

To: All SACRE Members

Members, Kent County Council

Corporate Director, Education and Young People Services

Head Teacher / Chair of Governors all schools in Kent

NASACRE



**KENT STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL  
FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

**ANNUAL REPORT**

**2014 – 2015**

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### Opening remarks from the Chair of SACRE

Welcome to the 2014-15 Annual Report of the Kent SACRE. The SACRE has met three times during the academic year. We have continued our commitment to hold at least one meeting each year in a venue away from County Hall. This year's June meeting was hosted by Highworth Girls' Grammar School, an Academy in Ashford. This reflected SACRE's ongoing desire to engage with all schools (including Academies) in Kent.

The SACRE has had a full year working towards the priorities outlined in the Development Plan. One focus has been on developing a Youth SACRE. During this year, our colleagues at Canterbury Christ Church University, hosted a very successful inaugural event for Primary schools: "Knowing you; Knowing me". SACRE also hosted a Secondary event that was expertly facilitated by Lat Blaylock from RE Today. The focus for this event was the subject of Evil, a provocative topic that provided for positive exchanges between students

SACRE has continued to make efforts to engage with all schools to ensure their compliance with requirements to provide high quality Religious Education and opportunities for Collective Worship. SACRE has worked with the Kent Association of Head teachers in order to seek membership of representatives of Primary and Secondary head teachers. Through communications with national appointing bodies, SACRE has tried to quickly fill vacancies that arise in Group 1. We believe it is important that we have a membership drawn from the Faith Groups and the range of schools found locally as they help to ensure that the SACRE is reflective of the diversity found in Kent. SACRE continues to benefit from its partnership with the different faith groups, the Anglican diocesan education boards of Canterbury and Rochester and with Canterbury Christ Church University. We are also thankful for the support that is provided by our former AST colleagues. Not only are they each members or co-opted to SACRE, but they do provide a valuable link between Secondary Schools / Academies and ourselves.

SACRE would like to remind schools that Kent does not currently offer many opportunities for professional development in Religious Education. This, combined with the impact of the absence of RE from the English Baccalaureate in secondary schools, causes the SACRE great concern that Religious Education may not be apportioned the same importance as other subjects in the school curriculum. If, as a part of their monitoring cycle, schools identify RE or Collective Worship as an area that needs development, they need to look for their own bespoke training. The SACRE is grateful to Allan Foster, Consultant Adviser, who was funded by the Local Authority to support SACRE for the period covered by this report, for driving our work forward and keeping us abreast of developments in Religious Education nationally.

As Chairman, I would like to thank all those who serve on Kent SACRE, teachers, faith group representatives. The professional support of our consultant /adviser and the democratic support are also gratefully acknowledged. This team has worked very hard this year to provide support so that we are able achieve our aims despite challenges in a time of ongoing austerity. We are grateful for the ongoing support and interest of the Local Authority and for the active involvement of senior officers and Members in our activities. I believe that Kent SACRE is very well placed to face the challenges ahead as we continue to ensure that Religious Education and Collective Worship retain their rightful place at the heart of our schools.

Steve Manion

Chairman, Kent SACRE

### INTRODUCTION

The 1988 Education Reform Act established the statutory requirement for all Local Authorities (LA) to establish a permanent body called a Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE). The Kent SACRE is an independent body which advises the LA on matters concerned with the provision of Religious Education (RE) and Collective Worship.

#### The Statutory Duties of a SACRE

All LAs are required to establish a SACRE.

A SACRE's main function, as set out in the 1996 Education Act is:

“To advise the Local Education Authority upon such matters connected with religious worship in County schools and the Religious Education to be given in accordance with the Agreed Syllabus as the Authority may refer to the SACRE or as the SACRE may see fit”. (s.391 (1) (a))

Such matters include:-

“Methods of teaching, the choice of materials and the provision of training for teachers”.

A SACRE also:

- Can require the LA to review its current Agreed Syllabus (s.391(3))
- Must consider applications made by a head teacher that the requirement for Collective Worship in County schools 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 in a particular school - “determinations”. (s.394(1))

It is a legal requirement that the SACRE publish an Annual Report to inform relevant parties, including schools, of the advice that SACRE has given to the Local Authority and of the actions taken to support RE and Collective Worship in schools using the Agreed Syllabus, that have resulted from this advice.

The broad role of the SACRE is to support the effective provision of Religious Education and Collective Worship in schools through:

- Giving advice on methods of teaching using the Agreed Syllabus Religious Education;
- Advising the LA on the provision of training for teachers;
- Monitoring inspection reports on Religious Education, Collective Worship and Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development (SMSC);
- Considering complaints about the provision and delivery of Religious Education and Collective Worship referred to by the LA;
- Asking the LA to review its Agreed Syllabus.

This report covers the work of the Kent SACRE during the academic year from September 2014 to August 2015.

Three full SACRE meetings were held during the period covered by this report. Details of SACRE Membership and attendance at meetings can be found in Appendix 3 and agendas and minutes of meetings can be found on the KCC website - [www.Kent.gov.uk/SACRE](http://www.Kent.gov.uk/SACRE).

