

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 **5 September 2017**

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), Mrs M Taylor, Rev. D Bates and Fr J Hutchinson - Church of England.

Committee C: Ms A Jellicoe, Ms H Gillman, Mr P Griffiths and 3 Vacancies - Teachers' Associations.

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

Co-opted Vacancy

Agenda

Open to Public and Press

	Page
1 Apologies for Absence	
2 Minutes	5 - 8

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education meeting held on 19 April 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 Appointment of Chair and Vice-Chairs

6 Monitoring of RE in Thurrock Schools 9 - 16

7 Collective Worship 17 - 54

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

Agenda published on: **25 August 2017**

Information for members of the public and councillors

Access to Information and Meetings

Members of the public can attend all meetings of the council and its committees and have the right to see the agenda, which will be published no later than 5 working days before the meeting, and minutes once they are published.

Recording of meetings

This meeting may be recorded for transmission and publication on the Council's website. At the start of the meeting the Chair will confirm if all or part of the meeting is to be recorded.

Members of the public not wishing any speech or address to be recorded for publication to the Internet should contact Democratic Services to discuss any concerns.

If you have any queries regarding this, please contact Democratic Services at Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk

Guidelines on filming, photography, recording and use of social media at council and committee meetings

The council welcomes the filming, photography, recording and use of social media at council and committee meetings as a means of reporting on its proceedings because it helps to make the council more transparent and accountable to its local communities.

If you wish to film or photograph the proceedings of a meeting and have any special requirements or are intending to bring in large equipment please contact the Communications Team at CommunicationsTeam@thurrock.gov.uk before the meeting. The Chair of the meeting will then be consulted and their agreement sought to any specific request made.

Where members of the public use a laptop, tablet device, smart phone or similar devices to use social media, make recordings or take photographs these devices must be set to 'silent' mode to avoid interrupting proceedings of the council or committee.

The use of flash photography or additional lighting may be allowed provided it has been discussed prior to the meeting and agreement reached to ensure that it will not disrupt proceedings.

The Chair of the meeting may terminate or suspend filming, photography, recording and use of social media if any of these activities, in their opinion, are disrupting proceedings at the meeting.

Thurrock Council Wi-Fi

Wi-Fi is available throughout the Civic Offices. You can access Wi-Fi on your device by simply turning on the Wi-Fi on your laptop, Smartphone or tablet.

- You should connect to TBC-CIVIC
- Enter the password **Thurrock** to connect to/join the Wi-Fi network.
- A Terms & Conditions page should appear and you have to accept these before you can begin using Wi-Fi. Some devices require you to access your browser to bring up the Terms & Conditions page, which you must accept.

The ICT department can offer support for council owned devices only.

Evacuation Procedures

In the case of an emergency, you should evacuate the building using the nearest available exit and congregate at the assembly point at Kings Walk.

How to view this agenda on a tablet device



You can view the agenda on your [iPad](#), [Android Device](#) or [Blackberry Playbook](#) with the free modern.gov app.

Members of the Council should ensure that their device is sufficiently charged, although a limited number of charging points will be available in Members Services.

To view any “exempt” information that may be included on the agenda for this meeting, Councillors should:

- Access the modern.gov app
- Enter your username and password

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

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
-

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 split 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**

5 September 2017	ITEM: 6
Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education	
Monitoring of 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: N/A	
Accountable Director: Rory Patterson, Corporate Director of Children’s Services	
This report is Public	

Executive Summary

SACRE has a legal duty to monitor 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 it would now seem timely to carry out a monitoring exercise to establish how effective the new syllabus has been in meeting its aim to raise standards of RE. This report proposes a mechanism by which SACRE might collect information in order to meet this requirement.

1. Recommendation(s)

1.1 That SACRE members:

- **Discuss the draft pro forma - See appendix 1 and suggest revisions.**
- **Authorise a pilot monitoring programme that might be reviewed in the summer term meeting.**

2. Introduction and Background

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

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 SACRE cannot require schools to respond to a request to complete a self-evaluation form however, all schools must evaluate their work. The draft questions on the survey encompass the areas that best practice would suggest are key areas of concern, so it is likely that many schools will respond albeit at different rates.
- 3.2 If this method of collecting information about RE in Thurrock schools is not successful then SACRE will need consider a different method or rely on data alone.

