

West Sussex
Standing Advisory Council
on
Religious Education

Annual Report

2007 – 2008



CONTENTS

| | Page |
|--------------------------------------|------|
| Introduction | 3 |
| Religious Education | 4 |
| West Sussex Agreed Syllabus | |
| Standards in Religious Education | |
| Complaints | |
| Collective Worship | 4 |
| Determinations | |
| Complaints | |
| Results in Public Examinations 2007 | 5 |
| New Agreed Syllabus Proposals | 8 |
| Links with other agencies | 9 |
| SACRE action plan | 9 |
| SACRE arrangements | 10 |
| | |
| Appendix 1: Who is on SACRE | 11 |
| Appendix 2: SACRE Meetings 2007/08 | 12 |
| Appendix 3: 2008 Examination Results | 14 |

**WEST SUSSEX STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS
EDUCATION**

ANNUAL REPORT 2007/2008

INTRODUCTION

It gives me pleasure to present the Annual Report of the West Sussex Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE). This report sets out the matters that have been considered by SACRE over the year 2007/08 and the advice it has given. I am very grateful to the members of SACRE for their time and efforts in assisting the LEA in its support to our schools.

I commend to you this report and in doing so would like to thank the headteachers and teaching staff who have worked so hard to provide quality Religious Education and collective worship for the pupils in our schools.

Margaret Collins

Chairman

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The West Sussex Agreed Syllabus

An Agreed Syllabus, which was adopted in 2003, governs religious education in West Sussex. The syllabus was the result of the first major review since 1998. The revision reflected the experiences of schools over the five years and the desire to offer more explicit support to teachers by specifying minimum content to be covered, making links to the QCA Scheme of Work and adding requirements in relation to assessment. Although this syllabus predates the Non-statutory national framework for Religious Education there are significant similarities and subsequent resources published to support the framework will be relevant to schools following the West Sussex Agreed Syllabus.

Work to review this Syllabus was completed in this year and an Agreed Syllabus Conference was convened in March 2008 and a new syllabus adopted to be introduced in September 2008.

Standards in RE

In the past SACRE has received Ofsted inspection reports for schools within the LEA and this provided substantial information on the state of religious education in the county. Ofsted changed their system of inspection and from September 2005 school Ofsted reports did not include reports on subjects.

Without these valuable reports from Ofsted information regarding the standard of work in schools cannot be easily reported to SACRE.

SACRE considers the examination results in detail and receives occasional reports from the RE Adviser.

Complaints concerning RE

A panel of SACRE members would consider complaints on Religious Education in community and voluntary controlled schools that cannot be resolved by the headteacher or governors. During 2006/2007 no complaints were received.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

A document was published by the SACRE in 1995 providing guidance for schools and the interpretation of the statutory requirements. This was circulated to all schools and was subsequently supported by in-service training courses. In addition to advice on the interpretation of the legislation, sections were provided on planning principles, the use of music in assemblies and reference books to support worship. A further publication in 2002 provided guidance to schools on withdrawal from collective worship and a publication on collective worship in secondary schools was published in 2003.

The SACRE has considered those sections dealing with collective worship in Ofsted reports on schools within the LEA. This is mainly reported through the section on "spiritual, moral, social and cultural development" although references are made in other aspects of the reports.

In those schools where the spiritual element was considered to be a strength, collective worship and religious education were identified as being areas that contributed positively to pupils' spiritual development.

During the year SACRE wrote to the Secretary of State to ask for clarification around the failure of most secondary schools to meet the statutory requirement for daily worship. The chairman wrote again with support from the local Member of Parliament to request a response to her initial letter and eventually received a reply in May 2008 from the Public Communications Unit. The response said:

"I must advise you that the Department has no plans at this time to review the guidance in circular 1/94 on Collective Worship. However it is something we hope to consider in the future. The faith communities and Religious Education (RE) professionals have been clear that separate guidance on RE and CW would be most useful. We believe that our priority has to be on improving RE, including providing clear and up to date guidance.

The aim of CW is to provide the opportunity for pupils to worship God, to consider spiritual and moral issues and to explore their own beliefs. It also provides schools with a unique opportunity to deepen and extend a positive ethos and a set of common values. I can assure you that ministers continue to recognise this is important.

