

Thurrock: A place of opportunity, enterprise and excellence, where individuals, communities and businesses flourish

## Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education

The meeting will be held at **6.00 pm** on **30 January 2018**

**Committee Room 4, Civic Offices, New Road, Grays, Essex, RM17 6SL**

### Membership:

**Committee A:** Mrs S Lawson, Free Church Christian Member  
Mrs Shepherd, Roman Catholic Member  
Miss A Ahmed, Muslim Member  
Mr A Rashid, Muslim Member  
Mr B Gill, Sikh Member  
Mr A Kariyawasam, Buddhist Member  
Dr O Soleye, Pentecostal Member  
Mr P Anderson, Free Church Representative  
Vacancy, Jewish Member  
Vacancy, Hindu Member

**Committee B:** Rev. J Guest (Chair), Rev. D Bates and 2  
Vacancies - Church of England

**Committee C:** Mrs R Gedalovitch and 5 Vacancies - Teachers' Associations

**Committee D:** Councillors: Martin Kerin, Tunde Ojetola and Angela Sheridan -  
Local Authority

**Co-opted:** Vacancy

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### Agenda

Open to Public and Press

**1 Apologies for Absence**

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**2 Minutes**

**5 - 20**

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education meetings held on:

- 19 April 2017
- 05 September 2017
- 22 November 2017

**3 Items of Urgent Business**

To receive additional items that the Chair is of the opinion should be considered as a matter of urgency, in accordance with Section 100B (4) (b) of the Local Government Act 1972.

**4 Declarations of Interest**

**5 Monitoring Provision for Religious Education in Thurrock Schools**

**21 - 30**

This item will be discussed in two parts:

- a) Analysing information published on school websites
- b) School workforce data 2016

**6 SACRE Work Programme 2018/2019**

This item is to suggest topics for discussion in the New Municipal Year.

**7 Any Other Business**

**Queries regarding this Agenda or notification of apologies:**

Please contact Kenna-Victoria Martin, Senior Democratic Services Officer by sending an email to [Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk](mailto:Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk)

Agenda published on: **22 January 2018**

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# DECLARING INTERESTS FLOWCHART – QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

Breaching those parts identified as a pecuniary interest is potentially a criminal offence

## Helpful Reminders for Members

- *Is your register of interests up to date?*
- *In particular have you declared to the Monitoring Officer all disclosable pecuniary interests?*
- *Have you checked the register to ensure that they have been recorded correctly?*

## When should you declare an interest *at a meeting*?

- **What matters are being discussed at the meeting?** (including Council, Cabinet, Committees, Subs, Joint Committees and Joint Subs); or
- If you are a Cabinet Member making decisions other than in Cabinet **what matter is before you for single member decision?**



Does the business to be transacted at the meeting

- relate to; or
- likely to affect

any of your registered interests and in particular any of your Disclosable Pecuniary Interests?

Disclosable Pecuniary Interests shall include your interests or those of:

- your spouse or civil partner's
- a person you are living with as husband/ wife
- a person you are living with as if you were civil partners

where you are aware that this other person has the interest.

A detailed description of a disclosable pecuniary interest is included in the Members Code of Conduct at Chapter 7 of the Constitution. **Please seek advice from the Monitoring Officer about disclosable pecuniary interests.**

**What is a Non-Pecuniary interest?** – this is an interest which is not pecuniary (as defined) but is nonetheless so significant that a member of the public with knowledge of the relevant facts, would reasonably regard to be so significant that it would materially impact upon your judgement of the public interest.

### Pecuniary

If the interest is not already in the register you must (unless the interest has been agreed by the Monitoring Officer to be sensitive) disclose the existence and nature of the interest to the meeting

If the Interest is not entered in the register and is not the subject of a pending notification you must within 28 days notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest for inclusion in the register

Unless you have received dispensation upon previous application from the Monitoring Officer, you must:

- Not participate or participate further in any discussion of the matter at a meeting;
- Not participate in any vote or further vote taken at the meeting; and
- leave the room while the item is being considered/voted upon

If you are a Cabinet Member you may make arrangements for the matter to be dealt with by a third person but take no further steps

### Non- pecuniary

Declare the nature and extent of your interest including enough detail to allow a member of the public to understand its nature



You may participate and vote in the usual way but you should seek advice on Predetermination and Bias from the Monitoring Officer.

**Vision: Thurrock:** A place of **opportunity**, **enterprise** and **excellence**, where **individuals**, **communities** and **businesses** flourish.

