

**SACRE**

**Annual Report  
2017- 2018**



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## Foreword

It has been my privilege and honour to serve as Chair of Walsall SACRE in this time of change and challenge in the world of Religious Education. This Report highlights the present situation of Religious Education and Collective Worship in Walsall.

Religious Education continues to be an essential part of education in Walsall, providing a host of opportunities for our children and young people to enhance their understanding of diversity, values, beliefs and ways of living around the world.

During this year we have been pleased to secure the services of Fiona Moss from RE Today to support SACRE.

We are aware there remains much to accomplish. There is a worrying drop in the number of pupils studying for a GCSE in religious studies we need to establish what RE the non-GCSE students are receiving to meet the statutory requirements. The School workforce data shows that 4 Walsall secondary schools are reporting that they are not providing any RS in KS4. SACRE are keen to investigate whether this is correct.

We are also aware that more needs to be done to monitor provision for RE especially in relation to primary school standards and levels of provision. However we are pleased that we are still able to offer a half day Primary network meeting for schools each term. These are provided at no cost to schools and are well attended.

**Councillor A. Nawaz, Chair, Walsall SACRE**

# 1. Introduction

Since 1988, it has been a requirement that every local authority establish a Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE).

Though legislation sets out both the structure and the remit of a local SACRE - principally, overseeing religious education (RE) and collective worship - in practice every SACRE has developed its own particular style and character.

It is a legislative requirement that each SACRE produces an annual report of its work and that this is published, sent to the local authority, to local schools and to other interested parties. One important element of the report is performance data and an analysis of the extent to which schools are meeting their legal duties in relation to RE. More recently, other datasets have been made available by the DfE, most significantly the school workforce data that supports the monitoring of the level of provision in secondary schools.

## 2. Meetings

All meetings held at the Council House, Lichfield Street, Walsall commencing at 6.00pm

The following SACRE meetings were held during the reporting period:

9<sup>th</sup> October 2017, 5<sup>th</sup> March 2018 and 23<sup>rd</sup> July, 2018.

### **Summarised Minutes from 2017/18 Academic Year**

#### **9th October 2017**

RE Today provided an overview of the following activities

- Termly Network group for Primary Teachers: Free training to be offered to all schools and advertised via Walsall Children's Services Update 'Link' page plus write to all Headteachers. Strong representation from community schools and church schools. The focus this term was on teaching Islam.
- Whilst we would like to run a similar group for Secondary teachers the LA has found it hard to make links with RE teachers in Secondary.
- Plans to support our Agreed Syllabus-
- Details pertaining to a proposed, joint funded 'Project for Excellent RE (Primary)' training to improve RE within their own schools had been provided at the meeting along with costings, which was approved by SACRE. This will provide training for 10 schools over a year to improve RE in their school and beyond.
- NATRE/REC/RE Today State of the Nation report and the interim report from the independent Commission on RE: Document had been tabled entitled 'Why Do Schools Think it is OK to Run Illegal RE?', based upon commentary on NATRE's analysis of the Government Schools Workforce Census which had revealed that more than one in four (28%) of state secondary schools were struggling to meet their legal obligation to teach pupils about major religious and systems of belief. Members were also provided a copy of the CoRE's (Commission on Religious Education)'s interim report.

#### **SACRE resolved**

-that local authority members (Councillors) co-ordinate a Notice of Motion to be presented at full Council on behalf of SACRE requesting the Council's

support of the actions of SACRE in researching the level of RE provision in Walsall, making reference to Community Cohesion

- Chair to write to her Majesty's Chief Inspector plus the Secretary of State on behalf of Walsall SACRE to express its concern with regards to the low level of teaching time given to offering RE nationwide within schools and particularly within academies.

**5<sup>th</sup> March 2018**

### **Update on Excellent RE project**

- RE Today had been running the course with primary schools nationwide for six years;
- Detailed information of the course content for the proposed 3.1/2 days provided;
- 13 nominations from Walsall (combination of teachers and teaching assistants) registered to attend, mostly from non religious primary schools (church groups having their own support networks). Lengthy discussions took place with regard to the training;

### **Compliance of Academies**

- SACRE advised academies do not have to follow the local authority RE syllabus they do have a statutory duty to either use Walsall's syllabus, adopt another syllabus or write a syllabus of their own.
- Schools Workforce data 2016 which had been obtained by NATRE in a FOI from DFE pertaining to secondary schools and academies was discussed at length
- GCSE Results 2017 discussed at length

Asked the Council to support:

- SACRE's actions in researching the level of RE provision particularly KS4 in Walsall Secondary Schools;
- Join with Walsall SACRE to write to the Secretary of State for Education to urge that Central Government will instruct OFSTED to check on curriculum provision to ensure schools comply to provide a legal amount of RE;
- Write to all Secondary Schools in Walsall to remind them of their legal obligation to provide RE under the 1998 Schools Standards and Framework Act.

