

**ANNUAL REPORT OF THE OXFORDSHIRE
STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE)**

September 2018 – July 2019

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FOREWORD from Charles Mathew, Chairman –
Oxfordshire County Councillor for the division of Eynsham

I trust that all members have enjoyed their SACRE year as much as I have ; members have a responsibility to ensure RE is properly represented in the curriculum of every school and should feed children with the right diet in this age of controversies between beliefs and *modi vivendi*. We have made some progress in our communications with schools but sadly it is a slow campaign. Oxfordshire County Council has been supportive but schools have been slow to build on that important joint relationship. In view of the heavy burden teachers bear today, perhaps this is not surprising; we do however need to reinforce SACRE's value to their children in that we give vital help in preparing them for the vicissitudes of life in the world today and understanding them.

Thank you to all members for their contributions this year and let us hope some of the missing invitees begin to participate or at least send apologies when failing to attend meetings. Thank you to Bill Moore for his guidance and judgement in the management of Oxfordshire SACRE and to Helen Batten for keeping us in line so gallantly!

I leave you with a thought from Simone de Beauvoir, French existentialist philosopher- 'It is doubtless impossible to approach human problems with a mind free from bias'. Guilty as charged, your Honour!

Councillor Charles Mathew

1. Standards and Quality of provision of RE

Again, SACRE finds it difficult to establish the quality of RE across all schools, other than through the published examination results at GCSE and 'A' Level. Please see the tables below.

SACRE was pleased to note that there has been a slight increase in the percentage of 16 year olds being entered for the GCSE. It is nonetheless disappointing, given that RE is statutory for all pupils, to see that it is still less than half of the cohort. Whilst we recognise that many schools provide non-examination or Core RE at KS4, there are schools where this is not the case, or where such provision is minimal and therefore does not provide a coherent and challenging curriculum for the students. The recent survey run by the National Association of RE Teachers (NATRE July 2019) showed that 40% of community schools and 50% of academies without a religious character do not meet their legal or contractual requirements at KS4. We do not know the situation in Oxfordshire, but if this is similar to the national picture, it would fit in with the percentage of entries at GCSE. The percentage of students gaining the highest (9-7) and good pass (9-5) grades is lower than the nationals, but we are slightly above the national for 9-1 grades. A pass grade is 4.

A-Level entries showed a slight increase and, more pleasingly, a significant rise in the percentage of students achieving the top grades, which is broadly in line with the national figure. The remaining grades are similar to 2018, but below or slightly below the national figures. Given that we have Oxford University with its theology and religious studies courses, there may be some benefit in exploring how links between school RS A Level groups and the University departments might help to boost the performance at A Level.

The outcomes from examination RS do not give a full picture of the quality of RE across all schools and Key Stages, but they do raise certain questions. These are raised below in a top-down format, but actually in terms of ensuring children and young people develop into informed and thoughtful adults, we need to balance any approach with a bottom-up model as well, ie looking at RE provision from Reception into KS1, KS2 and KS3 leading into, and not just being determined by, examination RS.

- Why is there a decline in entries at A Level?
- How do we stretch and engage the most able students in KS4 and KS5?
- What is the impact of the EBacc and how can we address this?
- What priority is RE given in schools?
- What is the provision of RE like in KS3 across different schools and why?
- How effective is transition across primary to secondary RE?
- What priority is given to RE in primary schools?
- What is the quality of RE in primary schools?
- How well trained and prepared are teachers to provide quality of RE appropriate to the stage and needs of their pupils?
- How effective is the agreed syllabus in supporting good quality RE?
- How can SACRE support schools in working collaboratively to provide quality RE?

We cannot assume anything specific from the exam results, nor presume anything in relation to possible answers to these questions. However, the evidence does suggest that we need to act urgently to explore the issues, find out what the situation is and act to provide any support needed. These are not easy to answer, but if we want RE to thrive in Oxfordshire, then as an educational community we need to collaborate on exploring:

- a) what the true situation is;
- b) what are the underlying issues;
- c) what are the best ways forward;
- d) how SACRE can work with schools, teachers, the LA and faith communities to achieve this.

