

9 January 2019		ITEM: 9
Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education		
Annual Report 2017- 2018		
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Non-Key	
Report of: Deborah Weston: Associate Adviser for Religious Education		
Accountable Assistant Director: Michele Lucas, Assistant Director Learning Inclusion and Skills		
Accountable Director: Rory Patterson, Corporate Director of Children’s Services		
This report is Public		

Executive Summary

This report presents the Annual Report to members of SACRE for approval

1. Recommendation(s) that SACRE:

- **That SACRE accept this report as an accurate record of its work for the period September 2016 – July 2018**
- **Requests that the Director of Education, writes to all schools to remind them of their statutory duties/ contractual obligations to provide religious education to all pupils on the school roll**
- **Requests that the school improvement team include a review of schools’ provision for RE and Collective Worship as part of the annual conversations**

2. Introduction and Background

2.1 It is a legal requirement that SACRE submit an annual report of its activities to the local authority.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

3.1 Members are requested to accept, amend or reject the report.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

4.1 In order that SACRE fulfils its statutory duty to publish an annual report and to advise the LA on RE given in accordance with the agreed syllabus, and on

matters related to its functions, whether in response to a referral from the LA or as it sees fit.

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.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

**Implications verified by: Kay Goodacre
Finance Manager Corporate Finance**

There are no financial implications for this report.

7.2 Legal

**Implications verified by: Lucinda Bell
Education Lawyer**

SACRE is asked to accept, reject or amend the report. S391 of the Education Act 1996 requires SACRE to publish a report as to the exercise of its functions and any action taken by representative groups on the council during the last year. The section states that “The council’s report shall in particular—

- a) specify any matters in respect of which the council have given advice to the authority,
- b) broadly describe the nature of the advice given, and
- c) where any such matter was not referred to the council by the authority, give the council’s reasons for offering advice on that matter.”

The Committee is requested to accept the report, and also that it makes two decisions that are related to the report findings.

7.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Rebecca Price**
(Community Development & Equalities Manager)

Although there are no direct diversity implications, the Annual Report demonstrates how the work of SACRE continues to promote an understanding of different religions in education therefore promoting cohesion.

7.4 Other implications (where significant) – i.e. Staff, Health, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder)

Not applicable

8.0 Appendices to the report

8.1 **Appendix A** – annual report of the Thurrock standing advisory council on religious education (SACRE) for 2017 - 2018

8.2 **Appendix B** – The membership of Thurrock SACRE 2016-18

8.3 **Appendix C** – SACRE discussion of National Developments in RE

8.4 **Appendix D** – Standards in RE in Thurrock Schools

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Associate Adviser for RE

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE THURROCK STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE) FOR 2017 - 2018

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Introduction

Since 1988, it has been a requirement that every local authority (LA) has a Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE).

Though legislation sets out both the structure and the remit of a local SACRE - principally, overseeing religious education (RE) and collective worship - in practice every SACRE has developed its own particular style and character.

Thurrock SACRE has over the years developed its own particular style and character as this report will testify.

It is a legislative requirement that each SACRE produces an annual report of its work and that this is published, sent to the local authority, to local schools and to other interested parties. One important element of the report is performance data and an analysis of the extent to which schools are meeting their legal duties in relation to RE. GCSE data, including the short course was not available until this month, hence the delay in the publication of the report. More recently, other datasets have been made available by the DfE, most significantly the school workforce data that supports the monitoring of the level of provision in secondary schools.

Foreword by the Chair of SACRE – Rev. John Guest

Pending

APPENDIX B

The membership of Thurrock SACRE 2016-18

Committee A

Mrs S Lawson – Free Church Member

Mrs Shepherd – Roman Catholic Member

Vacancy – Jewish Member

M A Rashid – Muslim Member

Ms A Ahmed – Muslim Member

Mr B Gill – Sikh Member

Vacancy – Hindu Member

Mr P Anderson – House Church Member

Dr O Soleye – Pentecostal Member

Vacancy – Buddhist Member

Committee B

Rev. John Guest – Chair (from July 2014) Church of England Member

Mrs Mary Taylor – Church of England Member

David Bates – Church of England Member

Committee C

Angela Jellicoe – Teacher representative

Paul Griffiths – Headteacher representative

Richard Epps – Headteacher representative

Hayley Gillman - Teacher representative

Nicola Fawell - Teacher representative

Committee D

Councillor Kerin

Councillor Gupta

Councillor Ojetola

SACRE Meetings Held

The following SACRE meetings were held during the reporting period:

- 19 April 2017
- 5 September 2017
- 22 November 2017
- 30 January 2018
- 18 July 2018

All meetings were held at the Civic Offices, New Road, Grays, Thurrock, Essex

SACRE discussion of National Developments in RE

National Association of SACREs (NASACRE)

Thurrock SACRE was pleased to continue to be involved in this association and to discuss issues raised at the Annual General Meeting. The NASACRE newsletters provided useful information to inform agendas and support for schools.

