



# Peterborough Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education

## ANNUAL REPORT 2013 – 2014

**Peterborough Standing Advisory Committee for Religious Education  
Annual Report 2013-2014**

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## **Peterborough City Council SACRE Annual Report 2013 – 2014**

### **Chairman's Introduction From Reverend Ian Forsyth**

This year there have been many highlights. I am just going to highlight three as there are so many I could mention.

In the summer of 2014, Nicola Lord was invited to give a presentation on 'How can we integrate a 'curiosity' approach to learning so pupils with severe learning disability and low communication skills can lead their own learning and raise questions in RE?'

Following this presentation all of the SACRE members were inspired by her work and felt that Nicola's work and teaching in the Phoenix School has enriched children's lives at the school.

In the autumn of 2014, Mark Tomlins (Education Officer, Peterborough Cathedral) gave a presentation to SACRE members on his involvement with the new education centre being developed at the Peterborough Cathedral and social cohesion with a question and answer session.

This year has seen the SACRE Sixth Form lecture held at the King's School. Peter Baron led the day where schools participated in workshops and lectures on AS and A2 ethics. The following schools were represented: Thomas Deacon Academy; Prince William School; Stanground Academy; Voyager Academy and Ormiston Bushfield Academy. Over 150 students took part in this event.

We continue to be hugely grateful for the guidance and commitment of our adviser, Sue Ward, in helping SACRE members.

This year we have been meeting in Peterborough Town Hall and in various places of worship, for example, a SACRE meeting was held at the Quaker's meeting house last autumn.

SACRE will continue to meet the challenges and changes below in the forthcoming year:

1. Work to support teachers to provide meaningful and challenging RE;
2. Involve wider representation (Faith / belief / Universities / Academies);
3. Pupil / student involvement with SACRE;
4. Meeting the challenges of the changes to the curriculum at GCSE and A level.

**Rev I J Forsyth**

**Chair of SACRE**

## The purpose of the report:

Religious Education (RE) is an important curriculum subject and makes a unique contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils and supports wider community cohesion. The Government is keen to ensure all pupils receive high-quality RE.

The Education Act 1996, Section 391 (6) and (7) requires that each year the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) from each Local Authority (LA) publishes 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.

This entails:

- advise the LA on RE given in accordance with the agreed syllabus;
- monitoring the provision and quality of RE taught according to its agreed syllabus, together with the overall effectiveness of the syllabus;
- provide advice and support on the effective teaching of RE in accordance with the locally agreed syllabus;
- provide advice to the LA and its schools on methods of teaching, the choice of teaching material and the provision of teacher training;
- in partnership with its LA, consider 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 teaching and learning of RE;
- offer advice to the LA, and through the LA 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

With the changing face of education both nationally and locally in the past year, SACRE has had to grapple with its role and function in the LA and nationally. The 'Non Statutory Framework for Religious Education' was produced in October 2013 and is being encouraged by the Religious Education Council for England and Wales to be a significant document to inform a locally Agreed Syllabus Conference when determining its future syllabus for RE. This will be taken into account when the review of Peterborough's Agreed Syllabus happens in 2017.

Following the launch of the 2013 Agreed Syllabus, SACRE have invited schools to share their teacher assessment levels for pupils at the end of each key stage with SACRE. The request for this information was delayed until the Autumn term 2014 and will be reported in the next year's annual report. There is evidence to show that some schools are not in a position to report their levels as they are still embedding the new syllabus and understanding the use of assessment in planning and progression.

SACRE is very pleased to report that the LA has continued to support the work of SACRE by providing a named officer from the LA responsible for SACRE, a clerk for the administration and secured the services of a RE Adviser to support SACRE's work to schools. Despite significant cutbacks in many local authorities, Peterborough City Council has continued to support SACRE and its work.

Peterborough SACRE, which has met once a term, comprises of four statutory groups. Attendance at meetings has been variable. The four groups are as follows:-

- Group A -representatives of non-Anglican Christian denominations, other religions and religious denominations;
- Group B -representatives of the Church of England;
- Group C - representatives of the teachers' associations;

- Group D – representatives of the LA.

