

1 March 2017

ITEM: 6

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education

Religious Education Quality Mark

[SACRE members note: Copies of this document will be made available for discussion at the meeting and need not be printed]

Wards and communities affected:

All

Key Decision:

Non-Key

Report of: Deborah Weston, Associate Adviser for Religious Education

Accountable Head of Service: Roger Edwardson, Strategic Lead, School Improvement, Learning and Skills

Accountable Director: Rory Patterson, Director of Children's Services

This report is Public

Executive Summary

This report presents the RE Quality Mark to members with a recommendation that it should be commended to Thurrock schools, not only as a means of raising standards but also to help SACRE monitor provision for RE.

1. Recommendation(s) that SACRE:

1.1 That SACRE members discuss the merits of the REQM and the means by which it might be used in Thurrock Schools.

2. Introduction and Background

The RE Quality Mark:

- Has been developed to celebrate high quality religious education;
- Provides community schools, faith schools and academies with a framework to capture good practice; and
- Encourages the development and celebration of school wide commitment to excellent teaching and learning in religious education.

The REQM has five strands:

1. Learners and Learning
2. Teachers and Teaching
3. Curriculum

4. Subject Leadership
5. Continuing Professional Development

There are three award levels: bronze, silver and gold. Schools applying for the REQM highlight where they think 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.

Costs: £475 per school but If a school has fewer than 150 pupils or has been categorised by Ofsted as "requiring improvement" or in "special measures", it may be eligible for a £275 grant.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

- 3.1 The costs of REQM might prevent some schools from engaging with the programme. One option might be simply to use the proforma as a means of raising awareness of best practice and as a monitoring tool. A second option might be to encourage the Excellent RE school to apply for the REQM and celebrate their success as a means of encouraging others to follow in their footsteps.

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 and;
 - Monitors the quality of provision for RE and Collective Acts of Worship in Thurrock.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Shaj Sivadasan**
Management Accountant Schools & Education

Obtaining the RE Quality Mark involves a cost to individual schools, some of which are LA maintained. Grants are available in some circumstances and this is explained in the body of the report.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Matthew Boulter**
Deputy Monitoring Officer

This report asks member to consider the scheme and discuss how it might be commended to schools. This is within the remit of SACRE.

7.3 Diversity and Equality

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

The REQM aims to challenge schools to raise standards in RE and then to celebrate their 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

- Not applicable

9. Appendices to the report

- Appendix 1 – Religious Education Quality Mark (REQM) School Evidence Form

Report Author:

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Associate Adviser for RE