

HARROW STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2008-2009

Executive Summary

This is the twenty first annual report of Harrow SACRE.

It is written during a time of considerable change in Harrow Council's educational organisation. For many years provision was arranged as:

- First Schools for Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception), Key Stage 1 (Years 1 and 2) and Key Stage 2 (Year 3);
- Middle Schools for Key Stage 2 (Years 4, 5, 6) and Key Stage 3 (Year 7);
- High Schools for Key Stage 3 (Years 8 and 9) and Key Stage 4 (Years 10 and 11)

Tertiary colleges provided sixth form and further education. From 2006 Sixth Forms are being added to schools as part of the Harrow Collegiate. From 2010 Year 7 pupils will transfer from middle to high schools.

The 2008-2009 academic year saw steady progress and consolidation of RE and collective worship, building on past experiences and looking ahead to the way in which RE can play a central part in curriculum development, giving opportunity for pupils and students to continue to develop an important and exciting role in their RE learning and exploration.

1. Standards and quality of religious education (RE) provision

Overview

Harrow is the most religiously diverse borough in the UK and enjoys strong, trusting relationships between its council, faith communities, SACRE and schools. Religion and faith are seen as strong, positive elements in the local community. This strength is reflected in religious education in schools, where adults (staff, parents and members of the local community) and young people (from the nursery to Year 13) willingly share their scholarship, understanding, perceptions and reflections with confidence, in the knowledge that they will be received with respect and interest. The organisation in March / April 2009 of a Jewish Way of Life Exhibition was testimony to the work of the Jewish SACRE members, who in conjunction with the Middlesex New Synagogue and the Board of Deputies of British Jews arranged an excellent, inter-active learning experience for the hundreds of pupils who visited the exhibition and an example of the many occasions when pupils visit places of worship and listen to members of faith communities describing their experiences. The youth members of SACRE speak warmly of the value of religious education in the curriculum and members of the Harrow Student Advisory Group show noticeable enthusiasm for religious education projects across the borough. In November 2008 a SACRE Showcase united school staffs and pupils, SACRE members, councillors and members of faith communities to participate in an impressive exhibition of young people's work in RE, enlivened by pupils of all ages, who explained and

demonstrated their learning.

There is appreciation for the potential and lively nature of RE across the curriculum but also awareness of the way it can become a low priority amongst strong competing curricular demands, in danger of being squeezed to the limits. Where there are specialist, committed members of staff learning is deep and relevant, but it can become superficial or mundane in the hands of unqualified or unwilling teachers. SACRE takes seriously the strengths and weaknesses of learning and teaching in RE and plans to investigate and analyse learning opportunities and the sharing and dissemination of good practice, wherever it occurs.

1a: Compliance and time allocation for RE

All schools comply with with the requirements of the agreed syllabus to provide regular opportunities for religious education and most schools are rigorous in ensuring that RE lessons are of an appropriate length and meaningful. However teacher members of SACRE and RE subject leaders have voiced their disquiet that when other curricular priorities become overwhelming, RE can be sacrificed, both in terms of time and expertise.

For the first time high schools are considering general sixth form provision for RE and are building on opportunities provided by successful inter-school conferences in religion and philosophy, such as that organised by the Harrow Inter Faith Council in 2007 and Park High School in 2008. Further conferences are being planned by Harrow Inter Faith Council and the Youth Parliament and serious thought will be given to sixth form provision, led by the high school religious education panel.

There were no official complaints about RE during the academic year, but a Church of England Member of SACRE, a teacher in a Harrow community school, voiced concern that some pupils in her school were being withdrawn from certain aspects of RE such as visits to particular places of worship or learning about certain religions. Although there is legal provision for this, SACRE members were concerned that this attitude could threaten community cohesion and will investigate the extent to which this is happening in other schools.

