

City of Stoke-on-Trent

**Standing Advisory Council on
Religious Education**

Twentieth Annual Report – 2017

Message from the Chair of SACRE

This twentieth annual report of the Stoke-on-Trent SACRE covers the period of the academic year 2016 - 2017.

I was pleased to be able to join SACRE in 2017. Religious Education is an essential part of a pupil's education and provides rich opportunities for children and young people to learn about things that matter in the lives of local people and the wider world. Pupils study beliefs, teachings and ways of living, and explore a range of responses to questions of identity, meaning, purpose, values and commitments. At a time when religious beliefs guide the lives of billions of people worldwide, understanding people's views can be a first step to recognising and appreciating diversity. This is particularly important at a time of global tensions.

It is good this year to be able to hear from schools about the successful embedding of syllabus and the engagement of pupils. Primary schools report that the agreed syllabus has led to raised standards. However we remain concerned that the number of pupils studying GCSE RS continues to fall and we continue to engage with secondary schools on this matter.

We have been pleased to note that there has been further faith community engagement with schools to support the syllabus. As a SACRE we have been working towards creating a place of worship data base for schools. We were pleased to be able to run another successful RE pupil day for over 80 primary school pupils from over a quarter of Stoke Primary schools.

SACRE have also spent time discussing and engagement with national issues through response to the national Commission on RE. We eagerly await the publication of the final report from the commission.

Councillor Abi Brown
Chair
Stoke-on-Trent SACRE



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Summary

SACRE met on three occasions during the academic year 2016/2017: 24 November 2016; 16 Feb 2017; 22 June 2017. Meetings were held in the Civic Centre from 4pm – 6pm. All meetings were quorate. The agendas and minutes are available on the local authority's website.

The Local Authority provided funding to support SACRE activity 2016/17 by contracting with RE Today Services of an RE Consultant for 13.5 days per year. These days include servicing SACRE, working with schools and the local authority, provision of a pupil day and first response consultancy. Fiona Moss from RE Today continued in the role of RE consultant.

There were no formal complaints to SACRE about RE during the year.

There were no determinations in force and no requests for determinations were presented to SACRE during the year.

1 Standards and quality of Religious Education (RE) provision

1a Compliance and time allocation for RE

Evidence from teachers attending professional development opportunities provided by SACRE and contact with schools suggest that that the City's primary schools are continuing to teach RE and are continuing to find there is pressure to fit it into the curriculum. Continuing links with British Values and SMSC have led to an increased understanding of the importance of RE in some schools. Teachers continue to be pleased with the new Agreed Syllabus launched in April 2016 and have now fully implemented it in their schools. Teachers are pleased at how easy it is to plan from and that the units of the work purchased for each school are being used successfully. Pupils are engaging with the new questions and are enjoying learning in RE. Teachers in Primary report that pupil standards have risen as a result of using the new syllabus. Some primary schools continue to report an increase in the time spent teaching RE as a result of the new Agreed Syllabus.

SACRE are still extremely concerned about the situation in some Stoke secondary schools. Not only has the amount of students entered for short course fallen to 0 pupils there has also been a decrease in the number of pupils entered for GCSE full course (1,084 in 2016 down to 995 in 2017). The new locally Agreed Syllabus states that;

*'All students can reasonably expect their learning will be accredited, and **this agreed syllabus requires that all students should pursue an accredited course leading to a qualification approved under Section 96¹⁰. These modes of accreditation include nationally accredited courses in RE such as GCSE and A level RS, and a wide range of enrichment courses and opportunities, such as the Extended Project Qualification. Good practice examples include many schools where all students take GCSE RS courses at 16.'***

The SACRE are collecting information from local secondary schools to ensure that they are compliant with the law and are offering religious education for all students. If schools that are academies are choosing not to follow an agreed syllabus they must still teach RE to all their pupils. Currently SACRE is struggling to find out how RE is being taught in schools who are not entering the majority of their cohort for GCSE. SACRE is also using the information from the School workforce survey that NATRE sourced from the DfE.

The new Stoke-on-Trent Agreed Syllabus for RE 2016-2021 is used as the basis for planning the RE curriculum in the City's primary schools.

Issues of compliance with regard to RE relate mainly to the secondary phase, and we believe remain more an issue in key stage 4 than in key stage 3.

