

LINCOLNSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Lincolnshire's

Standing Advisory Council

for

Religious Education

(SACRE)

ANNUAL REPORT

2009 – 2010

DRAFT

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1. Introduction from Chairman

This year has continued to witness the establishment of Lincolnshire SACRE's monitoring function within schools. The regular update reports on the quality of RE and acts of collective worship in Lincolnshire schools keep SACRE well informed. They also enable the RE Adviser to provide support and training tailored to individual schools' needs based upon areas identified as requiring development. The impact of such events is carefully monitored. We remain as confident as we can be that funding will continue to be made available to retain the services of an Adviser so that improvements in provision and outcomes can be sustained.

SACRE also remains well informed about Ofsted's evaluations of pupils' Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) development and the very detailed information that the Diocese provides through its Section 48 Inspections.

SACRE continues to have serious concerns about the lack of rigour and consistency shown in some Ofsted reports, both in relation to SMSC but also curricular provision for RE and the legal requirement for a daily act of collective worship. This appears to be a growing problem with each new framework for inspection and this has been discussed regularly in our meetings. The result is that sometimes we find our hands are tied when it comes to challenging, for example, schools not meeting statutory requirements who have been told by Ofsted that their provision is satisfactory, or better. Within the 'outcomes for pupils' section of inspection reports SMSC is sometimes lost or the four aspects treated as one. This makes it difficult to understand or get to grips with the evidence for judgements about spiritual and cultural development. We are aware that a significant number of our schools are told by Ofsted that they need to improve pupils' understanding of life in a multi-cultural society. While we appreciate the problems faced by many, in terms of providing pupils with first hand experience of different faith communities, we are constantly looking for new ways to support schools in this area, for example, through the development of multi-cultural teaching materials for key stage 1.

Looking back on 2009/10 I am reminded of the varied and complex nature of many of our discussions. I continue to be grateful to the members of SACRE for their enthusiasm, the professional and challenging quality of debate they provide during meetings, and their commitment to the individual roles they perform. The quality of continuing professional development for RE continues to be high, plans are underway for the statutory review of the Agreed Syllabus and academic results overall in Religious Studies are close to the national average.

It has been a year of positive achievements as we see our monitoring systems well and truly embedded and accepted by schools. A comprehensive range of continual professional development activities are offered both centrally and school level by the LA and the Diocese.

Taking all of the above into account I remain confident when I think about the future and the significant contribution Lincolnshire SACRE can make to the local and national picture. We are living in a time when significant changes are being made to education and those of us who are committed to RE will need more than ever to make our voices heard so that this important aspect of the curriculum is protected. We will continue to nurture existing relationships, and strengthen our engagement with different faith

communities, so that our children and young people can have the benefit of that dialogue so they can develop fully as citizens in our multicultural society.

Councillor Mrs Christine Talbot
Chairman of Lincolnshire SACRE
January 2011

2. Background

Standing Advisory Councils for Religious Education (SACRE) were established by the Education Reform Act (1988). The main function of SACREs is to advise the Local Authority (LA) on matters connected with RE and collective worship. SACREs also oversee the five yearly revision of the Religious Education (RE) Agreed Syllabus and consider any complaints about the provision and delivery of RE referred to it by the LA.

The membership of SACRE comprises four groups together with nominated Advisers. The groups are:

1. Christian denominations and other religions and religious denominations;
2. the Church of England;
3. teachers' associations;
4. the Local Authority.

3. Meetings of SACRE

There were three meetings of Lincolnshire's SACRE during the academic year 2009/2010, in November 2008, March 2009 and July 2009. Fixed items on the agenda included the monitoring of inspection reports in relation to SMSC development; analysis of Section 48 inspection reports, reports on the Adviser's monitoring visits to schools and an ongoing review of SACRE's Action Plan. The composition and management of SACRE has remained unchanged, with the Chairman, Councillor Mrs Christine Talbot being unanimously elected for another year as well as the Vice Chairman, Mr Neil McFarlane. Attendance generally remains good. The strength of debate has ensured that issues have been dealt with efficiently and that the priority areas of the Action Plan have been addressed.

