

Bexley Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE)

Annual Report for the academic year 2019-2020



1. INTRODUCTION FROM THE CHAIRMAN

I am pleased to be able to introduce the Bexley SACRE Annual Report for the academic year 2019 - 2020, and my third Annual Report as Chairman.

I started my time as Chairman at the beginning of a period that I hoped would see an exciting and encouraging change for Religious Education, for RE teachers and for SACRE's. That was when the initial findings of the Commission on RE had not long been published. Since then the Commission's final recommendations have come and gone, the government has declined to take action and, frankly, RE and SACREs are in a worse place than before the Commission started its work. The Bexley SACRE has managed to function to a certain extent: I suspect many have not.

But the good news is that Bexley's schools and academies now have an exciting new Agreed Syllabus to follow should they wish to do so. The previous Syllabus had been well received and I sincerely hope this new one will bring the same positive outcomes, and also help our teachers and schools meet the requirements of the relatively new Ofsted inspection framework.

As ever, I must thank those who teach the subject. Whilst this Summer's examinations could not take place because of the coronavirus pandemic and national lockdown, I am sure the results based on assessments will have been as good as previous examinations in recent years. This is, in no small part, a credit to our teaching staff. It is a shame that DfE have declined to publish this year's results, because this certainly helps us to make an initial assessment of the quality of RE provision.

We had intended to take a closer look at three things this year: our finances; provision of RE; and, provision of collective worship. The pandemic has curtailed much of the latter two, but I am pleased to report that thanks to our local authority, and when staffing costs are taken into account, it would appear that we continue to exceed the NASACRE recommended allocation. However, based on limited desk-based research, we do not believe that the provision of RE in all of our schools and academies is what it should be, and if we are able to, we will develop some plans to research this in more detail. We had intended to assess collective worship in a sample of schools, but their closure during lockdown prevented this. We will revisit this when able to do so. Although we are committed to working with our education providers, I have to say that the communication is rarely two way and is proving difficult, particularly with our academies.

In closing, I must thank the SACRE members who have departed, and extend a warm welcome to our new members, and to also thank all members and Council officers for supporting the SACRE.

Christine Catterall

Councillor Christine Catterall
Chairman of the Bexley SACRE



2. ADVICE TO STATUTORY BODIES

Our schools

The London Borough of Bexley has more than 80 schools, with three quarters being primary schools.

The majority of the Borough's schools have moved to academy status and the SACRE's ability to influence and intervene is limited. Whilst some schools continue to engage with the limited number of initiatives the SACRE is able to develop, they are mostly in the primary sector.

We do try to ensure that every school is aware of their responsibilities and, where appropriate, ensure that those required to follow the Bexley Agreed Syllabus do so, and encourage others to have regard to it where no specific religious denomination or other syllabus applies.

Our profile

Notwithstanding the above we reported last year that some schools and teachers are not aware of the SACRE, or of its work, and so we asked staff in the local authority's education directorate to undertake some awareness-raising for schools, governors and teachers. We are grateful that this has been happening where appropriate.

For some time the SACRE had not been able to access the services of an Adviser but following an appointment in Summer 2019 we are delighted that our new Adviser has been working hard to raise our profile.

However, with limited resources and an ever-increasing number of academies, we are finding it difficult to promote the SACRE and its work.

Agreed Syllabus

A new Agreed Syllabus has been prepared and is due to be introduced in the 2020-21 academic year. More details are provided in section 4 of this report.

SMSC

The SACRE believes to complement RE in school, Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development should be promoted. However, following a very successful SMSC conference in 2017 the SACRE has not conducted any follow up research.

Training

Our Adviser has held a number of RE Network meetings for teachers, and these are well received. The current focus is on primary teachers, but if there is secondary interest too, this will be addressed. One such Network meeting in December 2019 was also used to gauge views on a new Agreed Syllabus, and to ask what teacher's needs and requirements for a new Syllabus might be.

One primary school had requested bespoke support.

The SACRE is extremely grateful to the local authority staff, and our adviser, all of whom undertook a great deal of hard work to organise RE training and related events.

No training events for Governors have been held in the period of this report.

Newsletter

Through our adviser, the SACRE produces a Newsletter every term. It is designed to publicise local events, training opportunities and articles and provide details of teaching resources of help and interest to RE subject leaders and teachers. It is also used to keep our schools informed about best practice.

