

**Cambridgeshire
Standing Advisory Council
on Religious Education
(SACRE)**



**Annual Report
2015 - 2016**

Cambridgeshire Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education: Annual Report 2015 - 2016

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Chair's Introduction from Tony Orgee

The past year has been busy for the Cambridgeshire SACRE as it promotes good standards in RE and advises the Local Authority about matters connected with collective worship and religious education in accordance with the Local Agreed Syllabus.

The Cambridgeshire SACRE brings together faith representatives, teachers and councillors, and I would like to thank all members for the way in which they have worked constructively together throughout the year.

The Cambridgeshire SACRE is very aware that religious education can make an important contribution to a range of activities that help our young people understand and respect the various faith traditions. Following the launch of the new Local Agreed Syllabus over a year ago, this year has seen further work to support teachers in its delivery.

This year has seen, however, significant changes in personnel. Steph Boothroyd who has provided invaluable support for the Cambridgeshire SACRE over a number of years has moved on and Kerri McCourty has taken over this role. We welcome Kerri to SACRE and she too has provided excellent support for our work.

Sadly, Sue Ward, adviser to SACRE and the RE Adviser for Cambridgeshire tendered her resignation during the year. SACRE members wish to place on record their appreciation for all the excellent work that Sue has done for SACRE over the last 10 years since 2006.

In the time between the start of Sue's illness and the appointment of a new adviser to SACRE, the Cambridgeshire SACRE has continued to be well supported. We would like to thank Fiona Ward who has organised and run RE training and network meetings. We would also like to thank all SACRE members for their help and support during this time, with particular thanks to Shirley Hall, Cathy Michell and Mo Middleton. We are also grateful for the help of Helen Manley, Senior Adviser, who has attended our meetings and supported SARCE during this period.

The meetings of the Cambridgeshire SACRE are open public meetings and agendas are published on the County Council's website in advance of the meetings. We are pleased to welcome members of the public who would like to attend our meetings.

Councillor Tony Orgee

Chair, Cambridgeshire SACRE

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The Purpose of the Report

Religious Education is an important curriculum subject. It is important in its own right and also makes a unique contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development of pupils and supports wider community cohesion. The Government is keen to ensure all pupils receive high-quality Religious Education.

The Education Act 1996, Section 391 (6) and (7) requires that each year the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) from each Local Authority will publish 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:

- advising the Local Authority on Religious Education given in accordance with the Agreed Syllabus;
- monitoring the provision and quality of Religious Education taught according to its Agreed Syllabus, together with the overall effectiveness of the syllabus;
- providing advice and support on the effective teaching of Religious Education in accordance with the locally Agreed Syllabus;
- providing advice to the Local Authority and its schools on methods of teaching, the choice of teaching material and the provision of teacher training;
- in partnership with its Local Authority, considering 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 of teaching and learning of RE;
- offering advice to the Local Authority, and through the Local Authority 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

The Local Authority has continued to support the work of SACRE through funding that provides a clerk for the meetings, services of an RE Adviser to support SACRE, its work and teacher training for the teaching of Religious Education, and advice about Collective Worship.

There was a change of Clerk with Kerri McCourty taking responsibility for the role, SACRE welcomes her to the role. They would also like to thank Stephanie Boothroyd for the work she did as the clerk to SACRE.

During the past year it was good for SACRE to see the Agreed Syllabus being referenced and further embedded within schools. SACRE continues its work to encourage schools and share practices at the network meetings and through CPD training. The core materials of the syllabus continued to be developed and in July 2016 the final units were distributed to all schools. Thanks are given to Shirley Hall and her team who worked on getting these finished.

This year there has still 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, this had been addressed over 2016 -17 with CPD sessions for teachers in Cambridgeshire along with the existing network meetings.

Work to revise the Agreed Syllabus so that the assessment system is more in line with National Curriculum subjects was delayed and put back to the 2016-17. Therefore a concern regarding 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. A letter was sent to all schools in Cambridgeshire schools advising on assessment and asking for any data regardless of format. This is a development area for SACRE in the next academic year which has been put back to 2016-17 when the Agreed Syllabus will be updated.

