

North Yorkshire Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education

Annual Report for the School Year 2014/15



Contents

1. Chair's introduction and context
2. Advice to statutory bodies
3. Standards and quality of provision of RE
4. Agreed Syllabus
5. Collective Worship
6. Management of SACRE
7. Contribution of SACRE to the wider Local Authority agenda
8. Summary
9. Membership of SACRE

1: Introduction and context from the Chair of SACRE

This has been an exciting year for SACRE, hosting our first regional RE Conference for teachers and working in partnership with York SACRE and the Diocese of York to establish InspiRE : a regional RE hub.

This year we have also said goodbye to Gill Sellars, our Baptist church representative and Susan Grey, one of our teacher representatives. We extend to them our warmest thanks for their support over many years.

Over the last academic year the SACRE has met three times, once each term. The members have received presentations about aspects of RE teaching in schools and settings. They have also debated a range of issues raised by different stakeholders arising from religious education in North Yorkshire schools and have developed new guidance to schools on collective worship and organising visits to places of worship. Thanks go to staff and pupils from Christ Church CE Primary School for hosting the Spring Term meeting and giving us a valuable insight into religious education in a primary school.

The report that follows provides more detailed information about examination results and the experiences that our pupils and young people are gaining from their learning. We are continuing with the inclusion of cameos of good practice in schools written by the teachers themselves, giving an opportunity for schools to share their practice and allowing us to celebrate the excellent practice taking place in many schools across North Yorkshire.

SACRE have introduced an RE annual return for all schools to complete. Some of the findings from this first on-line survey are included here.

None of what has been achieved would have been possible without the dedication, hard work, knowledge, skills and understanding of all those who have contributed to the SACRE's endeavours over the last year, and my heartfelt thanks go to all members of SACRE who have made this possible. I must also thank Rebecca Mason, Sally Mitchell and Josie O'Dowd as they are a tower of strength and support.

I am very pleased to be able to commend this annual report to school governors, head teachers and their staff, and to Members and Officers of the County Council.

Nasr Moussa Emam, SACRE. Chair 2014/15

The SACRE welcomes any comments on, or enquiries relating to, this report, which should be addressed to Ms. Rebecca Mason, Equalities Adviser, North Yorkshire County Council, Children & Young People's Service, County Hall, Northallerton, DL7 8AE. Email: Rebecca.mason@northyorks.gov.uk

2: Advice to Statutory Bodies

SACRE have issued the following guidance to schools this year:

Collective worship guidance

Revised 'Collective Worship Guidance' was issued to schools in January 2015. The more detailed guidance is supported by additional appendices, which include a self-evaluation document and a resource list to support Collective Worship. The revised guidance reflects the need for schools to ensure their Collective Worship is inclusive, educational and valued by pupils and staff.

Guidance on organising visits to places of worship

As part of the RE curriculum and to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, a visit to a place of worship, such as a mosque, gurdwara, synagogue or temple is a very valuable experience, enabling pupils to learn more about the religions and become more comfortable with different faiths and cultures. Several schools however, have reported that parents sometimes withdraw their children from such visits and that they are becoming increasingly difficult to organise. To support schools with this, some guidance for schools was developed around arranging visits to places of worship. Schools that have successfully organised such visits, shared their experiences and recommend places to go through an appendix to the guidance document.

3: Standards and Quality of Provision of Religious Education

Public examinations

Key stage 4

In 2015, 2665 students were entered for the GCSE full course in Religious Studies, which was 41% of the cohort and decrease of 327 entries from last year. 32 centres out of 43 entered pupils for full course GCSE. Some schools entered the whole cohort, whilst for other schools, Religious Studies GCSE was offered as an option.

'Nationally, short course entries in England have decreased by about 70% since 2012. The total number of entries for GCSE RS has decreased by approximately 20% since 2012, some 90,000 candidates. In contrast, entries for short course in Wales have decreased by approximately 4% since 2012 and the combined entries have remained fairly stable. The data would strongly support the conclusion that the introduction of the English Baccalaureate in 2010 and changes to the way that school performance is measured have damaged provision for RE in England very significantly.'

