

Luton SACRE Annual report , 2014-15

SACRE support and training for Luton teachers.

The Agreed Syllabus

This year has been the third year of the implementation of the new Agreed Syllabus, 'Identities, Meanings and Values'. The SACRE has continued to support schools to embed the syllabus through the activities described below.

RE Today supporting SACRE and Luton schools

Lat Blaylock and other RE Today colleagues have supported the SACRE at all the meetings with information on national initiatives and reports on the work they have provided for Luton RE teachers and heads of department.

Lat has led network meetings for Primary and Secondary colleagues, whole training days and in March 2014 he led two days of workshops for Year 5 and Year 8. All of the networks and day conferences have been highly regarded by the participants with especially enthusiastic responses from the children who couldn't wait to go back to school to share what they had learnt.

See Appendix A for a summary of the work of RE Today in the financial year 2014-15.

Luton Council of Faiths (LCoF)

In Luton we are very fortunate to have a highly respected and proactive Council of Faiths which works tirelessly in the town to promote inter-faith dialogue and community cohesion. The SACRE contributed to some of the financial costs of the overarching work and activities and intends to support LCoF to develop more activities in 2015-16, with advisory support from RE Today.

Report by Mohammed Ryad Khodabocus, LCoF

Last year saw its challenges with a number of international conflicts affecting the UK and filtering down into the borough. With its umbrella role of promoting harmony in a diverse town LCoF had to engage in a number of conflict resolution issues in regards to the Gaza war in July 2014, the war in Syria, the Peshawar killings and local situations e.g the EDL demo on November 22nd in Luton. Having seen youth active participation in various demonstrations, the preventative work of the organisation is ongoing, bringing clarity into the local context, developing innovative and pioneering ways of enabling communities to engage and befriend each other. The sad event of Charlie Hebdo and rise of Far Right ideology in the world, especially in Europe, is pushing LCoF towards active local debates around Freedom of Expression versus Freedom to offend!

LCoF aims to blur the boundaries between school and real life so as to make the learning experience of young people as productive as possible fitting in very well with the RE Agreed Syllabus 'Respect for all for a Harmonious Diverse Town'. Mohammad Ryad Khodabocus, Community Relations Development Officer for LCoF, a co-opted SACRE member, has worked with schools on many projects this year, delivering projects, lessons and assemblies which complement the Agreed Syllabus. He has worked with schools on units such as:

- What makes some places Special? - facilitating visits to places of worship and engaging with other Faith Based schools. It is also to be noted that this year, following the 'Trojan Horse' issue, many Islamic Faith based schools sought the help of LCoF to develop their syllabus.
- Why should we care for the Earth? -sustaining the development of Dallow Downs as a resource for guided walks for schools. Schools in the area are actively using the space and a family picnic was organised by LCoF with 400 attendees. Primary schools in Dallow ward played a great role in marketing the event in summer.
Based on the Dallow Downs's model a new piece of work has started in Cohen's Yard Park in Bury Park where All Saints Church and Medina Mosque have joined forces under the Near Neighbours project. The first phase started with a community consultation around the area. This followed by a cleaning up of the park and litter picking with 40 people attending including school children living in the area. Children also planted seeds in pots which they took home to look after and then bring back in two months to plant in the park. More of such engagements are planned in the summer.
- Who is an inspiring person? -facilitating religious representative speakers for schools which is on-going when requested by a school.
- Fairness and Justice -delivering assemblies and supporting schools to become fully Fair Trade.

In 2014, Luton took the challenge to organise the regional Fairtrade Conference at the University of Bedfordshire which was hugely successful. Luton sixth formers, Stopsley High School students and university students took active part in volunteering for the conference. They also video interviewed local MP Kelvin Hopkins which was shown on the day. St Joseph Catholic Junior school stole the show right at the start of the launch of the conference by presenting a play around Fair-trade. The event hosted prestigious international and national producers and speakers including the CEO of Fairtrade foundation. Luton is highly respected in the region and nationally for its Community Development Work through a multi-faith approach around Fair-trade.