We welcome questions and suggestions from schools and other academic institutions as to how SACRE can support learning and teaching to ensure children and young people get the best religious education they can. We wish to learn from your own experience and situation to help improve RE in all our schools.

Details of individual schools' results can be found in Annex 4.

Examination results 2019

GCSE 2019	% entry			% A*- A	%A*- C	%A*- G	%9-7		%9-5		%9-1	
	2017	2018	2019	2017	2017	2017	2018	2019	2018	2019	2018	2019
Oxfordshire	38.7	39%	46%	25.2	68.6	98	21	23	53.3	55	98.3	99
National	-	-		30	72	97.9	30	31	60	61	98	98

A Level 2019	% entries			% A*-A			% A*-C			% A*-E		
	2017	2018	2019	2017	2018	2019	2017	2018	2019	2017	2018	2019
Oxfordshire	5.5	5.0	7.0	24.9	17	21	80.9	71	70	99.5	98	97
National				24.3	23	22	80.9	70	76	98.7	98	98

2. Managing the SACRE and Partnership with the LA and Other Key Stakeholders

Meetings

SACRE meetings are public meetings and take place in County Hall. Agendas and minutes are published on the CC website.

This year, SACRE held three meetings, one each term, as below:

1. 7th November 2018
2. 6th March 2019
3. 5th June 2019

All meetings were held in County Hall, with refreshments provided and ran from 4-6pm.

Items discussed at these meetings include:

- The RE Commission report, published September 2018
- Teacher Network meetings
- The extension to the 2015-20 Agreed Syllabus and the impending review
- Non-compliance of schools and how to monitor
- The recommendation in the CoRE report on the National Entitlement
- RE Quality Mark
- The new Regional Ambassadors for RE
- SACRE Funding
- The response to the Chairman's letter to the Secretary of State
- The new Ofsted Framework and Handbook
- SACRE priorities and strategic planning

SACRE was broadly supportive of the Commission on RE Report and appreciated the work done to secure a stronger future for RE in our schools. The notion of a National Entitlement proved interesting and there was debate as to how this would stand in relation to a local provision for RE, which both politically and educationally is something which, though not without some issues, we highly value. In April, the Chairman wrote to the Secretary of State about this and the broader issues relation to RE, most notably funding available and the important role Ofsted needs to play in ensuring that schools meet their statutory duties.

The issue of non-compliance is one which SACRE is needing to grasp. It was agreed that the new Ofsted Framework would support us here, and also that we need to work in partnership with the School Improvement and Learning Service. It was considered vital that as far as possible we need to get schools on board and to offer support, but that where there was clear neglect of RE, firmer action would need to be taken. One way forward would be to look at the school curriculum published on their websites.

The review of the agreed syllabus will include a consideration to work closely with Buckinghamshire SACRE.

We drafted an initial strategic plan to be finalised and agreed in 2019-20.

There was much discussion of SACRE funding.

Links with the LA

The partnership with the LA remains vital for SACRE to function effectively. We recognise that these are challenging times for LAs and that there is much for them to do with dwindling resources. However, properly resourced and funded, and with good officer support, communication with schools and members, SACRE can provide good value-for-money in terms of education, community cohesion and promoting Fundamental British Values through Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development in schools. Teachers need CPD and networking and, for RE, SACRE can act as a hub to promote effective school-to-school support, co-ordinating and facilitating the process. We have been ably supported by Cathine Hayward.

The adviser and the Chairman met with the Head of Service and the liaising officer to discuss the strategic development of SACRE and an information sheet for headteachers and governors was written and distributed. We discussed future funding, using the information distributed by NASACRE, but at the end of the year funding arrangements had not changed. We continue to discuss this with the LA and, with the strategic plan and the syllabus review, hope that progress will soon be made.

SACRE Budget

This year there has again been no designated budget for SACRE. Support from a specialist adviser and for clerking has been bought in by the LA and costs of refreshments at meetings have been met on an ad-hoc basis.

Network meetings

We held two network meetings for teachers, one in October and the other in June. Teachers found these useful and would welcome more. This was also attended by many SACRE members, who introduced themselves to the teachers and shared some background information.

In the first, teachers made suggestions for the support that they would welcome.

