



## Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE)

### Annual Report 2019-2020

#### **Status of this report**

An annual report is prepared by Tameside Standing Advisory Council on RE (SACRE) as part of its statutory responsibility. It summarises support for Religious Education and Collective Worship and outlines any advice SACRE has given to the local authority during the year, together with the response to such advice. The report is a public document which is also sent to the National Association of SACREs and the Department for Education. For further information on the report or on RE and Collective Worship in Tameside, please contact Alastair Ross at [alastair@penninelearning.com](mailto:alastair@penninelearning.com)

## **Part 1: Responsibilities, membership and administration**

### **SACRE's responsibilities**

Every local authority is required to form and support a SACRE which has responsibility for advising on its schools:

- For Religious Education (RE), SACRE advises community, voluntary controlled and Trust and Foundation schools without a religious designation.
- For Collective Worship SACRE advises the LA on community, Trust and Foundation schools without a religious designation.

Although not part of its compulsory statutory role, Tameside SACRE also seeks to serve and support all schools and academies within the borough and funds an agreed RE syllabus for all.

The second half of the school year has been dominated by the impact of the worldwide pandemic and its effects on schools and education, as well as on the broader life, health and economy of Tameside and Greater Manchester. Some of the impact will be outlined in the report and much is still unknown. Analysis of public examination results is also normally included in the annual report, although this year will not be available.

SACRE does not have the resources to comment in detail on every aspect of RE or collective worship in every school. Specific reports of individual visits and reviews in schools are outside the remit of this general report, but these have informed the overall picture offered.

### **Meetings**

During the latter part of the school year, proposals for re-forming Tameside SACRE were begun, albeit with some delay because of the pandemic. An initial exploratory meeting was held online in June. Since then a clerk has been appointed by the local authority and a further meeting took place in September.

Some further steps are needed by the local authority before the SACRE can be fully functional, including the appointment of local authority representatives, confirmation of the constitution and members and the appointment of a chair.

Further SACRE meetings for 2020-2021 have been provisionally arranged for 30<sup>th</sup> November, 17<sup>th</sup> March and 8<sup>th</sup> June. The last date will also be the Annual General Meeting. Details of arrangements for any SACRE meeting can be obtained from the clerk, Rachel Lees (rachel.lees@tameside.gov.uk)

## Membership

SACRE membership includes representatives from all four constituent committees.

Committee A	Faith communities except for the Church of England
Committee B	Anglican representatives
Committee C	Teachers and schools
Committee D	The local authority

A provisional, list of members is appended here.

TAMESIDE SACRE 2020	Cttee**	
Amrit Mistry	A	
Imam Ghulam Moyhuddin	A	Islam; Ashton Central Mosque
<b>Vacancy</b>	A	Humanist
Michael Lowe	A	Judaism
Indu Popat	A	Hinduism
<b>Vacancy</b>	A	Buddhism
<b>Vacancy</b>	A	Sikhism
Babs Allen	A	Free Church/URC
<b>Vacancy</b>	A	Methodist Church
<b>Vacancy</b>	A	Baptist Church
<b>Vacancy</b>	A	Quakers
<b>Vacancy</b>	A	Roman Catholic
The Rev Jean Hurlston	B	CE Dio Manchester
The Rev Roger Farnworth	B	CE Dio Manchester
Beatrix Calow	B	CE Dio Chester
Susan Marsh	B	
Verna Marsh	B	CE Dio Manchester
Leanne Bugler	C	Teachers associations
Isabella Worsley	C	Teachers associations
Vicky Hewitt-Lee	C	Teachers associations

Liam Spencer	C	Teachers associations
Alex Newman	C	Teachers associations
Graham McGuffie		Co-opted, Oldham SACRE
<b>Awaiting confirmation</b>	D	Local authority
<b>Awaiting confirmation</b>	D	Local authority
<b>Awaiting confirmation</b>	D	Local authority

## **Financial support**

All local authorities have a statutory duty to fund and support a SACRE and Tameside has allocated funds and staffing to allow SACRE to fulfil its legal functions, including the review of the local agreed syllabus which is due in 2020-21.

## **Partners, support and advice**

SACRE is grateful for the expertise of its members. Teacher and governor representatives continue to advise on the needs and progress of schools. SACRE receives advice and information from many sources, among them NATRE (National Association of Teachers of RE), NASACRE (National Association of SACREs), the RE Council of England and Wales and Ofsted.

