

DURHAM SACRE ANNUAL REPORT 2010

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1. MONITORING OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

- SACRE has a statutory duty to advise the Local Authority on matters relating to agreed syllabus religious education. In order to do this, SACRE monitors provision, standards, teaching and learning in religious education so it they can discuss current strengths and weaknesses and make recommendations to the Local Authority on how they can best support and challenge schools. SACRE monitor by requesting information from the local authority (e.g. standards, information about monitoring visits), carrying out their own survey work (e.g. through questionnaires) and by asking for funding for specific monitoring activities (primary audit visits). They also analyse any Ofsted subject scrutiny visits in religious education visits that may have taken place in County Durham.
- The Inspector for RE has continued to visit secondary religious education departments in order to monitor provision, standards, teaching and learning, leadership and management of RE. All secondary schools are visited approximately every two years. These visits aid schools in their own internal review systems and inform the Local Authority about standards and provision within their schools.
- The Inspector completed her first cycle of visits to the thirty two secondary schools in County Durham* (January 2008 – March 2010) in 2010 and produced a detailed report on her findings. This has been used to recommend ways in which religious education departments can be supported, both in school, by SACRE and by the Local Authority.
- SACRE has continued to analyse entry and standards in religious education at Key Stage 4; this is an annual agenda item in the November meeting. SACRE uses the Local Authority data analysis (provided by the Inspector) in order to evaluate the number of entries, attainment and achievement. Please see Appendix A for a summary of findings.
- As well as evaluating the percentage number of students achieving A* - C and A*/A in each school against national and Local Authority averages, SACRE continues to analyse results for each school against Fischer Family Trust data. This gives the percentage of pupils gaining A* - C against expectations and is therefore a more accurate indication of success and achievement than Local Authority or national averages. It is possible to evaluate whether individual pupils have added value to their estimated grade or have not achieved expectations and see whether there are any emerging patterns in particular schools and across the Authority. This gives a clearer picture of the success of pupils and individual RE Departments.
- SACRE has continued to use this analysis to advise the Local Authority about the need for training or individual support in schools.
- SACRE sends a letter each year to each secondary school in order to comment on exam entries or standards, offer congratulations or support through the Education Development Service. SACRE now uses this opportunity to comment on any other information received

about the religious education department e.g. participation in the Inter Faith Conferences, changes in staffing, monitoring visits.

- SACRE audit visits to a small sample of primary schools have continued this year. These have been undertaken by Marilyn Longstaff, independent Consultant in RE (formerly Adviser for RE and professional support to SACRE). These visits do not include any Ofsted judgements; their purpose is to inform SACRE about RE in schools, help schools identify best practice and consider ways in which they may develop further. The schools receive a written report on main findings and recommendations and can have a follow up visit from the Education Development Adviser (EDA). This has been well received with several schools requesting further contracted support.
- A summary of findings from primary audit visits will be made available to SACRE in 2011.
- A questionnaire for SACRE was completed by all primary newly qualified teachers (NQTs) at the training sessions held in March 2010. This was analysed by the Education Development Adviser who produced a summary report for the SACRE meeting in November 2010.
- One Ofsted subject scrutiny visit has taken place in Durham this year. The HMI visited a primary school and the report is on the Ofsted website. SACRE did not receive this report from Ofsted (this is the recommended practice).
- Ofsted produced its long report on religious education visits undertaken across the country between 2006 and 2009 (a report is published every three years). It is entitled, "Transforming Religious Education". The report contains information on visits to primary and secondary schools, outlines some of the challenges facing religious education in England today and makes recommendations. The Inspector prepared a report which compared the findings of Ofsted in secondary schools with the findings in secondary religious education departments in Durham schools (through the Inspector monitoring visits). This was discussed by SACRE at the November meeting.