NATRE Report: Impact of Government Policy on GCSE Entry Patterns for Religious Studies Short and Full Course

The performance in the full course for North Yorkshire, with students receiving A*-C, improved by a further 1.8% from the previous year.

GCSE Grades A* - C				
	2015 National	2015 North Yorkshire	2014	2013
Full GCSE	72%	72.6%	70.8%	69.0%
Short GCSE	Data not available	Data not available	59.7%	59.9%

In the absence of nationally validated data at the time of writing, it is estimated on the basis of interim data that North Yorkshire's GCSE results for the full course at grades A*-C are above national performance.

¹ Public examinations leading to approved qualifications are entitled Religious Studies.

Post-16

In 2015 168 students were entered for GCE 'A2' level Religious Studies, 2 more than the previous year. 98.2% of candidates entered achieved a grade A*-E (98.9% national figure), 20.2% a grade A*/A (24.4% national figure) and 48.2% a grade A*-B. A2 Religious Studies was studied in 16 North Yorkshire schools. Results show a dip in pupils achieving the higher grades, since the 2014 results.

At GCE 'AS' level, there were 70 candidates, compared to 61 in the previous year. 80% achieved an A-E grade (92.1% national figure), with 24.3% achieving a grade A-B (43% national figure).

In the absence of nationally validated data at the time of writing, it is estimated on the basis of interim data that North Yorkshire's GCE A level results are slightly below national average and GCE AS level results are more significantly below national performance results.

Quality of provision of Religious Education

Time allocated to RE

The RE schools annual return indicated the following:

Average time allocated to RE each week in North Yorkshire schools participating in the RE annual return	KS1 % of schools	KS2 % of schools	KS3 % of schools	KS4 % of schools	KS5 % of schools
None	0	0	0	12.5	23
5-30 mins	6.8	0.8	8	8.3	23
31-60 mins	84.5	80.4	64	54	23
61-90 mins	6.8	14.3	16	12.5	0
91+ mins	1.9	0.4	12	12.5	31
Total number of participating schools	103	112	25	24	13

The majority of schools are meeting SACRE's suggestion of 5% of curriculum time being devoted to RE, with some schools exceeding this, particularly faith schools. There continues to be a concern however, at the provision for RE at KS4 and 5.

Foundation stage and key stages 1 and 2

Over 85% of primary schools follow the North Yorkshire RE Agreed Syllabus, at least in part. Church schools also follow their diocesan syllabus. Through the RE Annual Return, 94% of primary schools stated they were satisfied with the quality of provision for RE in their school.

An increasing number of schools teach RE in an enquiry based way. Some schools have opted for regular RE themed days, whilst others are adopting a cross-curricular approach.

Below are two case studies from North Yorkshire primary schools.

Reeth Community and Gunnerside Methodist Federated Primary Schools

Number on role: 56
Report by Mrs Bastow and children at the school

Our Spiritual Day

Spiritual Day was really a day of reflection- thinking and relaxing.

When we did it, we did six different things which were:

Where is God?, Making dream catchers, Thank you for water (poem or prayer), Special places, Sorry Zone and Yoga.

When we started to think about where God is, we had a lot of answers like in the river, everywhere and nowhere, in stones and one of mine was in the air.

I found the yoga most relaxing and it was my favourite thing. I learned how to breathe properly breathing in with your nose and out through your mouth. It was very relaxing. Yoga really calmed me down.

In the Sorry zone we sat down on the bean bags and looked at the bubble machine and thought about what we are sorry for. I felt sad when I did this activity. The relaxing bubble machine made me feel calm. I wrote I am sorry for thinking of the dark side and not looking for the light.

My favourite activity was showing my partner my favourite place to be. I enjoyed it because we got to explore all the little features that we have never seen before and we all got to show each other what we think about the place where we live and what we value about Swaledale and how special it is to us.



The challenge of teaching multi-faith RE in the more mono-cultural, rural parts of the county continues to be a challenge. SACRE continues to build our database of recommended places to visit and visitors to the school and this is now being linked up with the county's Educational Visits website.