To achieve our vision, we have identified five strategic priorities:

**1. Create** a great place for learning and opportunity

- Ensure that every place of learning is rated “Good” or better
- Raise levels of aspiration and attainment so that residents can take advantage of local job opportunities
- Support families to give children the best possible start in life

**2. Encourage** and promote job creation and economic prosperity

- Promote Thurrock and encourage inward investment to enable and sustain growth
- Support business and develop the local skilled workforce they require
- Work with partners to secure improved infrastructure and built environment

**3. Build** pride, responsibility and respect

- Create welcoming, safe, and resilient communities which value fairness
- Work in partnership with communities to help them take responsibility for shaping their quality of life
- Empower residents through choice and independence to improve their health and well-being

**4. Improve** health and well-being

- Ensure people stay healthy longer, adding years to life and life to years
- Reduce inequalities in health and well-being and safeguard the most vulnerable people with timely intervention and care accessed closer to home
- Enhance quality of life through improved housing, employment and opportunity

**5. Promote** and protect our clean and green environment

- Enhance access to Thurrock's river frontage, cultural assets and leisure opportunities
- Promote Thurrock's natural environment and biodiversity
- Inspire high quality design and standards in our buildings and public space

## Minutes of the Meeting of the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education held on 19 April 2017 at 6.00 pm

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### Present:

- Committee A:** Mrs S Lawson, Mrs M Shepherd, Dr O Soley and Mr P Anderson (arrived at 6.46)
- Committee B:** Rev. J Guest, Mrs M Taylor, Rev. D Bates (arrived at 6.08) and Rev. J Huntcherson
- Committee C:** Ms A Jellicoe and Ms H Gillman
- Committee D:** Councillor T Ojetola
- Apologies:** Mr A Kariyawasam, Mr P Griffiths and Roger Edwardson, Strategic Lead, School Improvement and Skills
- In attendance:** Malcolm Taylor, Strategic Lead - Learner Support  
Deborah Weston, Associate Adviser for Religious Education  
Kenna-Victoria Martin, Senior Democratic Services Officer
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Before the start of the Meeting, all present were advised that the meeting may be filmed and was being recorded, with the audio recording to be made available on the Council's website.

### 10. Minutes

The Minutes of the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education, held on 7 December 2017, were approved as a correct record.

### 11. Items of Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

### 12. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

### 13. Excellent Religious Education

The Associate Adviser for Religious Education presented the report explaining to Members that by providing training for the teachers in the 11 primary schools in Thurrock the Excellent RE project aimed to increase capacity for the sharing of good practice in the borough.

She continued by stating higher standards in the teaching of RE would help schools to fulfil their statutory duty to promote community cohesion and to encourage better respect and tolerance for those with different religions and beliefs.

It was commented that with SACRE being involved in the 'Excellent RE' programme assisted its members for updated information and invited them to be involved in its monitoring.

Members were then spilt into groups to discuss the feedback forms, which had already been received. During deliberations the following was highlighted:

- Teacher's responses were positive and many welcomed visits;
- The programme was seen as a way to obtain guidance and support to teaching the agreed syllabus;
- The honesty from teachers, with one admitting RE could be improved within their school and;
- To gain ideas and resources.

Teachers sitting on SACRE notified other Members that the local secondary school RE teachers met to discuss RE within their schools. It was explained there used to be primary schools attending, however this was now no longer the case.

The Chair commented that many schools saw SACRE a council body who completed inspections, rather than a support network who was there to monitor the agreed syllabus and offer guidance.

The Associate Adviser for Religious Education asked Members to contact those Schools who were happy to be visited and arrange a visit with the aim to feed back at the next meeting.

#### **RESOLVED:**

**That SACRE Members visit the schools involved in this project to monitor the impact.**

#### **14. Religious Education Quality Mark**

The report was introduced and explained the RE Quality Mark had been developed to celebrate high quality religious education and provided community schools, faith schools and academies with a framework to capture good practice.

It was commented that the award encouraged the development and celebration of school wide commitment to excellent teaching and learning in religious education. Within the award there were three award levels: bronze, silver and gold.

Schools applying for the REQM would be asked to highlight where they thought they meet the criteria. After applying for the REQM an assessor will



visit the school, interview learners and meet the subject leader and a member of the senior leadership team.

Members heard that the Ockendon Academy had recently been awarded Silver within the programme. It was explained that the award was evidence based and you would meet with an assessor to ensure that all criteria had been met.

The Council discussed how the award was presented and suggested that perhaps the Mayor could present the schools with their certificates as this would also raise awareness of the programme and the high quality of teaching in the borough. Members were informed that once completed you could include the qualification on letterheads, email signature and the schools website.

