

# Swindon SACRE

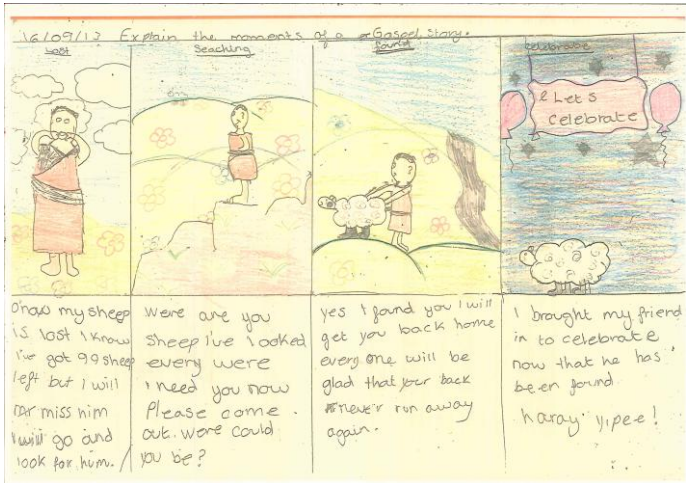
(Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education)

## Annual Report 2012 -13



Year 7 students from Dorcan Academy explore the symbolism used in Indian dance

Year 3 work from St Francis VA Church of England School  
"Explain the meaning of a gospel story"



Year 3 children from Bridlewood Primary School visit a church to find out how Christians worship God

## **Chair's Introduction**

Swindon is well known as a railway town (if not THE Railway Town). Home of the Great Western Railway or as GWR was sometimes known, God's Wonderful Railway. But why Swindon ? Supposedly it was because Swindon marked the halfway point between London and Bristol - and before geographers write in - halfway in term of power and fuel used. It became a place of innovation, invention and high technology.

We are still a town of innovation and technology, with hi-tech manufacturing and modern service industries sitting alongside the general services needed to keep towns and village running, amidst a thin curtain of agriculture.

Yet Swindon's history predates Mr. I. K. Brunel. The area around Swindon had long been a place of long journeys, the Celts using the river systems, many generations travelling the Ridgeway, both route-ways from the great spiritual centres of Stonehenge and Woodhenge as well as our more local centre of Avebury. The local countryside includes the great white horses. We also sit just above the old Great West Road (A4) and on the modern equivalent, the M4.

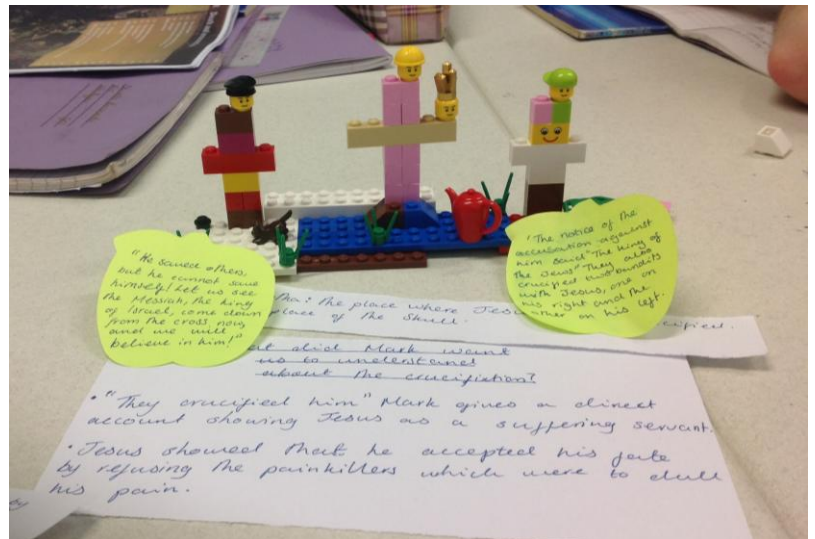
Though much of Swindon Borough is new in historic terms, up in Wode Hill (Highworth) we have a parish church yard in which a Civil War skirmish took place and one of the oldest congregational churches in the area (now the United Reformed Church) and overlooking the main town we have the remains of Blunsdon Abbey. The massive growth of the late nineteenth and late twentieth centuries sits within this older context.