** The Local Authority Inspector for RE does not monitor provision of RE in Roman Catholic Aided schools as this is the responsibility of the Diocese. Roman Catholic schools provide RE according to Diocesan guidelines and do not use the locally Agreed Syllabus.*

2. SUPPORT FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

SACRE uses information received through monitoring procedures to identify ways in which SACRE and the Education Development Service can support schools. It notes the following advice and support for schools provided through the Local Authority Education Development Service and SACRE.

General Support to Schools

- As part of their service level agreement with Durham Education Development Service, a number of primary and secondary schools have requested contracts to support RE. These have mainly been carried out by the Education Development Adviser (EDA) and have included staff meetings and support of individual teachers and groups of teachers. The EDA provides a report on her work to SACRE regularly.
- Following on from the success of the inaugural Durham SACRE school Inter Faith conference in 2009, SACRE funded two Inter Faith days (primary and secondary) in November 2010 to coincide with national Inter Faith Week. Schools were invited to bring students to a morning or afternoon session to meet people of faith and beliefs, hear about their lives and beliefs and ask them questions. The primary conference was on the theme of worship with the secondary conference focusing on beliefs about life and death. The days were organised by Catherine Robson, EDA and involved several SACRE members and members of local faith communities. Evaluations from students, teachers and faith members rated the days highly. A more detailed report can be found in Appendix B.
- The RE section of the Durham Learning Gateway (DLG) has been developed. This includes updates and guidance, links to national documentation and a discussion forum for teachers to ask questions and raise issues. Further development will take place in 2011.

Support for Secondary Schools

- Lat Blaylock from RE Today Services returned to Durham to lead the annual secondary RE Conference in March. Lat had led the day last year and many teachers had requested that he be invited back. Lat provided teachers with a wide range of challenging classroom activities, all of which were appropriately pitched for Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 students.
- Catherine Robson, Education Development Adviser (EDA) ran a one day course, 'Raising Achievement in RE at Key Stage 4' in September this year. Twelve delegates attended. Evaluations were excellent. One delegate stated, " If you want to engage and motivate students, share collaboratively with colleagues and come away inspired and with practical strategies to raise KS4 attainment you must attend this course".
- Secondary RE networks have continued to be held termly. The Inspector provides local and national updates and explores current issues with colleagues. Various papers and reports have been

presented and discussed, e.g. Ofsted's 'Transforming Religious Education', Ofsted guidance for RE subject scrutiny visits, the Inspector's long report on Cycle One of monitoring in Durham secondary schools, 'Religious Education in English Schools: Non-statutory guidance 2010'. The EDA has provided various practical activities and resources. An example of a new technology which can be used within RE is being showcased at each network e.g. in the November network, secondary colleagues were able to talk to Dorothy Sadlik, Jewish representative through skype.

- Two networks have been held for newly qualified teachers or non-specialist teachers of RE. These have not been very well attended but colleagues found them useful and supportive.
- Two EDAs (Catherine Robson, Trish Benson) worked with a small number of individual RE departments to focus on raising attainment at Key Stage 4. This included tutoring small numbers of students and providing revision days over the Easter holiday.
- The EDAs continued in the first part of 2010 to work with a small number of schools who had been involved with the RE and ICT project.
- The Inspector has been involved in offering support and guidance on pedagogy and the use of new technologies to schools in the building Schools for the Future initiative. Whilst this initiative has ceased for several schools in Durham, support for all schools in the use of emerging technologies has continued. The EDA began work on guidance of specific strategies that can be used to enhance learning in RE. These are being trialled in early 2011 and will be made available to all Durham schools.

Support for Primary Schools

- As well as the secondary RE conference in March, Lat Blaylock also ran the annual primary RE conference the following day. He focused on practical teaching and learning activities. Approximately 25 delegates attended the day. Again, evaluations rated the course highly. SACRE is grateful to Lat for the friendly support he has offered and the excellent strategies he has shared with Durham teachers.
- The Education Development Adviser led a one day course for primary RE Co-ordinators in October. Nine delegates attended.
- Four half day sessions were run for primary NQTs (Newly Qualified Teachers) led by the Inspector for RE and the EDA. These sessions focused on the requirements of Durham Agreed Syllabus and some examples of good teaching and learning methodology.
- Some primary networks have been held across the region at the end of the school day (Leadgate in the north, St Margaret's for central schools). One meeting was also held at Carter House in Durham, the resource centre for NERLRC. One network has been held at the Durham Leadership Centre during the school day. Numbers remain small at these networks and schools will be consulted about whether they would prefer to meet centrally or continue with current provision.