- Where to get good resources
- Where to get information on different faiths and beliefs
- How to raise the profile of RE
- The provision of CPD
- Links with local faith groups, places to visit and visitors to schools

The meeting in June was well attended and teachers shared something that they are doing in the school that is working well, resources that they are using and issues that they face. What became clear from all contributors is that where the senior leadership sees the value of RE and is supportive, amazing things can (and do) happen.

RE days were effective in raising the profile of the subject with staff, pupils and parents, provided that they are in addition to and not instead of regular lessons. Teacher CPD is much needed.

3. The effectiveness of the agreed syllabus

As the process begins for reviewing the agreed syllabus, we will be sending out a questionnaire to schools and holding focus groups to ascertain the effectiveness of the syllabus and look at how it needs to be developed and improved.

4. Collective Worship

Determinations

SACRE has not received any requests for determinations with regard to Collective Worship.

Complaints

There have been no formal complaints under the statutory complaints relating to Collective Worship or RE.

SACRE Attendance 2018 - 19

Member's name/group represented	14 November 2018	6 March 2019	5 June 2019
Rose Westwood (Methodist)	vacant	✓	✓
Nicholas Wood (Baptist)	absent	✓	apology
Steve Beegoo (Oxfordshire Community Churches)	apology	✓	apology
Fraser Long (Roman Catholic)	apology	apology	absent
Ruth Cohen Sarah Montagu (Judaism)	✓	vacant	✓
Sheikh Ramzy (Islam)	✓	✓	✓
Chandra Vadivale/Sathya Vadivale (Hinduism)	✓	✓	✓
Susan Grenfell (Church of England)	✓	✓	apology
Christine Price-Smith “	✓	✓	✓
Carol Worthington “	apology	✓	✓
Ruth Cohen (Teacher)	vacant	✓	✓
Charles Mathew (Local Authority)	✓	✓	apology
Glynis Phillips “	apology	apology	apology
Bob Johnstone “	apology	✓	✓
Co-opted members			
Stephen Vickers (Baha'is)	✓	✓	✓
Shahin Bekhradnia (Zoroastrianism)	✓	✓	✓
Margaret Godden/John Webster (Humanists)	absent	✓	✓
Nigel Fancourt (University of Oxford)	✓	✓	✓
Officers in attendance			
Catherine Hayward(LA)	✓	apology	apology
Bill Moore (SACRE Advisor, RE Specialist)	✓	✓	✓
Helen Batten (Clerk to SACRE)	✓	✓	✓