Religious Education and Collective Worship, the parts of school life for which SACRE has responsibility, are about bringing together the old and the new. About helping each generation of children and young people, whether they have a personal religious faith or not, understand the key world faiths, other faiths and all the ethical and social issues which the whole of humanity seek to live with or challenge. What can Abraham and the Buddha say about nuclear weapons or abortion ? Can we listen to the Kings Saul and David about friendship, leadership or ethnic cleansing ? So how do sacred works written down hundreds or thousands of years ago speak to and influence people in (what some people call) this twenty-first century ? Or how do those pupils and students with non-religious views address major ethical issues and everyday choices ? It is about equipping the young of Swindon to live in a time when the growing majority of the global population are people of faith yet in our own national context it is seen as less important and valid. A time when some of the world's nations and conflicts still are drawn on religious lines, yet most religious leaders would preach a message of peace. To be able to understand the other and their neighbours, wherever they are from and whatever they believe.

Religious Education remains an entitlement of all school and academy pupils from Year R to Year 13 and an option which has to be made available to those who want it in FE colleges. Daily acts of collective worship (whatever that entails) remain a legal entitlement for all school and academy pupils. However reports to government and our own local understanding show that provision of RE and collective worship is not meeting these requirements. Government has no plans to address this, but we are keen to support our local schools and academies in this area. Indeed, we are grateful that the local authority and the local academies continue to work together with us to support all the pupils in this area.

This report contains information about: our SACRE meetings; teacher network meetings; exam results; work from local pupils and students. Mark Cawte

Year 10 students explain the significance of the crucifixion for Christians by using Lego.



## Executive Summary

The report meets the requirements of the 1988 Education Act, which states that:

- 'The council shall in each year publish a report of their functions and any action taken by representative groups on the council during the preceding year.'
- The report is required to specify any matters in respect of which the council has given advice to the authority, and the nature of that advice.

The key function of SACRE is to advise the Local Authority on RE in accordance with the agreed syllabus.<sup>1</sup>

The composition of SACRE is set out in legislation.

The four groups or committees represent the following interests within the local community.

These are the people that have served for the year September 2012 to June 2013 or for a part of that period.

- **Committee A**  
**Christian Denominations, Other Religions or Religious Denominations**  
 Mr Tony McAteer, Catholic Community  
 Mr Arun Bedi, Sikh Community  
 Mr David Burbidge, Baptist Church  
 Mr Mark Cawte, Methodist Church (Chair from December 2012)  
 Reverend David Howell, Swindon Evangelical Alliance  
 Mr M S Khan, Muslim Community  
 Mrs Sarah Lane Cawte, United Reformed Church  
 Mr Dinesh Patel, Hindu Community,
- **Committee B**      **The Church of England**  
 Reverend Beth Brown  
 Miss Janet French

<sup>1</sup> Section 391(1)(a), Education Act 1996

- Reverend Norma McKemey  
 Ms Steph Mundin  
 Mrs Penny Summers
- **Committee C      Teacher Association Representatives**  
 Ms Catherine Lomax  
 Mrs Tracy Mason  
 Mrs Victoria Misselbrook  
 Miss Lottie Rowe  
 Mrs Mandy Sandleton  
 Ms Mel Shepherd  
 Mr Paul Sunners
  - **Committee D      The Local Authority.**  
 Councillor Alan Bishop  
 Councillor Doreen Dart (Chair until October 2012)  
 Councillor Claire Ellis  
 Councillor Fionuala Foley  
 Councillor Russell Holland  
 Councillor Fay Howard  
 Councillor James Robbins
- Support Officers:**  
 Ms Katy Staples, SACRE Adviser, 0117 9175583,  
[katy.staples@bristoldiocese.org](mailto:katy.staples@bristoldiocese.org)  
 Ms Sarah Foulkes, School Improvement Adviser  
 Mr Paddy Bradley, Director of Schools and Learning  
 Miss Sarah Lawrence Committee Officer  
 Stuart Figini Current Committee Officer  
 Tel: 01793 463612  
 Email: [sfigini@swindon.gov.uk](mailto:sfigini@swindon.gov.uk)

Members are nominated by appropriate organisations and appointments confirmed by the Local Authority. Other members may be co-opted.

