

**METROPOLITAN BOROUGH OF BURY**

**STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL  
ON  
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

**ANNUAL REPORT  
ACADEMIC YEAR  
2012-2013**

**Bury**  
**COUNCIL**



## **Chair's Foreword**

I commend to you the Annual Report of Bury SACRE (Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education) for the academic year ending August 2013, this being the 24<sup>th</sup> such report.

We have managed to maintain our SACRE activities for a further year, albeit on a smaller scale. The Local Authority has continued to withdraw administrative support and Central Government is seemingly disinterested in the work of SACREs and the Department of Education no longer sets a deadline for receiving our Reports. However they are now archived by NASACRE (the National Association of SACREs) and in fairness I should admit that, after special pleading, the Council did agree to pay our annual subscription to that body – a gesture of recognition.

The SACRE remains a statutory body charged with monitoring the delivery of the RE curriculum and Collective Worship. We have continued to make visits to schools to observe “Assemblies” and to discuss RE teaching – though more limited in scope than we would have liked. We are grateful to the schools we have visited for making us welcome.

Without the voluntary efforts of John Wilson (recently retired Deputy Director of Education for Manchester Diocese) and Gail Branch (former part-time RE adviser), it would be hard to operate. Between them they have arranged for RE teachers to attend a Training Day on “Creativity and Enquiry in RE” at the Village Hotel, for us to hear speakers at Whitefield Synagogue and at the Professional Development Centre and kept our meetings on track.

RE continues to be discussed and supported in both the national papers and the religious press. The All Party Committee of MPs is getting more involved in endorsing the importance of RE, while the RE Council of England and Wales produced an excellent RE Subject Review last June. Things are moving nationally and I feel strongly that our local SACRE should strive to support future provision in Bury.

**Councillor Roy-Edward Walker BA, M Ed**

**Chairman, Bury SACRE**

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## What is the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE)?

Bury, like all local authorities, has to establish and support a SACRE, 'to advise the authority on matters connected with religious education and collective worship' in schools. In particular, it can:

- advise the local authority on methods of teaching, the choice of teaching materials and the provision of teacher training;
- require the authority to review its Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education at least once every five years;
- determine whether a community school may be exempted from the requirement to provide collective worship which is wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character.

## How is SACRE composed?

SACRE has four committees whose membership is drawn from local religious communities, representatives of teacher associations and local councillors.

Committee A comprises members nominated by the Roman Catholic and Free Churches and the Jewish and Muslim faiths; three members representing the Church of England make up Committee B; Committee C has local representatives of the teacher associations and Committee D consists of three local councillors. Each committee has one vote and there is provision for co-opted, non-voting members.

SACRE elects the Chair and Deputy Chair from amongst its membership. For 2012 - 2013 Councillor R E Walker, a representative of the Local Authority (LA), was re-elected Chair and Mrs B Goldstone, a representative of the Jewish community, was re-elected Deputy Chair.

The term of office of each of the members has been fixed at three years although they are eligible for re-appointment by their nominating body.

## Overview

### (i) National:

Religious Education began the year in a weak position:

- It had been excluded from the subjects that counted towards the English Baccalaureate (EBacc), a reduction in status which appeared to be having an effect on the number of students studying the subject at GCSE level. This would potentially have serious knock-on effects to the sixth form and key stage 3 and ultimately to the number studying the subject in Higher Education and by those coming into teaching.
- The slashing of RE places for post-graduate training of teachers and the removal of bursaries further threatened the supply of specialist RE teachers.
- Announcements of the changes to GCSE qualifications also led to the loss of credibility of the short-course GCSE in Religious Studies. This course had motivated increasing numbers of students to continue studying the subject to 16 but the decision not to count short courses in students' GCSE points' scores and in school league tables had led to fewer being examined in the course in 2012.
- There were also the uncertainties of national curriculum reform which excluded RE from the process. The review of RE was, however, being undertaken on sparse resources by the Religious Education Council of England and Wales.