It was commented that the qualification was positive on both schools and SACRE and by promoting it could help to change schools view of SACRE.

#### **RESOLVED:**

**That SACRE Members discussed the merits of the REQM and the means by which it might be used in Thurrock Schools.**

### **15. Any Other Business**

#### **Thurrock SACRE Annual Report**

The Associate Adviser for Religious Education informed Members the Annual Report had been updated and the take up of the agreed syllabus from Schools and Academies within the borough was now up to 95%.

Councillor Ojetola offered to present the report at the June meeting of Full Council. The Chair thanked Councillor Ojetola and Members agreed the report should be presented at the next available Full Council meeting.

#### **NASACRE Survey**

The Chair explained the survey had been circulated via email prior to the meeting for Members to look over. Members were then separated into groups to complete different sections of the survey to be pulled into one response by the Associate Adviser for Religious Education.

#### **SACRE – Venue, Time and Date**

The Chair of SACRE sought if Members were happy with where the Council met and its time. He suggested that the Council hold its three meetings in separate areas linked to its individual committees:

- Faith Community

- School
- Local Authority

Members commented they were happy to meet at different venues, however they would have to have close links to public transport such as a train station for those travelling back from London.

It was raised that if a meeting was held in a faith venue then Members would need to be aware of difference religions and their customs.

During discussions of the timing of the meeting it was highlighted, that as the meeting was a public meeting then any venue would have to cater for the general public and any media.

Members raised that the Membership of different Committees still had vacancies. The Chair assured Members that Officers were following up on a number of leads to fill the vacancies.

**The meeting finished at 7.20pm**

Approved as a true and correct record

**CHAIR**

**DATE**

**Any queries regarding these Minutes, please contact  
Democratic Services at [Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk](mailto:Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk)**

## Minutes of the Meeting of the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education held on 5 September 2017 at 6.00 pm

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### Present:

**Committee A:** Mrs S Lawson(arrived at 6.32), Mrs M Shepherd, Miss A Ahmend (left at 7.31) and Mr P Anderson (arrived at 6.20)

**Committee B:** Rev. J Guest and Rev. D Bates

**Committee D:** Councillor Angela Sheridan

**Apologies:** Mr A Kariyawasam, Rev. J Huntcherson, Ms A Jellicoe, Ms H Gillman, Dr Soley, Mrs M Taylor and Councillors Martin Kerin and Tunde Ojetola

**In attendance:** Deborah Weston, Associate Adviser for Religious Education  
Kenna-Victoria Martin, Senior Democratic Services Officer

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Before the start of the Meeting, all present were advised that the meeting may be filmed and was being recorded, with the audio recording to be made available on the Council's website.

### 1. Minutes

The meeting was declared inquorate and it was agreed that the meeting would continue informally and recommendations put to members at the next quorate meeting of SACRE

### 2. Items of Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

### 3. Declarations of Interest

There were no interests declared.

### 4. Appointment of Chair and Vice-Chairs

The Chair suggested that the current Chair and Vice-Chairs remain until the next meeting, as the Committee were not quorate.

### RESOLVED:

**That the Chair and Vice-Chair remain in place until the next meeting on 22 November 2017.**

## **5. Monitoring of RE in Thurrock Schools**

The Associate Adviser for Religious Education introduced the item explaining that following the previous meeting, Members had been visiting schools in the borough to monitor how RE was taught in Thurrock Schools.

Mrs Shepherd presented back to the Committee on the two schools she had visited, Benyon Primary School and Dilkes Primary Academy. Members heard how both schools addressed the subject and the following was highlighted:

### **Benyon Primary School**

#### **Why did your school become involved in Excellent RE? What are your aims?**

Previously RE was taught sporadically but there was a feeling in school that it was 'getting squeezed out' by other subjects. The Headteacher was very supportive of the project and RE was placed on the timetable on a weekly basis with it being known that the Senior Leadership Team would expect to see it and did not want it to get 'squeezed'. This led to an increased volume of work and better coverage.

The school follows the Agreed Syllabus and because it is part of Catalyst, they were all following the scheme of work. They felt the Agreed Syllabus ensured steady progression. There had been no cross-school moderation of work but this was possible across the Trust in the future.

R.E. work was monitored in school via 'Learning Environment' checks; planned book looks and the collection of samples of work.

The audit, carried out as part of the project, included pupil conferencing and based on the feedback from this, changes were made and they were now conducting another audit to evaluate impact. For example, the children asked for more opportunities for drama work, which was implemented.

