

30 January 2018		ITEM: 5
Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education		
Monitoring Provision for Religious Education in Thurrock Schools		
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Non-Key	
Report of: Deborah Weston, Associate Adviser for Religious Education		
Accountable Assistant Director: Roger Edwardson, Strategic Lead, School Improvement, Learning and Skills		
Accountable Director: Rory Patterson 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 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.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 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

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>

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