Turning to your observations about the organisations of CW in secondary schools, I should explain it is Ofsted's role as part of school inspections to make judgements on whether schools are complying with all their legal duties and to make recommendations relating to this. Headteachers, governors and local authorities are responsible for ensuring these are carried out."

Determinations

One of the responsibilities of SACRE is to consider applications from Headteachers for a determination that the collective worship in their school should be other than "wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character". In 1989 SACRE set up procedures for any school that wishes to make an application for a determination and these were set out in the annual report for 1989/90. During 2006/2007 no applications were received.

Complaints

Complaints relating to collective worship in community schools that cannot be resolved by the headteacher or governors within a school would be considered by a panel of SACRE members. During 2006/2007 no complaints were received.

RESULTS IN PUBLIC EXAMINATIONS, SUMMER 2007

2007 Examination Results

Entry Patterns

Examination results may vary from year to year without any clear reason other than the variety of entry patterns. Table 1 show the numbers of students entering for GCSE, "A" Level and "AS" Level exams

| | GCE 'A' Level | | GCE 'AS' Level | | GCSE | | Short Course GCSE | | Total GCSE |
|------|---------------|----------|----------------|----------|---------|----------|-------------------|----------|------------|
| | Schools | Students | Schools | Students | Schools | Students | Schools | Students | Students |
| 1998 | 10 | 41 | 2 | 6 | 22 | 1031 | 7 | 902 | 1933 |
| 1999 | 11 | 53 | 2 | 6 | 22 | 1103 | 10 | 986 | 2089 |
| 2000 | 13 | 65 | 5 | 17 | 18 | 1144 | 13 | 1243 | 2377 |
| 2001 | 12 | 67 | 4 | 13 | 19 | 883 | 15 | 1513 | 2396 |
| 2002 | 12 | 76 | 13 | 52 | 18 | 991 | 17 | 1829 | 2820 |
| 2003 | 14 | 76 | 11 | 19 | 21 | 976 | 17 | 1937 | 2913 |
| 2004 | 12 | 84 | 12 | 31 | 23 | 1068 | 22 | 2567 | 3625 |
| 2005 | 13 | 74 | 10 | 45 | 25 | 1250 | 25 | 2878 | 4128 |
| 2006 | 14 | 96 | 14 | 231 | 26 | 1385 | 27 | 3116 | 4501 |
| 2007 | 13 | 129 | 14 | 237 | 23 | 1295 | 25 | 3020 | 4315 |

Table 1 – Numbers of students studying RE and the number of schools entering students

There are thirty-six schools with Year 11 students of which fourteen schools entered the majority (90%+) of their students for an examination with another five schools entering a significant proportion of students (between 70% and 90%). Other schools only enter those students who have chosen to study RS within the option system. Thirty-two of the thirty-six secondary schools in the county entered students for some form of GCSE examination.

This year has seen a decrease in the total number of students entered for a GCSE level qualification in either the short course or the full course. In 2006 55% of Year 11 students in West Sussex took a GCSE examination in religious studies while in 2007 this dropped to 51%. The number of students who study AS level is continuing to rise as is the number who go on to study at "A" level

Attainment at GCSE

The percentage of students achieving grades A*-C in the full GCSE course have shown significant improvement and standards are in-line with the national figure. Table 2 illustrates this:

| | A* - C | | | | | A* - G | | | | |
|-------------|--------|------|-------|------|-------|--------|------|------|------|------|
| | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 |
| West Sussex | 53.9 | 56 | 56 | 66 | 71.3 | 96.3 | 96.6 | 95 | 98 | 98.8 |
| National | 63.2 | 65.8 | 68.6 | 70.6 | 71.5 | 96.9 | 97.5 | 97.9 | 98 | 98.2 |
| Difference | -10.7 | -9.8 | -12.6 | -4.6 | -0.15 | 0.2 | -0.9 | -2.9 | 0 | 0.64 |

Table 2 – Percentage of students gaining higher grades and grades A*-G compared to the national picture in RE in full course GCSE.