Several organisations interested in the strength and future of Religious Education have been working to convince the Government of the need to provide more support:

- The Religious Education Council of England and Wales helped to establish an All-Party Parliamentary Group on RE, chaired by Stephen Lloyd MP. In March it produced a report as the result of an inquiry into teacher training and provision in RE. It reported on some depressing findings such as:
  - about a half of primary teachers and trainee teachers lack confidence in teaching RE;
  - about a half of subject leaders in primary schools lack the expertise or experience to undertake their role effectively;
  - over 50% of teachers of RE in secondary schools have no qualification or appropriate expertise in the subject
  - the inclusion of non-specialists in the total number of RE teachers given by the DfE gives the false impression that we have enough RE teachers and skews the statistics regarding the need to train more RE specialists.
  
- It also made recommendations to the DfE, Higher Education institutions, school leaders and to local authorities. It asked the latter to ensure sufficient resources are made available to enable SACREs to:
  - provide high quality RE support;
  - monitor the quality of the provision and staffing of RE; and
  - develop networks to share good practice in RE
  
- In July, Stephen Lloyd MP launched an Early day motion on Religious Education and Toleration, recognising the contribution the subject plays in fostering mutual understanding and respect between people with different religious and non-religious beliefs.
  
- The National Association of Teachers of Religious Education (NATRE) researched and published a report on RE in 679 self-selecting primary schools and are working on a similar report on secondary RE. The report concludes that:
  - Teachers are most likely to hold the position of RE subject leader for fewer than two years and least likely to continue beyond 5 years.
  - Most teachers regard the resourcing of RE as ‘adequate’ but schools with a religious character are more likely to describe resourcing as ‘more than adequate’ than schools without a religious character.
  - In just over three-fifths of schools, RE is taught solely by the class teacher. In other schools, classes are taught by, for example, a different teacher who specialises in RE, by a full or part time teacher who is covering the class-teacher’s planning, preparation and assessment time or by a teaching assistant.
  - The amount of time allocated to the teaching of RE varies considerably between schools but especially between schools with and without a religious character. In 37% of schools without a religious character, RE is allocated less than 45 minutes per week and in 10% of these schools, less than 30 minutes. In schools with a religious character, 13% of schools allocate less than 45 minutes per week to RE and 3% less than 30 minutes. There is very little difference between the time allocated to RE, History and Geography in the schools that responded.
  - The provision for RE in initial teacher training in RE is insufficient to allow beginning teachers to feel confident about delivering the subject.
  - In consequence, less than 5% of primary teachers described themselves as feeling very confident about teaching RE when they started teaching and 37% as only reasonably confident. In addition, only 47.7% of teachers currently teaching RE describe themselves as ‘very confident’.
  - The most popular resources teachers used to support planning and assessment are the local agreed syllabus (77.6% said they used it regularly), web-based resources (67.2%)

and local schemes of work (41.3%). Teachers also occasionally use material produced by NATRE/RE Today and QCA/QCDA units of work.

- Ofsted's three year 'long' report on RE was awaiting publication at the end of the academic year.. This is the distillation of themed inspections in 90 primary and 90 secondary schools and is thought to be likely to outline a decline in RE provision.

There have been a few more positive developments:

- During the year, Mr Gove announced that, although the EBacc would continue as originally envisaged, a more crucial measure of student performance would be based on the best eight GCSE subjects, which could include Religious Studies.
- Towards the end of the academic year there was a further hopeful sign. On 3 July the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, called together a large number bishops and Diocesan Directors of Education to talk about the Church of England's schools and other aspects of education policy. One of the speakers was Michael Gove. In answer to a question from the Bishop of Oxford, he said about RE, "I don't think I've done enough," and added, "I thought its [RE's] special status was protection enough." Time will tell whether any improvement will result.
- The RE Review has been taking place during 2012/13. A draft document was produced for consultation in June and July. The final, non-statutory guidance for the subject will be produced early in the autumn term.

## **(ii) Local**

This report, covering the year from September 2012 to August 2013, is the result of the continuing co-operation between the SACRE and Bury Children's Service. Information and statistics have been collected and collated by officers representing both groups.

