



December 2007

The Annual Report of the City of York
Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE)

Summary

This report provides members and QCA with details of the work of the City of York Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) from January to December 2007.

1. Background

Under the provision of the 1988 Education Reform Act every local education authority has a responsibility to establish a permanent body, called a Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE), together with an occasional body, called an Agreed Syllabus Conference.

2. Membership

The people who serve on SACREs are invited to do so by the Director of Learning Culture and Children's Services on the recommendation of various bodies in the local community with a concern for the religious education of school children. The law prescribes that there have to be four "committees" each comprising representatives of specified groups. Those four committees can together co-opt further non-voting members, provided a majority are in agreement. The actual members change over time and the current SACRE is constituted as follows:-

Representing the City of York Council Councillors:-

Carol Runciman
Christina Funnell

Keith Aspden
Roger Pierce

Representing the Church of England:-

David Sellick
Sharon Whittington

Olive Wordsworth
Julia Fletcher

Representing Other Denominations / Faith Communities:-

Sr Mary Walmsley (Roman Catholic)
Ann M Vaughan (Methodist)
Sarah Allen (Religious Society of Friends) (Vice Chair)
Robert Huey (Salvation Army)

Daryoush Mazloum (York Baha'i Community)

Representing Teachers:-

Jane Atkinson

Brian Rees (resigned Oct 2007) Jane Stinson

Co-opted:-

Mick Phythian (Humanist; Chair)

Roderic Vassie (Muslim)

Marlene Sender (Jewish)

Shabana Jabbar (Head of RE, York High)

In attendance:-

Sue Foster (Senior Education Development Adviser)

Angela Instone (Clerk)

Anna Lewis (York CollegeTertiary)

3. Religious Education

The City of York SACRE was established during the autumn term 1996 and held its first meeting on 15 January 1997. At this meeting, members of SACRE agreed unanimously to adopt the North Yorkshire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education. In November 2002, following the statutory quinquennial review the LEA accepted SACRE's recommendation to adopt the recent East Riding Agreed Syllabus, with suitable modifications appropriate for the City of York. The Agreed Syllabus is now established across all schools in the LA. The SACRE has set up an Agreed Syllabus Conference to review the current syllabus. This group includes members of SACRE together with RE subject leaders from both primary and secondary schools.

4. Collective Worship

Besides Religious Education each local authority must work with its SACRE to monitor the provision of daily collective worship. As a result of changes to the Ofsted framework from 2005 and the absence of further guidance, the City of York SACRE is currently compiling guidance to support Collective Worship in schools in the City. This piece of work is being led by the Chair and includes the Senior Adviser for RE and two members of SACRE.

5. Support for Schools

Members of SACRE are keen to support staff in schools to raise standards in RE and have been kept up to date with the strategies to achieve this through reports from the Senior Education Development Adviser, with responsibility for RE and Collective Worship, covering such topics as:-

Support for RE Co-ordinators through the primary and secondary Curriculum Support Groups as they work together to implement the Syllabus.

RE Adviser working with schools to develop RE and Collective Worship.
 Some members of SACRE are on a sub-committee of the City of York's Executive Member for Children's Services Advisory Panel (EMAP) and note what comments Ofsted Inspection Teams make on Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) Development following an inspection. When attending this sub-committee Heads and Chairs of Governors are generally asked to comment about the contribution of RE, Collective Worship and SMSC to the fostering of the ethos of their school.
 In service training (INSET) specifically to enable teachers to move to implementation of the new Agreed Syllabus
 Briefings in the form of newsletters have also been distributed during this reporting year.

SACRE is supporting the work of the Yorkshire and Humberside Global Schools' Association in relation to Citizenship and understanding of religions in society.

SACRE is supporting the work of the Yorkshire & Humber Faiths Forum.

Support is also available for working with BME pupils and Travellers from the LA officers with lead responsibility for these areas. Courses are provided as well as resources and bespoke training on related issues.

6. Religious Sensitivities

The SACRE is working with CYC Learning, Culture and Children's Services department to establish a guidelines document to support its duty to promote community cohesion.

7. NASACRE

The SACRE continues to be actively involved with national events in RE.

8. Analysis of Examination Results for Religious Studies/Education Summer 2007

Two of the four 11-18 schools together with York College (Tertiary) entered students for AS and A level examinations

A2 Level	Entries	A	B	C	D	E	N	Total
All Saints	12	6	5	1				100%
Fulford	4		1	3				100%
York College	17	5	4	4	3	2		100%
AS Level Entries		A	B	C	D	E	N	Total
All Saints	3	2	1					100%
Fulford	2	2						100%
York College	30	8	6	6	4	3	3	90%

These results were well above the national benchmarks at both AS and A2 level in all three institutions.

Full GCSE

8 schools entered 515 students with 79% achieving A*-C grades and 99% achieving A*-G. This is an interesting development since 2000 when only the Voluntary Aided (VA) schools entered students for the full GCSE courses.

Short Course GCSE

8 schools entered 1036 students with 56.9% achieving A*-C grades and 96.2% achieving the A*-G grades. Four of the schools entered virtually the whole cohort so that in York for most students they do have the opportunity to gain an accreditation either full or short course GCSE in Religious Studies or Religious Education. One school also entered 27 pupils for Entry Level Qualification (ELQ) Band C qualification and all of them passed. The one school yet to enter a cohort is to do so in 2008 giving all students in York a chance for a national accreditation after 11 years of compulsory RE lessons.

Overall the 2007 results are very pleasing both in GCSE and Advanced GCE. Many more young people are able to study the subject to GCSE, the challenge in York now is to increase the numbers going on to study at Advanced level. York College is doing very well and has increased its numbers significantly over the last three years with large cohorts achieving the high grades. Many of the students transfer from York's 11-16 schools. The 11-18 schools are to be encouraged and supported to offer RS as a subject post-16 and to target the take-up.

9. Methods of Teaching

In the last year SACRE has not made any specific recommendations concerning teaching methods, choice of teaching materials or teacher training, though the Education Development Service has provided support for pedagogy via the Primary and the KS3 National Strategies. The Agreed Syllabus provides a comprehensive framework for teaching and learning and assessment of pupils' knowledge and understanding of religions. Resources are available for all teachers in York for the teaching of RE from the York St John University's David Hope RE Centre and for cultural diversity and global education from the Centre for Global Education (also at the university).

10. Complaints regarding the teaching of RE

None were made to SACRE during this reporting year.

11. Determinations

From time to time a school may request from the SACRE a "determination"; i.e. permission to waive the legal requirements for religious education and collective worship. The SACRE has received no requests for determinations during this reporting year.

12. Complaints regarding Collective Worship

None were made to the SACRE during this reporting year.

13. SACRE Initiatives

The SACRE is working on guidance for Collective Worship and participating in the development of cultural and religious diversity guidelines already being prepared by the Council to address the community cohesion agenda.

Report produced by Mick Phythian; Chair. Sue Foster; Senior Education Adviser. Sarah Allen; Vice Chair.