



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

**Annual Report
for 2018 - 2019**

March 2020

I am pleased to send you Merton SACRE's Annual Report for the academic year 2018-2019. 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:

- Reviewing feedback from schools about visits to places of worship with an emphasis on making these visits as successful as possible.
- Broadening the membership of SACRE to include representatives of the Bahá'í and Buddhist faiths. This work is ongoing as to date representatives have not been identified.
- Preparations for an inter faith dialogue project for 6th Formers in the following academic year.

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. In our discussions we looked at aspects of the action plan from the Prevent Security Report that apply to SACRE as mentioned in the report below. We will seek to continue to address the challenge of radicalisation and help schools to understand and celebrate the diverse faith presence in Merton.

Cllr M Brunt
Chair of Merton SACRE
March 2020

SACRE MEETINGS

Cllr Brunt was re-elected chair at the autumn meeting of SACRE. Four meetings were held during the academic year and minutes are available from the Local Authority and on the Council website.

The SACRE group continued to meet in places of worship around the borough. They were hosted at the Wimbledon Mosque, The Shree Ghanapathy Temple and at Merton Civic Centre.

Some of the key issues looked at this year were:

- SIAMS reports of Faith Schools were reviewed.
- SACRE discussed support for RE teachers, continuing to facilitate sessions for RE teachers at places of worship. SACRE also looked into many ways of assisting teachers who were struggling to find faith speakers to explain to GCSE students the differences between different denominations within each religion, the understanding of which is necessary in accordance with the syllabus. This included speakers on social issues from a faith or belief perspective. This will be developed further next year. Faith and belief groups discussed setting up agreed lists of speakers for schools.
- SACRE discussed feedback of schools from visits to places of worship and how to make these visits as successful as possible. The Directory of Places of Worship in Merton (available on the SACRE page <https://www.merton.gov.uk/education-and-learning/schools/standing-advisory-council-on-religious-education>) p9 provides advice on effective visits to places of worship.
- Efforts throughout the year took place regarding trying to recruit Bahá'í and Buddhist faith representation for SACRE. Unfortunately this did not end up being successful. SACRE also worked on progressing a faith dialogue project in partnership with secondary schools.. It was decided that this should be a peer-to-peer faith dialogue project.
- Discussion of aspects of the action plan from the Prevent Scrutiny Report that apply to SACRE, including what activities should be identified as areas of concern regarding radicalisation of young people, how the current syllabus is being used positively, as well as how it and SACRE could support counter-narrative development. The continuous professional development session titled `Religious Education Coordinator Network Meeting - Prevent and The British Values` was set up as a result of this.
- The SACRE annual report was agreed and submitted including a review of school Ofsted reports.

SACRE going forward into 2019/20

- Interfaith dialogue project to be piloted.

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.

<https://www.merton.gov.uk/education-and-learning/schools/standing-advisory-council-on-religious-education>

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

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

Talking about difficult things in RE

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

STANDARDS

SMSC, British Values, faith and culture references in school Ofsted reports inspected 18 – 19

These are direct quotations from the reports.

Morden Primary School (short report)

This school continues to be good.

There were no comments or references to British Values, faith and culture in this report.

Rayne's Park High School

This is a good school.

Leaders have nurtured a very congenial and industrious environment across the school, in which mutually respectful relationships and positive rapport between staff and pupils prevail. The very large majority of pupils who completed the survey for this inspection agreed that the school encourages them to respect people from other backgrounds and to treat everyone equally.

Leaders carefully plan the curriculum so that pupils experience a broad range of subjects which routinely provide spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. For example, the Year 7 curriculum provides pupils with a comprehensive introduction to the variety of subjects to be covered in secondary school. Pupils spoke enthusiastically to inspectors about the range of topics and activities that extended from their class text about the Second World War. These included being introduced to contrasting regions of the United Kingdom, considering the experiences of refugee children, and learning to jive. Older pupils can choose to study areas that match their aspirations. Leaders are especially mindful of ensuring pupils study for qualifications that will prepare them well for the next stages of their education and employment.