Leyburn Community Primary School

Number on role: 170

Report by Belinda Curtis – Y5 Teacher

Breaking down barriers in rural communities.

~As part of our unit – 'Why are there over 50 mosques in Yorkshire?', we invited members of the Islamic Diversity Centre in Teesside to our school. We live in an area with little cultural diversity, so many of our children have not been exposed to people of other faiths and backgrounds. This visit provided them with an opportunity to meet practicing Muslims and allowed them to find out about their religion.

On the day, we were very excited to welcome a team of three women and two men into our Y5 classroom. They told us all about their religion and showed us what Islam meant to them. The children were given the opportunity to try on items of clothing and were very interested to observe prayer rituals. We even got to have a go!

The visitors were extremely friendly and were able to break down any stereotypes or prior assumptions the children had about Muslims. They were able to see that their faith is just one aspect of the person and that there were many similarities between the visitors and ourselves, even though we follow different religions.

The presentation was fun, engaging and innovative and the presenters were extremely friendly and approachable. The children were able to ask any questions they had and went away feeling like they had learned an awful lot.



'I learnt a lot about Muslims' – HW – Year 5

'It was fascinating to learn why the women wear headscarves.' – KW – Year 5

'I loved trying on the prayer robes.' – HS – Year 5

Key stages 3, 4 and post-16

At key stage 3, some schools have developed an inspiring and stimulating RE curriculum, often incorporating some of the 5 units of learning developed to support the new agreed syllabus. For some schools however, curriculum time for RE has been reduced or RE has been incorporated into an integrated, skills based course, combining with other humanities subjects, or with Personal, Social, Health and Citizenship Education. This can work successfully, but is a challenge to teachers and to school leaders to ensure that sufficient time is given to deliver a quality RE curriculum that allows students to make good progress.

At key stage 4 and post-16 there is more variation in the quality of teaching and learning in RE. In the public examination courses offered either for all students or as an option, it is largely good with some outstanding features, as evidenced by the improving GCSE results. The quality can be less secure in non-examination situations where statutory RE is provided through integrated courses or during tutor group or form time, but there are some good examples emerging of relevant, exciting courses that students enjoy and value.

Subject leaders in many secondary schools continue to face an increasing challenge in securing the place of RE within the curriculum. The English Baccalaureate put pressure on optional subjects with the inclusion of Modern Foreign Languages and History/Geography, but not RE. However, the newly introduced 'Progress 8' measure, which calculates a pupils progress over eight subjects, one of which can be a full GCSE in Religious Studies, provides an opportunity for schools to include Religious Studies as a core GCSE for all students.

Easingwold School

Number on role:

Report by Natalie Wikocki, Deputy Faculty Leader for Humanities

Y10 visit to Poland

On 25th – 28th March 2015 thirty Year 10 students taking Philosophy and Ethics and History GCSE at Easingwold School went to Krakow for 4 days. The trip began with a visit to the Schindler Factory Museum and the Eagle Pharmacy in order to learn about life in the Krakow ghetto and prepare students for Auschwitz Birkenau. The Museum encompasses the two largest camps of the Auschwitz complex: Auschwitz I, the main camp (in the town of Owi cim) which includes the museum exhibits, and Auschwitz II-Birkenau near the village of Brzezinka including the site of the concentration camp and the mass extermination facilities. Many students commented that the trip reinforced their knowledge and it was much more effective than learning from a classroom.

I didn't know what to expect but actually being there in the place where one million people died is indescribable. It wasn't a pleasant or nice experience but one that everyone should experience, as it was thought provoking and gave me a sense of an act of evil that the world should never see again. **Ollie Tanner-Smith**

The most shocking moment was seeing the hair. It was mind blowing to stand where men and women were sent to their deaths. An unforgettable experience. **Alex Bortman**

It made me feel grateful seeing the living conditions and torture places. I feel so sorry for all the innocent people. **Emily Johnson**

It was a really worthwhile experience. Seeing the camp on TV or in pictures is nothing compared to seeing it with your own eyes. The vastness and ruin of the camp was very eye-opening and has made me see the holocaust itself in a completely different light and consider more the people it affected, rather than just thinking of it as an event in history. **Callum McAfee**

After Auschwitz, students took a breath-taking trip along underground routes through saline chambers of the Wieliczka Salt Mine and the Wawel Royal Castle State Rooms. Finally students had time to explore, shop and sample local cuisine at Rynek Glowny, the central square, where they heard the hourly bugle call from the tower of St Mary's Church.