### **Budget**

- Breakdown to date of SACRE's annual budget 2017/18 provided and remaining budget be assigned to providing additional resources to RE budget

**SIAMS:** Reports were shared and discussed. They provided a positive picture of RE and collective worship in the schools inspected.

**Multi-faith Event:** SACRE were advised of a multi-faith event at a temple in Walsall

**23<sup>rd</sup> July, 2018**

### **Appointment of Chair and Vice Chair for the 2018/19 Municipal Year**

Councillor Nawaz to be appointed Chairman and Mr. D. Lomas to be appointed Vice Chairman for the 2018/19 Municipal Year.

### **Update on Purpose of SACRE and RE Today's role**

RE Today gave an overview of the role of SACRE within local authorities for the benefit of new members, which included:-

- SACRE was a statutory body which all local authorities had to have and follow guidance to ensure the law is upheld on how RE is taught and that every school must, by law, provide religious education and daily collective worship to all its pupils;
- RE Today's role was to work with local authorities to monitor and review the quality of existing RE and collective worship within schools and to advise the local authority on RE matters;
- Provide advice and support with regards to the agreed syllabus and teacher training;
- Set up a Conference every 5 years in relation to Agreed Syllabus
- Provide relevant, local statistics pertaining to RE to alert SACRE to none RE teaching schools

### **Twinning Project – Community Cohesion**

Walsall Council's Community Cohesion and Engagement Team gave a verbal presentation in relation to a 'Twinning Project' initiative, which had been included within Walsall Council's Cohesion and Integration Strategy 2017-2020.



Walsall Council had been chosen as one of five local authorities to be included within a national integrated communities green paper and it was keen to promote integration and SACRE were further advised:-

- School Twinning was a key project within the authority's Cohesion and Integration Strategy and would involve schools who had signed up to the initiative to be 'twinned' with schools of dissimilar makeup, as a vehicle to improve understanding of faith across the participating schools;
- Walsall faced challenges by virtue of its diverse communities – some areas of the authority are predominantly white and some are secular communities and the project would provide integration through a number of initiatives including art and sports;
- Government was looking for a initiative and challenging model which would facilitate strategic change within the area and it has pledged funding to reinforce that change;
- One of the biggest challenge to community cohesion was to change people's 'parochial' mind set, to break preconceived ideas by engaging communities and promoting honest and open questioning
- The Community and Cohesion Engagement Team has worked with both faith and non faith schools and all feedback had been very positive with visits to mosques having taken place so far

### **RE Today Project for Excellence**

The project, jointly funded by Walsall's SACRE and Re Today had been delivered to 7 fully engaged primary teaching staff.

**National Update Summer 2018** distributed at the meeting for information.

### 3. Membership

The membership of Walsall SACRE at the end of the academic year 2017-18 was as follows:

<p><b>Committee A: Christian Denominations and Other Religions and Religious Denominations</b></p> <p>Mr Gerry Gomez Roman Catholic (Archdiocese of Birmingham)</p> <p>Mrs. P. Mullins Roman Catholic (Archdiocese of Birmingham)</p> <p>Mrs M. Gibbons Methodist</p> <p>Captain T. Stubbings Salvation Army</p> <p>Mr. David Lomax United Reformed Church</p> <p>Mrs. D. Letford New Testament Church of God</p> <p>Mr. Dhiren Thakker Walsall Evangelical Churches</p> <p>Mrs. Barbara Groombridge Walsall Quakers</p> <p>Mr. Mahmood Sacha Muslim Welfare Society</p> <p>Mr. M. Lad Shree Ram Mandir (Walsall)</p> <p>Mr. Sijaad Hussain Pakistan Muslim Welfare Association</p> <p>Mr. Ismail Dangor Anjuman-E-Isha'at-E-Islam</p> <p>Imam Saeed-Ur-Rahman Mosque and Islamic Centre</p> <p>Mrs. A. Sharma Hindu Faith</p> <p>Mohammed Ashik Ali Bangladesh Islamic Association</p> <p>Mohan Singh Guru Nanak Gurdwara</p> <p>Mr. K. Mavi Guru Nanak Sikh Temple</p> <p>Mr. Surjit Singh Rai Walsall Sikh Forum</p> <p>Father John Nankivell Black Country Orthodox Trust</p> <p><b>Vacancies</b></p> <p>Baptist churches</p>	<p><b>Committee B The Church of England</b></p> <p>Mrs. S. Blackmore</p> <p>Mr. P Prasadam</p> <p>Mr. C. Hopkins</p> <p>Ms. Karen Donnellan</p>
<p><b>Committee C Teachers' Associations</b></p> <p>Mrs Doreen Barrett National Union of Teachers</p> <p>Mrs. Rebecca Broughton-Mills Association of Teachers and Lecturers</p> <p>Mrs. Ellen Taylor National Association of Head Teachers</p> <p><b>Vacancies</b></p> <p>Association of School and College, National Association of School Masters and Union of Women Teachers or NEU, VOICE.</p>	<p><b>Committee D Local Authority</b></p> <p>Councillor Craddock</p> <p>Councillor Phillips</p> <p>Councillor Robertson</p> <p>Councillor Rochelle</p> <p>Councillor Washbrook</p> <p>Councillor Gultasib</p> <p>Councillor Barker</p>
<p>Also invited – Mrs F Moss</p>	<p>Mrs Bev Mycock (Clerk)</p> <p>Elaine Maher (LA Representative)</p>

## 4. Religious Education

### The locally agreed syllabus

- a. For historical reasons, Religious education (RE) is not part of the National Curriculum but is a local responsibility. It is for this reason that legislation requires that each local authority (LA) produces an Agreed Syllabus for RE. Legislation also requires that an Agreed Syllabus be reviewed every five years.
- b. During the reporting period, SACRE supported schools as they embedded the new syllabus into the curriculum. The feedback received from schools, especially from primary schools, is that they appreciate the clarity of the materials and the guide to planning. They also say that there are still challenges for those with little experience or training in the teaching of RE but that is probably more to do with a situation replicated nationally. Primary teachers receive on average 0-3 hours of training about RE in their initial teacher training and the majority receive no training each year in teaching the subject.
- c. A hard copy of the Agreed Syllabus was given or sent to all schools in Walsall at the syllabus launch on the 6<sup>th</sup> June 2016. An electronic copy of the syllabus was also given to all schools.
- d. The syllabus is accompanied by a full set of 27 support units of work for Primary schools. These units were placed onto a disc and shared with all Walsall Primary schools. Two sample units were also shared with secondary schools. Schools have found these extremely useful to support planning but are aware that these are not statutory units to be slavishly followed rather to use as a treasury to support planning for their own school and classes.
- e. Each term Fiona Moss from RE Today runs a NATRE affiliated RE network meeting in an afternoon between 1-3pm. She is also available before and after these meetings for 1:1 meetings with subject leaders and teachers. She also provides support by phone and email.

These Termly meetings provided a regular input of professional support and development for those who attend (usually subject leaders) and those in their own school to whom they disseminate learning. Termly briefing and training sessions also continue to support non-specialist TAs, HLTAs and teachers in primary schools to increase their confidence leading, managing and teaching RE.

During the year 2017-18 sessions were provided on Teaching Islam, Teaching about non-religious worldviews and Meaningful and manageable assessment for learning strategies to use in Primary RE.

These sessions were well attended.

- f. Delivery of RE by Higher Level Teaching Assistants (HLTAs), with teachers taking this time as their Preparation and Assessment (PPA) time, continues in Primary schools. Several HLTAs still regularly attend the termly network meetings. We continue to hear that some primary schools are reporting that although RE had been taught by HLTAs this subject is now taught by class teachers. Where this decision has been made it is usually led by a confident subject leader and a supportive senior leadership team. There are early signs that training as a result of the syllabus is increasing the number of teachers delivering RE.
- g. There were no formal complaints to SACRE about RE during the year. However as you can see in the minutes in Section 2 above SACRE has raised concerns to the local authority about potential compliance issues in Key Stage 4.

**The Walsall Agreed Syllabus**  
**Religious Education**  
2016-2021



Aliza, 14: 'Open minds look at all religions'

## 5. Acts of Collective Worship

No school requested a determination during this period.

There were no complaints received about Collective Worship during this period.

SACRE offered no advice concerning Collective Worship during this period.

