

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



**Annual Report  
2016 - 2017**

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on Religious Education:  
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# **Cambridgeshire Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education: Annual Report 2016 – 2017**

## **Chair's Introduction from Julia Ewans**

In the last year there have been many changes for the Cambridgeshire SACRE. Our chair of many years Councillor Tony Orgee decided to step down from the County Council and from his role with SACRE with effect from the May 2017 local elections. We miss his firm calm hand on the tiller and thank him for his many years of service both to SACRE and to the county generally.

Amanda Fitton was appointed to be the new RE Adviser and began work in July 2016. Amanda has taken on quite a task as she advises not only Cambridgeshire but also Peterborough, Northamptonshire and Rutland. We are also grateful for the help of Helen Manley, Senior Adviser, who has attended our meetings and supported SACRE until Amanda's appointment and continues to support and advise.

No sooner had Amanda settled in and attended the first round of SACRE meetings than three of the Local Authorities (Rutland joined later) decided to call a joint Agreed Syllabus Conference. With little or no funding for RE in any local authority over and above the RE Adviser and clerk's salaries the aim was to find an innovative way of working collaboratively and to write a short and flexible syllabus which will cater for the needs of a wide range of schools and school cohorts.

My thanks also to Kerri McCourty our clerk who never fails in the exemplary performance of her role and calmly deals with the odd crisis along the way.

Whilst we continue to promote good standards in RE and to advise the Local Authority about matters connected with collective worship and religious education, the main focus of our work has been directed to writing a new syllabus with two members of Cambridgeshire SACRE, Dr Shirley Hall and Janet Scott working with me, Amanda, the SACRE clerks and SACRE representatives from Northampton and Peterborough on the framework of the new syllabus and putting many hours of work into the end result. In 2017-18 many other SACRE members have contributed to the new syllabus with support materials.

The Cambridgeshire SACRE brings together faith representatives, teachers and councillors who work together in a spirit of friendship and collaboration. SACRE meetings are something to look forward to and I would like to thank all members for the way in which they have worked constructively together throughout the year. SACRE members are volunteers who receive no expenses. We are fortunate in Cambridgeshire to have all major religions and humanism represented on Committee A. We are truly a representative body. In our work we place particular emphasis on religions working together for the public good. Our plans for the future will build on this positive attitude.

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.

Julia Ewans

(Chair of Cambridgeshire SACRE)

## **Cambridgeshire Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education: Annual Report 2016 – 2017**

### **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.

The work of SACRE includes:

- 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

Cambridgeshire County Council 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. A new Religious Education Adviser, Amanda Fitton, was appointed by Cambridgeshire County Council, to work with all the Cambridgeshire schools and SACRE.

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 however all committees are well represented. This year the SACRE moved meetings from morning to afternoon to help increase attendance by making meetings more accessible. We continue to ensure 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 several new members:

Committee A - Ged McHale (Roman Catholic rep) and Jagjit Singh (Sikh rep)

Committee B - Reverend Debbie Noonan

Committee C – Dennis Johnson (NUT rep)

We said farewell to Cllr Tony Orgee after 16 years of representing committee D, and in the last few years as Chair. We also said farewell to Cllr Paul Sales, Cllr Ed Cearns, Richard Potter and Fr Dragos Herescu. We thank them all for their contributions to SACRE.

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 <https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/working-together-children-families-and-adults/working-with-partners/cambridgeshire-standing-advisory-council-on-religious-education/>

During the past year the local authority started the process of reviewing the Agreed Syllabus by convening a joint Agreed Syllabus Conference. Working jointly with Northamptonshire, Peterborough and Rutland SACREs. The Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC) convened in December 2016. SACRE continues its work to encourage schools and share practices at the network meetings and through CPD training.

This year there has still been 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 network meetings in Cambridgeshire focusing on assessment and progression.

Data for 2016- 17 was not collected and has been postponed until July 2019 to coincide with the launch of the new agreed syllabus and new assessment criteria that will be based on current pedagogical practice.

## Secondary Schools

### Monitoring Secondary RE Provision

#### Network Meetings

There were several network meetings planned for secondary schools in Cambridgeshire with little uptake. The network meeting were then rebranded as 'Staying Connected' meetings and made free for secondary delegates. Despite best efforts there was little engagement from secondary RE teachers. It will be part of SACREs remit to come up with innovative ideas to engage with secondary schools.

#### Subject Strengths and Weaknesses

- **A-Level Entries:**

The number of centres entering candidates for A level was 6 but there was a slight increase in the number of candidates being entered. The pass rate still remains at 100% A\* to E which is above the national average.