SACRE amended the constitution to allow Humanists to become a full member of Committee A.

Every Local Authority has to convene a Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE). Cambridgeshire SACRE, which has met three times this year, comprises four statutory groups. Attendance at meetings has been variable. Most notably, there has been a decline in regular attendance by non-Christian faith representation. This year the SACRE continued to hold the meetings in the afternoon to help increase attendance by making meetings more accessible. We continue to ensure that the membership reflects the demographic.

The four groups that make up SACRE are as follows:

- Committee A - representatives of non-Anglican Christian denominations, other religions, and world-view communities;
- Committee B - representatives of the Church of England;
- Committee C - representatives of the teachers' associations;
- Committee D – representatives of the Local Authority.

SACRE welcomed to committee A, Julia Ewans who represents the Humanists. SACRE also welcomed Father Dragos representing Christian Orthodox church, , Rebecca Smith representing the Diocese of Ely , Shahla Suleiman representing the Islamic faith.

We said farewell to Shaikh Mabud, Tom Watkins, Rev Nigel Cooper and Tricia Pritchard and thank them for their contributions to SACRE.

There continues to be a vacancy for a Sikh representative and an NUT union representative.

Details of the agenda items, attendance at the meetings and minutes of the meetings can be found on the Cambridgeshire County Council SACRE website at www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/info/20076/children_and_families_practitioners_and_providers_information/279/children_and_families_working_with_partners/3.

Secondary Schools

Monitoring Secondary RE Provision

Network Meetings

In March and July 2016 two Secondary RE Network Meetings were arranged by Dennis Johnson, Head of RE at St. Bede's Inter Church School. The first meeting was attended by teachers from Soham, Sawtry, Ely, Linton, and St. Bede's. They discussed what they would like to gain from these meetings, and surveyed which religions they had chosen to teach for the new RS GCSE. One of the most pressing needs was to have experts or representatives in world faiths speak to them to clear up any misunderstandings or gaps in knowledge. Since Islam was one of the most popular religions being taught in the new GCSE the next Network Meeting was held at the Muslim College in Cambridge in July where Atif Imtiaz spoke to the delegates about the central tenets of Islam and then answered their many questions. All those who attended were very grateful to Atif for his expertise and patience.

Subject Strengths and Weaknesses

- **A-Level Entries:**

The number of centres entering candidates has dropped slightly from 89 candidates in 2015 to 81 in 2016. This is not in line with national figures. The pass rate has increased with a 100% pass rate compared with a national figure of 98.6% pass rate.

- **AS-Level Entries:**

There has been a decline in entries for the AS in 2015 with 45 fewer candidates put forward for the exam, although the percentage gaining a pass rose by 4.4%, above the national average of 88.5%. The number of centres entering candidates dropped from 9 to 7.

Areas of development

Schools need to be made aware of the benefits to students in studying RE to A level and the correlation with entries to Oxford and Cambridge universities and the Russell group of Universities.

- **GCSE Full-Course Entries:**

While entries have risen nationally, in Cambridgeshire there has been a drop in entries for 2016 despite the number of centres entering having increased by 1. This is a concern as the previous year had seen an increase numbers and passes. The percentage of students gaining A*-C grade is very slightly higher than the national percentage, which is an encouraging outcome.

- **GCSE Short-Course Entries:**

Short course entries have declined this year significantly this year; the decline is in line with national figures. The percentage of A* to C passes was above the national average and the pass rate had also risen by 15.7% from 2015, again above the national average. It has to be noted that the centres entering students had significantly dropped from 17 to 5.

Areas of development

To continue to support schools with RE and to make schools aware of the benefits of RE. Also to continue to make schools aware of their statutory requirements for RE to be part of the school curriculum until the end of year 11.