Membership has continued to change. Councillor Pam Kreling retired and relinquished her long serving role on SACRE. SACRE is very grateful for her support throughout many years. New Councillors were appointed and welcomed to the SACRE. SACRE continues to have associated members from the British Humanist Association and Peterborough Learning Partnerships. The Roman Catholic representative, Kate Pereira, resigned and currently this position is being sought to be filled. Rev Ian Forsyth continued as chairman and Sukaina Manji was voted as vice Chair, both are RE teachers from Peterborough secondary schools. Efforts have been made to secure a Hindu and Buddhist representative but to no avail. James Groombridge, a primary school teacher has recently been nominated as the NASUWT representative. SACRE also welcomed Reverend John Flack, a Church of England representative, representing Ely Diocese.

There are fewer members attending the meetings regularly and on one occasion SACRE had not been quorate and had to postpone ratifying decisions.

Membership has been discussed, especially in the light of the census detail, the Equality Act 2010 and the rich diversity of Peterborough's population. SACRE has reviewed its constitution and agreed to allow associate representatives to continue, but also to maintain the current legal requirements of SACRE membership, as spelt out in the 1996 Education Act.

There are various sub groups within SACRE but due to many circumstances these have not met as regularly as one would hope. The Development Planning Sub group has met and reduced the number of objectives due to restraints on people's time available. Peterborough was represented at the National Association of SACRE's (NASACRE) Annual General meeting in London, May 2014.

At one SACRE meeting, there was an inspirational presentation by Nicola Lord from The Phoenix Special School, as part of a Farmington Fellowship project about developing Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) through RE for pupils with profound learning difficulties.

Other important matters that have been discussed are the All Parliamentary RE Group Report entitled 'The Truth Unmasked' and Ofsted's Long Report on Religious Education in England "Religious Education: Realising the Potential" (reference number 130068). It was noted that there is still much work needed to support teachers. The future of RE is vital if one is to have successful, confident and well-rounded young people contributing to the future of this country.

A paper from Dr Mark Chater, Director of Culham St Gabriel's, was presented to all SACREs about "The Future of SACREs". There were mixed reactions about the paper. General consensus was the positive nature of having a local syllabus determined locally, but based upon a national framework for the subject, was the ideal way forward.

### **Determinations**

SACRE had requests for determinations from two primary schools. Gladstone Primary school was granted a renewal of their existing determination for another five years, unless the school population changed and warranted a review within the next five years. The second school, The Beeches Primary School, withdrew their application for a renewal of their determinations, as the school population had changed thus making it unnecessary for the determination to be granted.

Details of the agenda items, attendance at the meetings and minutes of the meetings can be found on the Peterborough City Council website:

<https://www.peterborough.gov.uk/residents/schools-and-education/religious-education/>

## Impact of the Religious Education Quality Mark (REQM):

William Law Primary School, The Phoenix Special school and Jack Hunt Secondary School continue to support teachers of RE. Julia Blower and Nicola Lord have given presentations to teachers at network meetings.

## Impact of Academy Programme

Peterborough SACRE enjoys a positive relationship with some of the academies in the city. There are members from academies on SACRE. Teachers from academies attend network meetings to share and exchange ideas and materials. The RE Adviser continues to support academies through a series of network meetings. There are more chains of academies but SACRE has determined its role to engage with them and try to monitor the quality and provision of statutory RE in all schools. Partnership with Peterborough Learning Partnership has helped to promote the work and role of SACRE to many schools.

## Standards and quality of provision of Religious Education

SACRE has a statutory duty to monitor the impact of the locally agreed syllabus. Analysis of section 5 Ofsted inspection reports, which identifies the performance of schools with respect to spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects of the curriculum, continues to give a simple indicator and occasionally points to a school's performance in RE. If concerns are raised then advice and support are offered by the Religious Education Adviser.

