



**The Merton  
Standing Advisory Council  
for  
Religious Education**

**Annual Report  
for 2009 - 2010**

**February 2011**

## **INTRODUCTION**

I am please to send you Merton SACRE's Annual Report for the academic year 2009-2010. Every SACRE is required to submit its report to QCDA and schools at the end of each year.

The main focus for SACRE over the last year has been:

- Review and update of the Merton SACRE Constitution
- Publishing the Merton SACRE list of local places of worship
- Publishing the Merton SACRE guidelines for visiting schools
- Consideration of changes to membership of Committee A

We strongly urge the Local Authority to ensure that they consider the needs of Religious Education, which makes a major contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and also to the community cohesion and equality and diversity agenda, when considering budgets and funding.

The Merton SACRE wishes to say thank you to all the many members of schools' staff and in particular their teachers for their continued support and dedication to raising the status of Religious Education within Merton Schools

**Peter Kendrick**  
**Chairman of Merton SACRE**  
**March 2011**

## **SACRE MEETINGS**

The election of a chair took place in the June meeting and Peter Kendrick was returned as chair.

A full review of the Merton SACRE constitution has taken place over the three meetings of the year. Key changes to reflect new council processes have been made. In addition wording was made clearer to make sure the document supported the functions and procedures of SACRE more effectively. The new constitution was agreed at the September 2010 meeting.

## **CHANGES TO COMMITTEE A**

There has been a co-opted Humanist representative on SACRE for many years. At the Summer Term 2010 meeting Merton SACRE discussed a proposal from the British Humanist Association to consider including a Humanist representative on Committee A.

SACRE is made up of four committee groups and co-opted members. Each committee has one vote. Co-opted members do not have an opportunity to vote, but do participate in general discussions prior to each of the four committees meeting together to decide how they will vote on any proposal.

At the September Term 2010 meeting the four Committees were unanimous in supporting the proposal from BHA and as a result, from Spring 2011, the Humanist representative became a member of Committee A.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

### **The Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education in Merton Schools**

[http://www.merton.gov.uk/learning/merton\\_revised\\_agreed\\_syllabus\\_2008a.doc](http://www.merton.gov.uk/learning/merton_revised_agreed_syllabus_2008a.doc)

With the current Agreed Syllabus in place for just over two years the Merton SACRE has carried out a survey to ascertain how schools view the quality of RE education and provision in their schools. An A4 questionnaire was sent to all maintained schools in the authority. Of a possible 53 responses only 16 were returned. This in itself could suggest that teaching Religious Education may not be a priority for schools. Of the replies 12 were from primary, 2 from secondary and 2 from special schools.

Replies indicated that, in primary schools, celebrations of the various festivals (Christmas, Eid, Passover etc) were often being used as opportunities to teach children about major faiths. Visits to places of worship were valued as were visits to schools by members of faith and belief groups. The majority of replies indicated that the quality of RE teaching and standards were satisfactory. One special school judged its provision to be outstanding. Only a few of the schools who replied judged that the standards and provision for RE were good.

A very small minority of primary schools had an RE lead who had any particular training to teach or lead RE. In secondary schools both replies had specialists to lead this subject.

Generally it appears schools are also moving towards a more cross-curricular and thematic approach to delivering the RE curriculum. At secondary level there was an indication that more students would have the opportunity to take the longer RE course.

All replies valued the Agreed Syllabus and the Places of Worship directory and almost all replies requested that there was more CPD opportunities for RE subject leaders and other class teachers.

### **Standards**

The survey suggests that in primary schools standards are mostly satisfactory but with some schools attaining good standards.

### **Religious Studies Examinations:**

Merton's six secondary schools entered 549 pupils for R.E. GCSE (full course) of which 88% gained A\* to C and 100% gained A\* to G. Five secondary schools plus one Special School entered 693 pupils for the RE GCSE (short course). 50% of pupils gained A\* to C and 96% attained A\* to G.

The two Catholic secondary schools (as they have 6<sup>th</sup> forms) entered 21 pupils for A level. 100% gained an A\* to E. 43% gained A\* to B.

This represents an increase in the overall numbers of pupils taking RE and also a small increase in the pass rates in the long course. Results were similar to last year for the short course.

### **CPD for teachers**

SACRE approved the funding of a consultant to run a day of training for RE leads in primary school. This was very well received and as a result there has been a demand for further training. Over this academic year the consultant is running termly sessions with RE leads from Sutton and Merton.

The LA adviser to SACRE has met with the LA school improvement adviser for CPD to try to secure further training opportunities for RE.

Any information regarding conferences, resources and training, which is received by the LA adviser to SACRE, is forwarded to the appropriate schools.

### **Places of worship**

The Places of Worship list is available on the Merton website. There is also another very comprehensive guide, Faiths in Merton, published by MVSC, which SACRE are looking at to see if, in the future, it is possible to share one resource rather than duplicating time and money to produce two similar documents.

### **Complaints concerning RE**

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

### **COLLECTIVE WORSHIP**

#### **Determinations**

There are no Determinations in Merton.

## **COMPLAINTS**

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

## **GENERAL**

### **Links with other agencies**

Merton SACRE is a member of NASACRE and a representative attends national meetings. Full reports are given at the SACRE meetings so that all members are aware of current topics and issues. Members of SACRE are also representatives on the Merton Inter-Faith group and this facilitates communication between the two committees.

### **List of organisations to which SACRE report has been sent**

Copies of the SACRE Annual Report were distributed to all maintained schools in the local Authority with a request that governing bodies consider the report and take any appropriate action. QCDA will also receive a copy.

### **Contacts**

If you have any issues that you would like to raise with the Merton SACRE, please contact the, LA Adviser to SACRE or the Chair, Peter Kendrick ([scrc@lineone.net](mailto:scrc@lineone.net))

## **Appendix 1: SACRE Membership**

### **Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education**

#### Group A: Christian and Other Denominations

Buddhism	Mr P Lom
Free Churches	Mr P Kendrick (Deputy Mrs S Rogers)
Hinduism	Mrs G Maheshwaran
Humanism	Ms A King
Islam	Mr S Sheikh (Deputy Mr M Irfan)
Judaism	Mr M Freedman
Roman Catholic Church	Mr W Doris
Sikhism	Mr B Singh

#### Group B: Church of England

Ms H Fahey  
Mr C Powell  
Reverend R Skinner

#### Group C: Teacher Associations

ATL	Mr N McManus
NASUWT	Vacancy
Voice	Vacancy
NUT	Mr R Kay-Kreizman
NAHT/SHA	Ms K Seamer

#### Group D: Local Authority

Councillor Laxmi Attawar  
Councillor Nick Draper  
Councillor Miles Windsor

#### Co-opted Members

Baiha'i Faith	Mrs K Torr
Ahmadiyya Muslim Association	Mr Nasseem Ahmad Bajwa

#### Officers in attendance

Elaine Joyce, School Improvement Adviser