

Peterborough Standing Advisory Council for
Religious Education

ANNUAL REPORT
2011 – 2012

**Peterborough Standing Advisory Committee for Religious Education
Annual Report 2011-2012**

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Peterborough City Council
SACRE Annual Report 2010 – 2011

Chairman's Introduction

From the Vice Chair Reverend Philip Davies, 2011-12

We end a busy year for SACRE looking forward to the launch of our new Agreed Syllabus in March 2013. The work on the Agreed Syllabus has been a major priority because, from the beginning of the review process, SACRE was aware that a more enquiry based approach would be required to offer greater challenge and for the raising of standards. A small committee under the Chair of Adrian Peters has driven the review forward and SACRE is hugely grateful for the guidance, knowledge and commitment of our adviser Sue Ward in steering us towards our final goal.

SACRE has been pleased to welcome new members who bring a breadth of experience and different skills to the committee. We are grateful to those who have previously given of their time to be members of SACRE, including Councillor David Over who stepped down as our Chair, Lynne Perry who has retired as our clerk, and Lucia Hawes who has taken on this role.

The SACRE sub committees meet in between our full meetings and each SACRE member plays a part in at least one of these. Particular thanks this year to the curriculum committee who along with Sue Ward have been working on producing new units of work for the new syllabus.

SACRE has continued to debate the many issues currently facing schools, especially in relation to the provision of RE. We are delighted that there is an increase in the number of students entered for A Level and offer our congratulations to those schools that have achieved the RE Quality Mark. Both these achievements reflect the hard work of students, the dedication and expertise of their teachers and the priority given to RE by senior leaders in many of our schools.

SACRE is kept up to date on national RE issues and is a member of the National Association of SACREs. The reduction in places for the initial training of RE specialists and the omission of RE from the English Baccalaureate remain concerns for the wider RE community. The All Parliamentary Group for RE and the RE Council Curriculum Review group have begun to gather evidence on their impact and we will need to consider the result of this in the next year.

Reverend Philip Davies

The purpose of the report

The Education Act 1996, Section 391 (6) and (7) requires that each year the Standing Advisory Council for 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'.

Management of SACRE

SACRE is very pleased to report that the Local Authority (LA) has continued to support the work of SACRE by providing a clerk for the meetings and securing the services of a Religious Education (RE) Adviser to support SACRE and schools. Extra funding over two years has been provided for the work of revising the existing Agreed Syllabus.

Every LA has to convene a SACRE. Peterborough SACRE, which meets at least once a term, comprises of four statutory groups. The four groups are as follows:

- Group A -representatives of non-Anglican Christian denominations, other religions and religious denominations,
- Group B -representatives of the Church of England,
- Group C - representatives of the teachers' associations, and
- Group D – representatives of the LA.

Membership has changed again this year. New members include those representing the teachers' community, the Quakers community, the Roman Catholic community, the Sikh community and the Church of England. A member of the British Humanist Association has also joined SACRE as an associate member.

Members of SACRE have taken an active role in various sub groups. The main focus for SACRE has been to review and revise the existing Agreed Syllabus and to secure evidence for reporting on the provision of RE in our schools. There have been a total of six meetings of the Agreed Syllabus Conference/sub group and four main SACRE meetings, held in a variety of faith, community and LA venues around the city.

The Collective Worship sub group has been very active and endeavoured to make contact with local schools to determine their needs and encourage good practice. The group have been considering the latest guidance document from the National Association of Standing Advisory Councils on RE (NASACRE) and the Association of Religious Education Inspectors, Advisers and Consultants (AREIAC) and think that the advice about collective worship is very good and helpful for schools. The group also sent out another questionnaire to schools to determine the way schools are delivering collective worship.

Members of the Curriculum sub group have been actively involved in creating new schemes of work to support the new Agreed Syllabus and joined the teachers' writing group.

The Development Planning sub group has recognised that there needs to be a reduction in the number of objectives due to restraints on people's available time.

The Publicity Group has produced an excellent leaflet summarising the purpose and role of a local SACRE. These leaflets are sent to new head and deputy teachers in the LA and also new members of SACRE.

The Induction sub group have put together a welcome pack of materials for new members to SACRE.

These sub groups regularly meet and submit reports to the main meetings.

Details of the agenda items, attendance at the meetings and minutes of the meetings can be found on the SACRE area of Peterborough City Council's website.

