

# Annual SACRE Report

2013 - 2014



Issued by Milton Keynes Council Setting & School Effectiveness

**Date issued**  
December 2014

**Review date**  
December 2015

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**Approved by**  
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The SACRE (Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education) has several aspects to its role. SACRE:

- Advises the Local Authority on matters relating to collective worship and religious education;
- Advises on methods of teaching and resources for religious education;
- Decides whether or not to grant determinations to those schools which apply to have daily worship which is other than of a broadly Christian character;
- Identifies the need for a revised religious education syllabus.

Milton Keynes' SACRE works closely with NASACRE (National Association of SACREs) and the Diocese of Oxford. All meetings of the SACRE are open to the public.

This report sets out a brief summary of the work of the Milton Keynes SACRE over the academic year 2013-2014. The minutes of the meetings which give more detail can be found at:

<http://cmis.milton-keynes.gov.uk/CmisWebPublic/CommitteeDetails.aspx?committeeID=2411>

For more information about the role and business of the SACRE please contact:

<b>Chair</b>	Rev Paul Smith <a href="mailto:paul.a.smith.mk@btinternet.com">paul.a.smith.mk@btinternet.com</a>
<b>Clerk</b>	Janet Gleghorn <a href="mailto:janet.gleghorn@milton-keynes.gov.uk">janet.gleghorn@milton-keynes.gov.uk</a>
<b>Local Authority Officer</b>	Linda Bartlett <a href="mailto:linda.bartlett@milton-keynes.gov.uk">linda.bartlett@milton-keynes.gov.uk</a>
<b>Professional Adviser</b>	Jo Fageant <a href="mailto:jo.fageant@oxford.anglican.org">jo.fageant@oxford.anglican.org</a>

#### **SACRE Developments in 2013-2014**

Meetings of the SACRE during this year were held on the following dates:

- 23 October 2013
- 14 February 2014
- 10 June 2014

Reverend Paul Smith was re-elected as Chair of the SACRE. Mrs Talvinder Kaur Virdee-Basra was appointed as Vice Chair. This year membership of Group A of the SACRE improved significantly and Arif Master, Bhavini Goricha were welcomed as representatives of Islam and Hinduism respectively. Members also welcomed Janet Gleghorn as the new clerk to the SACRE. Conversely, there was a continuing challenge posed by the number of vacancies in Group C (representatives of teacher

organisations) and the fact that no councillors (Group D) were able to attend any meetings which meant none was quorate. Members were concerned about the impact of failure to engage with these important groups. A reduction to two councillor representatives has been approved by Cabinet and named councillors will be co-opted.

The budget allocated for the SACRE during this year was £970. An additional £4000 was made available to pay for ten days of specialist consultant support, all of which was spent.

The SACRE received copies of a book about Christianity in Milton Keynes produced by the Bridgebuilder Trust. It was the latest in a series of publications initiated by Ken Harris about religious groups in Milton Keynes. Books on Buddhism and Sikhism had already been shared with members and schools. Significantly, the Christianity book has been structured to reflect the locally agreed syllabus' focus on 'Believing', 'Behaving' and 'Belonging'. The book was made available in hard copy for donations of £3.

It can also be downloaded from the Bridgebuilder website (<http://www.mkbt.org.uk/projects/christianity-in-mk/>). New members of the SACRE were inspired to commit to exploring the possibility of continuing the series with books on Hinduism, Islam and Judaism. In addition to this initiative members were alerted to the publication of the new edition of Milton Keynes' LA *Equality and Diversity* document (<http://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/schools-and-lifelong-learning/ethnic-minority-achievement/guidance-documents>).

### **Partnership working**

Paul Smith, a representative of the Church of England on the SACRE, attended the NASACRE AGM in May. Stephen Lloyd MP spoke about the work of the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Religious Education (RE) of which he is the Chair, and of the increasingly widespread recognition of the importance of the subject. Workshop discussions highlighted excellent practice in SACREs around the country.

The SACRE considered the documentation for a new national initiative to create regional hubs in support of RE (<http://www.cstg.org.uk/2014/09/re-regional-strategy-pilot-launched/>). Various options to work in partnership with other SACREs and/or other organisations to help enrich the provision for RE teachers began to be explored. Discussions about his initiative will continue in the new academic year.

### **Religious education in 2013/14**

This was a year in which there were many developments in RE that the SACRE needed to consider.

In October Ofsted published a new long report on RE:

(<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/surveys-and-good-practice/r/Religious%20education%20-%20realising%20the%20potential.pdf>).

Members were disappointed to see that many issues were those already raised in the 2010 report. Although not necessarily reflecting the situation in Milton Keynes schools, the SACRE recognised the value of the research in developing a plan for future action. The report from the (APPG) on RE

([http://religiouseducationcouncil.org.uk/media/file/APPG\\_RE\\_one\\_page\\_summary.pdf](http://religiouseducationcouncil.org.uk/media/file/APPG_RE_one_page_summary.pdf)) highlighted challenges relating to initial and on-going training of teachers in RE. Alerted to this, the SACRE recognised that the Local Authority had made it possible for primary teachers of RE to attend regular termly meetings led by a RE specialist adviser. However, it recognised the need to ensure more teachers know about them, as attendance in the spring and summer terms were low. It was agreed that SACRE would benefit from knowing more about RE staffing in schools, in addition to issues of provision and responses to the locally agreed syllabus for RE. It was decided to develop a schools' questionnaire.

A significant outcome of the APPG report was the publication of two documents, one for primary and one for secondary, providing guidance for governors on their statutory responsibilities in relation to RE. The SACRE considered these documents and advised the Local Authority that they should be made available to all Milton Keynes schools. In response, members of the SACRE presented at a governor training session.

