

Thurrock - An ambitious and collaborative community which is proud of its heritage and excited by its diverse opportunities and future

Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education

The meeting will be held at **6.00 pm** on **6 November 2019**

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

Membership:

Committee A:

Mrs S Lawson, Free Church Christian Member
Mr P Anderson, Free Church Christian Member
Mrs M Shepherd, Diocese of Brentwood, Roman Catholic Member
Mr J Hussein, Muslim Member
Miss A Ahmed, Muslim Member
Ms H Kaur Takhtar, Sikh Member
Mr T Ojetola, Pentecostal Member
Mr A Kariyawasam, Buddhist Member
Ms S Perlmutter, Jewish Member
Vacancy, Hindu Member

Committee B:

Rev.J Guest, Church of England Member
Vacancy, Church of England Member
Vacancy, Church of England Member
Vacancy, Church of England Member

Committee C:

Mrs R Gedalovitch, Teachers' Associations
Ms H Martins, Teachers' Associations
Ms A Harris, Teachers' Associations
Ms J Culloty, Teachers' Associations
Vacancy, Teachers' Associations
Vacancy, Teachers' Associations

Committee D:

Councillor G Collins
Councillor M Kerin

Agenda

Open to Public and Press

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1 Apologies for Absence

2	Minutes	5 - 10
	To approve as a correct record the minutes of the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education meeting held on 5 June 2019	
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 RE in Thurrock Schools	11 - 16
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Queries regarding this Agenda or notification of apologies:

Please contact Kenna Victoria Healey, Senior Democratic Services Officer by sending an email to Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk

Agenda published on: **29 October 2019**

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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.

Our Vision and Priorities for Thurrock

An ambitious and collaborative community which is proud of its heritage and excited by its diverse opportunities and future.

1. **People** – a borough where people of all ages are proud to work and play, live and stay
 - High quality, consistent and accessible public services which are right first time
 - Build on our partnerships with statutory, community, voluntary and faith groups to work together to improve health and wellbeing
 - Communities are empowered to make choices and be safer and stronger together

2. **Place** – a heritage-rich borough which is ambitious for its future
 - Roads, houses and public spaces that connect people and places
 - Clean environments that everyone has reason to take pride in
 - Fewer public buildings with better services

3. **Prosperity** – a borough which enables everyone to achieve their aspirations
 - Attractive opportunities for businesses and investors to enhance the local economy
 - Vocational and academic education, skills and job opportunities for all
 - Commercial, entrepreneurial and connected public services

Minutes of the Meeting of the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education held on 5 June 2019 at 6.00 pm

Present:

Committee A: Mrs S Lawson, Mr P Anderson, Mrs M Shepherd and Mr T Ojetola

Committee B: Rev.J Guest,

Committee D: Councillors Martin Kerin and Gary Collins

Apologies: Mr A Kariyawasam, Mrs R Gedalovitch and Ms J Culloty

In attendance: Deborah Weston, Associate Advisor for Religious Education
Andrea Winstone, Strategic Lead for School Effectiveness and SEND
Kenna-Victoria Healey, Senior Democratic Services Officer

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.

Mr Ojetola enquired as to why there had not been a report following the news that parents had been withdrawing their children from RE in schools. It was explained that at the time the report was presented to Members, the Council was in 'Purdah' meaning that as yet officers were unable to present a report. However, Members were assured that they would be presented with a report in due course.

2. Items of Urgent Business

There were no items of Urgent Business

3. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

4. Appointment of Chair and Vice-Chairs

Nominations were invited for the appointment of Chair for the Committee. It was proposed by Mr Ojetola and seconded by Councillor Kerin, that Rev. Guest be appointed as Chair of the Committee.

Nominations were invited for the appointment of Vice Chair of Committees A, B, C and D.

RESOLVED that:

That Rev. John Guest be appointed as Chair of Thurrock SACRE.

The following members be elected as Vice Chairs:

Committee A: Mr T Ojetola

Committee B: Rev. J Guest

Committee C: to be confirmed at the next meeting

Committee D: Councillor Collins

5. 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 that schools struggled to set up collective worship and so it was pleasing to see the policies on the selected schools websites as this was no longer a legal requirement.

SACRE Members broke off into groups to each discuss the policies listed in the agenda at appendix 1.

Mr Ojetola left at 6.55pm

Discussions moved on to reading materials offered to schools, to enable them to carry out acts of collective worship. It was commented there was a group of volunteers called 'Open the Book', who visited schools putting on plays for primary school children from the bible and leading them in prayer.

RESOLVED that Members:

- 1. Considered a sample of policies from Thurrock schools to determine how Collective Worship is offered in local schools in the light of the legal requirements set out in section 3 below.**
- 2. Considered the policies of the 5 schools which are attached in Appendix 1.**

6. Monitoring Provision for RE in Thurrock Schools

The Associate Adviser for Religious Education introduced the item explaining she had met with the Director of the Hassenbrooke Trust. Following which it had been made clear the school was open to discussions regarding Religious Education and teachers were committed to the subject.

During discussions it was mentioned that Questions 4 to 7 were seeking which syllabus was being used by the schools; all answered the Thurrock's Agreed Syllabus. It was highlighted that this outcome was not obvious however; this was the case when you looked closer at the answer to questions. Members further highlighted that most schools followed the scheme of work with most answering 'yes', one answering 'no' and one simply said 'something different' however didn't mention which scheme of work they were using. Overall Members were pleased with its completeness

Members noted that even the Academies who had responded were using the Agreed Syllabus. Members further commented that Warren Primary School replied they were following a different scheme at the current time. The Associate Adviser for Religious Education stated she was curious as to what scheme the school would be following. She hinted that it would be the discovery scheme.

Members heard that out of 52 schools only 7 had responded, it was queried as to how the schools could be encouraged into responding. It was decided that individual emails would be sent to school in an aid to encourage them to reply. The Strategic Lead for School Effectiveness and SEND offered to include the questionnaire in the schools bulletin, to assist with encouraging the schools to complete and send back their questionnaires.

RESOLVED that Members:

- 1. Considered the information collected to date (May 2019) (Appendix 1)**
- 2. Noted any lessons learned from these responses**
- 3. Considered what action might be necessary to collect more responses**

7. Work Plan 2019-2020

Members sought as to when the Agreed Syllabus was last reviewed and submitted. It was confirmed by the Associate Adviser for Religious Education that the last update was completed in 2016 and the Syllabus was not due for renewal until 2021.

