

Annual Report 2014-2015

Sutton Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education

Sutton SACRE.



Sutton SACRE Annual report

Three meetings were held during the 2014-15 Academic year on;
11th November 2014 New Horizon Centre, Assembly Walk, Carshalton
4th March 2015 Wentworth Hall, Ruskin Road, Carshalton
2nd July 2015 North Cheam Baptist Church

The main purpose of the annual report is to hold the LA to account, by informing the Secretary of State and key partners what advice SACRE gave the LA during the year and how that was responded to; this includes advice on RE and Collective Worship in those schools for which the LA has responsibility.

SACREs have responsibility for advising a Local Authority (LA) on its schools.

For Religious Education (RE), SACRE advises community, voluntary controlled and Trust and Foundation schools without a religious designation.

For Collective Worship SACRE advises the LA on community, Trust and Foundation schools without a religious designation.

Introduction from the Chair

As newly-appointed chair of Sutton SACRE, I would commend this Annual Report to your attention and interest.

RE has always been something of a 'Cinderella' subject in schools – being a statutory subject, protected, and yet not accorded the status of most other subjects. It is regularly taught by non-specialists – who it must be said often do an excellent job regardless – and struggles to achieve curriculum time and budget. It is into this context that SACRE is tasked with monitoring and supporting RE and collective worship across the borough. You will see in this report how we have set about this task over the past year.

Events over the past year or so have shown how crucial it is to have an understanding of religious beliefs and the part they play in people's lives. Good RE teaching cannot help but inspire an awareness and appreciation both of other cultures and of our own. It is invaluable as a basis of good Citizenship, and also has a unique role in exploring British values in their wider context.

I would like to thank SACRE members for their commitment to and enthusiasm for this task. I would also, on behalf of SACRE, wish to commend most highly all teachers teaching the subject for their enthusiasm, imagination and professionalism.

The highlight of this year has been the dedicated work of the Agreed Syllabus working party who have produced an excellent document – currently only complete up to and including Key Stage 2. Not only has the syllabus been revised significantly, but there are more user-friendly course outlines and lesson ideas.

2015 saw the retirement from SACRE of a number of long-standing members: the Revd Andy Rowland has been a Church of England representative for 17 years, Mrs Pat Teasdale for 12. Mrs Sandra Oborski has served for 4 years. Mr Tony Brett Young also did not stand for reappointment as Local Authority representative. Finally, and by no means least, Mr Lal Hussain has stepped down from his role as Chair after twenty five years. He fulfilled that role commendably, and will be a hard act to follow.

Finally I would like to thank Cllr Richard Broadbent for agreeing to take on the role of Vice-Chair, Ms Penny Smith-Orr for her invaluable support and input as Consultant, and Mrs Penny Garry for her immensely efficient clerking.

Mark Williams
Chair of Sutton SACRE

This report will be available on the Sutton website: www.sutton.gov.uk

Advice to Statutory bodies

Local Authority.

In 2014 Sutton SACRE decided to review and revise the agreed syllabus and had undertaken a survey of Primary teachers to get their views. The LA agreed to this but with no extra budget to cover the costs. However money has been found to pay for the final formatting and typing of the syllabus.

During the year the SACRE was asked for a number of responses to questions for a presentation to a Council meeting on the activities of SACRE.

Every meeting is attended by the lead Inspector for Primary school improvement and support services. A clerk is provided by the LA from Governor Services and is currently engaged in arranging for documents regarding the Sutton SACRE to be put onto the new Sutton Council website. The committee spent some time this year updating the constitution at the suggestion of the clerk and this has now been agreed.

Schools

The RE Co-ordinator network meetings are attended by up to 25 people each term. Some of these come from Merton borough but the majority from Sutton. At the meetings there is usually a presentation on teaching and learning an aspect of RE, for example in the spring ideas were shared on how to teach about Easter. There is also an opportunity for discussion and this is the main way that information on schools can be obtained.

Courses have also been presented on How to be the Best RE Coordinator and Ideas and Activities for Teaching the Sutton RE Syllabus. The RE Consultant met with a group of secondary heads of department to discuss the idea of introducing Faith Ambassadors and will be discussing this further in the next academic year.

It has not been possible to arrange a Governors training session this year.

Government

The SACRE discussed the letter to all local authorities regarding the nature of SACRE and sent it on to Head teachers in the Borough but did not respond to Lord Nash.

