

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:

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Associate Adviser for RE