The SACRE is keen to promote and protect Religious Education and collective worship within the Borough's schools. The membership takes its responsibilities seriously and the results of its efforts and constant encouragement are recorded here, including comments on visits to schools by SACRE members to observe acts of collective worship and monitor Religious Education.

Members support and attend a range of additional events, including the Holocaust Memorial Event.

SACRE values its links with other agencies in the local community and beyond. For many years visiting speakers have been welcomed to SACRE meetings to speak on matters concerning principles of faith, aspects of education and community cohesion. Mary Maguire spoke at the autumn term meeting on the Good Life Orphanage in Kenya and the links which two Bury schools have with the Orphanage. The spring term meeting was addressed by Melanie Griffin of Bury's Curriculum and Language Access Service. In the summer term, Revd Steve Williams and David Arnold, joint Chairs of the Greater Manchester Council of Christians and Jews spoke about the organisation. Presentations such as this have proved to be most valuable and will continue in future meetings.

Also in the summer term a very well received course was run for RE subject leaders in primary schools in combination with Manchester Diocese. Lat Blaylock, a nationally renowned figure in religious education led the day on Creativity and Enquiry in RE.

Bury SACRE remains conscious that there is still much to do and there are no signs of complacency amongst its members. Its outward and visible signs of action come as a result of the high degree of

inter-dependence and mutual responsibility between members, outside agencies and others, including schools, within the partnership.

## **Religious Education**

### **The Agreed Syllabus**

Community and voluntary controlled schools have to provide religious education in accordance with the local agreed syllabus. The present syllabus was adopted in November 2007 for five years. SACRE decided not to request a review during 2012/13 because of the review being undertaken by The Religious Education Council of England and Wales corresponding to the Government sponsored review of national curriculum subjects. This will be published in the autumn term 2013.

### **Standards in RE**

SACRE members have visited three primary schools during 2012-13, following their Ofsted inspections, to gather evidence on religious education. These visits indicate that standards are at least in line with national expectations.

GCSE results are provided in Appendix 1.

### **Full course GCSE**

911 students were entered for the full GCSE course in 2013, an increase from 840 in 2012. There was a reduction in the grades since the last year; the percentages of students achieving A\* or A grades fell from 35.5% in 2012 to 29.7% in 2013, compared with 30.9% nationally. Although dropping from last year's results, Bury schools outperformed schools nationally with grades at A\* to C; 74.5% in 2013 compared with 77% last year and 72.4% nationally. 98.9% of students entered in 2013 earned a grade at A\* to G as against 99.4% in 2012 and 95% nationally.

The Bury schools which provide most of the entries to the full course are the two Catholic High Schools and Bury Church of England High School. Well over half of the students (56.1%) entered at Elton High School and nearly half (48.5%) of those from Bury Church High School gained A or A\* grades. Castlebrook High and Phillips High Schools and St Gabriel's High also outperformed the national average at these top grades. Only Radcliffe Riverside and Tottington High did not enter any student for the full GCSE course; the other community high schools entered between 15 and 41.

All eleven students entered from The Phillips High School gained a pass at A\* to C, whilst Parrenthorn High School (88.2%), The Elton High School (87.8%), Bury Church High School (79.9%), St Gabriel's (79.4%), Castlebrook (78.6%), The Derby High School (75.6%) and St Monica's (72.8%) outperformed the national average.

All students entered at Broad Oak High, Bury Church High, Castlebrook High, Manchester Mesivta, Phillips High, St Gabriel's High, The Derby High and The Elton High Schools gained a pass at A\* to G.

### **Short course GCSE**

950 students were entered for the short course GCSE in Religious Studies, a considerable increase on the 2012 figure of 834. The combined numbers for GCSE entries of 1861 is the highest on record over recent years. Castlebrook, Parrenthorn, Phillips, Prestwich, Derby and Tottington High Schools entered the majority of their Year 11 students for the short course. Elton entered around half its Year 11 but Broad Oak, Manchester Mesivta, Radcliffe Riverside, St Monica's and Woodhey did not enter any students.