- How to make our town more respectful- The 2014 Peace Walk was also unique working with 3 primary schools (Farley Junior, Hillborough Junior and St Margaret of Scotland Primary) in the Farley ward. Schools worked towards a display of art in Farley Community centre, decorating the commercial square in Farley with peace messages, tree planting at Farley vicarage and of course visiting the different places of worship.
- RE and Inclusion and the Importance of RE (for e.g. Stay Healthy, etc): LCoF developed Archery in Seven Primary Schools and Luton Sixth Form College. This is a 3 year programme funded by Big Lottery. LCoF stretched its resources to schools to include them as part of a wider community programme. The aim was to engage those who would not be confident in popular sports and to encourage girls to keep active and healthy. Archery was identified as a sport that presses the religious motivational button for many as it is ancient, quoted and glorified in various scriptures and traditions. Archery also ties into the wider English culture. Despite limitations in terms of equipment, the results were startling. All schools fed back and here is what they said:

"It has helped break barriers for some children as it gave them a common activity to share with others" Farley Primary School

"Being able to see they can achieve something in this area has improved confidence and helped them to make new friends" Sundon Park Junior School

"It has helped the children with their concentration skills, hand eye coordination and body posture" and enabled them to "make friends in different year groups and from different cultures" Foxdell Junior

The biggest highlight of this year was the Community Archery Game hosted by World and Paralympics Archery Champion Danielle Brown MBE. Thirty-six new archers from 4 Luton Clubs (Shooting Stars under Beech Hill Council of Churches, Golden Arrow under Islamic Home Tuition, OM Group at Luton Hindu Temple and Luton Sixth Form) took part with 6 students from Luton Sixth Form (LSF) helping as volunteer Instructors. One of the LSF students achieved the best archer of the day award and had the honour to shoot with Danielle Brown. The day drew 150 attendees across Luton including local dignitaries.

Luton Churches Education Trust (LCET)

LCET has worked successfully in Luton high schools for many years. Last year the SACRE supported LCET's new ThinkTank project and Spiritual Awareness accreditation. SACRE and LCET's successful joint bid for a NASACRE award has provided more funding to enable the project to further expand.

Youth Ambassadors, report by Alex Drew

Last year we were able to launch our Thinktank youth ambassadors in 2 key schools, Icknield and Lealands, where we learnt a lot in our initial piloting. With the help of the funding from Luton SACRE and an award from NASACRE we have been able to extend Thinktank to an additional school and there is now a Thinktank youth panel at Putteridge High School as well.

The youth ambassadors have monthly lunchtime workshops and the students are benefiting from direct input into their own learning and development. They are also impacting the thinking of their school's Spiritual Moral Social Cultural curriculum. We were able to put through 18 students in total for the Developing Spiritually accredited course. Each student goes away with a level 2 OCN qualification completed; the very first of its kind in the country. We see this as a very exciting new development, which we would like to continue to share more widely in the year ahead.

"Thinktank provides unique opportunities for enriching RE and community cohesion. All of the work they do with LCET, ThinkTank included, helps them to understand different perspectives and ways of thinking and this inputs into their RE, especially at GCSE level." Mr Ward, Assistant Head, Lealands

“They approached things differently, they always do at LCET. I learnt so much about myself, I even changed who I was hanging out with, because I realised some of my friends weren’t helping my self-esteem and I thought about it as part of a session about living a fulfilled life”. Year 10 pupil

“LCET have also been running a Spirituality course with a number of year 9 and 10 students. This has provided some of them with the confidence to discuss religious and spiritual ideas with those outside of their friendship group. During their time they have completed tasks examining themselves and what strengths and weaknesses they have. This has been eye opening for many students and this will be beneficial to them throughout their school career.” Mrs Aston, Head of RE, Icknield High School

“The students are benefiting from ThinkTank tremendously. They have spoken about how they enjoy meeting with other pupils from different years and schools and discussing spiritual and religious themes. They are looking forward to spending time with students from other schools on the residential.” Mr Ward, Assistant Head, Lealands High School

Traded Services support for schools

Luton Traded Services have a number of RE consultants that they are able to commission for specific work in individual schools on request. Schools should contact Katherine Shieber at the Legrave Centre 548020 if they wish to access bespoke training or advice.

‘Collective Worship in Schools’ Conference

Several Luton schools attended The Diocese of St Albans’ training ‘**Collective Worship in Schools**’ at Marston Mortaine in November 2014. This training was led by Helen Matter.

RE Quality Mark (REQM)

SACRE continues to promote the RE Quality Mark. The REQM has been developed to celebrate high quality RE, provide schools with a framework to capture good practice and to develop whole school commitment to excellent teaching and learning in RE.

