
**DARLINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL
ANNUAL SACRE REPORT – ACADEMIC YEAR 2019/20**

Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE)

Legal Requirement for Religious Education

1. Every maintained school in England must provide a basic curriculum (RE, sex education and the National Curriculum). This includes provision for Religious Education (RE) for all registered pupils at the school (including those in the sixth form), except for those withdrawn by their parents (or withdrawing themselves if they are aged 18 or over) in accordance with Schedule 19 to the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.
2. Academies have to provide RE for all their pupils, except for those whose parents exercise the right of withdrawal, under the terms of their funding agreement with the Secretary of State for Education.
3. Free Schools are academies in law and have the same requirement to provide RE.
4. The funding agreement for an academy without a religious designation states that it must arrange for RE to be given to all pupils in accordance with the requirements for a locally agreed syllabus, set out in section 375 (3) of the Education Act 1996 and paragraph (5) of Schedule 19 to the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. The requirements are that a syllabus must 'reflect the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are, in the main, Christian while taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain.
5. The key document in determining the teaching of RE is the locally agreed syllabus within the Local Authority (LA), although schools designated as having a religious character are free to make their own decisions in preparing their syllabuses

The Duties of SACRE

6. There is a legal requirement on all Local Authorities to establish a 'Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education' (SACRE). A SACRE's main duty is to advise the Local Authority on matters connected with the teaching of Religious Education and Collective Worship.
7. SACRE can advise the Authority to review its Agreed Syllabus and can recommend that particular teaching methods, materials and resources are considered for use in Religious Education.

8. A SACRE may also consider any application from Head Teachers that the requirement for Christian collective worship should not apply to a particular school or class of pupils within that school.
9. Darlington has only three Maintained primary schools, the remaining primary and secondary schools are either standalone Academies or Academies within a Multi Academy Trust; however there is a good proportion of the Borough's schools and academies using the Locally Agreed Syllabus.
10. The current Locally Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education was approved in April 2015 and was due for review 2020; at the SACRE Meeting in March 2020 it was recommended that the local authority commence the review process and convene an Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC) to progress, however due to the Covid-19 pandemic meetings of SACRE or an ASC were unable to take place during Spring/Summer 2020 to commence the process.
11. SACRE commenced a consultation exercise with all schools to collate information in relation to the teaching of religious education within their schools; use of the Locally Agreed Syllabus; and information on the daily Act of Collective Worship and withdrawal from collective worship in readiness for a review of the Syllabus when possible. This was carried out on their behalf by Anne Davison – SEND and Inclusion Advisor.

Membership of SACRE

12. The membership of SACRE consists of four representative groups (or committees) and co-opted members. The membership below is the current Membership of SACRE.

Representing Darlington Borough Council

- Councillor Clarke (Cabinet Member with Children and Young People Portfolio).
- Councillor (Chair of Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee)
- Councillor C Hughes (Labour Group Member)
- Councillor Curry (Liberal Democrat Group Member)

Representing Church of England

- Reverend P. Baker
- Martin Stand
- Beth Miller

Representing Other Faith Groups

- Rev Vicky Thompson, Darlington Baptist Church
- Morvyn Sanderson, Methodist Church
- Helen Ellis, Roman Catholic
- Bhopinder Singh, Sikhism

- Dr. Chitra Kumari, Hindu Community
- Dr Quader, Islamic Society of Darlington
- Kelsang Dragden, The Atisha Kadampa Buddhist Centre
- Mrs. M. Calderon, Religious Society of Friends
- Margaret Thomson, United Reformed Church
- Bess Robertson, Darlington Hebrew Congregation
- Jenny Uzzell, Paganism

Representing Teaching Associations

- Stuart Rawle, National Association of Head Teachers (NAHT)
- Fiona Rankin, National Association of School Teachers/Union of Women Teachers

Co-opted Members

- Mike Fryer
- Janet Mole, Humanist Society

Meetings of SACRE

13. SACRE Members have met during the Academic Year 2019/20 on 12 November 2019, 10 March 2020 and 13 July 2020 (cancelled due to Covid-19 restrictions).
14. The SACRE was advised by Anne Davison, SEND Inclusion Advisor from Children and Adult Services and supported by Allison Hill, Democratic Officer.

Chair and Vice Chair of SACRE

15. At the meeting held on 13 March 2017, Jenny Uzzell , National Association of School Teacher/Union of Women Teachers was appointed as Chair and Martin Stand, Church of England was appointed Vice-Chair for a period of three years from the date of appointment.

Synopsis of Meeting Content and Events:

Commission on RE (CORE) Report 2018 'Religion and World Views: The Way Forward'

16. At the meeting held on 12 November 2019, Members received a presentation from Joyce Miller on the Commission on Religious Education (CoRe) 2018 Report 'Religion and World Views: The Way Forward'.
17. Joyce gave some background to the role of the Commission on Religious Education and their vision to change the way in which religious education is perceived and enacted and referred in particular to the two year project which was carried out during 2016 and 2018 which worked towards that goal of transforming religious education in England.

18. The presentation outlined the policy and the underlying principles of the project to teach about religion and worldviews and included the current educational and national challenges; highlighted the four key policy recommendations which related to a subject name change to 'Religion and Worldviews', National Entitlement for all, changes to the law in relation to SACRE'S and removal of the requirement in Law for a Locally Agreed Syllabus and a legal clarification to be sought on selective withdrawal from collective worship, provision of alternative curriculum and access to other curriculum areas.
19. The presentation also outlined three key practice recommendations which included a National body of RE experts to prepare programmes of study; changes to Initial Teacher Education (ITE) to improve training and support for teachers; and funding for resources and provision for continuing professional development (CPD) which Members discussed and welcomed, acknowledging the challenges faced ahead to change the way religious education is delivered and perceived.

Appointment to Vacant Positions

20. Following any resignations from our SACRE Members we continue to appoint to any vacancies as soon as possible to ensure that our attendance at meetings is maximised.

Special Thanks

21. In presenting this report Darlington Borough Council, local School Teachers and Members of Faith Groups be warmly thanked for their collective and individual contributions.

Members of the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education