A programme of personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE), assemblies and themed days provides pupils with age-appropriate guidance on contemporary risks to their safety and welfare. Leaders consider the optimum approach to dealing with sensitive topics in lessons and assemblies, seeking relevant external advice and training. A range of initiatives nurtures pupils' consideration and respect for others, so, for example, they are keen to organise fundraising events for various charities.

Pupils are respectful to each other and the adults who work with them. They were polite and welcoming to the inspection team, expressing loyalty and pride in their school.

Bond Primary School (short report)

This school continues to be good.

The school is a happy and friendly place. Adults create positive learning environments where pupils work well together. Pupils are enthusiastic about their learning. They behave well, in and out of lessons. They are polite and show respect for adults and each other. The pupils that I met told me that they feel safe in school and well cared for. They were confident that their teachers would help them if they had a problem. They understand about being a good citizen and spoke to me about making good choices, following rules and being kind. Leaders provide opportunities for them to develop their sense of citizenship. The library area, for example, is full of messages and reading

materials that encourage and celebrate women's empowerment.

Garfield Primary School (short report)

This school continues to be good.

Subjects are taught in the wider curriculum using quality story books as a starting point. For example, Year 6 pupils were studying 'A Beautiful Lie' by Irfan Master. Pupils told me they had enjoyed learning about the culture and history of India, which provided a good link to their learning in history. These story texts at the heart of each topic are carefully linked to wider subjects, such as history or geography. Pupils told me that the stories help to bring their other subjects alive, and spark their imagination. I saw examples of different writing genres in pupils' books.

Poplar Primary School (short report)

This school continues to be good.

Pupils are polite, courteous and very welcoming. They talked confidently about the many learning experiences they enjoy and engage in, in and out of classrooms. Pupils take pride in contributing to school life and are appreciative of how school leaders take their views into account. Parents and carers support this and typically commented: 'At Poplar, you definitely get the sense that the school is the focal point of a wider and mixed community.'

Merton Abbey Primary School

This is a good school.

Pupils behave well and relate extremely well to each other and to staff. Pupils' strong social awareness and enjoyment of school are clearly evident during break times. They exchange ideas and aid each other's learning during lessons.

Staff and pupils are proud of the school and its nurturing ethos. The school's warm and inclusive culture provides an environment where pupils feel safe and valued.

Pupils' spiritual, cultural, social and moral development is catered for well. They understand and learn to value differences, including in relation to faiths, beliefs and abilities. Pupils are included and valued by staff and this helps pupils to understand that discrimination of any kind is not tolerated and that there should be equality in opportunity for all. Fundamental British values are promoted well.

Parents are supportive of the school and, in particular, the care and guidance that the school provides. One parent, summing up the views of many, wrote: 'The school has a nurturing atmosphere, pupils respect the staff and pupils are very well behaved.'

When questioned, pupils clearly expressed their appreciation of the school's supportive family atmosphere. They said, 'We all work well together and take care of each other even though we are from different religions.' Pupils undertake various responsibilities diligently. These include organising fundraising events such as for Comic Relief.

Pupils work well together. In lessons, they listen carefully and cooperate well with each other, showing respect for other people's opinions. Pupils generally work hard and are focused and engaged in their learning. Inspectors observed no incidents of low-level disruption.

SMART (short report)

This school continues to be good.

Leaders and governors have developed a strong and ambitious vision and ethos for the school, which has the overwhelming support of school staff. Leaders know the strengths and weaknesses of the school and have clear plans to improve the school further.

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is a strength of the school. These aspects are taught through a range of subjects, including citizenship, personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education, English and religious studies. Pupils are supported to learn about British values, including tolerance, and to understand the dangers of radicalisation and extremism.

The curriculum on offer for pupils at all sites of the school is carefully thought out and implemented well. It has an appropriate mix of academic subjects and opportunities to develop pupils' social and emotional skills that pupils will need to be successful and happy adults.

