



December 2008

**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 2008.

### **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 are Councillors:-**

Carol Runciman  
Christina Funnell  
Paul Firth (from April 2008)  
Keith Aspden (until March 2008)  
Roger Pierce

#### **Representing the Church of England:-**

David Sellick  
Julia Fletcher  
Olive Wordsworth (until March 2008)

#### **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) (until May 2008) Sharen Furlong from December 2008  
Daryoush Mazloum (York Baha'i Community)

**Representing Teachers:-**

Jane Atkinson (until April 2007)  
Jane Stinson

**Co-opted:-**

Mick Phythian (Humanist; Chair)  
Roderic Vassie (Muslim) (until March 2008)  
Suraya Lloyd (Muslim) (from May 2008)  
Marlene Sender (Jewish)  
Shabana Jabbar (Head of RE, York High)

**In attendance:-**

Sue Foster (Senior Education Development Adviser)  
Angela Instone (Clerk) (until August 2008)  
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 LA 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 is required every 5 years to has set up an Agreed Syllabus Conference to review the current syllabus. This has been done and the Agreed Syllabus Conference is currently working on the revisions.

### **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 has compiled and published guidance to support Collective Worship in schools in the City.

### **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 subject leaders 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 an Ofsted sub-committee of the City of York's Executive Member for Children's Services Advisory Panel and note what comments Ofsted Inspection Teams make on Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) Development following an inspection. Currently the members involved include Cllr Carol Runciman, Cllr Tina Funnell, Cllr Paul Firth, Cllr Roger Pierce and Dr David Sellick. 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 Black and Minority Ethnic 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.
- Sue Foster has been involved in developing the City of York Council's commemorations for Holocaust Memorial Day in January 2009. Support for schools has been offered.

## **6. Religious Sensitivities**

The SACRE has worked with the CYC Learning, Culture and Children's Services department to produce a guidelines document to support the Council's duty to promote community cohesion. The document was very well received by the SACRE and by schools. It can currently be viewed on the Council website

[http://www.york.gov.uk/education/Schools\\_and\\_colleges/School\\_-\\_general\\_information/SACRE/224020/](http://www.york.gov.uk/education/Schools_and_colleges/School_-_general_information/SACRE/224020/)

## **7. NASACRE**

The SACRE continues to be actively involved with national events in RE by sending representatives to the National Association of SACRE Conference and by supporting new initiatives such as the training programme for new SACRE members.

## 8. Analysis of Examination Results for Religious Studies/Education Summer 2008

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

| <b>A2 Level</b> | Entries | A | B | C | D | E | N | Total |
|-----------------|---------|---|---|---|---|---|---|-------|
| All Saints      | 16      | 7 | 6 | 3 |   |   |   | 100%  |
| Fulford         | 11      | 1 | 5 | 2 | 3 |   |   | 100%  |
| York College    | 15      | 7 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 1 |   | 100%  |
| <b>AS Level</b> | Entries | A | B | C | D | E | N | Total |
| All Saints      | 4       | 1 | 3 |   |   |   |   | 100%  |
| York College    | 26      | 6 | 8 | 5 | 6 | 1 |   | 100%  |

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

### Full GCSE

6 of the 10 secondary schools entered 333 students with 281 achieving A\*-C grades and 332 achieving A\*-G. This is continuing the trend since 2000 when only the Voluntary Aided (VA) schools entered students for the full GCSE courses. It should be noted that in some schools the time to study for the full course is not provided on the timetable and teachers and students are expected to give up their own time on top of the 1 hour a week.

### Short Course GCSE

9 of the 10 secondary schools entered 1197 students with 825 achieving A\*-C grades and 1175 achieving the A\*-G grades. Seven 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. Two schools also entered 38 pupils for Entry Level Qualification (ELQ) Band C qualification and all of them passed. Only one school now has not entered the majority of pupils for any accredited qualification in RE and the Adviser is currently in discussions about possible options with the Senior Leadership Team.

Overall the 2008 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 highest 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. One 11-18 school that has not offered post-

16 RE before is now doing so with over 40 young people starting the course. The SACRE is watching this development with great interest.

## **9. Methods of Teaching**

In the last year SACRE has not felt it necessary to make 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 KS3 Strategy. 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). The internet also provides excellent resources for every religion. Teachers TV also has some very useful programmes that focus on teaching RE.

## **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 to be 'wholly or mainly Christian'. 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 has published guidance for Collective Worship along with participating in the development of cultural and religious diversity guidelines which were prepared by the Council to address the community cohesion agenda. The SACRE also distributed guidance for schools on how to deal sensitively with issues relating to Islam, including working with Muslim families, produced by the York Mosque. These are all available electronically on the SACRE page of the Council web site:

[http://www.york.gov.uk/education/Schools and colleges/School -  
\\_general information/SACRE/224020/](http://www.york.gov.uk/education/Schools_and_colleges/School_-_general_information/SACRE/224020/)

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