



MANCHESTER
CITY COUNCIL

Manchester SACRE Annual Report 2014/15

Foreword

It's been an exciting and at the same time challenging year for our Manchester SACRE.

We have expedited our statutory duties by holding all the appropriate meetings as per the SACRE Constitutional requirements.

We have had the opportunity hold a meeting in a local Mosque to celebrate the diversity of our SACRE members. This provided the opportunity for our members and some teachers to meet members of Muslim communities from our City and actively participate in discussions on topical issues in a safe environment.

I attended the 3rd RE Conference organised by the Greater Manchester Hub held at the Britannia Hotel in June this year. I was able gauge an incredible level of enthusiasm from the primary and secondary school teachers to teach RE in their respective schools. The conference guest speaker was Lat Blaylock from RE Today; he spoke passionately about the significant role of SACRE, contributing to and promoting social cohesion in a diverse contemporary society.

The principal aim of SACRE in Manchester is to engage pupils in enquiring into big questions arising from the study of religion, belief, philosophy and ethics. In so doing Religious Education will support pupils' own personal moral, philosophical, ethical and spiritual development and promote respect for others.

The fact that SACREs are continuing their valued role in education has been a catalyst for Community Cohesion and embraces many aspects of the Manchester's Approved Syllabus for RE. SACRE welcomes its continuing ability to bring together education professionals and teaching practitioners, representatives from the Churches and other Faith communities, and elected members of Manchester City Council.

As chair of SACRE I have been able to emphasise to the members how important the role of SACRE is in our schools, particularly to highlight alongside RE we also need to inculcate the British values such as the rule of law, individual liberty and respect and tolerance of others.

We are nearly at the end of our five years with our current agreed syllabus and by law we need to review it and have a revised version in place by September 2016. Broadly we have an understanding that the review will be supported by Lat Blaylock of RE Today and the RE Today syllabus will be adopted by MCC and hopefully by our colleagues in Trafford, Salford, Tameside and Stockport.

I am grateful to SACRE members for their enthusiasm and commitment. Also for their contributions from their own faith perspectives as well as on general work of the SACRE to what we believe to be an exciting and rigorous contribution to pupils' school experience. I would like, on behalf SACRE to

thank Manchester City Council for its continued support in respect of its administration/servicing and occasional costs in running our AGM and workshops. As ever I would like to thank Nick Paul and Lydia Smith for providing us with expert knowledge and timely advice in making sure SACRE met all its legal obligations. I would also like to give a special and sincere thanks to Rachel Kemp for her resilience and tenacity for driving the RE work despite all her personal difficulties.

Manchester SACRE plays a very important role in our City. We are looking forward to the RE syllabus review and also to developing and promoting the profile of SACRE and truly celebrating the spiritual, moral, social and cultural diversity of all faith or no faith members living our dynamic forward looking City.

Cllr. Ahmed Ali JP
Chair Manchester SACRE

Membership of Manchester SACRE at the end of year 2014-2015

Name	Committee	Representing
Cllr Ahmed Ali	Committee D (Chair)	LA
Nick Paul	Committee D	LA
Maureen Curley	Committee B	C of E
Erik Keasberry	Committee A	Chinese Christian
Liz Roper	Committee A	Unitarian
Robin Grinter	Committee A	Humanist
Dominic Hemington	Committee A	Roman Catholic
Heather Steward	Committee A	Methodist
Grange Williams	Committee A	Bahai
Rachel Kemp	Committee C (co-opted member)	RE Teacher
Rabbi David Braunold	Committee A	Jewish
Angela Bogg	Committee A	United Reformed Church
Danielle Gordon-Lanes	Committee C	RE Teacher
Jamila Kossar	Committee A	Islam
Joanna Dowey	Committee A	Buddhist
Helen Tildesley	Committee C	NASUWT rep
Mike Chesterton	Committee A	Evangelical
Katie Cowley	Committee C	RE Teacher
Holly Smith	Committee A	Bahai
Robert Phillips	Committee A	Quaker

Clerk: Lydia Smith (One Education)

The role of the SACRE

The SACRE is independent of the Local Authority and its main function is to advise the Local Authority upon such matters connected with religious worship in Community and Voluntary Controlled schools.

Also it:-

- can require the Authority to review its current agreed syllabus
- and must consider applications made by a head teacher that the requirement for collective worship in Community schools or Schools which have not been designated as having a religious character to be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character shall not apply to the collective worship provided for some or all of the pupils at that particular school.

The broad role of the SACRE therefore is to support the effective provision of Religious Education and collective worship in schools.

Meetings held:

5th November 2014

11th March 2015

16th June 2015

Meetings held in November and June were at the traditional venue of Manchester Town Hall, however in February SACRE were welcomed to the Shahjalal Mosque and Islamic Centre in Rusholme, as part of the aim of Manchester SACRE to take at least one meeting a year out into the community.

Comments from Rachel Kemp (Primary RE Specialist)

A very successful 3rd RE conference was held at The Britannia Hotel in June, for both primary and secondary colleagues. The conference was organised by the Greater Manchester Hub and already preparations are in hand for a fourth (subject to finance).

