



# Peterborough Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education ANNUAL REPORT 2014 – 2015

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## **Peterborough Standing Advisory Committee for Religious Education Annual Report 2014-2015**

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**Peterborough City Council  
SACRE Annual Report 2014 – 2015  
Chairman's Introduction  
From Reverend Ian Forsyth**

The many changes in education have brought challenges. However, SACRE has been busy doing a lot of preparatory work for the future including exploring opportunities to provide funding for pupils to visit places of worship in Peterborough which will further enhance their knowledge and understanding. The SACRE Sixth Form lecture was held at the King's School Peterborough and Peter Barrowman provided workshop and lectures on AS and A2 Ethics (over 100 students took part in this event) for the following Schools Thomas Deacon Academy, Prince William School, Stanground Academy, Voyager Academy and Ormiston Bushfield Academy.

With regards to standards in RE in Peterborough schools, the pass rate at AS is higher and at A level is in line with the national average whilst the pass rate at GCSE has increased this year from 62.1% to 65%, which is pleasing to note.

Sue Ward announced her early retirement this year and I would like to include a response on behalf of all SACRE members and RE teachers in both primary and secondary schools in Peterborough. Sue has been our advisor to the Peterborough SACRE for many years and has spent many hours working with Primary and Secondary teachers' network meetings providing CPD and coming alongside those in the teaching profession at times with her infectious enthusiasm for teaching outstanding RE in the classroom.

On behalf of SACRE members, I would like to say thank you to Sue for her professionalism, kindness and her sense of duty to ensure that RE remains a statutory subject not just locally but nationally too. It is with this thought that as members of SACRE we would continue to emphasise the statutory requirements of the Peterborough SACRE to monitor and deliver outstanding RE and support RE teachers in the classroom, as well as headteachers and governors.

SACRE will continue to meet the challenges and changes outlined below in the forthcoming year:

1. Work to support teachers to provide meaningful and challenging RE;
2. Involve wider representation (Faith / Belief / Universities / Academies);
3. Pupil / student involvement with SACRE;
4. Meeting the challenges of the changes to the curriculum at GCSE and A level.

**Rev. Ian Forsyth  
Chair of SACRE  
May 2016**

**The purpose of the report:**

Religious Education (RE) is an important curriculum subject and makes a unique contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils and supports wider community cohesion. The Government is keen to ensure all pupils receive high-quality RE. The Education Act 1996, Section 391 (6) and (7) requires that each year the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) from each Local Authority (LA) publishes a report as to the exercise of its functions and any action taken by the representative groups on the Council during the last preceding year.

This entails:

- advise the LA on RE given in accordance with the agreed syllabus;
- monitoring the provision and quality of RE taught according to its agreed syllabus, together with the overall effectiveness of the syllabus;
- provide advice and support on the effective teaching of RE in accordance with the locally agreed syllabus;
- provide advice to the LA and its schools on methods of teaching, the choice of teaching material and the provision of teacher training;
- in partnership with its LA, consider whether any changes need to be made in the agreed syllabus or in the support offered to schools in the implementation of the agreed syllabus to improve the quality teaching and learning of RE;
- offer advice to the LA, and through the LA to schools, concerning how an existing agreed syllabus can be interpreted so as to fit in with a broad, balanced and coherent curriculum.

**Management of SACRE**

With the changing face of education both nationally and locally in the past year, SACRE has had to grapple with its role and function in the LA and nationally. The 'Non Statutory Framework for Religious Education' was produced in October 2013 and is being encouraged by the Religious Education Council for England and Wales to be a significant document to inform a locally Agreed Syllabus Conference when determining its future syllabus for RE. This will be taken into account when the review of Peterborough's Agreed Syllabus happens in 2017.

SACRE is very pleased to report that the LA has continued to support the work of SACRE by providing a named officer from the LA responsible for SACRE and a clerk for the administration, and has secured the services of a RE Adviser to support SACRE's work to schools. Despite significant cutbacks in many local authorities, Peterborough City Council has continued to support SACRE and its work.

Peterborough SACRE, which has met once a term, comprises of four statutory groups. Attendance at meetings has been variable. The four groups are as follows:-

- Group A -representatives of non-Anglican Christian denominations, other religions and religious denominations;
- Group B -representatives of the Church of England;
- Group C - representatives of the teachers' association;
- Group D – representatives of the LA.

Membership has continued to change. Long serving members, Dave Roberts (NUT representative), Barbara Crellin (Church of England, Peterborough Diocese), Susie Hall (LA representative) have all resigned from SACRE. SACRE thanks them all for their time and contributions over the years. Councillor Mohammed Jamil was replaced by Councillor Jonas Yonga. Sue Ward, RE and SACRE Adviser retired and her knowledge, hard work and commitment will be missed. In collaboration with Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire SACREs, Peterborough intends to have a SACRE Adviser in post by September 2016 at the latest. SACRE continues to have associated members from the British Humanist Association and Peterborough Learning Partnership. Rev Ian Forsyth continued as chairman and Sukaina Manji was voted as Vice Chair. Efforts have been made to secure Hindu, Buddhist and Roman Catholic representatives but to no avail. There are fewer members attending the meetings regularly and on one occasion SACRE was not quorate and had to postpone ratifying decisions.