1b: Public examination entries in RE

In 2009 pupils in Harrow schools were entered for public examinations at GCE A2 and AS levels and GCSE long and short courses in religious studies. Creditable results were achieved in all areas, with overall improvement at GCSE Full and Short Courses, as set out below:

Religious Studies: GCE A level

This is the first year that the A Level results have been available to the Local Authority.

Number entered	A Grade %	B Grade %	C Grade %	A & B grades %	A To E grades %
10	20%	70%	10%	90%	100%

There were no scores lower than Grade C. Congratulations to the students of

Nower Hill and Park High Schools who achieved these good A level results.

Religious studies: GCE AS level

Year	Total entries	A Grade %	B Grade %	C Grade %	D Grade %	E Grade %
2007	19	52.6%	36.8%	10.5%		
2008	17	53%	41%	6%		
2009	21	38.1%	19.2%	33.3%	4.7%	4.7%
2009		A-B grades			A-E grades	
		57.1%			100%	

The students of Hatch End, Nower Hill and Park High Schools and Sacred Heart Language College, who contributed to these results, are to be commended. Special congratulations to Sacred Heart College, which currently has no Sixth Form and whose Year 11 pupils gained 43% A grades and 100% A-D grades at AS level.

Religious studies: GCSE Full Course

Figures are in percentages

Y	NOE	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U
2007	499	13.6	24.2	27.3	15.2	7.2	5.8	4.8	1.0	
2008	450	14.2	21.1	23.1	19.1	7.1	5.3	5.8	22.2	
2009	440	19.8	29.1	22.5	11.4	7.2	4.1	3.9	1.6	0.5
		A* - C grades					A* - G grades			
2007		80.4%					99.2%			
2008		77.6%					98%			
2009		82.7%					99.5%			

We commend the pupils from Bentley Wood High School for Girls, Canons High School, Harrow High School, Hatch End High School, Nower Hill High School, Park High School, Rooks Heath College of Business and Enterprise, Sacred Heart Language College, Salvatorian College, and Whitmore High School, who contributed to these good and improved results.

There are special congratulations to:

- Bentley Wood High School, where of 37 entries 43% obtained an A* grade, 62% obtained A* and A grades and 94.6 % obtained A* - C grades;
- Hatch End High School, where of 37 entries 41% obtained an A* grade, 62% obtained A* and A grades and 91.9% obtained A* - C grades;
- Nower Hill High School where of 26 entries 71% of pupils obtained A* and A grades and 92.3 obtained A* - C grades;
- **Park High School, where of 26 entries 59% of pupils obtained an A* grade and 96% of pupils A* and A grades. 100% achieved A* - B grades.**
- Rooks Heath College where of 4 entries 75% of pupils received A grades and 100% of pupils obtained grades A* - C;

- Sacred Heart College where of 114 entries 56% obtained A* and A grades and 94.7 obtained grades A* - C;
- Whitmore High School where of 24 entries 79% of pupils obtained A*, A and B grades and 83.3 obtained grades A* - C.

Religious studies: GCSE Short Course

Figures are in percentages

Y	NOE	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U	
2007	876	5.2	15.2	22.7	23.5	12.5	11.0	6.0	2.9		
2008	1299	7.6	14.7	21.4	22.2	11.9	9.3	6.3	4.0		
2009	1405	12.2	18.7	20.8	17.9	12.7	7.8	5.2	3.6	1.1	
				A* - C grades				A* - G grades			
2007				66.7%				99.0%			
2008				66%				97.7%			
2009				69.9%				98.9%			

We also commend the pupils from Bentley Wood High School for Girls, Canons High School, Harrow High School, Hatch End High School, Nower Hill High School, Park High School, Rooks Heath College, Sacred Heart Language College, Salvatorian College, and Whitmore High School, who contributed to these good and improved results.

There are special congratulations to Park High School, where 52% of pupils achieved A* and A grades and to Whitmore High School where 41% of pupils achieved A* and A grades

Religious studies: Entry Level Qualification Band C

Of the 21 entries from Hatch End and Park High Schools, 48% obtained level 3, 43% level 2 and 9% level 1.