Special schools

Separate regulations covering maintained special schools require them to ensure that as far as practicable a pupil receives opportunities to explore RE. Most Special Schools use the North Yorkshire RE Agreed Syllabus, at least partially, and adapt to meet the needs of the pupils. Some Special Schools use the 'Equals' curriculum package which is designed specifically for RE in special schools. There are examples of outstanding practice in RE teaching and learning experiences in special schools. SACRE are only aware of one Special School that does not deliver an RE curriculum.

Brooklands Community Special School

Number on role: 57

Report by Christina Davies

Islamic Workshop

The school invited Yasmien of Amaali to provide a series of workshops for the children at Eid.

What did you do?

The students were split into 3 groups and completed different activities which they then shared with the rest of school. The youngest students participated in making chapattis and tasting curries. The next group participated in henna hand decorations. The older students looked at and created simple artwork using printing techniques.

All students had the opportunity to listen to greetings in Arabic and observe traditional Islamic clothes. Some students were able to try on the clothes.

What did the children learn from it?

The children learned that Eid is a special time for Muslims. They learned that during Ramadan followers of Islam do not eat or drink between sunrise and sunset and that the fast is broken by eating dates and drinking milk. They learned about prayer and going to the mosque.



The students all said they enjoyed the workshops but would have liked the opportunity to participate in the other activities as well.

Summary

90% of all schools involved in the annual return reported they were happy with the current provision for RE in their school. However, reasons given from the 10% of schools that were not satisfied were:

- lack of curriculum time
- lack of specialist teacher
- lack of consistency across classes
- lack of RE provision for all at KS4
- no A level or GCSE Religious Studies option
- lack of emphasis placed on the importance of the subject.

SACRE have received no complaints regarding RE provision or quality this year.

4: Effectiveness of the North Yorkshire agreed syllabus

The current North Yorkshire Agreed Syllabus was launched in February 2013 and teaching of it began in September 2013. It is due to be revised in 2018.

The Agreed Syllabus is supported by a range of guidance documents and units of learning. They include:

Six guidance documents:

- Good learning in RE: guidance for teachers;
- Beginners guides to the religions and beliefs recommended for learning;
- Glossary of terms;
- A SACRE tool for using the 8 level scale of expectation in RE;
- RE and assessment: six sample tasks
- SEND and RE resource pack

19 units of learning from KS1-3

A poster illustrating the 8 level progress scale.

The resources are available free to schools in the Service Level Agreement (SLA) via 'Fronter', North Yorkshire's virtual learning platform, or are available to purchase by other schools.

According to the RE annual return, 78.4% of North Yorkshire schools fully follow the North Yorkshire SACRE RE Agreed syllabus. 16.4% of schools partially follow it, and 5.2% of schools follow an alternative syllabus. Alternative syllabi include 'The Way, The Truth and The Life' from the Catholic Diocese of Leeds, and 'Equals', a syllabus designed for Special Schools.

90% of schools use the North Yorkshire RE Units of learning. 12% of all schools just use these, whilst 78% of schools supplement the North Yorkshire units of learning with other resources and their own planning. 88% of schools evaluated the North Yorkshire units to be good or excellent.

5: Collective worship

There were no complaints registered with the local authority or SACRE in 2014/15 in respect of collective worship and no North Yorkshire school has been found to be failing in its statutory duties in respect of collective worship.

As in previous years, no determinations were requested by schools¹.

