

Annual Report of the Nottingham City SACRE 2007

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1. Introduction.

The 06/07 academic year has been one of stabilisation and steady growth for Nottingham City SACRE. Much time has been spent on strengthening the foundations to ensure a secure and sustainable platform for the exciting new developments ahead.

Alongside a full constitution review, issues around membership, representation and attendance have been addressed and remain an essential part of our future development plans.

Forging closer links with our schools and teachers has been a particular focus of the Committee's work and success in this area has been most welcomed. A new SACRE RE Teachers Network has resulted in an increased number of training opportunities for schools as well as enhancing our communications with RE subject leaders.

SACRE continues to have an exciting and challenging agenda as we embark on new partnerships and begin the review and development of a suitable Locally Agreed Syllabus for Nottingham in 2009.

We commend this report to all those interested in Religious Education and Collective Worship in Nottingham schools.

Councillor D Mellen.

1.2. Overview

The Nottingham SACRE met three times during the academic year 2006 to 2007.

The main issues discussed during this time were as follows:

October 06

- Nottingham City Annual SACRE Report
- SACRE Self Evaluation
- End of Year Review of the SACRE Development Plan

March 07

- Election of Vice Chair
- Membership, Representation and Attendance
- Development Plan rewrite based on the Self Assessment Results
- CPD Programme proposal
- Exploration of potential web-site materials.

June 07

- Constitution Review
- Development Plan Progress Review

- LASC Formation
- Presentation and Discussion around the Children and Young People Plan Refresh

Standing items such as correspondence and finance are reported at every meeting.

In addition to the full SACRE meetings discussions have taken place with the County SACRE that has resulted in a fruitful partnership arrangement with regard to training and discussions around a joint Locally Agreed Syllabus. Meetings with officers within the Schools Division of Children's Services have also been held to address issues around linking SACRE activity more firmly to the Authorities Education and Social Cohesion Agenda.

SACRE welcomed the news that regular meetings between the Director of School Service and the Dioceses Directors of Education had been reinstated. Minutes of all SACRE Meetings are now sent to the Director of Schools Service to be fed into these meetings.

1.2. Identified Priorities for Development in 06/07

- Membership review and expansion
- Strengthen links with RE teachers in City schools
- Increase the knowledge base of the SACRE

Identified Priorities for Development in 07/08

- Continued membership development
- Review and develop a new locally agreed syllabus for the City

2. Religious Education.

2.1 Locally Agreed Syllabus

A Locally Agreed Syllabus Committee was formally convened at the June SACRE meeting. The review of the existing LAS has begun and the Committee will hold its first meeting to review progress in February 08.

Meetings have been held with the County SACRE with regard to a possible joint curriculum. This acknowledges the movement of pupils between schools across our borders and the use of a shared curriculum by our C of E schools. As a result the review of our current LAS is also to invite responses to the existing County LAS. This will be made available to all schools via a shared web site.

It is intended that a new curriculum will be made available to schools with a full programme of support and training by April 09.

2.2. Standards in Religious Education

Due to the change in Ofsted Reports it has become increasingly difficult for the SACRE to accurately monitor the quality of RE in schools. This difficulty has been shared with the relevant officers within the Schools Service and discussions continue to find suitable and manageable alternatives.

It is gratifying to note that the number of pupils achieving a qualification in Religious Studies has increased on last year, and results in all areas are higher than the National average. The predominant exam boards used by schools are Edexcel for GCSE and OCR for A Level.