Some members of SACRE are embarking on the Teach RE course provided by Culham St Gabriel's. SACRE member, James Groombridge, who is on the course, said, "The projects/modules have been very thought provoking and interesting. I have realised that I over simplify the concepts of religion, and this has made me realise how complicated it is. This has made me wonder how much do we teach the children, and should we complicate it for them, or simplify it for them. I have had really good support when needed, and have been given good advice on where to go to find out more - this is the part that I have found the hardest about religion, as I cannot be sure as to how biased the text would be. The only difficulty I have found is with time management, as there is so much to do within the term time, and this is an extra pressure. That being said, I am enjoying the work and the little bit of pressure that it is causing."

### **Determinations**

SACRE had no new requests for determinations.

Details of the agenda items, attendance at the meetings and minutes of the meetings can be found on the Peterborough City Council website: <https://www.peterborough.gov.uk/residents/schools-and-education/religious-education/>

### **Impact of Academy Programme**

Peterborough SACRE continues to enjoy a positive relationship with some of the academies in the city. There are members from academies on SACRE. Teachers from academies attend network meetings to share and exchange ideas and materials. The RE Adviser continues to support academies through a series of network meetings. There are more chains of academies but SACRE has determined its role to engage with them and try to monitor the quality and provision of statutory RE in all schools. Partnership with Peterborough Learning Partnership has helped to promote the work and role of SACRE to schools.

### **Standards and quality of provision of Religious Education**

In previous years, SACRE scrutinised Ofsted inspection reports as a means of monitoring the impact of the locally agreed syllabus. This was achieved through analysis of the reports' references to spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects of the curriculum (SMSC) and from time to time references to religious education or collective worship. In 2013/14, the format of Ofsted inspection reports changed and became more succinct. Fewer references were made to SMSC and religious education which meant that SACRE could no longer use the inspection reports as a tool to monitor the effectiveness or impact of the locally agreed syllabus.

## **Standards and quality of provision of religious education (see appendix 1)**

**A and AS level RE** The pass rate at AS is higher and at A level is in line with the national average.

**GCSE RE:** The percentage A\*- C pass rate has increased once again this year from 62.1% to 65%, which is pleasing to note. Peterborough's pass rate is still lower than the national percentage A\*- C pass rate (England) (72.2% this year), but lower by a smaller amount.

However, the percentage of the total cohort entered for GCSE RE was lower this year than in any of the previous years: this is cause for concern if it remains a downward trend.

**KS1 - 3 RE** This year there has been considerable confusion in schools over how to assess and report on progress in RE. Schools have often assumed that the removal of levels from National Curriculum subjects would also apply to RE, and have therefore in many cases been using the Agreed Syllabus but not the assessment part of it. The data that SACRE has been able to gather has been patchy therefore, and it is difficult to draw conclusions with regard to progress at KS1, KS2 and KS3 other than the conclusion that work needs to be done both to raise teacher confidence in assessing progress, and to revise the Agreed Syllabus so that the assessment system is more in line with National Curriculum subjects.

A concern for SACRE's ability to report on progress in the future is that if schools all use their own assessment systems as for foundation subjects, it will be difficult to standardise these for the purpose of analysis and comparison. This is a development area for SACRE in the next academic year.

### **SACRE Comments:**

- It is not clear if the percentages of the cohort who are not entered for any examination are receiving their entitlement of RE lessons in Key Stage 4. We know that some students are not, yet Ofsted rarely tackle this issue;
- Whilst most of the secondary schools are academies there is still a statutory entitlement for RE to be taught at Key Stage 4 and 5. Academies, unless their Trust deeds say otherwise, should follow either the locally Agreed Syllabus or another local Agreed Syllabus. As there are a number of secondary schools with no entries for a Religious Studies exam, SACRE wonders what is being provided in the way of statutory RE.

### **How SACRE has supported schools**

From September 2013, schools have been required to teach to the new syllabus. Training events have been offered to teachers, alongside the development of schemes of work and resources for teachers to use as they see fit. Schools have been grappling with the implications of introducing a new national curriculum for September 2014. Some schools have found it harder to give sufficient time and training for teachers to know and understand the requirements of the Agreed Syllabus. Attendance at the training events has been satisfactory, though one would like to see schools allowing more colleagues access CPD in this statutory subject. The evaluations demonstrate a positive impact upon teachers' teaching practices – **see appendix 2.**

### **Effectiveness of the Agreed Syllabus**

The agreed syllabus of 2013 has been received well by the teachers of RE in Peterborough schools. 100% of the schools we received a survey back from have confirmed they have integrated all or part of it into their RE program. Many commented that they found the schemes of learning and core material the most helpful parts of the syllabus and, in the words of one response, "The cd with additional support materials is a God send". This is encouraging for us on the Peterborough SACRE and goes some way to show all the hard work has helped support our RE teachers in delivering good RE. In addition to the positive feedback, when asked what we could improve in future versions of the syllabus an overriding request was for more help with assessment of RE, in part, it seemed due to an ever increasing lack of RE specialists delivering the RE curriculum.