1c: Standards and achievement

Stories and cultural aspects of festivals are very much part of life in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Children are aware of worship and special events in the locality and are interested in the religious story and artefact packs that were developed for nursery and reception classes and are available for loan at Harrow Teachers Centre.

Pupils at Key Stage 1 build on their experiences of religion and its various forms of expression in the locality, identifying places of worship and retelling stories associated with particular religions. Many describe experiences of religious traditions at home and on special occasions, often demonstrating in-depth perceptions.. Pupils frequently make links between different religions, based on their own experiences.

At Key Stage 2 pupils demonstrate their knowledge, understanding and experiences of religion through answering open questions, discussion, drama, writing, activities that encourage thinking skills and investigations that are frequently presented through ICT. The non-statutory units of work, that have been developed in

conjunction with the Harrow Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education, encourage the keeping of a diary for recording thoughts that arise in RE lessons as well as various other forms of religious expression. In subject leader meetings, teachers express admiration for the depth of thought that is manifested in these diaries. A Group A member of SACRE representing Zoroastrianism, who visited a class to speak about her faith was astonished at the level of research undertaken by the pupils prior to her visit, in that they were able to add to her input and make sophisticated links between primary and secondary sources.

In the current set up of middle and high schools, close connections have been established between the aspects of the Key Stage 3 RE syllabus, as it is taught in Year 7 in the primary schools and Years 8 and 9 in the high schools. The RE Advanced Skills Teacher, a high school RE specialist, has undertaken significant work in transition while high school departments report favourably on the developing knowledge and understanding demonstrated by Year 8 pupils on entering their schools, particularly since the introduction of the revised non-statutory units of work. High school departments are honing their skills in building on this knowledge and understanding to develop appropriate expectations and encourage pupils to ask and explore in-depth questions. Standards in RE at Key Stage 3 are raised noticeably in those schools which introduce GCSE long and short courses in Year 9 with resultant expectations of higher order thinking, analysis and evaluation.

Pupils build on their knowledge and understanding of RE in Key Stages 1-3 to acquit themselves well at Key Stage 4 as testified by the achievements in RE examinations outlined and analysed above. A number build on their achievements in RE to progress to studies in philosophy.

SACRE pays tribute to Harrow's pupils, students, teachers and community members for their diligence and hard work in achieving current standards in RE.

1d: Quality of teaching

The ongoing work that in Harrow schools on the Primary and Secondary Strategies, "Building Learning Power" and "Assessment for Learning" has had a positive effect on the teaching of RE. The non-statutory schemes of work encourage an interactive, rigorous approach with high level pupil participation, cross-curricular approaches and the development of pupil skills in making meaningful links between the various areas of learning. In the regular termly meetings for RE subject leaders, teachers share examples of good quality work, analyse assessment strategies, discuss the resolution of problems and demonstrate impressive ability in open questioning that develops in-depth thinking. The sharing of subject knowledge and experience between colleagues, pupils and members of local faith communities is encouraged and support offered whenever there is lack of self confidence, leading to limited learning experiences for pupils. Visits to schools by members of the Harrow Achievement and Inclusion Group and OFSTED inspectors together with members of SACRE and Harrow Inter Faith Council in their capacity of sharing community resources, leave the impression that teachers encourage pupils to talk about religious issues and articulate their ideas, which they do with confidence and energy.

Most schools undertake pupil evaluations of their learning in RE as in other subjects.

Harrow SACRE has nothing but praise for the inspiring contribution of its youth members, who have described their response to religious education and that of their fellow pupils and have commented on the high level of learning in which they are engaged. They made useful suggestions on a future pupil survey, which will be part of a research project on youth and religion, being planned in co-operation with Brunel University and three other local authorities to take place in 2010. Interest in religious matters led to a request by the Harrow Student Advisory Group for the formation of a Harrow Youth Inter Faith Forum. Plans and funds are in place for the first activity of this group to organise and make a film "This is Harrow - Britain's most religiously diverse borough", with support from SACRE, the Harrow Inter Faith Council, the Harrow Student Advisory Group and Harrow Youth Parliament. The pupil voice is poised to make a significant contribution to the evaluation of RE in schools and religious experience in the community.

