



Camden Standing
Advisory Council on
Religious Education

Annual Report
2014-2015

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Introduction from the Chair of Camden SACRE

We live in times of heightened anxiety about religion and the impact that distorted forms of it may have in our schools. This year has seen new instructions from government to all schools about how religious identity must be understood within the promotion of the British values of democracy, the rule of law, liberty and tolerance. It has also seen the extension of the government's Prevent Strategy to cover school children of all ages.

This has inevitably increased scrutiny and debate around Religious Education and the accommodation of religious issues within schools. As well as meeting our specific legal obligations, the SACRE is seeking to support schools as well as it can in facing these issues, publishing briefing papers and talking with teachers and headteachers to provide guidance in particular contexts. Our joint meeting with the Camden Faith Leaders Forum at the end of the year was an indication of how we want to share this conversation with the wider community, ensuring that the different faith communities present in the borough have confidence in the religious education being provided and the respect shown to their traditions.

This report sets out that work in detail and provides more information about our procedures and policies for Collective Worship. We hope that our efforts in the year ahead continue to resource Camden schools in developing a learning environment that improves religious understanding, develops spiritual awareness and encourages respectful and lively debate.

James Walters
Chair 2014-2015

Background

This report summarises the activities of Camden Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) during the academic year 2014 – 2015. SACRE has a remit for monitoring Religious Education and Collective Worship in non-denominational schools. The relevant diocesan authorities monitor denominational schools. The Education Act 2002 requires that Religious Education must be provided as part of the basic curriculum in addition to the National Curriculum. Parents have the right to withdraw their children from all or part of RE and are not obliged to state their reasons for withdrawal.

This report continues to be composed in the light of guidance from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) on the format of SACRE annual reports.

1. Religious Education

1.1 Locally Agreed Syllabus

After due process, the Local Authority agreed to adopt the Hampshire RE Syllabus – Living Difference. Work was carried out to adapt the syllabus to make it specific to Camden. The content of the syllabus and the methodology behind it were not amended, as these were the key factors in agreeing to adopt the syllabus. The new syllabus became the statutory Agreed Syllabus for all non-denominational schools in Camden from September 2012

Materials were sent to schools in July 2012. Each school received hard copies of the Agreed Syllabus, plus CD versions. Schools also received a primary or secondary handbook, as appropriate.

Appropriate advice, support and training was offered to primary and secondary teachers to enable them to implement the new syllabus. The feedback was very positive.

Support continues to be provided to subject leaders via access to the Hampshire RE website and associated Moodle platform where there are many additional resources, including teaching plans.

1.2 Standards in RE

The school visit programme continued and is a useful way of sampling approaches to the subject in a range of schools across Camden. SACRE members and the SACRE Consultant offer school based colleagues advice, help and support during these visits, reflecting the requirements of the agreed syllabus and pertinent to the individual needs of each school.

1.3 Methods of Teaching, the Choice of Teaching Materials, Teacher Training

The focus for the year was on continuing to support the implementation of the Agreed Syllabus.

In addition, SACRE helped to organise the biennial joint conference with colleagues from Islington SACRE. It was held on Thursday 19th March in Islington and sincere thanks go to them for all their work in ensuring that it was a great success.

The title of the conference was 'Rights and Responsibilities: What is the relationship between RE and Community Relations?' and Dr. Joyce Miller, Chair of the RE Council of England and Wales was the guest speaker. After her presentation, there was an opportunity for members of the audience to break into smaller groups and discuss the issues raised, as well as their implications for SACREs. They then engaged in a question and answer session with Joyce. Attendees included SACRE members and teachers from a range of Camden and Islington schools, as well as governors and members of local faith communities.

1.4 Complaints concerning RE

No complaints were received by SACRE in 2014-2015.

2. Collective Worship

2.1 Advice on Collective Worship

SACRE has produced short and clear advice for schools on Collective Worship and distributed to schools (see appendices).