The REQM has 5 strands:

- Learners and Learning
- Teachers and teaching
- Subject Leadership
- Continuing Professional Development (CPD)
- Curriculum

Last year the SACRE agreed to subsidize fifty percent of the application cost of four schools each year based on a first come basis. Lealands High School and Foxdell Infant School received a subsidy in 2013-14. Wenlock Junior, St Margaret of Scotland Catholic Primary and Hillborough Junior received a subsidy in 2014-15. The SACRE welcomes requests for a subsidy from more Luton schools. Further information is available on the website www.reqm.org or by email admin@reqm.org.

We are delighted to announce that In February 2015, Foxdell Infant school achieved their bronze RE Quality Mark validating their creative and robust teaching of RE. See Appendix B for full report by Foxdell Infant School.

Luton SACRE

SACRE Meetings

Three full SACRE meetings were held during the period covered by this report. The minutes of meetings can be requested from Louise Browne at louise.browne@luton.gov.uk. The SACRE has continued to meet in education or religious establishments. This year we have met in the newly transformed education building, The Legrave Centre, Challney High School for Boys and Luton Sixth Form College. Thank you to all of our hosts.

Determinations

In the autumn of 2014 the Clerk wrote to all Luton schools and academies to remind them about the Determination process. LA schools need to apply to the SACRE; academies need to apply to the Secretary of State via the Education Funding Authority (EFA). A Determination means that the school is exempt from the legal expectation that the school's collective worship should be "wholly or broadly of a Christian nature". Beech Hill Primary School renewed their Determination in October 2014 and Denbigh Primary renewed theirs in February 2015.

SACRE Website

The SACRE web page is constantly updated with local courses and national documents. The webpage also includes information on the SACRE and links to useful resources. Our RE resources (Baha'i, Buddhism, Christianity, Festivals/Celebrations and World Religions, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, Sikhism) are also catalogued on the web page; they are available for loan to schools.

http://www.luton.gov.uk/Education_and_learning/schools_and_colleges/sacre.

2013-4 Religious Studies GSCE results

The half GCSE/short courses are no longer included in school performance measures. The percentage of children in Luton High schools that sat the full GCSE RE was 66.3. Only 20.3% attained A+ compared to 27.9% nationally, and only 64.1%, (2% below 2013-4) attained C+ compared to 70% nationally.

SACRE Membership

I would like to thank the SACRE members for their commitment; both attendance and membership continue to be strong. We have approached the faith groups where there are vacancies but we have not been able to fill them so far. We would like to thank Sylvia Keddo (Majority Black Churches) Sue Moss (Early Years), Angela Wallington (Special Schools), who have recently resigned, for their contribution to SACRE over the past few years.

I would like to express my appreciation to the Clerk to SACRE, Rosalind Paul, and the Secretary to SACRE, Louise Browne, for their conscientious preparation of each meeting and for commissioning high quality RE work for schools as outlined in the development plan of 2014-15 and the new development plan 2015-16.

Current members include:

Group A: Christian and other religious denominations

Stephen O'Brien and Sinead Killian (Roman Catholic)
Michael Singleton (Vice Chair) and Lawrence Patterson (Free Church)
Marvalyn Chambers, Eluria Morgan (Black Churches)
A Malik, Sujel Miah, and Massood Akhtar (Islam)
Ramnikbhai T Gohil (Hinduism)
Vacancy (Sikhism)
Hayley Cohen (Judaism)
Vacancy (Buddhism)

Group B: Church of England

Jane Chipperton
Jane Lipman
Janet Mackenzie

Group C: Teachers

John Williams (Headteacher) - Chair
Noshin Hussain (Secondary)
Debbie Williams (Primary)
Elif Ucar (Further Education)
Tricia Penfold (Early Years)
Vacancy (Special)

Group D: Local Authority

Cllr Mahmood Hussain
Cllr Gilbert Campbell
Cllr Andrew Malcolm
Cllr Tahir Khan

Group E (no voting powers): Co-opted members:

Ryad Khodabocus (Luton Council of Faiths)
Farzad Forghani (Baha'i Faith)
Alex Drew (Luton Churches Education Trust)

LA Officers

Rosalind Paul (Clerk to SACRE)
Louise Browne (Secretary)

John Williams
Chair, Luton SACRE

Appendix A

RE Today Consultancy with Luton SACRE 2014-15



This short report summarises the activity and achievements of the partnership between RE Today and Luton SACRE in 2014-2015

We have engaged in the following activities:

Activity	Outcomes
Attendance at 3 SACRE meetings and engagement with the SACRE agendas and projects, offering advice and national perspectives	SACRE has access to national advice Projects are reported to SACRE in detail, and open to question
Provision of whole day training for primary teachers on learning from Hindus, Muslims and Jewish people	Raising standards of primary learning Practicing inclusion and our community cohesion policies
Provision of whole day training for primary teachers on assessing RE	Raising standards of primary learning Enabling teachers of RE to contribute to assessment development in their own schools
Programming and running three primary network meetings	Average attendance nearly 30 High impact: evaluations over 90% rating events 'very good'.
Programming and running two secondary teacher network meetings	Attendances small: 12 and 6 (though apologies received from other schools and teachers) All evaluations rated the events as 'very good' (the top grade)
Programming and running a primary enrichment day for gifted and talented pupils from Year 5 All attending teachers received a pack of materials to use Pupils returned to school to run lessons + events as 'learning leaders' themselves.	Attendance of nearly 100 Evaluations: all good or very good A dynamic opportunity to do RE together on 'Respect for all' themes, also worked as INSET
Programming and running a secondary enrichment day for gifted and talented pupils from Year 8 on 'evil and how to reduce it.' All attending teachers received a pack of materials to use Pupils returned to school to run lessons + events as 'learning leaders' themselves.	Attendance of 40 (a disappointment that not more schools engaged with this – better promotion needed next year, and more advance notice – dates already proposed for Feb 2016) Evaluations: all good or very good A dynamic opportunity to do RE together also worked as INSET (teachers rated it VG)
Development of guidance and support materials on British Values, based on a 'survey monkey' to all Luton schools to assess needs and monitor provision, linked to LA current priorities.	Guidance drafted and submitted to the LA 20.3.15 Survey still open to responses in April 2015 Guidance to be finalised and published after survey is closed and at next SACRE meeting
Development and planning of 'Excellence in RE' project for ten primary schools. Plans all in place for this project which will run over 3.5 days later in 2015.	Effectiveness to be monitored and reported to SACRE in the next 6 months

Notes:

- Each training event and network meeting has led to the circulation of classroom resources to all those teachers attending – enabling lessons to be run ‘the next day’ and resourcing teachers with quality materials
- Our initiatives on British Values and Excellent RE, started in 2014-15 and ongoing, make Luton a well connected and nationally admired SACRE
- Some work this year has been fully drafted, but will be published in the next financial year. Some work is in final draft stage awaiting outcomes from consultation before publication.

Lat Blaylock, March 2015

Appendix B– Foxdell Infant School's REQM Bronze award, report by Debbie Mitchell

The staff of Foxdell Infant School took the decision to apply for the Religious Education Quality Mark for two reasons. Firstly, we felt that it would be encouraging and empowering for our good practice and hard work in this area of the curriculum to be recognised and validated; we also recognised that it would be an invaluable opportunity to determine actions for the future development of our religious education practice.

With a school population from a mainly Muslim background, we pride ourselves on our delivery of an RE curriculum encompassing a range of religious beliefs – Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism, Judaism and Christianity. The children have been fortunate enough to have had visitors from these different religious communities talk to them about their faith and their traditions. We also mark some special days, such as Chinese New Year, when we arrange for our school kitchen staff to prepare a Chinese meal, everyone is encouraged to dress in the Chinese 'lucky' colours of red and gold, and the children all take part in activities relating to this day. Children make visits to local churches, the gurdwara and the mosque, during which they learn to compare and contrast these special places and respect the ideas and values of different faith communities. We value involvement from our children's parents by inviting them to our RE assemblies, led by visitors from different faiths, and by organising a Faith Card competition in which parents support their children's creation of a faith card of their choice at home. We believe strongly in linking the work we do with providing support to the local community, so we have collected food donations for Luton Food Bank during our Harvest Assembly, held a Christingle Service to collect money for the Children's Society and put together gift boxes for refugee children from Syria. All teaching staff members have attended local RE courses led by Lat Blaylock, which have equipped them with ideas to develop and deliver an enjoyable, creative and challenging curriculum.

The REQM has benefited us by encouraging all of us to think more closely about our assessment procedures – what we have in place and how we can improve it – so that the children's progress will be tracked more closely. Another area that we need to address is to remember to incorporate into our planning more opportunities for the children to engage with big ideas.

We are very proud of our achievement and would like to celebrate it with the wider community.