1e: Quality of leadership and management

The leadership and management of RE is good throughout the primary, secondary, and sixth form sector and special schools. Whole-staff training in RE was requested and managed well by subject leaders throughout the year in primary and special schools, in conjunction with the RE Consultant and the RE AST. Additionally there is excellent support to schools by the Chair of SACRE, a teacher member and AST in drama, who has undertaken extensive study and research in RE through Farmington Fellowships and intends to pursue further higher level qualifications in this area. Difficulties in management arose when RE subject leaders experienced isolation in the promotion of their subject, felt under-valued and were not encouraged to participate in CPD, due to general pressures within the school. The attitude of a school's senior management team was crucial to the success of RE in a school, which can flourish with encouragement or wither in the face of neglect and lack of interest.

The study of religion and philosophy, previously covered by Harrow's tertiary colleges, has passed to school sixth forms and virtually disappeared in the post-16 sector. This is to be regretted particularly in the case of the RE element in an Access to Education course, which led many students into degrees and teacher training with an RE specialism. A number of subject leaders in schools are graduates of this provision, which is no longer available.

1f: Teacher recruitment and retention, level of specialist provision

Harrow schools enjoy overall the blend of a stable staff with an influx of highly qualified, inspiring NQTs (Newly Qualified Teachers). Of the ten high schools with sixth forms, nine have well qualified RE departments as is the case with the two special high schools. One high school lacked specialist RE teachers during the year, although the department was well-managed by a deputy head teacher (now acting headteacher) with the help of input from local faith communities. Specialist qualifications in RE are well represented among primary school teachers, who play a valuable role in subject leadership. In addition most school staffs include people who are knowledgeable and well versed in their own religion and willing to share their understanding and traditions to enhance RE. SACRE has been alerted, however, to a tendency in some schools to put RE lessons in the hands of

unqualified staff members in order to give teachers appropriate time for preparation , planning and evaluation (PPE). Some of these staff members are willing, but need considerable support to develop appropriate subject knowledge and a good range of activities.

1g: Resources

Subject leaders report that budgets for RE are generally small, less than budgets provided for other subject areas and not sufficient for the full development of the subjects.

This is counterbalanced by the wide range of available ICT resources that are used for investigation, research, reading, discussion, lesson stimulation and presentations. The Harrow Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education with the non-statutory units of work for the Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1, Key Stage 2 and Year 7 is available electronically in the RE section of the London Grid for Learning for flexible down-loading and use by schools. The RE AST is using this portal to develop banks of resources to support learning in RE at all levels and within all phases.

SACRE continues to work with faith communities to produce RE packs to enhance learning about the different religions, which, due to the generosity of faith communities, are distributed free or at a highly subsidised cost to schools. Schools continue to use previously distributed packs on the Baha'i, Christian, Hindu, Jain and Muslim religions. During the year work has progressed on Sikh and Zoroastrian packs for distribution in 2009-2010. Schools much appreciate these packs especially those produced by religions, i.e. the Baha'i and Jain religions, where information is not readily available in current published resources. The local Jains, in association with the Institute of Jainology, commissioned a primary text-book by Colin Hynson, that gives child-friendly explanations of the complex philosophy and teachings of Jainism, which was distributed free in generous quantities to all Harrow primary schools during the year. The Jains and Zoroastrians, although numerically small faiths world-wide, have relatively large populations living in Harrow.

2. Managing the SACRE and partnership with the LA and other key stakeholders

2a: SACRE meetings

During the the 2008-2009 academic year SACRE met on 17th September 2008, 2nd December 2008, 12th March 2009 and 2nd June 2009 at Harrow Civic Centre. There was an additional meeting of a working party on 24th June 2009 at Priestmead Middle School to consider and draft SACRE's response to the D.C.S.F. Curriculum Reform Consultation, in particular responding to questionnaires on the primary curriculum review and updated non-statutory guidance on religious education.

