



Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE)

Date **Thursday 3 March 2016**

Time **1.30 pm**

Venue **Committee Room 1B, County Hall, Durham**

Business

Part A

**Items during which the Press and Public are welcome to attend.
Members of the Public can ask questions with the Chairman's
agreement.**

1. Introductions, Welcome and Apologies
2. Minutes of the meeting held on 5 November 2015 (Pages 1 - 6)
3. Declarations of Interest, if any
4. Matters Arising
5. Chairs Comments (Pages 7 - 8)
6. RE Inspector Report (Pages 9 - 12)
7. Discussion Item 1: Islam in Schools
8. Discussion Item 2: Changes in Key Stage 4
9. Date and Time of Future Meetings
10. Any other business
11. Any resolution relating to the exclusion of the public during the discussion of items containing exempt information

Colette Longbottom
Head of Legal and Democratic Services

County Hall
Durham

24 February 2016

To: **The Members of the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education**

1. Church of England

N Chapman, Revd D Lindley, K Passmore, R Sansom and
P Snowden

2. Other Religious Denominations and Faiths

J Bainbridge	- Methodist Church
N Barker	- The Salvation Army
S Brown	- Assemblies of God
V Gallant	- Judaism
W Gray	- Buddhism
B Guymer	- Baptist Church
J Kidd	- Methodist Church
J Nicholls	- Society of Friends (Quaker)
I Osborne	- Roman Catholic
J Pallister	- Roman Catholic
S Purba	- Sikhism
Bhakti Rasa Dasa	- Hinduism
C Spencer	- Bahá'í Faith
M Stephenson	- United Reform Church
M Turner	- Islam

3. Teachers Associations

V Bain	- NUT
S Baker	- NUT
A Hartley	- NASUWT
P Lamb	- SHA
S Lupton	- RE Curriculum Group
P Welch	- NUT

4. County Council Representatives

Councillors P Brookes, M Dixon, S Iveson and W Stelling

Specialist Inspector (Religious Education)

Isobel Short

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

At a Meeting of Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) held in Committee Room 1B, County Hall, Durham on Thursday 5 November 2015 at 1.30 pm

Present:

P Welch (Chairman) In the Chair

Church of England

K Passmore

Other Religious Denominations and Faiths

N Barker	- The Salvation Army
V Gallant	- Judaism
J Kidd	- Methodist Church
J Nicholls	- Society of Friends (Quaker)
J Pallister	- Roman Catholic

Teachers Associations

A Hartley	- NASUWT
S Lupton	- RE Curriculum Group

County Council Representatives

Councillors P Brookes and M Dixon

Specialist Inspector (Religious Education)

Isobel Short

1 Introductions, Welcome and Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from V Bain, J Bainbridge, S Baker, N Chapman, W Gray, I Osborne, Bhakti Rasa Adhikara and M Turner.

2 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 4 June 2015, were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

3 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest in relation to items of business on the agenda.

4 Matters Arising

Councillor Dixon referred to the minutes of the previous meeting and advised members that he would shortly be contacting S Brown on behalf of SACRE as discussed.

5 Chairs Comments

The Chairman advised members that V Bain was now a NUT representative on Durham SACRE and not the RE Curriculum Group. The Specialist Inspector for Religious Education would be appointing a new representative to the RE Curriculum Group.

The Chairman also advised members that regrettably D Mowbray-Pape had tendered her resignation as a member of Durham SACRE which meant that there were now three vacancies on the Church of England Group.

K Passmore indicated that she had some contacts who may be interested in becoming Church of England representatives on Durham SACRE who she would contact and advise SACRE and the Church of England Group accordingly.

Councillor Dixon sought clarification on the County Council representatives and if these could be altered. SACRE members indicated that they were happy for these representatives to be altered if this was possible.

The Chairman referred to the four religious education teacher training places that were offered at Shotton Hall Academy, which they were struggling to fill last academic year. The Hermitage Academy also has a teacher training place available for religious education this academic year and the training is provided by Shotton Hall Academy.