Bury schools' combined results show a reduction since 2012 and did not reach the national percentage passes at A\* and A (14.5 % compared with 18.7% nationally) or at A\* to C (49.5% compared with 53.9% nationally). However, Parrenthorn High and Elton High considerably outperformed the national averages at all levels.

### **Methods of teaching, choice of materials, teacher training**

The present agreed syllabus encourages a varied use of teaching methods, choice of materials and cross-curricular links, dependent upon the topic or theme being presented. It also requires that children learn about religion and learn from religion.

Gail Branch, a primary school headteacher and member of SACRE, has hosted network meetings to discuss teachers' needs in the light of the R.E. Syllabus, to provide resources for staff in schools and share good practice. Individual support has sometimes been provided for teachers in both primary and high schools.

The LA maintains a selection of RE resources at its local Development and Training Centre, which are available on loan to support the delivery of Religious Education and Collective Worship in schools. These include books, CDs, religious artifact and posters. Some schools take advantage of the materials on offer. The artefact boxes are in high demand, although many schools are continuing to develop their own collections.

There have been no complaints about RE to SACRE during the period of this report.

### **Collective Worship**

SACRE monitors the provision of collective worship using the slender evidence from OFSTED reports, which give an indication of the quality of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

In order to enhance the information on this issue, members of SACRE visited three primary schools in 2012 - 13 to observe acts of collective worship. The outcomes of these visits are reported to SACRE. An overview of the visits is in Appendix 2. Thanks are expressed to the headteachers and governors concerned for their willingness to be involved in this programme of visits, which have been of great value to members of SACRE.

There have been no complaints to SACRE about collective worship, nor has any application from schools for a determination lifting the "wholly, mainly or broadly Christian" requirement from collective worship been received during the year.

### **Links with other Agencies**

Bury SACRE is a member of the National Association of SACREs (NASACRE), although no-one attended this year's NASACRE conference. The NASACRE newsletter password is made available to members.

Close links are maintained with the Department of Children's Services in Bury and various local agencies including the Manchester Diocesan Board of Education, the Salford Diocesan Schools Commission, the Free Church Federal Council, the Jewish Representative Council and the Bury Racial Equality Council. SACRE also works closely with the local churches and religious groups, the Teachers' Associations and all other nominating bodies.



## **For Further Information**

If further information on any matter contained in this report is required, please contact:-  
John Wilson, Consultant to SACRE, e-mail: [j.r.wilson@cantab.net](mailto:j.r.wilson@cantab.net); tel: 015242 61594.

