

SACRE Annual Report

2016-17

Message from the chair

It is a pleasure to introduce the annual report of the Central Bedfordshire Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education for 2016-2017.

The aim of this report is to update readers about the work of the members of the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE). Our function is to advise the Local Authority (LA) on matters relating to collective worship in community schools and on religious education given in accordance with the locally agreed syllabus. The SACRE monitors the effectiveness and appropriateness of the agreed syllabus. This has been given to every school in the LA and is available on <http://www.beds-re-resources.org.uk/> It is reviewed every five years and should be followed by all community and VC schools. Other schools may also follow the syllabus. For further information about RE in academies and free schools, please read:

<http://www.natre.org.uk/uploads/Free%20Resources/RE%20%26%20Collective%20Worship%20in%20Academies%20and%20Free%20Schools.pdf>

During 2016-17 the agreed syllabus was discussed regularly at SACRE and the decision was taken to work together with Luton and Bedford Borough SACREs on the revised syllabus, due to be launched in September 2018. A variety of bids were put forward to do the work, with the result that RE Today successfully took on the revision. We have engaged with SACRE members and teachers from the three LAs as we prepared for the production of a high quality syllabus supporting Bedfordshire teachers over the next five years. SACRE is grateful to St Albans Diocese for supporting the funding of the syllabus alongside Luton, Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire SACREs.

We have been fortunate to support the work of The RE Society of Bedfordshire and RE Today, who have continued to deliver high quality Religious Education training to teachers, headteachers and those in initial teacher training (SCITT). Bedfordshire teachers also access the local RE PSG, which is run by Ryan Parker.

A number of national RE reports were launched in 2017 which resulted in RE having a high profile in media. "The State of the Nation" report from NATRE, the RE Council and RE Today cited clear evidence based on the government's own data that **more than one in four schools are not providing RE at all** and even more are not providing RE for all pupils.

<http://www.religiouseducationcouncil.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/State-of-the-Nation-Report-2017.pdf>

SACRE members discussed and responded to this report and the Interim Report from the RE Commission <http://www.commissiononre.org.uk/religious-education-for-all-commission-interim-report/> at local SACRE meetings and at national events in York and Birmingham. The legal and educational positions regarding RE in schools is very clear in the agreed syllabus and the national reports. If schools have any questions about the issues raised, please contact SACRE.

As part of a systematic approach to teaching RE, Understanding Christianity training was launched across Bedfordshire in 2016-17. Over 2000 teachers from all types of schools attended training. The agreed syllabus will incorporate examples of this approach to teaching and courses will continue to be offered at the Forest Centre, Marston Moretaine.

We offer 'Congratulations' to all schools within Central Bedfordshire who have gained the RE Quality Mark accreditation in the past year. This is an award that SACRE is keen to promote across schools and is part of a subsidy costing offer in our development plan. Please contact SACRE for more information.

The Queens Park Faith Tour in Bedford continues to go from strength to strength. It is very encouraging that so many schools, recognise the value of quality first-hand experiences by visiting three amazing faith buildings and listening to each faith community describe their worship practices.

SACRE are grateful for the work and support of Paul Harpin, as part of his LA advisory role to SACRE, who has supported the work of SACRE and RE in the LA.

Members of SACRE bring much expertise and a spirit of thoughtful co-operation to meetings. The Council brings together councillors, teachers and faith representatives. The commitment of the members of SACRE to promoting religious education in Central Bedfordshire is strong and evident in their active interest, involvement in developmental work and in monitoring the quality of religious education in the Borough's schools.

SACRE receives much positive information from Ofsted reports and school visits about the quality of RE and its impact on pupils' spiritual and personal development. Some reports reveal outstanding and innovative work in schools. We acknowledge the hard work of RE subject leaders and teachers. The importance of high quality religious education cannot be overstressed. Our teachers make a vital contribution to the promotion of social cohesion in our multi-faith society and the development of critical thinking in the RE classroom.

There have been some membership changes to Central Bedfordshire SACRE this year; we have welcomed new members and thanked those who have come to the end of their term.

I am pleased to commend this report to you.

Jane Chipperton - Chair, SACRE (2016-17)

Membership of SACRE

| Group A | Representing |
|---|----------------|
| Christian and other religious denominations | |
| Sister Aiden Richards | Roman Catholic |
| Mary O'Sullivan | Roman Catholic |
| Nina Leigh | Jewish |
| Vacancy | Muslim |
| Vacancy | Buddhist |
| Tirath Bhavra | Sikh |
| Marian Roberts | Free Church |
| Tulsi Seva Dasi | Hindu |

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| Group B Church of England | |
| Jane Chipperton | Church of England |
| Carly Woodall | Church of England |
| Group C Teachers' Association | |
| Anita Whitehurst | Primary Schools |
| Kathleen Eldridge | Upper Schools |
| Lucy Chapman | Primary Schools |
| Vacancy | Special Schools |
| Group D Elected Members | |
| Cllr Angela Barker | Local Authority |
| Cllr Charles Gomm | Local Authority |
| Cllr Doreen B Gurney | Local Authority |
| Cllr A Ryan | Local Authority |
| Cllr F Firth | Local Authority |
| Cllr Mark A G Versallion (Substitute) | Local Authority |
| Officers to SACRE | |
| Helen Bell | Committee Services Officer |
| Paul Harpin | School Improvement Consultant |

SACRE Meetings are held on a termly basis and some information is shared through “Central Essentials”, the LA’s weekly electronic newsletter which goes to all schools.