Teaching resources

There is nothing specific to report this year, but the SACRE keeps this matter under review.

3. STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF PROVISION OF RE

Provision of RE in schools

Following earlier research to ascertain, as best as we could, the RE provision in our schools (as reported in our previous Annual Report) we agreed to conduct a review of a 20% sample of the Borough's school and academy websites each year against the same criteria as the original research, to ascertain if any improvement is evident. The sampling will focus on those schools and academies who were identified as requiring improvement. This is based on the assumption that those demonstrating good practice will continue to do so.

That sampling has not yet started and will be reported on next year.

Religious Studies examinations in Bexley

The SACRE continues to be proud of the results Bexley students achieve in their Religious Studies GCSE, AS and A Level examinations. But it should not be overlooked that good results would not be possible without the excellent teaching staff and RE subject leaders we have in the Borough, and the SACRE owes these dedicated people a debt of gratitude.

We discussed the 2019 examinations results and noted, with some regret, that the falling trend in GCSE Short and Full Course entries was continuing. However, 2019 presented another set of excellent results for the Borough's students who sat a Religious Studies examination. The students, their teachers and RE Leaders should be congratulated.

With the national lockdown in place because of Covid-19 the Summer 2020 examinations were severely disrupted and teacher assessments were used to determine students' results. It is somewhat disappointing therefore that we have been advised that these results are not going to be published by the Department for Education, so local authorities will not have access to the results data. This does not help a SACRE assess the quality of RE.

That said, historical results for RE examinations in the Borough are provided at the end of this section.

Religious Studies examinations in England

Aware of the concerns nationally (i.e. in England) about a decline in those sitting a Religious Studies examination the SACRE decided to make some comparisons with the core subjects of English, Mathematics, History and Geography. Qfqual analytics published data was used.

Earlier in this reporting year the SACRE asked to see some comparisons between Religious Studies and other subjects, and Members were provided with data for Religious Studies, English, Geography, History and Mathematics. It was clearly evident that whilst there will always be variations in examination entries because of

the number of students, Religious Studies has seen fewer entries year on year across all three examination levels (GCSE Full Course, AS Level and A Level).

Although there are fluctuations with entries for all other subjects, with the exception of all AS Level examinations, and English A Level, there has not been the consistent and continuing decline that is evident for Religious Studies.

Whilst there will always be annual fluctuations in entry levels as a result of variations in student numbers, the change in Religious Studies examination entries is more pronounced than for the other subjects compared.

Some SACRE members believed the introduction of the EBacc. was a primary cause for the decline, and we wrote to the Secretary of State for Education on this matter (see below). Others suggested decoupling of the AS Level was another, and one further view expressed was that it is linked to the fact that some schools have reduced the options for their students so that only the best eight subjects are needed, meaning fewer exams are now taken (10 instead of 12), with Religious Studies being one of the casualties.

Against this background, it must be said that the SACRE is grateful for the work of our RE subject leaders and teachers in the Borough, against a national picture of teachers and schools struggling to meet their legal obligations.

The English Baccalaureate and marginalisation of RE

On 22 August 2019 the Secretary of State for Education announced that GCSE entries to core academic subjects and the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) had risen. Following discussion by the SACRE the Chairman wrote to the Minister in September 2019 about the decline in Religious Studies (RS) examinations locally and nationally, particularly as a result of its continued exclusion from the EBacc.

The Bexley SACRE shares the views of many in the teaching profession that the exclusion of GCSE RS from the EBacc has had a serious detrimental impact on learning about religion and belief in schools. There is evidence indicating that curriculum time for Religious Education (RE) has come under pressure, sometimes resulting in the marginalisation of RE teaching, with many schools reporting that curriculum time has been cut to make more room for core EBacc subjects.

A recent survey locally had revealed that many of our schools may not be fulfilling their statutory requirements in the teaching of RE, and we have seen a general decline in the number of GCSE RS examinations entries. In the SACRE's opinion, this decline is not a coincidence following the introduction of the EBacc, but a consequence of it.

The SACRE understands the intent behind the EBacc subjects, to promote a broad, academic core curriculum for statutory aged children and argues that RE conforms to that academic standard, with students required to actively engage in conceptualisation of key elements in belief systems and to articulate, often drawing on philosophical, ethical and humanist perspectives, the key characteristics of those beliefs and how it impacts human behaviour. It is also an academic discipline that can support British values.

