

## Barnet SACRE Report September 2014 –August 2015

Three SACRE meetings were held, these took place on the 18<sup>th</sup> November 2014 & the 10<sup>th</sup> March & 16<sup>th</sup> June 2015. The first meeting was held at the North London Business Park & the other two at Hendon Town Hall.

### **Kevin McSharry Chair's introduction:**

This year there have been a number of publications that have implications for the teaching of RE. These included the guidance on the teaching of British Values, the proposed changes to the examination syllabi in Religious Studies and the Clarke/Woodhead discussion paper '*A New Settlement: Religion & Beliefs in Schools*' with huge implications for SACREs. In the last few years there has been a decline locally in the numbers of students taking examinations in Religious Studies. We are pleased that the bursary for trainee RE teachers has been reintroduced. It was decided at one of the meetings that SACRE needed its own webpage & it is hoped that this will be in place in the next academic year. SACRE made a presentation to the Scrutiny committee to inform it of its work. It was an excellent opportunity to make new contacts & explain the work that it has by law a responsibility to complete, I have now been nominated to attend the new Education committee from the Autumn Term 2015. A training programme for new & established SACRE members is in place & joint visits to places of religious interest have continued by teachers & SACRE members in London. Membership has been discussed & reviewed & contact has been made with the teaching groups as there are vacancies which need to be filled. The Directory of Places of Worship has been updated & is used by teachers to build links with faith groups in their locality. Faith presentations continue to be part of some meetings & this year Rabbi Mark Goldsmith outlined the diversity within Judaism & his presentation was shared with schools. A pilot session of visitor training in preparation for school visits has taken place in Alyth synagogue. A joint bid for a Westhill grant was written by Barnet & Enfield SACREs & was successful. It was entitled '*Faith Ambassadors in Schools: Encounters & Understandings*' & involves secondary school students from 2 who schools will prepare presentations for 3 of their local primary schools. The young people will discuss with their faith communities the materials that they are producing & these would be tailored to the relevant primary school agreed syllabus for each of the boroughs. This project hopes to address the needs that primary schools have expressed for high quality speakers & those of faith communities who have voiced concerns about how they can best support religious education in their locality. The students will attend SACRE meetings in the Summer Term to share their findings & receive certificates. We have the services of Anna Sallnow who acts as an educational consultant to SACRE she is also part of the Barnet School Improvement Service.

### **Support for the Agreed syllabus**

Termly half day meetings have been held for primary coordinators & a termly meeting open to all teachers in Barnet & Enfield has been arranged. A new in post primary RE co-ordinators course was held in the autumn term after requests from teachers. Visits were made to schools & staff meetings & inset provided under the Barnet for School Improvement Programme. A Holocaust pack was written with the support of Rev Bernd Koschland it was circulated to all schools in Barnet & Enfield & SACRE members. Young people from Mill Hill County, who had take part in the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust (HMDT) were invited to speak at the Holocaust Commemoration in Barnet. A termly newsletter is circulated to all schools in Barnet & Enfield

## **Membership Academic year 2014-5**

### **Group A**

Mr Alae & Mrs Golesanah Baha'i, Mr Gonewardene, Buddhist, Mr C O'Halpin Catholic, Mrs Karaolis Greek Orthodox, Mr Bose & Mr Saha Hindu, Mr E. Barbour Humanist, Mrs Amreena Husain-Ali Islam, Mr Levin Jewish & Rabbi Mark Goldsmith Jewish, Mrs J Smith Free Church, Mr Attariwala & Mr Chada Sikh, Dr Shah Jain, Major Paul Hilditch Salvation Army.

We heard the very sad news that Mr Gonewardene had died, he had been a great supporter of Barnet SACRE in his role as the Buddhist representative. He shared his expertise generously & gave copies of his books to be shared with schools. He will be greatly missed. Major Paul Hilditch, the Salvation Army representative has moved to the headquarters in South London, he too was an active member of SACRE & was a great resource for schools hosting visits & giving talks. We also said goodbye to Rev Mike Smith who retired after giving great support from the Free Churches. Alice Miller one of the members of Group C also moved on to promotion after giving some excellent presentations to SACRE with her students, we wish her well.

### **Group B**

Mrs Jane Pavlou	London Diocese
Rev Dr Gregory Platten	London Diocese (from June 2014)
Mrs Mel Adams	Diocese of St Albans
Rev Tristan Chapman	Diocese of St Albans

### **Group C**

Mr Kevin McSharry	ASCL
Ms Anne Dyas/Neil Enright	NASUWT
Ms Alice Miller	NUT

### **Group D**

For the November & March meetings Cllr Brian Coleman, Cllr Brian Gordon, Cllr Catherine Salinger, Cllr Joan Scannell, Cllr Mark Shooter, Cllr Agnes Slocombe.

From June 2014 Cllr Alison Cornelius, Cllr Claire Farrier, Cllr Brian Gordon, Cllr Sury Khatri, Cllr Joan Scannell, Cllr Mark Shooter & Cllr Agnes Slocombe.

Also in attendance: Mr Neil Marlow (LA representing the Assistant Director & Interim Director of Children's Services), Mrs Janet Robinson (clerk to SACRE) & Dr. Anna Sallnow RE consultant.

## **Examination Results**

### **National & Barnet Examination results 2015**

The number of pupils in England and Wales taking GCSE Religious Studies full course has risen again this year, up 5.3% against 2014 to 283,756. This echoes the increase in 'A' Level

entries, which are up 6.5% this year compared with 2014.

