

City of Stoke-on-Trent

**Standing Advisory Council on
Religious Education**

Sixteenth Annual Report – Autumn 2013

Message from the Chair of SACRE

This sixteenth annual report of the Stoke-on-Trent SACRE covers the period of the academic year 2012-2013.

At a time of change in education nationally, and considerable uncertainty regarding Religious Education, SACRE continued to work with schools in a variety of ways to support teaching and learning in Religious Education, and to support Collective Worship. It has maintained a regular pattern of meetings, been proactive in responding to national consultations and campaigns on issues which affect the delivery of statutory requirements for RE, attracted some new members, and supported the use of high quality resources in its schools.

During the year the review of the Agreed Syllabus was completed. Four additional guidance resources were written, at the request of teachers, to support the revised syllabus and to accompany the units of work already available. The Agreed Syllabus will be made available during the autumn term 2013 for teaching from September 2014.

I would like to thank all members of Stoke-on-Trent SACRE and our RE consultants for their positive contributions, advice and guidance and for the time and commitment they have devoted to SACRE throughout the year. We approach the new school year in good heart, and an ongoing commitment to support good RE in the City's schools.

Cllr Gurmeet Singh Kallar
Chair
Stoke-on-Trent SACRE

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Summary

SACRE met on three occasions during the academic year 2012/2013: 15 November 2012; 14 February 2013; 23 May 2013. 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 2012/13 by contracting with RE Today Services for provision of an RE Consultant for 16.5 days per year.

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 consultancy visits to schools suggest that the City's schools are continuing to develop a variety of curriculum approaches to RE. In some schools, primary and secondary (all types), creative approaches to curriculum planning and delivery have enhanced the learning experience of RE; in other schools curriculum planning, allocation of curriculum time, accreditation of study and access to specialist teachers have been squeezed.

The Stoke-on-Trent Agreed Syllabus for RE is used as the basis for planning the RE curriculum in most of the City's schools.

Issues of compliance with regard to RE relate mainly to the secondary phase, and remain more an issue in key stage 4 than in key stage 3. Some primary schools do not allocate enough curriculum time to fully cover the themes specified in the syllabus.

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 regularly attend the termly network meetings.

Where there is a strong subject leader, curriculum planning is more likely, particularly in Primary schools, to meet the needs of RE in terms of compliance and time allocation, and ensure RE's contribution to the education of the whole child.

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

1b Primary RE

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

- in the primary phase the trend of RE being taught by TAs and HLTAs in PPA time has continued, in some cases with great skill and commitment
- 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.

- teachers remain pleased with the Agreed Syllabus and continue to develop their thinking and planning for RE based on it, valuing its flexibility for local initiative and development. The detailed units of work written by the consultant were well-received and proved very effective in supporting long-term planning. Three more units were written during the year.
- ensuring that sufficient time is given to RE is an ongoing difficulty for some schools. The potential for RE-specific focus days linking RE to other curriculum subjects was explored in some schools; comprehensive guidance on developing such focus days is being provided as part of the guidelines accompanying the new Agreed Syllabus. Teachers are aware that used on their own such focus days (or weeks) do not enable the delivery of the Agreed Syllabus or support progression in learning.
- teachers continue to find difficulty accessing professional development opportunities to support their planning and teaching of RE. However, three teachers attended NATRE's residential conference for RE in May 2013.

1c **Secondary RE**

- many schools entered significant numbers of students for GCSE RS Full or Short courses; some schools entered the entire cohort for GCSE RS Full or Short courses, thereby providing external accreditation for some/all of their students of their studies in RE.
- development of effective models of assessment continued in many schools, with RE working within the whole school assessment policy. In curriculum contexts where teaching time was cut and/or delivery was via individual 'drop down days' separated by time (rather than blocks of teaching time, or weekly lessons) then meaningful assessment was problematic.