We said to the Minister that excluding the GCSE RS from the EBacc has been demoralising for our teaching staff, it has devalued RE and has adversely impacted the academic, moral and social development of pupils. The SACRE believes that in our society today there has never been a greater need for the new and enlightened perspectives that good RE can deliver.

Statements from successive Ministers about there being a statutory requirement to teach RE are all well and good, but the subject will never receive the required curriculum time until the government ends this marginalisation of the subject and starts treating it with the respect and importance it deserves.

An expectation that powerless SACREs can resolve the problems being created is unrealistic. The future for the subject is extremely uncertain if this continues.

The response from the Minister's correspondence unit did nothing to raise the SACRE's spirits in that it said nothing more than changes will not be made to the EBacc and teaching of Religious Studies should be mandatory in all state funded schools.

The SACRE had also sent its concerns about marginalisation of RE, and the subject's importance in today's society, to all the Borough's schools so that, should they feel so inclined, they may pass on these concerns to the Secretary of State for Education.

The new Ofsted inspection framework offers some hope of a fuller investigation of RE in our schools, and we are aware of a number of at least one school that has been subject to a deep dive in RE.

Complaints

In the period covered by this Report, there were no complaints made to the SACRE about RE or the provision thereof.

Religious Studies GCSE examination results: Bexley

(DfE advise 2020 data will not be published)

GCSE Full Course					
	Entries	Passes A* - C	% Passes A* - C	All passes A* - G	% All Passes A* - G
2009	1,010	746	73.4	994	98.4
2010	1,120	829	74.0	1,116	99.6
2011	1,625	1,161	71.4	1,609	99.0
2012	2,133	1,458	68.4	2,091	98.0
2013	1,977	1,481	74.9	1,953	98.8
2014	2,136	1,650	77.2	2,111	98.8
2015	2,062	1,635	79.3	2,031	98.5
2016	2,197	1,625	74.0	2,163	98.5
2017	1,982	1,533	77.3	1,960	98.9

GCSE Full Course					
	Entries	Passes 9-4	% Passes 9-4	All passes 9-1	% All Passes 9-1
2018	1,779	1,293	72.7%	1,740	97.8%
2019	1,643	1,360	82.8%	1,631	99.3%

GCSE Short Course					
	Entries	Passes A* - C	% passes A* - C	All passes A* - G	% all passes A* - G
2008	1,554	932	60	1,525	98.1
2009	1,417	900	63.5	1,395	98.5
2010	1,631	892	54.7	1,590	97.5
2011	1,047	593	56.6	1,008	96.3
2012	536	299	55.8	510	95.1
2013	706	357	50.6	673	95.3
2014	437	178	40.7	395	90.4
2015	216	44	20.4	198	91.7
2016	3	1	33.3	3	100.0
2017	38	1	2.6	31	81.6

GCSE Short Course					
	Entries	Passes 9-4	% Passes 9-4	All passes 9-1	% All Passes 9-1
2018	23	0	0%	17	73.9%

There were no recorded GCSE Short Courses in Bexley in 2019.

AS Level					
	Entries	Passes A - B	% passes A - B	All passes A - E	% all passes A - E
2009	108	41	38.0	89	82.4
2010	104	40	38.5	91	87.5
2011	98	32	32.7	89	90.8
2012	142	68	47.9	122	85.9
2013	140	52	37.1	121	86.4
2014	118	54	45.8	113	95.8
2015	226	97	42.9	212	93.8
2016	238	95	39.9	226	95.0
2017	154	70	45.5	142	92.2
2018	151	54	35.8	134	88.7
2019	37	11	29.7	27	73.0

A Level					
	Entries	Passes A* - B	% Passes A* - B	All Passes A* - E	% All Passes A* - E
2009	67	31	46.3	67	100.0
2010	58	34	58.6	57	98.3
2011	68	28	41.2	67	98.5
2012	61	28	45.9	56	91.8
2013	80	46	57.5	78	97.5
2014	82	47	57.3	80	97.6
2015	90	44	48.9	88	97.8
2016	148	79	53.4	148	100.0
2017	130	72	55.4	129	99.2
2018	113	51	45.1	108	95.6
2019	105	37	35.2	101	96.2

4. AGREED SYLLABUS

The Bexley Agreed Syllabus

The current Agreed Syllabus was introduced in September 2014, and in the period of this Report continues to be well received. And we hear that it is well established in schools that follow it.