4. Religious education

Standards in RE

Key stages 1-3

Assessment remains something of an issue in RE. More schools in the county have assessment systems in place but frequently there is uncertainty about what the data and information actually says about standards and achievement. Based on evidence from monitoring visits carried out by the RE Adviser it would appear that standards overall remain in line with the expectations of the Agreed Syllabus. During 2009/10 there has been a focus on *how* judgements about standards are reached and what teachers are doing to raise standards and use the higher levels. It is likely that when the syllabus is reviewed during 2010/2011 further guidance will be provided on assessment.

Examination results - see Appendix 1

School reviews: report from RE Adviser

The work of the RE Adviser is now well established. The main focus remains that of monitoring provision for RE and collective worship but also supportive. Systems for monitoring remain unchanged since the last Annual Report. A range of primary, secondary and special schools are selected following Section 5 inspections. The overall effectiveness grade is also taken into account to give a balance in relation to outcomes. Visits focus upon provision and outcomes and may include lesson observations, discussion of documentation, interviews with pupils, scrutiny of work and dialogue with headteachers. Some schools prepare by completing the 'Self Evaluation Toolkit', available on-line. Following the visit the school receives a summary report which outlines good practice and possible areas for improvement. The report can be used by schools as evidence for further Ofsted visits (including subject inspections) and for their School Improvement Partner meetings. The visits are now very well established and schools see them as positive and developmental, leading to an overwhelmingly positive response from headteachers, co-ordinators and heads of department.

Summary of outcomes from visits:

Areas of Strength:

- Proactive subject specialist co-ordinators and heads of department who are well supported by headteachers and/or senior managers.
- Positive attitudes towards the subject from pupils and other teachers.
- Overall, RE is well resourced.

Areas for improvement:

- Assessment needs to be strengthened in the way it is used, i.e. to provide a clear picture of achievement of groups and individuals.
- Schools need to continue to provide pupils with first hand experiences of religions other than Christianity (links with churches are generally good) through visits out and visitors in.

Multi-cultural development remains high on the agenda of many Lincolnshire schools, but because of their location (many schools are very isolated) and the fact that many of them are predominantly mono-cultural, there are difficulties with this. Websites continue to be used for 'virtual' visits to places of worship, and some schools have developed links with inner city, multi-racial schools. Increasingly individuals from a range of faith communities are offering their services to schools and providing presentations about their beliefs. Ofsted grades/comments for community cohesion sometimes appears to contradict those given for cultural development and SACRE is monitoring this closely.

Acts of Collective Worship

The overall picture remains positive in the sense that schools do value assemblies as a time for strengthening a spirit of community and celebrating achievement. Themes are usually based around moral and ethical issues, and some built in time for reflection and prayer. Key festivals from different faiths are celebrated with services to celebrate Christian festivals often held in the local church. Members of the local clergy are frequently involved in assemblies. Ofsted inspection reports appear to comment less and less on this legal requirement but despite this there is evidence of some good

practice. Concerns remain about schools where such good practice is not satisfactorily embedded.

Support for schools

The RE Adviser also provides support for schools. During 2009/10 this has covered the following areas:

- Support for secondary heads of department on a one to one basis, including those who receive little or no support from the senior management of the school.
- Leading staff meetings to help teachers develop the 'learning from' attainment target.
- Support for co-ordinators who are not RE specialists.
- Scrutiny of key documentation (policies, planning, etc.) by email.

Parents also seek support and advice, usually over the telephone, e.g. regarding the right of withdrawal and legal requirements regarding provision for RE.

Section 48 inspections

Lincolnshire Schools Section 48 inspection data.