#### **How many staff have been involved in Excellent RE in your school so far? How?**

It has now increased to all staff. The 'gap exercise' from the course led to an initial 2 staff members being involved. Mrs Gostling helped an NQT with subject knowledge and supported staff with planning, giving ideas for activities.

#### **What did you discover from GAP task 1? (Audit of RE and SMSC in school) What has changed?**

The children wanted more drama opportunities in their RE lessons as they enjoyed this when it happened.

The project had encouraged the use of open-ended questions and research.

The Subject Leader had encouraged staff to use the SACRE website and has signposted them to other sources of information.

Mrs Gostling showed Mrs Shepherd several examples of work from across the school: EYFS work on Chinese New Year; KS1 designing Islamic prayer mats, creating a model of a mosque; work on Christmas.

Staff were now using a much wider range of resources; they are using actual artefacts eg Jewish replica artefacts.

The Subject Leader took the idea of using dolls from the course SACRE video.

### **What have you discovered from completing the GAP task 2?**

Gap task 2 led to Mrs Gostling planning with the other 2 teachers, from KS1. They gave the children a day of activities using artefacts and 'hands-on' resources which the children absolutely loved. The children were able to dress up for religious role play and this really sparked children's curiosity, so much that the children still speak about it now. Mrs Gostling showed Mrs Shepherd some wonderful video footage as well as still photographs and the children's interest and enthusiasm was clearly evident. She told me that a particularly challenging pupil so enjoyed this work that it has improved his attitude; he thoroughly enjoyed the opportunities he was given through this work. The project encouraged staff and pupils to further develop cross curricular links and teachers are now sharing their own religious artefacts, from home, with the children.

### **How might SACRE help you to share what you have learnt, with other schools?**

Mrs Gostling is happy for SACRE to pass on any of her work and comments to others.

Mrs Gostling would be interested in supporting other schools if they needed it. She has already done some 'team teaching' in her own school.

She would like to develop an RE Subject Leaders; group or forum and perhaps share work via a website.

### **Dilkes Primary Academy**

### **Why did you school become involved in Excellent RE? What are your aims?**

Ms Kular wanted to attend the training because she had previously attended another Julia Diamond course and it had inspired her through techniques to

make R.E. vibrant. Ms Kular felt that it's very important, especially in an area like Thurrock, to open the minds of children through learning about a variety of religions. The course also fitted the schools aims of making learning engaging: 'Dilkes' Best Methods'. It raised the profile of RE through the year and made it important in the 'year's agenda'.

### **How many staff have been involved in Excellent RE in your school so far? How?**

5 teachers completed the initial survey on Survey Monkey and Ms Kular felt the survey was good because it was quick and simple, however not all children completed the survey.

8 teachers have now been involved and it has really supported Ms Kular's own development. She has already completed her subject action plan for next year and this will involve all staff.

### **What did you discover from GAP task 1? (Audit of RE and SMSC in school) What has changed?**

The audit showed that some teachers found the Agreed Syllabus too detailed; they wanted ideas on how to teach the units through quicker, 'snappier' ways in line with Dilkes' Best Methods.

It also showed that teachers were questioning their own subject knowledge and there were resource issues- resources being unused, out-dated resources and resources which were not engaging.

### **What have you discovered from completing the GAP task 2?**

Ms Kular chose areas from the survey to improve and decided to use the RE award framework to help with this; her improvement work ran concurrently with gathering the evidence for RE award.

She realised that art and other creative activities such as dance, were lacking from their RE teaching and learning. She also felt that cross-curricular writing was affecting what was being done in RE.

She combined the evidence she needed to collect from the RE Quality with the work for the Excellence in RE project and gave much more emphasis to different aspects of experiencing and recording RE, than just writing. She also encouraged more debate and discussion and felt that during the course of the project, children became more open minded and willing to engage in RE. She said that there was an increase in display work on RE across the school and children became more enthusiastic and readily engaged with the assessor for the Quality Mark.

Dilkes were awarded the Silver Quality Mark.

## **How might SACRE help you to share what you have learnt, with other schools?**

Ms Kular is happy to share what she has learnt. She would like SACRE's help with creating a 'bank of people of different faiths who would be happy to visit schools to talk about their faith. She felt it was more powerful for the children when people they didn't know ie not their own teachers, spoke to them about their faith. She would be happy to visit other schools to talk about being a Sikh.

The Associate Adviser for Religious Education notified Members that SACRE had a legal duty to monitor provision for Religious Education in its local area where RE was delivered in accordance with the Local Agreed Syllabus.

She continued to explain Thurrock introduced a new Agreed Syllabus in 2016 and it would now seem timely to carry out a monitoring exercise to establish how effective the new syllabus had been in meeting its aim to raise standards of RE.