Table 3 below illustrates the results for the short course GCSE. The West Sussex results for the higher grades have moved above the national results and are in line with the national figure for the A*-G grades.

| | A* - C | | | | | A* - G | | | | |
|-------------|--------|------|------|------|-------|--------|------|------|------|------|
| | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 |
| West Sussex | 67.5 | 52.7 | 55.1 | 53 | 62.05 | 96 | 96.4 | 94 | 94 | 97.9 |
| National | 51.3 | 52.9 | 53.7 | 54.1 | 53.4 | 91.2 | 96 | 96.4 | 94.6 | 95.5 |
| Difference | 16.2 | -0.2 | 1.4 | -1.1 | 8.65 | 4.8 | 0.4 | -2.4 | -0.6 | 2.4 |

Table 3 – Percentage of students gaining higher grades and grades A*-G in short course GCSE

In the GCSE full course, boys' performance has continued to improve in 2007. Alongside this girls have made a big increase of 12%. The results for boys in the full course or A*-C have risen to 64% and are broadly in line with national figures while the girls results have made a significant improvement and are also in line with the national figure.

The gender gap on Short Course GCSE this year has reduced again this year with the boys doing significantly better than last year for A*-C and girls recovering the ground they lost last year. The 8% gap between boys and girls is significantly less than found nationally.

3. 'A' Level

3.1 The percentage of students gaining the higher grades at 'A' Level has risen this year and is above the national figures. In addition 12 students entered the examination in Year 12 all of whom achieved an A-C grade.

| | A-B | | | A-C | |
|-------------|------|------|------|------|------|
| | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 |
| West Sussex | 56.6 | 55 | 59 | 82.3 | 86.2 |
| National | 51.8 | 51.8 | 53.8 | 79.1 | 81.6 |
| Difference | 4.8 | 3.2 | 5.2 | 3.2 | 4.7 |

Table 6 – Percentage of students gaining higher grades at A Level

3.2 The numbers studying RS at 'A' Level are growing and the number in 2007 was the highest ever reported in West Sussex. The percentage of students achieving an A-C grade fell slightly from 2006 and is below the national average.

| | A-C | | | | |
|-------------|------|-------|-------|-------|------|
| | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 |
| West Sussex | 39.4 | 37.5 | 47 | 65.4 | 63.1 |
| National | 66.4 | 68.6 | 64.5 | 65.9 | 68.4 |
| Difference | -27 | -31.1 | -17.5 | -0.5% | -7.1 |

Table 7 – Percentage of students gaining higher grades at AS Level

Conclusions

Overall examination results in religious studies for 2007 are good and show a steady improvement from 2006.

PROPOSAL FOR DEVELOPMENT OF NEW WEST SUSSEX AGREED SYLLABUS FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Religious Education is controlled by the West Sussex Agreed Syllabus 2003. It is a requirement that we should review this syllabus every 5 years and West Sussex SACRE is working towards publishing a revised Agreed Syllabus in September 2008.

Work was begun in early 2007 to review the 2003 Agreed Syllabus and a set of principles was agreed for the new Syllabus.

1. The new syllabus should reflect the views of the teachers, and where possible students, on the usefulness of aspects of the current syllabus and their needs in the future.
2. The Non-Statutory National Framework for Religious Education should form the basis for the new syllabus.
3. The syllabus should be as concise as possible with support material being produced separately.
4. The principle audience will be schools and the language used should reflect the non-specialist nature of many teachers.
5. The demands for RE at 14+ should reflect the aspiration in West Sussex of all pupils following a course leading to qualification in RE.
6. The Syllabus should be inclusive and be relevant to pupils who come from a background of any religion or none.
7. The Syllabus should meet all the requirements set out by the relevant act of parliament.

The process was overseen by SACRE who made recommendations to the Agreed Syllabus Conference that was held in March 2008. A sub-committee of SACRE was set up to consider proposals in detail before going to SACRE. This sub-committee received reports and papers from working groups of teachers and was supported by officers from the LA. The Purpose of this group was to:

- Ensure the principles set down by SACRE are adhered to in the development of the new Agreed Syllabus.
- regular monitoring of the developments in detail of the project
- reporting to SACRE at each meeting.

Significant work took place over 2006/07 to develop a new syllabus that would be ready to consult with schools in Autumn 2007. Based on the principles agreed with SACRE groups of teachers supported by the RE Adviser drew together an initial Syllabus that was presented to SACRE and modified as a result of SACRE's comments. This process was managed by the Steering group set up by SACRE. In the summer of 2007 SACRE agreed a draft syllabus to go out to schools for consultation in the autumn.