#### 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:**

The number of schools entering candidates for the full GCSE has risen but the number of candidates per centre does not represent all pupils having the opportunity to study RE to GCSE.

Pass rates for A\* to G are above the national average, as are pass rates A\*-B. Rates for C–D fall slightly against national averages but rise above for the remaining grade boundaries.

### **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 of RE to be part of the school curriculum until the end of year 11

## **Primary Schools**

### **Monitoring Primary RE Provision**

#### **Network Meetings**

The primary network meetings for the academic year have been led by Dr Shirley Hall (Schools Adviser, Diocese of Ely) and Amanda Fitton (RE Adviser). Those who attended the meetings were able to take away copies of PowerPoints of materials. The meetings have been used to collect schools' views on the current and new agreed syllabus as well as covering a variety of different topics to support RE in primary schools. These have ranged from New to RE, Assessment and Philosophy for children. Greater efforts need to be made in engaging with secondary schools across the county to help share good practice and support schools in the GCSE and A level exams. These will continue into the next academic year. SACRE would like to thank the following schools for hosting the meetings, Houghton Primary School, William De Yaxley Academy, Mayfield Primary School and Wisbech St Mary Academy.

#### **Training**

Due to the employment of a new RE & SACRE Adviser, the Cambridgeshire Religious Education Service were able to offer five core training courses for RE teachers across Cambridgeshire, Peterborough and Northamptonshire. The courses that were provided covered: Planning for Creative RE, RE for the non-specialist, Using IT in RE, Exploring Judaism and Leading RE at Primary School. The courses provided a wide and interesting range of topics that encompassed RE professionals from a range of skill levels. The underlying theme throughout the training programme was to encourage a deeper engagement with RE using creative resources and modern technology.

The evaluation data for the training can also be found in Appendix 2.

## **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

### Agreed Syllabus Conference

SACRE began the process of reviewing the Agreed Syllabus for Cambridgeshire in conjunction with Northamptonshire, Peterborough and Rutland SACREs. Four joint Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC) meetings were held from December 2016 to July 2017, with subcommittees looking initially at the Framework, Assessment and Progression with the aim of a number of schools by September 2017 piloting the syllabus. Expert advice was also sought from different schools, different faiths and teachers and thanks is extended to all these persons.

### NASACRE Conference

The SACRE Adviser and SACRE Clerk attended the NASACRE Conference and AGM on behalf of Cambridgeshire SACRE on 16<sup>th</sup> May 2016. There were two key note speakers at the conference, The two key note speakers at the conference were Dr Joyce Miller and Aaqil Ahmed who both talked about 'Preparing for Life in Britain today' and RE's role in this pertinent topic.

### RE Newsletter

From September 2016 a termly RE newsletter has been compiled by the RE adviser and sent out to all schools in Cambridgeshire. The newsletter has been a mixture of news from the RE world, advice, notifications and links to resources.

### Knowledge Hub

The RE advisory service have begun to use Cambridgeshire County Councils **Knowledge Hub** as a means of sharing resources and information to all schools across the county. Throughout the year the number of teachers and education personnel joined and began to use the service.

### Abbey College Gold RE Quality Mark award

Congratulations were sent to Abbey College and the RE team in Ramsey for gaining the Gold RE Quality Mark award.

### Development plan for 2016-17

The main aim of the development plan for 2016 -17 was initiating the Agreed Syllabus Conference across firstly three LA's and four with the inclusion of Rutland.

### Accord National Recognition Award

An entry was made for the 2016 Accord National Recognition Awards for the inclusivity of the work that had been done in the previous year by Cambridgeshire SACRE. Even though



Cambridgeshire SACRE were not successful they were recognised as strong contenders for the award.

### **Consultancies**

There were no consultancies for Cambridgeshire schools.

### **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)

<https://www.cambslearntogether.co.uk/religious-education/>

- Cambridgeshire County Council:

Cambridgeshire Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE)

<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/working-together-children-families-and-adults/working-with-partners/cambridgeshire-standing-advisory-council-on-religious-education/>

### **Meeting dates 2016-2017**

- ❖ Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> October 2016, 13:30 – 16:30
- ❖ Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2017, 13:30 – 16:30
- ❖ Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> June 2017, 13:30 – 16:30

**If you have any comments about this report, please contact the Cambridgeshire SACRE Clerk via e-mail at [RE.SACRE@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:RE.SACRE@cambridgeshire.gov.uk).**