The Chairman and the Specialist Inspector for Religious Education had met to see if SACRE could support Shotton Hall Academy to fill these spaces.

The Chairman had sent an e-mail to surrounding universities in relation to the vacancies but had not received a huge response. No university in the North East offers religious education teacher training, the nearest is York St John. He also advised members that there was a national bursary available.

SACRE members discussed the ways in which they could help fill these training places. The Specialist Inspector for Religious Education advised SACRE members that they could offer support but she did not know how much marketing they could carry out on behalf of the Academy.

Jo McShane who was in charge of training at Shotton Hall Academy would be in attendance at the next SACRE meeting to discuss the matter with members.

Councillor Dixon referred to the British Values Conference and sought clarification on the feedback. The Specialist Inspector for Religious Education responded that

they had done a question time panel and the feedback received was that this was a good session and the Humanist representative in attendance had been welcomed.

K Passmore referred to the photograph that had been taken at the British Values Conference and asked if a copy could be obtained. The Chairman indicated that the photograph could be used in the next SACRE annual report or a newsletter.

The Chairman referred to the working groups that had been set up last year which worked well but it was difficult to get everyone together. He sought clarification if they were still the way forward or if members wanted to set up a joint working group. Members discussed the working groups in particular the need for a flexible membership and that the working groups be opened up to all members. It was agreed that arrangements be made for a joint working group meeting to be held on Wednesday 9 December 2015.

The Chairman referred to the circulated response from Lord Nash in relation to future funding and the role of Durham Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE). Members discussed the contents of the letter, in particular in relation to the future of SACRE in view of academies. Members sought clarification on the number of secondary schools in Durham and how many were academies.

The Specialist Inspector for Religious Education advised that there were 32 secondary schools and 4 Roman Catholic secondary schools, half of which were academies and half community maintained. In 2012 all academies paid to buy into the agreed syllabus but she was not sure if schools would buy into the Durham Agreed Syllabus in the future.

Members discussed academies and C Forbes who was an observer from Sunderland advised members that Sunderland no longer had advisors and 14 out of the 17 schools were academies and they also have a Multi Academy Trust. One of the academies did not offer Religious Education at Key Stage 3 but academies have to deliver Religious Education. She had sent a letter to school governors responsible for religious education and enclosed a copy of the leaflet from NASACRE. They had also hosted a network meeting and invited academies at no cost for the first meeting. SACRE were responsible for all children regardless if an academy.

The Chairman suggested that Durham SACRE write to school governors and also enclose a copy of the NASACRE leaflet. It was suggested that the letter also include what services the local authority could offer.

6 RE Inspector Report

The Specialist Inspector for Religious Education presented the circulated report which was the RE Inspector Report for the Autumn Term 2015 (for copy, see file of minutes).

The report looked at the following:-

- Durham RE Networks - Primary Network held on 29 September 2015 and Secondary Network held on 21 October 2015
- Network Attendance – Analysis of attendance at Durham's Secondary RE networks over the last year
- RE Courses – New to Teaching RE/Geography/History, Teaching Christianity, GCSE RS Conference
- RE Contracts – Demand for one-to-one support and requests for training and support in developing effective SMSC and the promotion of British values
- School Queries – The Specialist Inspector for Religious Education continued to be contacted by school leaders on a range of queries relating to parental queries about the nature of RE and/or collective worship/assemblies and the withdrawal of their children from RE and/or Collective Worship.
- Annual Interfaith Week from 15-21 November 2015

Members discussed the contents of the report in particular the attendance at the network meetings.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

7 Interfaith Week

The Chairman referred to the Annual Interfaith week in England which would take place from 15 to 21 November 2015. He asked SACRE members for their thoughts on SACRE organising an event which would be held after Interfaith week due to time constraints.

S Lupton talked about the various activities she had arranged at her school for Interfaith week.