In early September a consultation was sent to all maintained schools in West Sussex. Schools were sent a copy of the Draft Agreed Syllabus and asked to complete a questionnaire. This questionnaire consisted of two parts. Section 1 was a brief series of questions that could be answered "Yes" or "No" while Section 2 allowed detailed comments. All schools were asked to complete section 1 and invited to complete Section 2 if they had detailed comments to make.

Ninety-seven schools replied. This consisted of seventy-six Primary schools (out of 246) and twenty-one secondary schools (out of 40).

Most schools completed all the questions in Section 1 while only some completed section 2. An analysis of section 1 in Primary schools indicated that schools were in favour of the new Syllabus and felt that it provided a good basis for their work. Of the 76 schools that replied there were only 5 questions that received a negative response. In one case a school felt that there needed to be more specific guidance on how much of the syllabus should be given over to Christianity. The only other comment to note was a preference shown by one reply for the more detailed guidance provided in the current syllabus. Secondary schools were also supportive of the syllabus.

An Agreed Syllabus conference was convening in March 2008 and a new Agreed Syllabus for West Sussex schools was adopted to come into operation in September 2008. Following the conference SACRE agreed a range of support material and training to aid the implementation of the Syllabus.

LINKS WITH OTHER AGENCIES

West Sussex continued its membership of the National Association of SACREs (NASACRE) and took an interest in their work including receiving reports from members who attended their conferences and circulating and discussing their newsletter.

During the year the SACRE received and considered reports and information from a number of national organisations. The SACRE welcomed the work being done by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority and Ofsted in support of Religious Education.

During the year the Ofsted publication "Making sense of religion" was considered carefully by SACRE. This long report on religious education and the impact of locally agreed syllabuses was a significant document and received careful attention.

SACRE Action Plan

SACRE has developed a pattern of work over three meetings a year. In the summer of 2008 it established a programme for the year 2008 – 09 that would pick up major areas of work in addition to ongoing SACRE work. The agreed priorities are:

Autumn

1. Analysis of external examination results
2. Draft of annual SACRE report
3. Self-evaluation exercise for SACRE – complete a self-evaluation

Spring

1. Analysis of Ofsted inspections of schools
2. Collective worship – review of support.
3. Self-evaluation exercise for SACRE – use results of the self-evaluation to draw up plan for SACRE

Summer

1. Induct new SACRE following county council elections.
2. Programme of in-service training for teachers

SACRE ARRANGEMENTS

To support Religious Education, the LA is advised by the General Adviser (Religious Education) who also attends meetings of the SACRE and advises it as appropriate. The Director of Children and Young People's Services is clerk to the SACRE and staff from Democratic Services support the meetings.

WHO IS ON SACRE?

The structure of the SACRE is laid down by law and the Local Education Authority agrees its composition. Although it consists of the four committees required by law, it normally meets in full session.

SACRE MEMBERSHIP

| | | |
|--------------------|--|------------|
| <u>Committee A</u> | <u>Christian Denominations and other religions and religious denominations</u> | |
| Mr D Fetteroll | Roman Catholic | |
| Major I Leach | Salvation Army | |
| Mrs J Schofield | United Reform Church | |
| Mr D James | Baptist Union | |
| Rev Dr P Bishop | Methodist | |
| Mr D Patel | Hindu | |
| Mrs K Pearce | Quaker | |
| Imam H Rabbani | Muslim | |
| Dr F Tahzib | Baha'i | |
| Mrs L Wilkins | Jewish | |
| Mr JS Jhans | Sikh | |
| Co-opted Member | | |
| Mr B Andrews | Buddhist | |
| <u>Committee B</u> | <u>The Church of England</u> | |
| Mrs R Moriarty | Diocese of Chichester | |
| Miss M Shilliday | Diocese of Chichester | |
| Mr J Taylor | Diocese of Chichester | Vice Chair |
| Mrs A Smith | Diocese of Chichester | |
| <u>Committee C</u> | <u>Associations Representing Teachers</u> | |
| Mrs K Brown | Joint Consultative Committee | |
| Mr M Hawke | Joint Consultative Committee | |
| Mrs S Heasman | Joint Consultative Committee | |
| Mr D Thomas | Joint Consultative Committee | |
| Mrs S Carter | Primary Headteacher Representative | |
| Mr G Parry | Secondary Headteacher Representative | |
| Mr D Reid | Special Schools Headteacher | |
| <u>Committee D</u> | <u>The Local Education Authority</u> | |
| Mrs M Collins DL | Chairman | |
| Mr Coote | | |
| Mr D Crow | | |
| Mrs G Joyce | | |
| Mr P Griffiths | | |