1d **Public examination entries in RE/RS**

Examination results

- Results for the 2013 GCE and GCSE examinations are summarised in Appendix B together with comparative data from 2012 (subject to final validation).
- Results from the 2013 Full Course GCSE were 70.3% A* - C which is below the national average of 74% but above the 2012 results (64.5%).
- 991 students, 37.4% of all students at the end of KS4 in Stoke-on-Trent schools in 2013, entered for the full GCSE, a small decrease from the 993 students, 40.3% of all students in 2012.
- A further 297 students took the Short Course GCSE. This was a substantial decrease on 2012 (703 students).
- Results from the Short Course GCSE were 37% A*-C which is below the national average 50% and below the 2012 results (38.1%).

GCE A and AS Level Religious Studies

- 125 students took A level in 2013 (slightly less than in 2012 when there were 129). 4% of students gained the A* grade which is slightly below the national average of 5.6%. 100% students achieved A* - E which is above the national average of 99.1%
- The numbers taking AS level decreased from 39 in 2012 to 35 in 2013. 17.1% of students achieved an A grade which is below the national average of 20% but above the 2012 results

(12.8%). 94.9% of students achieved A - E which is above the national average of 91.6%.

Standards in RE at GCSE (full course)

- Standards in RE at GCSE (full course) rose this year.
- 70.3% of students attained Grade A* - C which is a rise from last year (64.5%), but this is 3.7% below the national average (74%).
- 99% of students attained Grades A*-G which is slightly above the national figure (98%) and a slight increase on 2012 (97.2%). 7.4% of higher attaining students achieved the A* Grade.

Standards in RE at GCSE (short course)

- Standards in RE at GCSE (Short Course) declined this year. 37% of students attained Grade A*-C which is a decrease from last year (38.1%); this is 13% below the national average (50%).
- 98.3% of students attained Grades A*-G which is above the national figure (92.9%) and an increase on 2012 (94.5%). 1.7% of higher attaining students achieved the A* Grade which is 3.9% below the national average (5.6%) and slightly below 2012 (2.4%).
- In the GCSE Short Course, fewer students achieved the higher grades A* and A (5.1%) than they did in the previous year (6.8%). B Grades were 13.8% this year compared with 13.7% in 2012. There was an increase in students achieving C and D grades – 45.1% this year compared with 36% in 2012.

Standards in RE at GCE (A2 and AS)

- Standards in GCE A Level (A2) showed a fall from last year's figures. 77.6% of students achieved a grade C or above (A* - C) which is slightly below the national average (80%) and below last year (79.1% A* - C). 4% of higher attaining students achieved A* grade in comparison with 5.6% nationally.
- Standards in GCE AS Level showed an improvement from last year's figures. For higher attaining students, 17.1% achieved an A grade, below the national average (20%) but above last year (12.8%). 77.1% of students achieved a grade D or above, below the national average (81.2%) but above last year (76.9%).

1e Resources

SACRE provided schools with some exemplar detailed schemes of work for primary RE to support planning needs expressed by teachers; these are available for download from the authority's learning platform (intranet).

New resources which support the agreed syllabus were regularly highlighted and discussed at termly briefings, reflecting the range of content and religions studied.

Additional guidance materials were written for schools to support the agreed syllabus; these will be issued to schools in the autumn term 2013.

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.

- **15 November 2012**, 4pm – 6pm - Civic Centre, Stoke-on-Trent
 - RE with 4 – 7s – visual learning and using talk
 - United Nations World Peace Day
 - SACRE letter to schools
 - Approval of SACRE's annual report
 - RE Council's Review of RE
 - DfE consultation on Key Stage 4 qualifications
 - NATRE's 2012 report on RE in secondary schools
 - Review of the Stoke-on-Trent Agreed Syllabus for RE
 - What does good practice in secondary RE look like? A short film
- **14 February, 2013**, 4pm – 6pm – Civic Centre, Stoke-on-Trent
 - Adoption of Stoke-on-Trent Agreed Syllabus for RE 2014 - 2019
 - Additional guidance materials (units of work) for the Agreed Syllabus
 - DfE Q&A briefing paper on RE and Collective Worship in academies and free schools
 - 'REthink RE' campaign
 - All Party Parliamentary Group for RE
 - RE Council's Review of RE
- **23 May, 2013**, 4pm – 6pm – Civic Centre, Stoke-on-Trent
 - Stoke Agreed Syllabus – new guidance materials
 - NATRE North of England Conference
 - RE Unmasked: the supply of and support for RE teachers. Summary report by the All Party Parliamentary Party for RE
 - Data on RE in KS4 for Stoker and its statistical neighbours

Each meeting was quorate.