The report is sent to the Head teachers/Chair of Governors of all schools in the county, The National Association of SACREs (NASACRE), and the Local Authority. The report is also available on the SACRE pages of the Kent website.

## THE SACRE'S MISSION STATEMENT

Kent SACRE seeks to ensure that all pupils in our schools develop spiritually, academically, emotionally and morally, as well as socially, culturally and physically, so that they are able to understand themselves and others and cope with the opportunities, challenges and responsibilities of living in a rapidly changing world.

### **Kent SACRE aspires to:**

- Enhance the quality of religious education and collective worship in Kent schools, and
- Celebrate the religious and cultural diversity found in Kent

### **Our vision is:**

#### **For schools to be able to:**

- provide challenging learning through the RE Curriculum;
- promote an inspirational and aspirational ethos through meaningful and engaging Collective Worship; and
- contribute to community cohesion by engaging the whole school community in an exploration of identity and community in the local, national and global context.

#### **For the Local Authority to:**

- place a high priority on the role of RE and Collective Worship in schools;
- aim to provide sufficient resource to support schools in the above;
- work in partnership with SACRE to build links between schools and local faith communities.

#### **For SACRE members to:**

- represent their constituents in the spirit of promoting educational RE and Collective Worship within statutory regulations;
- represent fairly the views of their constituents as far as this is possible;
- work with other members of SACRE to model and promote respect for and understanding of different beliefs and lifestyles and a universal search for what it means to be human.

### **Our Aims:**

To work with the Local Authority to:

- place a high priority on the role of RE and Collective Worship in schools;
- aim to provide sufficient resources
- work in partnership with SACRE to build links between schools and local faith communities.

To support schools in:

- raising standards of pupil attainment in RE to equate to national expectations of performance levels in other core subjects
- developing the spiritual dimension of the school
- improving the quality of collective worship
- making appropriate provision to meet the needs of all pupils represented within their school community.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Advice to the Local Authority (LA)

The SACRE advises the LA to bring this report to the attention of schools and governing bodies and, in particular, to highlight the following points:

- Following the introduction of the new National Curriculum in September 2014, schools will need to be aware that the existing statutory requirements of the Kent Agreed Syllabus (2012) are still valid. **Schools should use this syllabus as the basis of their R.E. curriculum planning.** The statutory requirements and the non-statutory guidance of this syllabus are available for download from the KELSI website.  
**<http://www.kelsi.org.uk/Curriculum/curriculum-resources/standing-advisory-council-for-religious-education>**
- In all maintained schools other than Voluntary Aided schools or schools of a religious character, but including Voluntary Controlled Schools, **Religious Education has to be taught according to the Kent Agreed Syllabus. However, the Diocese of Canterbury continues to recommend that all Church of England schools also follow the Agreed Syllabus and the Diocese of Rochester recommends that its Voluntary Controlled schools use the Agreed Syllabus;**
- **Academies are reminded of their statutory requirement to teach Religious Education in accordance with their Funding Agreement.** Academies in Kent are recommended to use the Kent Agreed Syllabus to ensure that they fulfil their statutory requirements;
- Following the presentation of the SACRE Annual Report to the County Council's Education and Young People's Services (EYPS) Cabinet Committee, Members had asked that a letter be sent to Sir Michael Wilshaw (HMCI Schools) requesting that RE provision be considered as part of school inspection regime.
- In accordance with the expectations of the Kent Agreed Syllabus, schools are reminded of the **requirement to assess pupils' progress in Religious Education using the two Attainment Targets, and the eight point level descriptors.** The Agreed Syllabus Non-Statutory Guidance (Section 3) provides guidance on assessment and how to use the Level Descriptions for RE;
- **Secondary schools are reminded that Religious Education is a statutory subject and that all KS4 students should follow an accredited course as required in the Agreed Syllabus.**
- **All schools are reminded of their responsibilities to provide opportunities for daily Collective Worship.** The place of collective worship in schools is upheld by statute and has been so since 1944. The basic requirement is that all registered pupils shall take part in an act of collective worship every day. There are only two exceptions to this: parents have the right to withdraw their child from collective worship and pupils in school sixth forms are permitted to decide for themselves whether to attend or not. The Education Reform Act (ERA) 1988 stipulates collective worship must be 'wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character'; it is deemed to be fulfilling this description if it 'reflects the broad traditions of Christian belief, without being distinctive of any Christian denomination'.