### **SACRE met on four occasions during the Academic year 2012 - 13**

All meetings were quorate.

Tuesday 25th September 2012

At St Francis Church of England VA Primary School, Aitken Road, Taw Hill, SN25 1UH

Key Agenda items were:

- Religious Education at St Francis School and the role of the Community Link support worker in supporting RE
- National developments in RE
- A SACRE self assessment activity to make the next Development Plan
- Update on RE Network meetings

Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> December 2012

Committee Room 3, Civic Offices

Key Agenda items were:

- A tribute and memorial for Councillor Doreen Dart (Chair of SACRE)
- The election of a new Chair and Vice-Chair
- REC (Religious Education Council) Draft Review
- National developments in RE

- Feedback from Network Meetings
- SACRE Development Plan

Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> March 2013  
 Committee Room 6, Civic Offices  
 Key Agenda items were

- SACRE Annual Report and Development Plan
- National developments in RE
- Feedback from Network meetings

Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> June 2013  
 Committee Room 6, Civic Offices

- Membership update
- Examples of the activities that happen in RE Teacher Network meetings
- National developments in RE including the final comments on the draft RE Review sent to the REC
- SACRE Development Plan - and setting up sub groups
- Feedback from network meetings
- A fond farewell was offered to Sarah Lawrence who had acted as Clerk to SACRE for ten years

## **Challenges and opportunities that lie ahead**

### **Challenges** for SACRE include

- Offering continuing support for RE within a limited budget.
- Keeping alive a local community of shared best practice and enthusiasm amongst a changing landscape of school providers
- On going need to monitor achievements in RE effectively
- To ensure that the work of SACRE is understood by different stakeholders in Swindon.

### **Opportunities** include

- The enthusiasm and professionalism of SACRE members. This is exemplified by members who have volunteered and worked hard on sub-committees.
- Continued commitment and dedication of teachers as shown by attendance at Network meetings and other CPD opportunities offered by SACRE

## **1. Standards and quality of Religious Education (RE) Provision**

### **1a. Compliance and time allocation for RE**

The Locally Agreed Syllabus sets out the required number of hours for each pupil in relation to the delivery of RE, which is 36 hours in Key Stage 1 and is 45 hours per year for Key Stage 2, 3 and 4.

With the lack of information available through Ofsted reporting, it is very difficult to determine whether community schools and academies are fully compliant with the statutory requirements for RE.

## Religious Studies at GCSE (Key Stage 4) and A-Levels, 2012/13

### GCSE results (end of Key Stage 4 results)

A total of 1,148 end of Year 11 pupils were entered for Religious Studies at GCSEs (both Full and Short courses), an increase in the previous year but still below numbers in 2008/09.

Religious Studies GCSEs entries in Swindon	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
GCSE Full course	257	286	323	370	393
GCSE Short course	1051	878	765	610	755
Total	1308	1164	1088	980	1148

The table above shows that 2012/13 recorded the highest number of pupils entered for Full GCSE courses over a 5 year period. All secondary schools entered students for Religious Studies examinations in 2012/13. The largest numbers of examination entries were from St Joseph's. Only Commonweal and Dorcan did not enter pupils for the Full GCSE course.

In terms of pupils entered for Religious Studies GCSEs (Full and Short course) as a proportion of all end of Year 11 pupils, 2012/13 saw an increase in the proportion against the previous year but lower figures than in 2008/09. Comparative data suggests that more pupils across England are entered for Religious Studies GCSEs.

