

LINCOLNSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Lincolnshire's

Standing Advisory Council

for

Religious Education

(SACRE)

ANNUAL REPORT

2010 – 2011

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1. Introduction from Chairman

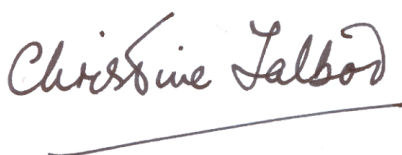
This year has continued to witness Lincolnshire SACRE's monitoring function within schools. The regular update reports on the quality of RE and acts of collective worship in Lincolnshire schools ensure that members are kept well informed. They also enable the RE Adviser to provide support and training 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, though this is becoming increasingly difficult as Ofsted no longer grade the individual aspects. We appreciate very detailed information that the Diocese provides through its summary of Section 48 Inspections.

As mentioned in the last Annual Report, there are ongoing 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 has continued to be an issue with each new inspection framework and is a regular agenda item. It is becoming almost impossible to provide challenge, for example, where schools are not meeting statutory requirements but whose curricular provision has been judged to be satisfactory or better by Ofsted. We are still 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, including developing a database of appropriate speakers from different faith communities.

Looking back on the past year 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 support for those teaching RE continues to be high, the statutory review of the Agreed Syllabus is well underway and academic results overall in Religious Studies are very positive.

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.


A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading 'Christine Talbot', with a horizontal line underneath it.

2. Background

The Education Reform Act (1988) established standing Advisory Councils for Religious Education (SACRE). 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 2010/2011, in November 2010, March 2011 and June 2011. 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 Neville 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 continues to remain something of an issue in RE. There was consensus that the new agreed syllabus should provide more guidance and support for teachers in this area. 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. Members also discussed the issue of non-specialist teachers delivering RE but monitoring this has proved to be impossible due to lack of data and an ever changing picture.

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 is also supportive. Systems for monitoring remain unchanged since the last Annual Report. A range of primary, secondary and special schools is 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. Schools can use the report as evidence for further Ofsted visits (including subject inspections). 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:

- Strong subject leadership, backed up by effective support from the headteacher.
- Planning based on the agreed syllabus.
- Positive attitudes towards learning.
- Good balance between 'learning about and learning from' religion.

Areas for improvement:

- Assessment – the 8 level scale could be used much more effectively to provide a clear picture of achievement of groups and individuals and to bring about improvement.
- 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.
- Insufficient monitoring, e.g. of pupils' work

Schools where there are significant areas for development are re-visited to monitor progress made.

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 appear to contradict those given for cultural development and SACRE is monitoring this closely.

5. Support for schools

Local Authority

During 2010/11 this has covered the following areas:

- Training: RE for HLTAs (6 day course), RE: Children as Philosophers (1 day)
- Support for a primary co-ordinator
- On-going planning (with Diocese) for Celebrating RE day and the SACRE conference.
- Response to public query re. the teaching of paganism.
- Staff meeting on developing thinking skills in RE.
- Completion of key stage 1 topic boxes.

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

Diocese

Paul Thompson, Deputy Director of Education for the Diocese provided SACRE with regular, detailed reports. These included information about the following:

RE Cluster meetings – these have proved to be a useful forum for RE subject leaders and co-ordinators to share good practice and receive updates about current issues. The Diocese also produces a termly newsletter. Meetings are open to TAs, HLTAs, non-specialists and others with an interest in RE.

400th Anniversary of King James Bible

In addition to training days the Diocesan team worked on a Bible project with Lincoln Cathedral. This involved 96 schools and nearly 3000 pupils in producing a handwritten and illustrated new version of the King James Bible. This was on display at the Church Schools Festival, the special bi-centenary service in July 2011 and would then be kept in the Cathedral Library.

Bi-centenary anniversary of the National Society

Schools were encouraged to participate in this event and explore the history of church school education.

Updated electronic documents – to provide support and guidance for RE subject leaders and co-ordinators.

Creative Bible Days in Schools

Paul Thompson has been working with others to provide every school in the Diocese with a Creative Bible day. This involves the delivery of creative and practical activities related to the Bible.

6. Acts of Collective Worship

The majority of primary schools have assemblies but not all have daily acts of collective worship (ACWs). One school visited actually has a policy for 'assemblies' rather than ACWs. There are examples of outstanding practice identified by Ofsted, e.g. in one school spirituality was developed very well throughout the year through ACWs and further strengthened through an annual 'spirituality week'. In most primary schools there is a different type of assembly/ACW each day, with many having a

'celebration assembly' on Fridays. Representatives from local churches make positive contributions and churches are used well to celebrate key festivals.