A quorum of representatives of Committees 1, 2, 3 and 4 was maintained at all meetings. Attendance was encouraging throughout the year, inasmuch as booking of a large committee room or the Council Chamber at the Civic Centre was requested to accommodate attendees.

2b: Membership and training

Baha'is, Buddhists, Christians (including the Church of England), Hindus, Humanists, Jains, members of the Jewish religion, Muslims, Rastafarians, Sikhs and Zoroastrians are represented on SACRE.

New members are offered induction packs, most recently that produced by the National Association of SACREs (NASACRE). There are detailed introductions, whenever a new member joins SACRE, together with background explanations of the items under discussion. The induction procedure will be reviewed in future development plans. Harrow SACRE sends members on a regular basis to the NASACRE AGMs, meetings for representatives of London SACREs and Q.C.A. (now Q.D.C.A.) conferences, who report back to SACRE on their learning and experiences and answer questions. During the year a Senior School Improvement Professional (SSIP) attended SACRE to give training on data analysis, specifically RAISE ONLINE.

A constant item on each agenda is "News from Harrow Inter Faith Council" and "News from the faith communities". These contribute well to members' knowledge and awareness of what is happening in the local community.

2c: SACRE development

In addition to curricular advice and resources mentioned in Section 1, SACRE continued its annual publication of Advice on Authorised Absence for Religious Festivals, which includes the school session days when SACRE considers that parents / carers may properly request that their children spend religious observances with them. It states that the official borough allowance for religious observance is up to three days in the school year. The advice for the academic years 2008-2009 and 2009-2010 has been the subject of serious deliberation by SACRE, conscious that although unauthorised absence by pupils in the borough is low, the incidence of authorised absence is very high compared with statistical neighbours. Members are aware that this is a result of Harrow's religious demography with a high proportion of observant families in its many and diverse faith communities. SACRE advises that the final decision for permitting authorised absence for religious observance must rest with the Governing Body and school, balancing religious requirements with the importance of each pupil's education.

In July 2009 SACRE published, in response to a request by schools, a document entitled "Faith Matters in Harrow: Guidance on Sensitivities that Impact on Schools". It was the result of detailed discussion and checking with local faith communities to raise teachers' awareness of the practices of the various faiths and how these impact on children as they engage with the National Curriculum and educational provision in the school. The introduction stresses that it is an attempt to acknowledge SACRE's dialogue with local faith communities in the hope that children in school feel confident that their faith will be respected and valued in every aspect of school life. It consists of a diagrammatic poster for the staff room, with an accompanying booklet that sets out the perspective of faith communities on such topics as dress, diet, jewellery, music, art, dance, P.E., sex education, science, drama and Holy Books. Schools have welcomed the guidance and feel that it

encourages a common approach throughout the borough.

In November 2008 SACRE organised the previously mentioned SACRE Showcase, which included a wide-ranging exhibition of work from all phases, impressive writing, cheerful accounts of learning during visits to places of worship, technically accomplished Power Point presentations, eye-catching models of examples of religious architecture and a filmed survey from Harrow town centre when Year 10 and 11 pupils investigated the perception of passers-by on what happens to a person after death. Pupils spoke confidently about their learning and activities in RE and received awards for outstanding work. Delegates to the showcase were impressed by its manifestation of Harrow's spiritual life and community cohesion.

From 2008-2009 SACRE worked to a SACRE action plan linked to the Achievement and Inclusion Service Plan. A maintenance plan is in place for 2009-2010 when the next three year development plan will be produced.

SACRE kept in touch with local providers of teacher education and the placement of RE students in its schools and Continuing Professional Development in RE including work with NQTs through reports by the Senior School Improvement Professional (SSIP) who is the SACRE Lead, the Associate Senior Adviser and Religious Education Consultant and the Advanced Skills Teachers (ASTs), all of whom play a central role in SACRE's work..