Teachers are effective in making lessons interesting and relevant. For example, in one English lesson the teacher was using contemporary 'rap' lyrics in a lesson on unseen poetry. The ideas being explored included relevant moral, social and cultural themes.

St Mark's Primary School (short report)

This school continues to be good.

You and your team make every decision with your pupils' well-being at the centre. Leaders have created a warm and nurturing environment, which provides a safe haven for learning. As a result, pupils are well focused during lessons and respond well to adults within school.

Pupils are well supported, and know who to go to if they need guidance. There are a range of systems in place for children to raise concerns. This includes a 'worry box' in classrooms, and some pupils are trained as 'well-being leaders'. Important topical issues are discussed in assemblies to educate pupils on how to keep themselves safe.

Lonesome Primary School

This is a good school.

The school's motto of 'Be Different' is understood by pupils and helps them show respect, tolerance and kindness towards each other. They are well behaved, work hard and appreciate the care given to them.

The school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This is helping pupils to acquire an understanding of life in modern Britain. The school's values place mutual respect at its core, embodied in the 'Lonesome Charter'. Together with the 'Be Different' shared motto with its federation partners, the Charter contributes positively to the life of the school.

The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Leaders ensure that the welfare and care of pupils help them to work more effectively at school. Pupils work and play together harmoniously because they have embraced the school's values. They are taught to show tolerance of diversity as well as compassion for others. Pupils are also encouraged to work hard and to demonstrate resilience.

Through the curriculum, pupils develop a sound awareness of different faiths, backgrounds and

cultures. Pupils demonstrate respectful and considerate attitudes and show respect for each other, even if they hold different beliefs or points of view. They are well prepared to play a positive role in modern Britain.

Beecholme Primary School

This is a good school.

Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain because the school makes links between fundamental British values and the school's values.

Leaders foster pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very strongly. Pupils learn about different cultures, traditions and religions. Leaders and all staff encourage tolerance and respect very successfully through class lessons and assemblies. This is underpinned by the school's values and ethos. Consequently, pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

Throughout the school, mutual respect is evident. Pupils are tolerant and respectful of each other. Adults in the school promote positive relationships based on the school values. Pupils are able to articulate these values and know how to live them out in the school environment.

The head of school, along with all staff, has established a sense of community within the school. This is evident in the exemplary behaviour of all pupils. Pupils care for each other, play well together and help each other. The school's values are firmly embedded in the school culture and are demonstrated through pupils' interactions, resilience in learning and how they treat each other.

The early year's staff know the children well. They are aware of their individual starting points and of their learning needs. Learning support assistants are well deployed and support children in their learning. Children enjoy the topics they study. They settle quickly to work and are well behaved and get on well together. The school values are evident in the relationships between staff and children.

Perseid Special School (short report)

This school continues to be outstanding.

The expressive arts provision is well established and a strength of the curriculum, contributing strongly to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There are impressive displays around the school of pupils' art work and posters of them showing their participation in performances.

The school's vision of being 'an inspiring visionary school, blazing a trail for outstanding holistic learning' was demonstrated perfectly during the inspection. The arts week with the theme 'extinction rebellion' showed pupils fully engaged in a range of artistic activities centred around endangered species and the damaging effect of human actions on the environment. They talked to inspectors about their work with enthusiasm. One pupil explained that he was learning about endangered animals and how humans were responsible for destroying their homes. Other pupils were learning about the damaging impact of plastic on the natural environment. Another class were enjoying creating their own forest, accompanied by background forest sounds that added to their sensory experiences.

The personal, social and health education curriculum prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain. The careers education programme helps pupils to decide on their next steps in education or training.

RELIGIOUS STUDIES EXAMINATIONS 2018 – 19

All results are provisional until nationally published

GCSE

In 2019 there were 1120 entries for RE GCSE in Merton, a fall of 6 from the previous year. 77% of year 11 pupils took at a GCSE in RE in Merton Secondary Schools which is an increase of 4%. It should be noted that in most Merton secondary schools are entering nearly all their pupils, not just those who have opted for RE. Attainment at the highest grades is rising significantly and is well above national. More pupils have achieved lower grades 3 to U however this level of attainment is still better than national averages.