It is more difficult to obtain information about the situation in secondary schools, as it is rare to meet with headteachers during visits.

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

SACRE receives regular reports analysing judgements about pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development found in Section 5 Inspections. These reports show one overall grade along with the positive features and areas for development for each school. A grade is also given for community cohesion. Letters of commendation are sent from SACRE to schools achieving an 'outstanding' grade for SMSC.

Primary Schools, 2010/11

Total number: 72

	SMSC	Community Cohesion
Grade 1 (Outstanding)	7	4
Grade 2 (Good)	49	25
Grade 3 (Satisfactory)	9	42
Grade 4 (Inadequate)	7	1

Secondary Schools, 2010/11

Total number: 10

	SMSC	Community Cohesion
Grade 1 (Outstanding)	2	0
Grade 2 (Good)	7	6
Grade 3 (Satisfactory)	1	4
Grade 4 (Inadequate)	0	0

Special Schools, 2008/09

Total number: 7

	SMSC	Community Cohesion
Grade 1 (Outstanding)	1	1
Grade 2 (Good)	6	1

Grade 3 (Satisfactory)	0	5
Grade 4 (Inadequate)	0	0

8. Training and other events

Diocese

Special Schools' RE day

This now well-established event took place on 29th September 2010 with nine special schools from across the Diocese participating in a very positive experience at Lincoln Cathedral. A variety of activities took place including signing, craftwork, singing and an animal safari.

Other training

- October 8th 2010 – visit to Beth Shalom Holocaust Centre. This included a guided tour around the interactive 'Journey' exhibition, aimed at primary school pupils. There was also an opportunity to listen to a survivor and to explore ideas of how the Holocaust can be taught in schools.
- October 15th 2010 – in preparation for the 400th anniversary of the King James Bible later in the year teachers were invited to a training day on 'how to use the Bible creatively in the primary classroom.' This was well attended and Martyn Payne from 'Barnabas in Schools' led some practical and dynamic sessions. Teachers were provided with a DVD of ideas.
- November 29th 2010 – 'Community Cohesion and RE', led by Lat Blaylock. Delegates were provided with a range of information and ideas and received a CD containing practical activities to help develop community cohesion.
- March 11th 2011 – Assessment for Learning in RE, led by Lat Blaylock.
- 1st/2nd April 2011 – Godly Play taster day, led by Dr Rebecca Nye.
- May 19th 2011 – The Big Six in RE, led by Lizzie McWhirter, RE Adviser for Coventry Diocese.
- June 20th 2011 – Creative RE in the Whole Curriculum, led by Lat Blaylock.
- October 4th, 2011 – The Lord's Prayer: an RE focus day, led by Helen Matter, RE Adviser for the Diocese of Edmundsbury and Ipswich.

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.

Joint activities

Celebrating RE Event – 31st March 2011

Despite numerous invitations and reminders to schools the response was very disappointing and the event was cancelled.

SACRE Conference – 2011

The conference was originally booked for the 10th November 2011 but response from schools was very poor. An alternative date is to be looked into.

9. Review of the year

SACRE's work has been guided by its Action Plan which is reviewed during every meeting. The Chairman, Cllr Mrs Christine Talbot has continued to work tirelessly to ensure that RE maintains a high profile within Lincolnshire. This is becoming increasingly challenging as more schools opt out of local authority control and monitoring of RE and collective worship becomes more problematic.

Changes to membership

In March 2010 Mr A Hornsby (Methodist) and Mrs Lynette Gaylard (Ground Level Network of churches) were appointed as new members of Committee A.

In November 2010 it was also announced that Debbie Barnes, Assistant Director of Children's Services would no longer be attending SACRE meetings due to additional duties within her post. Debbie would still oversee the work of SACRE and any matters relating to budgets or finance would still be referred to her.

Holocaust Memorial Week: January 2011

The County Council organised various events, including a talk by Hanneke Dye (Holocaust survivor) and a commemorative evening of Remembrance and Reflection through music, poetry, readings and personal stories.