Primary Schools

Monitoring Primary RE Provision

Network Meetings

Following the retirement of the SACRE Adviser, members of SACRE stepped up. Dr Shirley Hall and Fiona Ward (Wisbech St Mary's) together led the primary RE network meetings, holding four per term for the academic year across different regions of the county to ensure some access to professional development for teachers of Religious Education. Those who attended the meetings were able to take away copies of PowerPoints of materials. The final meeting subject focus was assessment as schools were confused about how to assess RE due to the Agreed Syllabus' use of levels. SACRE is grateful to Houghton Primary School, Mayfield Primary School, William de Yaxley Academy and Wisbech St Mary for hosting the meetings. Overall the meetings were attended by over 100 teachers. This was a unique

opportunity for subject leaders to come together to share good practice and begin to increase subject knowledge regarding different religions. Feedback from these meetings shows that interest in Religious Education, of teachers and pupils alike, has improved. The enquiry-based learning pedagogical approach is inspiring teachers. You will find the evaluation data for the network meetings in [Appendix 2](#).

Training

Due to the retirement of the RE LA Adviser, Cambridgeshire SACRE relied heavily on the interim support of others. This meant that during the academic year 2015-2016 fewer training courses took place. With that being said, there were three specialised training courses organised for the year. The focus of the training courses were Leading RE at Primary School and SMSC across the Curriculum. The training courses were very well attended. The evaluation data for the training can also be found in [Appendix 2](#). Cambridgeshire SACRE extends special thanks to Fiona Ward (RE Lead at Wisbech St Mary), Tamara Allen (Head at Holme Primary) and Laura Perkins (RE Lead at Holme Primary) for their interim support.

Special Schools

Unfortunately Cambridgeshire did not have any special school delegates attend any of the training during 2015-2016. Cambridgeshire SACRE endeavours to work harder in order to engage with the special schools in the county.

Support for Improving the Teaching of the Local Agreed Syllabus

NASACRE Conference

The SACRE Clerk attended the NASACRE Conference and AGM on behalf of Cambridgeshire SACRE on 17 May 2016. There were two key note speakers at the conference, The Rt Honourable Baroness Elizabeth Butler-Sloss and Professor Adam Dinham.

Shirley constructed a questionnaire around the Agreed Syllabus which was distributed to RE teachers by the SACRE Clerk and handed out at the final network meeting. The results of the questionnaire were generally positive and schools seemed to be happy with the use of enquiry based learning. However there is a demand for more support for the school designed units. Dennis Johnson (St Bede's Cambridge) led the secondary meetings. SACRE would like to extend thanks to Shirley Hall, Fiona Ward and Dennis Johnson for their interim support.

Website Survey

In the Autumn term SACRE carried out a survey to look at the provision of RE in all Cambridgeshire schools. Out of the 245 schools allocated, only data from 127 schools was reviewed. It was found that the website task was difficult as each website is different and the information wasn't always easy to find. It was considered that if SACRE weren't able to find the content they were looking for then parents would also struggle. It is important to note however that the results from the website survey do not necessarily reflect the provision for teaching RE in schools.

Advice on Controversial issues

A letter was sent to all schools in Cambridgeshire giving advice on how to tackle controversial issues that may be raised in RE lessons. This was in relation to the various terrorist attacks that took place in Europe and questions that may be raised in schools by pupils as a result.

Consultancies

St Botolph's Primary School and Kingsfield Academy used the consultancy service offered by the Local Authority and, in the absence of an adviser, these were carried out by Tamara Allen (Head at Holme Primary School). SACRE wish to thank her for the time and advice offered to these schools.

Development plan

SACRE should carry on monitoring Collective Worship and to update the leaflet on a regular basis. We should also monitor on a regular basis Ofsted reports to help monitor provision of RE across Cambridgeshire and seek to offer help and advice when necessary.

Formal Complaints

There have been no formal complaints made to the Local Authority.

