



**The Merton  
Standing Advisory Council  
on  
Religious Education**

**Annual Report  
for 2017 - 2018**

**March 2019**

I am pleased to send you Merton SACRE's Annual Report for the academic year 2017-2018. Every SACRE is required to publish a report and make it available to schools and the wider public.

The main focus for SACRE over the last year has been:

- Getting the Directory of Places of Worship in Merton up and running and online.  
[www.merton.gov.uk/learning/directoryplacesworship.pdf](http://www.merton.gov.uk/learning/directoryplacesworship.pdf)
- Embedding the new Merton Locally Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education (link to new syllabus) after its launch in July 2016 through improving the quality of teachers support we offer,
- Broadening our role to support schools with a range of questions related to RE and the faith community in Merton.

Merton is a unique and religiously diverse community to grow up in. Our children need to be helped to navigate this local as well as global world. This year we have continued to see the challenges of global terrorism and parallel risk in stereotyping that RE as a subject, and RE teachers in particular, do so much to challenge. We have participated in the national conversation about the role of RE that has been ongoing for the last few years. We will seek to continue to help schools to understand and celebrate the diverse faith presence in Merton.

**Cllr M Brunt**  
**Chair of Merton SACRE**  
**March 2019**

## **SACRE MEETINGS**

Cllr Brunt was re-elected chair at the autumn meeting of SACRE. Three meetings were held during the academic year and minutes are available from the LA and on the council website.

The SACRE group continued to meet in places of worship around the borough. They were hosted at the Wimbledon Synagogue, Wimbledon Mosque and the Buddhist Temple.

The key issues debated were:

- Two key National Reports on RE were published about the future of RE in Schools. These were debated by SACRE and questions asked to Merton Secondary Academies about their commitment to RE. Two of the three provide RE GCSE for all pupils.
- SACRE agreed to continue to provide religious buildings for the RE coordinators to meet in and had feedback on the success for the training offer in Merton for RE teachers and that this is in line with the agreed syllabus
- SACRE discussed a request from Children and Young People's Scrutiny panel that training might be provided on Prevent and the Link to the teaching of RE and British values. This was agreed and commissioned into next year's programme.
- A discussion was led by the school reps on what is needed from a faith or belief speaker coming into a school and advised on how to improve the impact of these visits
- SIAMS reports of Faith Schools were reviewed.
- A debate across the year was what else could SACRE do to support particularly secondary RE and a range of options from across the UK were discussed. The idea of a peer to peer project will be developed next year.

### **SACRE going forward into 2018/19**

- The committee would support the RE teachers' network by providing venues and speakers on faith and belief at each session to enrich the RE leads knowledge and also make them aware of places of worship they can visit with school groups.
- A peer to peer faith project will be proposed to secondary schools.

SACRE members would like to thank all hosts for their hospitality. The aim of holding meetings in different education and faith or belief venues is to evidence the inter faith agreement of the SACRE: to support children of all faiths and beliefs or none to be educated about all the main local religions and belief groups. The chair and vice chair attended the NASCRE conference and have an annual meeting the Merton Director of Children Services to update on the work of

Merton SACRE.

[www.merton.gov.uk/learning/schools/standing-advisory-council-on-religious-education.htm](http://www.merton.gov.uk/learning/schools/standing-advisory-council-on-religious-education.htm)

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

**The Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education in Merton Schools – Hard Copies are available from Merton Civic Centre**

[https://www.merton.gov.uk/assets/Documents/sacre\\_agreed\\_syllabus\\_2017.pdf](https://www.merton.gov.uk/assets/Documents/sacre_agreed_syllabus_2017.pdf)

**Directory of places of worship 2017 - Hard Copies are available from Merton Civic Centre**

[https://www.merton.gov.uk/assets/Documents/re\\_directory\\_of\\_places\\_of\\_worship.pdf](https://www.merton.gov.uk/assets/Documents/re_directory_of_places_of_worship.pdf)

**Talking about difficult things in RE**

[https://www.merton.gov.uk/assets/Documents/sacre\\_guidance\\_talking\\_about\\_difficult\\_things\\_in\\_re.doc](https://www.merton.gov.uk/assets/Documents/sacre_guidance_talking_about_difficult_things_in_re.doc)

**Meeting the needs of Muslim Pupils in Merton schools**

<https://www.merton.gov.uk/assets/Documents/NeedsMuslimPupilsMerton.pdf>

**SACRE constitution**

[https://www.merton.gov.uk/assets/Documents/merton\\_sacre\\_constitution\\_june\\_2016.doc](https://www.merton.gov.uk/assets/Documents/merton_sacre_constitution_june_2016.doc)

## **STANDARDS**

### **SMSC, British Values, faith and culture references in school Ofsted reports inspected 17 – 18**

These are direct quotations from the reports.