Table 1 GCSE Short course Religious Studies

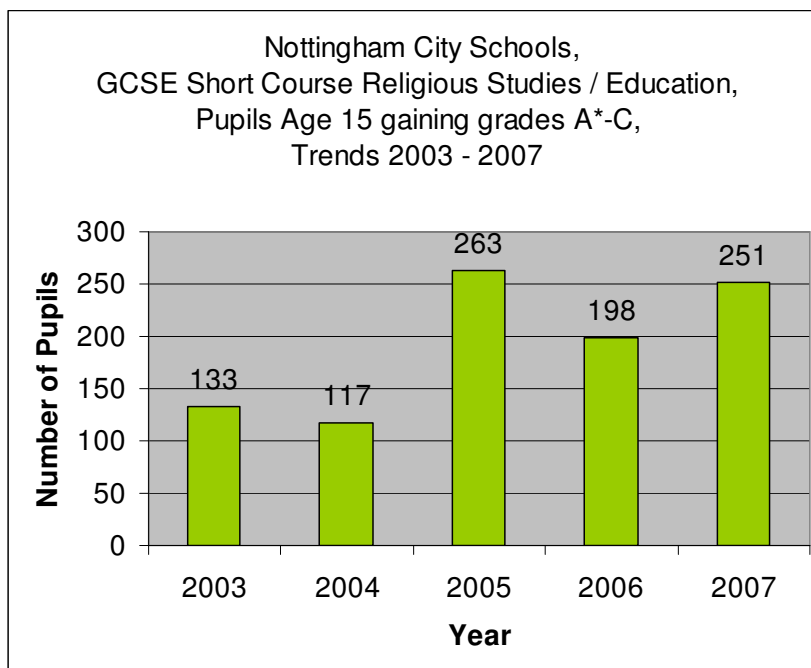


Table 2: GCSE Full course Religious Studies

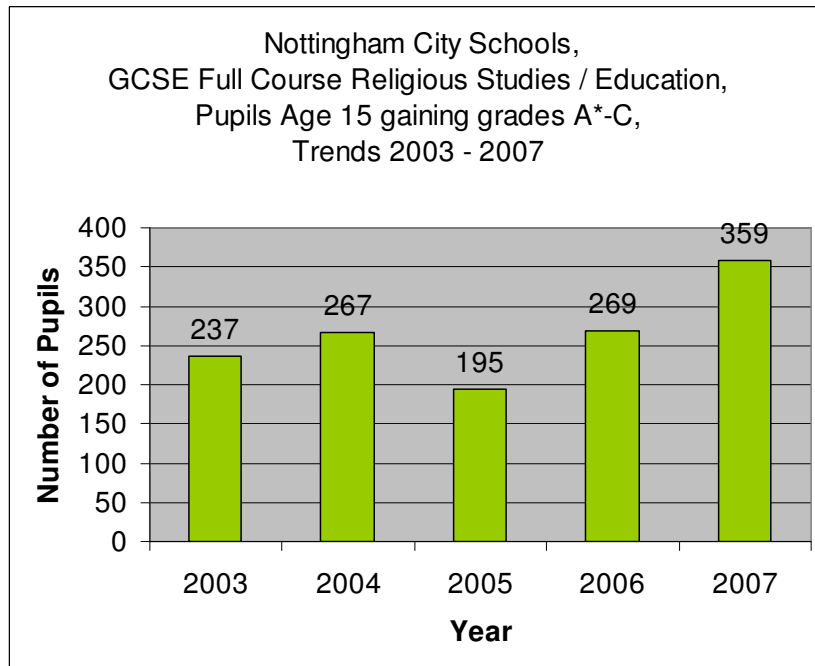
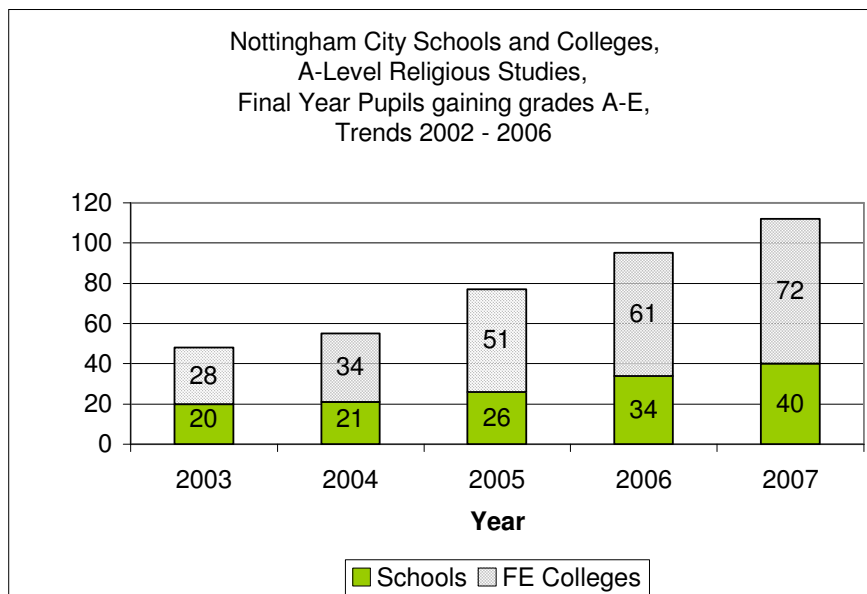


Table 3: Advanced level Religious Studies.



More detailed results for 2007 are shown in the appendices in Section 7 of this report.