Members reviewed the role and responsibilities of a SACRE listed within the report which included Must Dos, Should Dos, and Might Dos of SACRE. During discussions, it was deemed that Thurrock SACRE met all of the Must Dos. It was suggested that if it was felt necessary then a mid-term review could be undertaken of the Agreed Syllabus. It was commented that most schools followed the Agreed Syllabus, with the Academies adopting to follow it, even though they did not have to. Members stated they felt the Agreed Syllabus was very good.

It was queried as to points 2 and 4 on the 'should' section, with regards to how much SACRE were working with the Local Authority. It was commented by the Associate Adviser for Religious Education, that perhaps the Local Authority could be made more aware that part of her contract meant they could contact her; if they need to or should they need advice or have any issues. It was sought as to if SACRE could

receive a report summarising any contact had with the Local Authority or schools and whether SACRE were proactive enough in offering advice and support.

Members then discussed the work programme for the new municipal year and stated in addition to the reports mentioned in appendix 2 they wished to see the following reports:

- Children being withdrawn from RE
- SACRE and the LA working together
- Good practise of SACRE
- Advice given to schools and the LA

RESOLVED that Members:

1. Considered the Non-Statutory Guidance (Appendix 1) and the workplan from 2018-2019

2. Developed a workplan for 2019-2020

8. Any Other Business

The Associate Adviser for Religious Education addressed Members notifying them the Conference for 2019 had taken place, with Schools they were not expecting just turning up to take part, which was very pleasing to see.

She firstly gave her thanks to Sue Lakin and Michelle Dove, for all of their help in telephoning every School in the Borough to enquire if they would be attending the Conference.

It was highlighted that the year 8 children only had a short briefing of the activities they would be leading on and they lead the activities brilliantly while offering support to the year 5 children if they needed it.

The meeting finished at 7.35pm

Approved as a true and correct record

CHAIR

DATE

Any queries regarding these Minutes, please contact
Democratic Services at Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk

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6 November 2019	ITEM: 5
Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education	
Monitoring Provision for RE in Thurrock Schools	
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Non-Key
Report of: Deborah Weston, Associate Adviser for Religious Education	
Accountable Assistant Director: Michele Lucas, Assistant Director of Education and Skills	
Accountable Director: Roger Harris, Corporate Director of Adults, Housing and Health and Interim Director of Children’s Services	
This report is Public	

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 regularly monitors data on provision for the subject to establish how effective the new syllabus has been in meeting its aim to raise standards of RE. This data set is based on the school workforce census collected in November each year.

1. Recommendation(s) that SACRE:

1.1 Consider the school workforce data for 2018 within Appendix 1

1.2 Consider any follow up action that might be warranted such as:

- 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.¹²
- 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 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 work plan.

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

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.

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

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

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **David May**
Strategic Lead 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.

7.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Natalie Warren**
Strategic Lead for Community Development

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. Appendices to the Report

- Appendix 1 - Schools Questionnaire

Report Author:

Deborah Weston
Associate Adviser for RE

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Appendix 1

School	Type	Percent of timetable allocated to RE					GCSE					Ofsted Rating	Pupil Premium	
		Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	GCSE Full Course Entries %	GCSE Short Course Entries %	Percentage 9-4 Full Course	Percentage 9-4 Short Course	Total AC Percentage		Percentage Secondary	Secondary Premium
Beacon Hill Academy												Outstanding	30%	Low
Olive Ap Academy - Thurrock										0		Special Measures	67%	High
Treetops School							0	0					39%	Low
Grays Convent High School	Voluntary aided school	8.33	8.63	8.28	11.16	10.42	94.7	3.5	85.2	75	84.8	Good	22%	Low
The Gateway Academy	Academy sponsor led	4.2	4.48	14.56	12.51	0	74.8	0	49.2		49.2	Requires improvement	42%	Medium
Ormiston Park Academy	Academy sponsor led	0	0	0	0	0	0	0				Good	43%	Medium
The Ockendon Academy	Foundation school	6.87	6.66	7.46	7.45	7.25	100	0	41.3		41.3	Good	34%	Low
Ortu Gable Hall School	Foundation school	0	2.51	2.96	0.7	0	24.2	0	63.8		63.8	Requires improvement	21%	Low
William Edwards School	Foundation school	2.6	4.49	4.53	1.19	0	3	0	71.4		71.4		16%	Very Low
St Clere's School	Foundation school	4.55	5.13	2.5	0	0	0	28.6		87.7	87.7	Good	24%	Low
Harris Academy Chafford Hundred	Foundation school	0	0	0	0	0	12.2	0	77.3		77.3	Outstanding	14%	Very Low
The Hathaway Academy	Academy sponsor led	0	0	0	2.13	2.11	13.7	0	47.1		47.1	Good	34%	Low
Hassenbrook Academy	Academy converter	3.37	3.57	3.17	0	0	0	0					35%	Low
Harris Academy Riverside													29%	Low

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6 November 2019		ITEM: 6
Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education		
Update on National Developments and Opportunities		
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Non-Key	
Report of: Deborah Weston, Associate Adviser for Religious Education		
Accountable Assistant Director: Michele Lucas, Assistant Director of Education and Skills		
Accountable Director: Roger Harris, Corporate Director of Adults, Housing and Health and Interim Director of Children's Services		
This report is Public		

Executive Summary

This report details the key national developments that impact on Religious Education with suggestions for actions for SACRE

- 1. Recommendation(s) that SACRE:**
 - 1.1 Review the information collected (October 2019) within Appendix 1**
 - 1.2 Evaluate the relevance of each section for RE in Thurrock**
 - 1.3 Consider the suggested actions**
- 2. Introduction and Background**
 - 2.1** In the period since the last SACRE meeting, a number of developments have taken place such as the introduction of the new Ofsted Framework for Inspection, resources introduced, such as the exhibition at the British Library and summer examination results released. These are presented to SACRE for consideration in support of the duties of SACRE and in accordance with the work plan.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

- 3.1 Schools need to be informed about national developments and opportunities available to them but it is important not to overload them with information
- 3.2 Likewise, SACRE needs to be aware of the national context for information they receive that applies just to Thurrock
- 3.3 SACRE needs therefore to decide on which information to share with schools and which reports and national data is most relevant to the situation in Thurrock

4. Reasons for Recommendation

- 4.1 According to the non-statutory guidance – RE in English Schools (2010), SACRE should provide advice and support on the effective teaching of RE. This advice and support includes keeping stakeholders include SACRE members and schools informed about current developments that impact on the subject.