External and Specific Support and Monitoring

- The Inspector has continued to receive requests to support some Durham schools in their selection process for teachers and leaders in RE. She has been involved in lesson observations and interviews and offered advice and guidance where appropriate.
- The Education Development Service has been asked to provide support to teachers in South Tyneside through a termly network; the first meeting was held in October.
- The Inspector has been asked to provide some advice and guidance to schools outside the local authority. She has undertaken RE monitoring visits in schools, been part of selection panels and offered advice to a local SACRE on the procedure for revising the locally Agreed Syllabus. The EDA has also offered follow up support to one school after a monitoring visit.

3. THE MANAGEMENT OF SACRE AND PARTNERSHIP WITH THE LOCAL AUTHORITY AND OTHER KEY STAKEHOLDERS

- SACRE membership in each Committee remains strong and all meetings have been quorate this year.
- SACRE has met three times this year: March, June, November 2010. All meetings were held in one of the committee rooms at County Hall. SACRE continues to hold the view that SACRE meetings should take place in the public council meeting rooms where they are visible to all.
- The SACRE Task Group has met throughout the year; to review and revise SACRE's self-evaluation and Development Plan and to write to secondary schools following the analysis of Key Stage 4 examination results.
- SACRE continues to receive professional advice through the Inspector for RE who also provides SACRE with a national and local update at each meeting; this is used as a basis for discussion and evaluation.
- Support is also provided by an Education Development Adviser (EDA) who specialises in RE. It is she who organised the highly successful school Inter Faith conferences this year.
- SACRE has been well supported this year by the clerk to SACRE Jill Parker. Jill has now moved to another position during the year and has been replaced by Jo March.
- Durham SACRE continues to enjoy a constructive and supportive relationship with the Local Authority and continues to receive funding for running costs and projects identified. SACRE are aware of budget constraints within Local Authorities. Whilst SACRE were no longer supported in their bid for bursary funding they are grateful to the Local Authority for funding for the Inter Faith Conferences and project work around Celebrating RE Month, March 2011.
- SACRE members have continued to give short presentations at full SACRE meetings about themselves, their work or faith. This year Councillor Mike Dixon talked about his work as a County Councillor and his work as a priest in the Church of England. Dorothy Sadlik talked about being Jewish and the impact this has on her life and family. These remain valuable experiences as members learn more about each other and the faiths and beliefs represented around County Durham.
- Several SACRE members visited the Orthodox Jewish Synagogue, Gosforth in April. Rabbi Dovid Lewis and Dorothy Sadlik, our Jewish representative on SACRE showed us around the synagogue and spoke about Jewish life. Deanna Van Delde joined us as together we discussed some of the issues that face people of faith and no faith today.
- SACRE continues to work with local partners and stakeholders. The RE Inspector is a member of The North East Religious Learning Resources Centre (NERLRC). The Director of NERLRC attended the primary RE conference in March 2010. There is a close partnership with the Education Service at Durham Cathedral and many Durham schools visit the Cathedral and undertake the specifically designed tours to support agreed syllabus work on pilgrimage, northern saints, sacraments and worship.

Durham SACRE will be working with NERLRC and the Cathedral on a joint project for Celebrating RE Month March 2011.