Delivery of RE by Higher Level Teaching Assistants (HLTAs), with teachers taking this time as their Preparation and Assessment (PPA) time, continues in Primary schools. Several HLTAs still regularly attend the termly network meetings. We continue to hear that some primary schools are reporting that although RE had been taught by HLTAs this subject is now taught by class teachers. Where this decision has been made it is usually led by a confident subject leader and a supportive senior leadership team. There are early signs that training as a result of the new syllabus is increasing the number of teachers delivering RE.

There were no formal complaints to SACRE about RE during the year. However SACRE has raised concerns to the local authority about potential compliance issues in Key Stage 4. The SACRE is striving to collect information about whether suitable RE is being taught to all pupils.

1b Primary RE

Evidence from teachers attending termly briefing meetings and the RE consultant's visits to schools suggested that:

- Termly briefings provided a regular input of professional support and development for those who attend (usually subject leaders) and those in their own to school to whom they disseminate learning. Termly briefing and training sessions continue to support non-specialist TAs, HLTAs and teachers in primary schools to increase their confidence leading, managing and teaching RE. This year termly briefings have taken place on Celebration and journey, Teaching RE in the early years and KS1 and links to the wider curriculum. There has been increase in the number of teachers attending meetings.
- Teachers are continuing to work with the new Agreed Syllabus launched in April 2016 and have reported that the planning steps are working well. Long term plans are being adapted and the new syllabus has been fully implemented. Schools continue to be grateful for the investment by the local authority and SACRE providing a comprehensive syllabus, units of work and a full day of training.
- Ensuring that sufficient time is given to RE is an ongoing difficulty for some schools although there are reports that the new syllabus is bringing a renewed focus on RE. The pupil day is also supporting some schools to run RE focus days in addition to other teaching of RE.
- In March 2017 SACRE funded a pupil day for year 5 pupils this was offered to all city schools. Approximately One hundred pupils from seventeen primary schools attended the RE and British values day for schools at the Bridge Centre. Pupils and teachers went on to recreate a similar day with groups of pupils in their schools. This day was such a success that it will be repeated on two occasions in March 2018. This will allow more pupils to attend. Places were offered to pupils in year 8 however unlike last year no secondary schools took up this offer.

1c Secondary RE

- There has been a very significant decrease in the number of students entered for examination RE. 1 Stoke-on-Trent school still enters no students for GCSE RS (Ormiston Horizon Academy). Also 6 schools enter less than 25% of their cohort (Birches Head Academy, Discovery Academy, Haywood Academy, Ormiston Sir Stanley Matthews Academy, Ormiston Meridian Academy and Trentham Academy) and a further 1 school enter less than 50% (Thistley Hough Academy). On a positive note 5 out of 14 Stoke-on-Trent secondary schools entered more than 65% of their cohort for full course GCSE, thereby providing external accreditation for most of their students of their studies in RE (The Excel Academy, St Joseph's College, St Peter's Academy, St Margaret Ward Catholic Academy and St Thomas More Catholic Academy).
- Most secondary schools are now assessing without levels, some are using GCSE grades down to year 7 and others are creating their own bespoke systems. The new agreed syllabus will not use levels and will allow recording of progression to mesh with individual school systems.

1d Public examination entries in RE/RS

Examination results

- Results for the 2017 GCE and GCSE examinations are summarised in Appendix B together with comparative data from 2016.
- Results from the 2017 Full Course GCSE were 66.8% A* - C which is below the national average of 71.2%.
- 995 students, 46.8% of all students at the end of KS4 in Stoke-on-Trent schools in 2017, were entered for the full GCSE religious studies course, showing a marked decrease from the 1,080 students, 49.3% of all students in 2016.
- No students took the religious studies short course GCSE in 2017 compared to 4 in 2016. This low number is extremely worrying.

GCE A and AS Level Religious Studies

- 114 students took religious studies A level in 2017 (more than in 2016 when there were 97 entries).
- 4.4% of students gained the A* grade and 9.6% gained the A grade. 95.6% of students achieved A* - E.
- The numbers taking AS level decreased from 167 in 2016 to 28 in 2017. 10.7% of students achieved an A grade. 92.9% of students achieved A - E which is an increase compared to 2016.

Standards in RE at GCSE (full course)

- Standards in RE at GCSE (full course) increased this year.
- 66.8% of students attained Grade A*- C which is a slight increase from last year (63.6%).
- 98.5% of students attained Grades A*-G which is a slight increase from last year (96.7%).
- 8% of higher attaining students achieved the A* grade compared to 7.4% in 2016.