## Monitoring of Secondary RE (see Appendix 1):

Despite the changes about the significance of the English Baccalaureate by the Department for Education (DfE), there has not been a decline in the number of students taking GCSE Religious Studies nationally but rather a change from entries numbers in the short course to an increase for entries to the full course. Other national changes that have also impacted on Religious Studies Short Course exam are the DfE's decision to discount points from the Short Course in league tables. Details of exam entries are no longer available, even though schools are still entering candidates for the exam. To see national statistics see [www.jcq.org.uk](http://www.jcq.org.uk) or [www.gcserg.org.uk](http://www.gcserg.org.uk)

- **A level:** SACRE note that there is a significant decline in the entry numbers from our schools for Religious Studies compared to previous years. A drop of 41.5% was noted this year, as well as a drop in the number of schools entering pupils for A Level. Reasons for this are unclear. Speculation about this may be due to increased drive for STEM subjects at A Level, future career prospects influencing choices and the importance of some subjects more than others from the Russell Group of Universities. This decline is opposite to the national picture, in which there has been an overall increase of 5.1% in the number of entries for A Level Religious Studies. It is also a disappointing trend in light of recent years in which increased entries from Peterborough schools had been noted. The 100% pass rate has been maintained, which is pleasing to report. 51.3 % of these were grades A\*- B, an increase on last year (48.8%).
- **AS Level:** The increase in entries for AS level is surprising, given the decline in the value of AS qualifications, but this mirrors the increase seen nationally. However, the fall in the pass rate is concerning. It is also noted that the number of centres entering candidates for the exam has declined slightly from the previous year. The pass rate falls significantly below the national level for this examination and raises questions for SACRE.

- **GCSE Full Course:** the GCSE RS full course results show that there is an increase in the number of entries which mirrors what has happened nationally. However, there is a disappointing decline in the number of schools entering students for GCSE full course. The percentage A\*- C pass rate has increased this year from 60.9% to 62.1%, which is pleasing to note. Compared to the national percentage A\*- C pass rate (England) for full course (71.5%), Peterborough is significantly lower. This raises questions for SACRE.
- **GCSE Short Course:** There are no national statistics available for Short Course as this is no longer counted in the league tables. However, some schools are entering students for Short Course in order to fulfil their statutory entitlement for Religious Education.
- Regarding Key Stage 3 teaching assessments it was decided to invite secondary schools to share teacher assessment levels at Key Stage 3 in Autumn 2014 following the implementation of the new Agreed Syllabus. So there is no data available for this year.

#### **SACRE Comments:**

- It is not clear if the percentages of the cohort who are not entered for any examination are receiving their entitlement of RE lessons in Key Stage 4. We know that some students are not, yet Ofsted rarely tackle this issue;
- Some schools are starting GCSE courses in Year 9. Early entry means that Key Stage 3 has been impoverished in time and depth. The foundations for good understanding at GCSE are undermined;
- The significant fall in numbers entered for GCSE short course may be the result of the introduction of the English Baccalaureate and the other changes to the short course in 2014;
- The fall in schools entering students for AS and A level will need to be monitored;
- The increase in the numbers opting for full course is reassuring confirmation of the popularity of the subject amongst some students;
- Whilst most of the secondary schools are academies there is still a statutory entitlement for RE to be taught at Key Stage 4 and 5. Academies, unless their Trust deeds say otherwise, should follow either the locally Agreed Syllabus or another local Agreed Syllabus. As there are a number of secondary schools with no entries for a Religious Studies exam, SACRE wonders what is being provided in the way of statutory RE.

#### **Primary Schools**

It is difficult to state accurately and objectively information about the provision and quality of RE in primary schools. Five courses have been offered to help teachers embed the new syllabus. CPD around leadership and managing for RE subject leaders, understanding what outstanding RE entails, developing spiritual activities in the classroom and refreshing philosophy for children to develop enquiry based skills have all been well received by the teachers. At the termly network meetings numbers of teachers attending has risen and the impact of the new syllabus and the courses on the quality of teaching is evident

#### **Special Schools**

SACRE is delighted to report that The Phoenix Special School, is now a Teaching School and the teaching of RE is excellent. The head of RE, Nicola Lord, has been working on SMSC development through RE and has shared her findings with teachers in the LA. It is also pleasing to report that teachers from other special schools have attended a number of training events to develop the quality and provision of RE within their own schools.