Leading Teachers in RE

Paul Thompson put this initiative in place from the Diocese. Twenty leading teachers of RE have been identified who can share their expertise with colleagues. They will:

- Promote the Leading Teachers Support Network to Schools
- Respond to individual CPD requests for support and advice
- Provide regional CPD opportunities for clusters of schools
- Provide an electronic resource library

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

Lincoln Inter-Faith Forum

Mrs June Austen (Teachers' Panel) attended the above event in February and June 2011. She reported that the group were encountering difficulties in electing a treasurer and a secretary. Numbers have dwindled and the existing members are not able to take on new responsibilities. There is a need to raise awareness among the public about the group with a view to increasing membership, possibly through the development of a website. During the March meeting there was a discussion about RE in schools and the current agreed syllabus.

Ofsted

The RE Adviser (who also carries out inspections for Ofsted) ensures that members are kept updated in relation to any changes to the inspection process. Concern was expressed during all three SACRE meetings about the lack of reference to RE in inspection reports and the way SMSC appears to be diminishing in importance.

The English Baccalaureate (EB)

Lincolnshire SACRE played an active role in campaigning for Religious Studies to be included in the EB. Unfortunately the collective efforts of bodies such as AREIAC (the Association of RE Inspectors, Advisers and Consultants) and the REC (Religious Education Council) were not successful. The possible impact of this decision is a matter of concern for SACRE.

Academies

As academies are autonomous institutions it is not possible for the RE Adviser to monitor the quality of RE. SACREs can only fulfil their role of monitoring RE with the full consent of academies. As the number of academies increases this is a growing cause for concern. Attempts to arrange a meeting with Academy representatives have been unsuccessful. In March 2011 Debbie Barnes (Assistant Director of Children's Services) provided SACRE with update and background information. This included clarification about the role of SACRE – i.e. to advise the LA on RE and to provide an Annual Report. The point was made that SACRE could only undertake these duties with the full consent of an academy as they have freedom over their curriculum and choice of RE syllabus.

Review of the Agreed Syllabus

The review began in July 2010 and during 2010/11 regular meetings took place with the teacher's working party and the Agreed Syllabus Conference.

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. Attempts were made to do this but were unsuccessful.

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 2011

GCSE National Overview

There was a 17.6% increase in the number of candidates sitting the full course GCSE in Religious Studies (RS) in 2011. RS has grown in popularity for the 13th year running with nearly 222,000 entries, up from 188,704 in 2010. Entries for the full course represented 4.3% of papers sat in all subjects. The proportion of female candidates in RS was 54%. A* - C grades were achieved by 73.3% (full course) in RS and 69.8% in all subjects. This is an impressive picture for RS given that there is no statutory requirement to take the subject at examination level. It is worth noting that the cohort of students taking the full GCSE was the last group to begin their studies before the EBacc proposals.

There were slightly fewer entries for the short course and there was a more even gender balance. A* - C passes were obtained by 52.4% in RS which was 1.3% below the mean for all subjects.

GCSE FULL COURSE

Entries

GCSE Full Course				
LA Comparator		2009	2010	2011
Girls	National	82778	85540	96959
Girls	Lincolnshire	871	966	990
Boys	National	67022	69884	82053
Boys	Lincolnshire	800	808	988
All	National	149800	155424	178634
All	Lincolnshire	1671	1774	1978

In line with national trends entries in Lincolnshire schools show an increase since 2009 (of around 15.0%, close to national).In 2011 the number of boys and girls taking the examination was close in Lincolnshire compared to national figures.

% A* - C

GCSE Full Course				
LA Comparator		2009	2010	2011
Girls	National	77.3	77.4	77.5
Girls	Lincolnshire	83.6	77.8	80.6
Boys	National	64.8	65.6	65.6

Boys	Lincolnshire	72.6	68.7	71.2
All	National	71.7	72.1	72.1
All	Lincolnshire	78.3	73.7	75.9

For the past 3 years Lincolnshire results at A* - C have been above the national average. This is true for boys and girls. Girls out-perform boys nationally and in Lincolnshire achieve higher than nationally.

% A* - G

GCSE Short Course		2009	2010	2011
LA Comparator		2009	2010	2011
Girls	National	99.2	99.1	99.0
Girls	Lincolnshire	99.9	99.1	99.2
Boys	National	98.0	98.1	97.6
Boys	Lincolnshire	99.9	98.9	98.2
All	National	98.7	98.7	98.4
All	Lincolnshire	99.9	99.0	98.7

There are no significant differences between national and local results.