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.

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. No additional financial cost is required.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Lindsey Marks**
Principal Solicitor Safeguarding

SACRE has a statutory duty to monitor the provision for religious education in its local area.

7.3 Diversity and Equality

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

The aim of this exercise 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

11. Appendices to the report

- Appendix 1 - Draft Pro forma

Report Author:

Deborah Weston

Associate Adviser for RE

This page is intentionally left blank

RE School Self-Evaluation (Secondary) School:
School Type:

Thurrock SACRE has a statutory responsibility to monitor provision for Religious Education in the borough. SACRE can use this information to make recommendations to Thurrock Council about the strengths and weaknesses of that provision, how good practice might be shared and what support might be offered. Subject leaders are requested to complete this proforma and return it to the Associate Adviser; Deborah Weston - deborah@retoday.org.uk

Management and Organisation of RE

No. of students on roll

Name of subject leader:
(Yes/No/Partly)

Do you follow the Agreed Syllabus?

How long as subject leader in this school:

1 year	2 years	3 years	4 years	5+ years
--------	---------	---------	---------	----------

Quality and standards of RE in the school

- How does the school make a judgment on this?

(e.g. monitoring, lesson observation, work scrutiny, meeting with pupils, learning walks ...)

- How accurate a picture does this give?

Continuing professional development in RE

- What CPD has the subject leader taken part in (over the last year) and what was its impact?

- What CPD have other teachers taken part in (over the last year) and what was its impact?
- Do you have links with a local group of teachers in Thurrock?
(Yes: please list below/No/No but I'd like to know more)

Timetabling of RE

- Is provision for RE combined with another subject e.g. PSHEe, Citizenship? (Yes (please explain below)/No)
- How much time does each pupil spend on RE-related work each week?

Key Stage 3:

Key Stage 4:

Post-16:

Scheme of work (SoW)

- When was the current SoW drawn up or revised?
- To what extent does it match the requirements of the local agreed syllabus?
<http://www.Thurrockrenet.co.uk/agreed.html>

Fully/ Mostly/Not at all

If not fully explain how you intend to address this

- How does the SoW ensure progression between the key stages?

1. In respect of subject knowledge?

2. In the development of skills?

Resources

- Are the resources sufficient to support the RE programme? Yes/No

- Are there any resources that you would recommend to other schools?

- Are there any resources that you are lacking?

School self-evaluation: key questions

1. What are the strengths of your current provision and practice?

2. Where are there weaknesses/areas for improvement?

3. Is there something that is so good in your school that it could be shared with other schools?
If so, please elaborate.

4. What are your priorities for development in RE? Please attach your current development plan

5. Is there anything related to RE for which you would like external support?

6. Overall, how would you grade the quality of RE provision (including quality and standards achieved by pupils) in your school?

Outstanding (1)	Good (2)	Requires Improvement(3)	Inadequate (4)
-----------------	----------	-------------------------	----------------

Why have you chosen this grade?

Schools may wish to refer to one of the following sets of criteria to help with this judgement:

1. <http://www.re-handbook.org.uk/section/managing/self-evaluation-in-re/effectiveness-of-provision/>
2. <http://www.reqm.org/media/file/school-evidence-form-13-06-2016.doc>

Other comments/notes

Continue overleaf if necessary

5 September 2017		ITEM: 7
Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education		
Collective Worship		
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Non-Key	
Report of: Deborah Weston, Associate Adviser for Religious Education		
Accountable Assistant Director: N/A		
Accountable Director: Rory Patterson, Corporate Director of Children's Services		
This report is Public		

Executive Summary

SACRE has a legal duty to monitor provision for collective worship in schools in its local area. Collective worship is an area which many schools find challenging both on practical and philosophical level. This report aims to stimulate a discussion between members of SACRE with the aim that some support might be offered to schools.

1. Recommendation(s)

1.1 That SACRE members

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

2. Introduction and Background

What does the legislation require?