Standards in RE at GCSE (short course)

- No students were entered for the GCSE short course religious education in 2017.

Standards in RE at GCE (A2 and AS)

- Standards in GCE A Level (A2) showed that 95.6% of students achieved an A* - E grade which is slightly below last year's figures (95.9%). 4.4% of students achieved A* grade and 9.6% achieved grade A.
- Standards in GCE AS Level (A2) showed that 92.9% of students achieved an A* - E grade which is above last year's figures (88%). 10.7% of higher attaining students achieved A grade.

1e Resources

The agreed syllabus was delivered in to schools both in hard copy and electronic form in 2016. This provides a substantial amount of support and guidance for teachers. Primary schools also received a full set of units of work to support teaching of the new Agreed Syllabus. These continue to be used.

2 Managing the SACRE and partnership with the LA and other key stakeholders

2a SACRE meetings

SACRE meetings were held termly. Main agenda items are given below; full agendas and minutes are available on the Local Authority's website.

- **24 November 2016**, 4pm – 6pm - Civic Centre, Stoke-on-Trent
 - Concern regarding events in Europe
 - Accord inclusivity award
 - Places of worship guide
 - Independent commission on RE
 - Meeting with local MP
 - RE in local schools
 - FOI National Secular society

- **16 February, 2017**, 4pm – 6pm – Etruscan Primary School, Stoke-on-Trent
 - RE in Sandford Hill Primary
 - Commission on RE
 - Annual report
 - Secondary school survey
 - Place of worship data collection
 - SACRE membership
 - Nasacre survey

- **22 June, 2017**, 4pm – 6pm – Civic Centre, Stoke-on-Trent
 - Annual review of the SACRE constitution and membership and appointment of members including Chair and vice chair
 - Places of worship guidance
 - Compliance on RE in Secondary schools
 - RE pupil day feedback
 - Formulate Action plan
 - Autumn training plans
 - Commission on RE
 - School workforce data on RE in Secondary schools

Each meeting was quorate.

2b **Membership and training**

The following faith groups were represented on SACRE: Church of England, Elim Pentecostal Community, Hindu Community, Jewish Community, Methodist Community, Muslim Community, Roman Catholic Community & Sikh Community.

SACRE considered and discussed a range of topics throughout the academic year, relevant to the changing context in education. These included a variety of papers & reports such as the commission on RE appeal for evidence, NASACRE survey, a variety of documents from National Association for Teachers of RE, 'RE Quality Mark' and feedback on implementation of the New Agreed Syllabus for Stoke-on-Trent.

SACRE also viewed and discussed teaching materials regarding RE to understand their use in the classroom, how they supported the delivery of the Stoke-on-Trent Agreed Syllabus and prepared pupils for life in Modern Britain.

2c **SACRE development**

SACRE supported a range of initiatives during the year. These included:

- Supporting the National Association of Teachers of Religious Education's (NATRE) survey to schools
- Identifying new members to join SACRE.
- Reviewing the New agreed Syllabus
- NASACRE Survey
- Commission for RE

2d **Financial support for SACRE**

The Local Authority provided funding to support SACRE activity 2016/17 by contracting with RE Today Services for provision of an RE Consultant for 13.5 days per year. This is for servicing SACRE and supporting RE in Stoke schools.

Funds were also provided for the new Agreed Syllabus.

2e **Information and advice**

Specialist consultancy was provided by Fiona Moss of RE Today Professional Services. This guidance was for up to 13.5 days per year. As in previous years this advice and support proved to be of the highest standard and was greatly appreciated by teachers, the Local Authority and SACRE.

The RE Consultant provide termly briefing meetings for primary subject leaders, teachers and HLTAs, first response consultancy by phone and email, professional development, Guidance and support on the continuing implementation of the new agreed syllabus, consultancy to schools on request (either by the LA or by individual schools) and email support and guidance. The professional development opportunities for primary teachers of RE have been RE network meetings and the RE pupil day. Secondary teachers organise their own RE meetings, Fiona or one of her colleagues have offered to attend one of these meetings.

The RE Consultant also provided guidance to SACRE to support its role in giving advice to the Local Authority concerning:

- School workforce data for secondary schools
- Website compliance of local schools
- RE, British Values and preparation for life in Modern Britain
- RE and KS4 compliance.
- Supporting the new Agreed Syllabus
- Specific issues relating to RE or religion and belief in local schools

2f **Professional development opportunities**

Topics for one-day professional development opportunities continued to be identified in feedback from teachers. However, it remained the case that teachers found it difficult to attend courses which required them to be absent from school during the school day.

