

# Oldham Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education

ANNUAL REPORT 2017 - 2018



**Oldham**  
Council

## Introduction

Oldham SACRE welcomed the support and significant encouragement received from Oldham Council. The Council has remained an active and interested supporter of SACRE and its officers regularly attend meetings and have secured the resources that keep the SACRE in good health. In November 2016 the Council arranged for publicity materials and advertising banners to be displayed at the Annual Conference for School Governors and the Chair and members of SACRE were available at the information desk throughout the conference.

Beside a welcoming speech from Caroline Sutton, who sadly passed away later in 2017, Failsworth MP and Shadow Spokesperson for Education, Ms Angela Rayner MP also gave a keynote speech.

Following the retirement of Mrs Karen Holmes, long serving Clerk to SACRE, Mrs Carol Hyde was appointed clerk to SACRE. Mr Dave Barter left the authority and Mrs Jenny Christopher joined SACRE as the representative of the interim Director of Education Andrew Sutherland.

The Annual Conference for teachers and school leaders and governors sponsored by Oldham Council has brought notable speakers with a national reputation in Religious Education to contribute to training. Following the “Getting to Good” initiative the process of schools achieving REQM Gold was initiated.

Oldham Council also maintained the support for a structure of subject leads in primary and secondary phases and regular RE Network meetings took place with the leads reporting to SACRE regularly. In secondary the meetings were held jointly with Rochdale.

The SACRE produced a costed development plan which has been monitored by an RE consultant and designated officers in the Council.

SACRE welcomed the active engagement the newly appointed Clerk to SACRE, Mrs C Hyde and Mr Peter Hawkins and their support for the programme put in place by Oldham Council supported by Mrs Gerri Barry.

Oldham SACRE is linked by subscription to:

- National Association of SACREs (NASACRE)
- "RE Today" online
- The Association of RE Inspectors, Advisers and Consultants (AREIAC)
- The Manchester Diocese
- AQA
- School Performance Team Oldham
- Inter Faith Forum
- Rochdale Council

## **Review of 2017-2018**

Oldham SACRE continued the policy of rotating meetings between civic, religious and educational venues.

Three meetings of Oldham SACRE took place:

### **Winter Term 2017**

Date: 29 November 2017

Location: The Salvation Army Headquarters Manchester Road,  
Failsworth

Crompton Suite

### **Spring Term 2018**

Date: 27 March 2018

Location: The European Islamic Centre, Manchester Road, Oldham

### **Summer Term 2018**

Date: 4 July 2018

Location: Christ Church VA CE Primary School, Denshaw

### **Items on the Agenda included:**

- Determinations and the implications for Academies and how SACRE can help
- Clerking arrangements and future meetings particularly to accommodate elected members
- Publication of Oldham SACRE constitution on Council Website and annual reports
- Methods of communicating the offer from Oldham Inter Faith Forum (IFF) to schools

- Collaboration between SACREs in Oldham and Rochdale and the Conference theme for 2018 including review of evaluation of Oldham SACRE Conference in 2017
- The policy for Determinations in the Local Authority maintained Schools
- The significance and impact of the OFSTED framework on schools and communication of relevant sections from OFSTED reports in the form of a spreadsheets and the role of SACRE
- Visits to schools by members of the SACRE including collective worship and use of reporting sheet reflecting on quality of collective worship
- Holocaust Day events
- Encouraging the contribution of Humanists to the work of Oldham SACRE
- The impact of events globally which had an impact on members of the religious groups in Oldham and Rochdale
- The role of officers and consultants in relation to the Councils carrying out their statutory duties in relation to Religious Education and worship and the development of a service level agreement (SLA)
- The work of subject leads in both phases and importance of Subject Networks
- Development of standardisation groups for GCSE
- Commentary on experience of delivering new GCSE and GCE syllabi and the challenges for students and teachers and resources to support secondary schools
- Policies relating to visits by schools to places of worship
- Work of European Islamic Centre Oldham in relation to school visits
- Co-option of RE subject leads and practitioners onto SACRE