Standards and quality of provision of religious education

Religious Education Quality Mark (REQM): Three of Peterborough's schools have successfully been awarded a new national quality mark for religious education. They were involved in a pilot scheme supported by the Religious Education Council, for schools in the east and the north west of the country.

Significant changes in the way schools are run, especially the developments in the academies programme, have impacted upon the work of SACRE and its ability to monitor the provision and quality of RE. A number of secondary schools in Peterborough have become academies. They can choose which curriculum to follow and do not have to use the local Agreed Syllabus for RE.

Other national changes that have also impacted on RE provision include the Department for Education dropping any value in league tables of the points awarded for GCSE short courses; the uncertainty about the direction of future exam courses and the drive to push for schools to build upon the English Baccalaureate. Nationally, there has been a decline of 14 per cent in the number of pupils taking any GCSE Religious Studies course. This is made up of a significant increase in the numbers taking a full course but a decline in those taking short courses and this has led to the overall percentage decline. National statistics can be seen at www.icq.org.uk or www.gcsere.org.uk

During the process of revising the Agreed Syllabus, RE subject leaders from academies have been included in the teachers' writing group with the hope that many of the academies in Peterborough will want to adopt the local Agreed Syllabus and fulfil its requirements regarding provision and quality religious education.

Letters sent to invite secondary schools to share teacher assessment levels at Key Stage 3 resulted in only two schools sending their data to SACRE which made it statistically too small to make any relevant comments.

The new Agreed Syllabus: The direction of the new syllabus has been made with the intention to help schools deliver quality religious education and improve standards of teaching and learning in this subject. The new syllabus promotes enquiry based learning and develops further assessment of and for learning in RE. It will stipulate a number of core units that all schools will use in order that rigour, challenge and progression in RE can be better secured in each phase of schools in Peterborough.

Secondary Schools (see Appendix 1)

- Key findings from the A/AS Level Religious Studies (RS) results show that there continues to be a 100 per cent pass rate and with record numbers of entries recorded in 2012 compared to the previous six years. This would suggest that RS remains an important subject to students. The statistics for AS level show a rise in the percentage passes at A*-E grades, although it still has not achieved the levels of 2010. One centre has stopped offering AS level RS.
- Key findings from the GCSE RS full course results show that there is a small decline in the number of students studying the subject in Peterborough (down by 6.5 per cent) and this does not reflect the national trend. However the percentage A*-C pass rate has significantly increased this year (up from 64 per cent to 66.9 per cent), which is very pleasing to note. This would suggest that RS remains an important subject in some of our schools. The number of students entering the GCSE RS short course declined significantly, similar to the national picture, but like full course results, there has been an improvement in the A*-C percentages.

- This year, statistics for England have been included in the report. Students in Peterborough schools achieve above the national percentage of A*-C grades for short courses but there is a significant difference between the percentage of A*-C results for the full course. The evidence shows in particular, that compared to other schools nationally, Peterborough schools' results are 3.7 per cent below the national level for full course GCSE Religious Studies.
- Some Peterborough schools do not appear to be entering any students for short or full course RE, but SACRE has received no requests from schools to agree to alternate programmes of study at Key Stage 4. Therefore, SACRE is unsure about how RE is being dealt with in some schools. SACRE intends to pursue a way forward to resolve this uncertainty.

Number of teachers attending the secondary network meetings has risen this year and SACRE wishes to record its thanks to The King's School and Ian Forsyth, the head of the RS department, for organising the meetings and offering the school for a meeting venue.

SACRE is delighted to report that Jack Hunt School, led by Katie Wilkins as head of department, achieved the gold award for the RE Quality Mark (REQM). The school have been supporting SACRE with new schemes of work for the new syllabus.

Primary Schools

SACRE is delighted to report that William Law C of E Primary School, led by Julia Blower, subject coordinator for religious education, achieved the silver award for the REQM. The school is looking to share best practice with others.

Network meetings have been very well attended. Feedback from colleagues continues to show how variable the provision and quality of RE is in our primary schools. Concern has been raised about whether parents' right to withdraw a child from RE and collective worship can be exercised in a school where RE is integrated in a creative curriculum or topic approach. Schools should ensure they have a way of allowing parents this right.