## Appendix 1

### GCE AS, A Level and GCSE results for Religious Studies in Cambridgeshire schools: Summer 2017

#### GCSE Religious Studies (full course) Cambridgeshire

	2017 Cambs	2017 National	2016 Cambs	2016 National	2015 Cambs	2015 National
Number of candidates entries	1941	248063	1,991	268,437	2,096	30,507
Percentage of candidates gaining grades A*-C	73.6	70.3	74.4%	71.7%	71.3%	253,196
Number of centres entering candidates	28		26		25	

#### A Level Religious Studies Cambridgeshire

	2017 Cambs	2017 National	2016 Cambs	2016 National	2015 Cambs	2015 National
Number of candidates entries	45	21180	81	21,900	89	21,313
Percentage of candidates obtaining A*-E grades	100.0%		100.0%	98.6%	98.9%	98.9%
Number of centres entering candidates	6		9		10	

## Appendix 2

### Continuous Professional Development Data

<b>Planning for Creative RE – Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> October 2016</b>					
<b>EVALUATION SCORES</b>					
No. of Teachers in Attendance	No. of Evaluation Forms Received	Scores (Very Good)	Scores (Good)	Scores (Satisfactory)	Scores (Unsatisfactory)
27	24	73%	22%	5%	-
How would you rate the training's impact on your practice?	No. of Evaluation Forms Received	Very Good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
	24	75%	21%	4%	-

<b>Using IT in RE – Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> November 2016</b>					
<b>EVALUATION SCORES</b>					
No. of Teachers in Attendance	No. of Evaluation Forms Received	Scores (Very Good)	Scores (Good)	Scores (Satisfactory)	Scores (Unsatisfactory)
13	13	83%	17%	-	-
How would you rate the training's impact on your practice?	No. of Evaluation Forms Received	Very Good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
	13	69%	31%	-	-

<b>RE for the non-specialist – Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> January 2017</b>					
<b>EVALUATION SCORES</b>					
No. of Teachers in Attendance	No. of Evaluation Forms Received	Scores (Very Good)	Scores (Good)	Scores (Satisfactory)	Scores (Unsatisfactory)
17	17	94%	6%	-	-
How would you rate the training's impact on your practice?	No. of Evaluation Forms Received	Very Good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
	17	94%	6%	-	-

**Exploring Judaism – Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> March 2017**

**EVALUATION SCORES**

<b>No. of Teachers in Attendance</b>	<b>No. of Evaluation Forms Received</b>	<b>Scores (Very Good)</b>	<b>Scores (Good)</b>	<b>Scores (Satisfactory)</b>	<b>Scores (Unsatisfactory)</b>
11	11	89%	11%	-	-
<b>How would you rate the training's impact on your practice?</b>	<b>No. of Evaluation Forms Received</b>	<b>Very Good</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>Unsatisfactory</b>
	11	82%	18%	-	-

**Leading RE at Primary School – Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> June 2017**

**EVALUATION SCORES**

<b>No. of Teachers in Attendance</b>	<b>No. of Evaluation Forms Received</b>	<b>Scores (Very Good)</b>	<b>Scores (Good)</b>	<b>Scores (Satisfactory)</b>	<b>Scores (Unsatisfactory)</b>
19	19	61%	39%	-	-
<b>How would you rate the training's impact on your practice?</b>	<b>No. of Evaluation Forms Received</b>	<b>Very Good</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>Unsatisfactory</b>
	19	74%	26%	-	-

## Appendix 3

### Cambridgeshire SACRE Membership

#### Committee A (Faiths)

Aga Cahn	Jewish
Cathy Michell	Methodist
Daniel Bennett	Roman Catholic
Ged McHale	Roman Catholic
Jagjit Singh	Sikh
Janet Scott	Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)
Julia Ewans	Humanist
Moira Middleton	Baptist
Rajnikant Shah	Hindu (Indian Community & Culture Association (ICCA))
Shahla Suleiman	Muslim
Virginia Barnes	Baha'i
Vacancy	Buddhist
Vacancy	Orthodox

#### Committee B (Church of England)

Dr Shirley Hall	Ely Diocese (Schools RE Adviser)
Rebecca Ford	Ely Diocese (Church of England Primary HT)
Rebecca Smith	Ely Diocese (Church of England Primary HT)
Reverend Debbie Noonan	Ely Diocese (Rector of Eynesbury)

#### Committee C (Teachers' Associations)

Elizabeth Bassett	National Association of Headteachers
Raymond Mitchell	Association of Teachers and Lecturers
Tony Reynolds	VOICE
Dennis Johnson	National Union of Teachers

#### Committee D (Local Authority)

Cllr Edward Cearns	Liberal Democrat
Cllr Tony Orgee	Conservative
Vacancy	Labour