However, as reported last time, the Agreed Syllabus was due for review and a scoping group had reported to the Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC) that the Syllabus required updating, as although much of the knowledge and organisation will be valuable moving forward, there are significant areas which needed adjusting, in the light of changes in education since 2014. This view was based on three areas: Assessment Methodology (changes in practice require review); Progression (a more explicit programme map is recommended); and, Curriculum Content (content and expectations from RE require review).

Last time we reported that the ASC was due to meet again to assess further research requested by us into the options available for a new Syllabus, and the Conference convened in February and March 2020. In the light of the scoping groups findings, the ASC accepted that retaining the existing Syllabus was not a realistic option and therefore considered three alternative approaches: to amend and update the current version; to prepare a new Agreed Syllabus to reflect current practice; or, to purchase an off-the shelf Agreed Syllabus and adapt it for Bexley.

The ASC was also acutely aware of the new Ofsted inspection framework which places great emphasis on the importance of the curriculum and progression, with its particular focus on curriculum intent (why content is studied and how it meets the needs of learners), implementation (how intent is delivered) and impact (how it contributes to an holistic view of achievement and pupil development). The ASC noted that a new Agreed Syllabus must be able to support those three elements.

Having taken into account the scoping group comments, and having also assessed existing staffing resources and expertise, the option to explore the purchase of an Agreed Syllabus, adapted for Bexley, was agreed. It was noted that this has become an increasingly popular choice for hard pressed ASC's, and it was unanimously agreed to purchase from RE Today a Syllabus that offers a systematic approach to learning.

Before committing to this course of action the Borough's Headteachers and RE leads were consulted. There were no objections and some useful observations were received, which have been used to enable the standard Syllabus offered by RE Today to be adapted for Bexley and make it more relevant to the Bexley demographic.

The exciting new Syllabus was adopted by the local authority in the Summer of 2020 and will be made available for all schools and academies in the Borough for the 2020-21 academic year. A virtual launch event is planned in October 2020 and a day conference of face to face training for teachers is scheduled for March 2021. We are reassured that the transition from the old Syllabus to the new one will be straightforward, but amongst other things the March 2021 event will review how teachers are managing with the new Syllabus.

5. COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

Provision of collective worship in schools

Research conducted in 2018 helped us ascertain which schools state when and how collective worship is conducted, and the initial findings revealed that for many schools the provision of relevant information is lacking.

The SACRE was disappointed to find that as many as half of our schools and academies (13 secondary and 30 primary) are not providing the recommended information on collective worship, which in turn leads the SACRE to believe that provision of the statutory requirement for a daily act of worship is not being met.

Members of the local authority's Strategic Education and Improvement Team had therefore planned to conduct up to 10 visits to schools and academies in the 2019/20 academic year, to ascertain collective worship provision, and the SACRE was expecting to receive regular reports on those visits. However, the Covid pandemic and closure of schools during lockdown has meant this work is on hold, for now.

When these visits can begin a key objective for the SACRE will be to assess the reports of those visits and ascertain what further action, if any, is required in respect of the provision of collective worship.

Determination and complaints

For a number of years the SACRE has had a comprehensive determination framework that provides guidance on the procedures in the London Borough of Bexley for Head Teachers of schools wishing to seek a determination in respect of collective worship, or renewal or review of a previous determination.

This framework has never been brought into use and, as might be expected, therefore, in the period of this report no determinations were applied for.

The SACRE did not receive any complaints about collective worship.

6. MANAGEMENT OF SACRE

Professional and administrative support

We are grateful that a senior officer from the local authority's Strategic Education and Improvement Team has attended every meeting in the period of this report. An officer of the Committee Services and Scrutiny Team of the local authority clerks the SACRE meetings and acts as the point of contact for individual members and external enquiries.

Following the absence of an Adviser for more than a year, we are delighted that our new Adviser has resurrected the SACRE termly Newsletter and regular RE networking sessions for teachers. We know the latter are particularly valued by our primary teachers, many of whom are not experts in the subject and appreciate any support that can be offered.

Development of the SACRE and SACRE training

SACRE members are encouraged to attend national and regional events and to report back to subsequent SACRE meetings, but other than those organised by the local authority or the SACRE, no such events were attended in the period covered by this Report.

Any new members are provided with details of the work of the Bexley SACRE and are given copies of relevant National Association of SACRE literature.