WEST SUSSEX SACRE MEETINGS 2007/08

1. The SACRE met on four occasions and the attendance was as follows:

| | |
|------------------|------------|
| Mr B Andrews | 3 out of 4 |
| Dr P Bishop | 4 out of 4 |
| Mrs K Brown | 2 out of 3 |
| Mrs S Carter | 3 out of 4 |
| Mrs M Collins | 3 out of 4 |
| Mr P Coote | 2 out of 4 |
| Mr D Crow | 4 out of 4 |
| Mr D Fetterol | 3 out of 4 |
| Mr M Hawke | 1 out of 1 |
| Mrs S Heasman | 4 out of 4 |
| Major Heward | 3 out of 3 |
| Mrs S Hibberd | 1 out of 1 |
| Mr D James | 4 out of 4 |
| Mr J Jhans | 0 out of 4 |
| Mrs G Joyce | 2 out of 4 |
| Mrs R Moriarty | 2 out of 4 |
| Mr G Parry | 2 out of 4 |
| Mr D K Patel | 2 out of 4 |
| Mrs K Pearce | 1 out of 2 |
| Iman H Rabbani | 0 out of 4 |
| Mr D Reid | 0 out of 4 |
| Mrs J Schofield | 3 out of 4 |
| Miss M Shilliday | 4 out of 4 |
| Mrs A Smith | 4 out of 4 |
| Mr F Tahzib | 1 out of 4 |
| Mr J Taylor | 3 out of 4 |
| Mr D Thomas | 0 out of 1 |
| Ms L Wilkins | 4 out of 4 |

2. The main items of discussion have been:

2.1 Annual Reports

Consideration of the SACRE's Annual Report for 2005/06 and discussion on the QCA analysis of reports submitted in respect of 2004/05.

2.2 Inspection Reports for West Sussex Schools

Details of the sections of inspection reports dealing with pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development in 10 West Sussex schools.

2.3 Analysis of GCSE and "A" Level results

Statistics relating to the county results for GCSE were considered along with the trend over previous years.

2.4 Collective Worship

Consideration of the guidance provided on collective worship.

2.5 Revision of the West Sussex Agreed Syllabus

Proposals for the review and revision of the West Sussex Agreed Syllabus.

RESULTS IN PUBLIC EXAMINATIONS, SUMMER 2008

The report on page 5 sets out the results in public examinations for 2007 as discussed at the SACRE meeting of November 2007. To provide a view on current performance this report on the 2008 results is included in this annual report although it was not considered by SACRE in the reporting year.

1. Entry Patterns

1.1 Examination results may vary from year to year without any clear reason other than the variety of entry pattern. Table 1 below shows the numbers of students taking GCE and GCSE examinations over the past 10 years. In West Sussex 7780 students sat GCSE examinations in 2008 with 58.4% of these students taking religious studies.

| | GCE 'A' Level | | GCE 'AS' Level | | GCSE | | Short Course GCSE | | Total GCSE |
|------|---------------|----------|----------------|----------|---------|----------|-------------------|----------|------------|
| | Schools | Students | Schools | Students | Schools | Students | Schools | Students | Students |
| 1999 | 11 | 53 | 2 | 6 | 22 | 1103 | 10 | 986 | 2089 |
| 2000 | 13 | 65 | 5 | 17 | 18 | 1144 | 13 | 1243 | 2377 |
| 2001 | 12 | 67 | 4 | 13 | 19 | 883 | 15 | 1513 | 2396 |
| 2002 | 12 | 76 | 13 | 52 | 18 | 991 | 17 | 1829 | 2820 |
| 2003 | 14 | 76 | 11 | 19 | 21 | 976 | 17 | 1937 | 2913 |
| 2004 | 12 | 84 | 12 | 31 | 23 | 1068 | 22 | 2567 | 3625 |
| 2005 | 13 | 74 | 10 | 45 | 25 | 1250 | 25 | 2878 | 4128 |
| 2006 | 14 | 96 | 14 | 231 | 26 | 1385 | 27 | 3116 | 4501 |
| 2007 | 13 | 129 | 14 | 237 | 23 | 1295 | 25 | 3020 | 4315 |
| 2008 | 13 | 120 | 15 | 230 | 26 | 1425 | 29 | 3118 | 4543 |