Revised 'Collective Worship guidance' was issued to schools in January 2015. The guidance is supported by additional appendices, which include a self-evaluation document and a resource list to support Collective Worship. The revised guidance reflects the need for schools to ensure their Collective Worship is inclusive, educational and valued by pupils and staff.

6: Management of SACRE

SACRE meetings

The SACRE maintained its normal annual pattern of three meetings during the school year 2014/14. Two meetings were held at County Hall and the third at Christ Church CE Primary School, where there was an opportunity to walk round the school and talk to students and staff. Members of SACRE observed enquiry based RE lessons and answered questions about faith and belief. SACRE wishes to express their thanks to the pupils and staff at Christ Church CE Primary School for providing us with this opportunity and in particular, Simone Bennett, the headteacher.

SACRE is professionally clerked by a member of the local authority's committee services team, for which members and advisers are grateful.

Attendance at SACRE meetings 2014-15

Membership of each of the four groups which constitute the North Yorkshire SACRE:

Group A: Baptist, Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish, Methodist, Muslim, Roman Catholic, Salvationist, Sikh, Society of Friends (single representative of each)

Group B: Two representatives nominated by each of the Diocese of York, and the Diocese of West Yorkshire and the Dales

Group C: Four teachers for religious education

Group D: Five elected members of the county council

Co-opted: Humanist

	4th December 2014	5th March 2015	2nd July 2015	Possible Maximum Attendances at each meeting
Group A	6	7	6	(8) 2x vacancies = 10
Group B	2	1	1	(4)
Group C	2	1	3	(4)
Group D	3	3	4	(5)
Co-opted	1	1	1	(1)
Local Authority Adviser	1	1	1	(1)
Total	15(12)*	14(11)*	16(7)*	(23)

*2013-14 Attendance

Membership and training

Mr Nasr Moussa Emam was elected chair of SACRE for the school year 2014/15.

SACRE were delighted to welcome new members to SACRE: County Councillor Margaret-Ann De Courcey-Bayley, Mr Mohinder Singh Chana, representing Sikhism, Mr M Dickinson, representing The Society of Friends and Mrs Sarah Beveridge, teacher representative. There are currently vacancies for representatives from the Hindu faith, Salvationists and Baptist. SACRE welcome applications for membership from anyone who has an interest in supporting Religious Education in North Yorkshire.

The chair of SACRE, Mr Nasr Moussa Emam attended the national SACRE conference 21st May 2015 and was re-elected to be an Executive Member for NASACRE and the Liaison Executive to Hull and East Riding SACRE for the Westhill Award 2015. The chair of SACRE attended the National Interfaith network 'IFN' and continue his support to the Inter-Faith Week and its themes 'Living Well Together' and 'not in my name'. He attended a special education event at York Inter Faith Group, Civic and Community Leaders on Tuesday 28th April 2015 in York and was a guest of the Rt Hon the Lord Mayor of York for the Remembrance Sunday Service at the War Memorial on Sunday 9th November 2014 and the collective way of remembrance, thought and prayer on Friday 3rd July 2015.

Complaints

No complaints have been received by SACRE about Collective Worship or RE.

Information and advice

The SACRE continues to employ the wide range of knowledge, skills and experience represented in its membership to provide information, advice, support and wise counsel to the local authority and its schools on matters relating to RE, collective worship and the wider agenda of inclusion, diversity and community cohesion, for which the local authority is grateful.

In turn, professional advice has been provided to the SACRE by the Humanities Education Development Adviser (EDA), supported by other colleagues. The Humanities EDA provided valuable support to schools at a time when other authorities are cutting back support.

As part of the restructure of the Education and Skills service in August 2015, the Humanities Education Development position was disestablished. A new position of Equalities Adviser was established and the role of LA adviser to SACRE was included within this post.