Standards and Quality of provision of RE

It is generally difficult for SACREs to ascertain the standards of religious education teaching in schools without the cooperation of the schools. Some of the schools employ one person to teach all the religious education which ensures progression.

The RE Consultant also went on one visit to a Primary school during the year. This visit was reported to the SACRE meeting and the two lessons observed had been carefully planned with good activities for the pupils and excellent outcomes.

From discussion at network meetings there is little withdrawal from RE lessons in Sutton schools and there have been no complaints received by SACRE.

The results of the public examinations for GCSE, AS and A level are unavailable from the local authority until January 2016.

Agreed Syllabus

The Sutton Agreed syllabus has been reviewed and revised during this academic year. A working party of SACRE members and teachers met several times to discuss the results of the teacher's survey. The Agreed Syllabus Conference (a separate body to SACRE but with similar membership) also met twice to agree the format and contents and help with checking for typing errors and spellings. The RE Consultant is employed for 15 days per year and the work on the syllabus has had to come out of this time. Therefore some of the other activities planned by SACRE have had to be put on hold. The syllabus is now finished and will be launched on line only in the autumn term of 2015. Schools will be asked to implement it fully from the summer term 2016.

Collective worship

There have been no determinations received during this year and no complaints regarding collective worship

Management of SACRE

The Sutton SACRE committee is quite representative of the local community and a priority for the future is to further ensure the main faith groups of Sutton are represented. Meetings this year have been held at places of worship in the borough and have been quorate. The constitution has been updated during the year. Mr Lal Hussein, who had been the chair of SACRE for many years resigned during the year due to continuing ill health and will be sadly missed. The new Chair is Rev Mark Williams from the Church of England group and the vice Chair is now Cllr Richard Broadbent. There is a SACRE member on the Faith & Belief Group (a multi-faith group in Sutton) the SACRE does not have the opportunity to contribute to wider LA agendas.

Discussions at the meeting included the letter from Lord Nash to all SACREs, the introduction of British values teaching, the document on Collective worship by Charles Clarke and Linda Woodhead and the NASACRE AGM.

Membership of Sutton SACRE for 2014-15 can be seen in the table below;

A- Other faith representatives, B-Church of England, C- Teachers D- Councillors

A	Mrs S Oborski	C	Miss V M Stone
A	Mr L Bracken	C	Mrs M Cockram
A	Mr D Smith	C	Mr P Henry
A	Mrs R Johnson	C	Ms M Cucharo
B	Revd M Williams	D	Mr T Brett Young
B	Revd A Roland	D	Cllr R Broadbent
B	Mrs P Teasdale	D	Cllr M Burstow
B	Mrs C Smythe	D	Mr L Hussain
	Ms K Evans		Observer/Local Authority Representative
	Mrs P Garry		Clerk
	Ms P Smith-Orr		Consultant/Observer

Self-evaluation of Sutton SACRE (Autumn 2014)

Key Area	Key Area	Developing	Established	Advanced
1A	Compliance and time allocation for RE		x	
1B	Public examination entries RE Standards and achievement		x	
1C	Quality of teaching, leadership and management		x	
1D	Recruitment and retention issues		x	
1E	Resources		x	
2A	SACRE meetings			x
2B	Membership and training	x		
2C	Improvement and development planning		x	
2D	Professional and financial support		x	
2E	Information and advice	x		

2F	Partnership with our key stakeholders	x		
3A	Review of Agreed Syllabus			x
3B	Using the non statutory National Framework for RE		x	
3C	Developing the revised Agreed Syllabus		x	
3D	Consultation/launch/implementation of the Agreed syllabus		x	
3E	Additional guidance/ monitoring and evaluating the Agreed syllabus	x		
4A	Practice and provision for collective worship	x		
4B	Monitoring collective worship/ tackling issues of non compliance	X		
5A	Representative nature of SACRE	x		
5B	Knowledge and understanding of the local religious, cultural, ethnic community		x	
5C	Understanding the intrinsic contribution RE can make to social and racial harmony		x	
5D	Links to the LA initiatives promoting social and racial harmony	x		

The three priorities for the academic year were as follows;

To build a good relationship with secondary schools, RE Heads of Department and promote the Ambassadors for Faith & Belief idea.

Review and revise the RE Syllabus

Get better representation on SACRE from other faiths and beliefs.