

Barnet SACRE Annual Report

September 2013 – August 2014

Introduction by Kevin McSharry

There has been some positive news with the re-instatement of bursaries for RE trainee teachers this hopefully, will begin to address the issue of the lack of trained RE professionals & give support to the teaching of good RE. The impact of the introduction of the EBacc has had a very dramatic impact on the numbers of Barnet students being entered for the full & short course RS, after many years of increased numbers of entries this is a very negative development.

We are grateful for the support of the LA & for all the members of SACRE who contribute their time & expertise. Anna Sallow supports SACRE as a consultant.

We enjoyed another joint Learning Outside the Classroom visit with SACRE members & teachers to the Buddhist Temple in Margaret Street & All Saints Church, one of the finest examples of Victorian architecture. Many thanks to the councilors who have left this year we, benefitted from their expertise & commitment. Also thanks to members from the other groups who also gave SACRE great support Paul Hilditch (Salvation Army Rep) Alice Miller (NUT).

Three meetings were held, which took place on the 19 November 2013, 11 March & 17 June 2014. The first two meetings were held at St Peter's Bourne & the June meeting at Hendon Town Hall. A termly newsletter was sent out to all SACRE members before all of the meetings providing opportunities for issues to be clarified & discussed. These included a discussion on the latest Ofsted report 'Religious education: realising the potential' published in October 2013, the REC review of Religious Education in England, the APPG report of 2013 & the APPG report on 'RE & Good Community Relations'. The Holocaust Pack for schools was circulated & discussed. The Chair & RE consultant reported on their presentation to the Scrutiny committee on the 19th March 2014. Copies of the letter on guidance for Governing Bodies of Primary & Secondary school were circulated to members & a decision was made to send copies out to all schools.

Presentation by Mr Neil Marlow

At the November meeting a presentation was made by Mr. Neil Marlow (Barnet Learning Inspector) after a request at the previous meeting in June when a number of SACRE members had asked for clarification & information about the role of Free Schools, Academies & LA schools in Barnet. Mr. Marlow explained the differences between academies & maintained schools, the types of academies & free schools. He also informed SACRE of the current position of schools in Barnet & provided a printed copy of his presentation. He reported that nationally 52% of secondary schools are academies as compared with 62.5% in Barnet & 9% of primary schools nationally as compared with 7% in Barnet. The information as to the current position of schools was as follows:

Stand Alone Academies - 14 schools were in this category (Ashmole, Christ's College, The Compton, Copthall, East Barnet, Hasmorean High, Hendon, Henrietta Barnet, Mill Hill High, Queen Elizabeth Boys, Queen Elizabeth Girls, The Totteridge Academy, Whitefields & the Wren Academy. One primary school Broadfields and The Jewish Independent Day school will be an academy from 1st October 2013.

Multi Academy Trusts - London Academy (with Deansbrook Junior School) & Grasvenor Infant school.

Sponsored Academies - The Hyde & Parkfield primary schools both sponsored by The Elliot Foundation.

Maintained Schools - Bishop Douglas Catholic, Friern Barnet, Finchley Catholic High, JCoss, St James' Catholic High, St Mary's CE High and St Michaels' Catholic Grammar, along with all other Primary Schools.

Special Maintained Schools - All four Special Schools & the PRU's.

A Report from the RE Consultant Anna Sallnow

Termly half-day meetings were held for primary Religious Education co-ordinators & a meeting open to all teachers in Barnet & Enfield was arranged. A new in post RE co-ordinators course was held in the autumn term after requests from teachers. A course on spiritual, moral, social & cultural education was also held in the autumn term. Visits were made to schools, staff meetings were held & INSET was provided for individual under the Barnet School Improvement Programme. A Holocaust pack was written with the support of Rev Bernd Koschland & was circulated to all schools in Barnet & Enfield & SACRE members. Young people from Mill Hill County, who had taken part in the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust (HMDT) visit to Auschwitz, were invited to speak at the Holocaust Commemoration in Barnet. A termly newsletter was circulated to all schools in Barnet.

Examination Results 2014

A level results

There were 20,196 Religious Studies 'A' level entries in 2014; nearly double (96%) the number in 2002/3 (10,313 entries).

RS entries over the last ten years have increased their numbers of entries by more than any other arts, humanities or social science subject. This year there was again an increase in numbers up by 5.3% on the number of 2012/13 entries. In line with other subjects the results are generally lower but the percentage of students achieving A* at RS 'A' level has increased from 5.4% to 6.8%.

The Russell Group of universities has made it clear that RS A level provides 'suitable preparation for University generally'. Oxford & Cambridge Universities include Religious studies in their list of '*generally suitable Arts 'A' levels*'.