The legal requirements can be summarised as follows:

All registered pupils in state-funded schools should take part in a daily act of collective worship unless wholly or partly withdrawn by parents. The term 'registered pupils' includes students up to and including the age of eighteen years in a school sixth form or at a sixth form college but not pupils in nursery schools or classes. Students over the age of 18 are entitled to withdraw themselves from the Act of worship. Collective worship for special school pupils should be provided so far as practicable.

There can be a single whole school act of collective worship or separate acts for pupils in different age of school activity groupings.

Acts of collective worship can take place at any time of the school day and, with certain exceptions, should take place on the school premises.

In a community, academy or foundation schools (ie other than at voluntary-aided schools), most acts of collective worship each term should be 'wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character', that is, 'reflecting' the 'broad traditions of Christian belief' without being denominationally biased. But acts of collective worship should also be appropriate, having regard to pupils' ages, aptitudes and family backgrounds.

If a community, academy or foundation school believes that the Christian character clause (4 above) is inappropriate for the whole school or certain pupils within it, application can be made for a determination to have that clause lifted or modified. In the case of Academy schools, that application should be made to the Educational Funding Agency. In the case of community or foundation school, to the local Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE), unless the school requests otherwise, a determination will be reviewed by the local SACRE after five years.

A determination does not lift the requirement for daily collective worship. Such worship must still be undenominational but may be distinctive of a particular faith.

Teachers – including head teachers – have the right to withdraw from collective worship (though, in voluntary schools, these conditions may vary) and cannot be discriminated against for so doing. Attending 'assemblies', on the other hand, is part of a teacher's contractual duty.

In a community or foundation school, it is the responsibility of a head teacher, in consultation with the governors, to see that these arrangements are carried out. In a voluntary-aided school, it is the responsibility of the governors, in consultation with the head teacher.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

3.1 Some of the support SACRE might offer include:

- the production of a guidance document or a 'reading list' of useful guidance that is available
- information about local organisations prepared to support collective worship
- sharing examples of good practice collated from local schools
- sharing information about training that might be on offer

4. Reasons for Recommendation

4.1 This area is of concern to many school leaders especially because it is a legal requirement that is often overlooked and it falls under the remit of SACRE.

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: **Nilufa Begum**

Management Accountant Corporate Finance

There are no financial implications to this report since the next steps from this discussion will be carried out by the Associate RE Adviser as part of their work. No budget pressures or costing required.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Lindsey Marks**

Principal Solicitor Safeguarding

The requirements for collective worship in schools are contained in the Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998. This provides that subject to the parents' right of excusal or other special arrangements that all registered pupils in state-funded schools should take part in a daily act of collective worship.

7.3 **Diversity and Equality**

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

The aim of this exercise is to support schools with meeting their responsibility to offer a daily act of collective worship. These 'acts' will include the celebration of a range of beliefs and worldviews whilst acknowledging that the majority will be 'of a broadly Christian character' For this reason, Acts of worship 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 - NASACRE (National Association of SACREs) presentation

Report Author:

Deborah Weston

Associate Adviser for RE

nasacre



National Association of
Standing Advisory Councils
on Religious Education

- **supporting**
- **strengthening**
- **promoting**



SACREs and collective worship

Collective worship: a brief discussion

- Is collective worship appropriate in a maintained, non-faith school?
- For some people, collective worship is controversial. Has it an educational value? If so what is it?

Introduction

- The requirement for a daily act of collective worship is challenging for some schools and especially for secondary schools.
- Done well, it really can make a difference for the whole school community.
- The more support, encouragement and clarity a SACRE can provide for schools, the better able they will be to provide quality experiences for their pupils.

This training presentation examines:

- Collective worship, including its nature and purpose, the law, what good CW might include
- SACRE's responsibilities regarding collective worship

Why collective worship?

Collective worship has been a legal requirement in maintained schools since 1944 and for academies and free schools, is set out in their funding agreement.

By law it:

- is the responsibility of the head teacher (LA Maintained schools and academies) or the governors (voluntary controlled and aided schools), in consultation with each other
- must be provided for pupils every day, unless they are withdrawn by their parents

Collective worship

- must not be distinctive of any denomination, except in schools with a religious character
- is not part of the taught curriculum time of the school
- is specific in terms of content, ie: the majority of acts of collective worship in a term must be 'wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character' except in schools with a religious character
- parents/carers can withdraw their child from collective worship and 6th formers can themselves decide to withdraw from it without their parents'/carers' consent.