**APPENDIX 1:  
Religious Studies: GCSE Full Course**

	Number of Entries					%A* - A					%A* - C					%A* - G				
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Broad Oak High	73	63	67	35	<b>15</b>	4.1	3.2	6.0	5.7	<b>13.3</b>	46.6	52.4	46.3	60.0	<b>53.3</b>	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	<b>100.0</b>
Bury Church High	136	138	135	141	<b>134</b>	46.3	55.1	45.2	48.9	<b>48.5</b>	88.2	89.9	87.4	85.1	<b>79.9</b>	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	<b>100.0</b>
Castlebrook High	0	0	11	44	<b>28</b>			18.2	29.5	<b>39.3</b>			45.5	68.2	<b>78.6</b>			100.0	100.0	<b>100.0</b>
Manchester Mesivta	29	30	32	0	<b>18</b>	48.3	6.7	15.6		<b>27.8</b>	65.5	36.7	46.9		<b>61.1</b>	96.6	100.0	96.9		<b>100.0</b>
Parrenthorn High	11	0	10	14	<b>17</b>	45.5		20.0	28.6	<b>29.4</b>	90.9		80.0	100.0	<b>88.2</b>	100.0		100.0	100.0	<b>94.1</b>
Philips High	45	19	26	41	<b>11</b>	37.8	26.3	23.1	68.3	<b>36.4</b>	77.8	73.7	65.4	100.0	<b>100.0</b>	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	<b>100.0</b>
Prestwich High	17	0	42	17	<b>34</b>	5.9		0.0	5.9	<b>11.8</b>	47.1		26.2	52.9	<b>52.9</b>	94.1		88.1	88.2	<b>97.1</b>
Radcliffe Riverside High	0	16	0	0	<b>0</b>		18.8					56.3					100.0			
St Gabriels High	180	196	199	186	<b>209</b>	30.0	33.2	34.2	26.9	<b>31.6</b>	78.3	80.6	79.9	69.4	<b>79.4</b>	100.0	100.0	99.5	98.9	<b>100.0</b>
St Monica's High	208	214	212	225	<b>213</b>	41.3	43.9	50.0	39.1	<b>23.9</b>	87.0	84.6	90.1	80.4	<b>72.8</b>	99.5	99.5	99.5	100.0	<b>98.1</b>
The Derby High	36	42	22	50	<b>41</b>	41.7	26.2	13.6	6.0	<b>19.5</b>	86.1	71.4	81.8	58.0	<b>75.6</b>	94.4	100.0	100.0	100.0	<b>100.0</b>
The Elton High	21	19	55	48	<b>41</b>	47.6	68.4	60.0	43.8	<b>56.1</b>	100.0	89.5	96.4	79.2	<b>87.8</b>	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	<b>100.0</b>
Tottington High	0	14	21	0	<b>0</b>		57.1	28.6				78.6	90.5				100.0	100.0		
Woodhey High	27	29	34	28	<b>150</b>	37.0	37.9	32.4	53.6	<b>18.0</b>	92.6	96.6	94.1	96.4	<b>66.0</b>	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	<b>97.3</b>
<b>Borough</b>	<b>783</b>	<b>780</b>	<b>866</b>	<b>841</b>	<b>911</b>	<b>35.5</b>	<b>37.2</b>	<b>35.4</b>	<b>35.5</b>	<b>29.7</b>	<b>79.8</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>78.1</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>74.5</b>	<b>99.4</b>	<b>99.9</b>	<b>99.1</b>	<b>99.4</b>	<b>98.9</b>
<b>National</b>										<b>30.9</b>					<b>72.4</b>					<b>98.3</b>

## Religious Studies: GCSE Short Courses

	Number of entries			%A* - A			%A* -C			%A* - G		
	2011	2012	2013	2011	2012	2013	2011	2012	2013	2011	2012	2013
Broad Oak High	17	1	<b>0</b>	0.0	100.0		5.9	100.0		100.0	100.0	
Bury Church High	19	13	<b>19</b>	0.0	7.7	<b>0.0</b>	21.1	38.5	<b>10.5</b>	100.0	100.0	<b>89.5</b>
Castlebrook High	22	97	<b>121</b>	36.3	3.1	<b>5.8</b>	90.9	28.9	<b>35.5</b>	100.0	88.7	<b>95.0</b>
Manchester Mesivta	0	0	<b>0</b>									
Parrenthorn High	146	139	<b>142</b>	36.3	39.6	<b>29.6</b>	74.7	79.1	<b>75.4</b>	98.6	97.1	<b>100.0</b>
Phillips High	142	121	<b>147</b>	11.3	0.8	<b>6.1</b>	63.4	17.4	<b>29.3</b>	97.2	95.0	<b>95.2</b>
Prestwich High	0	0	<b>118</b>			<b>0.8</b>						<b>94.1</b>
Radcliffe Riverside High	14	0	<b>0</b>	0.0			14.3			100.0		
St Gabriel's High	3	0	<b>2</b>	0.0		<b>0.0</b>	33.3		<b>0.0</b>	100.0		<b>100.0</b>
St Monica's High	1	0	<b>0</b>	0.0			0.0			100.0		
The Derby High	88	94	<b>143</b>	2.3	2.1	<b>3.5</b>	18.2	30.9	<b>43.4</b>	95.5	96.8	<b>97.2</b>
The Elton High	74	77	<b>90</b>	18.9	10.4	<b>45.6</b>	79.7	46.8	<b>94.4</b>	100.0	100.0	<b>100.0</b>
Tottington High	137	144	<b>168</b>	13.1	36.1	<b>19.6</b>	68.6	84.7	<b>56.0</b>	97.8	99.3	<b>98.8</b>
Woodhey High	142	148	<b>0</b>	38.0	8.1		84.5	45.3		98.6	95.9	
<b>Borough</b>	<b>805</b>	<b>834</b>	<b>950</b>	<b>20.5</b>	<b>16.2</b>	<b>14.5</b>	<b>64.1</b>	<b>50.2</b>	<b>49.5</b>	<b>98.1</b>	<b>96.3</b>	<b>97.1</b>
<b>National</b>						<b>18.7</b>			<b>53.9</b>			<b>95.0</b>