However, the removal of short courses from Department for Education (DfE) performance tables is having a serious and negative impact on the number of pupils choosing to take RS at GCSE level, with an increasing number of schools having no pupils at all taking the subject.

DfE performance tables do not take account of results in short courses. The GCSE short course RS, which had been very popular in the past and provided a reward for schools that provided RE for all, has suffered as a result. The short course is delivered at GCSE standard but covers half the content of a full course and is therefore worth half a GCSE. Changes in entries for short courses have a disproportionately significant impact on RS: almost two thirds of all short course GCSEs taken in England and Wales are in RS.

The damage to take-up of the RS GCSE short course comes at a time when RS is otherwise a subject growing in popularity and when the government is rightly emphasising the importance for young people to have knowledge and understanding of religions and non-religious beliefs. In addition, reforms to GCSE RS make it an increasingly attractive and rigorous subject, while increasing numbers of pupils are carrying RS on to A-level.

The key outcomes for Religious Education in England and Wales at KS4 in 2015 are as follows:

- There were 283,756 entries for the full course in GCSE RS, a rise of 5.3% from 2014 (269,494)
- There were 86,679 entries for the short course in GCSE RS, a decline of 26.8% from 2014 (118,481)
- There were 370,435 entries for GCSE RS (combined short and full courses), a decline of 4.5% from 2014 (387,915)
- In 2014 there were 1,197 schools making no entries for any RS qualification; a rise from 268 in 2010.
- 29.6% of entries for the full course in GCSE RS were awarded an A or an A\*
- 11.8% of entries for the short course in GCSE RS were awarded an A or an A\*

When RS GCSE entries in England over the past four years are compared to those in Wales (where the EBacc and the average point score at GCSE have not been adopted as school performance measures), the following patterns emerge:

#### **England**

Take up of the GCSE RS short course has fallen from 211,269 in 2012 to 68,890 in 2015 (-67.3%)

GCSE RS full course entries in England have increased from 216,182 in 2012 to 271,917 in 2015 (25.7%)

#### **Wales**

Short course GCSE RS entries have declined slightly from 19,182 in 2012 to 17,789 in 2015 (-7.3%)

RS GCSE full course entries have increased from 10,409 in 2012 to 11,839 in 2015 (13.7%)

Overall this means that compared with 2012 over 85,000 **fewer** pupils in England will complete key stage 4 this year having not gaining a qualification in Religious Studies (a drop of 20.3%).

This echoes research by the National Association of Teachers of RE (published in November 2013) that found that a third of community schools and over a third of academies without a religious character are still failing to meet their legal or contractual agreements to provide religious education for this key age group.

#### **Barnet 'A' level Results**

In 2015 165 pupils were entered with 26% achieving an A\* or A result & 61.2% achieving an A\*-B grade. These figures when compared with those of 2014 show a drop in numbers when 188 students entered 26.1% achieved an A\* or A result. In 2013 163 pupils were entered.

The following schools entered students: Ashmole; Bishop Douglas, Copthall, East Finchley, Finchley Catholic High, Hasmorean High, Hendon, JCoss, London Academy, Mill Hill High, Queen Elizabeth Girls, QE School, St James', The Wren Academy & St Mary's & St

Michael's. Four schools, The Totteridge Academy, Christ's College, The Henrietta Barnet School & Whitefield did not enter any pupils.

### **Barnet A/S level 2015**

64 pupils were entered from the following schools: Ashmole, Bishop Douglas, Copthall, East Barnet School, Finchley Catholic High, Hasmorean High, Hendon, London Academy, Mill Hill High, Queen Elizabeth's Girls, St James', St Michael's, School & the Wren Academy 14% obtained an A grade & 48% obtained an A-C result. These numbers are lower than last year, 2014 when the number of entries were 50 students so this year there was an increase in numbers from fewer schools & the results are lower when 24% obtained an A grade & 60% obtained an A-C pass.

### **GCSE Full course 2015**

1635 students entered the examination a rise in numbers from 2014 when 1353 students were entered & nearer to the numbers of entries in 2013 which were 1800.

The following schools entered pupils for GCSE full course: Bishop Douglas, Copthall, Finchley Catholic High, Friern Barnet, Hasmorean High, Hendon, JCoss, London Academy, Mill Hill High, Queen Elizabeth's Girls, Queen Elizabeth's School, St James', St Mary's, St Michael's, The Compton, The Henrietta Barnet, The Totteridge Academy, Whitefield & Wren Academy.

Ashmole Academy, East Barnet & Christ College had no entries & JCoss entered pupils for the first time.

A\* - C passes were 86.17%

### **Short course 2015**

The following schools entered pupils for the short course: Ashmole Academy, Christ College Finchley, Copthall School, Mill Hill County, Queen Elizabeth School, St Mary's School, The Wren Academy, JCoSS, Bishop Douglas, Friern Barnet, Hendon School, The Compton School & the Totteridge Academy. More schools entered students than in 2014 however, a numbers of schools only entered very small numbers of pupils. The total number of entries was 762 so the numbers of students has gone back to the 2013 numbers 737 after the very dramatic drop in entries of 100 in 2014. So this is against the national trend.

The total number of students entering short & full course RS is 2397 which brings the figures much nearer to the numbers of entries in 2013 compared with 1453 in 2014 when there was a severe decrease in the numbers of KS4 students studying RS.

Barnet SACRE intends to survey all its secondary schools to find out more information about KS4.

The changes to GCSE will come into effect from September 2016 when all schools will need to study two religions this may have consequences for entry numbers.