The syllabus and units were provided last year for all schools and academies in the city with primary age pupils. The syllabus was delivered to all schools and academies with secondary age pupils. Support on using the syllabus has been ongoing for primary schools throughout this year.

Termly teacher meetings

Termly briefing meetings (twilight) were held for primary RE subject leaders. Primary meetings were led by Fiona Moss (RE Today);

The local authority charges for attendance at termly briefings; this had led to a reduction in the number of teachers accessing this support.

Primary briefings were slightly lower in numbers than last year, 2 briefing had attendance of approximately 20 and one had approximately 30 attendees. One primary network per term being made available. There remained a need for regular face-to-face contact with an RE specialist to provide focused support. A number of schools requested email and phone consultancy from the consultant and all requests were met.

The Lichfield Diocese provided similar opportunities for its subject leaders (primary), led by the Diocesan Adviser for RE. Attendance at the diocesan-led meetings was good. Some aided schools attended both meetings.

NATRE affiliated local groups also run in the city. Having achieved the silver RE quality Mark Sandford Hill Primary have continued a network for the Stoke 6 local primary schools.

3 The local agreed syllabus

An Agreed syllabus conference was convened and a new syllabus was launched in schools in April 2016. The syllabus has been fully taught from September 2017, the year 2016-17. Feedback from Primary schools has been extremely positive, less feedback has been received from secondary schools but that which has been received has been positive.

4 Collective worship

Support for Collective Worship was provided to individual schools on request during the year, by advisers from the Diocese of Lichfield and RE Today Services.

There were no determinations in force during the reporting year. There were no requests for a determination submitted to SACRE.

No formal complaints or other matters concerning RE were referred to SACRE during the year.

Appendix A: Terms of reference of SACRE

Terms of reference of SACRE

The composition of SACRE is set out in legislation. The four groups or committees represent the following interests within the local community.

- a. Christian denominations and non-Christian religions, broadly representing their relative strength in the area;
- b. The Church of England
- c. Teachers' associations
- d. The local authority (LA)

Members may be nominated by appropriate organisations but are appointed by the council. Other members may be co-opted.

Terms of reference

1. To support the effective provision of religious education (RE) and collective worship (CW) in schools.
2. Except in specified circumstances, to hold meetings in public and to ensure that notices, agendas and reports are publicly available.
3. To advise the LA on matters connected with daily collective worship in community schools and with the RE provided in accordance with an agreed syllabus for RE.
4. Such matters may be referred to SACRE by the LA or be raised by SACRE on its own initiative. They may include methods of teaching, the choice of materials, the provision of training for teachers and school inspection reports.
5. To determine whether to require the LA to review its agreed syllabus for RE.
6. To consider any applications from Head teachers of community schools after consultation with governors, to disapply the requirement for collective worship to be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character, and to review any 'determination' after five years.
7. To publish an annual report on its work which should:
 - specify any matters on which it has been advised the LA;
 - broadly describe the nature of that advice, and
 - set out reasons for offering advice on any matters which were not referred to it initially by the LA.
8. Circulate annual reports to schools and other interested parties, including the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority which publishes a national analysis of SACRE reports.
9. Upon any question being put to the vote, each committee shall have one vote only. Co-opted members have no vote.

Appendix B: Summary of GCSE and GCE results 2017

GCSE results for Religious Studies (2017) with comparative data from 2016

GCSE (Full Course)

	A*	A	B	C	Total A*-C	D	E	F	G	Total A* - G	Ungraded
Stoke-on-Trent 2017	8%	16.9%	21.8%	20.2%	66.8%	13.7%	9%	6.6%	2.4%	98.5%	1.5%
<i>Stoke-on-Trent 2016</i>	7.4%	14.5%	22.1%	19.7%	63.6%	6%	8.5%	7.6%	4.4%	96.7%	3.3%
National 2017	10%	19.4%	23.4%	18.4%	71.2%	12.1%	7.3%	4.5%	2.7%	97.9%	2.1%
<i>National 2016</i>	10.6%	19.1%	23.5%	18.5%	71.7%	11.9%	7.2%	4.5%	2.7%	98.1%	1.9%

GCSE (Short Course)