- **SACRE guidance on Collective Worship** “Gathering Together – Policy & Practice for Collective Worship” is currently being updated and will be linked to the KELSI web page for RE.
- Schools need to be aware that only a limited **CPD programme for RE is currently being initiated by the LA**; instead schools are expected to identify and access their own training needs through local and national organisations;
- Senior Leaders and Governing Bodies are urged to ensure that **RE Subject Leaders/RE Co-ordinators are adequately supported** in terms of professional development, opportunities to monitor and evaluate the subject, opportunities to train and support colleagues and in having an adequate budget in order to help raise standards in Religious Education;
- Schools are reminded that the Teachers’ Standards (Part One:3) require all **teachers to demonstrate a good subject and curriculum knowledge** and this is crucial within RE in order that pupils develop clear and accurate understanding of different faith communities and world views. Schools are urged to access appropriate CPD to meet the needs of the staff teaching RE;
- Schools are recommended to **subscribe to “RE Today”** in order to access regular publications which provide teaching and learning resources, subject knowledge, access to CPD opportunities, and access to the RE Today web based resources.
- Schools are encouraged to **apply for the RE Quality Mark (REQM)**. Three levels – Bronze, Silver and Gold can be achieved and schools will be able to demonstrate their good practice in RE and have hard work recognised and rewarded ([www.reqm.org](http://www.reqm.org));
- All teachers are urged to ensure that **tasks set for all pupils are appropriately challenging** and meet the needs of the learners. Again, this is a requirement of the Teachers’ Standards (Part One:1, 2 & 5);
- Schools are also urged to look at the range of activities provided for pupils. At all Key Stages there continues to be a difference in boys’ and girls’ attainment. **Teachers are asked to use strategies that are known to be more effective with boys** to try to narrow this gap;
- The SACRE encourages secondary teachers to look at **ways in which they might challenge pupils earlier on in Key Stage 3, especially in the development of reasoning and evaluative skills and in developing extended writing skills**. Evidence shows that where schools do this it impacts significantly on performance in GCSE examinations. (The Agreed Syllabus has guidance on skill development and on Personal, Learning and Thinking Skills as well as other advice on Teaching and Learning processes);
- Kent SACRE continues to work with KCC to ensure that essential and appropriate supporting materials and resources are made available on the Kent Education Learning and Skills Information (KELSI) web pages. Currently the Agreed Syllabus and Non-Statutory Guidance can be accessed here:  
**<http://www.kelsi.org.uk/Curriculum/curriculum-resources/standing-advisory-council-for-religious-education>**



**AN OVERVIEW OF THE SACRE'S WORK:**

**Meetings**

The full SACRE has met on three occasions over the academic year. Group pre-meetings are held from 9:15a.m. The full meeting beginning at 9:30a.m. Meetings end at 12:30p.m.

**(1) 25 November 2014 – County Hall, Maidstone**

Mr R Gough, Cabinet member for Education and Health reform attended the meeting to take a question and answer session and discuss the relationship of the local Authority with RE in schools.

He had previously met a small group of SACRE members, which had resulted in a letter being sent to Mr Gove. He agreed to contact his successor, Nicky Morgan and highlight Kent's concerns about RE's place within the school curriculum and the difficulty of attracting quality specialist teachers to the subject.

Mr Foster presented the final draft of the 2013/14 Annual Report. Members noted the style had been made more reflective of the way Kent worked, having researched other Counties reports and noted greater emphasis had been given to Kent's mission statement.

The second secondary Youth SACRE event had taken place and been attended by thirteen schools. Lat Blaylock (editor of RE Today) was facilitator for the day. His theme was the presence of evil, which was explored by various creative methods, such as board games, drawing, story board, post-it notes to answer questions posted around the Council Chamber, stories and philosophies such as Nihilism. The teachers attended a very useful breakaway session facilitated by a couple of SACRE members.

Members agreed that they wished to build on the success of the day and organise another event the following year with an additional separate event for primary aged children in school years 5 and 6.

The usual standing items including an update of the Budget position, Development Plan and Overview of national and local developments were considered.

A working group to rewrite the Shaping the Spirit publication was appointed and the meeting concluded with an invitation to SACRE members to attend the forthcoming Kent and Medway HUB. Meeting.

**(2) 10 March 2015 - County Hall, Maidstone**

The first item for discussion was the Budget which was reported to be in a healthy position.

Members next debated the proposed Youth events to be held in 2015. Ideas to publicise and promote engagement with older students were considered, it was acknowledged that secondary schools often found it difficult to release students and teachers due to timetabling pressures.

The primary event 'Knowing You, Knowing Me' to be held on 20 May 2015 would be at Canterbury Christ Church University to give Year 5 pupils an experience of university campus. After registration and refreshment the day would begin with the opportunity to meet and greet other schools and then split into two groups; half would take part in a reflection workshop led by CCCU students and half would meet representatives of a faith different to their own. After lunch the two groups swap.

It was noted the event had proved to be hugely popular with 210 applications for 150 places.

The Shaping the Spirit working group had met and developed a briefing paper taking account of the publication of new guidance from the Dept. of Education on SMSC and British values. Eventually the revised document would be distributed via a link to all schools and added to the County Council's website.

The Development Plan had been revised to take account of the latest objectives:- establish the Conference to Review the Agreed Syllabus, REAct and timetabling of additional meetings required: development of SMSC Guidance for schools; and briefing meetings for Youth SACRE events.

Members were updated on current events, including the proposed NASACRE Trojan Horse aftermath conference, AGM and Executive elections, the Kent SACRE survey summary 2014 Report and that Mr Foster had responded on behalf of SACRE to the Dept. of Education's consultation on the new examinations. Finally it was noted that the Annual report had been presented to the County Council's Education and Young People's Services (EYPS) Cabinet Committee. Members suggested the KCC write to Sir Michael Wilshaw regarding the issue of RE being part of the Ofsted inspection.