7: Contribution of SACRE to the wider Local Authority Agenda

Improvement and development planning

During the course of the year the SACRE has considered a number of issues, including:

- National changes and developments in RE
- Revising the North Yorkshire Collective Worship Guidance and supporting resources
- Organising a regional RE Conference
- RE's contribution to the 'Prevent' Agenda
- Establishing a regional RE hub: InspiRE
- The publication of 'A new settlement for Religion and belief in schools'
- RE's contribution to SMSC and British Values
- Providing guidance to schools on planning visits to places of worship
- How SACRE can effectively gather information from schools on their RE provision

Training for schools

The local authority continues to support the leadership and management of RE, and thus teaching and learning in all schools, through facilitating secondary subject leader termly network days and an annual network day for primary RE subject leaders. These are provided free to all schools signed up to the Education and Skills Service Level Agreement and at a charge to other schools.

Agendas have included:

- Updates on local and national issues and developments
- Input from AQA on the new GCSE and A Levels
- Marking, assessment and effective feedback
- Outstanding RE lessons
- Teaching about Islam
- Links with RE and Prevent
- Subject leadership
- Sharing ideas on visits and visitors
- Sharing good practice

A further full days training course, 'Developing Primary RE', was also provided for primary subject leaders and was well attended.

RE Regional Conference

North Yorkshire SACRE were delighted to host a regional conference day for teachers of RE delivered in partnership with York SACRE and the Diocese of York .

The conference, entitled, 'Creative, engaging and challenging RE' was attended by over 100 delegates, with 87% of them evaluating the conference as 'excellent'. Key note speeches from Lat Blaylock, from RE Today and Alan Brine, former HMI lead for RE, inspired, challenged and up-dated the audience on current thinking in RE. Delegates were also able to attend three workshops during the day on a range of topics from 'Big RE Days', Enquiry in RE, Approaches to assessment, Using ICT in RE, Curriculum development and Developing positive links with the Muslim Community.

Over lunchtime, delegates were entertained by Jas Singh performing a thrilling Sikh sword dance.

This is what the delegates had to say:

- "Great key note speakers."
- "Thank you. A great day with lots of great ideas to take away with us. People seem to be much more buzzing about RE now."
- "Informative. Good choice of workshops."
- "Such a lot of info for such a short amount of time – very fast paced!!"
- "It was useful talking to other RE coordinators about how they do things."
- "Fabulous day- got a lot from it."
- "Very inspiring- thank you!"



8: Executive Summary

- There were no complaints registered with the local authority and SACRE in 2014/15 in respect of religious education or collective worship.
- No determinations were requested by schools.
- The number of pupils entered for GCSE full course Religious Studies decreased this year to 41% of the cohort but there was a further improvement in results, which are above national performance at grades A* to C.
- At GCE A level the number of entries increased lightly and 98.2 % of candidates entered for A2 level achieved a grade A*-E, 20.2% at grades A*/A, which was just below the national average performance. At GCE AS level there was a slight increase in the number of entries. 80% of candidates achieved a grade A-E, 24.3% at grade A-B.
- New Collective Worship Guidance was issued to schools.
- Subject leader network meetings continued termly for secondary subject leaders and annually for primary subject leaders.
- SACRE hosted a regional RE Conference for teachers

² In respect of requests for exemptions from the legal requirement for broadly Christian collective worship.

9: Membership of The North Yorkshire Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education 2014-2015

Baptist	Mrs G Sellers (until August 2015)
Buddhist	Mrs C Taylor
Hindu	Vacancy
Jewish	Dr N Packter
Methodist	Mrs B Belsham
Muslim	Mr N M Emam (Chairman)
Roman Catholic	Mr C Devanny
Salvationist	Vacancy
Sikh	Mr Mohinder Singh Chana
Society of Friends	Mr M Dickinson
Church of England (The Diocese of West Yorkshire and the Dales and the York Diocese)	Miss M Haigh MBE Rev R Davill Mrs O Seymour Mrs S Bennett
Teachers	Mrs M Gibson (Vice-Chairman) Mrs S Beveridge Mrs A Head Mrs R Oates
Local Authority	County Councillor J Clark County Councillor Margaret-Ann De Courcsey-Bayley County Councillor R Heseltine County Councillor J Plant County Councillor J Savage
Co-opted Member	Professor J Adams (Humanist)
Local Authority Adviser	Ms R Mason
Clerk to SACRE	Mrs S Mitchell



Contact us

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