Visits to schools by SACRE members accompanied by the SACRE Consultant and/or the Chair of SACRE have continued. Any school applying for or renewing a Determination should receive a visit from SACRE members prior to the application being discussed at a meeting.

In addition, during the academic year, such visits were also made to the following schools, some also including support for Religious Education as well as Collective Worship:

- Brecknock Primary School
- Fitzjohn's Primary School
- Rhyl Primary School

2.2 Determinations

There were no new applications for a Determination. There are currently 13 schools with a Determination.

At the SACRE Meeting on 4th November 2014, members considered and approved an application for the renewal of a determination from the following school:

- Gospel Oak Primary School

At the SACRE Meeting on 2nd June 2015, members considered and approved applications for the renewal of a determination from the following schools:

- Hampstead School
- Torriano Infant School

- Torriano Junior School

The application from Primrose Hill Primary School was considered at the same meeting, but no renewal was granted as SACRE members had not been able to make a visit to the school to observe Collective Worship. The school was encouraged to make another application at the next SACRE Meeting in Autumn 2015, once such a visit had taken place.

Schools with Determinations and Date of Review

- Primrose Hill Primary School 06/14
- Brecknock Primary School 06/14
- Beckford Primary School 02/16
- Swiss Cottage Special School 02/16
- Rhyl Primary School 02/16
- Frank Barnes School for Deaf Children 02/17
- Kingsgate Primary School 02/17
- Christopher Hatton Primary School 06/17
- Eleanor Palmer Primary School 06/19
- Gospel Oak Primary School 11/19
- Hampstead School 06/20
- Torriano Infant School 06/20
- Torriano Junior School 06/20

A number of schools have determinations which have expired and some of them are engaged in the process of renewing these.

2.3 Complaints Concerning Collective Worship

No complaints were received by SACRE.

3. Links with other bodies

The SACRE Consultant attended the Annual General Meeting of the National Association of SACREs in Birmingham on 21st May 2015.

The Rt Hon Charles Clarke, former Secretary of State for Education was the keynote speaker. Charles is currently Visiting Professor in Politics at the University of East Anglia and also a Visiting Professor in Politics and Faith at the University of Lancaster. The University has established a department of Politics, Philosophy and Religion, within which he is doing some teaching and lecturing. With Professor Linda Woodhead, also at the University of Lancaster, he has worked on a paper on the future of religion in schools and this was the main subject of his address. The full paper can be found at:

<http://faithdebates.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/A-New-Settlement-for-Religion-and-Belief-in-schools.pdf>

If SACRE members would like to hear Charles Clarke's speech from the NASACRE AGM , then they will need to login to the NASACRE website to gain access to a podcast. The link is available here, but please note that login details are required in order to access it successfully. <http://www.nasacre.org.uk/conference-and-agm/2015/materials> . These are available from the Clerk to SACRE.

Other speakers at the AGM included Professor Denise Cush of the University of Bath Spa and Mary Myatt, Senior Ofsted Inspector and RE Adviser. Their presentations are also available on the NASACRE website.

On 29 July 2015, the SACRE held a joint meeting with Camden's Faith Leaders' Forum to explore their different roles and how they might support each other. The constructive dialogue focused on working together with Camden's faith leaders to tackle withdrawals and to offer support to the teaching of RE in Camden through providing speakers and offering faith venues for school visits. It is an aspiration to hold an annual joint meeting, as well as to hold future, similar meetings with the London Borough of Camden's Children, Schools and Families and the Culture and Environment scrutiny committees to explore joint interests in, for example, education and community safety.

4. SACRE Arrangements

SACRE Meetings were held on:

- 4th November 2014
- 3rd February 2015
- 2nd June 2015

Clerking of SACRE was provided by Camden Council Committee Services section.

Professional support was provided by SACRE Consultant Lesley Prior on a consultancy basis, supported by Tracy Edwards, Specialist Leader in Education, based at Swiss Cottage Special School.

The Local Authority covered the running costs.