#### **St John Fisher RC Primary School**

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Your strong, confident leadership is well supported by the deputy headteacher and by other leaders in the school. Together with governors and senior leaders, you have successfully created a happy and caring atmosphere, where all feel secure and valued. You have developed a culture of high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour, and have fostered a culture of respect, tolerance and good manners.

#### **Abbotsbury Primary School**

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You and your team share a strong sense of purpose in your commitment to achieve the very best for all of your pupils. You, other leaders and governors have an accurate understanding of what is working well and what needs to improve. This is because systems to check the quality of learning, pupils' progress, attendance, behaviour and other aspects of the school's work are robust and accurate. You strengthen this further through regular evaluations from local authority consultants. As a result, changes are made quickly to address any shortcomings. The school is a calm and nurturing environment where staff help pupils to develop well, academically and personally. Without doubt, pupils enjoy being at the school and they enjoy learning. The overwhelming majority of parents think that the school provides a very good standard of education. They particularly appreciate the caring ethos that allows their children to thrive. One parent captured this ethos by stating, 'This school is a home away from home for my children. They look forward to school every day and are well looked after.'

Pupils talk knowledgeably about the opportunities that they have to learn about staying safe online. They told me that they feel confident that all pupils from different backgrounds and cultures are accepted by their peers.

#### **St Mark's Academy**

This is a good school

The school's provision for the personal development and welfare of pupils is outstanding. It is highly enriching and supportive and focuses on 'values in action'. Pupils are confident, thoughtful and articulate.

Leaders' work to promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural education of pupils is well developed. Pupils are tolerant and value the education they receive. They are thoughtful, well prepared and ambitious for their futures. They value the diversity in the school and are proud to be part of the school.

Leaders and teachers strongly advocate the school's core values of love, hope and trust. These values permeate the school. The promotion of pupils' understanding of 'values in action' and 'values in Britain' is embedded in daily coaching time. Pupils respect different views and said that they value their education and appreciate what teachers do for them. Pupils are proud of the inclusive nature of the school.

Leaders and teachers ensure that pupils receive high-quality, appropriate and relevant guidance on personal and social development. This is delivered through well-planned coaching time, assemblies, extra-curricular activities, trips and 'drop-down days'. As a result, pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. v Leaders and teachers plan engaging and thought-provoking experiences for pupils. For example, during an assembly on remembrance, pupils heard personal reflections and considered the difference between right and wrong. Consequently, pupils show a high degree of respect and understanding of moral viewpoints.

### **The Sherwood School**

This is a good school.

Pupils talk confidently about their own spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This is a strength of the school. Pupils are well prepared to take on their roles as citizens in the diverse British society.

The school's work to support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is effective and a strength of the school. For example, pupils confidently talked to inspectors about the importance of democracy, referring to the elections of the chair and vice-chair of the school council. Leaders provide many opportunities for pupils to develop their social and leadership skills.

Pupils are self-assured learners and talk eagerly about their learning experiences. For example, some pupils talked enthusiastically to inspectors about their learning on different religions. They say, 'It is important to know about different religions, so we learn to respect what other people's beliefs are.'

### **Gorringe Park Primary School**

This is a good school.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school. Pupils have a tremendous amount of respect for one another and are genuinely interested in learning from each other.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. Leaders ensure that pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. They regularly teach the importance of British values through effective assemblies which the pupils talk about confidently. When asked about what British values meant to him, one pupil said, 'To be fair and follow the law. We use democracy when we vote for the school council and for the ecowarriors.'

Pupils shared an example of showing respect for supporters of different football teams and how they had been taught to do this. v Pupils' respect for one another is a strength of the school, particularly with regard to different religions. Pupils learn about a range of faiths. Teachers use pupils as specialists to support learning. One pupil said that she enjoyed talking about her faith with other pupils, but that she also learned things that she didn't know before. Trips to places of worship support learning. One pupil spoke of how a trip to the mosque had developed his understanding of prayer.

Pupils' respect for one another is exceptional. Pupils talk about respecting the religion and beliefs of others and will ask questions to further develop their understanding. One pupil said, 'We respect each other's religion and everybody understands that we are all different.'