## How SACRE has supported schools:

From September 2013, schools have been required to teach to the new syllabus. Numerous training events have been offered to teachers, alongside the development of more schemes of work and resources for teachers to use as they see fit. Enquiry based learning is proving to be engaging for the teachers and the pupils alike but it also raises concerns as to how to plan for such pedagogies and how to deal with some of the complex questions asked by young people. Schools have been grappling with the implications of introducing a new national curriculum for September 2014. Some schools have found it harder to give sufficient time and training for teachers to know and understand the requirements of the Agreed Syllabus. There has been a rise in the number of schools requesting consultancies about RE, SMSC and how to plan and teach the subject effectively. Attendance of the training events has been satisfactory, though one would like to see schools allowing more colleagues access CPD in this statutory subject. The evaluations demonstrate a positive impact upon teachers' teaching practices.

From September 2013 until August 2014, on behalf of SACRE, the RE Adviser visited six schools that have had a new subject coordinator. The purpose is to support and guide them through the requirements of the Agreed Syllabus.

## Effectiveness of the Agreed Syllabus

The new direction of the Agreed Syllabus has received a very positive response from both faith members on SACRE and teachers. Enquiry based learning supports rigorous and challenging RE. Though welcomed by teacher, this has been a challenge to many. Many teachers have reported that their RE has been revitalised because of the new syllabus but they also have requested more help and support with planning and embedding the syllabus alongside the new national curriculum.

SACRE recognised that further work and support was needed with assessment and work on looking at levels in RE has been undertaken. A number of primary and secondary schools from Cambridgeshire and Peterborough have engaged in a pilot project with three other local authorities, under the leadership of Dilwyn Hunt, current chairman of the Association of RE Inspectors, Advisers and Consultants. The purpose of the project is to consider what progress looks like in RE if one did not have levels. This is still to be reported upon.

Schools are beginning to share their methods of assessment and recording with one another and at network meetings there has been a focus to develop enquiry based learning around the six major religions. Evidence from evaluations and contact with schools has demonstrated that assessment in RE is proving to be the area teachers are most worried about. There is genuine uncertainty around the standards for each level. There is evidence of low level task setting which needs to be addressed.

SACRE have agreed that the RE Advisor continues to write supporting schemes of work for the core units. SACRE have also hired services of others to support with schemes of work but this is still ongoing. SACRE wants to encourage schools to develop their own schemes of work to make meaningful links with other areas of the new national curriculum.

In support of the syllabus, and for any new RE coordinator, SACRE can offer support through the RE Adviser, Sue Ward. Her email address is [susan.ward@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:susan.ward@cambridgeshire.gov.uk)

## Artefact Bases - Materials

A substantial collection of religious artefacts purchased previously by SACRE are held at The Beeches Primary School who will lend it to local primary schools on request. Please contact the school secretary at The Beeches for further information.

## Complaints

There have been no complaints to the LA during the past year in respect of RE, requiring the LA's Special Appeals Committee to be convened.

## Collective Worship

SACRE support the guidance document on collective worship produced by NASACRE. The guidance document is available for all Peterborough Schools and can be found on the Council website under collective worship: <https://www.peterborough.gov.uk/residents/schools-and-education/religious-education/>

Under the Ofsted framework, inspectors do comment on the opportunities for spiritual development in assemblies and acts of collective worship. Further advice and materials are available from both the RE adviser.

## Contribution of SACRE to social and racial harmony agenda

SACRE has its own web page on the Council website. Minutes and agendas are available there <https://www.peterborough.gov.uk/residents/schools-and-education/religious-education/>

Links to the Interfaith Council have been established and invites for members to attend SACRE meetings and speak about their work have been extended.