Relevant Links

- Learn Together Cambridgeshire: Religious Education Advisory Service (Services & Charges and Courses & Training)
www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/learntogether/homepage/31/religious_adviser
- Cambridgeshire County Council:
Cambridgeshire Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE)
www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/info/20076/children_and_families_practitioners_and_providers_information/279/children_and_families_working_with_partners/3

Collective Worship

Collective worship observations

Members of SACRE carried out a number of Collective Worship observation in primary schools across Cambridgeshire. The visits proved to be very beneficial and SACRE decided that it should give advice and guidance with practical suggestions to all primary schools. Subsequently an information leaflet was produced and was distributed to all schools.

Contribution of SACRE to Social and Racial Harmony Agenda

Stonewall's Interfaith Seminar Report

Cllr Ed Cearn attended Stonewall's Interfaith Seminar to develop a network of support resources to teach Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) issues in RE. The conference was well attended with over 300 people and a variety of representation. There were testimonials from people of different faiths. Ed put the SACRE leaflet titled 'Teaching about Gender Identity and Sexuality in Religious Education: Advice for Headteachers and Governors' on a stand and delegates were positive towards the leaflet.

If you have any comments about this report, please contact the Cambridgeshire SACRE Clerk via e-mail at RE.SACRE@cambridgeshire.gov.uk.

Appendix 1

GCE AS, A Level and GCSE results for Religious Studies in Cambridgeshire schools: Summer 2016

A Level Religious Studies Cambridgeshire

	2016 Cams	2016 National	2015 Cams	2015 National	2014 Cams	2014 National	2013 Cams	2013 National	2012 Cams	2012 National	2011 Cams	2011 National
Number of candidates entries	81	21,900	89	21,313	62	19,850	64	19,200	63	18,850	41	18,550
Percentage of candidates obtaining A*-E grades	100.0%	98.6%	98.9%	98.9%	100.0%	98.8%	98.4%	99.1%	98.4%	99.0%	97.5%	98.9%
Number of centres entering candidates	9		10		8		8		9		5	

AS Level Religious Studies Cambridgeshire

	2016 Cams	2016 National	2015 Cams	2015 National	2014 Cams	2014 National	2013 Cams	2013 National	2012 Cams	2012 National	2011 Cams	2011 National
Number of candidates entries	86	32,515	131	30,507	27	29,500	22	27,450	57	26,250	29	26,400
Percentage of candidates obtaining A-E grades	93.0%	92.7%	88.5%	92.1%	81.4%	91.1%	95.5%	91.6%	81.7%	91.5%	79.3%	90.7%
Number of centres entering candidates	7		9		10		10		11		8	

GCSE Religious Studies (full course) Cambridgeshire

	2016 Cambs	2016 National	2015 Cambs	2015 National	2014 Cambs	2014 National	2013 Cambs	2013 National	2012 Cambs	2012 National	2011 Cambs	2011 National
Number of candidates entries	1,991	268,437	2,096	253,196	1,644	282,099	1,730	263,988	1,561	239,123	1,388	199,752
Percentage of candidates gaining grades A*-C	74.4%	71.7%	71.3%	70.9%	74.6%	71.5%	71.3%	72.4%	75.7%	73.7%	73.4%	73.2%
Number of centres entering candidates	26		25		26		28		27		21	

GCSE Religious Studies (short course) Cambridgeshire

	2016 Cambs	2016 National	2015 Cambs	2015 National	2014 Cambs	2014 National
Number of candidates entries	385	26,267	1,232	68,028	1,284	86,679
Percentage of candidates gaining grades A*-C	63.1%	59.0%	47.4%	51.8%	51.9%	
Number of centres entering candidates	5		17		14	

Appendix 2

Continuous Professional Development Data

RE network meetings

Autumn term

Autumn Term 2015						
COMBINED ATTENDANCE NUMBERS FOR 4 SESSIONS		COMBINED EVALUATION SCORES FOR 4 SESSIONS				
No. of Teachers	No. of Schools Represented	No. of Evaluation Forms Received	Scores (Very Good)	Scores (Good)	Scores (Satisfactory)	Scores (Unsatisfactory)
47	44	7	15%	30%	5%	-
How would you rate the training's impact on your practice?		No. of Evaluation Forms Received	Very Good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
		7	15%	23%	13%	-