- First-hand experience of making submission to Religious Education Quality Mark and ways of recruiting more schools
- Working in partnership Manchester Diocese to facilitate support for Newly Qualified teachers of Religious Education
- Support from Farmington Institute for scholarships
- Report from Cardiff University: Diversity of Religion and Belief
- Overview of National Reports
- Pledge for Peace circulated to SACRE members
- Results in public examinations
- Collective worship reports from school visit by SACRE members
- Establish a chair and membership of AGREED Syllabus Writing Group
- Support methodology for Oldham's new Agreed Syllabus and Professional development opportunities for teachers through anticipated Writing Group
- An audit of the current Agreed Syllabus due for renewal in 2019
- Discussion of the mechanisms of electronic communication and how to ensure maximum contact for members of SACRE
- Clarification of membership of Committee D
- Safeguarding advice from NASACRE
- The value of school linking project in Oldham

Thank you to Jenny Christopher as Link Officer for SACRE

## Officers 2017-2018

Chair of SACRE	Captain Simon Rowney
Vice Chair of SACRE	Mr Peter Butler
Clerk to SACRE	Mrs Carol Hyde
Business Support Officer	Mr Peter Hawkins
Oldham Council	Ms Jenny Christopher

### Support for maintaining standards

Oldham Council worked with SACRE to develop a service level agreement for the consultant post for September 2017 until January 2019

SACRE requested a mechanism be sought to link OFSTED reports for eligible schools and the SACRE and the Clerk to SACRE indicated a willingness to explore possibilities with the appropriate officers in the Council and deliver a proposal in Autumn 2017.

Within the SACRE development plan, funding continued for the RE subject leads for primary and secondary phases.

## **Support for RE**

Oldham SACRE remains vigilant in relation to the impact of the English Baccalaureate on the take up of GCSE Religious Education and Religious Studies.

Some members of SACRE had previously expressed concerns about the withdrawal at a national level, of additional support for training specialist teachers of RE and regarding the limited time spent in helping trainee teachers prepare for teaching this important subject.

Oldham SACRE was pleased to see the reintroduction of funded pathways and guidance for schools and Initial Teacher Training providers for 2016 to 2017, including bursaries, scholarships and School Direct salaried grants. Information on the National Association of Teachers of RE (NATRE) web site reflected concerns that there was more to do in this

area of professional development and a need to underline the connection between good religious education and the goals of achieving outstanding community cohesion and developing understanding of different faiths. SACRE therefore was reassured that Oldham Council's maintained schools were well aware of their responsibilities including:

The Education Act 2002 laid a duty on maintained schools to:

- Promote the well-being of pupils at the school, and in the case of a school in England, promote community cohesion
- HMCI has a duty under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 (as inserted by section 154 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006) to report on the contribution made by schools to community cohesion
- OFSTED will collect evidence to evaluate a school's contribution to promoting well-being. Guidance on practical examples of the ways in which schools can contribute to well-being includes 'Delivering high quality citizenship and RE, to help children understand how society works; to prepare them for playing their part as adult citizens; and to help them understand other faiths and cultures while developing a sense of shared identity'.

The Education Act 1944 laid a requirement on schools "to promote the spiritual, moral, mental, cultural and physical development of pupils'. This is sometimes referred to in the abbreviation 'SMSC'.

In November 2014, the Department for Education published Guidance on promoting British Values in schools to ensure young people leave school prepared for life in modern Britain. Oldham Council arranged for the distribution of the publication "Religious Education and British Values Issues, opportunities and resources"<sup>1</sup> and SACRE was pleased to note that guidance for SMSC had been strengthened.

SACRE also was pleased to see the view endorsed that if people are to grow up to be well-informed about religions they will encounter and other

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<sup>1</sup> Religious Education and British values Issues Opportunities and Resources ISBN 978-1-910261-10-1



non-religious worldviews, this must begin early in their school life and be supported by high quality religious education.