### **Wimbledon College**

This school continues to be good.

You have placed pupils' welfare and personal development at the heart of the school's work. Pupils benefit from strong levels of support, guidance and care through the chaplaincy and pastoral teams. This contributes effectively to their positive attitudes to learning and prepares them

well for the next steps in their education. You and your staff work hard to ensure that all pupils are encouraged to be 'men for others' through the embodiment of the school's core values.

The school's chaplaincy programme provides extensive opportunities for reflection and promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development extremely well. Pupils say that they greatly value this aspect of the school's work with them.

Leaders have also acted quickly to strengthen teaching in religious studies and as a result, pupils' achievement has improved considerably in this subject.

### **St Matthew's Primary School**

This school continues to be good.

They are polite, and they show respect for adults and each other. Parents appreciate the work the school community does for their children.

### **Sacred Heart RC Primary School**

This is a good school

The school's work to foster pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is effective. Pupils are prepared well to take on their roles as citizens in modern Britain

Leaders support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively. Pupils learn about different world religions and are taught the importance of tolerance and respect. Pupils are well prepared to play their role in diverse Britain.

Pupils have a great sense of belonging to their school community. Teachers make good use of 'reflection books' where pupils can share their thoughts on a range of issues. For example, one pupil wrote, 'I know I belong to a community that includes school.' This contributes well to pupils' personal development. v Pupils say they feel safe at school. They are taught how to keep themselves safe through lessons, assemblies, and the school's personal, social, health and economics (PSHE) education programme.

### **Hillcross Primary School**

This is a good school. Leaders ensure that the curriculum fosters the school's core values. Pupils respect themselves and others and are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

The school's core values underpin its vision and ethos. Staff model these values well, which supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The development of pupils' well-being is threaded throughout the curriculum. Assemblies and the personal, social, health and economics (PSHE) education curriculum further contribute towards pupils building good relationships and developing their resilience. v Pupils take part in elections for the school council and learn about democracy. They become aware of different faiths through studying different cultures and festivals, as well as visiting places of worship. These experiences help pupils gain a deeper understanding of British values and the diversity of faiths that make up modern Britain.

The displays around the school celebrate pupils' backgrounds and provide pupils with an understanding of people and communities beyond their immediate experiences. For example, pupils learn about Chinese New Year, Eid and Diwali.

### **Melrose Special School**

This school continues to be good.

The recently reviewed vision and values are apparent in the ethos of the school. There is an emphasis on the development of the 'whole child' through personalised learning to meet individual needs.

### **Liberty Primary School**

This is a good school

The school's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is effective. Fundamental British values are at the core of the school's work and this prepares pupils well for their futures in modern Britain.

Leaders' work to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is effective and is at the core of the school's curriculum. For example, pupils presented their work about British values to members of the governing body. They visit the Houses of Parliament to get a better understanding of democracy in action. They are well prepared as citizens of modern Britain.

### **Hollymount Primary School**

This school continues to be good.

No reference to smsc

### **Cranmer Primary School**

This school continues to be good.

No reference to smsc

## **RELIGIOUS STUDIES EXAMINATIONS 2017 - 18**

### **GCSE**

In 2018 there were 1025 entries for RE GCSE in Merton, a fall of 50 from the previous year. 73% of year 11 pupils took at a GCSE in RE in Merton Secondary Schools. It should be noted that in most Merton secondary schools are entering nearly all their pupils, not just those who have opted for RE.

The GCSE are now graded 9-1 there is not a direct read across to A – Cs for comparison however. In 201-16 the pass rate was well above average for A – C. If we look at 9-5 higher grades this is once again above the 5-8 and in line at 9 (smaller cohort)

	Grade										Grand Total
	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	U	
<b>Merton Number of candidates</b>	71	110	165	202	163	119	123	47	18	7	1025
<b>Merton Percentage National Percentage</b>	6.9	10.7	16.1	19.7	15.9	11.6	12	4.6	1.8	0.7	
<b>Percentage</b>	7.2	10.1	12.6	15.9	14.4	11.4	13.5	8.3	4.4	1.6	



Numbers achieving at each grade (2016/17)	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U	Total Number of Entries
Merton	94	251	334	215	99	52	19	11	0	1075

Percentages achieving at each grade	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U	A*-C	A*-G
Merton 16/17	8.6	23.0	30.6	19.7	9.1	4.8	1.7	1.0	0.9	82.0	98.6
National 16/17	8.8	18.6	23.5	19.0	12.6	7.6	4.8	2.8	1.8	70.0	97.9

### A level

Entries have dropped over the last 3 years with 4 school offering RE A level. 4 students also took AS level several are considering Philosophy A Level. A\* - A is well above and has risen significantly on a small cohort.