The SACRE considered the curriculum review of RE report (<http://resubjectreview.recouncil.org.uk/re-review-report>) published by the RE Council of England and Wales (REC). Members accepted that they would need to understand the document and be aware of wider responses to it in the RE community in preparation for the next review of the local RE syllabus, due in 2016. To support their planning of RE lessons a number of schools have chosen to purchase Jan Lever's *Discovery* resource (<http://www.discoveryschemeofwork.com/>). In addition, in July, the Diocese of Oxford published a scheme of work which also supports the Milton Keynes syllabus for Years 1-6. It was made freely available to all Church of England schools in the Diocesan Service Agreement and at a cost of £200 to all other primary schools ([www.oxford.anglican.org](http://www.oxford.anglican.org)).

## **RE Courses**

In addition to termly twilight meetings for primary school RE subject leaders the SACRE initiated a day-long course on teaching about Christianity designed to extend teachers' thinking and explore effective teaching methods.

## **Religious Education in Milton Keynes Secondary Schools**

The SACRE commissioned the Diocesan RE Consultant to visit all Milton Keynes' secondary schools to survey: provision, staffing, what works well and areas for development in relation to RE. Nine schools engaged with the initiative and all welcomed engagement with SACRE. Provision, arrangements and staffing varied from school to school with high standards in several contexts. However, in 3 schools statutory requirements were not being fulfilled. This has been addressed for the 2014-2015 academic year. As a result of the survey a network of secondary RE teachers has been created. After an initial facilitated meeting the group was planned to become self-supporting.

## **Collective Worship**

A revised guidance document on collective worship was commissioned by the SACRE for publication by the Local Authority. This acknowledged that there had

been no change in relevant legislation since the last guidance leaflet. However, the new paper provided expanded advice.

No applications for a determination have been received by the SACRE either this year or in previous years. Any school wishing to explore the relevance of a determination (daily collective worship which is other than 'wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character) in their context should contact the local authority officer, Linda Bartlett. Church schools are not eligible for a determination. For an academy wishing to apply for a determination the correct process is for the Trust to apply through the Education Funding Agency (EFA) to the Secretary of State.

### **Schools and the SACRE**

The SACRE is aware that it has found its responsibility to monitor the provision and quality of RE and collective worship in Milton Keynes' schools challenging. One of the main benefits of such monitoring is to inform the SACRE of the needs of schools and help members to identify ways in which they might best support schools in the provision of RE and collective worship. The SACRE, therefore, invites and would welcome news from schools about what is going well in both these areas so this news can be shared with others. It would also like to hear teachers' suggestions about the support they would most like the SACRE to provide.

### **Looking to the future**

The SACRE is always keen to explore ways in which it can support schools. It was not able to complete all the ideas that were shared and explored in meetings so some will be addressed in the academic year 2014-2015. These will include:

- Provide information to secondary schools about the 'Who am I?' DVD resource produced by the Interfaith committee of the Diocese of Oxford;
- Explore the possibility of developing a Young Ambassadors for RE scheme in partnership with secondary schools and supplementary schools;
- Explore the value of bidding for a Westhill funding award if the criteria for them are suitable when they're published early in 2015;
- Develop a record of contact details for RE subject leaders throughout Milton Keynes schools;
- Develop a process for dealing with applications for determinations in preparation for any that might be submitted;
- Ensuring schools are aware of the EMA resource library and the richly diverse collection of RE books and artefacts that can be borrowed;
- Ensuring schools are made aware of the information held by the EMA Network on places of worship in and around Milton Keynes;
- Assess the need to provide induction training for new members of the SACRE.

**Membership of Milton Keynes Standing  
Advisory Council on Religious Education  
2013-2014**

<b>Representing</b>	<b>Member</b>	<b>Meetings attended</b>
<b>Group A:</b>	<b>Christian denominations and other religions</b>	
Free Churches	Rachel Foster (MK Bridgebuilder Trust)	2/3
Free Churches	Richard Wightman	2/3
Roman Catholic Church	Vacancy	
Baha'i	Latifeh Rowlands	3/3
Buddhism	Vacancy	
Hinduism	Bhavini Goricha	2/3
Islam	Arif Master	2/3
Judaism	Margo Best	1/3
Sikhism	Talvinder Kaur Virdee-Basra	1/3
<b>Group B:</b>	<b>The Church of England</b>	
	Rev Paul Smith (Chair)	2/3
	Rev Michael Morris	2/3
	Lesley Salter	2/3
	Vacancy	
<b>Group C:</b>	<b>Associations representing teachers</b>	
NUT	Doris Evans	2/3
NASUWT	Vacancy	
NAHT	Vacancy	
ATL	Vacancy	
VOICE	Vacancy	
ASCL	Vacancy	
<b>Group D:</b>	<b>The Local Authority</b>	
	Cllr Bradburn	0/3
	Cllr Miles	0/3
	Cllr Geary	0/3
	Cllr Shafiq	0/3
	Cllr Clarke	0/3
<b>Additional attendees</b>		
Co-opted Humanist	Andrea Quayle	2/3
	Elaine Lever (Humanist)	2/3
	Fay Bryan	1/1
	Irem Syed	1/1
	Oluwatoyin Soetan	1/1
<b>Professional Adviser</b>	Jo Fageant	3/3
<b>Local Authority Officer</b>	Linda Bartlett	2/2
	Gurbax Ghattora	1/1
<b>Clerk</b>	Janet Gleghorn	3/3
	Liz Corby	1/1