Special Schools

SACRE is delighted to report that The Phoenix Special School, which had appointed a teacher to have a special focus upon RE and Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development of pupils last year, was rewarded by achieving the silver award for the REQM. The standards and provision of RE in the school are excellent and SACRE would recommend visits to the school or contact to be made with Nicola Lord (subject coordinator) at the school. Nicola has contributed to the new Agreed Syllabus with new schemes of work for special schools.

How SACRE has supported schools

The RE Adviser from Cambridgeshire has been brought in to support Peterborough schools and SACRE. The RE Adviser, on behalf of SACRE, has visited primary schools that have had a new subject coordinator. The purpose was to support and guide them through the requirements of the Agreed Syllabus. This support was well received and was utilised by six primary schools.

SACRE sponsored another 6th form lecture at the King's School and pupils from surrounding 6th forms also attended.

Five CPD courses for primary teachers were offered and attended by teachers. In particular, the courses on links to the Olympic values, making RE fun and "tell me a story" were very well received by the schools.

Both primary and secondary network meetings have been very well attended and there has been a focus upon curriculum developments and assessment.

RE Resources were purchased for schools to book out and supplement their teaching. These were held at a resource centre in the city and have been used in particular, by a number of primary schools.

Effectiveness of the Agreed Syllabus

The new direction of the Agreed Syllabus has received very positive responses from both faith members on SACRE and teachers. Enquiry based learning supports rigorous and challenging RE. The Agreed Syllabus Conference recognised that further work and support was needed with assessment. For the first time, Peterborough SACRE decided to outline a number of core units of work that all schools in all key stages would follow. This is to ensure moderation of standards across the LA could happen effectively.

A teachers' writing group was established. Funds were used to pay for teacher release to enable them to write schemes of work and offer their views about the direction of the syllabus. SACRE would like to thank all the teachers who willingly gave their time and effort to write and read materials related to the syllabus.

Collective Worship

SACRE support the guidance document on collective worship produced by NASACRE and agreed to make that guidance document available for all Peterborough schools. It can be found on the Peterborough SACRE webpage under collective worship.

Also the sub group has been active in seeking out schools with good practice in collective worship. It is noticeable that this happens more in primary than secondary schools. This is still being looked at by the sub group.

Contribution of SACRE to social and racial harmony agenda

SACRE now has its own web page on the City Council Web site. Minutes and agendas are available http://www.peterborough.gov.uk/children_and_families/schools/standing_advisory_council_for.aspx

Membership of SACRE has been increased to reflect the local community. Links to the local Inter-Faith group have been established. There is regular exchange of information between each group and this information is shared with schools to improve their RE teaching.

If you have any comments about this report, please contact the Clerk to SACRE, email lucia.hawes2@peterborough.gov.uk

Appendix 1

GCE AS and A Level and GCSE results for Religious Studies in Peterborough schools: Summer 2012

A Level Religious Studies

	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007
Number of candidates entries	105	78	69	91	59	80
Number of candidates obtaining A-E grades	105 (100%)	78 (100%)	69 (100%)	91 (100%)	59 (100%)	80 (100%)
Number of centres entering candidates	7	7	6	7	4	7

AS Level Religious Studies

	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007
Number of candidates entries	28	21	17	14	14	24
Number of candidates obtaining A-E grades	25 (89.3%)	17 (81%)	16 (94%)	13 (93%)	13 (93%)	16 (67%)
Number of centres entering candidates	5	6	6	6	5	5

GCSE Religious Studies (full course)

	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007
Number of candidates entries	1032	1048	965	1177	806	650
Number of grades A*-C	690 (66.9%)	666 (64%)	574 (59%)	648 (55%)	486 (60%)	414 (64%)
Number of centres entering candidates	7	8	6	7	6	8

GCSE Religious Studies (short course)

	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007
Number of candidates entries	648	733	838	776	895	1067
Number of grades A* -C	355 (54.8%)	337 (46%)	394 (47%)	374 (48%)	444 (50%)	544 (51%)
Number of centres entering candidates	8	6	9	6	8	8
National (England only) Religious Studies (full course)	2012			2011		
Numbers of candidate entries	216373			199752		
% of A*-C Grades	73.6%			73.2%		

	2012	2011
National (England only) Religious Studies (short course)		
Number of candidate entries	211269	233998
% of A*-C grades	53.1%	51.8%