Alma Park became PEACE MALA accredited in July. Members of the council were there as was the Birchfields school choir. This is a National award to show cross curricular RE as well as Peace and charity work throughout the year.

Demand from schools for CPD support is strong and there is a need for a mechanism by which this need can be fulfilled.

R.E Data

Numbers

Percentages

GCSE Full Course	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014		2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Pupils entered	1806	2111	2244	2355	2637						
A*	113	116	120	165	224		6.3	5.5	5.35	7.00	8.5
A	256	292	311	323	421		14.2	13.8	13.86	13.7	16.0
A* - C	1064	1238	1251	1431	1709		58.9	58.6	55.75	60.80	64.8
A* - G	1754	2035	2129	2255	2529		97.1	96.4	94.88	95.80	95.9

GCSE Short Course	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014		2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Pupils entered	634	827	461	906	0						
A*	7	9	1	30			1.1	1.1	0.22	3.3	
A	39	43	16	50			6.2	5.2	3.47	5.5	
A* - C	251	317	137	321			39.6	38.3	29.72	35.4	
A* - G	566	740	419	830			89.3	89.5	90.89	91.6	

Commentary

Members will note the continued improvement over the period 2010-2014 although figures for Manchester remain below the national average (A*-C 71.5%)

GCSE short courses were not available in 2014.

2014 Annual Celebration Event

The first AGM/Annual Celebration of SACRE was held at Birchfields Primary School on 17th July 2014. Rachel Kemps input in organising the event was acknowledged by the Committee. Although participation was not as high as hoped, those who attended represented a balance of groups – education (three secondary and five primary school teachers), Jewish faith, Humanism and members of Manchester SACRE. Children's work was showcased, there was a musical performance by Birchfields pupils and the SACRE Annual Report was issued. The feedback that Rachel received was very positive, with attendees welcoming the opportunity to network within the right environment, the personal feel to the event and the fact that there was no charge to join. Teachers who attended felt that the event highlighted the links between RE education at KS2 and KS3 and welcomed the opportunity to share good practice in RE education.

2015 Annual celebration event up date

Due to difficulties in securing a suitable venue this event was deferred to academic year 15-16, with the possibility of tying in with Manchester faith week in November.

New locally agreed RE syllabus

Rachel Kemp raised concerns about the new RE syllabus, which needs to be ready for use by 2016. There is a great deal of work to be done before then. The current curriculum is only skeletal and needs to be substantially fleshed out. It is the role of SACRE to review the curriculum every five years. There is a possibility of getting some assistance from an outside consultant, but there will be costs connected to this. Rachel is keen to preserve Manchester's reputation as one of the two most active LAs for RE teaching in England. She

will forward her concerns to the Chair who will take the issue up with the Executive Lead in Education.

Contact was made with the editor of RE Today at the June Hub conference and plans are in place for a joint meeting in September of representatives of all five LA's within the Hub. One item for consideration is to look at a possible way forward led by Lat Blaylock's services as a consultant.

SACRE Website

At the time of writing work is underway to up date The RE curriculum section of the MEWAN website which contains all SACRE material is now regularly up dated and is proving a useful means by which to promote opportunities for engagement with a variety of faith groups.

SACRE membership

During the academic year Manchester SACRE is pleased to have welcomed representation from the Ba'hai faith and the Chinese Christian Community. Members of SACRE continue to seek contacts in order to ensure that the membership is as diverse as possible.

Raising the profile of SACRE

This remains an issue of concern with the chair highlighting the need for SACRE to assume a more catalytic role than in the past and to focus on enabling and encouraging RE development in schools. It is aimed to secure a slot at the first head teacher briefings of the academic year 15-16 in order to give an overview and up date on SACRE.

Humanism as an option in GCSE and A level syllabuses.

There was general agreement with Rowan Williams' stated regret at the decision by the Department of Education to remove Humanism from the RE curriculum, and support for the inclusion of a non religious belief system in the new curriculum. Robin Grinter prepared a statement of support to be submitted to the Secretary of State for school reform on behalf of Manchester SACRE.

Freedom of Information requests (FOI)

SACRE has responded to the following FOI requests.

- A press enquiry regarding numbers of schools (since January 2014) requesting a determination so that they no longer have to provide an act of worship which is broadly Christian in nature.
The LA responded confirming that no such determinations had been requested.

Requests for a determination

SACRE has not received any requests for determinations with regard to Collective Worship during the last academic year. Any school wishing to explore the relevance of a determination (daily collective worship which is

other than 'wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character) in their context should contact SACRE via the local authority officer, Nick Paul (n.paul@manchester.gov.uk). Church schools are not eligible for a determination and for an academy wishing to apply for a determination the correct process is for the Trust to apply through the Education Funding Agency (EFA) to the Secretary of State.

Complaints concerning RE

There have been no complaints concerning RE.

Complaints concerning Collective Worship

There have been no complaints received about collective worship.

Finance

SACRE does not have a dedicated budget; however the LA covers the costs of a professional clerk and the membership of NASACRE.

The LA representative on SACRE has the authority to consider requests for financial support for SACRE activities and to authorise payment where funds exist and there is a clear benefit to the role of SACRE.

Nick Paul
Manchester City council
October 31st 2015