## 6. Standards in Religious Education

SACRE agreed that it is remarkably difficult for them to fulfill their role to monitor provision for RE; especially in relation to primary school standards and levels of provision. The lack of any judgement about the quality of RE in Ofsted reports meant that SACRE has very few tools to support them to meet this statutory duty.

GCSE entries 2017/8	School religious character	Number of pupils at the end of Key Stage 4	% of pupils at the end of KS4 entering		% of pupils achieving A*-C/9-4 as a proportion of those entering		% of pupils achieving A*-C/9-5 as a proportion of those entering		No entries for religious studies (%)	Number of Pupils not entered
			Full course only %	Full Course (Count)	Full course only %	Count	Full course only %	Count		
Bloxwich Academy	None	115	7	8	62.5	72	25	29	93	107
Blue Coat Church of England Academy	Church of England	127	100	127	49.6	63	34.6	44	0	0
Grace Academy Darlaston	Does not apply	100	0	0	.		.		100	100
Ormiston Sheffield Community Academy	None	203	0	0	.		.		100	203
Walsall Academy	Does not apply	173	0	0	.		.		100	173
West Walsall E-ACT Academy	None	102	80.4	82	64.6	66	40.2	41	19.6	20
Willenhall E-ACT Academy	None	223	0	0	.		.		100	223
Aldridge School - A Science College	None	259	24.7	64	81.3	211	68.8	178	75.3	195
Barr Beacon School	None	259	5.8	15	93.3	242	93.3	242	94.2	244
Joseph Leckie Academy	Does not apply	187	7	13	61.5	115	53.8	101	93	174
Pool Hayes Academy	None	160	5	8	87.5	140	87.5	140	95	152
Queen Mary's Grammar School	None	111	100	111	95.5	106	92.8	103	0	0
Queen Mary's High School	None	111	62.2	69	98.6	109	97.1	108	37.8	42
Shire Oak Academy	None	228	96.9	221	43.9	100	29.9	68	3.1	7
The Streetly Academy	None	235	14	33	72.7	171	66.7	157	86	202
Brownhills School	None	112	0	0	.		.		100	112
Walsall Studio School	None	53	28.3	15	66.7	35	53.3	28	71.7	38
St Francis of Assisi Catholic Technology College	Roman Catholic	178	100	178	73.6	131	62.4	111	0	0
St Thomas More Catholic School	Roman Catholic	238	99.6	237	56.1	134	43.5	104	0.4	1
		<b>3,174</b>	<b>37.2%</b>	<b>1,181</b>	<b>49.2%</b>	<b>1,561</b>	<b>42.5%</b>	<b>1,349</b>	<b>62.8%</b>	<b>1,993</b>

- There has been a very significant decrease in the number of students entered for examination RE. Only 37.2% of students were entered for an examination. This is a further decrease from last year when 43% of students were entered for an examination.
- Five Walsall schools enter no students for GCSE RS (Grace Academy, Ormiston Shelfield, Walsall Academy, Willenhall E Act academy and Brownhills Academy). Also 6 schools enter less than 25% of their cohort (Bloxwich Academy, Aldridge School, Barr Beacon School, Joseph Leckie Academy, Pool Hayes Academy and Streetly Academy). On a positive note 7 Walsall secondary schools entered more than 60% of their cohort for full course GCSE, with several entering 100% of the cohort, thereby providing external accreditation for most of their students of their studies in RE (Bluecoat Church of England Academy, West Walsall E-ACT Academy, Queen Mary's Grammar School, Queen Mary's High School, Shire Oak Academy St Francis of Assisi Catholic Technology College and St Thomas More Catholic School).
- SACRE remain concerned about the number of pupils not following an accredited course as this is a clear sign that the standards of the Agreed Syllabus have been met. SACRE intends to contact schools and academies to find out they are following the law and/or their Funding agreement and providing RE for all pupils in all Key Stages.
- Results from the 2018 Full Course GCSE were 42.5% of pupils achieved a strong pass (grades 5-9) compared to 60.3% nationally. 49.2% of pupils achieved a standard pass (grades 4-9) compared to 71.8% nationally.
- 1181 students, 37.2 % of all students at the end of KS4 in Walsall schools in 2018, were entered for the full GCSE religious studies course, showing a decrease from the 1159 students, 43% of all students in 2017.
- 0 students took the religious studies short course GCSE. This reflects the national pattern but is still a concern as it means pupils are not accredited for their studies.
- Provision for RE in Walsall schools and nationally is being affected by the focus of accountability measures used by the Department for Education. This includes the proportion of children studying the subjects that make up the English Baccalaureate that do not include Religious Education. This must be reported by schools. Likewise, the elements of a schools' Progress 8 school also prioritises the EBacc subjects and does not always reward schools that offer Religious Studies for all.