GCSE SHORT COURSE Entries

GCSE Short Course		2009	2010	2011
LA Comparator		2009	2010	2011
Girls	National	108337	101022	93375
Girls	Lincolnshire	2125	2327	2103
Boys	National	109822	104020	95018
Boys	Lincolnshire	1938	2075	1916
All	National	218159	205040	188067
All	Lincolnshire	4063	4402	4019

The uptake in Lincolnshire has remained fairly constant over the past 3 years, which bucks the national trend.

% A*-C

GCSE Short Course		2009	2010	2011
LA Comparator		2009	2010	2011
Girls	National	58.8	59.8	58.4
Girls	Lincolnshire	67.1	64.9	68.3
Boys	National	44.5	45.1	43.0
Boys	Lincolnshire	50.3	49.9	50.5
All	National	51.6	52.3	50.7
All	Lincolnshire	59.1	57.9	59.8

As for the full course, Lincolnshire results are higher than those nationally. Girls out-perform boys overall.

% A* - G

	LA Comparator	2009	2010	2011
Girls	National	97.7	97.6	96.7
Girls	Lincolnshire	98.8	98.5	98.4
Boys	National	94.9	94.7	93.2
Boys	Lincolnshire	97.0	95.9	96.1
All	National	96.3	96.1	94.9
All	Lincolnshire	97.9	97.3	97.3

No significant differences.

A and AS LEVEL

A level results for 2011 nationally are impressive. 81.2% achieved A*-C grades, up 1.9% from 2010. The number of students taking the examination has also increased. At AS level there has been a similar increase.

A Level

A level 2009-2011		Entries			A* - B			A* - E		
		2009	2010	2011	2009	2010	2011	2009	2010	2011
National	Boys	3673	3663	3964	47.8	45.1	49.0	99.4	99.3	99.5
Lincolnshire	Boys	69	66	82	43.5	40.9	43.9	100.0	100.0	100.0
National	Girls	7847	7799	8537	54.9	52.6	54.1	99.6	99.5	99.6
Lincolnshire	Girls	174	162	200	58.0	57.4	49.5	100.0	98.8	100.0
National	All	11520	11462	12501	52.6	50.2	52.5	99.5	99.4	99.5
Lincolnshire	All	243	228	282	53.9	52.6	47.9	100	99.1	100

In line with the national picture, entries are up for Lincolnshire students. The above data shows A* - B grades rather than A* - C – for the first time in 3 years Lincolnshire grades are below national figures (- 4.6%) for boys and girls.

AS Level

AS 2009-2011		Entries			% A* - B			% A* - E		
		2009	2010	2011	2009	2010	2011	2009	2010	2011
National	Boys	1649	1625	1719	27.2	27.4	26.4	85.9	85.5	86.7
Lincolnshire	Boys	22	20	18	36.4	40.0	33.3	100.0	85.0	88.9
National	Girls	2996	3079	3307	32.7	31.6	32.0	90.5	89.3	90.0
Lincolnshire	Girls	61	66	67	44.3	40.9	38.8	95.1	87.9	95.5
National	All	4645	4704	5026	30.8	30.1	30.1	88.9	88	88.8

Lincolnshire	All	83	86	85	42.2	40.7	37.6	96.4	87.2	94.1
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The number of students taking RS at AS level has remained fairly constant (though the number of girls has increased slightly whereas the number of boys has decreased) whereas numbers have increased nationally. Although A*-B grades are higher than the national average, it must be remembered that numbers are low.

General comment

Overall the picture is very positive in Lincolnshire, especially at GCSE level. Post 16 provision and outcomes need to be monitored more carefully.

Appendix 2: Membership of Lincolnshire's SACRE

GROUP A

Christian and other religious denominations

Mr B Ahmed	Muslim Community
Mr F Sperring	Religious Society of Friends
Mrs C Dring	Baptist Church
Mrs L Gaylard	Ground Level Network
Professor B Winston	Jewish Community
Mrs S Sreenivasan	Hindu community
Mr A Hornsby	Methodist Church
Rev E McDonald	United Reformed Church
Mr N McFarlane	Salvation Army

GROUP B

The Church of England

Mr D Clements
Mrs A Parry-Jones
Ms C Wright

GROUP C

Teacher Associations

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

GROUP D

The Local Authority

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

Advisers/Officers

Debbie Barnes	Assistant Director (Universal) Children's Services
Paul Thompson	Diocese Assistant Director of Education
Wendy Harrison	Religious Education Adviser
Salina West	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

