SACRE is professionally clerked by a member of the local authority's committee services team, for which members and advisers are grateful.

The majority of members of the SACRE in place for the full year attended at least two of the three meetings held during the year.

Membership and training

Mr Nasr Moussa Emam was re-elected chair of SACRE for the school year 2011/12.

SACRE were delighted to welcome new members: Mrs Heather Goodall, representing The Society of Friends and Mr Roop Singh, representing the Sikh faith.

There is currently a vacancy for a representative from the Salvationists.

Mr Nasr Moussa Emam attended the National Association of Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (NASACRE) conference and has been elected as an executive member for NASACRE for 2012-15.

Improvement and development planning

During the course of the year the SACRE has considered a number of key issues, including:

- the revision of the RE agreed syllabus;
- the new Ofsted framework and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development;
- self evaluation of North Yorkshire SACRE and action planning;
- Ofsted RE subject inspections;
- what engaging, exciting RE in secondary schools looks like; and
- inter-faith work.

Information and advice

The SACRE continues to employ the wide range of knowledge, skills and experience represented in its membership to provide information, advice, support and wise counsel to the local authority and its schools on matters relating to RE, collective worship and the wider agenda of inclusion, diversity and community cohesion, for which the local authority is grateful.

In turn, professional advice has been provided to the SACRE by the humanities education development advisers, supported by other colleagues, and the advanced skills teachers in RE, as appropriate. The engagement of a national renowned and very experienced RE consultant to support the revision of the agreed syllabus has proven to be particularly valuable in ensuring the syllabus and supporting guidance materials are at the forefront in RE educational thinking.

Membership of the North Yorkshire Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education 2011-2012

Baptist	Mrs G Sellers
Buddhist	Mrs C Taylor
Hindu	Ms K Bali JP
Jewish	Dr N Packter
Methodist	Mrs B Belsham
Muslim	Mr N M Emam (Chair)
Roman Catholic	Mr C Devanny
Salvationist	Vacancy
Sikh	Mr Roop Singh
Society of Friends	Mrs. Heather Goodall (until Sept 2012)
Church of England (Ripon and Leeds Diocese) (York Diocese)	Mr R Marks Miss M Haigh MBE Rev R Davill
Teachers	Mrs M Gibson (Vice-chair) Mrs S Grey Mrs A Head
Local authority	County Councillor D Blades County Councillor J Clark County Councillor Mrs P English County Councillor R Heseltine County Councillor J Savage
Co-opted	Professor J Adams
Local authority advisers	Ms R Mason Ms G Miller (until Sept 2012)

Contact us

North Yorkshire County Council, County Hall, Northallerton, North Yorkshire, DL7 8AD

Our Customer Service Centre is open Monday to Friday 8.00am - 5.30pm (closed weekends and bank holidays). Tel: **0845 8727374** email: **customer.services@northyorks.gov.uk**

Or visit our website at: **www.northyorks.gov.uk**

If you would like this information in another language or format such as Braille, large print or audio, please ask us.

Tel: 01609 532917

اگر آپ کو معلومات کسی دیگر زبان یا دیگر شکل میں درکار ہوں تو براۓ مہربانی ہم سے پوچھیے۔

如欲索取以另一語文印製或另一格式製作的資料，請與我們聯絡。

যদি আপনি এই ডকুমেন্ট অন্য ভাষায় বা ফরমেটে চান, তাহলে দয়া করে আমাদেরকে বলুন।

Aby otrzymać te informacje w innym języku lub formacie, np. w alfabecie brajla, w wersji dużym drukiem lub audió, prosimy się z nami skontaktować.

Email: communications@northyorks.gov.uk