Standards in Religious Education

The GCSE in Religious Education remains the principle way in which the achievement of students is recognised. The final results are reviewed by SACRE in the Spring Term meeting each year.

GCSE Full Course

- Students were entered for the full course in RE in ten Central Bedfordshire secondary / upper schools, including academies.
- Of the 831 students entered 75.5% gained grades A* to C. This reflected a rise of 2.5% on the previous year’s figures when 946 pupils were entered and 73% gained A* to C grades.

A Level (AS)

- In Central Bedfordshire, 73 students took AS RE across five of the reporting secondary / upper schools including academies.
- 61.9% of students attained A* to C grades, a significant rise on the 46% in 2016.

A Level (A2)

- In Central Bedfordshire, 100 students took A Level across seven of the reporting secondary / upper schools including academies, fifteen more students than in 2016.
- 74% of students attained A* to C grades compared with 85% in 2016.

Advice and Support for Schools

Many schools use the support and resources provided by Jane Chipperton, Religious Education Adviser for the Diocese of St Albans, who oversees a resource base at St Mark's Church Centre, Brickhill. The resource collection and beds-re website (www.beds-re-resources.org.uk/), support the multi faith approach of the Agreed Syllabus, which is available throughout the day and in school holidays. SACRE members wish to express their thanks to the Diocese of St Albans, St. Mark's Church in Bedford and Jane Chipperton for providing this service.

The RE Society for Bedfordshire has been active in publicising courses running in the area, organising visits to places of worship for different faiths and providing after-school workshops for teachers. SACRE receives copies of the RE Society's informative newsletter which the LA sends to all schools.

LA Agreed Syllabus

The current Agreed Syllabus which embraces Central Bedfordshire, Bedford Borough and Luton was written in 2010 – 2011 and, five years on, has become due for review. There was agreement between the SACREs of Bedford Borough, Luton and Central Bedfordshire to review the current Agreed Syllabus on a collaborative basis. This review was commissioned to RE Today under the leadership of Lat Blaylock. A meeting of SACRE Teachers was held in July 2017 to inform the review of the Agreed Syllabus and the aim now is to ensure the revised document, which will link with the new assessment arrangements based upon Age Related Expectations, will be finalised and ready to be launched in the Autumn Term 2018. Until that time the current Agreed Syllabus remains the reference point for RE teachers in our area.

Religious Education Quality Mark (REQM)

The aim of this programme is to celebrate and acknowledge high quality RE. The Religious Education Council of England and Wales (REC) www.religiouseducationcouncil.org provides support and monitors the quality of the award.

The REQM is based upon three levels of bronze, silver and gold where schools can self assess against criteria. Judgements are then evaluated by assessors who have RE experience together with appropriate training. There are five main areas to the REQM i.e. Learners and learning, teachers and teaching, curriculum, subject leadership and CPD.

Eleven schools within Central Bedfordshire have now gained the RE Quality Mark and they have agreed to support other schools pursuing this accreditation. SACRE has also agreed to fund the application of any Central Bedfordshire school wishing to apply for RE Quality Mark status. It is hoped that the REQM will help to raise the profile of Religious Education and also enable schools to embed it within their self assessment processes.

The website: www.reqm.org gives more details.

Ofsted Inspections (September 2016 – July 2017)

Since January 2012 the new Ofsted framework has not included a separate judgement for Social, Moral, Spiritual and Cultural development (SMSC). Despite this fact SACRE have chosen to review the comments re SMSC in each Ofsted report to evaluate the significance of such statements when compared to the “Overall effectiveness” judgement. This review is a regular agenda item at each termly SACRE meeting and ensures that developments are evaluated.

SACRE Development Plan (April 2016- July 2017)

The following points highlight the priorities in this year’s SACRE Development Plan. They are reviewed and evaluated through regular SACRE Meetings.

- To sample and evaluate the current provision of collective worship and RE across the three phase system
- To monitor comments re Spiritual, Moral, Social and Spiritual Development (SMSC) in Central Bedfordshire schools through information gleaned from Ofsted reports and RE subject inspections.
- To review GCSE, AS and A level results in Religious Education from July 2017.
- To support the Professional Studies Group (PSG) in RE, especially concentrating on Primary Planning (See next item)
- To provide opportunities for SACRE Council Members to gain knowledge and experience of different faiths through presentations at meetings. Presentations will reflect different age groups and types of schools
- To provide opportunities for SACRE Council Members to visit schools in Central Bedfordshire to review the provision for Religious Education
- To investigate and promote the use of artefacts within schools and ensure that schools are aware of what is available
- To support schools looking to gain the RE Quality Mark.

The RE Professional Study Group

Over the last year the RE Professional Study Group (PSG) has continued to be well attended with around 20 colleagues meeting once each term. Ryan Parker who is RE Coordinator at Alban Academy has lead the meetings with support from Lucy Chapman, the Head Teacher at Sutton VA Lower School, taking aims and objectives from the attendees. Please contact Paul Harpin if you would like more information about this Professional Study Group.

Understanding Christianity training for schools





...and teachers' meeting at Silsoe





**Central
Bedfordshire**

Central Bedfordshire in contact

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