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

- 5.1 Not applicable

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: **David May**
Strategic Lead Finance

There are no financial implications to this report since the actions recommended in this report, if approved 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.

7.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Natalie Warren**
Strategic Lead for Community Development

The aim of this report is to provide information about issues that support 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. Appendices to the Report

- Appendix 1 - National RE News updates: Autumn 2019
- Appendix 2 – Schools Questionnaire

Report Author:

Deborah Weston
Associate Adviser for RE

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National RE News updates: Autumn 2019

First OFSTED reports published

You will remember that the new OFSTED framework was published and came into force at the beginning of September

www.gov.uk/government/collections/education-inspection-framework#handbooks-and-framework

172. All pupils in maintained schools are expected to study the basic curriculum, which includes national curriculum, religious education and age-appropriate relationship and sex education. Academies are expected to offer all pupils a broad curriculum⁶⁸ that should be similar in breadth and ambition.

P.42 Footnote 68: Academies must include English, mathematics, science and religious education in their curriculum.

On the first day of reports being published NATRE published the following useful information including extracts from two reports. Neither of these schools are in Thurrock.

NATRE are pleased that the new Ofsted framework emphasises the importance of the broad and balanced curriculum including RE for all pupils in all school types. As the first inspection reports under the new framework are released it is pleasing to note that inspectors are reporting where improvements are needed in RE. NATRE are keen for schools who need support to be in contact and join our subject association in order to receive the resources, training and support we offer.

NATRE also notes that these new reports will be a helpful reminder to all schools and school leaders including governors as a reminder that high quality RE has to be taught at all key stages.

These recently published reports act as a reminder of how even when RE isn't the focus of a deep dive a lack of provision will be picked up.

An example from a Primary academy (Overall grade RI) Pupils are starting to build knowledge in some subjects. Pupils in Year 4 told us about their topic on ancient Rome and what they have learned about democracy. In other subjects planning to build pupils' knowledge is less well developed. For example, in religious education (RE) pupils know little about religions other than Christianity. Pupils do not learn a modern foreign language.

What does the school need to do to improve?

Pupils do not know enough about cultures and religions different to their own. Leaders have put plans into place to address this, but they must continue to review this work to ensure that pupils have opportunities to develop the knowledge they need to prepare them for life in modern Britain.

An example from a Secondary academy (Overall grade RI) Most teachers are now teaching pupils the subject content that matters the most, apart from religious education, which is limited.

What does the school need to do to improve?

Currently, some pupils in key stage 3 do not cover subject content sufficiently well to be able to draw upon their learning in the future. This is because subjects such as religious education lack prominence in the curriculum. Additionally, the time pupils spend learning new content is limited in some subjects as teachers attempt to teach a broad and balanced curriculum that is commensurate with the national curriculum. However, time is limited, and teachers sometimes gloss over important learning points. This leads to gaps in pupils' understanding. Leaders must ensure that pupils are afforded sufficient time to learn important subject content in detail for as long as possible, including in religious education.

NATRE only publish extracts of reports and don't publicly name the schools concerned. Our aim in publicising this information is for all schools to understand the importance of RE and we recognise that individual schools may well be part way through a process of improving RE provision and will certainly be acting on the recommendations in their reports.

What should SACRE do?

- **Monitor for local reports**
- **Consider writing to schools 'at risk' with this new information.**

NATRE Meetings with the DFE

NATRE representatives continue to meet frequently with the DFE. Recent agenda items have included discussing complaints about RE, non-compliance with the law on RE and the necessity of support for RE from government. NATRE were pleased to work with the DFE to jointly provide a subject knowledge enhancement courses for secondary trainee teachers, and are currently meeting with the DFE approximately once a month on behalf of RE teachers.

Number of schools flouting Religious Education laws rises

Half of academies without a religious character and 40 per cent of community schools are still failing to meet their legal or contractual agreements to provide Religious Education, new research by the National Association of Teachers of Religious Education (NATRE) has revealed.

State schools must teach RE to all pupils, whether they are studying for a GCSE in the subject or not. However, provision has been hit by schools being able to hide behind failing accountability structures, meaning many academies and community schools breach their contractual and legal obligations.

Meanwhile, more than a third of schools reported that they have received no subject specific training in the last academic year. The new Ofsted Framework for inspection states that school leaders, including governing boards, will be held to account during an inspection where lack of training for teachers has a negative impact on pupils.

NATRE's research found that:

- Almost 40% (up from 34% in 2015-16) of community and 50% of Academy schools without a religious character do not meet their legal or contractual requirements for RE at Key Stage 4. The proportion of Academies remains similar to 2015-16, but the overall number of Secondary Academies has increased by almost 20%, meaning more pupils are affected.
- 64% of students in year 11 and 59% in year 10 receive no Religious Education at Key Stage 4 where RE is an optional subject, even though it is a legal requirement.
- Almost one in three (32%) of respondents reported that some parents withdraw pupils from Religious Education in their school.
- Nearly a quarter (21%) of schools give less than the recommended teaching time of 120-140 learning hours for a Full Course RS GCSE.
- More than 80% of schools plan to make no GCSE RS Short Course entries in 2018/19, which represents a rapid decline (50%) since 2012. 16% reported no entries for the Full Course.
- In 58% of schools the number of specialist teachers of RE either remained stable or (in 13% of cases) increased. In some schools however the number of specialists employed is falling. This was reported by more than a quarter of respondents (28%).
- Three quarters of respondents reported that some RE was taught by teachers who spent most of their timetable teaching another subject. In 36% of cases more than 1 in 5 lessons is taught by these teachers who usually teach another subject. Part of the reason for this is lack of RE specialists in the workforce.