Table 1 – Numbers of students studying RE and the number of schools entering students

1.2 The pattern of entry for GCSE has become more varied in recent years. There are thirty-seven schools with Year 11 students of which ten are church schools. This year 7 schools entered the majority (90%+) of their students for an examination with a further 8 schools entering a significant proportion of students (between 70% and 90%). An interesting feature this year is that 22 schools entered over half their students for a GCSE examination. What we are beginning to see is a more sophisticated entry pattern with schools entering students for a variety of examinations. In the past we have seen a few schools enter all or most students for the examination while the others entered small numbers. The other 13 schools only enter those students who have chosen to study RS within the option system. Fluctuations in results are usually more marked in those schools where only a limited number of students are entered for the examination.

- 1.3 Thirty-five of the thirty-seven secondary schools in the county entered students for some form of GCSE examination. The two schools with no entries have entered students for the examination in the recent past and plan to enter students in the future.
- 1.4 In addition to the GCSE courses 62 students were entered for the entry level qualification in 2 schools. This enables students who would not achieve a GCSE pass grade to be credited for their work. If you add to this the 32 students who sat the AS level in Year 11 we have a total of 4647 or 59.7% of students achieving a qualification in RE at the end of Year 11.
- 1.5 This year has seen an increase in the total number of students entered for a GCSE level qualification in either the short course or the full course. In 2006 55% of Year 11 students in West Sussex took a GCSE examination in religious studies, in 2007 this dropped to 51% and in 2008 rose to 58.4%.
- 1.6 Although the number of students who go on to study 'A' level is small the figure for 2007 was the highest for nine years and this has been followed by only a small drop in 2008. The number of entries recorded for AS level has remained stable for three years and is likely to continue providing higher numbers studying to "A" Level. In addition we had two schools that entered a total of 62 students for the AS Level at the end of Year 11 (up from 26 in 2007) that are not included in the figures in Table 1. Nationally 63% of all GCSE level entries are accounted for by the short course while this figure in West Sussex is 69%.
- 1.7 The number of students studying for a Level 3 qualification has remained stable this year after rising steadily for a number of years. A new feature this year is that in addition to "A" and "AS" examinations there are a small number of students sitting the advanced extension award.

2. GCSE Trends

- 2.1 The percentage of students achieving grades A*-C in 2008 in the full GCSE course has fallen slightly after a large improvement last year. Table 2 illustrates this:

| | A* - C | | | | | A* - G | | | | |
|-------------|--------|-------|------|-------|-------|--------|------|------|-------|------|
| | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 |
| West Sussex | 56 | 56 | 66 | 71.35 | 70.38 | 96.6 | 95 | 98 | 98.84 | 98.8 |
| National | 65.8 | 68.6 | 70.6 | 71.5 | 72.2 | 97.5 | 97.9 | 98 | 98.2 | 97.9 |
| Difference | -9.8 | -12.6 | -4.6 | -0.15 | -1.82 | -0.9 | -2.9 | 0 | 0.64 | 0.64 |

Table 2 – Percentage of students gaining higher grades and grades A-G compared to the national picture in RE in full course GCSE.*

2.2 Table 3 illustrates the results for the short course GCSE. The West Sussex results for the higher grades have fallen slightly but are still above the national results and are in line with the national figure for the A*-G grades.

| | A* - C | | | | | A* - G | | | | |
|-------------|--------|------|------|-------|-------|--------|------|------|------|-------|
| | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 |
| West Sussex | 52.7 | 55.1 | 53 | 62.05 | 59.81 | 96.4 | 94 | 94 | 97.9 | 96.08 |
| National | 52.9 | 53.7 | 54.1 | 53.4 | 53 | 96 | 96.4 | 94.6 | 95.5 | 96.1 |
| Difference | -0.2 | 1.4 | -1.1 | 8.65 | 6.81 | 0.4 | -2.4 | -0.6 | 2.4 | -0.02 |

Table 3 – Percentage of students gaining higher grades and grades A*-G in short course GCSE

2.3 The performance of boys has fallen slightly and for A*-C is now over 3% below the national figure while girls have improved further and are slightly above the national figure. Both boys and girls are above the national figure for A*-G. The gender difference for higher grades in religious studies is larger than in most other subjects nationally and this is reflected in West Sussex. However the gender gap is greater in West Sussex (14.1%) than nationally (10.5%).