The GCSEs are graded 9-1 where 9 is the top grade.

	Grade										Grand Total
	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	U	
Merton Number of candidates 18/19	117	135	148	193	139	120	149	76	31	9	1119
Merton Number of candidates 17/18	71	110	165	202	163	119	123	47	18	7	1025
Merton Percentage 18/19 (2)	10.5	12.0	13.2	17.2	12.4	10.7	13.3	6.8	2.8	0.8	
Merton Percentage 17/18	6.9	10.7	16.1	19.7	15.9	11.6	12	4.6	1.8	0.7	
National Percentage (1)	7.3	10.1	12.6	15.9	14.4	11.5	13.5	8.3	4.4	1.9	213854

Sources:

- (1) Key Stage 4 performance: 2018, DfE (Subject Time Series Tables).
- (2) The GCSE results data is provisional based on school reported results

The tables below show the number of entries achieving each grade, and the percentages achieving each grade.

A Level

Entries have dropped over the last 4 years with 2 schools offering RE A level in the last year: Ursuline and Wimbledon College. A* - A has dropped slightly from the year before, but is still higher than the national percentage at this level. A*-B is higher than national. The percentage of A grade students has dropped significantly. Several school Sixth forms are considering running Philosophy A level.

Centre	NOE	A*	A	B	C	D	E	A*-A	A*-B	A*-E
Merton 18/19	20	5.0	10	35	30	20	0	23.81	57.14	100
Merton 17/18	31	6.4	29	32.2	12.9	9.6	9.6	35.4	67.6	100
National 18/19	16,155	4.4	17.5	28.3	25.9	15.6	6.2	21.9	50.2	97.9
National 17/18 (1)		4.7	18.3	29.2	25.8	14.3	5.7	23	52.3	98

Sources:

- (1) 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, with three sessions run in the year. These sessions ran on the following dates and were titled as follows:

- 9/10/2018 - 13 attended the `Religious Education Coordinator Network Meeting` at Christ Church, Wimbledon.
- 27/11/2018 - 12 attended `The Muslim Women of Merton - Schools' Project` at Morden Islamic Centre.
- 31/1/2019 - 9 British Values and RE Leaders attended `Prevent and the British Values` at the Chaucer Centre.

Sessions based on a faith or belief area of the syllabus are delivered in faith premises such as at the Morden Islamic Centre in Morden. Sessions were run as after school twilights.

Take up of these sessions averaged at 30% of primary RE leads attending a session. This is consistent with the previous year. Only two of the three sessions received evaluations, with the Muslim Women of Merton - Schools' Project collecting their own evaluations. 9 of the 13 attendees of the Religious Education Coordinator Network Meeting submitted evaluations, and 8 of the 9 attendees of Prevent and the British Values. The majority of evaluations for these two sessions were positive, with an average of 64.58% of participants rating the overall quality of the sessions as very high. Both the sessions had very similar quality ratings: 66.6% for Religious Education Coordinator Network Meeting and 62.5% for Prevent and The British Values. Take up is in line with previous years and the evaluations of sessions continue to be strong. All teachers took positive actions from the sessions to improve RE in their schools.

Penny Smith – Orr, Keith Shipman 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, as in the previous year, consulted as to what they would like to see in future sessions. Their feedback suggested that as in previous years, 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
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.

Appendix 1: SACRE Membership**STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE)****MEMBERSHIP- between September 2018 and September 2019****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
C of E	Andrew Williams
C of E	Mr. Marcus Cooper

Group C – Teacher Associations

NAHT/SHA	Vacancy (Ms. M Keenan to July 2019)
NASUWT	Vacancy
NUT	Debra Beale

Group D – Local Authority

Conservative Group	Cllr Hayley Ormrod
Labour Group	Cllr Mike Brunt
Labour Group	Cllr L Attawar

Others

Local Authority Adviser	Mr. K Shipman
Clerk	Ms. E Nasse