Members were spilt into groups to discuss the draft pro-forma at appendix 1. During discussions the following was raised:

- The form was straight forward and simple to answer;
- May require reformatting such as the layout, use of different fonts and the type of language used needed to be consistent;
- Answers may be different depending on whether the school was Primary or Secondary.

### **RESOLVED that SACRE Members:**

- **Discussed the draft proforma at appendix 1 and suggested revisions.**
- **Authorised a pilot monitoring programme that might be reviewed in the summer term meeting**

## **6. Collective Worship**

The Associate Adviser for Religious Education remarked SACRE had a legal duty to monitor provision for collective worship in schools in its local area.

Members were advised collective worship was an area which many schools found challenging both on practical and philosophical level. They were further notified the report aimed to stimulate a discussion between Members in the hope that some support might be offered to schools.

During discussions Members commented that many schools struggled to meet the need of collective worship every day and it lacked after primary school. It was discussed that schools required extra time to be able to do something meaningful

within collective worship, at the same time as it being different to RE.

It was commented that teachers were not trained to teach collective worship and so many of them were not sure how to offer collective worship to children. Members further stated that children needed an opportunity to worship and reflect if they wish too.

Members heard that Holy Cross Primary School had a pray garden, which was inspired by a school trip to Aylesford, where children completed the Rosary Walk. Following a trip with a Year 6 class the children asked if they could have their own peace garden.

The children created their garden with stones painted with word such as Love and Peace, running water, the sun, moon, stars to represent Gods garden a mission statement and benches with cushions. It was commented that the garden meant a lot to the children as it gave them somewhere to go and reflect.

The Committee continued their discussions by mentioning it was important for children to have time to reflect or to have time to sit and have a thought for the day within Schools. It was further commented that collective worship could be made enjoyable and not a subject that was durable.

**RESOLVED that SACRE Members:**

- **Discuss the issues raised by the NASACRE (National Association of SACREs) presentation**
- **Agreed on what support schools might need that SACRE might offer**

**The meeting finished at 7.40 pm**

Approved as a true and correct record

**CHAIR**

**DATE**

**Any queries regarding these Minutes, please contact  
Democratic Services at [Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk](mailto:Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk)**



## Minutes of the Meeting of the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education held on 22 November 2017 at 6.00 pm

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### Present:

**Committee A:** Mrs S Lawson and Mr P Anderson (arrived at 6.20pm)

**Committee B:** Rev. J Guest (Chair) and Rev. D Bates

**Committee C:** Mrs R Gedalovitch

**Apologies:** Miss A Ahmed, Mr A Kariyawasam, Dr O Soleye, ,  
Fr J Hutchinson, Councillor Martin Kerin and Councillor Tunde Ojetola

**In attendance:** Deborah Weston, Associate Adviser for Religious Education  
Roger Edwardson, Strategic Lead, School Improvement and Skills  
Kenna-Victoria Martin, Senior Democratic Services Officer

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### 7. Minutes

The meeting was declared inquorate and it was agreed that the meeting would continue informally and recommendations put to members at the next quorate meeting of SACRE.

### 8. Declarations of Interest

There were no interests declared.

### 9. Youth Cabinet

The Chair addressed SACRE welcoming the three Members of the Youth Cabinet, to the meeting and explaining the role of SACRE.

The Associate Adviser for Religious Education further explained the role of SACRE and included the following:

- Members met three times a year;
- In 2016 Members completed the agreed syllabus, which was taught within 85% of Thurrock schools;
- SACRE advised the Local Authority on Religious Education matters;
- There were four Committees which made up SACRE, these consisted of Religious groups, Church of England, Teachers and the Local Authority.

It was explained Members had invited the Youth Cabinet to their meeting as they felt it was important to seek their views and experiences of Religious Education in Schools and the importance of Religious Education in Thurrock today.

Members of the Youth Cabinet informed SACRE of their Secondary Schools, 2 attended St Cleres and one Grays Convent. It was explained that at St Cleres Religious Education was compulsory for Years 7 – 9 and could be taken as an option for years 10 and 11, topics taught included, comparisons of the Christian Faith to other Faiths, customs within Faiths and in the later years morals within different Faiths such as blood transfusion.

It was discussed that at Grays Convent Religious Education was compulsory for all years and included a focus on topics such as Marks Gospel and topic at GCSE on morals.

The Chair sought if either of the Youth Cabinet had experience collective worship at their schools. It was commented that there was a pray space for children of the Muslim faith, however this was not always used for its purpose as it was not in the best location and could be seen into.