Academic Year 2009-10

Grade	Overall SIAS Grade	Distinctive Christian Character	Collective Worship	Religious Education	Leadership and Management
1	13	14	15	1	13
2	18	17	16	8	18
3	1	1	2	1	1
4	1	1	0	0	1
Percentages					
1	39.4	42.4	45.5	10.0	39.4
2	54.5	51.5	48.5	80.0	54.5
3	3.0	3.0	6.1	10.0	3.0
4	3.0	3.0	0.0	0.0	3.0

Summary of the strengths and issues for development identified during 2009/10.

Established strengths identified

- ▶ The quality of leadership within the school contributes to:
 - its significant success

- relationships within the school
- relationships within the community and with local church
- the deeply felt caring and supportive ethos
- the behaviour and understanding of the pupils of the Christian way of life
- the Christian values which schools promote
- the living out of the Christian values of the school.

Main issues development

Schools were encourage to pursue developments in:

- Creating links with other schools to share good practice
- Developing global links and links with other major world faiths
- Increasing opportunities for all stakeholders including the pupils to contribute to the monitoring, evaluation, planning and effectiveness of collective worship
- Embedding the monitoring and evaluation by governors
- Developing resources for classroom worship Enable pupils to become active partners with staff and clergy in the delivery of collective worship
- Enabling pupils to become active partners with staff and clergy in the delivery of collective worship
- Ensuring that governor involvement in monitoring and evaluating impacts on the work of the school as a church school
- Strengthening the visual impact of the school as a Church of England school within and around a school
- Developing reflective areas in classrooms enhancing pupils' spiritual development
- Developing the role of foundation governors as critical friends to include regular monitoring, evaluation and challenge for the school as a church school.

5. Section 5 inspections: Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

SACRE receives regular reports analysing judgements about pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development found in Section 5 Inspections. These reports show the overall grade along with the positive features and areas for development for each school. However, from the summer term 2010 Ofsted have only reported an overall grade for the four areas. A breakdown of grades for autumn 2009 and spring 2010 can be seen below.

Primary Schools, 2009/10

Total number: 40

	Spiritual	Moral	Social	Cultural
Grade 1 (Outstanding)	5	5	5	5

Grade 2 (Good)	29	29	29	27
Grade 3 (Satisfactory)	6	6	6	8
Grade 4 (Inadequate)	0	0	0	0

It can be seen clearly that the majority of primary schools are judged to provide good opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Slightly less schools have achieved an outstanding grade than a satisfactory one. The aim now is to increase the number of overall 'outstanding' grades. Cultural development remains an area for development, mainly in the area of developing pupils' awareness of a range of faiths and cultures.

Secondary Schools, 2009/10

Total number: 11

	Spiritual	Moral	Social	Cultural
Grade 1 (Outstanding)	1	2	2	1
Grade 2 (Good)	6	5	5	6
Grade 3 (Satisfactory)	4	4	4	4
Grade 4 (Inadequate)	0	0	0	0

The majority of secondary schools have received a 'good' grade, with more receiving 'satisfactory' overall than outstanding.

Special Schools, 2008/09

Total number: 8

	Spiritual	Moral	Social	Cultural
Grade 1 (Outstanding)	2	2	2	2
Grade 2 (Good)	5	5	5	5
Grade 3 (Satisfactory)	1	1	1	3
Grade 4 (Inadequate)	0	0	0	0

Bearing in mind that this is a small sample, a high proportion of schools have received the top two grades.

General comments

It is encouraging that no schools have been judged 'inadequate' in any of the four areas.

Analysis of reports shows a very inconsistent approach, ranging from comments about all four aspects to no mention at all. Since Ofsted's requirement is now only to provide one grade for SMSC (on the Judgement Recording Form at the back of the report) it is easy to see how this situation has arisen. SACRE has previously expressed its very serious concerns to Ofsted about this and has questioned the process of how judgements are made. As in 2008/09, there is no longer a requirement to state in reports whether or not schools are meeting requirements for acts of collective worship.