Commenting on the research findings, Ben Wood, NATRE Chair, said:

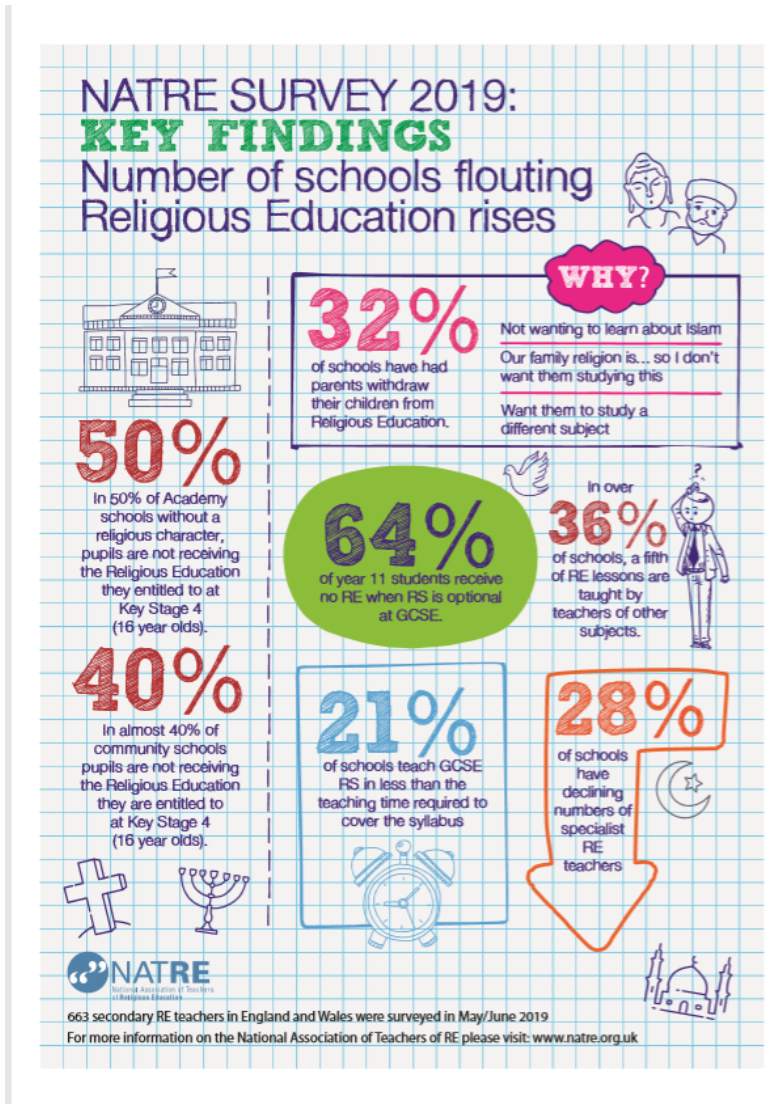
“There are so many schools, of every type, primary, secondary, academy, free school, local authority school, big and small, rural, urban, in every part of the country that provide their pupils with excellent RE as part of a broad and balanced curriculum. This makes it all the more unacceptable to hear of schools where pupils are not given the access to the religious literacy they need and deserve to support them in our increasingly pluralistic society.

“RE is a vital part of the curriculum, giving pupils the chance to learn about the people in the world around them and providing them with the opportunity to discuss and debate important questions. To deny pupils this chance means pupils are missing a crucial part of their learning, something every pupil in every school is entitled to receive.”

The survey results show that the Government needs to take action and NATRE urges it to establish a National Plan for RE as recommended by the Commission on Religious Education.

Read the full [NATRE secondary survey report](#) here.

[**View the infographic of the key findings from the report.**](#)



NATRE and school compliance on RE

NATRE are continuing to work with schools, parents and teachers on compliance around RE. Letters from NATRE to schools supporting parents or teachers who are complaining about non compliance have proved effective. NATRE are also supporting several people who are taking their complaints to the DFE. NATRE were at the Labour and Conservative conference and had meeting with the Secretary of State, Schools minister and shadow schools minister to discuss non- compliance in RE.



What should SACRE do?

- Invite local MPs and councillors to see RE in school
- Check websites of local schools to look for schools at risk of non-compliance

Massive improvement in recruitment of trainee teachers of RE

We are delighted to report that based on the UCAS figures released this week, there are 505 trainee teachers of RE placed or conditionally placed which, when compared to **2018**, is an increase of over 100 trainees. If all of these people start their training and don't change their mind at the last minute, this will be the best recruitment figures for RE in a very long time! We are really pleased that our campaigning for higher value bursaries and subject knowledge enhancement courses appears to have paid off.

Lest we get too complacent however, we need to consider how many more trainees we might recruit next year if the government were to treat trainees in religious education in the same way as those of shortage subjects as recommended by the CoRE.

Perhaps then we would have a chance of improving the percentage of lessons of RE taught by specialists, that figure has remained stubbornly low for many years and clearly has an impact of outcomes for pupils.

What should SACRE do?

- Find out if there is a shortage of secondary specialists in our schools

Welsh consultation: subject name change and the right of withdrawal

The Welsh Government has announced that it is consulting on key potential changes to the teaching of Religious Education (RE). The reforms up for consultation include a potential change of the name of the subject to 'Religions and Worldviews' and the ending of the right of parents to withdraw their children from RE lessons.

NATRE is encouraged by the Welsh Government actively taking an interest in RE and its role in their new curriculum. It is good to see they are consulting on one of the most challenging areas to affect our subject recently; the right of withdrawal.

The NATRE Executive sees no good reason for prolonging the right of parental withdrawal from inclusive RE and supports the Commission on RE's recommendation that the right of withdrawal should be reviewed. If the right of withdrawal is maintained then it should be clarified or modified by guidance to show that it is for reasons of religion and belief, and not for use selectively, in a discriminating manner.

As a step towards this we have produced our own guidance in association with the NAHT, which can be found [here](#).

In addition, the proposed name change might be a step in the right direction of a more inclusive description of our subject. However the phrase 'Religions and Worldviews' makes less sense than the Commission on RE's recommendation of "Religion and Worldviews". The proposed term from the Welsh Government suggests that religions are distinct from worldviews, which differs from the Commission on RE idea that we all have a worldview, and this can be religious or non-religious.

NATRE would like to encourage all teachers and NATRE members in Wales to respond to the 8-week consultation, which can be found [here](#).

What should SACRE do?

- **Consider whether school leaders have sufficient support in managing the right of withdrawal**
- **Publicise the NATRE guidance on withdrawal**

National and Regional Ambassadors

A reminder that the National and Regional RE Ambassadors are continuing to work to support and connect teachers of RE. More details here: www.natre.org.uk/news/latest-news/regional-ambassadors-announced/

Primary 1000: can SACRE nominate schools for this RE-improvement project?

Are there Primary schools in our area who rarely engage with SACRE or with RE events?

The 'Primary RE 1000' project from NATRE is designed to reach these schools with support for better RE.

NATRE has received funding for an amazing RE development project called Primary RE 1000. The aim of the project is to benefit 'hard to reach' schools so that they are more engaged with RE. We have a list of project activities that will help Primary schools to improve their RE, wherever they are currently.

The project has been designed to challenge, support and inspire Primary schools where they need to change and improve the RE opportunities they give to pupils.