Research from the Centre for Evaluation & Monitoring at Durham University on the comparative difficulty of different subjects at 'A' level showed that RS was '*in the middle difficulty range, similar to Geography & more demanding than English*'.

Barnet 'A' level Results

188 students were entered 26.1% achieved an A* or A result. This compares with 163 pupils who were entered in 2013 so an increase in numbers of entries. 58% of students obtained an A* - B pass.

The following schools entered students: Ashmole; Bishop Douglas, Copthall, Finchley Catholic High, Hasmorean High, Hendon, JCoss, London Academy, Mill Hill High, Queen Elizabeth Girls, QE School; St James', St Mary's & St Michael's. Two schools, East Barnet & Whitefield did not enter pupils compared with 2013 & two schools JCoss (9 entries) & Queen Elizabeth School (1 entry) entered pupils for the first time.

National GCSE results 2014

The combined numbers entered for the full & short course Religious Studies was 387,915 a decrease of 8% in 2013 entries (420,151). Full course entries showed an increase by 7% from 251,063 in 2013 to 269,494 in 2014. The dramatic fall was in the short course entries that fell by 30% from 169,088 in 2013 to 118,421 in 2014 shows a fall in numbers but there are more students being entered for the full course & less for the short course.

This continues the trend over the last few years, as more schools seem to be moving from the short course to the full course. This is positive in some ways as it means that students are spending more time studying RS & at greater depth. However, overall fewer numbers of students are studying RS at GCSE.

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

- Take up of the GCSE RS short course has fallen from 211,269 in 2012 to 99,602 in 2013 (-53%)
- GCSE full course have increased from 216,182 in 2012 to 258,067 in 2014 (+19%)

A/S level 2015 - 50 students were entered from Ashmole, Bishop Douglass, Copthall, Finchley Catholic High, Hasmorean High, Hendon, JCoSS, London Academy, Mill Hill High, Queen Elizabeth's Girls, Queen Elizabeth's School, St James', St Mary's, St Michael's, & Whitefield School. 24% obtained an A grade & 60% obtained an A-C pass.

GCSE Full course 2014 - The following schools entered pupils for GCSE full course: Bishop Douglas, Christ College, Copthall, East Barnet, Finchley Catholic High, Friern Barnet, Hasmorean High, Hendon, London Academy, Mill Hill High, Queen Elizabeth's Girls, Queen Elizabeth's School, St James', St Mary's, St Michael's, The Compton, The Henrietta Barnet, The Totteridge Academy, Whitefield & Wren Academy. The boards studied were AQA, EDEXEL, OCR & WJEC.

The total number of entries for the full course was *1353, a very significant decrease* in numbers of entries compared with 1800 in 2013. Ashmole Academy had no entries & The Compton & Christ's College entered pupils for the first time.

Short course 2014 The following schools entered pupils for the short course: London Academy, Queen Elizabeth's Girls, the Totteridge Academy. The number of schools entering students has dropped from 14 schools to 3 & the total number of entries was *100 compared with 737* in 2013 so a huge & dramatic drop in numbers. However, there is a national trend away from short courses.

The total number of students entering short & full course RS is *1453 compared with 2537* so a very severe *decrease* in the numbers of KS4 students studying RS.

The data from Barnet mirror those nationally with increases in numbers for the full course & decreases in numbers for the short course.

This is the first year that the impact of the EBacc would have been on RS examination entries & it seems that the increases experienced over the last 10 years has now been halted. Some schools are still entering the whole year 12 cohort, whereas, some schools are only entering pupils from option groups. It does pose the question what are the other student doing as RE is compulsory in the Barnet Agreed syllabus at KS4? However, as some of the schools are now Academies they are allowed to follow a syllabus of their choice.

Other Items

- Mr Kevin McSharry reported on the APPG visit by Mike Freer to Manorside School in July 2013 further information is on the APPG website.
- The Directory of Places of Worship needs regular updating & members were asked to check the details of their entries before the publication was reprinted. The Directory is arranged in geographical areas as schools find this more useful.
- Membership issues were discussed & will be on the agenda at the November 2014 meeting. The change of meeting place was discussed & after some research by the clerk a decision was made to hold meetings at Hendon Town Hall. This would be easier in terms of parking & access by public transport. From June 2014 meetings will be held at Hendon Town Hall.
- Ideas for future training for SACRE members were discussed & a programme arranged for the next year. A joint visit of teachers & SACRE members took place in July to the Buddhist Centre & All Saints Church in Margaret Street. Both places of worship were willing for school groups to visit.

Development plan 2014-2015

Issues that will be addressed in the next year:

- Review of membership
- The development of stronger links between SACRE members & schools.
- A joint Barnet & Enfield SACRE bid to the Westhill Trust for a pilot project to train young people to become faith ambassadors in their local primary schools.