Entered for Religious Studies GCSEs as proportion of all Key Stage 4 pupils	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Swindon	58%	54%	49%	43%	50%
England	67%	67%	66%	65%	64%

In terms of proportion achieving an A\*-C GCSE, the table below shows an increase in attainment for both Full and Short GCSEs in 2012/13 when compared to the previous year. It also shows Swindon with a higher proportion of A\*-C results in Full GCSE courses.

Achieved A*-C	GCSE Full Course					GCSE Short Course				
	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Swindon	81%	79%	84%	73%	79%	54%	49%	48%	45%	51%
England	72%	72%	72%	73%	72%	52%	52%	51%	50%	50%

*As a percentage of pupils at the end of key stage 4 entering the subject*

## GCE A and AS Level Religious Studies

A total of 55 students were entered for Religious Studies at A level and AS level, lower than in the previous year. The largest number of examination entries came from New College.

Religious Studies A/AS level entries in Swindon	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
A level	29	36	49	47	36
AS level	14	12	19	20	19
Total	43	48	68	67	55

In terms of pupils achieving A\*-B in A level, Swindon had higher results in 2012/13 than in the previous year and higher than the national average. In terms of pupils achieving A\*-B in AS level, Swindon had lower results in 2012/13 than in the previous year and lower than the national average.

Please note that percentages can be affected by the small number of A/AS level entries in Religious Studies each year.

Achieved A*-B	A level					AS level				
	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Swindon	59%	36%	39%	32%	58%	21%	17%	42%	40%	16%
England	53%	50%	53%	52%	52%	31%	30%	30%	30%	29%

*As a percentage of pupils at the end of A/AS level study entering the subject*

### 1c Standards and achievement quality of teaching and quality of leadership and management of RE

There are no methods for collecting verifiable evidence of levels of achievement in RE, other than through public examination results. There are no opportunities to access sufficient information to make a well-substantiated judgement on the quality of RE teaching or leadership and management of RE in Swindon schools.

Support has been offered to both Primary and Secondary RE teachers about the management of RE and key national documents have been shared, modelled and discussed during network meetings.

### 2. Managing the SACRE and partnership with the local authority and other key stakeholders

SACRE members have been offered training at the SW SACRE conference in Dillington House but unfortunately no members except the adviser were able to attend.

The LA officers Sarah Foulkes and Paddy Bradley have attended SACRE meetings and have been kept informed of national and local developments in RE.

Local councillors play an informed and supportive role in all SACRE meetings. The diverse constituents of SACRE ensure that the breadths of beliefs held in Swindon are represented and links to those key stakeholders are sustained.

## **2a SACRE development**

### **CPD offered.**

All Secondary Schools in Swindon are now academies, network meetings are financially supported by SACRE and attendance at these meetings by RE colleagues has remained at a level constant to the time prior to these schools becoming academies.

Three of these meetings were held in the academic year 2011 – 12.

Three network meetings were also held for primary colleagues.

<b>Primary /Secondary/Venue</b>	<b>Date/Topic</b>
Lydiard Park Secondary Academy	26/9/12 Sharing good practice - examples from colleagues best units of work
Lydiard Park Secondary Academy	16/1/13 Assessment and progression in RE : Providing the right challenge?
Lydiard Park Secondary Academy	17/4/13 Ethics and RE : using the media – making lessons relevant and rigorous
Primary Goddard Park Primary School	4/10/12 How to be an effective RE subject leader
Primary Orchid Vale Primary School	31/1/13 Assessment and challenge in RE: Providing the right challenge?
Primary Liden Primary School	7/5/13 Compelling and creative ideas in RE

### **Further Training signposted for teachers**

Three secondary colleagues attended the Wiltshire Secondary RE Conference

Five colleagues both primary and secondary accessed the Bristol and South Gloucestershire annual RE conference for RE teachers

## **3. The Effectiveness of the Local Agreed Syllabus**

### **3a**

The update for the Local Agreed Syllabus was launched in June 2011 and so this has been a year of further consolidation. With limited capacity to observe teaching and learning it is hard to effectively evaluate the effectiveness of the Local Agreed Syllabus.