The meeting concluded with a thought provoking interactive presentation from Miss Walters, a member of the Church of England group, about 'Preparing teachers to develop SMSC'.

### **(3) 17 June 2015 – Highworth Girls Grammar School ( Academy), Ashford.**

After the usual items on membership changes, matters arising from the previous minutes and a budget update members moved on to consider the RE Curriculum Review. Liz Pope, the Highworth teacher hosting the meeting gave her lively presentation "Insights from the Top; being part of the NATRE Executive."

The members debated how SACRE could best use the three aims of the Review:

- Know about and understand a range of religions and worldviews
- Express ideas and insights about the nature, significance and impact of religions worldwide
- Gain and deploy the skills needed to engage seriously with religions and worldviews.

The free Youth Primary SACRE event had taken place at CCCU, attended by 31 primary schools each with up to 4 pupils. Members received the positive evaluation report prepared by the CCCU faculty of Education Outreach team and were delighted with the events overwhelming success.

Mr Manion (SACRE Chairman) had written to the Cabinet member to request permission to start the review of the locally Agreed Syllabus with the aim of introducing a revised syllabus for implementation in schools by September 2017. Members volunteered to form a working party from each of the four constituent groups. Clarification of funding would be sought before the Conference could progress.

Following the NASACRE AGM it was noted NASACRE was promoting the idea of regional networking and collaboration. Two members, Mr Foster and Miss Walters had attended the "Trojan Horse" event and heard Alan Brine speak about Ofsted's review of schools in the Birmingham area and the issues in Tower Hamlets concerning possible undue influence by Muslim groups on Governing Bodies. Other speakers included Joyce Miller, Joy Schmack and Lesley Prior led a workshop concerning Collective Worship.

Mrs Paterson (Canterbury Diocesan Board Rep) had attended the last HUB meeting, where amongst other topics the REQM had been discussed, it was noted that Kent SACRE had

been pleased to support local schools with this. The Hub had been operating for a year and its format was being reviewed. After a reminder about the start of the month of Ramadan members agreed 2016 SACRE dates and the meeting concluded with the agreement to make a donation to the Academy in appreciation for hosting the meeting.

### **Kent Secondary Youth SACRE, November 18th 2014**

Lat Blaylock (Editor of RE Today magazine) was facilitator for the day looking at the issue of Evil. “What does evil mean?” “What do we think is evil?” “What are the evils in the world today?” “Is religion evil and how does it fit into society today?”.

These were some of the questions posed by Lat. He provided a range of examples and used a variety of creative methods; such as a board game; drawing; using Story Board (post it notes to answer questions which were posted around the Council Chamber); stories; and philosophies such as Nihilism, to encourage responses from students. This was a very active and thought provoking session.

The session concluded with a true story from Maputo, Mozambique. Bishop Dinis asked Christian Aid for a donation to swap bicycles and tools for guns to start a gun amnesty. This was enormously successful where weapons were handed in, but what to do with them? They were turned into works of art/sculptures by some local people. Lat asked the students to do the same with pictures of weapons and prizes were given for the most imaginative artwork.

Lat ended by stating that the “Golden Rule” exists in all faiths and shared statistics of various religious charities helping people throughout the world. This event was very well received by students and teachers in attendance. As a result, SACRE considered the value of hosting a similar event in the future, but referring to it as a ‘Secondary Conference for Young People.’

### **Kent Primary Youth SACRE, May 20<sup>th</sup> 2015 “Knowing me; Knowing you.” Hosted by Canterbury Christ Church University**

This event had proved to be hugely popular with 210 applications for 150 places. After registration and refreshments the day began with the opportunity to meet and greet other schools and then split into two groups; half took part in a reflection workshop led by CCCU students and half met representatives of a faith different to their own. After lunch the two groups swapped around. Feedback from pupils and teachers indicated that this was a very successful and beneficial event that ought to become a regular event on SACRE’s calendar.

### **SACRE Development Plan**

In 2014 and early 2015, SACRE reviewed its development plan to set out some areas of achievable activities over the coming years. Updates included initial thinking about the next review of the Kent Agreed Syllabus, in the light of recent national developments, and the future of Youth SACRE activities following the successful events that had been held previously. The focus for this plan is to ensure that statutory requirements are met. The 2014 – 2015 Development Plan can be found as Appendix 2, attached to this report.

### **Professional Administrative Support**

The Local Authority provides support in the following ways:

- a dedicated clerk to support the Committee
- funding for a dedicated Consultant Adviser to support and advise SACRE
- an annual budget to support the running costs of Committee meetings and for the SACRE to perform its statutory functions
- space on KELSI web pages for RE and Collective Worship resources

## **ADDITIONAL SACRE ACTIVITIES**

### **National Links**

Kent SACRE is a member of NASACRE (National Association of SACREs) and representatives attend national meetings. A representative also attends the regional meetings for SACRE.

**NASACRE AGM. 21<sup>st</sup>. May 2015.** A very successful NASACRE annual conference was held. The Rt Hon Charles Clarke gave a great deal to consider in his keynote address and the seminar addresses from Prof Denise Cush and Mary Myatt provided thought provoking starting points for regional round table discussions.