We have plans to re-visit the using the National Association of SACREs (NASACRE) self-assessment toolkit scores first achieved in 2013. We may well re-visit the March 2018 outcome on "Standards and Quality of Provision of RE". In any subsequent assessment we would hope to be able to show that the six sub-categories of the self-assessment show some improvement from earlier results.

Finance

The SACRE receives no independent funding, although we are grateful to have access to an allocation from the local authority's education budget should the need arise for a limited number of conference delegate fees, for example, and our NASACRE membership fee. The fee for the SACRE's Adviser is also paid from this budget.

We now receive regular updates on our budget allocation. This includes staffing costs and takes the SACRE's allocation beyond the recommended allocations from the Central Schools Services Block, for which we are grateful.

Membership and Constitution

Maintaining a strong membership is an ongoing concern for the SACRE. We continue to have two long-standing vacancies in Group A, and these are proving difficult to fill: a number of local and national organisations have been approached but appear to be either unable or unwilling to nominate someone.

Every four years, before local elections, the Chairman and Secretary conduct a membership review. The next review is due in 2022.

The SACRE Constitution was reviewed during the period of this report, to align it more closely with wording in relevant legislation and bring it more up to date. We adopted a new Constitution in November 2019.

Details of the SACRE membership and attendance at meetings during the period of this report, are provided in the following four pages.

NASACRE Code of Conduct

We have adopted the NASACRE Code of Conduct, which will complement our Constitution.

The composition of the SACRE for the 2019/20 academic year was as follows:

GROUP A (CHRISTIAN AND OTHER FAITHS)

Baptist	Mr Mark Leveson	
Free Church (Evangelical Christians)	Mr Paul Weston	
Islam	Mrs Faozia Rashid	
Islam	Dr Faz Rashid	
Methodist	Mrs Di Sprowles	
Sikh	Mr Kulvinder Singh	
Buddhism	Mr Bijay Gurung	
Hinduism	Vacancy	
Judaism	Vacancy	
Roman Catholic	Ms Rebecca O'Reilly	Since January '20

GROUP B (CHURCH OF ENGLAND)

Ms Virginia Corbyn	
Rev'd Alison Healy	
Mrs Dorothy Jones	(Vice Chairman)
Mrs Michelle Torrance	

GROUP C (TEACHERS IN THE AUTHORITY)

Mrs June Ben Rabah	
Mr Matthew Harris	
Mrs Julie O'Hara	Since February '20
Ms Victoria O'Reilly	Since September '19
Ms Cerys Siney	

GROUP D (THE AUTHORITY)

Councillor Esther Amaning		
Councillor Cheryl Bacon		
Councillor Christine Bishop		
Councillor Sybil Camsey		Since May '20
Councillor Christine Catterall	(Chairman)	
Councillor Sally Hinkley		Since May '20
Councillor Howard Jackson		
Councillor Geraldene Lucia-Hennis		Since May '20
Councillor Melvin Seymour		

Councillor James Hunt		Until May '20
Councillor Wendy Perfect		Until May '20
Councillor Adam Wildman		Until May '20

CO-OPTED MEMBERS

None

SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (other than Councillor substitutes)

None

OBSERVER

None

ADVISERS AND OFFICERS

Mrs Lauren Ovenden	Head of Strategic Education & Improvement
Ms Rizwana Rehman	Part-time Adviser

Attendance by members during the 2019/20 academic year was as follows:

	Possible	Apologies submitted	Absent	Attended
<u>Group A</u>				
Mr Bijay Gurung	2	2	0	0
Mr Mark Leveson	2	0	0	2
Ms Rebecca O'Reilly	1	1	0	0
Mrs Faozia Rashid	2	2	0	0
Dr Faz Rashid	2	2	0	0
Mr Kulvinder Singh	2	0	2	0
Mrs Di Sprowles	2	1	0	1
Mr Paul Weston	2	1	0	1
<u>Group B</u>				
Ms Virginia Corbyn	2	0	0	2
Rev'd Alison Healy	2	0	0	2
Mrs Dorothy Jones (Vice Chairman)	2	0	0	2
Mrs Michelle Torrance	2	1	0	1
<u>Group C</u>				
Mrs June Ben Rabah	2	2	0	0
Mr Matthew Harris	2	1	0	1
Mrs Julie O'Hara	1	0	0	1
Ms Victoria O'Reilly	2	1	0	1
Ms Cerys Siney	2	0	0	2