The schools accepted to join the project will receive:

- A digital starter pack to kick start better RE in their schools
- Over 1000 free-to-use classroom resources
- Links with a local group of RE teachers to share best practice
- NATRE membership at a discounted price (£55 for two years, instead of £150!)
- Opportunities to attend high quality training at a discounted rate
- And much more
-

Can SACRE send school names, email contacts and subject leader contacts for schools who may benefit from this support? NATRE will then invite eligible schools to join the project. The invitation may come from NATRE via SACRE, or directly from SACRE. If SACRE gives NATRE its recommendations, NATRE will check which schools qualify for Primary RE 1000 and get back to SACRE with a personal invite we can send to them. NATRE is very eager to work in partnership with SACRE.

Contact Mandeep Singh Shekhon Mandeep@natre.org.uk

What should SACRE do?

- **Send names of local schools to NATRE so they can be offered the opportunity**
- **Publicise the opportunity at heads meetings**

Discovering Sacred Texts: a new online resource

Discovering Sacred Texts is a new free British Library online learning resource, inviting visitors to explore the world's major faiths through the Library's extensive collection of sacred texts.

Available to all, the new website includes over 250 digitised collection items, teachers' resources, short films and articles written by academics, faith leaders and practitioners, library curators and cultural leaders.

Texts range from some of the best-known and most beautiful manuscripts of the scriptures of various world religions, to an extensive collection of printed editions, both early and modern, including selections from over 100 texts that are newly digitised and available online for the first time.

Discovering Sacred Texts provides access to the richness and diversity of the texts from the world's great faiths. Designed for Religious Education students, teachers and lifelong learners, it features the six most-practised faiths in the UK - Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, and Sikhism - as well as a number of other faiths including the Baha'i Faith, Jainism and Zoroastrianism.

Highlights include:

- A copy of the *Lotus Sūtra* in a lavishly decorated scroll from Japan, written in gold and silver ink on indigo-dyed paper dating back to 1636, which will also feature in the Library's upcoming *Buddhism* exhibition
- The earliest surviving copy of the complete New Testament, Codex Sinaiticus, which dates from the 4th century
- The *Ramayana*, an epic poem ascribed to the sage Valmiki, composed in Sanskrit in the middle of the first millennium
- The Ma'il Qur'an, one of the very earliest Qur'ans in the world, dating back to the 8th century
- One of the earliest surviving manuscripts of the Hebrew Bible from the 10th century
- The Prayer Book of Rani Jindan, a manuscript including three hymns from the Guru Granth Sahib, prepared in the early 19th century
- Tablet written by the Bab, co-founder of the Baha'i Faith in the 19th century
- Adhai Dvipa, a traditional Jain cosmic diagram from 18th-19th century
- A copy of the world's oldest Zoroastrian manuscript, the Ashem Vohu, dating from the 9th century

Offering specially researched and curated content, over 50 discursive articles are available for audiences exploring and celebrating religious diversity. Original articles by academics, library curators and faith leaders cover topics such as Islamic pilgrimage and sacred space, Henry VIII

and the Reformation, iconography, the Buddha and the Buddhist sacred text, Hindu deities, the illumination of Jewish biblical texts and the shared origins of the Abrahamic faiths.

Of the 250 diverse collection items on the Discovering Sacred Texts platform, over 100 of these are now available to the public online for the first time, including selections from:

- Tyndale's New Testament, the first complete edition to be printed in English and one of only three copies surviving from the 3,000 or more printed in 1526
- The British Library's oldest dated manuscript of al-Bukhari's collection of hadith from the 12th century
- A woodblock-printed Illustrated Life of Jesus in Chinese, from 1637, one of thirty-seven surviving copies of the book

A curated selection of the spectacular collection items representing these faiths will be on physical display in the British Library's free, permanent Treasures Gallery to coincide with the launch of Discovering Sacred Texts.

Strictly RE

Date: 25 January 2020

Location: Park Inn, London Heathrow

Full price: £175 (Price includes lunch and refreshments, downloadable handouts and presentations from all).

Strictly RE returns with another exceptional day dedicated to the teaching of RE! Packed full of inspiration, practical ideas and useful pedagogy - this year will focus on the intent, implementation and Impact of RE for your pupils.

Join colleagues from across the country, in a relaxed one-day CPD event sure to leave you feeling refreshed and excited to teach RE in the classroom.

What should SACRE do?

- **Publicise these opportunities with schools**

Religious Studies GCSE entries fall despite popularity among pupils

The number of pupils in England and Wales taking GCSE Religious Studies full course has fallen for the third year in a row, down 1.6% against 2018 to 237,862.

In addition, the number of pupils in England and Wales taking the short course GCSE in Religious Studies has fallen even more sharply, down 19.7% from last year to 27,384. Religious Studies remains by far the most commonly taken short course GCSE, accounting for 94.4% of all short course GCSEs taken in England and Wales.

The decline is greater in Wales than in England. In England the number of entries for GCSE Religious Studies full course has fallen by 0.6% to 227,913. In Wales the equivalent figures are down by 20.8% to 9,949.

When the entries for the full course and short course GCSE are combined, the picture is of significant decline in the number of pupils taking a qualification in Religious Studies. Entries for GCSE RS (combined short and full courses) in England and Wales peaked in 2011 at 461,795. Today's figures show a decline in entries of 42.6% in eight years with almost 200,000 fewer pupils achieving a qualification in RS at the end of KS4.

The long term picture is more positive for the full course GCSE where there has been strong growth in the number of entries for most of the last decade. In 2009 there were 170,303 entries for Religious Studies in England and Wales. The number of entries increased every year until reaching a peak in 2016. While there has been a decline since this peak, the number of pupils receiving a full course GCSE in Religious Studies is still 39.7% greater than in 2009.

All schools, including Academies, have a legal requirement to provide Religious Education to all pupils at all key stages, but today's figures, together with the Government's own school workforce data, suggest that this is not sufficient to ensure that all pupils in England get to study the subject at Key Stage 4. ^[1] A key driver of this behaviour is almost certainly the fact that there are no consequences for those schools that decide to flout their legal obligation, with Religious Education not featuring in measures such as the EBacc that are used to hold them to account.

At a time when greater religious literacy is even more necessary than ever before, the decline across England and Wales in pupils taking GCSE Religious Studies is troubling.

The fall in entries comes despite pupils emphasising how much they value and enjoy studying Religious Education (underlined by the overall rise in entries at A-Level and GCSE over the past decade) and despite the fact that the Government is rightly emphasising the importance for young people to have knowledge and understanding of religions and non-religious beliefs.