### **NASACRE 'Trojan Horse' Conference. 20th May 2015**

Alan Brine (former HMI with responsibility for RE at Ofsted) spoke about Ofsted's review of schools in the Birmingham area and also in Tower Hamlets where concerns about undue influence by Muslim groups on Governing bodies were causing concern. Other speakers included Joyce Miller who spoke about the aftermath of 'The Trojan Horse' and implications for schools; Joy Schmack fed back on her review of Ofsted school reports and the lack of helpful comment about SCSM development; and Lesley Prior led a workshop concerning Collective Worship and what was happening in some LEAs with regard to determinations.

### **Local and National Developments**

During the period of this report, five Freedom of Information requests have been received. One of these concerned the serving of halal meat in school meals, and the teaching of "Islamic studies" and "British values" in schools, the other four were requests for information regarding the number of Collective Worship determinations that SACRE had approved.

SACRE, on behalf of KCC Education and Young People's Service, responded to the DfE consultation on the new GCSE and A Level examinations for Religious Education.

Lord Nash, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Schools, had written to all SACRES to encourage them to consider ways the locally agreed syllabus could help pupils to develop an understanding of Christianity, whilst also learning about the teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain.

A working group met in early February to revise the Shaping the Spirit document following the publication of new guidance from the Department of Education on SMSC and British Values. It was noted that the previous document was out of date and contained expired links but in light of the latest Ofsted Framework for School Inspections guidance to schools on SMSC was essential. This new guidance would be made available to schools as soon as it is completed.

SACRE, in partnership with the Local Authority, continues to work behind the scenes to support schools as they fight to keep an exciting and stimulating, broad and balanced curriculum at the heart of what they offer to pupils of all ages. RE should be a significant part of that curriculum, because it creates opportunities for pupils to grapple with those deep and challenging questions about who they are, and what their place is in the rapidly-changing world around them. Kent pupils deserve the best RE that we can give them, because they are our future

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

### **The Locally Agreed Syllabus 2012**

Section 390 of the Education Act 1996 requires Local Authorities to institute a review of the locally Agreed Syllabus five years after the completion of its last review. The last review process took place in 2011. The current syllabus, 'REact 2012', was required to be implemented in county schools from September 2012 and is being used successfully in many county schools. Feedback about the syllabus has been extremely positive. Academies, Independent and Free Schools in the County are invited to use the locally Agreed Syllabus. SACRE is now considering its approach to the next review of the locally Agreed Syllabus, and the extent to which it will utilise the recent Religious Education Council's Review of RE.

### **Continuing Professional Development (CPD)**

During this year, with the support of KCC, a limited number of CPD opportunities were offered to schools. Additional local networking meetings have been held, and the emerging RE Teacher's Hub has held a number of meetings in collaboration with Canterbury Christ Church University and Teacher Associations.

SACRE does have concerns that schools do not seem willing to support CPD opportunities that involve costs. If schools are expected to support their staff with CPD opportunities provided by national bodies, e.g. NATRE, RE Today etc. then additional costs will be incurred.

## **MONITORING STANDARDS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

### **Ofsted Reports**

SACRE has been considering, and analysing, OFSTED reports for Kent schools over the past year where there are references to RE and SMSC. This has helped in monitoring standards of RE. There have been very few issues raised for Kent school with regard to RE or SMSC.

### **School Self-Evaluation**

The SACRE recommends that all subject leaders for RE in all schools should regularly evaluate the quality of provision in the subject to identify strengths and areas for development.

## **EXAMINATION RESULTS**

### **GCSE – The National Picture**

#### **Full course GCSE Religious Studies entries rise, but number of schools with no RS students at all is increasing**

The number of pupils in England and Wales taking GCSE Religious Studies full course has risen again this year, up 5.3% against 2014 to 283,756. This echoes the increase in A Level entries, which are up 6.5% this year compared with 2014.

However the removal of short courses from Department for Education (DfE) performance tables is having a serious and negative impact on the number of pupils choosing to take RS at GCSE level, with an increasing number of schools having no pupils at all taking the subject.

DfE performance tables do not take account of results in short courses. The GCSE short course RS, which had been very popular in the past and provided a reward for schools who

provided RE for all, has suffered as a result. The short course is delivered at GCSE standard but covers half the content of a full course and is therefore worth half a GCSE. Changes in entries for short courses have a disproportionately significant impact on RS: almost two thirds of all short course GCSEs taken in England and Wales are in RS.

The damage to take-up of the RS GCSE short course comes at a time when RS is otherwise a subject growing in popularity and when the government is rightly emphasising the importance for young people to have knowledge and understanding of religions and non-religious beliefs. In addition, reforms to GCSE RS make it an increasingly attractive and rigorous subject, while increasing numbers of pupils are carrying RS on to A-level.