As mentioned above, the question of using levels to assess remains an issue.

SACRE continues to encourage schools to develop their own schemes of work to make meaningful links with other areas of the new national curriculum.

In support of the syllabus, and for any new RE coordinator, SACRE can offer support through the SACRE Adviser, Amanda Fitton (in post from 1<sup>st</sup> July 2016).

### **Complaints**

There have been no complaints to the LA during the past year in respect of RE, requiring the LA's Special Appeals Committee to be convened.

### **Collective Worship**

SACRE supports the guidance document on collective worship produced by NASACRE. The guidance document is available for all Peterborough Schools and can be found on the Council website under collective worship: <https://www.peterborough.gov.uk/residents/schools-and-education/religious-education/>

Under the Ofsted framework, inspectors do comment on the opportunities for spiritual development in assemblies and acts of collective worship. Further advice and materials are available from both the RE adviser.

### **Contribution of SACRE to social and racial harmony agenda**

SACRE has its own web page on the Council website. Minutes and agendas are available there

<https://www.peterborough.gov.uk/residents/schools-and-education/religious-education/>

Links to the Interfaith Council have been established and invites for members to attend SACRE meetings and speak about their work have been extended.

SACRE has been very supportive of a number of initiatives to support social and community cohesion, as well as promote interfaith dialogue.



## APPENDIX 1

### A level Religious Studies

	<b>2015 Pboro</b>	<b>2015 National</b>	2014 Pboro	2014 National	2013 Pboro	2013 National	2012 Pboro	2012 National	2011 Pboro	2011 National
Number of candidates' entries	<b>97</b>		72		123		105		78	
% of candidates obtaining A*-E grades	<b>97%</b>	<b>98.6%</b>	100%	98.5%	100%	98.8%	100%	98.6%	100%	98.5%

### AS level Religious Studies

	<b>2015 Pboro</b>	<b>2015 National</b>	2014 Pboro	2014 National	2013 Pboro	2013 National	2012 Pboro	2012 National	2011 Pboro	2011 National
Number of candidates' entries	<b>159</b>		33		18		28		21	
% of candidates obtaining A-E grades	<b>97.5%</b>	<b>93.2%</b>	78.7 %	92.2%	94%	92.2%	89.3%	92.5%	81%	92%

### GCSE Religious Studies

	<b>2015 Pboro</b>	<b>2015 National</b>	2014 Pboro	2014 National	2013 Pboro	2013 National	2012 Pboro	2012 National	2011 Pboro	2011 National
Number of candidates' entries	<b>1012</b> (44% of cohort)		1140 (51.1% of cohort)		1097 (48.8% of cohort)		1048 (47% of cohort)		1048	
% of candidates obtaining A* - C grades	<b>65%</b>	<b>72.2%</b>	62.6%	71.5%	61.5%	69.2%	66.1%	73.7%	60.4%	73.3%

## Appendix 2

### Course Details 2014 - 2015

#### Attendance

Course/workshop	No. of attendees	No. of schools represented
Leading and Managing the new RE syllabus (Primary schools)	10	10
Linking RE to the national curriculum (Primary schools)	11	10
Stories to excite (Primary Schools)	4	2
Primary network meeting (Dec)	14	13
Primary network meeting (Mar)	4	4
Secondary network meeting (Mar)	5	3

#### Evaluations

Course/workshop	Evaluation ratings				
	Content	Quality of presentation	Usefulness of materials	Meeting your needs / school needs	Venue
Leading and Managing the new RE syllabus (Primary schools)	89% Excellent 11% Good	100% Excellent	89% Excellent 11% Good	78% Excellent 22% Good	33% Excellent 67% Good
Linking RE to the national curriculum (Primary schools)	70% Excellent 30% Good	80% Excellent 20% Good	90% Excellent 10% Good	60% Excellent 40% Good	30% Excellent 70% Good
Stories to excite (Primary Schools)	80% Excellent 20% Good	80% Excellent 20% Good	80% Excellent 20% Good	80% Excellent 20% Good	50% Excellent 25% Good 25% Satisfactory
Primary network meeting (Dec)	79% Excellent 21% Good	71% Excellent 29% Good	64% Excellent 36% Good	64% Excellent 36% Good	43% Excellent 50% Good 7% Satisfactory

Primary network meeting (Mar)	100% Good	100% Good	25% Excellent 75% Good	100% Good	75% Good 25% no comment
Secondary network meeting (Mar)	60% Excellent 40% Good	80% Excellent 20% Good	60% Excellent 40% Good	60% Excellent 40% Good	60% Excellent 40% Good