In 2018 the independent Commission on Religious Education made a series of recommendations including legal and policy changes that the Government could make to better support the subject. The report has been endorsed by the RE Council and NATRE among a wide range of other organisations.

The key outcomes for Religious Education in England and Wales at KS4 in 2019 are as follows:

- There were 237,862 entries for the full course in GCSE RS, a fall of 1.6% from 2018 (241,749)
- There were 27,384 entries for the short course in GCSE RS, a decline of 19.7% from 2018 (34,087)
- There were 265,246 entries for GCSE RS (combined short and full courses), a decline of 3.8% from 2018 (275,836). Entries for GCSE RS (combined short and full courses) peaked in 2011 at 461,795. Today's figures show a decline in entries of 42.6% in eight years with almost 200,000 fewer pupils achieving a qualification in RS at the end of KS4.
- 29.8% of entries for the full course in GCSE RS were awarded at least an A or a 7
- 23.5% of entries for the short course in GCSE RS were awarded an A or an A*

GCSE RS entries – England and Wales (2008-2018)

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	% change 2009 to 2019	% change 2018 to 2019
Full	170,	176,	209,	226,	251,	269,	283,	284,	269,	241,	237,	39.7	-

Course	303	867	479	782	063	494	756	057	839	749	862	%	1.6%
Short Course	282,168	274,381	252,316	230,451	169,088	118,481	86,679	71,299	53,071	34,087	27,384	-90.3%	-19.7%
Combined	452,471	451,248	461,795	457,233	420,151	387,975	370,435	355,356	322,910	275,836	265,246	-41.4%	-3.8%

Source: <http://www.jcq.org.uk/examination-results/gcse>

Comment from Rudolf Elliott Lockhart, Chief Executive, Religious Education Council of England and Wales (REC):

"Today's figures show the long term impact in England of reforms introduced when Michael Gove was Secretary of State for Education. The exclusion of short course GCSEs from the performance indicators by which schools are monitored, coupled with Religious Studies not being included in the Ebacc, has had a disastrous impact on RS at GCSE. There are now almost 200,000 fewer key stage 4 pupils studying for a qualification in Religious Studies than there were in 2011. This is particularly distressing given how popular the subject is with pupils and how relevant it is in today's world. Last year the independent Commission on Religious Education offered proposals for how to secure the future of religious education that had widespread support from stakeholders across education. It is time that the Government engages fully with the recommendations and for it to take action to support high quality religious education for all pupils in all schools.

As former education secretary and architect of the original GCSE, Lord Kenneth Baker, pointed out earlier this week, the narrowing of the curriculum is a damaging trend that the current Government needs to urgently address before it leads to a generation of young people whose education and prospects are severely weakened."

Comment from Ben Wood, Chair, National Association of Teachers of RE (NATRE):

"Congratulations to those pupils receiving their GCSE RS results today, and to their teachers. I hope that the hard work, study and revision have paid off for you.

For thousands of young people, GCSE Religious Studies provides an invaluable opportunity to learn about, consider and debate many important and pertinent questions, preparing them for adult life in a diverse and complex world. In this respect, it is pleasing to see that GCSE RS remains one of the most popular GCSE subjects.

However, too many pupils do not receive the teaching they need and deserve. Over half a million young people every year do not take a GCSE in Religious Studies, and while some schools do offer alternative provision, too many schools simply fail to meet their statutory duty to provide their students with RE. Research indicates that over half of secondary schools without a religious

character fail to provide RE at KS4, and that this lack of provision is more pronounced in schools with higher numbers of disadvantaged students.^[3]

It is not fair that so many young people are not given the full breadth of education they require, and we call on the government to take stronger action in ensuring that all schools provide high quality RE for all of their students.”

Schools’ failure to meet legal requirements on RE continues to impact A-level entries

The growing number of secondary schools in England and Wales that are failing to provide Religious Education to all pupils until the age of 16 is continuing to impact Religious Studies A-level entries.

While the reduction in number of students taking an RS A-level examination in Religious Studies in England and Wales slowed this year, the number of entries has declined significantly since its peak in 2016. Figures show a drop of 5.1% in 2019 and 22.8% in 2018.

The decline comes in the context of a smaller cohort of 18-year-olds this year and an overall reduced number of A-level entries across all subjects. Nonetheless, the number of schools failing to provide Religious Education at Key Stage 4 has been increasing. The latest data from the Department for Education’s School Workforce Census suggest that a third (33.4%) of all schools are failing in their legal duty to offer the subject, which in turn has consequences for A-level entries.*

The figures are an indication that Religious Education remains vulnerable and that the Government should engage further with the recent recommendations for change from the Commission on Religious Education.

The key outcomes of the 2019 A-level results in England and Wales for Religious Education are as follows:

- 17,490 RS A-level entries were recorded, a small decrease of 5.1% on 2018. Much of this decrease is explained by a decrease in the number of 18-year-olds in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland of 2.9%.
- Despite the decrease in entries for RS, there are still 57% more entries than in 2003 (11,132 entries were recorded in 2003).
- The 5.1% decrease in entries for RS is considerably smaller than equivalent figures for many other subjects such as English Language (down 21.8%), English Literature (down 7.8%), Further Maths (down 10.0%), and Drama (down 9.4%).
- The increase of 57% in the number of entries for RS A-level since 2003 is greater than equivalent changes over the same period for such as Geography (down 1%), Law (down 6%), and History (up 23%). Among arts, humanity or social science subjects, only Sociology (up 58%), Economics (up 77%) and Political Studies (up 114%) have seen stronger growth since 2003.
- Entries for RS A-level have declined since a peak of 24,849 in 2016, although this year’s decline in entries of 5.1% is considerably less than the equivalent figure of 22.8% last year.
- 21.5% of entries for RS A-level were awarded an A or an A*.
- There were 3,911 entries for RS at AS-level, a decrease of 35% on 2018, this reflects the decline across all subjects where the number of AS entries fell by 49% across England and Wales.

The decline in entries for RS A-level adds further evidence to the case for action to secure the future of Religious Education as a subject for all pupils in all schools. The Commission

on Religious Education published its final report in 2018 making recommendations for changes that have so far only been partially taken up by the Government.^[1]

The decline in entries comes after warnings in recent years of insufficient action to support the subject. In 2017 the RE Council of England and Wales (REC) and the National Association of Teachers of RE (NATRE) published **analysis** based on data from the Department for Education showing that 28% of secondary schools in England report that they are not meeting their statutory obligation to teach religious education (RE).