- SACRE is kept informed of any issues affecting RE and Collective worship in Initial Teacher Training provision through the Head of Programme at Durham University (Vice- Chair of SACRE).
- SACRE is kept informed of local faith issues by Ian Hunter Smart, Community Development Officer (with responsibility for faiths and beliefs) through his attendance at SACRE meetings. Durham Faiths Network have been very supportive of the SACRE Inter Faith conferences this year with members of the network offering to lead workshops.
- The RE Inspector represents Children and Young People's Services (CYPS) on the Local Authority Racist Incidents Panel and meets regularly with staff from EMTAS (Ethnic Minority Traveller Achievement Services). Whilst specific information remains confidential, the Inspector can keep SACRE informed of any generic issues or patterns relating to faith and beliefs that may be discussed at this panel.
- The Inspector is also one of the representatives of CYPS on the Local Authority Counter Terrorism Panel. She has kept SACRE informed of issues that relate to local faith communities, particularly towards the Muslim community.
- The Inspector for RE and the Education Development Adviser are members of AREIAC (Association of Religious Education Inspectors, Advisers and Consultants) and NATRE (National Association of Teachers of Religious Education). They use this membership to keep SACRE and teacher groups informed of developments and good practice.
- Durham SACRE is a member of the National Association of SACREs (NASACRE). They received a CD of training materials which is being used as a basis for induction and training on specific areas of responsibility.
- The Inspector attended the NASACRE AGM in May 2010 and provided a summary and report for SACRE members at the June meeting.
- SACRE received a Freedom of Information request this year for details of all costs for SACRE over the last five years including professional and clerical support, revision of Agreed Syllabus. SACRE understands that this request was made to several Local Authorities.
- SACRE received a request this year to advise the Local Authority about parental right of withdrawal from religious education after the local authority received a query from a member of the public. The Inspector advised the local authority on behalf of SACRE.

4. AGREED SYLLABUS

- The revision of the Agreed Syllabus was due to begin in 2010. Due to the number of new initiatives within education (e.g. new curriculum at secondary, proposed new curriculum at primary, Building Schools for the Future and its impact on pedagogical understanding) and an imminent general election, SACRE decided to delay revision until 2011.
- The new Coalition Government are making changes to educational practice and policy (e.g. introduction of English Baccalaureate, revision of curriculum with increased emphasis on subject knowledge) which will have impact on schools. These will be considered as part of the Agreed Syllabus review process.
- Consultation and revision will take place in 2011 and 2012 with launch and implementation in the summer and autumn of 2012.
- The Inspector has contributed to national collaboration meetings for Agreed Syllabus revision. This has included presentations from several Religious Education Advisers and discussions about developments. This will be used within the revision process.

5. COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

- SACRE were asked this year to provide the Local Authority with the number of schools who provided alternative acts of collective worship (determinations) for groups of students in their schools. This was a Freedom of Information request.
- No such applications for determinations have been made and no schools currently have been issued with a determination.
- SACRE were asked to provide advice to a Member of Parliament about the use of prayer in a community school. This followed a query to the MP from a member of the public. SACRE, through the Inspector for RE, provided detailed advice both on statutory requirements of collective worship and good practice.
- SACRE members requested an extra training session on collective worship so that they could fully understand legal requirements and the ways in which schools can provide good quality acts of collective worship. This is taking place on January 6th 2011 and will be led by the Inspector.
- SACRE has requested that the Local Authority provides inservice training for schools on collective worship in 2011.
- The Inspector will be providing some training for School Improvement Partners (SIPs) on collective worship early in 2011.
- One school requested support and training for collective worship through the Local Authority Service Level Agreement with schools. The Inspector met with the Headteacher to discuss the school Development Plan and clarify legal requirements. The Inspector then led a training session for all staff to outline how quality collective worship can be provided for all children each day.