He enquired if they felt collective worship had improved when they left primary School. Members heard how it took some getting used to when changing from a catholic primary school to a non-religious secondary school, as there were no prays in classes or masses. It was commented that there was an improvement at Grays Convent with visits to different places of worship including a synagogue and Sikh temple.

Members of the Youth Cabinet remarked they remembered a local reverend attending to speak to pupils in a whole school assembly and or mediation.

During their discussions the following was commented upon:

- Different Faiths and their practices;
- Equality within Faiths;
- Faiths and Social Media, such as the public's reaction to the recent attacks in London and Manchester.

When asked if they felt there should be faith schools, it was observed that faith was as important as any other subject taught within Schools. It was highlighted that should there be any problems the Local Authority, should have the ability to look over on a case by case basis.

**RESOLVED:**

**That SACRE welcomed and noted discussions with Members of the Youth Cabinet.**

## **10. Monitoring of Religious Education in Thurrock Schools**

The Associate Adviser for Religious Education introduced the report informing Members, in order to discharge its legal duties; SACRE monitored the provision for Religious Education in its local area where RE is delivered in accordance with the local Agreed Syllabus.

She continued by stating Thurrock introduced a new Agreed Syllabus in 2016 and decided it would carry out a monitoring exercise to establish how effective the new syllabus has been in meeting its aim to raise standards of RE. At the meeting of SACRE on 5 September 2017 a mechanism by which SACRE might collect information to meet this monitoring requirement was amended and agreed, this had updated following members' instructions.

The Associate Adviser for Religious Education commented the only draw up was receiving back the responses from the Schools to be able to input the results in a system accordingly.

Members discussed the self-evaluation forms commenting they were perhaps too long and therefore timely for teachers to complete. It was suggested as to whether SACRE knew who the Religious Education leaders were within each school, as this would give SACRE a direct contact link to the Schools.

It was agreed that along with a direct contact with the Schools that the evaluation be compiled electronically, using Survey Monkey, this might not shorted the evaluation completely but would give the option of multiple choice.

### **RESOLVED that SACRE:**

- 1. Discuss the revised proforma at Appendices 1 and 2 of the report;**
- 2. Authorise a pilot monitoring programme that might be reviewed in the summer term meeting.**

## **11. National Update on Religious Education**

The Associate Adviser for Religious Education presented the report to those present, explaining the Commission on Religious Education had been established to review the legal, education, and policy frameworks for religious education (RE).

She continued by remarking the review would be a wide-ranging, inclusive and evidence-based process designed to inform policy makers. The ultimate aim would be to improve the quality of Religious Education within schools and its capacity to prepare pupils for life in modern Britain.

Members heard how the remit of the Commission would include:

- To consider the nature, purposes, and scope of religious education;

- To identify the enabling factors that currently promote high quality RE and the barriers that currently limit it;
- To identify what changes are needed to ensure the highest quality provision of RE and;
- To ensure that recommendations focus on realistic and specific proposals aimed at both immediate and long-term implementation in the context of continuing educational reform.

During discussions it was highlighted that the percentage of schools either not providing Religious Education or having a little intake on the course for Key Stage 4 was surprising low. It was further discussed as to the recruitment of teachers for the subject, to which it was suggested the recruitment of Religious Education teachers was in crisis, with the subject being taught by other subject teachers.

Members of SACRE commented on the Commissions suggestion that there should be a different word for 'Religion'; the Chair agreed that it seemed to be the wrong word. Members proposed 'faith and belief'.

The Associate Adviser for Religious Education mentioned it was necessary to find SACRE's role within the current status of schools relating to the agreed syllabus. She explained that as Academies could, if they wished, follow their own syllabus or that of another authority it was a problem SACRE would have to face as the accountable body for Religious Education within the Borough.

It was agreed following discussions that the Strategic Lead for School Improvement and Skills speak to the Regional Schools Commission to invite them to the January meeting, in the hope to seek their thoughts on joining SACRE.

**RESOLVED that SACRE:**

- 1. Discussed the recommendations of each report.**
- 2. Considered responding to the Commission on the RE interim report using the online form.**

**12. Any Other Business**

There were no items of other business to be discussed.