2.3. Methods of teaching, the choice of teaching materials, teacher training

Advice on teaching and learning methods and materials are in the relevant section of Nottingham LEA Agreed Syllabus.

2.4. Teacher Training

There was a welcome increase in activity for teachers during the year. A partnership with the County SACRE meant all courses and conferences were open to City teachers and opportunities marketed directly to schools as well as featuring on a shared website facility.

SACRE launched a new RE Teachers Network programme facilitated by the RE Advisers from the Southwell Diocese and offered a subsidy to City teachers wanting to attend County Conferences.

In response to the participants identified need a full programme of meetings and training has been planned for the Network throughout the next academic year. This will include participation in the development of the LAS with Network teachers also attending SACRE meetings.

2.5. Complaints concerning RE

No complaints have been received about Religious Education during this period.

3. Collective Worship in Nottingham LEA schools

3.1. Advice on Collective Worship

No written advice has been offered to Nottingham City LEA schools. However an appropriate lead officer deals with school telephone enquiries.

A concern was raised as to Primary Schools using Assembly time for the SEAL programme at the expense of Collective Worship. This concern was passed on the appropriate lead officer along with some suggestions of possible support materials to clarify the difference and how both needs could be addressed. This advice was acknowledged and assurances received that schools would be advised accordingly.

3.2. Monitoring of Collective Worship

Any concerns about Collective Worship are followed up by Link Advisers and other LEA personnel.

The difficulty in monitoring provision has been noted given the changing relationship between the Authority and its schools, and officers are aware of

the issues.

3.3. Training for leaders of Collective Worship

A successful days training was held with a small number of Primary Schools. In evaluations all rated it as being very good or better and in fully achieving its aims.

Participants recommended that a simple guide be produced clarifying the difference between Collective Worship and an Assembly and more time was taken to consider the pupil voice when planning worship.

3.4. Determinations

Over the last year the Nottingham SACRE did not receive or hear any requests from schools with regard to Collective Worship determination.

3.5. Complaints concerning Collective Worship

No complaints were received about Collective Worship.

4. Links with other agencies

The Nottingham SACRE has links with the following regional and national agencies concerned with RE and Collective Worship.

4.1. Local agencies

Nottingham city SACRE supports the work of the Religious Education resources centre based at Bluecoat school.

SACRE also hope to establish strong partnerships with the County SACRE as well as other inter-faith groups within the City during the forthcoming year.

4.2. National agencies

The Nottingham SACRE is a member of:

- National Association of SACRE;
- AREIAC;
- Midlands Region AREIAC;
- Subscribes to RE today magazine.

5. Other issues

No Governor training was undertaken this year in relation to SACRE.

6. Nottingham SACRE arrangements

6.1 Professional and Administrative Support

The work of the Nottingham SACRE is supported by:

- Clerk to SACRE: the clerking service provided by Governor Services;
- Lead Officer: Karen Smith
Health and Citizenship Development Officer
Curriculum Service
College Street Centre
College Street
Nottingham
NG1 5AQ

Tel: (0115) 9476202
Email: Karen.smith@collegest.org.uk
- The Nottingham SACRE meets once per term.

6.2. Finance

For the first year SACRE has enjoyed having the security of its own working budget of £5000 from the Authority. This sum has funded all meetings and organisation expenses as well as supporting the new training programme and partnership agreements. The early parts of the LAS review will also be met from this financial year.

6.3. SACRE Membership

Cllr Mellen replaced Cllr Gill Haymes as chair in June for the final part of the academic year. A letter of thanks for all her support and guidance to SACRE over the years was sent to acknowledge her considerable dedication during her time as Chair.

Whilst some vacancies have been filled and attendance at meetings has increased over the year, this remains an area for further development in the coming year.

All new members are now sent a welcome letter and pack of information including a copy of 'So you're joining your local SACRE', a handbook for SACRE Members.

Current SACRE Members 2007

Local Authority

Councillor D Mellen (Chair of SACRE)
Councillor P Griggs
Councillor B Clarke-Smith
Councillor G Long
Councillor M Ibrahim
Councillor D Cresswell

Church of England

Mrs J Lewis
Rev K Johnson
Mr M Kidger
(2 Vacancies)

Teachers' Associations

NASWT
NUT
ATL
RE Teachers Network
(4 vacancies)

Christian Denominations and Other Faith Groups

Afro-Caribbean Churches (Vice Chair)
Council of Muslim Organisations
Hindu
Jewish
Religious Society of Friends
Roman Catholic
Salvation Army
Sikh
URC
(2 vacancies)