The reduction in entries is surprising given that Religious Studies at A-level continues to be a favourable gateway to university and jobs. The importance of RS A-level as a subject for Higher Education entry and for graduate recruiters is increasingly recognised by independent bodies. The Russell Group of top universities has made it clear that RS A-level provides 'suitable preparation for entry to university generally', and both Oxford and Cambridge University include Religious Studies in the top level list of 'generally suitable Arts A-levels'.

In fact, almost 21% of students admitted to Oxford University to study English and 13.5% admitted to study History in 2015 had an RS A-level, more than those with Economics, Physics and Business Studies A-levels.¹

Employers recognise the value of religious literacy. For example, in February 2017, EY announced the creation of Religious Literacy for Organisations (RLO), a diversity and inclusion training programme designed to help organisations better understand religious inclusion and its positive impact on business process and performance.

Career prospects for those that take Religious Studies/Philosophy at degree level are also very bright due to developing a strong academic skillset with transferable skills attractive to employers. In 2015/16, 16.5% of Philosophy graduates entered the professional sector in the fields of Business, HR and Finance, compared to 10% for all disciplines. With 13% of graduates going on to work in the fields of legal, social and welfare, 6.8% choosing to become educational professionals and 4.6% managers.²

The drop in the number of pupils taking A-level and AS-level Religious Studies is all the more concerning at a time when there is a shortfall in recruitment for teacher training in Religious Education in some areas of the country. Evidence collected by the National Association of Teachers of RE (NATRE) suggests that headteachers are finding it increasingly difficult to recruit RE specialists.

Comment from Ben Wood, Chair, National Association of Teachers of RE (NATRE)

"Congratulations to all those students receiving their A-level Religious Studies results today! Those continuing their studies in this area will be ready to take their understanding to the next level, while those going in other directions will be well prepared to succeed in an increasingly complex world.

"However, the continuing problem of schools failing to provide RS at KS4, and thus failing in their statutory duty, is impacting on the number of students taking the option of A-level Religious Studies. At a time when high levels of religious literacy have never been more important, it is sad to see so many young people are not given the opportunity they deserve, especially when teachers of RS see the many benefits this course offers young people.

"We look forward to seeing the impact of Ofsted's decision in May this year to place greater emphasis on the provision of quality teaching of worldviews and to hold to account those schools that are not giving pupils the RE to which they are entitled."

What should SACRE do?

- Promote the value of GCSE and A level religious studies both for pupils' personally and also in terms of the career value of the subject using resources such as these [films](#) from RE-Online, data on University attitudes to RE from NATRE [here](#) and parent/pupil appreciation of GCSE RS [here](#)
- Write to schools to celebrate success with examination results and ask the school improvement team to include RE in their conversations with school leaders where there are causes for concern

Other news

Questions in the House of Commons

NATRE want to thank Shadow Minister of State; Mike Kane for asking these useful questions to the Department for Education and sharing our concerns about Religious Education.

Click the links below to read Nick Gibb, Minister of State's (education) response to each parliamentary question asked:

'To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that all schools provide pupils with opportunities to develop specific and age-appropriate knowledge and understanding of religions as part of promoting mutual respect and tolerance of people with different faiths and beliefs; and if he will make a statement.'

'To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment his Department have made of the quality of training for primary teachers in religious education; and if he will make a statement.'

'To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to ensure that all state-funded schools are providing an adequate provision of religious education; and if he will make a statement.'

'To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what proportion of (a) religious education lessons and (b) history lessons are taught by teachers with no post A-level qualification in those subjects; and if he will make a statement.'

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what representations have been received by his Department on the provision of RE teaching in schools as part of a broad and balanced curriculum; and if he will make a statement.

What should SACRE do?

Consider actions that aim to encourage national government to provide further support and guidance for RE

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Appendix 2

10. Other comments or questions for SACRE		9. Have you published the content of your school curriculum in each academic year for every subject, including Religious Education even if it is taught as part of another subject or subjects, or is called something else?	No but this is in hand	Yes						
8. If your school includes the primary phase and has chosen to adopt the Thurrock Agreed Syllabus, do you follow the Thurrock Scheme of Work for primary schools?		Yes								
7. Link to non-Thurrock Syllabus for RE where applicable (see above)										
6. If your school in an Academy and you have chosen to adopt a syllabus for RE other than the Thurrock Agreed Syllabus, please specify which one and send a link to document below.										
5. If your school is an Academy, which of the options stipulated by the DfE through your funding Agreement, have you chosen?	TAS									
4. If your school is a LA maintained school, do all teachers of RE have access to the statutory Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education?		Not applicable	Yes	No	TAS	TAS	TAS	TAS	Not applicable	
3. What is the role of the person completing this form?		RE Co-ordinator	Assistant Headteacher	Headteacher	Headteacher		Headteacher		RE coordinator and class teacher	
2. What is the name of the person completing this form?	Christina Eldred	Nicola James	Nicola Shadbolt	Lorna Hamilton		Samantha Oxley		Nicki Studt		
1. What is the full name of your school?	Quarry Hill Academy	Giffards Primary School	Aveley Primary School	Ortu Corringham Primary	Stanford le Hope Primary School	Benyon Primary		Warren Primary School		

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6 November 2019	ITEM: 7
Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education	
Work Plan 2019-2020 – Second Draft	
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Non-Key
Report of: Deborah Weston, Associate Adviser for Religious Education	
Accountable Assistant Director: Michele Lucas, Assistant Director of Education and Skills	
Accountable Director: Roger Harris, Corporate Director of Adults, Housing and Health and Interim Director of Children’s Services	
This report is Public	

Executive Summary

Following the discussion of the non-statutory guidance on RE and the review of the 2018-19 work plan at the last meeting, SACRE worked on a draft work plan for 2019-20. This report proposes a second draft of that plan for adoption at the autumn term meeting.

1. Recommendation(s) that SACRE:

1.1 Consider the adoption of the draft work plan for 2019-2020

2. Introduction and Background

2.1 This work plan sets out a list of objectives for SACRE based on the responsibilities for SACRE described in the non-statutory guidance. For each of these responsibilities, there follows a set of actions and success criteria.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

3.1 The scope of work plan must take account of the current SACRE budget which comes from the CSSB (central schools services block) of funding which is allocated to each local authority.