Appendix A

Standards at Key Stage 4

Entry

- There has been a small decline in overall numbers of entries for some form of external accreditation in Key Stage 4 religious education (GCSE Full Course, Short Course, Entry level) in 2010. 3498 students were entered in 2010 compared to 3762 in 2008 and 3823 in 2009.
- 21 schools entered some of their pupils for Full Course GCSE Religious Studies (1154 entries.) This compares to 22 schools with 1215 entries in 2009.
- 31 schools entered some of their pupils for Short Course Religious Education (2076 entries). This compares to 32 schools and 2398 entries in 2009.
- 9 schools entered some pupils for Entry Level (268 entries). This compares to 9 schools and 210 entries in 2009.
- 8 schools enter over 90% of their cohort for Full, Short Course or Entry Level RE.
- 12 schools enter between 70 and 89% of their cohort for Full, Short Course or Entry Level RE.
- 10 schools enter between 40 and 69% of their cohort for Full, Short Course or Entry Level RE.
- 3 schools enter between 30 and 39% of their cohort for Full, Short Course or Entry Level RE.
- 2 schools enter less than 1% of their cohort with one school entering no students for external accreditation.
- Durham Agreed Syllabus 2006 (following national guidance) requires schools to follow an externally accredited course for RE at Key Stage 4. It is not statutory for pupils to be entered for final examination. SACRE continues to inform schools and the Local Authority on issues of compliance and ways in which pupils can receive high quality learning and external accreditation in RE at KS4. The Inspector for RE informs schools of non-compliance at KS4 through the subject monitoring visits. SACRE sends letters to all schools after exam data and entries have been analysed and will advise about non-compliance where appropriate.

GCSE Full Course

- The percentage of pupils in 2010 gaining A* - C in Durham schools is 76%. This shows an upward trend in recent years (an increase from 74% in 2009) and is above the national average of 73%.
- In line with the local authority analysis of data, Fischer Family Trust D Key Stage 2 – 4 has been used to analyse pupil achievement.
- 12 schools were above expectations with pupils at or above their predicted grade.

- 6 schools were generally in line with predictions (in some schools, some pupils achieved above expectations and some below and so the general pattern was 'flat').
- 3 schools were below expectations with students on average achieving a grade or more than a grade below their predicted grade.
- There is no clear pattern across the Authority in relation to achievement at particular grade boundaries or with boys or girls but SACRE will continue to analyse any emerging patterns each year.

GCSE Short Course

- The average percentage of pupils gaining A* - C at Short Course in Durham schools is 45%. This is an increase from 42% in 2009 but has not yet reached attainment in 2005 of 45%.
- The average % of A* - C in Durham remains below the national average of 54%. It is worth noting that national figures include all schools including independent schools; Durham data refers to comprehensive schools.
- In line with the Local Authority data analysis, SACRE Fischer Family Trust D Key Stage 2 – 4 has been used to analyse pupil achievement in Short Course RE. This is the second year that FFTD has been used rather than Fischer Family Trust B. FFTD is more challenging than FFTB and schools requested that this more aspirational measure was used to analyse data in all subjects.
- One school with 21 students achieved above expectation with pupils achieving on average half a grade above expectation.
- 8 schools achieved just below expectation by half a grade.
- 8 schools achieved below expectation by between half and a full grade.
- 14 schools achieved below expectation with students on average achieving more than one grade below expectation (2 schools by more than 2 grades).
- SACRE recognises the complexity of statistical data and the interpretation put on it, as well as the many and varied factors that can influence entry numbers and results e.g. specialist teaching, adequate curriculum time, early entry (Y10) before pupils are fully prepared for examination, resources, quality of teaching, support from Senior leadership. They are aware, however, that poor teaching can also contribute to poor results in some instances.
- SACRE remains concerned that in some schools pupils are withdrawn from many of their RE lessons in order to receive extra tuition and support for other subjects, particularly English and Maths. Whilst SACRE are sympathetic to the pressure schools are under to ensure pupils attain well in English, Maths and other curriculum areas and recognise the importance of these subjects for pupil progression and life chances, they are concerned that pupils do not always receive their

statutory entitlement to quality RE and external accreditation for their RE learning. They would continue to ask schools to use curriculum time creatively to ensure pupils needs and entitlements can be met fully and that students can achieve well in religious education.

Entry Level

Nine schools entered pupils for Entry Level. This qualification is designed for pupils who are not expected to gain a grade at GCSE. Some schools choose to enter pupils for this rather than Full or Short Course. However, no school only used Entry Level as a form of accreditation.