Areas identified for development

- Pupils' understanding of and empathy with other cultures and religions needs further development, particularly through first hand experience.
- Schools do not adequately evaluate the impact of provision for community cohesion.

6. Training and other events

Diocese

The annual Special Schools Day took place during the autumn term 2008 and was a huge success. The theme was Stories from Religions and included a number of workshops such as puppet making; African Christianity and Dance and Godly Play. Other events during the year included Teaching The Mystery of Easter and Christmas through Godly Play; workshops for individual schools; work with cluster groups and the input into the Lincolnshire Heads Conference. All were very well received and a number of schools are now using the Godly Play method. There was also an RE Co-ordinators' day with individual workshops on SMSC which included a session on Childrens' Dreams about God. There have been visits to the Buddhist garden, Beth Shalom and roof tours of the Cathedral as well as a series of pilgrimages to Walsingham, Lincoln Cathedral, Sempringham and Stow Minster.

A conference for primary schools on acts of collective worship took place in March under the title 'Lighting the Candle.' This was an excellent event and very well attended. A further event planned for secondary schools in July did not take place but was put forward to the autumn term 2009.

Local Authority

The RE Adviser provided centralised training for non specialist primary teachers and a six day training course for HLTAs with responsibility for RE. In house training has included support for subject leaders; training for staff on thinking skills in RE; developing assessment systems and guidance on planning/policy. Training has taken place across all phases.

7. Review of the year

SACRE's work has been guided by its Action Plan which is reviewed during every meeting.

Changes to membership

Lincolnshire County Council appointed Councillor P A Robinson to Group D

Probably the most significant membership changes came about as a result of the retirement of the Diocesan RE Adviser, Mrs Paulette Bissell at the end of the autumn term 2009. SACRE members thanked her for the invaluable contribution she had made to the development of RE over the years. She was presented with a gift token for a local health spa and a retirement party took place at the end of term. This was attended by many of Paulette's friends and colleagues from past and present and speeches were made by the Diocesan Director of Education, Canon Peter Staves and the Bishop of Lincoln, John Saxbee. From April 2010 Mrs Bissell was replaced on SACRE by Paul Thompson, the newly appointed Assistant Director of Education for the Diocese.

In addition to set agenda items (analyses of inspection reports, Action Plan update), SACRE also considered the following:

Funding

Councillor P A Robinson agreed to provide £5000 from funds under his control following unsuccessful bids from other sources. This money has been used to develop multi-cultural resources for RE at key stage 1. A presentation to SACRE about this work was given by Sarah Bonner, RE co-ordinator at Spalding Monkshouse Primary School. Members welcomed this valuable resource.

Ofsted

The RE Adviser (who also carried out inspections for Ofsted) explained the report structure to members. She outlined significant changes, including the new requirement for inspectors to report and grade schools on their promotion of community cohesion. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development was to be summarised in the 'outcomes for pupils' section, under one grade rather than four separate ones. It was agreed to monitor reports with this in mind as members shared concern that SMSC might be looked at rigorously as before. As with the previous framework, there are no subject paragraphs and if RE were to be mentioned anywhere it would be in the 'provision' section, which includes the extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs. There is now no specific reference to acts of collective worship and inspectors are not required to comment on whether schools are complying or not.

Ofsted report: Transforming RE

This report highlighted the need, amongst other things, for better teaching of Christianity and non religious belief systems. Members were provided with an executive summary of the report. It was agreed that issues relevant to Lincolnshire SACRE should be raised with Ofsted, as and when appropriate. Following on from this, the RE Adviser contacted the HMI for RE and highlighted the good work done in Lincolnshire but also mentioned concerns, e.g. the inconsistent quality of reports and the way non-compliance in RE is sometimes ignored in the curriculum section.

Academies

Members were updated on the situation regarding academies. Although they are required to follow the law regarding RE they are outside the control of the LA so the RE Adviser is not able to carry out monitoring visits. She could do so at the request of the school but they would then have to pay for the visit, meaning that this is unlikely to

happen. Members expressed great concern at this situation and the item appeared on each agenda during 2009/10.