2d: Financial support

The SACRE budget is allocated at the beginning of the financial year on 1st April. The allowance for the academic years 2007-2008 and 2008-2009 for SACRE's work was £5.120 per year. In addition Harrow Council provides free accommodation for SACRE meetings and events in its committee rooms, Council Chamber and Members' Lounge.

The budget 2008-2009 was spent on:

- The RE Consultant's work for SACRE, (including acting as SACRE clerk), the Harrow Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education and the drawing up of the non-statutory units of work
- Supply cover and expenses for Advanced Skills Teachers to lead RE INSET
- In-house printing of the guidance document "Faith Matters in Harrow"
- Yearly subscriptions
- Attendance of SACRE members at courses and meetings of NASACRE and QCA.
- Purchase of SHAP calenders for SACRE members, schools and libraries
- Coach travel for school parties to visit the exhibition of Jewish life at Middlesex New synagogue
- Administration, copying and refreshment costs.

The budget is sufficient for SACRE's days to day needs. A SACRE subsidy for travel by pupils to visit places of worship, special religious events and exhibitions is greatly appreciated by schools and makes a significant difference to the numbers that attend. Such subsidies need to be strictly controlled due to travel costs and SACRE was unable to contribute towards the costs of travel to the many events during the year that would have enhanced RE.

SACRE secured grant funding of £7.000 during the year for its part in setting up the Harrow Youth Inter Faith Forum. There will also be a contribution from Harrow Inter Faith Council.

2e: Information and advice

SACRE received information that is applicable to RE through reports passed on by the Religious Education Consultant from information gathered by the Achievement and Inclusion Service. This included school reviews by Senior School Improvement Professionals, OFSTED reports and data investigations, whereby progress in RE was measured against general progress across the curriculum. If particular problems with RE were identified in any school, specific information was passed to the RE Consultant who worked with the ASTs to provide appropriate support in the situation.

The Religious Education Consultant and ASTs reported regularly on their work at SACRE meetings and subject leaders attended from time to time to give a picture of RE in their school, show samples of work and answer questions.

The SACRE Showcase provided an excellent opportunity for SACRE members and others to taste pupils' RE experiences and scrutinise samples of their work.

Professional advice and support to SACRE for the year was received from:

- The Senior School Improvement Professional and SACRE lead, in conjunction with other duties
- An Associate Senior Adviser and Religious Education Consultant (for approximately 60 days in the year)
- The RE AST for one day a week, split into two half days
- Some AST time from the Chair of SACRE for approximately twelve days in the year.

These people participated regularly in SACRE meetings and discussions.

Advice given by SACRE to the local authority centred around authorised absence for pupils to fulfil religious obligations, guidance on religious sensitivities that impact on schools and the curriculum, support for organised faith events and responses to the DCSF concerning the curriculum reform consultation.

2f: Partnerships with other key stakeholders

Training sponsored by SACRE involved the SACRE Showcase, the Jewish Way of Life Exhibition, a programme of outreach work in connection with Harrow Inter Faith Council's 25th Anniversary and partnership with Brunel University in the planning of an important two year project on young people and religion.

3. The effectiveness of the local agreed syllabus

3a: Review of the Agreed Syllabus

The Harrow Agreed Syllabus was reviewed between 2005 and 2007 and published in revised form in 2008. Along with the accompanying primary non-statutory units of

work it is in a continuous process of review and evaluation.

3b: Using the non-statutory national framework

The Agreed Syllabus Conference was very grateful for the non-statutory national framework for RE on which the 2008 agreed syllabus was built, finding it a useful foundation for high quality learning and teaching in RE and a springboard to express the richness of faith traditions for which Harrow is renowned.

3c: Developing the revised agreed syllabus

Having developed the agreed syllabus, SACRE members aim to understand it fully, contribute to resources for effective RE, see learning and teaching in practice, monitor that all aspects of agreed syllabus requirements are in place and work with schools and teacher groups to resolve any difficulties that may arise.