Appendix 1

SACRE MEMBERSHIP – 2014/ 2015

PANEL A – CHRISTIAN AND OTHER RELIGIOUS DENOMINATIONS

Ms. Jean Harrison (Camden Free Church, Baptist)
Ms. Lynndy Levin (Jewish)
Rev. B. Ananda Mangala (Buddhist)
Mr. Abdul Quadir (Muslim)
Mr. Peter Ward (Roman Catholic)
Ms. Krishna Pujara (Hindu)
Ms Alice Fuller (Humanist)
Ms Shahanaz Begum (Muslim) (from November 2014)

PANEL B – THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

Ms. Liz Wolverson
Ms Amanda Szewczyk-Radley
Mr. Peter Ginnings
Reverend James Walters

PANEL C – TEACHERS

Ms. Lynn Trigg
Ms Tracy Edwards
Ms. Michelle Chalibamba
Ms. Sinead Whelan
Mr. Gerry Cohen (from June 2015)

PANEL D – CAMDEN LOCAL AUTHORITY

Julian Fulbrook
Heather Johnson
Maryam Eslamdoust (to June 2015)
Paul Tomlinson (from June 2015)
Oliver Lewis
Phil Rosenberg
Leila Roy
Don Williams

Guidance on Collective Worship for non-denominational schools

Why Collective Worship?

In a speech to high school students the late American writer David Foster Wallace remarked, “There is no such thing as not worshipping. Everybody worships. The only choice we get is what to worship.” That may be money, beauty, power or intellect. Wallace was not a religious person. But for him, living well was learning to worship the right things and shaping your character according to good values.

So Collective Worship is the opportunity in the day for your school to focus on what is most important. It’s a time to celebrate your common life, to reflect on the values that you want to shape your school and to form the character of the staff and pupils within it.

Why worship “of a broadly Christian character”?

The majority of people in this country believe in God and 55% self-identified as Christian in the 2011 census. Christian history, culture and values continue to shape our national life well beyond those who regularly attend church. So the law continues to stipulate that collective worship should reflect the broad traditions of Christian belief, being shaped by Christian stories, prayers and songs.

Religious diversity

This Christian character does not and should not preclude the incorporation of other faith traditions or humanistic wisdom within the collective worship. It is not the “corporate worship” of the Church but an inclusive experience that “collects” the whole school together and imposes no beliefs or devotional practices on anyone.

Where collective worship of a broadly Christian character is strongly at odds with the make up of the school community, the Head Teacher can apply to SACRE for a Determination. If granted this does not lift the legal requirement for a daily act of worship and requires some sensitive

reflection on the character of worship that may need to engage with interfaith resources and the broader values that underpin the school.

What should Collective Worship include?

Collective Worship is part of the educational experience of the school day and should contribute to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC). Teachers can make use of religious material drawn from a variety of traditions, including prayers. These should give those pupils who wish to the opportunity to worship God while offering to all a profound reflective experience.

Practical issues

- Collective Worship can be offered at any time of the day in any school grouping.
- Collective Worship is required by 1988 Education Act as compulsory for all pupils aged 5 to 18 unless they are withdrawn by parents.
- Parents have the right to withdraw their child from collective worship, but not from SMSC.
- Teachers also have the right not to take part in Collective Worship.
- Collective Worship is the responsibility of the Head Teacher and the Governing Body.

Camden Local Education Authority

Camden Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education

Collective worship: applying for a determination

Advice to headteachers

1. Background

1.1 A determination from SACRE lifts the requirement of Section 7(1) of the Education Reform Act 1988 that collective worship should be "wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character".

1.2 Section 12 of the Act allows for applications to be made to the local SACRE "to consider whether it is appropriate for the requirement for Christian collective worship to apply in the case of that school, or in the case of any class or description of pupils at that school".

1.3 Paragraphs 68-81 of the DFE (Department for Education) Circular 1/94 summarise the position on determinations. If you consider that it is inappropriate for the school to provide collective worship "wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character", you can apply to SACRE for a determination. The Act requires consultation with the governing body before an application can be made.