2b **Membership and training**

The following faith groups were represented on SACRE: Christianity (Church of England; Roman Catholic Church); Islam, Judaism, Sikhism. SACRE continued to be proactive in looking for new members to join SACRE; two new members will join from October 2013.

SACRE considered and discussed a range of topics relevant to the changing context in education as this affects RE e.g. results of NATRE's 2012 survey of schools; the All Party Parliamentary Group's first report on RE 'RE: the truth unmasked – The supply of and support for Religious Education teachers'.

SACRE also viewed and discussed some classroom materials for primary and secondary RE to understand their use in the classroom and how they support the delivery of the Stoke-on-Trent Agreed Syllabus.

2c **SACRE development**

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

- Attending NASACRE's AGM (23 May 2013)
- Supporting the United Nations World Peace Day (21 September 2012)
- Supporting the National Association of Teachers of Religious Education's (NATRE) campaign to raise awareness of the impact of the English Baccalaureate on RE
- Identifying new members to join SACRE from Autumn term 2013.

2d **Financial support for SACRE**

The Local Authority provided funding to support SACRE activity 2012/13 by contracting with RE Today Services for provision of an RE Consultant for 16.5 days per year, including two days for agreed syllabus work. This represents a reduction of 11 days support for RE over the year, due to local authority budget constraints.

2e **Information and advice**

Specialist consultancy continues to be provided by Rosemary Rivett of RE Today Professional Services for up to 16.5 days per year with Fiona Moss, also of RE Today. 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 Consultants provide termly briefing meetings for primary and secondary subject leaders, consultancy to schools on request (either by the LA or by individual schools), email updates on events, opportunities and resources, and professional development opportunities for primary teachers of RE.

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

- The impact of the English Baccalaureate on RE, locally and nationally.
- RE and Collective Worship in Academies and Free Schools

A representative of SACRE spoke to the City Faith Forum about the work of SACRE and the value of Religious Education for all pupils.

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.

This year SACRE encouraged its teachers to attend NATRE's North of England Conference, held in Bolton 17 – 19 May 2013. Three primary teachers attended and found this an inspirational and informative event. Several schools invited the consultant to lead a whole staff meeting with a focus on Spiritual Moral Social and Cultural development (SMSC).

SACRE remained concerned at the continuing downward trend in teachers accessing national professional development opportunities in Religious Education. Local findings resonated with the results of NATRE's national surveys of RE in secondary schools (September 2012) and primary schools (June 2013).

Termly teacher meetings

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

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

Primary briefings saw steady numbers over the year, with one opportunity per term being made available. Although some schools were prioritising in-house training and/or not prioritising RE, there remained a need for regular face-to-face contact with an RE specialist to provide focused support. A number of schools requested on-site visits from the consultant and all requests were met. A member of SACRE who is also a teacher in one of the City's schools is planning on setting up a second network meeting in 2013/2014.

Secondary briefings were discontinued from April 2013 due to a combination of low numbers and budget constraints.

Primary Briefings

- **7 November 2012** – RE through visual images
- **29 January 2013** – What makes RE good and outstanding?
- **12 June 2013** – Dealing with difficult issues

Secondary Briefings

- **14 November 2012** – Teaching controversial issues
- **12 March 2013** – Assessment and differentiation

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.

3 The local agreed syllabus

The Stoke-on-Trent Agreed Syllabus for RE (2009 – 2013) was reviewed and the Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC) recommended to SACRE that it be adopted, with some minor amendments, for teaching from September 2014. New guidance materials have been written including Introduction to Religions and Beliefs, Big RE Days and Teaching Controversial Issues.

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.

Inspection reports relating to aided schools were sent to SACRE by the Diocese of Lichfield (Church of England) and the Archdiocese of Birmingham (Roman Catholic). These indicated some excellent practice but this information cannot be extrapolated to give a representative overview of all schools in the City.