	Possible	Apologies submitted	Absent	Actual
<u>Group D</u>				
Councillor Esther Amaning	2	0	0	2
Councillor Cheryl Bacon	2	2	0	0
Councillor Christine Bishop	2	1	0	1
Councillor Sybil Camsey	0	0	0	0
Councillor Christine Catterall (Chairman)	2	1	0	1
Councillor Sally Hinkley	0	0	0	0
Councillor James Hunt	2	2	0	0
Councillor Howard Jackson	2	1	0	1
Councillor Geraldene Lucia- Hennis	0	0	0	0
Councillor Wendy Perfect	2	0	0	2
Councillor Melvin Seymour	2	2	0	0
Councillor Adam Wildman	2	0	1	1

Observer

None

Adviser and local authority lead officers

Mrs Lauren Ovenden	2	0	0	2
Ms Rizwana Rehman	2	1	0	1

7. SACRE IN THE WIDER COMMUNITY

Our activities

Bexley SACRE is a member of the National Association of SACREs (NASACRE). As mentioned earlier in this report, we have adopted the NASACRE Code of Conduct.

The SACRE works in collaboration with the local Diocesan Boards.

The CRiBS organisation (Christian Resources in Bexley Schools) continues to be represented on the SACRE.

A local Mosque has kindly offered their premises for the SACRE to hold a meeting and confirmed an offer to schools to undertake an educational visit.

A number of our members attend meetings of the Bexley Inter Faith Forum, and we include in our meeting agendas details of forthcoming Forum activities and events.

The contribution of the SACRE to the local authority agenda has been primarily through the provision of RE resources and RE subject leader training and networking events.

Consultations and correspondence

We discuss topics of interest in the regular issues of the NASACRE Newsletter.

The SACRE has been following closely, and with interest, the work of the Commission on Religious Education (CoRE). There have been no developments of note in this reporting year and, following the conclusion of the Secretary of State for Education “that now is not the time to implement the recommended reforms” and given that we felt a number of our questions remained unanswered, we continue to maintain a watching brief.

We reported last time that we were not prepared to promote the report recommendations, and that has not changed. Furthermore, we have agreed that there are no implications arising for the SACRE at this stage, and in particular in respect of the Agreed Syllabus, work on which, as reported earlier in this Report, we have now concluded.

Our Chairman's letter to the Secretary of State for Education has been referenced earlier in this report.

Equality

When using the locally Agreed Syllabus, the SACRE has made it clear that schools need to take into account the position that some faith groups take with regard to human sexuality, so that LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bi sexual, and Transgendered) young people are not made to feel vulnerable when these issues are being explored.

8. SUMMARY

This report is on the activities of the Bexley SACRE in the 2019-20 academic year. Much of the content appears to have been repeated in various forms for a number of years now.

There is a continuing, and worsening, climate for the public sector, teachers of RE, and SACREs, starved of support sometimes locally and most certainly by central government, with Ministers coming and going, yet all talking the same mantra that does nothing to prevent the marginalisation of RE. Responses from Ministers to SACRE letters of concern do little to change our view that there is no consideration being given to taking RE seriously. The new Ofsted inspection framework offers some hope.

It has been reported nationally that many state-funded schools are failing to meet their legal requirement to provide RE for all registered pupils, and limited research in Bexley suggests the situation may not be any different here. We suspect that our schools with a religious character are much more likely to comply with their legal requirements than schools without a religious character. However, we have plans to conduct some sampling research to ascertain a better view of the current position, and local authority staff will, when the current pandemic has passed, also start to assess on our behalf the collective worship provision in a limited number of schools.

We now have an exciting new Agreed Syllabus, and thanks must be expressed to our local authority staff, a scoping group, the Agreed Syllabus Conference and RE Today for making this happen so efficiently and effectively.

Excluding GCSE Religious Studies from the EBacc has been demoralising for our teaching staff, it has devalued RE and has adversely impacted the academic, moral and social development of pupils. Falling examination entry numbers are a consequence of this short-sighted omission. In our society today there has never been a greater need for the new and enlightened perspectives that good RE can deliver.

Our SACRE and RE in the Borough benefits immensely from the contributions made by our teachers and representatives from faith groups. They voluntarily give their time and share their expertise for the benefit of our community. We are extremely grateful to them all.



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