SACRE took part in The Big NASACRE survey. SACRE later heard that the data gathered from this survey was used to inform the Commission on RE. As the remit of the commission was to review the legal, education, and policy frameworks for religious education, it was essential that evidence from SACREs was considered.

State of the Nation Report and implications for Thurrock

Members were concerned to read of the decline in the levels of provision of RE in England measured by the school workforce and GCSE data. SACRE heard that schools in Thurrock were also facing significant challenges in recruiting specialist teachers of RE for secondary schools and that this was contributing to the decline in levels of provision. Headteachers were rightly concerned about the potential impact on school standards of using teachers with other specialisms to teach RE. SACRE members asked if the teaching school alliances that served the area could training places for teachers of RE. They were disappointed that alliances in Havering and Essex had been allocated RE places, none appeared to be available in Thurrock itself.

The Commission on RE interim report

SACRE discussed the interim findings of the interim report and how this related to RE in Thurrock. Members noted the following key issues in the report:

- A proposal for a national entitlement for RE
- The need to hold schools to account for the provision and quality of RE
- A renewed and expanded role for SACRES
- The legal status of right of withdrawal and the challenges of selective withdrawal
- A National Plan for improving teaching and learning in RE

RE support for Thurrock Schools

In order to support the raising of standards of RE in Thurrock Schools, SACRE explored several initiatives.

Religious Education Quality Mark

SACRE heard that 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 were 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 the silver award within the programme. It was explained that the award was evidence based and a visiting assessor evaluated the evidence that all criteria had been met.

It was commented that the qualification was positive on both schools and for SACRE and it was agreed that the Headteacher bulletin and subject leader mailing list should be used to congratulate Ockendon Academy and encourage other schools with engage with the award.

Acts of Worship

SACRE has a legal duty to monitor provision for collective worship in schools in its local area. A discussion on this topic raised the following points:

- many schools found the legal duties surrounding the act of collective worship challenging both on practical and philosophical level.
- it was common for schools to assume that assemblies and acts of worship were synonymous, but this was an error since not all assemblies provide an opportunity for worship
- Some schools, especially secondary schools struggled to meet the requirement to provide a daily act of collective worship in a crowded school timetable. Schools reported that it required quite a lot of time to be able to do something meaningful within collective worship, and so preferred less frequent sessions.
- Most teachers were not trained to lead collective worship and so many of them were reluctant to be involved.
- Members felt that collective worship should not be lost in school life, especially as it provided an opportunity to quiet reflection during a busy school day. Others stated that children needed an opportunity to worship and reflect if they wish too.
- Several schools in Thurrock provided excellent opportunities for prayer and reflection. Holy Cross Primary School had a prayer garden which was inspired by a school trip to Aylesford, Kent where children completed the Rosary Walk. Following a trip with a Year 6 class the children had asked if they could have their own peace garden. The children created their garden with stones painted with word such as Love and Peace, running water, the sun, moon, stars to represent God's garden. It was commented that the garden meant a lot to the children as it gave them somewhere to go and reflect. St Clere's School also has a prayer space.

Youth SACRE report to SACRE

As part of their monitoring work, SACRE decided to invite representatives of the Youth Cabinet to attend a SACRE meeting. Members informed the representatives that had invited the Youth Cabinet to their meeting as they felt it was important to seek their views about their experiences of Religious Education in Schools and the importance of Religious Education in Thurrock today.

Provision:

Members of the Youth Cabinet informed SACRE that two of them attended St Clere's and one Grays Convent. It was explained that at St Clere's, Religious Education was compulsory for Years 7 – 9 and could be taken as an option for years 10 and 11, topics taught included, similarities and differences between different religions and worldviews, customs and

practices within faiths and in the later years, the exploration of religious and moral issues such as life after death and different responses to blood transfusion.

In contrast, Religious Education at Grays Convent was compulsory for all years and all students studied for a full course GCSE. The focus of their GCSE was Mark's Gospel and Christian responses to religious and moral issues.

Acts of Worship:

The Youth Cabinet representative from St Clere's School reported that there was a prayer space for children which was open to all but particularly used by Muslim pupils for their prayers. The pupils from Grays Convent reported attending daily worship and Mass.