Review of the Agreed Syllabus

The present syllabus was produced in 2006, therefore due for review in 2011. Members agreed that schools should be consulted to see what changes might need to be made. With this in mind, questionnaires were sent out to all schools. The return showed that no major changes would need to be made but certain updates would be necessary because of new initiatives, terms, legislation, etc. since 2006. Schools also requested further support and guidance on assessment and visiting places of worship.

SACRE Conference – March 2010

This was held at Bishop Grossteste University College. The keynote speaker was the Bishop of Lincoln, John Saxbee. It was agreed that SACRE members could attend at no cost. The conference was very successful with an inspiring keynote speech and a wide range of workshops. The next conference will be in November 2011.

National Resilience Project

The RE Adviser informed SACRE that she would be working on this initiative as Project Officer. The project is intended to support secondary school RE teachers in teaching about controversial issues and is linked to the government's Preventing Violent Extremism agenda.

Visit of the Archbishop of Canterbury

This visit took place in March 2010 and was attended by Councillor Mrs Christine Talbot, Chairman of SACRE.

Announcement of deaths

Members received the very sad news of the sudden and unexpected death of Helen Longland, former Assistant Director of Children's services, on 13 December 2009. Helen served on SACRE while in post and provided invaluable support and guidance. The LA was represented at the funeral which took place in Leeds. The Chairman also reported the sudden death of Peter Douglas, headteacher at a Lincolnshire primary school.

Holocaust Memorial Day

In recognition of this day the Chairman and the RE Adviser attended an event at the Holocaust Memorial Centre near Newark. The day was entitled 'The Legacy of Hope'. Pupils from a Lincolnshire primary school took part and those attending heard a moving talk from Denis Avey, a British army officer who had been in a concentration camp. The service was also attended by a survivor, Arek Hersch, who lit one of the candles of remembrance. After the service there was an opportunity to visit the centre's latest interactive exhibition, 'The Journey', designed for primary school children. In March 2010 the Chairman also attended a seminar at the centre entitled 'Reading the Signs'. She encouraged members to visit the centre if they had not already done so.

Lincolnshire SACRE website

Thanks to the hard work of David Clements (Diocese) the website was made live. Members were consulted about what information should go onto the site and how it might be developed further.

MBE

SACRE congratulated one of its members, Mr Bashir Ahmed, on being awarded an MBE in the Queen’s birthday honours for services to the community.

NASACRE/QCDA Conference

A report was received from Mr Neil Mcfarlane in which he summarised the main points of the conference:

- Academies are required to teach RE and those that do not have a religious character should use the locally Agreed Syllabus.
- RE was strengthened where LAs had an RE adviser. It was hoped that funding would continue to support the post in Lincolnshire.
- QCDA would shortly be abolished and all Annual Reports should be sent to NASACRE in future.

Humanist representative

SACRE received a letter from the Chief Executive of the British Humanist Association (BHA) explaining that it was now possible to have a humanist representative as a full member. Members’ had differing views and it was decided that a way forward might be to invite a representative from the BHA to speak to SACRE.

1. Determinations and Complaints

No requests have been received from schools for determinations that Collective Worship should not be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character. No complaints have been received by SACRE about Collective Worship.

Appendix 1: Lincolnshire’s GCSE/A/AS Entries and Results 2010

Figures in brackets indicate national results

GCSE FULL and SHORT COURSE

Religious Studies												Grd Total
		A* - C	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U	
GCSE Full Course	Girls	77%	118	233	230	184	90	63	40	26	9	993
	Boys	67%	29	118	198	223	105	81	46	28	10	838
	ALL	72% (73.1)										
GCSE Short Course	Girls	64%	224	375	472	442	352	242	135	65	38	2345
	Boys	49%	104	217	342	376	330	296	206	143	95	2109
Grand Total	All	56%	475	943	1242	1225	877	682	427	262	152	6285

These figures show that Lincolnshire results are in line with national averages. Girls out perform boys but this reflects the national picture.