The key outcomes for Religious Education in England and Wales at KS4 in 2015 are as follows:

- There were 283,756 entries for the full course in GCSE RS, a rise of 5.3% from 2014 (269,494)
- There were 86,679 entries for the short course in GCSE RS, a decline of 26.8% from 2014 (118,481)
- There were 370,435 entries for GCSE RS (combined short and full courses), a decline of 4.5% from 2014 (387,915)
- In 2014 there were 1,197 schools making no entries for any RS qualification; a rise from 268 in 2010.
- 29.6% of entries for the full course in GCSE RS were awarded an A or an A\*
- 11.8% of entries for the short course in GCSE RS were awarded an A or an A\*

When RS GCSE entries in England over the past four years are compared to those in Wales (where the EBacc and the average point score at GCSE have not been adopted as school performance measures), the following patterns emerge:

### **England**

Take up of the GCSE RS short course has fallen from 211,269 in 2012 to 68,890 in 2015 (-67.3%)

GCSE RS full course entries in England have increased from 216,182 in 2012 to 271,917 in 2015 (25.7%)

### **Wales**

Short course GCSE RS entries have declined slightly from 19,182 in 2012 to 17,789 in 2015 (-7.3%)

RS GCSE full course entries have increased from 10,409 in 2012 to 11,839 in 2015 (13.7%)

Overall this means that compared with 2012 over 85,000 fewer pupils in England will complete key stage 4 this year having not gaining a qualification in Religious Studies (a drop of 20.3%).

This echoes research by the National Association of Teachers of RE (published in November 2013) that found that a third of community schools and over a third of academies without a religious character are still failing to meet their legal or contractual agreements to provide religious education for this key age group.

## KENT results at GCSE 2015

Once again, this year there has been no data collected from Kent schools for RS GCSE Short Course. This due to the fact that this course is no longer recognised by DfE for School Performance data.

In line with national trends the number of entries for RS GCSE Full Course from Kent schools continues to rise (+4.3% in 2015). In 2015 the number of entries was 5902 (5647 in 2014). This is only a very small proportion of the number of students on roll – 16,141. This means that almost 30% of Kent students are not being entered for an accredited course for their study of RS in Key Stage 4. The Kent Agreed Syllabus (2012) states that: **“Religious Education must be taught to all students in this key stage. This syllabus requires that it should be taught through a course leading to an accredited qualification.”**

The provisional results for 2015 show that the number of students achieving A\*-C grades has fallen from 72.2% of entries in 2014, to 68.5%. (The National A\*-C rate in 2015 being 70.6%). A similar decline in the A\*-G rates is also noted (95.6% in 2015 compared with 98.1% in 2014). Kent schools have now fallen below the National rate of 97.8% on 2015. **These are worrying declines that SACRE would hope are reversed in future years.**

## GCE 'A' LEVEL – The National Picture

**The key outcomes of the 2015 A level results in England and Wales for Religious Education are as follows:**

- 23,372 RS A level entries were recorded, an increase of 6.5% on 2014 and more than double the number in 2003 (11,132 entries were recorded in 2003)
- The number of entries for RS A level has increased by 110% since 2003, more than for any arts, humanity or social science subject (the nearest subject is Political Studies with an increase of 62%). Among all subjects, only Further Maths has seen more rapid growth than RS
- 23.9% of entries for RS A level were awarded an A or an A\*
- There were 37,365 entries for RS at AS level, an increase of 3.5% on 2014 and more than double the number in 2003 (15,482 entries were recorded in 2003)

**The contextual evidence shows the growing status of RS as a subject for Higher Education entry:**

- The Russell Group of top universities has made it clear that RS A level provides 'suitable preparation for University generally'
- Both Oxford and Cambridge University include Religious Studies in the top level list of 'generally suitable Arts A levels'
- Applicants with Religious Studies A level were more likely to gain admission to study History at Oxford University in 2012 than those with A levels in many 'facilitating' subjects
- 20% of students admitted to Oxford University to study mathematics in 2012 had an RS A level (more than those with Economics, Physics and Business Studies A levels)
- Research from the Centre for Evaluation and Monitoring at Durham University on the comparative difficulty of different subjects at A level showed that RS was 'in the middle difficulty range, similar to Geography and more demanding than English'.

### **KENT results at GCE AS and A level 2015**

In line with National data, there has been an increase in the number of RS 'AS' and 'A' Level entries for students in Kent. The summary data on page 17 shows dramatic increases in entries compared to previous years. These may be accounted for by changes to the data gathering process used by Kent.

Kent students' success rates at both 'AS' and 'A' levels remain very much in line with national data, with the exception of the percentage achieving grades A\* - B at 'A' Level. For this measure, 58.7% of Kent students achieved the higher grades compared with the national figure of 54.5%. This is an outstanding performance.

**SACRE would like to acknowledge the successes of Kent students and recognise the continued dedication of RE teachers across the county whose skill and hard work have supported students in their achievements at all levels.**

A summary of the RS GCSE full course and of the GCE AS and A level results for 2015 (with comparisons with previous years) is in Appendix 1 (page 17).

### **Complaints about Religious Education**

No formal complaints were received under Section 23 of the Education Reform Act 1988 regarding Religious Education in Kent schools.

### **COLLECTIVE WORSHIP**

Schools are reminded that the publication, "Gathering Together – Policy and Practice for Collective Worship" produced by the Kent SACRE in 2008, gives support as well as guidance on Collective Worship for Kent Schools. This is currently being updated, and will be linked to the KELSI web page for RE in the near future.

