



December 2020

## The Annual Report of the City of York Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE)

*Note: This report is the first to reflect an academic year instead of a calendar year cycle; it therefore effectively covers the second two terms of the academic year 2019-20*

### Summary

This report provides members and NASACRE with details of the work of the City of York Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) from January to December 2020.

### 1. Background

Under the provision of the 1988 Education Reform Act every local education authority has a responsibility to establish a permanent body, called a Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE), together with an occasional body, called an Agreed Syllabus Conference.

In September 2018 SACRE published revised versions of its constitution, roles and responsibilities of SACRE members and a guide to York SACRE. These are all available at [www.york.gov.uk/sacre](http://www.york.gov.uk/sacre)

### 2. Membership

The people who serve on SACREs are invited to do so by the Director of Children's Services, Education and Skills on the recommendation of various bodies in the local community with a concern for the religious education of school children. The law prescribes that there have to be four "committees" each comprising representatives of specified groups. Those four committees can together co-opt further non-voting members, provided a majority are in agreement. The actual members change over time and the current SACRE is constituted as follows:-

#### **Representing Other Denominations / Faith Communities:-**

Kevin Duffy (Catholic)

Ben Rich (Jewish)

Keith Albans (Methodist)

Vacant (Muslim)

Tracey Copestake (Religious Society of Friends)

Vacant (Salvation Army)

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Vacant (Sikh)

Daryoush Mazloum (York Baha'i Community)

Penny Coppin-Siddall (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints)

Ian Hodgson (Humanist)

## **Representing the Church of England:-**

Olivia Seymour (Diocese of York)

Katherine Harper (Archbishop Holgate's CE Academy)

## **Representing Teachers:-**

Claire Hennigan (Yearsley Grove)

Jenny Mooney (Westfield)

Brenda Christison (Naburn)

## **Representing the City of York Council are Councillors:-**

Ian Cuthbertson (Lib Dem)

Martin Rowley (Con)

Chris Cullwick (Lib Dem)

Fiona Fitzpatrick (Lab)

## **In attendance:-**

John Thompson (Education Adviser)

Janie Berry / Angela Bielby (Clerk)

Mike Jory (Education Adviser) who has supported SACRE since 2015 stepped down from this role in February 2020. Clerking and facilitation of meetings has been carried out by Naomi Watson of the Schools Effectiveness and Achievement service. Under revised arrangements for the council's support of SACRE (see item 5 below) she has also relinquished her role. We would like to acknowledge, and thank them for, their contributions.

### **3. Religious Education**

During the period January 2020 to March 2020 Ofsted inspection reports indicate that those schools inspected appear to be compliant in the statutory provision of RE. There were two inspections in this period, both of primary schools.

Due to the impact of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, including the closure for many pupils during the summer term, no Ofsted inspections have taken place since March 2020 and they will not start again until January 2021. Research visits to schools by Ofsted are taking place in the Autumn Term. Whilst these are technically inspections, no reports are being published but letters are being sent to schools following visits. Two primary schools and one secondary school have been visited. None of the resulting letters reference RE.

There was one SIAMS inspection in York in the spring term, at Elvington primary school which was graded good.

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All the reports are public documents and are available on the respective school websites.

There will be no published public examination results for the summer of 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Information about examination entries, which were made prior to the cancellation of the examinations can be found in item 7 below.

It had been intended to introduce some monitoring of provision by SACRE in 2020 through visits to schools. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic this has not been possible but the issue was discussed at the SACRE meeting of July 2020. Protective measures in place in schools under Covid-19 arrangements mean that it is unlikely that visits will be possible during the 2020-21 academic year and SACRE will need to consider alternative methods of monitoring.

## **4. Collective Worship**

Besides Religious Education each local authority must work with its SACRE to monitor the provision of daily collective worship. As a result of changes to the Ofsted framework and in the absence of further guidance, the City of York SACRE published new guidance in 2017 to support Collective Worship in schools in the City, which it continues to promote within schools. The guidance is available on the City of York SACRE website ([www.york.gov.uk/sacre](http://www.york.gov.uk/sacre)).

## **5. Update on the work of SACRE**

- The following priorities for the development of SACRE were discussed and agreed as part of the SACRE plan for 2018-20:
  - (1) Continue to raise the profile of SACRE and develop RE
  - (2) Contribute to the development of a professional CPD programme to develop the quality of RE teaching
- York SACRE is a member of the Learn Teach Lead RE regional hub
- Since January 2020 two SACRE meetings have been held, but these were not quorate. Following previous efforts to recruit new members, especially current teachers, and to fill the faith group vacancies it was decided to raise the profile of SACRE as a statutory committee of the council and formally incorporate it into the council's formal governance processes. This means that meetings will now be organised, facilitated and minuted by the council's Democratic Services team.
- The closure of schools for most pupils in March and pandemic infection protection measures prevented further work on actions identified at the January meeting including the Jewish Living Exhibition which had been scheduled for June. However, signposting to national and local resources had continued to be provided to schools and added to the City of York Council website, national updates to the agreed syllabus had been sent to schools,

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Learn, Track and read RE had held some workshops online and the Humanist workshop had also moved online.

- The March meeting was cancelled due to the pandemic and a meeting in July focused on updating members about the new arrangements for managing SACRE, the situation in schools during the summer term, information about full opening of schools in September and preparation for the Agreed syllabus review.
- As a result of the new arrangements for managing SACRE, including the election of Cllr. Ian Cuthbertson as Chair in October 2020, Olivia Seymour will no longer act as Interim Chair. She continues to be a member of SACRE but her considerable contribution in the academic year 2019-20 is recognised.
- A key piece of work for SACRE in 2021 will be agreeing its new syllabus. In light of the continuing pandemic and resulting pressures on schools, the SACRE development plan will need to be reviewed with actions which can realistically be taken forward identified and prioritised.

## **6. Examinations in Religious Studies/Education Summer 2020**

As noted above, there are no published examination results or performance tables for 2020 because of the cancellation of exams and the use of alternative grading and assessment methodology.

All five school sixth forms entered students for A Level RE, with the total number of entries being 47, which is one less than last year when only four schools made entries.

At GCSE there were 1273 GCSE entries across the nine secondary schools and a further 26 entries for GCSE short course. GCSE entries had declined from 1047 in 2015 to 744 in 2018 before increasing to 910 in 2019. In 2020 there was, therefore, a significant increase in the level of entries whereas nationally the number of entries was stable.

## **7. Methods of Teaching**

The Agreed Syllabus provides a comprehensive framework for teaching and learning and assessment of pupils' knowledge and understanding of religions. As noted in item 5 above, the Agreed Syllabus will be reviewed for academic year 2021-22.

## **8. Complaints regarding the teaching of RE**

None were made to SACRE during this reporting year.

## **9. Determinations**

From time to time a school may request from the SACRE a "determination"; i.e. permission to waive the legal requirements for religious education and collective

worship to be 'wholly or mainly Christian'. The SACRE has received no requests for determinations during this reporting year.

## **10. Complaints regarding Collective Worship**

There have been no complaints about Collective Worship.

**Report produced by John Thompson, Schools Effectiveness and Achievement: Head of Secondary and Skills.**