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 2013

GCSE results for Religious Studies (2013) with comparative data from 2012

GCSE (Full Course)

	A*	A	B	C	Total A*-C
Stoke-on-Trent 2013	7.4%	17.5%	23.5%	22%	70.3%
Stoke-on-Trent 2012	7.9%	19.5%	19.6%	17.5%	64.4%
National 2013	9.7%	19.2%	23.4%	19.9%	72.3%
National 2012	11.8%	20.3%	22.9%	18.7%	73.6%

	D	E	F	G	Total A* - G	Ungraded
Stoke-on-Trent 2013	13.4%	7.9%	4.8%	2.5%	99%	1%
Stoke-on-Trent 2012	12.2%	9.4%	6.7%	4.5%	97.2%	2.8%
National 2013	11.4%	7.3%	4.6%	2.8%	98.4%	1.6%
National 2012	11.4%	6.8%	4.2%	2.4%	98.5%	1.5%

GCSE (Short Course)

	A*	A	B	C	Total A*-C
Stoke-on-Trent 2013	1.7%	3.4%	13.8%	18.2%	37%
Stoke-on-Trent 2012	2.4%	4.4%	13.7%	17.7%	38.2%
National 2013	5.2%	10%	16.1%	18.8%	50.1%
National 2012	6.8%	11.7%	17.3%	18.0 %	53.8%

	D	E	F	G	Total A* - G	Ungraded
Stoke-on-Trent 2013	26.9%	15.5%	11.8%	7.1%	98.3%	1.7%
Stoke-on-Trent 2012	18.3%	15.7%	12.1%	10.1%	94.4%	5.6%
National 2013	15.6%	13%	9.4%	6.6%	94.7%	5.3%
National 2012	15.6%	11.9%	8.5%	5.7%	95.5%	4.5%

GCE results for Religious Studies (2013) with comparative data from 2012

GCE A Level (A2)

	A*	A	B	C	D	E	U
Stoke-on-Trent 2013	4%	16%	26.4%	31.2%	13.6%	8.8%	0%
Stoke-on-Trent 2012	0%	16.0%	40.0%	24.0%	13.3%	6.7%	N/A
National 2013	4.4%	18.4%	29.1%	26.4%	15.7%	5.7%	0.2%
National 2012	3.0%	17.7%	33.6%	26.2%	13.2%	4.6%	1.7%

GCE AS Level

	A	B	C	D	E	U
Stoke-on-Trent 2013	17.1%	22.9%	17.1%	20%	11.4%	11.4%
Stoke-on-Trent 2012	19.0%	9.5%	33.3%	19.0%	9.5%	9.5%
National 2013	11.3%	17.3%	20.8%	19.8%	15.7%	15%
National 2012	22.3%	22.5%	22.4%	15.9%	9.4%	7.5%

Appendix C: SACRE Representatives

Committee A: Christian denominations and non-Christian religions

Mr P Lewis	Jewish Community
Mr W Butt	Muslim Community
Miss M Hewetson	Roman Catholic Community

Committee B: The Church of England

Mrs J Furlong	Diocese of Lichfield
Revd W Slater	Diocese of Lichfield
Mrs G Prina	RE Co-ordinator, Christ Church Primary School

Committee C: Teachers Associations

Mrs J Aallun	RE Co-ordinator, St Matthew's CE (A) Primary School
Mrs N Groves	RE Co-ordinator, Heron Cross Primary School
Mrs G James	Headteacher, St Mary's Primary School

Committee D: Local Authority

Councillor K Clarke (Vice-Chair)
Councillor P Hayward
Councillor G Singh Kallar (Chair)
Councillor S Pitt

Co-optees

Mr P Such

Officer Support

Mr R Johnstone

Appendix D: Contact addresses of SACRE officers

Clerk to SACRE

Nathan Dawkins
Democratic Services Officer
Corporate Services Directorate
Democratic Services Division
Glebe Street
Stoke-on-Trent
ST4 1RN

Religious Education Consultants

Rosemary Rivett (SACRE and secondary schools support) and Fiona Moss
(primary schools support)
RE Today Services
1020 Bristol Road
Selly Oak
Birmingham
B29 6LB