### **Determinations**

The 1996 Education Act (section 394 – 1) empowers a SACRE to grant the request of a head teacher for alternative Collective Worship, where it is considered that the nature of a pupil population makes it inappropriate to be wholly or mainly Christian.

In the year of this report, the SACRE has not received any requests from schools for a determination.

### **Complaints Concerning Collective Worship**

No complaints were received under Section 23 of the Education Reform Act 1988 regarding Collective Worship in Kent schools.



## Kent SACRE Annual Report 2014 - 2015

### Appendix 1

#### Examination Results 2015

Year	Exam type	Boys entries	Girls entries	Total entries	Kent % A*-G	Nat % A*-G	Kent % A*-C	Nat % A*-C
2011	GCSE Full Course	1703	2160	3863	98.4	98.4	77.7	73.2
2012	GCSE Full Course	1760	2181	3941	98.7	98.5	77.6	73.6
2013	GCSE Full Course	2128	2351	4479	98.7	98.3	74.5	72.4
2014	GCSE Full Course	2656	2991	5647	98.1	97.9	72.2	70.1
2015	<b>GCSE Full Course</b>	<b>2776</b>	<b>3126</b>	<b>5902</b>	<b>95.6</b>	<b>97.8</b>	<b>68.5</b>	<b>70.6</b>
2011	GCSE Short Course	2907	3018	5925	94.8	94.9	50.9	51.8
2012	GCSE Short Course	2688	2876	5564	94.2	95.6	51.2	52.8
2013	GCSE Short Course	1796	2661	4457	95.5	95.0	59.2	53.9
2014	GCSE Short Course	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	95.8	N/A	56.7
2015	<b>GCSE Short Course *</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>
					<b>Kent % A*-E</b>	<b>Nat % A*-E</b>	<b>Kent % A*-B</b>	<b>Nat % A*-B</b>
2011	GCE AS	76	129	205	89.3	92	35.1	45
2012	GCE AS	80	132	212	94.2	92.5	44.6	44.8
2013	GCE AS	78	114	192	94.3	92.2	40.1	44.6
2014	GCE AS	80	118	198	78.1	86.4	23.4	27.1
2015	<b>GCE AS**</b>	<b>366</b>	<b>563</b>	<b>929</b>	<b>92.1</b>	<b>92.7</b>	<b>44.0</b>	<b>43.1</b>
2011	GCE A	192	349	541	99.6	98	59.5	56.9
2012	GCE A	182	309	491	99.8	98.6	56.4	55.9
2013	GCE A	189	302	491	99.6	98.8	54.2	55.3
2014	GCE A	184	329	513	99.8	99.8	49.3	53.4
2015	<b>GCE A***</b>	<b>275</b>	<b>440</b>	<b>715</b>	<b>98.6</b>	<b>98.9</b>	<b>58.7</b>	<b>54.5</b>

\* Please note that GCSE Short Course data for 2015 results was not collected for Kent schools.

\*\* GCE AS results for 2015 show a dramatic increase in number of entries for 2015 over 2014, this is probably a result of changes to data gathering from Kent schools.

\*\*\* GCE A level results for 2015 show a dramatic increase in number of entries for 2015 over 2014, this is probably a result of changes to data gathering from Kent schools.

**Appendix 2**

**SACRE Development Plan 2013 - 2015**

**SACRE Development Plan March 2015**

**PRIORITY OBJECTIVE: Advise the LA on RE given in accordance with the Agreed Syllabus**

<b>What?</b>	<b>and How?</b>	<b>Reporting</b>	<b>Resources</b>	<b>Legal Requirements</b>
Implementation of the Agreed Syllabus for RE	Contacting a sample of 5% of schools encompassing a) primary b) secondary) across 4 geographical areas	Written report to SACRE which may or may not be included in the Annual Report	Consultant - 6 days	Advise the LA on RE given in accordance with the Agreed Syllabus, and CW
Analysis of exam results	Compilation of local and national data	Written Draft report to SACRE Annual Report to NASACRE Annual Report to LA Education Cabinet Committee	Consultant – 2 days SACRE Chairman	Publish an Annual Report which is sent to NASACRE
Quality and provision of RE	Short Annual questionnaire to Chairs of Governors	Written summary to SACRE annually	Consultant – 4 days Admin. support	Monitor the provision and quality of RE
Provision and Compliance of Collective Worship	Short Annual questionnaire to Chairs of Governors	Written annual summary to SACRE	Consultant – included above Admin. support	Reporting to LA on CW in schools
Review of Agreed Syllabus for implementation Sept 2017	Plan for establishing Agreed Syllabus Conference Set out Timeframe for Review process	ASC and timeframe agreed by SACRE Principles for new KAS agreed by SACRE	SACRE members ASC members Consultant Budget for meetings and resources	To review locally Agreed Syllabus

**OBJECTIVE: Management of SACRE**

<b>What?</b>	<b>and How?</b>	<b>Reporting</b>	<b>Resources</b>	<b>Legal Requirements</b>
Hold 3 meetings of SACRE p.a. plus 3 meetings of Chair’s pre-briefing meeting	Booked in County Hall and Oakwood House Calendars	Agendas and Minutes Financial Budget Annual Report	Consultant – 6 days Admin. support Chair Membership	Hold meetings in public. Make Agendas and Minutes available to the public
Advise LA on RE and CW matters relating its functions	Annual Report Verbal/written reports/briefings	Annual Report Verbal/written reports/briefings	Consultant – 4 days Admin. support SACRE Chairman	Produce and Annual Report to advise LA