Faiths United in Tameside was formed as an Interfaith Network when funding was available for a number of networks covering many community interests. Unlike the other networks it decided that it would remain independent and had its own constitution and officers with a committee. They were able to arrange a number of large events that encompassed the faiths in Tameside. As the funding became less and less they continued to meet, usually by the generous hospitality of faith groups. They currently to meet as a committee at Ashton Central Mosque.

In 2019 they were able to hold a conference and planned more but were overtaken by the Covid 19 pandemic. Members were delighted to be involved in the re-launch of SACRE in Tameside and a number have joined. They are assisting with an on-line training event for educational staff.

## **Advice to the Local authority**

As SACRE did not formally meet during 2019-20, no advice was given to the local authority from the body itself. However, the Council appointed a consultant to help to re-establish SACRE and support the direction of future work. He has given advice to the local authority over the process necessary to establish a functioning SACRE, the review of the local agreed RE syllabus, the provision of guidance to schools and the offer of training and professional development for teachers.

SACRE has asked the local authority to appoint representatives and to agree a constitution. The outcome of this advice is awaited.

## **Complaints**

There were no formal complaints registered to SACRE throughout the academic year.

## **Priorities for 2020-21**

The main priorities for SACRE during 2020-21 have been agreed in a development plan:

1. To re-establish a fully functioning SACRE
2. To review the agreed RE syllabus (in conjunction with four neighbouring authorities)
3. To develop support for schools in RE and collective worship, including professional development and consultancy support

Uppermost in the autumn of 2020 is the impact of the coronavirus threat and the uncertainties for the future. As a result all these priorities will be shaped accordingly. For example, including effective CPD shared electronically and the possibilities for on-line 'virtual' visits to faith communities.

## **Part 2: Supporting RE and Collective Worship**

The role of SACRE is to advise and support the work of Tameside's Learning service and the RE Consultant. Inevitably most of the day to day work is undertaken by these professionals.

During the year this professional support was provided through the consultant, Alastair Ross. He can be contacted at [alastair@penninelearning.com](mailto:alastair@penninelearning.com). He is contracted to provide the equivalent of twenty days support per year in total, though this is arranged as flexibly as possible to facilitate effective working with schools and others.

### **The Impact of COVID-19**

The emergence of COVID-19 led to the closure of schools and the arrangement of home learning for, effectively, the period from March until the end of the school year. The ramifications and conclusion to this hiatus are uncertain but have clearly had radical effects on education, including RE. Schools, through senior leaders, teachers and governors, as well as local authorities, have had to adapt to emerging guidance and complex situations. The stress and challenge of this has been palpable but through it the hallmarks of dedication, creativity and kindness have been evident. Feedback from teachers has indicated they have discovered many resources and strategies, but remote learning has still, inevitably, presented limitations. From some across the country, there has been a perception that RE has been marginalised by a focus on core subjects; it will be important to ensure this does not become embedded and that a broad and balanced curriculum is maintained for the future. At the same time, there have been opportunities to develop new resources and strategies as well as to nurture a culture of independent learning. One specific challenge for RE is how to enable the direct engagement and communication with faith communities that can enrich RE – through visits and visitors. There will be ways of enabling this to happen on-line and these will be explored in the year ahead. Apart from being a response to the pandemic, this may enable communication to be wider. SACRE Has discussed how members and faith communities might facilitate this engagement, in particular through Faiths United in Tameside.

The RE consultant has been available to schools through:

- The provision of a range of on-line resources for remote RE teaching;
- Response to queries or difficulties;
- On-line consultancy over specific or general RE issues;
- RE reviews in a selection of schools;
- Availability by phone, email or virtual meetings throughout the crisis.

## **The Local RE syllabus**

The current RE syllabus '*Religious Literacy for All*' is mandatory for teaching in maintained schools from 2016-2021. It was produced by RE Today services Ltd and is shared with four nearby local authorities: Manchester, Salford, Stockport and Trafford. However, every RE syllabus must be reviewed every five years and this is now due.

SACRE will conduct a review of the and, in due course, SACRE will make a recommendation to the local authority through a specially convened Local Agreed Syllabus Conference.