	A*	A	B	C	Total A*-C	D	E	F	G	Total A* - G	Ungraded
Stoke-on-Trent 2017	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<i>Stoke-on-Trent 2016</i>	0%	0%	0%	33.3%	33.3%	33.3%	0%	0%	33.3%	100%	0%
National 2017	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<i>National 2016</i>	7.6%	14.2%	20.2%	19%	61%	13.4%	9.9%	6.6%	4.6%	95.5%	4.5%

GCE results for Religious Studies (2017) with comparative data from 2016

GCE A Level (A2)

	A*	A	B	C	D	E	U
Stoke-on-Trent 2017	4.4%	9.6%	24.6%	33.3%	16.7%	7%	4.4%
<i>Stoke-on-Trent 2016</i>	1%	13.4%	21.6%	33%	19.6%	8.2%	3.1%
National 2017	5.7%	18.5%	30.7%	25.7%	13%	4.8%	1.6%
<i>National 2016</i>	5.6%	18.5%	30.3%	25.8%	13.7%	5%	1.4%

GCE AS Level

	A	B	C	D	E	U
Stoke-on-Trent 2017	10.7%	25%	28.6%	25%	3.6%	7.1%
<i>Stoke-on-Trent 2016</i>	15%	21%	24%	17.4%	10.8%	12%
National 2017	22.5%	24.3%	23.4%	14.9%	8.2%	6%
<i>National 2016</i>	20.4%	24.6%	23.5%	15.5%	8.7%	6.9%

Appendix C: School workforce data for RE (2015)

School name:	Religious character:	% Year 7 hours spent on RE Teaching	% Year 8 hours spent on RE Teaching	% Year 9 hours spent on RE Teaching	% Year 10 hours spent on RE Teaching	% Year 11 hours spent on RE Teaching
Haywood Engineering College		0.0	0.0	2.0	1.0	1.6
Discovery Academy		2.2	2.5	0.0	1.0	0.0
The Co-Operative Academy of Stoke-On-Trent		2.6	3.6	3.7	2.9	2.4
St Margaret Ward Catholic School and Arts College	Roman Catholic	3.2	5.0	4.7	7.5	7.1
Holden Lane High School Specialist Sports College		3.7	3.7	0.0	8.3	4.1
Ormiston Horizon Academy		4.5	4.8	3.6	2.1	1.6
Ormiston Sir Stanley Matthews Academy		5.2	5.7	1.4	1.7	1.7
Thistley Hough Academy		5.7	4.9	5.6	5.1	3.2
St Peter's Academy	Church of England	5.8	5.7	5.6	8.7	10.0
Birches Head Academy		6.1	5.9	5.3	1.7	2.7
St Thomas More Catholic College	Roman Catholic	9.0	8.4	10.7	11.2	8.0
Stoke Studio College for Manufacturing and Design Engineering		.	.	0.0	0.0	.

Appendix D: SACRE Representatives

Committee A: Christian denominations and non-Christian religions

Mr W Butt Muslim Community

Mr B Singh Devgon Sikh Community

Pastor H Drummond Elim Pentecostal Community

Shahzad Tahir Muslim Community

Alex Wolvers Methodist Community

Saravanabavan Atputhan Hindu Community

Miss M Hewetson Roman Catholic Community (until 31st December 2016)

Chris Eyre Methodist Community

Paul Lewis Jewish Community

Committee B: The Church of England

Mrs A Stone Diocese of Lichfield

Gareth Davies Diocese of Lichfield (until 3rd February 2017)

Committee C: Teachers Associations

Mrs N Groves Primary School Teacher (Vice Chair)

Miss N Kirkham Primary School Teacher

Mrs E Preston Maintained School Headteacher (Primary)

Mrs A Mallard Secondary Academy Teacher

Rebecca Conn-Pearson Secondary Academy Teacher

Committee D: Local Authority

Councillor A Brown (from 18 May 2017) (Chair from 18 May 2017)

Councillor G Singh Kallar (Chair until 18 May 2017)

Councillor R Irving (until 18 May 2017)

Councillor M Khan

Councillor R Dale

Co-Optees

Mr P Such

Officer Support

Mrs C Bray

Mrs S Robinson

Mrs D Jabobs

Mr C Sands

Appendix E: Contact addresses of SACRE officers

Clerk to SACRE

Craig Sands
Democratic Services Officer
Democratic & Committee Support
Resources Directorate
Civic Centre
Glebe Street
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Religious Education Consultant

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