KS4 GCSE 2019 Religious Studies Results - Oxfordshire

Source - DfE Performance Tables Data

URN	School Name	School Type	Number of pupils at the end of KS4	GCSE Full Course			
				% Entries (out of KS4 pupils)	% 9-7	%9-5	% 9-1
137919	Bartholomew School	ACC	205	5%	30%	80%	100%
123345	Bishopswood School	CYS	6	NE	NE	NE	NE
141146	Blessed George Napier Catholic School and Sports College	ACC	140	91%	43%	76%	100%
138289	Burford School	ACC	196	NE	NE	NE	NE
123236	Carterton Community College	CY	107	94%	15%	47%	100%
139146	Cheney School	ACC	221	93%	29%	59%	97%
137936	Chipping Norton School	ACC	161	94%	19%	52%	99%
138490	Didcot Girls' School	ACC	216	13%	45%	66%	100%
137993	Faringdon Community College	ACC	175	79%	26%	63%	100%
123257	Fitzharrys School	CY	79	NE	NE	NE	NE
137921	Gillotts School	ACC	160	98%	29%	62%	99%
138897	Gosford Hill School	ACC	122	61%	7%	45%	100%
143984	Icknield Community College	ACC	120	47%	39%	77%	96%
140580	John Mason School	ACC	171	NE	NE	NE	NE
137140	King Alfred's	ACC	279	90%	21%	53%	98%
137976	Langtree School	ACC	116	94%	26%	57%	98%
143890	Larkmead School	ACC	117	1%	0%	0%	0%
138667	Lord Williams's School	ACC	314	1%	0%	0%	0%
146103	Maiden Erlegh Chiltern Edge	AC	75	NE	NE	NE	NE
142104	Matthew Arnold School	ACC	177	99%	30%	68%	99%
135365	North Oxfordshire Academy	AC	156	13%	30%	60%	100%
123346	Northfield School	CYS	12	NE	NE	NE	NE
136261	Oxford Spires Academy	AC	157	83%	23%	54%	100%
138762	St Birinus School	ACC	129	83%	12%	36%	98%
139528	St Gregory the Great Catholic School	ACC	172	90%	5%	29%	98%
123331	Swalcliffe Park School Trust	NMSS	15	NE	NE	NE	NE
142024	The Bicester School	AC	116	12%	7%	71%	100%
137970	The Cherwell School	ACC	266	20%	42%	75%	100%
141069	The Cooper School	ACC	215	94%	11%	42%	99%
138210	The Henry Box School	ACC	222	95%	16%	45%	100%
138817	The Marlborough Church of England School	ACC	168	79%	27%	68%	99%
135675	The Oxford Academy	AC	148	NE	NE	NE	NE
142218	The Warriner School	ACC	225	7%	38%	63%	94%
141111	UTC Oxfordshire	FUTC	112	2%	0%	0%	0%
137357	Wallingford School	ACC	195	10%	58%	95%	100%
140875	Wheatley Park School	ACC	168	12%	35%	60%	100%
144008	Wood Green School	ACC	150	37%	27%	64%	100%
123329	Woodeaton Manor School	FDS	13	NE	NE	NE	NE
138499	Wykham Park	AC	141	1%	0%	0%	0%
Oxfordshire Maintained and Academy Schools			5937	46%	23%	55%	99%

These tables are accurate according to DfE validated data. Please contact Bill Moore (bjvmoore@aol.com) if there are any inaccuracies.

KS5 A Level 2019 Religious Studies Results - Oxfordshire

Source - DfE Performance Tables Data

School Name	School Type	Number of students at the end of KS5	A LEVEL			
			% Entries	% A*-A	% A*-C	% A*-E
Carterton Community College	CY	28	SUPP	Supp	Supp	Supp
Faringdon Community College	ACC	87	14%	33%	83%	100%
Gosford Hill School	ACC	62	NE	NE	NE	NE
Larkmead School	ACC	68	22%	13%	73%	93%
The Cooper School	ACC	110	12%	15%	77%	100%
Fitzharrys School	CY	32	NE	NE	NE	NE
King Alfred's	ACC	143	SUPP	Supp	Supp	Supp
John Mason School	ACC	60	NE	NE	NE	NE
The Henry Box School	ACC	90	SUPP	Supp	Supp	Supp
Bartholomew School	ACC	134	7%	30%	90%	100%
St Birinus School	ACC	48	SUPP	Supp	Supp	Supp
Oxford Spires Academy	AC	100	9%	11%	44%	100%
Lord Williams's School	ACC	260	5%	7%	64%	100%
St Gregory the Great Catholic School	ACC	90	19%	6%	29%	82%
Wheatley Park School	ACC	69	SUPP	Supp	Supp	Supp
Wykham Park	AC	40	NE	NE	NE	NE
The Bicester School	AC	72	SUPP	Supp	Supp	Supp
The Warriner School	ACC	90	10%	33%	100%	100%
The Oxford Academy	AC	177	NE	NE	NE	NE
Burford School	ACC	127	7%	33%	78%	78%
Wallingford School	ACC	142	NE	NE	NE	NE
The Cherwell School	ACC	300	13%	37%	76%	100%
Chipping Norton School	ACC	93	14%	31%	85%	100%
Matthew Arnold School	ACC	102	NE	NE	NE	NE
North Oxfordshire Academy	AC	71	15%	0%	45%	100%
Cheney School	ACC	141	NE	NE	NE	NE
Didcot Girls' School	ACC	77	10%	0%	75%	100%
The Marlborough Church of England School	ACC	98	11%	18%	73%	100%
Blessed George Napier Catholic School and Sports College	ACC	87	15%	23%	69%	100%
UTC Oxfordshire	UTC	64	NE	NE	NE	NE
Wood Green School	ACC	86	10%	22%	67%	100%