All schools, including academies, must teach RE to all pupils from ages 5-18. Maintained schools and Church of England (VC) schools must use the Tameside local agreed syllabus. Schools can supplement this syllabus with other materials, such as *Understanding Christianity*. Church of England (VA) schools and Roman Catholic schools will normally use their relevant diocesan syllabus. Academies do not have to use the local syllabus. However, if they choose not to do so, they must provide an alternative syllabus compatible with existing legislation and taught to all pupils.

## **Guidance**

A half-termly newsletter is prepared for schools in Tameside. A range of guidance has been prepared and is now available through the intranet. Guidance covers the following topics:

- RE Policy
- Withdrawal from RE
- Collective Worship

## **Provision of Training**

SACRE does not directly provide other training but recognises and encourages its provision.

During the coming year two courses have been arranged through the Learning Service:

- A two-part course on leading RE in a primary school (available free to schools)
- An evening course on Intent, Implementation and Impact in RE

Further courses will be arranged.

Tailored training, consultancy and staff training is available subject to demand and the constraints of capacity, and the consultant has attended meetings of headteachers and chairs of governors during the year.

## **RE Reviews**

An RE review has been developed as an opportunity to reflect on the quality and provision of their religious education and to discover strengths and priorities for future improvement. It can be used as an internal self-assessment tool or it can be the focus for a review with the RE Consultant. Free consultancy is available in up to ten schools, with six so far arranged for 2020. The review has also been designed to dovetail with the national RE Quality Mark and it can act as a stepping-stone towards achievement of that national recognition.

## **Engaging with faith communities and developing tolerance**

Many schools find it invaluable to arrange links and visits to help broaden understanding and experience of our communities and world. These occasions can contribute to our obligation to promote fundamental values of respect and tolerance. They also broaden pupils' experience and perspectives and develop their critical thinking skills.

SACRE and Faiths United in Tameside are considering ways of encouraging and developing this engagement. An online morning course for faith communities is planned for the spring term 2021. An audit tool is also available for promoting tolerance and understanding of different faiths in schools.



## **Examinations**

Because of the suspension of public examinations, it is not possible to report on these for 2020.

## **Collective Worship**

The current law on Collective Worship is determined by the Education Reform Act 1988, with some requirements deriving from the Education Regulations 1981. In summary the law says this:

- All pupils must attend a daily act of collective worship, except for sixth formers who are allowed to decide for themselves whether to attend;
- The legal framework outlined here applies to maintained LA schools. In schools with a religious character collective worship is governed by the trust deed. Arrangements in free schools and academies is determined by the funding agreement.
- There is no need for an act of collective worship to include the whole school all at once. It may be through year groups, classes, key stages or in any combination.
- It may take place at any time during the school day and should normally be on school premises.
- It must be appropriate to the age, aptitude and family background of pupils.
- Responsibility lies with the head and governors, though the precise duties may vary according to the type of school.
- Details of arrangements for collective worship, including the policy, must be documented and available to the public.

Through the consultant SACRE is always ready to advise or support schools on request.

These questions may be helpful in reflecting on the value and effectiveness of collective worship in school:

1. Collective: How does the assembly celebrate and promote a sense of community within the whole school (or group)?
2. Educational: Is there a clear aim and focus, with appropriate learning? Does it engage and interest pupils and staff?

3. Spiritual: How does the assembly nurture pupils' awareness of their beliefs and values - and those of others (including non-religious beliefs)? How does it develop a sense of the meaning, purpose and value in their lives?
4. Reflective: Is there space and opportunity for thoughtful reflection, in the assembly or as a follow up? If prayers are used do these allow for different approaches and responses?
5. Inclusive: How does the assembly programme develop understanding of different perspectives and cultures? How does it promote values of tolerance, diversity and equality?
6. Responsive: How did pupils respond and participate?

Parents have a statutory right to withdraw their children from collective worship. During the year guidance on good practice and protocols for withdrawal has been prepared and is available to schools. SACRE recognises parents' legal rights but hopes all children will be enabled to receive stimulating and balanced RE as part of their entitlement to a broad curriculum. Guidance is also provided to schools in fulfilling statutory obligations over collective worship and promoting good SMSC development.

### **Complaints and determinations**

There were no complaints made during the year to SACRE about Collective Worship.

There are no determinations to vary statutory requirements in any maintained school in Leeds. Responsibility for determinations in English academies and free schools rests with the Schools Funding Agency.



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