Spring Term

Spring Term 2016						
COMBINED ATTENDANCE NUMBERS FOR 4 SESSIONS		COMBINED EVALUATION SCORES FOR 4 SESSIONS				
No. of Teachers	No. of Schools Represented	No. of Evaluation Forms Received	Scores (Very Good)	Scores (Good)	Scores (Satisfactory)	Scores (Unsatisfactory)
48	46	9	35%	15%	-	-
How would you rate the training's impact on your practice?		No. of Evaluation Forms Received	Very Good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
		9	39%	11%	-	-

Summer Term

Summer Term 2016						
COMBINED ATTENDANCE NUMBERS FOR 4 SESSIONS		COMBINED EVALUATION SCORES FOR 4 SESSIONS				
No. of Teachers	No. of Schools Represented	No. of Evaluation Forms Received	Scores (Very Good)	Scores (Good)	Scores (Satisfactory)	Scores (Unsatisfactory)
56	54	41	24%	66%	9%	-
How would you rate the training's impact on your practice?		No. of Evaluation Forms Received	Very Good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
		41	22%	73%	5%	-

Specialised training

Autumn term

Leading RE at Primary School – Thursday 15 th October 2015						
EVALUATION SCORES						
No. of Teachers	No. of Schools Represented	No. of Evaluation Forms Received	Scores (Very Good)	Scores (Good)	Scores (Satisfactory)	Scores (Unsatisfactory)
25	25	25	76%	21%	3%	-
How would you rate the training's impact on your practice?		No. of Evaluation Forms Received	Very Good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
		25	76%	20%	4%	-

Spring Term

SMSC Across the Curriculum – Thursday 28 th January 2016						
EVALUATION SCORES						
No. of Teachers	No. of Schools Represented	No. of Evaluation Forms Received	Scores (Very Good)	Scores (Good)	Scores (Satisfactory)	Scores (Unsatisfactory)
14	13	14	29%	48%	3%	-
How would you rate the training's impact on your practice?		No. of Evaluation Forms Received	Very Good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
		14	36%	57%	7%	-

Summer Term

SMSC Across the Curriculum – Thursday 30 th June 2016						
EVALUATION SCORES						
No. of Teachers	No. of Schools Represented	No. of Evaluation Forms Received	Scores (Very Good)	Scores (Good)	Scores (Satisfactory)	Scores (Unsatisfactory)
19	18	19	88%	12%	-	-
How would you rate the training's impact on your practice?		No. of Evaluation Forms Received	Very Good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
		19	84%	16%	-	-

Appendix 3

Cambridgeshire SACRE Membership (September 2015)

Committee A (Faith Representatives)

Virginia Barnes	Baha'i
Daniel Bennett	Roman Catholic
Mother Joanna Burton	Orthodox
Clare Clark *	Roman Catholic
Andrew Dyson	The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints
Vacancy	Sikh
Vacancy*	Roman Catholic
Dr Shaikh Abdul Mabud	Muslim
Cathy Michell	Methodist
Moira Middleton	Baptist
Vacancy	Hindu
Richard Potter	Buddhist
Janet Scott	Society of Friends
Rajnikant Shah	Hindu (Indian Community & Culture Association (ICCA))
Aga Cahn	Jewish

Committee B (Church of England)

Canon Nigel Cooper	Anglia Ruskin University
Dr Shirley Hall	Ely Diocesan
Tricia Pritchard	Ely Diocesan
Rebecca Smith	Church of England Primary School Headteacher

Committee C (Teachers)

Elizabeth Bassett	National Association of Headteachers
Andrew Daw	Association of School and College Leaders
Raymond Mitchell	Association of Teachers and Lecturers
Tony Reynolds	VOICE
Thomas Watkins	The National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers
Vacancy	National Union of Teachers

Committee D (Local Authority)

Cllr Edward Cearns	Liberal Democrat
Cllr Tony Orgee	Conservative
Cllr Paul Sale	Labour

Co-opted

Julia Ewans	Humanist
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* Rotating Attendance