**SACRE PRIORITIES**

<b>What</b>	<b>and How</b>	<b>Reporting</b>	<b>Resources</b>
SACRE Key Stage 4 Conference	Working group Half-day conference Link to KYCC?	Evaluation and Feedback to SACRE	Consultant – 1 day Working group Admin. support Financial support
SACRE Primary Conference	Working group Half-day event May 2015 CCCU staff & students	Evaluation and Feedback to SACRE	Consultant – 1 day Working group Admin. support Financial support
Raise profile and status of RE and CW in Kent	Youth SACRE events Communications with LA and schools Attendance at local and national events SACRE members visits to schools Relationship with LA	Evaluation and feedback to SACRE  SACRE Annual report	SACRE members SACRE Chairman Consultant Admin. support
Deliver high quality CPD	LA to be advised to commission CPD Collaboration with Dioceses Collaboration with CCCU and Regional Hub	Evaluation and feedback to SACRE	Consultant SACRE members SACRE Budget
Development of SMSC Guidance for schools	Working Group to review 'Shaping the Spirit' to reflect recent DfE and Ofsted guidance	Reviewed guidance to SACRE Published to schools on KELSI web page	Consultant Working Group SACRE budget

Appendix 3

KENT SACRE Membership and Attendance at meetings 2014 – 2015

**GROUP 1: CHRISTIAN AND OTHER RELIGIOUS DENOMINATIONS REFLECTING THE PRINCIPAL RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS OF THE AREA (13)**

MEMBERSHIP	25/11/2014	10/3/2015	17/6/2015
<b>Free Church (4)</b>			
Miss J Webb – (Baptist)	YES	YES	NO
Mrs E Talbot - (Methodist)	-	-	YES
Mrs E May – (United Reformed Church)	-	YES	NO
Mrs J Wigg -(Salvation Army)	NO	NO	YES
<b>Roman Catholic (3)</b>			
Mrs A Donnelly	NO	YES	NO
Mrs F Hawkes	-	YES	SICK
Miss S Malone	YES	YES	NO
<b>Buddhism (1)</b>			
Mrs C Elapatha	NO	NO	YES
<b>The Greek Orthodox Church (1)</b>			
Mr M Papadopoulos	NO	YES	YES
<b>Hinduism (1)</b>			
Mr R Chakkedath	NO	SICK	SUB
<b>Islam (1)</b>			
Mrs N Younosi ( <i>Group Convenor/SACRE Vice-Chair</i> )	YES	YES	YES
<b>Judaism (1)</b>			
Rabbi C Cohen	NO	YES	NO
<b>Sikhism (1)</b>			
Mrs Deepinder Kaur Gill	NO	NO	NO
<b>Co-opted Members</b>			
Mrs J Grant (Baha'i)	YES	YES	YES

**GROUP 2: CHURCH OF ENGLAND (6)**

MEMBERSHIP	25/11/2014	10/3/2015	17/6/2015
<b>Rochester Diocesan Board of Education (3)</b>			
Mrs V Corbyn ( <i>Group Convenor</i> )	YES	YES	NO
Mr R Tyson	YES	YES	NO
Miss K Anderson	NO	maternity	-
<b>Canterbury Diocesan Board of Education (3)</b>			
Mrs B Naden	YES	YES	YES
Mrs N Paterson	-	YES	YES
Miss R Walters	YES	YES	YES

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<b>GROUP 3: TEACHER ASSOCIATIONS (6)</b> <i>(Having regard to local circumstances)</i> <b>MEMBERSHIP</b>	25/11/2014	10/3/2015	17/6/2015
<b>National Union of Teachers</b> Mr W Chambers	-	YES	YES
<b>National Association of Schoolmasters/Union of Women Teachers</b> Ms K Burke ( <i>Group Convenor</i> )	YES	YES	YES
<b>Association of Teachers and Lecturers</b> Vacancy 1.4.2014			
<b>Kent Association of Head Teachers Primary</b> Mrs N Caisley	YES	YES	NO
<b>Kent Association of Head Teachers Secondary</b> Vacancy			
<b>National Association of Head Teachers Kent Branch</b> Vacancy			
<b>Co-opted Members</b> Miss T Kelvie Miss E Pope	NO NO	NO NO	NO YES

### **GROUP 4: LOCAL AUTHORITY (4)**

<b>MEMBERSHIP</b>	19/11/2013	5/3/2014	26/6/2014
<b>Nominees of Conservative Group (2)</b>			
Mr S Manion ( <i>SACRE Chairman and Group Convenor</i> )	YES	YES	NO
Mr M J Northey	YES	YES	YES
<b>Nominee of the Labour Group (1)</b>			
Mr T Maddison	YES	YES	YES
<b>Nominee of UKIP Group (1)</b>			
Mr J Elenor	YES	YES	YES