A and AS LEVEL

Religious Studies		Grade (No.)						Grand Total
		A	B	C	D	E	U	
GCE A level	Girls	30	58	41	22	7	2	176
	Boys	12	14	16	16	8	0	70
	ALL	42	72	57	38	15	2	226
GCE AS level	Girls	43	72	58	47	26	15	261
	Boys	12	18	19	20	10	6	85
Grand Total	All	97	162	134	105	51	23	330
Religious Studies		Grade (%)						Grand Total
		A	B	C	D	E	U	
GCE A level	Girls	19%	39%	31%	10%	1%	0%	100%
	Boys	14%	29%	27%	24%	6%	0%	100%
GCE AS level	Girls	25%	20%	25%	18%	8%	5%	100%
	Boys	26%	9%	30%	13%	22%	0%	100%

A Level

	A - C
GIRLS	73%
BOYS	60%
All	66% (73%)

AS Level

	A-C
Girls	66%
Boys	58%
All	62% (67.6%)

At A and AS level Lincolnshire pupils are performing slightly below national averages. Again, girls out perform boys, reflecting the national picture.

General comment

While many assume the UK is becoming more secular, the number of entries in religious studies has risen for the twelfth year running. The subject is now in the top ten most popular subjects, with entries increasing more than 60% since 1999. The Church of England believes "young people are clamouring for a deeper understanding of

religious perspectives on issues of the day and how moral and ethical questions are considered by the major faiths".

Examination boards have rejected claims by the Campaign for Real Education that the GCSE is "pathetically easy". Grades in religious studies are fairly similar to history, ICT, geography - although the percentage of good grades in a subject does not necessarily indicate how hard or easy it is.

One reason for the rise may be that it is compulsory for schools to provide some form of religious studies education for students, so some schools and students may decide that they want the time and effort it takes to count towards a GCSE. However, following statutory guidelines may lead to some schools entering all students for the examination and this could bring grades down compared to other subjects where there is a greater degree of selection regarding exam entry.

Appendix 2: Membership of Lincolnshire's SACRE

[This section needs checking]

GROUP A

Such Christian and other religious denominations, which in the opinion of the Authority appropriately reflect the principal religious traditions of the area

Mr B Ahmed	Muslim Community
Mr F Sperring	Religious Society of Friends
Mrs C Dring	Baptist Church
Mr D Gould	Jewish Community
Mrs S Sreenivasan	Hindu community
Mr J Hayden	Methodist Church
Rev E McDonald	United Reformed Church
Mr N McFarlane	Salvation Army
Mrs C Tovey	Roman Catholic Church

GROUP B

The Church of England

Mr P Staves	Diocesan Director of Education
Mrs A Parry-Jones	
Ms C Wright	

GROUP C

Such Associations representing teachers, which in the opinion of the Authority ought to be represented

Mrs J Austin	National Association of Headteachers
Miss C Turner	Primary Schools

Mrs C Williamson Secondary Schools

GROUP D
The Local Authority (3)

Councillor Mrs C M H
Farquharson
Councillor Mr P A
Robinson
Councillor Mrs C A Talbot

Advisers/Officers

Mr Peter Duxbury	Director of Children's Services
Debbie Barnes	Assistant Director (Universal) Children's Services
Mr Paul Thompson/D Clements	Lincoln Diocesan Advisers for Religious Education
Mark Plater	
Ms Wendy Harrison	Religious Education Adviser
Neil Wright	Clerk to SACRE, County Secretary and Solicitor's Office

Appendix 3: Links with other Bodies and Agencies

Links have been maintained with the following bodies and agencies:

- The National Association of SACRE
- Diocese of Lincoln Board of Education
- Religious Education Today/NATRE
- All Christian denominations
- All main stream faith organisations
- Lincoln Inter-Faith Forum

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