Centre	NOE	A*	A	B	C	D	E	A*-A	A*-B	A*-E
Merton 17/18	31	6.4	29	32.2	12.9	9.6	9.6	35.4	67.6	100
National 17/18		4.7	18.3	29.2	25.8	14.3	5.7	23	52.3	98
Merton 16/17	48	2.1	16.7	31.2	29.2	14.6	4.2	18.8	50.00	96
National 16/17		5.7	18.5	30.7	25.7	13.0	4.8	24.2	54.9	98.4

**Source: Statistical First Releases/LA summary data**

## CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (CPD) FOR TEACHERS

Penny Smith- Orr has been commissioned by the Local Authority to provide sessions for RE subject leads. Training workshops were run for RE subject leads. Three sessions were run in the year. These covered: Christianity; Islam and Prevent/ British Values. Sessions based on a faith or belief area of the syllabus are delivered in faith premises such as at Christ Church in Colliers Wood. Sessions are run as after school twilights.

Take up of these sessions averaged at 30% of primary RE leads attending a session. This is a fall from the previous year. Evaluations of the sessions vary from 88% good or better – down to 40%. One session had lower rating otherwise the quality ratings were similar and the previous year.

Penny Smith – Orr and the training lead meet termly to plan the sessions and try and improve take up and relevance. All sessions are based on delivery of the agreed syllabus.

RE teachers were consulted as to what they would like to see in these sessions in future. They would like the sessions to continue to focus on their role as coordinators and to be delivered in Merton places of worship.

## **COMPLAINTS CONCERNING RE**

No complaints were received under Section 23 of the Education Reform Act 1988 regarding Religious Education in Merton schools.

## **COLLECTIVE WORSHIP**

### **Determinations**

There are no determinations in Merton

## **GENERAL**

### **Links with other agencies**

Merton SACRE is a member of NASACRE and a representative attends national meetings. Full reports are given at the SACRE meetings so that all members are aware of current topics and issues. Members of SACRE are also representatives on the Merton Faith and Belief Forum and this facilitates communication between the two committees. A member of SACRE attended the NASACRE AGM meeting in Birmingham and reported back to SACRE

### **List of organisations to which the SACRE report is sent**

A copy of this report will be placed on the SACRE section of the Merton LA website and relevant officers will be informed [www.merton.gov.uk/learning/schools/standing-advisory-council-on-religious-education.htm](http://www.merton.gov.uk/learning/schools/standing-advisory-council-on-religious-education.htm)  
The National Association of SACREs) NASACRE will also receive a copy.

### **Contacts**

If you have any issues that you would like to raise with the Merton SACRE, please contact the Merton LA Advisor to the SACRE [keith.shipman@merton.gov.uk](mailto:keith.shipman@merton.gov.uk).

**Appendix 1: SACRE Membership****STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE)****MEMBERSHIP- between September 2017 and September 2018****Group A – Christian, Other Faiths & Beliefs**

Buddhism	Vacancy
Free Churches	Vacancy
Hinduism	Ms G Maheshwaran
Humanism	Ms Audrey King
Islam	Mr S Sheikh (Deputy Mr M Khan)
Judaism	Mr M Freedman
Roman Catholic Church	Vacancy
Sikhism	Mr A Singh Bahra
Ahmadiyya Muslim Association	Mr Waleed Ahmad

**Group B – Church of England**

C of E	Jane Savill (from October 2017)
C of E	Andrew Williams (from October 2017)
C of E	Mr Marcus Cooper (from October 2017)

**Group C – Teacher Associations**

ATL	Mark Yelland
NAHT/SHA	Ms M Keenan
NASUWT	Vacancy
NUT	Debra Beale

### **Group D – Local Authority**

Conservative Group	Cllr Hayley Ormrod (from May 2018)	Cllr Abdul Latif (to April 2018)
Labour Group	Cllr Mike Brunt (from October 2017)	
Labour Group	Cllr L Attawar	

### **Others**

Local Authority Adviser	Mr K Shipman
Clerk	Ms E Nasse