What does this mean?

- Every pupil registered in the school must take part in an act of collective worship on each school day.
- Taking part means more than simply attending, but sharing in some form of activity.

What is collective worship?

Collective worship:

- is an **educational** activity
- involves pupils of any faith and none as a school is a community of people holding different beliefs – it is inclusive
- is a **statutory daily** activity
- is **different** from *corporate* worship, which is the shared experience of people belonging to a particular faith or denomination

Good collective worship

- is invitational and not an imposition, e.g. *inviting* participants to pray or reflect
- offers variety
- challenges pupils
- has a reflective atmosphere and encourages the development of a reflective approach to life

How does collective worship contribute to school life?

Collective worship provides opportunities for pupils and staff in the school to reflect together on:

- What is important in life
- What it means to be human
 - exploring a range of beliefs and ideas and how the behaviour of some people gives an example of the best a human can become
- Ideas of right and wrong
 - applying these to current personal, school and external issues

How does collective worship contribute to school life?

and

- How people live and work together as communities, both in school and beyond
- Ways in which people in different places and times have experienced, responded to and expressed these issues and values

How does collective worship contribute to school life?

By providing good quality collective worship, a school can build an inclusive ethos around shared purposes and values, which contributes significantly to to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of each child and to a thriving learning community.

What is the purpose of collective worship?

The DfE circular 1/94 has a useful statement in its commentary as aims. It states collective worship is to provide **opportunities** for pupils to:

- worship God (*see page 16*)
- consider spiritual and moral issues
- explore their own beliefs
- encourage participation and response
- promote community/shared values
- reinforce positive attitudes

In 2012, the DfE stated that schools are free to choose whether or not to use circular 1/94 as guidance.

Good collective worship offers school communities opportunities to:

- celebrate together
- think deeply (reflect/meditate/worship/pray) together
- build community
- affirm the individual and the community
- share and promote common values
- foster a corporate identity
- encourage a reflective approach to living
- deepen every individual's capacity for emotional responses
- look beyond the material and the physical
- share experiences and possibilities of the transcendent

Worship?

- Providing the opportunity is not the same as expecting everyone to worship and a response does not have to be a faith response.
- For pupils with a faith, it is about giving them a chance to reflect on or explore the topic being considered within the faith aspect of their lives.
- For those who are not religious believers, it is an opportunity to reflect on and develop their own beliefs and values.

This educational purpose should inform clear principles about how collective worship is provided in schools.

About prayer

There is no specification anywhere about what collective worship should include. Prayer is frequently used (and sometimes misused) and can be a difficult issue for some teachers.

- There should be no expectation that children will pray. Words introducing any prayer-like activity should be as an invitation rather than an instruction.
- Any invitation to pray is made for the benefit of those pupils for whom it is appropriate.
- The use of silence gives space for prayer or reflection.

About prayer

- The words need to be owned by the speaker (teacher, child or visitor) or grounded in a religious tradition
- Everyone can be included in a personal reflection on the theme or story or words of a prayer
- It will benefit everyone to be still and to listen to the words of someone's prayer, without expectation of participation

What is the purpose of collective worship?

In community schools, collective worship must have an educational purpose and should:

- be appropriate to the age, aptitude and family background of pupils
- contribute to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Beyond this, schools are free to establish their own educational purposes for collective worship, linked to their aims, ethos and culture, and it is good for SACREs to encourage, enable and support them in doing this.

‘wholly or mainly of a *broadly Christian character*’

- The majority of collective worship experiences that count as ‘wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character’, can be entirely ‘broadly Christian’ or partly so
- ‘Broadly Christian’ means reflecting the broad traditions of Christian beliefs, without being distinctively of any particular denomination.
- Schools with a religious character are the only schools permitted to offer corporate ‘faith’ worship, although the majority also offer an educational experience which makes a contribution to pupils’ SMSC development.