3.2 National and local developments in RE or in education more generally may require SACRE to edit the plan during the year.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

- 4.1 A well designed workplan specifies objectives for a **committee**, actions to meet the objective, criteria to evaluate the success of the actions and timelines for completion of the goals.

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

- 5.1 Not applicable

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 all three elements of this programme.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **David May**
Strategic Lead 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 section 391 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.

7.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Natalie Warren**
Strategic Lead for Community Development

SACRE will continue to dedicate time for the discussion of the way in which religious education can help improve the level of community cohesion in Thurrock. The Agreed Syllabus is specific about the expected outcomes of teaching of religious education in this respect. The teaching of RE should 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. Appendices to the Report

- Appendix 1 - Developing an action plan for SACRE – second draft
- Appendix 2 - SACRE Work Plan– second draft

Report Author:

Deborah Weston

Associate Adviser for RE

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Developing an action plan for SACRE – second draft

Introduction: The role and responsibility of a SACRE
From Religious Education in English Schools DCSF (2010)

A SACRE must:

- advise the LA on RE given in accordance with the agreed syllabus, and on matters related to its functions, whether in response to a referral from the LA or as it sees fit¹¹
- publish an annual report on its work and on actions taken by its representative groups, specifying any matters on which it has advised the LA, broadly describe the nature of that advice, and set out reasons for offering advice on matters not referred to it by the LA
- send a copy of the report to the DfE
- meet in public unless confidential information is to be disclosed
- make minutes of its meetings available for inspection at the LA's offices (so far as the minutes relate to the parts of meetings that were open to the public). There are also provisions about public access to the agenda and reports for meetings.

A SACRE should:

- monitor the provision and quality of RE taught according to its agreed syllabus, together with the overall effectiveness of the syllabus
- provide advice and support on the effective teaching of RE in accordance with the locally agreed syllabus; provide advice to the LA and its schools on methods of teaching, the choice of teaching material and the provision of teacher training
- in partnership with its LA, consider whether any changes need to be made in the agreed syllabus or in the support offered to schools in the implementation of the agreed syllabus, to improve the quality teaching and learning of RE
- offer advice to the LA, and through the LA to schools, concerning how an existing agreed syllabus can be interpreted so as to fit in with a broad, balanced and coherent curriculum.

A SACRE may:

- require its LA to review the agreed syllabus and, if after discussion a vote is taken on this matter, the LA group on SACRE is not entitled to cast a vote. A majority decision by the three other committees is sufficient
- decide to advise the LA on matters related to its functions to the LA – equally, an LA may decide to refer matters to its SACRE
- co-opt members who are not members of any of the four groups
 - such co-opted members may provide educational expertise, young peoples' views or religious and non-religious views that reflect a diverse multi-cultural society.

- However, on any question to be decided by a SACRE, its constituent groups each have a single vote but co-opted members do not have a vote.
- Decisions within a group do not require unanimity. Each group must regulate its own proceedings, including provision for resolving deadlock. Many SACREs have chosen to adopt a constitution to regulate their proceedings and ways of working.

SACRE WORK PLAN DRAFT 2
To meet the statutory duties of a SACRE 2019-2020

Objective	Action	Responsibility	Date	Success criteria
1. SACRE meetings are planned and dates published annually	Agenda planning Liaison with relevant council departments Meeting preparation Report writing Meeting attendance Minute taking Publication of meeting agendas and minutes	Clerk, Chair, Adviser LA representative, members	Termly SACRE meetings	Meetings are effective meetings with actions followed up between meetings Members have a working knowledge of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • issues affecting RE in the area • the Agreed Syllabus for RE • an understanding of the responsibilities of SACRE
2. SACRE have the opportunity to consider national developments in relation to RE in Thurrock	Consider relevant material from National organisations (AREAIC, NATRE, NASACRE as well as the DfE, Ofsted and Thurrock Council department	Adviser	As information is published	Items on the Agenda for each meeting, Attendance at relevant meetings e.g. NASACRE AGM Minutes record discussions and actions
3. Produce annual report of the work of SACRE including advice to the council.	Collate information, source data and draft report Ensure final report presented to LA Send copy to Department for Education and to NASACRE	Adviser to draft Chair to write introduction Clerk to circulate. Elected representative to present to council	Spring Term (to account for data publication dates)	Completed draft in time for Spring meeting Report presented to council Copies sent to all schools Copy acknowledged by DfE

4. Engage with local schools and Academy Trusts to understand how Religious Education and Collective Worship are provided in Thurrock	Officers to identify schools to host visits Members undertake school visits Committee considers school reports	SACRE members at least one per year	Up to 4 school visits - 2 per term	Meaningful visits or discussion completed, and reports discussed at SACRE meetings.
5. Provide information on the RE curriculum to schools including through training	Update schools on current developments in RE (NATRE and other material requested by SACRE) Host a SACRE Youth Conference to model high quality provision to teachers of RE	Adviser Adviser and RE Today	Termly Annually - Summer Term subject to funding	Schools in receipt of material Teachers respond to material received Teachers raise questions to the adviser
6. Monitor provision for RE and Collective Worship	Source and present national and local data as follows: – GCSE validated and unvalidated results and entries (local and national) – School workforce data (local and national) – Surveys of provision and of issues such as withdrawal, use of agreed syllabus, who teaches RE etc (local) – Review school websites – Write to schools about findings – Sample collective worship policies	Adviser All SACRE members LA representative	Annually	LA respond to advice offered on strengths of RE and collective worship, and areas in need of development Schools respond to feedback on their websites and policies
7. Evaluate SACRE work and establish priorities	Item at summer term meeting	All SACRE members	Summer term meeting	Evaluation identified success criteria are met

Schedule 2019/2020		
Date of meeting	Subject	Objective (note – objectives 1 and 2 apply to all meetings)
Autumn 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National developments - update • Ofsted Framework on RE – Autumn 2019 • Monitoring provision via school workforce data • Review of membership and attendance • Monitoring the use of the right of withdrawal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 • 6 • 7 • 2 • 6
Spring 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring provision via GCSE and A level results • Annual report approval • Relationships: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Schools and Academies ○ the Council ○ Governors ○ Communities of religion and belief ○ Thurrock work on Community Integration ○ NASACRE ○ Youth Cabinet ○ Regional Schools Commissioners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 • 3 • 4+5
Summer 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standards and Achievements in RE in schools • Review of SACRE website • Review of Collective Worship • Review of SACRE Youth Conference • Annual report including GCSE results • Evaluation of work plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 • 6 • 6 • 5 • 4 • 7

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