3d: Implementation of the agreed syllabus

The Harrow Agreed Syllabus is explained and expanded through the model units of work that have been written to cover each year group from the Foundation Stage to Year 7. These consist of six units per year, (half a term's work) and are divided into six weekly activities. They were built up in conjunction with the needs and advice of local faith communities and the new secondary and emerging primary curriculum. Every attempt has been made to suggest meaningful, participative activities, rigour of expectation, links across the curriculum, research and exploration and above all the opportunity for pupils to share their ideas, beliefs, experiences and thoughts. There is electronic access to the agreed syllabus and units of work, which can be used and adapted by schools.

3e: Additional guidance/monitoring and evaluation of the agreed syllabus

Subject leaders under the guidance of the RE AST and a technical officer are working to add banks of electronic resources to the website that contains the agreed syllabus and non-statutory units of work. The high schools will offer their individual schemes of work, lesson plans, assignments, resource suggestions and GCSE/GCE tasks, thus sharing expertise and good practice that has been built up across the departments. The agreed syllabus, units of work, resources and gaps in resources are monitored regularly to see where they might be developed or improved.

4. Collective worship

4a: Practice and provision for collective worship

SACRE produced a document entitled "The A - Z of Collective Worship" soon after the 1988 Education Act, setting out legal requirements and providing ideas, resource suggestions, ideas and models of good practice. The document has been revised and developed over the years and is due for further revision and refreshment in 2009-2010.

4b: Monitoring the provision of collective worship

During the year primary schools offered daily assemblies with collective worship, the majority of which were found by the Achievement and Inclusion Service to be sensitive, meaningful, and appropriate for a multi-faith community. At festival time schools went to great lengths to provide a joyous multi-faceted celebration to enrich children of the faith concerned and educate pupils generally about the significance and traditions of the occasion. A teacher member of SACRE, following criticism by OFSTED of an assembly at her school, which failed in the opinions of the inspectors to sufficiently emphasise the transcendent, completed a detailed study of the requirements of collective worship during the opportunity of a Farmington Fellowship. During her year, as Chair of SACRE, she led very well received INSET for Senior Management Teams on the implications of her findings.

In the High Schools well constructed, thoughtful collective worship was blended with assemblies, at which pupils frequently performed, demonstrating their presentational, musical, dramatic and artistic skills. Visitors and drama groups set out spiritual and moral issues and there were opportunities for reflective thought and prayer. It was often difficult for high schools, however, to organise meaningful daily collective worship for logistical reasons of space and time. All conscientiously tried to fulfil obligations through a blend of school, year and class assemblies, but SACRE and schools are aware that these can vary in standard according to the priorities and experience of the people organising and leading them.

Nine schools, two high schools and seven primary schools have determinations, all of which are longstanding. There is a programme of five year renewals and the determinations of Marlborough First and Middle School and Stanburn First School were renewed during the year. Both schools, as required in the renewal process, set out the faith commitments of their pupils, consulted with pupils, staff, parents and Governors, and offered stimulating programmes and examples of collective worship, which, in both cases, were appropriate to the wide range of religions and philosophies practised by the school community. The overall number affected by school determinations is in the region of 6,800 pupils. SACRE's decisions, in renewing the determinations, were based on a thorough scrutiny of details on the application together with a judgement on the quality and value of the collective worship offered. In both cases the proposed worship was imaginative and stimulating with good opportunities for thought and reflection.

There were no complaints about collective worship during the year.

5. Contribution of the SACRE to the community cohesion agenda

5a: Representative nature of the SACRE

Harrow SACRE clearly reflects the wide religious and ethnic diversity of Harrow across all its groups. Group A representatives of Christian and other religious denominations and faiths reflect the size and variety of local religions.

An annual evaluation of SACRE membership identifies areas where there is a vacancy and agreed procedures are put in place to fill the vacancy through

nominations from appropriate bodies.

