

<b>6 November 2019</b>		<b>ITEM: 5</b>
<b>Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education</b>		
<b>Monitoring Provision for RE 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> Michele Lucas, Assistant Director of Education and Skills		
<b>Accountable Director:</b> Roger Harris, Corporate Director of Adults, Housing and Health and Interim 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 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.<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 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.

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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>

## **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