SACRE Members discussed the options available and agreed that a working group be set up to arrange an event to be held next year.

Resolved: That a working group be set up to look at organising an event for Interfaith week.

8 Provision for RE Age 14-16 (Key Stage 4)

The Specialist Inspector for Religious Education gave a PowerPoint presentation on Religious Education/Religious Studies for Key Stage 4 (for copy of presentation, see file of minutes).

During the presentation members were advised that Religious Education was statutory at Key stage 4 and always had been.

Traditionally GCSE/O Level Religious Studies was the same hours of teaching as other GCSEs. Non-examination compulsory Religious Education for all was one lesson a week. Durham Agreed Syllabus had a programme of study for non-examination CORE Religious Education.

In the Mid 1990s, Ofsted was introduced and schools were held to account if not meeting statutory duty to provide CORE Religious Education which led to change with the introduction of Short Course Religious Education to be taught to all with accreditation for all who entered the exam. This led to a huge increase in numbers across the country of students being entered for an exam in Religious Education. Sometimes the full course in Religious Education was not offered at all, the short course was offered to all but not taken seriously.

In 2010, there was another shift in schools where only a full course mattered as to how a school was judged and a short course did not count towards the school data. A lot of schools were now teaching a full course in core time which was one hour a week which meant there was not enough time to cover the course and get good results. Others were only offering CORE Religious Education as part of a PSHE programme based on ethics and some were ignoring the law and not offering Religious Education at all.

2016 would see new GCSEs which would be more rigorous and all exams would be taken at the end of Year 11.

SACRE Members were asked to think about how SACRE should respond, what should they recommend and how this affected the Agreed Syllabus revision, the subject would be discussed in more detail at the next meeting.

Resolved: (i) That the presentation be noted.

(ii) That the Provision for RE at Key Stage 4 be discussed at the next SACRE meeting.

9 Date of the next meeting

The next meeting of SACRE would be held on 3 March 2016.

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Dear Head teacher and Chair of Governors,

I am writing to provide you some information and updates about Durham SACRE.

SACRE is the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education which meets termly and comprises of representatives from:

- Christian denominations and other religions and their denominations which reflect the principal religious traditions of the county.
- The Church of England.
- Teachers' Associations.
- The Local Authority, including councillors and RE advisors.

Since the 1988 Education Reform Act every local authority has been required to set up a SACRE

One of the purposes of SACRE is to monitor the provision of RE in County Durham and the committee is also responsible for the revision and production of the Durham Agreed Syllabus.

At a time of significant change within education, I would like to take this opportunity to remind you about the statutory nature of Religious Education which is a component of the basic curriculum, to be taught alongside the National Curriculum in all maintained schools. In all maintained schools, other than voluntary aided schools with a religious character, it must be taught according to a locally Agreed Syllabus, (School Standards & Framework Act 1998) which is a statutory order.

The head teacher must ensure the provision of Religious Education and ensure that sufficient time and resources are given to Religious Education to meet statutory requirements. For LA maintained schools, the governing body and the LA must also exercise their functions in securing this provision.

Academies may, but are not required to, follow the locally agreed RE syllabus. Alternatively, they can devise their own syllabus, but it must be in line with the legislation that underpins the locally agreed syllabus.

Durham SACRE works closely with the Education Development Service (EDS) in Durham and with Isobel Short, Specialist Inspector for Religious Education who is also the professional support to SACRE. Durham EDS can provide support for schools through contracts, networks and regular courses. SACRE members endorse this and contributes to their success where appropriate.

In addition to this we would like to remind you to support RE colleagues through attendance at the termly network meetings and the upcoming GCSE RE conference on 18th March 2016.

Yours Sincerely,

Paul Welch

Chairman – Durham SACRE

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The RE Inspector Report

Durham SACRE

Spring Term 2016

Durham RE Networks

Durham Education Development Service offers termly RE networks for co-ordinators.

The **SPECIAL SCHOOL** network was scheduled for **19 January 2016** – no delegates attended.