SACRE has been very supportive of a number of initiatives to support social and community cohesion, as well as promote interfaith dialogue. SACRE supported the Holocaust Memorial Event in January and continues to encourage schools to sign up to the Anne Frank Ambassadors Programme. Links to faith groups have been established to encourage schools to visit places of worship and meet faith representatives.

## Appendix 1

### GCE AS and A Level and GCSE results for Religious Studies in Peterborough schools: Summer 2014

#### A Level Religious Studies

	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008
Number of candidates entries	72	123	105	78	69	91	59
Number of candidates obtaining A-E grades and % passes	72 (100%)	123 (100%)	105 (100%)	78 (100%)	69 (100%)	91 (100%)	59 (100%)
Number of centres entering candidates	7	8	7	7	6	7	4

#### AS Level Religious Studies

	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008
Number of candidates entries	33	18	28	21	17	14	14
Number of candidates obtaining A-E grades and % passes	26 (78.7%)	17 (94%)	25 (89.3%)	17 (81%)	16 (94%)	13 (93%)	13 (93%)
Number of centres entering candidates	6	7	5	6	6	6	5

#### GCSE Religious Studies (full course)

	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008
Number of candidates entries	1138	1103	1032	1048	965	1177	806
Number and % grades A*-C	707 (62.1%)	672 (60.9%)	690 (66.9%)	666 (64%)	574 (59%)	648 (55%)	486 (60%)
Number of centres entering candidates	7	10	7	8	6	7	6

#### GCSE Religious Studies (short course)

	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008
Number of candidates entries	Data N/A	385	648	733	838	776	895
Number and % grades A* -C	N/A	184 (47.8%)	355 (54.8%)	337 (46%)	394 (47%)	374 (48%)	444 (50%)
Number of centres entering candidates	N/A	10	8	6	9	6	8

## National Statistics

<b>GCE A Level England only Religious Studies</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2012</b>
<b>Numbers of candidate entries</b>	<b>20196</b>	<b>19173</b>	<b>18950</b>
<b>% of the total no. sat</b>	<b>2.6%</b>	<b>2.5%</b>	<b>2.4%</b>
<b>% of A*-E pass grades</b>	<b>98.5%</b>	<b>98.8%</b>	<b>98.6%</b>

<b>GCE AS Level England only Religious Studies</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2012</b>
<b>Number of candidate entries</b>	<b>33,634</b>	<b>29889</b>	<b>28682</b>
<b>% of the total no. sat</b>	<b>2.6%</b>	<b>2.4%</b>	<b>2.3%</b>
<b>% of A*- E pass grades</b>	<b>92.0%</b>	<b>92.0%</b>	<b>92.2%</b>

<b>GCSE National (England only) Religious Studies ( full course)</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2011</b>
<b>Number of candidate entries</b>	<b>282,099</b>	<b>239409</b>	<b>216373</b>	<b>199752</b>
<b>% of the total no. sat</b>	<b>4.8%</b>	<b>4.8%</b>	<b>4.5%</b>	
<b>% of A*-C grades</b>	<b>71.5%</b>	<b>72.1%</b>	<b>73.6%</b>	<b>73.2%</b>

<b>GCSE National (England only) Religious Studies ( short course)</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2011</b>
<b>Number of candidate entries</b>	<b>Stats not available</b>	<b>150621</b>	<b>211269</b>	<b>233998</b>
<b>% of the total no. sat</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>65.7%</b>	<b>64.8%</b>	
<b>% of A*-C grades</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>53.5%</b>	<b>53.1%</b>	<b>51.8%</b>

## Appendix 2

### Course Details 2013 - 2014

	= Primary Schools
	= Secondary Schools
	= Both phases

Course/workshop	No. of attendees	No. of schools represented
Embedding the new RE syllabus	20	16
Leading and Managing the new RE syllabus	15	15
Go RE! Good to outstanding	12	8
Spiritual Activities and Spaces	7	7
Primary network meeting 1	20	18
Primary network meeting 2	15	13
Primary network meeting 3	12	10
Secondary network meeting 1	8	3
Secondary network meeting 2	3	2