Best practice for quality collective worship includes:

- a commitment from senior leaders to the value of collective worship
- allocation of an appropriate budget for resources and training
- thorough planning to meet the needs of the particular school and its pupils and community
- educational use of religious and other material, ensuring variety in its form and presentation

Best practice for quality collective worship includes:

- an open approach that gives pupils opportunities to respond without compromising them in any way
- taking advantage of the freedom to provide collective worship at any time of day and in any school group
- taking every opportunity to interest and inspire pupils

Collective worship and assembly

- Collective worship is **not** the same as an assembly, though they may take place in the same gathering.
- A school may hold any number of assemblies each week, but **must** have a daily act of collective worship.
- An assembly could be whole school, by key stage, or year group.
- Collective worship could additionally be held in class or tutor groups for a shorter period of time.

Collective worship and assembly

Example:

A school holds one main assembly each week with a collective worship element.

For the remaining days it has acts of collective worship in tutor or form time.

Schools will generally have at least one assembly to develop the school community.

Managing the right to withdraw

- **Parents and carers** have the right to withdraw their child(ren) from collective worship and need only write to the headteacher to request this. They do not have to give a reason.
- **Students in the 6th form** can withdraw themselves.
- The school must comply with the request. The parent/carer is not obliged to provide a reason. It is good practice for the headteacher to invite the parent/carer in to discuss arrangements and the policy of the school.

Managing the right to withdraw

- The school does not have to provide an alternative activity for children who have been withdrawn but does have to ensure their safety. If the timing is convenient, a parent can bring a child to school after CW or take him/her home beforehand, provided this is agreed at the outset.
- A parent has a right to have alternative worship on the school site, at another school or at another site at no cost to the school or local authority, which must be at the beginning or end of a school day and must not interfere with the pupil's curriculum entitlement.
- **Teachers** also have the right not to take part in collective worship.

What are SACRE's responsibilities in collective worship?

To:

- receive inspection reports, noting any references to the quality of collective worship in the context of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
- monitor the quality of provision where possible and share good practice
- offer advice to headteachers and governing bodies, including where there may be difficulties

What are SACRE's responsibilities in collective worship?

- The SACRE has the **statutory duty** to 'grant a determination' to a community school where it is felt that the proportion of acts of collective worship of 'a broadly Christian character' as described by law is not appropriate for all or some pupils.
- If a school feels that the requirement for broadly Christian worship is inappropriate for some or all of the pupils usually because of their family or faith background, the headteacher can apply to the local SACRE for a 'determination' to have this requirement lifted or modified for some or all of the pupils.
- SACREs should have a clear process for applying for a determination. It may be sensible to get the SACRE's process approved by the LA's legal department.

What is a determination?

- The technical term ‘granting a determination’ is so called because SACRE ‘*determines*’ whether the case being made in an application to modify the law for pupils in a school is appropriate.
- A determination only affects the character of collective worship. It does not affect the requirement for all pupils (apart from those withdrawn by their parents/carers) to take part in an act of collective worship on each school day.
- A determination lasts for a period of five years.

Under what circumstances should a school apply for a determination?

- Usually schools will apply for a determination where significant numbers of parents/carers of pupils express concerns about 'broadly Christian' worship, possibly leading to numerous requests to withdraw their children from collective worship.

What should schools include in an application for a determination?

- The Headteacher must consult the governing body
- There should be a consultation with parents
- In key stage 2 and secondary schools, some form of pupil participation in the consultation process may be appropriate
- It should be clear whether the application is for the whole school or for a particular group or groups within the school
- A description of the proposed alternative collective worship to be planned and provided

What should a SACRE consider before granting a determination?

- Ensure that the proposed determination is justified by the evidence the school provides in its application, such as number of requests to withdraw from collective worship or the backgrounds of the pupils.
- Evidence of all consultations, including clear evidence that the governing body has been consulted, and the findings of those consultations
- Clear planning for how the school will provide alternative collective worship so SACRE can decide whether that this meets the needs of the pupils and the requirement for a daily act of collective worship

Discussion and thinking activity

“All pupils in attendance at a maintained school other than a maintained special school, shall on each school day take part in an act of collective worship”

Education Act 1996 par 385.

- What does this statement mean?
- What are your reactions to the statement: emotional, intellectual and spiritual? What value might there be in participating in collective worship? What concerns might there be? What questions does it raise?
- What precisely is required of schools?
- What can SACRE do to support schools?
- What can **you** do to help?

This page is intentionally left blank