1.4 In accordance with paragraph 74 of Circular 1/94, SACRE has drawn up these procedures to help you apply for a determination.

1.5 SACRE recommends that headteachers and governing bodies consider Camden's policy on collective worship before making an application using the proforma provided by SACRE.

2. Procedures for applying for a determination

2.1 Collect data on the percentage of pupils belonging to different faith communities and include this with your application. Evidence that the family backgrounds of pupils are from a faith other than Christian or from a variety of religious faiths and life stances would be necessary for conclusion in favour of determination to be reached.

2.2 Discuss your proposal to apply for a determination with governors drawing their attention to the relevant sections of Circular 1/94 and the SACRE collective worship policy. Record the views expressed by governors, the voting outcome if a vote was taken, and the date of the meeting. Enclose this information with your application.

2.3 Seek the views of the parent body as to whether or not an application should be made. You are advised to write to parents, informing them of your intention to apply for a determination based on your policy for collective worship, and inviting them to respond if they object. A copy of this letter must be enclosed with your application.

2.4 Your application should demonstrate that the 1998 Act is being complied with, that is the school must organise a daily act of collective worship for all pupils.

2.5 If the school intends to adopt the SACRE policy, then the implication is that the determination will apply to the whole school. Your application should explain how all pupils would take part in acts of collective worship on a daily basis. Secondary headteachers should note that the relevant requirements of the Act apply to all 11 to 19 year olds, apart from those sixth form pupils who have chosen to withdraw. Primary headteachers should note that the requirements do not apply to nursery schools and nursery classes.

2.6 If you do not intend to follow the SACRE policy, then you must clearly state what alternative policy you will use. You should demonstrate that the school's approach to collective worship is in concert with the aims of school collective worship as outlined in SACRE's collective worship policy, by providing a copy of the worship policy and programme.

2.6 You should apply using the appropriate form and sign the application, attaching all necessary additional papers:

1. Name of School
2. Name of headteacher
3. Pupils for whom the application applies
4. Reasons for applying, including information on the percentages of different faiths (or none) in the school
5. Details of consultation with governors
6. Details of consultation with parents (include copy of letter or newsletter requesting views of parents) and any consultation with pupils.
7. Proposed organisational arrangements for collective worship
8. Proposed policy for collective worship (if different from SACRE policy)
9. The statutory statement of the provision of collective worship intended for inclusion in the school's brochure.

3. Procedures for granting or rejecting applications

3.1 SACRE should receive applications at least eight weeks before the meeting at which the application will be considered.

3.2 Initially, the written application will be scrutinised by the Professional Adviser to SACRE.

3.3 The school will be included in the SACRE visit programme prior to the application being heard.

3.4 Headteachers will normally be notified in writing of the date of the SACRE meeting at which the application will be heard. SACRE meetings are held once a term and headteachers are invited to attend. The headteacher will be notified in writing, normally within two weeks, of the determination made by SACRE. If the determination made is to accept the application, it shall take effect from the date of that SACRE meeting and shall have effect for five years

Camden SACRE

Collective worship: Procedure for reviewing a determination

Schools are granted a Determination by SACRE for a period of 5 years. The following procedure for reviewing a Determination has been agreed by SACRE: -

1. The Clerk to SACRE will write to a school approximately 3months prior to the date for review, asking if it wishes to renew the Determination.
2. If a school wishes to renew a Determination, it should seek the views of parents through a letter or newsletter.
3. The governing body should formally agree to apply to renew the Determination
4. The appropriate form and supplementary papers should be sent to the Clerk of SACRE.
5. Information should be provided by the school about the representation of different faiths (or none) as well as details of the current arrangements for collective worship.
6. The school will be included in the SACRE visit programme prior to the renewal request being discussed at a meeting.
7. At the next SACRE meeting the form and supplementary papers will be presented and members asked to renew the Determination or not.
8. The school will be informed of the decision and, if successful, the Determination renewed for a further five years.
9. If a school does not respond to the request to renew its Determination, the Clerk will write to the school for clarification.