## 7. School Workforce Data

The Table below shows the percentage of the week's teaching hours dedicated for Religious Education as part of the school workforce census in November 2017. This data was published in the summer of 2018. Schools and academies are required to report Religious Education provision even when schools choose to call the subject something else. **SACRE has asked that the local authority investigate those schools reporting insignificant hours for RE and to remind schools that provide lessons in the subject of the importance of reporting them in the census.**

We are particularly concerned about the schools that have reported no hours of RE however we realise the importance of triangulating the data with GCSE results and website information. We note that Ormiston Shelfield enter no pupils for GCSE and register that they are providing no hours of RE. We note also that Barr Beacon School and Bloxwich Academy register no hours for RE at Key Stage 4 and enter an extremely small numbers of pupils for RE GCSE.

All pupils in all key stages in all publicly funded schools must receive RE (unless their parents have withdrawn them).



School	Character	Percentage of curriculum time spent on RE as submitted to the DFE							Ofsted Rating
		Yr7 %	Yr8 %	Yr9 %	Yr10 %	Yr11 %	KS3 %	KS4 %	
St Francis of Assisi Catholic Technology College	Roman Catholic	11.7	12.4	11.2	10.6	9.7	11.7	10.1	Good
St Thomas More Catholic School, Willenhall	Roman Catholic	12.4	10.8	9.6	10.8	7.9	11	9.2	Good
Ormiston Sheffield Community Academy	None	2.1	2.3	0	0	0	1.4	0	Good
Grace Academy Darlaston	Does not apply	3.9	3.8	3.2	1.6	0	3.7	0.8	Good
Shire Oak Academy	None	4.4	3.1	3.4	4.4	4.3	3.6	4.3	Requires improvement
Queen Mary's Grammar School	None	5.2	3.5	3.5	6.5	6.9	4.1	6.7	
Queen Mary's High School	None	5.9	5.8	5.8	4.2	6.9	5.8	5.5	
Barr Beacon School	None	4	3.3	0.3	0	0	2.6	0	Outstanding
Bloxwich Academy	None	4	5.2	4.4	0	0	4.4	0	Requires improvement
The Streetly Academy	None	4.2	4.3	4.1	3	2.3	4.2	2.7	Outstanding
Joseph Leckie Academy	Does not apply	3.4	3.6	2	2.1	2	3	2	Requires improvement
Aldridge School - A Science College	None	4.2	4.3	4.3	2.5	2.1	4.3	2.3	Good
West Walsall E-ACT Academy	None	0	0.7	1.3	1.6	2.3	0.6	1.9	Good
Blue Coat Church of England Academy	Church of England	8.1	7.7	7.6	7.5	6.8	7.8	7.1	Good
Walsall Studio School	None	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Good
Pool Hayes Academy	None	4.5	4.5	3.9	1.5	1.3	4.3	1.4	

## 8. SACRE discussion of National Developments in RE

**National Association of SACREs (NASACRE):** Walsall SACRE was pleased to become involved in this association. The NASACRE newsletters provided useful information to inform agendas and support for schools.

**State of the Nation Report:** Members were concerned to read of the decline in the levels of provision of RE in England measured by the school workforce and GCSE data. They noted that this decline is replicated in Walsall.

**The Commission on RE interim report:** SACRE discussed the interim findings of the interim report and how this related to RE in Walsall. Members noted the following key issues in the report:

- A proposal for a national entitlement for RE
- The need to hold schools to account for the provision and quality of RE
- A renewed and expanded role for SACRES
- The legal status of right of withdrawal and the challenges of selective withdrawal
- A National Plan for improving teaching and learning in RE

## 9. RE Support in Walsall Schools

During the reporting period the Adviser provided support to schools in the following areas:

- Selective withdrawal from religious education – in particular from visits to mosques
- Authorised absence for religious celebrations
- GCSE and A level specifications
- Availability of CPD
- Suitable places of worship to visit locally and further afield
- Resources for RE
- Agreed Syllabus
- Subject Knowledge

## 10. 2017/18 Budget

The Local Authority reported that the budget was £5,000 per annum and that this would be spent primarily on meeting costs, supporting the Excellent RE programme, Primary network meetings and professional advice to SACRE and Walsall schools provided by the Adviser.

**Clerk to SACRE**

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