5b: Knowledge and understanding of the local religious, cultural and ethnic Minority

Harrow SACRE recognises its privilege and responsibility in serving the UK's most religiously diverse borough, which is rich in the scholarship, traditions and understanding of its constituent faith communities. It works very closely with the voluntary Harrow Inter Faith Council and with all known faith communities in its boundaries, who demonstrate great generosity of spirit in supporting RE in schools, on which they place great value for the spiritual nurture of their children. Relationship with Harrow Council is close and due recognition is given to schools for their successful nurture of positive values and citizenship and their pursuit of cohesion in school as in the community. Links with the Student Advisory Group, the emerging Harrow Youth Inter Faith Forum and the Muslim Forum ensure continuity of vision and implementation of values and attitudes that contribute to Harrow's reputation as "a tremendous example of multi faith, multi cultural friendship and peaceful coexistence", *Bishop of Willesden*. SACRE is delighted to learn that Harrow's pupils make a significant contribution to this reputation.

5c: Understanding the intrinsic contribution which RE can make to social, racial and religious harmony and to community cohesion

Through the Achievement and Inclusion Service and through arranged opportunities to meet the pupils themselves, SACRE is aware of pupils' attitudes to RE and the very meaningful discussions whereby the pupils offer their own and their community's teaching and philosophies in the cause of religious harmony and community cohesion. They express personal beliefs with confidence and frequently use knowledge and understanding of their own and other religions and philosophies to bring to bear on day to day issues and concerns.

5d: Links to local authority initiatives promoting diversity

SACRE works to the borough's diversity and equal opportunities policy and during 2009-2010 will develop opportunities being set up for young people in schools to work with the Harrow Youth Parliament. A SACRE member attends meetings of the Hate Crime Forum, which, with the police and local authority officers monitors areas of concern in the borough and possible flash points of disruption and disturbance.

The value of difference and diversity in Harrow is paramount to SACRE's work for a meaningful education for each individual within vibrant, cohesive schools and communities. Members reflect the friendship and good intentions of the faiths and organisations that they represent, determined to work together for peace, harmony and the future of the young people.

Summary

A distinctive feature of Harrow SACRE is the knowledge and understanding of its members of the rich tapestry of local faiths and philosophies, including those that are lesser known on a national and international basis. We could share our range of expressions and traditions, together with our determined development to provide

opportunities for young people to feel comfortable in their faith / philosophy and to present their thoughts and ideas to others in confidence that they will be received with respect.

One of the SACRE members expressed the notion that SACRE works together with a great sense of unity and purpose. Members meet at a variety of celebrations and functions and all give generously of their enthusiasm, knowledge, understanding, expertise and vision.

SACRE offered advice to the DCSF and QCA in responses to the curriculum reform consultation. With regard to the primary curriculum review, SACRE made the strong recommendation that RE should be blended with the National Curriculum at the centre of curriculum requirements rather than as a separate entity or off-shoot that could be forgotten or felt by schools to be unimportant. In the same way that ICT is rightfully regarded as “the furniture of learning”, so RE should be given similar cross-curricular credibility as an important source of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. SACRE sees RE as a dome overarching all personalised learning with its sense of appreciation of self as a prerequisite for appreciation and respect of others and an essential aspect of community cohesion.

We should like to see in the updated non-statutory guidance on religious education a clear, specific statement on the place of RE within and contributing to the whole curriculum.

In the case of collective worship, SACRE feels that it would be helpful if the requirement of a daily act of collective worship could be replaced by requirement for a regular act of collective worship, which would free high schools especially to organise appropriate worship that commands real respect and value on every occasion.

Attached appendices are:

- Public examination statistics
- Index of the primary non-statutory units of work
- Advice to school on authorised absence for religious observance
- "Faith matters in Harrow". Guidance on Sensitivities that Impact on Schools"
- SACRE maintenance plan 2009-2010
- List of SACRE members 2008-2009