SECONDARY

21 January 2016. 17 delegates (11 from Durham schools, 6 from other local authorities: Middlesbrough, Darlington, Sunderland, Redcar and Cleveland).

Agenda items:

- Recap and analysis of questionnaires from the previous network on GCSE results 2015 (see attached).
- Discussion paper “What is progress in RE?” Network discussion on models of progression and assessment in RE.
- “What do Christians believe?” Discussion of overview planning for this Key Stage 3 unit of work. Delegates shared resources and ideas for teaching this unit. Delegates will bring more ideas and resources to the next meeting.

PRIMARY

Taking place on **Tuesday 15th March 2016.** Numbers applied so far: 38.

TALKING RE NETWORKS

These are new termly networks this year for any RE teachers/co-ordinators who want to come and talk all things RE. They are held at Durham Leadership Centre, Spennymoor, from 4.00-5.30 pm. Attendance last term was good and a range of issues discussed included:

- planning for RE
- sharing good practice
- using artefacts in RE
- training and support for HLTAAs
- advice for new RE co-ordinators
- the new GCSEs
- assessment and progress in RE.



Teaching RE in PPA Time

Evidence from talking to RE co-ordinators and Headteachers suggests that RE is taught in many schools in teachers' PPA time (Planning, Preparation and Assessment). This means that Teaching Assistants teach RE often with no training and little support. The Humanities training course for HLTAAs, offered by the RE and Humanities inspectors, had no take up. It may be that a different way has to be found to support and train Teaching Assistants in how to teach good RE.

The New GCSEs

We still await the specifications from the exam boards for teaching Religious Studies from September 2016. This has caused some **real** difficulties for our colleagues in schools, many of whom are teaching GCSE from Year 9 without a specification. Representatives from the exam boards are coming to our GCSE conference on 18 March (see below) so hopefully we will have news and specifications by then. Note the big change: **all** schools must study 2 religions with greater emphasis on beliefs, practices and sources of authority in religion than in previous specifications.

GCSE RE Conference

Durham is holding a regional conference for the new GCSE in Religious Studies on **Friday 18 March 2016**. We hope teachers from across the North East will attend.

Contributors:

- presentations from 4 exam boards
- RE Today
- Islamic Diversity Centre
- Karenza Passmore from North East Resources Centre
- Durham Library Services and Oxford Press.

Teaching Christianity

This course will run on **Friday 17 June 2016**. It is hoped that overview planning for all primary Christianity units in the Durham Agreed Syllabus can be provided for delegates and this will form the basis of the course.



Agreed Syllabus

The Durham Agreed Syllabus was approved in March 2012 and launched June that year. This means that the next review process must begin by March 2017 at the latest to meet statutory requirements.

Agreed Syllabus for
Religious Education
in Durham

Revised: May 2012

Durham
County Council

National Documents on Religious Education

Below is a list of national reports and documents relating to Religious Education which have been produced since the last Agreed Syllabus review in Durham. This extensive list demonstrates that there has been a great deal of activity and debate surrounding RE in schools, particularly in relation to the nature of RE, its purpose and the ways in which various schools interpret statutory requirements in their provision for RE. Much of the debate relates to the changing landscape in education generally (reduction in funding to local authorities, increase in number of academies and free schools, reduction in funding for initial teacher training in RE, new GCSEs, changing nature of school performance measures) and the impact this has for the subject.