Table 4 illustrates this:

| | A* - C | | | | | A* - G | | | | |
|----------|--------|------|------|------|------|--------|------|------|------|------|
| | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 |
| Boys | 47.9 | 55.5 | 63 | 64.5 | 63 | 96.2 | 96.7 | 99 | 98.1 | 98.2 |
| National | | 61.7 | 63.8 | 65.4 | 66.4 | | 97 | 97.3 | 97.4 | 97.9 |
| Girls | 61.4 | 58.9 | 65 | 76.2 | 77.1 | 98.3 | 97.3 | 98 | 99.3 | 99.3 |
| National | | 73.9 | 75.8 | 76.2 | 76.9 | | 98.6 | 98.6 | 98.8 | 99 |

Table 4 – Percentage of boys and girls gaining relevant grades in RE in the full course.

2.4 The gender gap on Short Course GCSE shows both boys and girls doing better than the national figure. Entry to the short course is generally more balanced and the gap between boys and girls performance is less than nationally.

| | A* - C | | | | | A* - G | | | | |
|----------|--------|------|------|------|------|--------|------|------|------|------|
| | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 |
| Boys | 39 | 43 | 46 | 57.4 | 54 | 94.4 | 91.7 | 90 | 95.9 | 95.2 |
| National | | 46.2 | 46.8 | 46.7 | 46.4 | | 94.1 | 94.6 | 94.1 | 94.8 |
| Girls | 61 | 65 | 59 | 65.9 | 65.1 | 97.5 | 95.8 | 96 | 98.7 | 96.9 |
| National | | 60.9 | 61.2 | 59.9 | 59.7 | | 96.9 | 97.6 | 96.9 | 97.5 |

Table 5 – Percentage of boys and girls gaining relevant grades in short course GCSE

3. 'A' Level

- 3.1 The percentage of students in Year 13 gaining the higher grades at 'A' Level has fallen this year but is still above the national figures. With the number of students studying the subject this still shows a promising trend.

| | A-B | | A-C | | |
|-------------|------|------|------|------|------|
| | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 |
| West Sussex | 55 | 59 | 82.3 | 86.3 | 83.3 |
| National | 51.8 | 53.8 | 79.1 | 81.6 | 80.4 |
| Difference | 3.2 | 5.2 | 3.2 | 4.7 | 2.9 |

Table 6 – Percentage of students gaining higher grades at A Level

- 3.3 The numbers studying RS at 'AS' Level are continuing to be good. The number of students achieving a grade A-C in 2008 showed an improvement over 2007. In addition to the figures reported in Table 7 below there were 30 pupils who sat the AS examination in Year 11. 81% of these pupils gained an A-C grade and all gained a A-E grade.

| | A-C | | | | |
|-------------|-------|-------|-------|------|------|
| | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 |
| West Sussex | 37.5 | 47 | 65.4 | 61.3 | 64.9 |
| National | 68.6 | 64.5 | 65.9 | 68.4 | 67.4 |
| Difference | -31.1 | -17.5 | -0.5% | -7.1 | -2.5 |

Table 7 – Percentage of students gaining higher grades at AS Level

4. Conclusions

- 4.1 The proportion of candidates taking a public examination in Religious Studies in Year 11 has continued to grow. Despite concerns that the growth of short course GCSE would reduce numbers on the full GCSE course numbers have continued to grow.
- 4.2 Entry patterns at 16 have become more complex with schools entering students for a variety of courses depending on their ability and aptitude.
- 4.3 The results in West Sussex for GCSE Religious Studies full course are have improved and are now in line with national figures
- 4.4 The gap between the results of boys and girls in the full course GCSE is larger than found nationally.
- 4.5 At 'A' Level and "AS" Level the numbers of students studying the subject continue to be good attainment is remaining strong.