According to published reports, recent national surveys have revealed that the majority of newly trained primary school teachers feel under-prepared to teach about religion and beliefs<sup>2</sup>. Oldham SACRE is aware that this raises a serious challenge and if the aim for children to become active citizens, having an understanding of, and respect for the beliefs and values of others then the goal will be more achievable if confidence can be built in the teachers of our children in maintained schools, Academies and settings.<sup>3</sup> The Oldham response was to secure funding for a high profile professional development event and a sustaining network in both phases.

The Oldham Agreed Syllabus in 2014 stated:

**Oldham Council** works for community cohesion and respect for all, for high standards in learning for every child and for a better education service where thoughtfulness, understanding and community are highly valued. Religious Education in Oldham can make key contributions to these strategic intentions. The whole community of all different faith and belief groups in Oldham contributes to RE through the SACRE and benefits where RE experiences are of good quality.

Furthermore, SACRE took note of the strengthening statements from OFSTED namely:

- Pupils' **spiritual development** is shown by their ability to be reflective about their own beliefs or otherwise, that inform their perspective on life and their interest in and respect for different people's faiths, feelings and values.

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<sup>2</sup> [https://www.religiouseducationcouncil.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Provtraining\\_teachers\\_RE\\_Primary\\_Hea.pdf](https://www.religiouseducationcouncil.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Provtraining_teachers_RE_Primary_Hea.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/education/mortarboard/2014/jan/15/dont-dismiss-religious-education-school>

- Pupils' **moral development** is shown by their ability to recognise the difference between right and wrong.....and being able to understand and appreciate the viewpoints of others on these issues
- Pupils' **social development** is shown by acceptance and engagement with the fundamental British Values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs; the pupils develop and demonstrate skills and attitudes that will allow them to participate fully in and contribute positively to life in modern Britain
- Pupils' **cultural development** is shown by their understanding of a range of cultures within school and further afield as an essential element of their preparation for life in modern Britain.....and their interest in exploring, improving understanding of and showing respect for different faiths and cultural diversity and the extent to which they understand, accept, respect and celebrate diversity, as shown by their tolerance and attitudes towards different religious, ethnic and socio economic groups in the local, national and global communities.

Religious Education consequently makes a holistic contribution and as such is identified as a significant contributor to Oldham Council's stated aims.

### **Professional development 2017-2018**

Network Meetings for Primary and Secondary colleagues took place during the year, with the focus on REQM engagement for primary colleagues and development of best practice for the new GCSE course.

## **Complaints concerning Religious Education 2017-2018**

No complaints were received by SACRE in relation to Religious Education or collective worship.

## **Determinations 2017-2018**

No requests were received in 2017-2018 for a determination or renewal of a determination previously granted

## **Finance 2017-2018**

The SACRE budget provisioned by Oldham Council covers basic running costs including business support, permits members to attend national and local conferences and supports the annual Conference for all Oldham's RE teachers, school leaders and governors. The Council indicated its willingness to continue to resource activities that support the development of high-quality Religious Education. The Big Think Day held in June 2017 was piloted by Ms Rachael Sunderland and was very successful though this enterprise struggled to find sufficient capital to cover all costs

## **Oldham SACRE membership 2017-2018**

### **Committee A**

Mr Peter Butler	Free Church
Rev Sheila Coop	Free Church
Mr Peter Morgan	Free Church
Captain Simon Rowney	Free Church (Chair)
Mrs Krishna Sisodia	Hindu
Rabbi Daniel Walker	Jewish
Mr Nasim Ashraf	Muslim
Rev Howard Sutcliffe	Oldham Inter Faith Forum
Vacancy	Roman Catholic

### **Committee B**

Mr Graham McGuffie	Church of England
Rev Paul Monk	Church of England
Rev Janet Pitman	Church of England
Vacancy	Church of England

### **Committee C**

Miss Jacqueline Beattie	NUT
Mrs Mary Butt	ATL
Mrs S Callaghan	Primary Heads (Subject Lead)
Ms Rachael Sunderland	for Secondary Heads (Subject Lead)

## **Committee D**

Councillor Cathryn Ball

Oldham Council

Councillor Chris Gloster

Oldham Council

Councillor Vitarose Price

Oldham Council

Ms Jenny Christopher

Oldham Council (for Director)

Vacancy

Special Schools