- RE: The Truth Unmasked, the supply of and support for Religious Education teachers (*APPG – All Party Parliamentary Group on RE, March 2013*)
- Religious Education: realising the potential (*Ofsted, October 2013*)
- A Review of Religious Education in England (*Religious Education Council of England and Wales, October 2013*). This includes the Non-Statutory National Framework for RE.
- RE and Good Community Relations (*APPG on RE, March 2014*)
- Religious Studies AS and A level subject content, Religious Studies GCSE subject content (*Department for Education, February 2015*)
- GCSE Subject Level Conditions and Requirements for Religious Studies, GCSE Subject Level Guidance for RS (*Ofqual, July 2015*)
- Religious Education in Schools (*Robert Long, Briefing Paper, House of Commons Library, May 2015*)

- A New Settlement: Religion and Belief in Schools (*Charles Clarke and Linda Woodhead, Westminster Faith Debates, July 2015*)
- RE for Real: the future of teaching and learning about religion and belief (*Adam Dinham and Martha Shaw for Culham St Gabriel's and Goldsmiths University of London, November 2015*)
- Living with Difference: community, diversity and the common good (*Report of the commission on religion and belief in public life, The Woolf Institute, December 2015*)

In addition

- There is some guidance on the REOnline website for curriculum planning. This is useful for schools and Agreed Syllabus Conferences.
- Letter sent by Lord Nash, minister for faith schools to all local authorities in relation to the importance of good RE teaching and the central role of SACREs and local authorities, January 2015.
- Ofsted handbooks since September 2014 give direct and explicit guidance on Religious Education and collective worship in differing types of schools (maintained, faith, free schools, academies) and how these will be inspected.
- All schools are now required (since 2014) to actively promote fundamental British values including mutual respect and tolerance for other faiths and beliefs.

This documentation will prove useful when advising schools and when Durham next reviews its Agreed Syllabus for RE.

The RE Inspector continues to keep abreast of national reports and developments and can hold a briefing session for interested SACRE members.

GCSE Religious Studies Questionnaire Analysis

The RE Inspector distributed a questionnaire on GCSE Religious Studies at the Autumn network 2015. This enabled Head of RE to reflect on their GCSE results from the summer and discuss together issues surrounding GCSE Key Stage 4 provision.

MAIN FINDINGS

Provision at Key Stage 4

- The majority of schools now predominantly provide Full Course Religious Studies (RS) either as option or within core Religious Education (RE) time (therefore, restricted time). The most popular models are:
 - Option Full Course with non-examination core RE
 - Full Course RE in core RE time with entry only for top sets or top up classes.
- Very few schools now offer Short Course across the County and region.
- Senior leaders generally decide the Key Stage 4 provision model. Heads of department have some input into decision making in some schools.
- Some Heads of department expressed concern about the following: lack of curriculum time, lack of specialist teachers, no RE at Key Stage 4 offered.
- Many schools start teaching Full Course in Year 9 (unless RS taught as an option). This is creating some difficulties eg Key Stage 3 curriculum squeezed, not in line with other subjects who have a two year Key Stage 4.
- Some schools undertake Full Course RS but are obliged to cover other areas of curriculum in the time eg PSHE/Citizenship. This shows a lack of clear purpose about RE (academic or personal development) by senior leaders.

- Most RE leaders are happy that RE is statutory as it gives protection for the subject, although they feel it would have been better if RE was part of the English Baccalaureate.

Inspector Observations

- Some teachers (senior or RE leaders) lack clarity about the purpose of RE at Key Stage 4. Is it for academic achievement or for personal development? If RE is the main provision for PSHE/Citizenship, religious literacy and academic rigour may be lost.
- Provision for RE is often chosen to meet the needs of the school not to ensure pupil entitlement or appropriate academic success in Religious Education.
- Full Course is delivered in many schools in restricted curriculum time (eg one hour a week). This is putting huge pressure on pupils and teachers. There is little evidence of this being taken into account by senior leaders eg through offering extra drop down days, extra marking/preparation time for RE teachers.
- There is still some expectations by leaders that lower standards in RE are acceptable because of restricted curriculum time. This is not the case.
- RE leaders feel most confident when they are fully supported by senior leaders and involved in decision making about curriculum provision, student entry to examinations etc.

Isobel Short is the Inspector for Religious Education for Durham County Council and is the professional support and advisor to SACRE.

Durham SACRE holds their formal meeting once a term in County Hall, Durham.