## **4. Collective Worship**

Last year a central focus for SACRE was Collective worship when the guidance document

“A Time to Breathe” was written and circulated.

This continues to be an important inspirational resource for Swindon Schools.

There were no determinations in force during the reporting year.

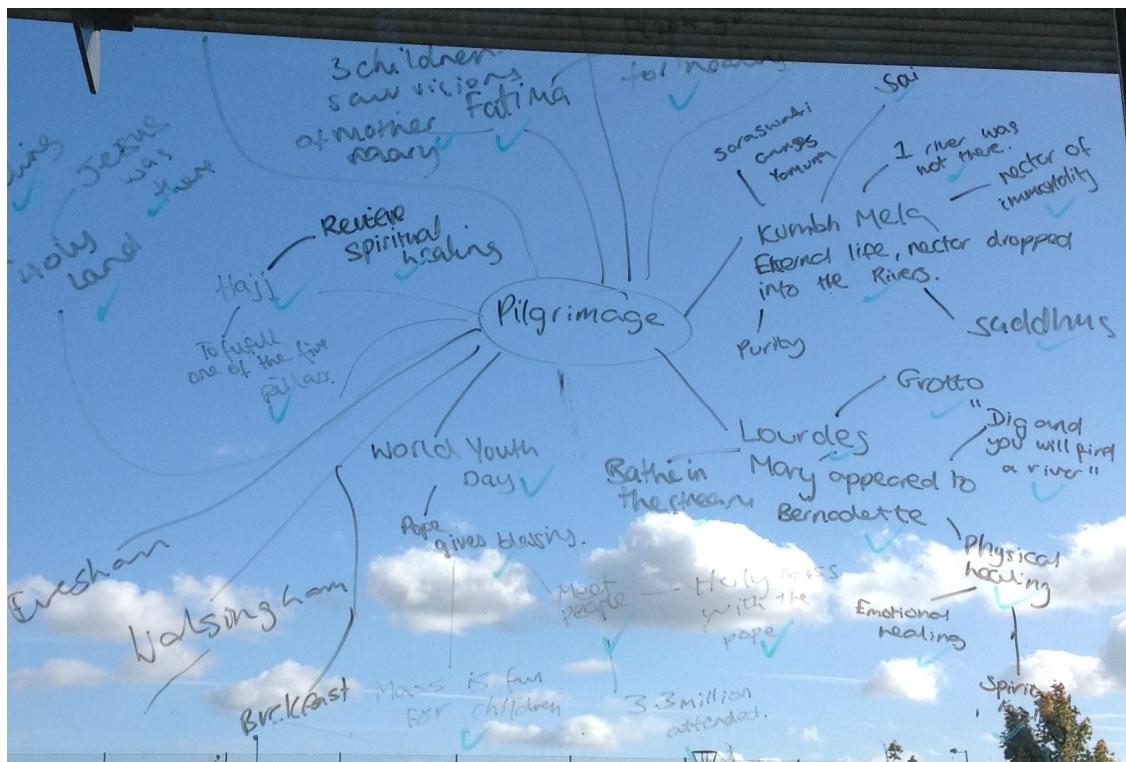
No formal complaints or other matters were referred to SACRE this year.



## 5. SACRE as a representative effective diverse community

There is an active and participatory ethos and sense of community within Swindon SACRE, the quality of debate, spiritual insight and meticulous attention to detail has been observed throughout full committee meetings and in working parties.

2012 -13 has been a sustained year of faithful commitment for Swindon SACRE in the face of movement and flux. The end of the year saw us lose an incredibly thorough diligent and informed clerk in the person of Sarah Lawrence. The academic year started with a time of huge sadness and at the loss of our well respected Chair. SACRE has with resilience continued to serve Swindon conscientiously, making reasoned decisions to support the children of Swindon in their understanding and appreciation of the place of belief in our world.



Year 9 students at St Joseph's make revision mind maps by writing on classroom windows with whiteboard pens