**13. Items of Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

**The meeting finished at 8.00 pm**

Approved as a true and correct record

**CHAIR**

**DATE**

**Any queries regarding these Minutes, please contact  
Democratic Services at [Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk](mailto:Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk)**

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<b>30 January 2018</b>	<b>ITEM: 5</b>
<b>Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education</b>	
<b>Monitoring Provision for Religious Education in Thurrock Schools</b>	
<b>Wards and communities affected:</b> All	<b>Key Decision:</b> Non-Key
<b>Report of:</b> Deborah Weston, Associate Adviser for Religious Education	
<b>Accountable Assistant Director:</b> Roger Edwardson, Strategic Lead, School Improvement, Learning and Skills	
<b>Accountable Director:</b> Rory Patterson Director of Children’s Services	
<b>This report is Public</b>	

## Executive Summary

In order to discharge its legal duties, SACRE monitors provision for Religious Education in its local area where RE is delivered in accordance with the local Agreed Syllabus. Thurrock introduced a new Agreed Syllabus in 2016 and decided that the academic year 2017-2018 would be a reasonable time to begin a monitoring exercise to establish how effective the new syllabus has been in meeting its aim to raise standards of RE. At the last meeting of SACRE agreed to launch a pilot project and collect information through a survey of a sample of schools and at the January meeting, it is proposed that SACRE uses school websites to continue to carry out this monitoring and also considers the school workforce data for secondary schools for 2016.

- 1. Recommendation(s) that SACRE:**
  - 1.1 Considers the proforma to review provision for RE as recorded on school websites;**
  - 1.2 Considers the school workforce data for 2016 in Appendix 2;**
  - 1.3 Consider any follow up action that might be warranted:**
    - **Where good practice is identified**
    - **Where there is no evidence that the requirements of the Agreed Syllabus are met**
    - **Where there looks to be limited or no provision.**

## **2. Introduction and Background**

- 2.1 It has been possible in the past for SACRE to carry out its monitoring function using a variety of methods:
- a. School visits and lesson observations
  - b. The collation of comments on RE found in Ofsted inspection reports
  - c. Analysis of data
- 2.2 Smaller education budgets and less staff capacity mean that specific visits to schools by specialist advisers for RE are no longer possible for most local authorities, Ofsted no longer report on RE in particular and therefore SACREs around the country largely rely on data and information that schools are prepared to share from their own self-evaluative work.

## **3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options**

- 3.1 To comply with the School Information (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012, all schools including academies and free schools must publish the content of the religious education curriculum for each academic year on their school website.<sup>12</sup>
- 3.2 A census of the school workforce is carried out annual and for secondary schools, this includes data about the number of hours of provision for each year group for each subject of the curriculum
- 3.3 These two methods of collective information on provision for RE cannot be used in isolation but the results should complement GCSE data and the pilot survey that are already part of this year's SACRE workplan.

## **4. Reasons for Recommendation**

- 4.1 One of the responsibilities of a SACRE is to monitor provision for RE to be given in accordance with its Agreed Syllabus

## **5. Consultation (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)**

- 5.1 Not applicable

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/what-maintained-schools-must-publish-online>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/what-academies-free-schools-and-colleges-should-publish-online>



## **6. Impact on corporate policies, priorities, performance and community impact**

6.1 The Local Authority reviews its Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education on a regular basis;

- Publishes an Annual Report of its work;
- Offers guidance on resources and methods of teaching and in consultation with Thurrock Schools;
- Monitors the quality of provision for RE and Collective Acts of Worship in Thurrock.

This exercise falls under the third element of this programme.

## **7. Implications**

### **7.1 Financial**

Implications verified by: **Nilufa Begum**  
**Management Accountant - Corporate Finance**

There are no financial implications to this report since the analysis of the data collected through this exercise will be conducted by the Associate RE Adviser as part of her work

### **7.2 Legal**

Implications verified by: **Lucinda Bell**  
**Education Lawyer**

The legal duties on the advisory council are set out in s391 of the Education Act 1996. The main one is to advise the local authority on such matters connected with the religious worship in community schools or in foundation schools which do not have a religious character and the religious education to be given in accordance with an agreed or other syllabus as the authority may refer to the council or as the council may see fit.

This report asks members to consider a proforma, data and follow up. Consideration as requested falls within the general powers of the committee.

No decision is required.

### **7.3 Diversity and Equality**

Implications verified by: **Natalie Warren**  
**Community Development & Equalities Manager**

The aim of this review is to collect information about the provision for RE in Thurrock, to address concerns and to celebrate success. Higher standards in the teaching of RE will help schools to fulfil their statutory duty to promote community cohesion and to encourage better respect and tolerance for those with different religions and beliefs.