## APPENDIX 2

### SACRE VISITS TO SCHOOLS TO OBSERVE COLLECTIVE ACTS OF WORSHIP

Visits were made to the following schools by members of SACRE.

School	Date	Attendees
Sedgley Park Primary School	17 <sup>th</sup> September 2012	Cllr R E Walker
Holly Mount RC Primary School	22 <sup>nd</sup> February 2013	Cllr R E Walker Mrs G Branch
Heaton Park Primary School	28 <sup>th</sup> February 2013	Mrs B Goldstone Mrs G Branch

### COMMENTARY

SACRE thanks the headteachers, staff and pupils of the schools that several members have been privileged to visit this year. They have observed and taken part in memorable acts of worship on each occasion.

A notable feature has been the involvement of children in planning and leading several of the acts of worship observed and their fulsome participation overall. It is clear that they wholeheartedly enjoy and benefit from the worship the school provides. They join in any singing with enthusiasm and concentrate well on presentations. Children in the schools visited show a good knowledge of information given both earlier in the worship and on previous occasions.

Each school arranges worship to suit the age and background of the communities they serve and fulfil the legal requirements. Several schools receive very valuable, wholehearted involvement from the local priest. The schools make good use of prayers, music and visual aids in helping pupils and students to focus on the worship theme and the environment is used well to enable the appropriate atmosphere for worship. Children were well behaved and treated the occasion with the respect it deserved; they are quiet whilst entering the school hall, waiting and leaving. In all three schools, collective worship contributes well to the children's spiritual, moral and social development.

## APPENDIX 3

### METROPOLITAN BOROUGH OF BURY

#### MEMBERSHIP OF SACRE 2012 – 2013

Members could attend a maximum of three meetings during the period of this report. Some members also attend the Effectiveness sub-committee. The first number listed shows the number of attendances at full SACRE meetings; the second number records attendance at the Effectiveness group meetings, which takes place during the working day and is therefore difficult for teachers and those working to attend.

#### Committee A

##### Roman Catholic Church

(3 members)

Mrs B Hindman (3 + 0 attendances)

Mrs J Heffernan (2 + 2 attendances)

Miss J Knowles (1 + 1 attendances)

##### Free Church Federal Council

(3 members)

Pastor B Millar (3 + 0 attendance)

Mr A Beedie (3 + 0 attendances)

vacancy

##### Jewish Faith (2 members)

Mrs B Goldstone 2 + 2 (attendances)

Mr R Kanter (1 + 0 attendance)

##### Muslim Faith (2 members)

Mrs R Fatima (0 + 0 attendance)

Naheeda Kouser (0 + 0 attendance)

#### Committee B

##### Church of England

(3 members)

Mrs J Moore (2 + 0 attendances)

Mrs S Farnworth (0 + 0 attendance)

Revd Alison Hardy (0 + 0 attendance)

#### Committee C

##### Teachers' Associations

(5 members)

NUT: Mrs C Batten (0 + 0 attendance)

NAS/UWT: Mrs G Branch (0 + 1 attendance)

NAHT: vacancy

ATL: Mr W. Elf (1 + 0 attendance)

ASCL: Mr D Frost (0 + 0 attendance)

#### Committee D

##### Local Authority (3 members)

Councillor R E Walker (3 + 3 attendances)

Councillor K Audin (0 + 2 attendances)

vacancy

#### Officers (2011-2012)

Mr I Chambers, Assistant Director of Learning, Bury MBC

Mrs C Crisp, Clerk to SACRE

Mr J Wilson, Part-time Consultant to SACRE,