7.4 **Other implications** (where significant) – i.e. Staff, Health, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder)

Not applicable

8. **Background papers used in preparing the report** (including their location on the Council's website or identification whether any are exempt or protected by copyright):

- None

9. **Appendices to the report**

- Appendix 1 – Information from School websites on RE/ Acts of Collective Worship
- Appendix 2 - School Workforce Data (DfE) 2016

**Report Author:**

Deborah Weston

Associate Adviser for RE

# Thurrock SACRE

## Information from School websites on RE/Acts of Collective Worship

*The Thurrock SACRE is examining what schools publish about their provision for RE and collective worship as part of its duty to:*

- Monitor provision and standards in religious education;
- Advise on methods of teaching, choice of materials, and provision of teacher training;
- Support schools in reviewing and self-evaluating their provision for religious education and collective worship

**Appendix 1**

<p><b>School</b></p>	<p><b>Has the school published the content of the RE curriculum for each academic year?</b></p> <p>Yes/No/Not known (Delete as applicable)</p> <p><b>Is this in line with the Thurrock Agreed Syllabus for RE (see back page)?</b></p> <p>Yes/No/Not known (Delete as applicable)</p>	<p><b>Is a GCSE course offered in Key Stage 4? Yes/No</b></p> <p><b>Short Course/Full Course/Not known</b></p>	<p><b>Secondary - Is there a non-GCSE KS4 RE curriculum shown? Yes/No</b></p>
<p><b>Notes</b></p>			
<p><b>Does the website also include:</b></p> <p>Page 26  <b>RE policy? (primary only)</b> <span style="float: right;"><b>Yes/No/Not known (Delete as applicable)</b></span></p> <p><b>Information about collective worship?</b> <span style="float: right;"><b>Yes/No/Not known (Delete as applicable)</b></span></p> <p><b>A nominated RE leader?</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Name: .....</b></p> <p><b>Any events linked to RE (e.g. relevant visitors, Inter Faith week etc)? Describe below:</b></p>			
<p><b>Overall impression of RE on school website</b></p> <p><b>Contact school? Y/N</b></p>			

## Appendix 1 Agreed Syllabus Requirements

### B2 What religions are to be taught?

This agreed syllabus requires that all pupils learn from Christianity in each key stage. In addition, pupils will learn from the principal religions represented in the UK, in line with the law. These are Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism, Buddhism and Judaism. Furthermore, children from families where non-religious worldviews are held are represented in almost all of our classrooms. These worldviews, including for example Humanism, will also be the focus for study.

Religious traditions are to be studied in depth as follows:

Schools should consider the pupils they serve in deciding whether to go beyond the minimum entitlements to learning about religions, which are that pupils should learn from:	
4–5s Reception	Children will encounter Christianity and other faiths, as part of their growing sense of self, their own community and their place within it.
5–7s Key Stage 1	Christians and Muslims or Jewish people
7–11s Key Stage 2	Christians, Muslims, Hindus and Jewish people
11–14s Key Stage 3	Christians, Muslims, Sikhs and Buddhists
14–16s Key Stage 4	Two religions required, usually including Christianity. This will be through a course in Religious Studies or Religious Education leading to a qualification approved under Section 96 <sup>12</sup>
16–19s RE for all	Religions and worldviews to be selected by schools and colleges as appropriate.

#### Important notes:

This is the **minimum requirement**. Many schools may wish to go beyond the minimum.

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## Appendix 2: School Workforce Data (DfE) 2016

School name:	Religious character:	School type:	% hours spent on RE Teaching 7	% hours spent on RE Teaching 8	% hours spent on RE Teaching 9	% hours spent on RE Teaching 10	% hours spent on RE Teaching 11	% hours spent on RE Teaching 12	% hours spent on RE Teaching 13	% hours spent on RE Teaching for years 7 to 13
The Hathaway Academy	None	Academy Sponsor Led	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.1	2.1	.	.	0.7
Harris Academy Chafford Hundred	None	Academy Converter	0.0	0.0	1.6	2.0	0.9	3.4	4.1	1.6
St Clare's School	None	Foundation School	2.8	2.6	2.0	2.4	0.0	.	.	1.8
William Edwards School and Sports College	None	Academy Converter	0.0	4.2	4.4	1.0	1.0	.	.	2.1
The Gateway Academy	Does not apply	ACADEMY SPONSOR LED	0.0	0.0	7.2	3.0	0.0	.	.	2.1
Gable Hall School	None	Foundation School	4.0	3.7	4.9	1.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.4
Hassenbrook Academy	None	ACADEMY CONVERTER	4.4	4.5	4.4	2.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.0
The Ockendon School	None	Foundation School	7.3	7.4	7.4	7.3	7.6	0.0	4.5	6.6
Grays Convent High School	Roman Catholic	VOLUNTARY AIDED SCHOOL	9.2	9.4	9.6	10.0	10.5	.	.	9.8

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