Members of the Youth Cabinet remarked they remembered a local reverend attending to speak to pupils in a whole school assembly and or mediation.

APPENDIX D

Standards in RE in Thurrock Schools

School Workforce data 2017

The table below includes the hours allocated to RE based on the data the school submitted to the DfE as part of the school census together with GCSE results and entry levels.

School	Type	Percentage of timetable hours for RE							GCSE		Ofsted	Results at GCSE 2017		
		Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Year 12	Year 13	% of year 11 entered full	% year 11 entered		Percentage A*-C FC	Percentage A*-C SC	Percentage (double entry)
Gable Hall School	Academy converter	2.7	1.6	3.2	1.4	0	0	0	24.2	0	Requires improvement July 2018	63.8		63.8
Grays Convent High School	Voluntary aided school	7.5	7.5	7.4	11	8.5	0	0	94.7	3.5	Good Nov 2017	85.2	75	84.8
Harris Academy Chafford Hundred	Academy converter	0	0	0	0	1.5	2.9	3	12.2	0	Outstanding Nov 2011	77.3		77.3
St Clere's School	Academy converter	4.8	4.9	2.7	2.3	0	0	0	0	28.6	Good Sept 2014 Inspected 27 th Nov 2018 – outcome to be confirmed		87.7	87.7
The Ockendon Academy	Academy converter	7.3	7.4	6.9	6.9	7.1	6.7	0	100	0	Good Feb 2014	41.3		41.3
William Edwards School	Academy converter	0	4.2	4.1	0	1	0	0	3	0	Outstanding	71.4		71.4
The Hathaway	Academy sponsor	0	0	0	1.9	2.9	0	0	13.7	0	Good	47.1		47.1

Academy	led										June 2015			
The Gateway Academy	Academy sponsor led	0	0	7	15	3.7	0	0	74.8	0	Requires improvement May 2017	49.2		49.2
Ormiston Park Academy	Academy sponsor led	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Good April 2017			
Hassenbrook Academy	Academy converter	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Requires improvement May 2018			

GCSE

GCSE ENTRIES	2014 Full Course % Roll Entry	2015 Full Course % Roll Entry	2016 Full Course % Roll Entry	2017 Full Course % Roll Entry	2018 Full Course % Roll Entry
Gable Hall School	6%	6%		24%	27%
Grays Convent High School	87%	94%	95%	95%	86%
Harris Academy Chafford Hundred	14%	24%	17%	12%	13%
Hassenbrook Academy	8%	9%	0%	0%	0%
Hathaway Academy	74%	96%	13%	14%	14%
Ormiston Park Academy	8%	7%	1%	0%	0%
St. Clere's School	86%	54%	12%		7%
The Gateway Academy	7%	26%	58%	75%	36%
The Ockendon Academy	99%	100%	99%	100%	100%

William Edwards School	10%	9%		3%	3%
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GCSE RESULTS	2014 Full Course A*-C	2015 Full Course A*-C	2016 Full Course A*-C	2017 Full Course A*-C	2018 Full Course 9-4
National Average	72%	72%	72%	71.3%	72%
Thurrock Average	67%	65%	62%	62%	73.5%
Gable Hall School	93%	64%	65%	64%	67%*
Grays Convent High School	81%	88%	78%	85%	75%
Harris Academy Chafford Hundred	96%	93%	83%	77%	100%
Hassenbrook Academy	42%	58%	No entries	No entries	No entries
Hathaway Academy	62%	47%	78%	47%	46%
Ormiston Park Academy	57%	67%	No entries	No entries	No entries
St. Clere's School	44%	51%	96%	92%	88%
The Gateway Academy	92%	67%	42%	49%	87%
The Ockendon Academy	65%	55%	54%	41%	45%
William Edwards School	42%	57%	62%	71%	100%

*These students sat their GCSE in year 10. There are no hours of RE in year 11

Commentary

1. Gable Hall:

- a. Entered 27% of the year 11 cohort for GCSE and achieved good results, just below the national average for the course.
- b. The analysis of the school website conducted by SACRE indicates that RE is delivered for, for “100 minutes in year 7, 50 minutes in year 8 and 100 minutes in year 9” This is a good allocation of time for a broad study of Religions and worldviews.
- c. However, the website also states that, “Towards the end of Year 8, students in Violet, Indigo and Yellow start a GCSE in Religious Education by following the fast track route which is covered in two years.” *SACRE were concerned that students were studying a course designed for students more than a year older, that their potential to make the maximum amount of progress was reduced by early entry and by reporting zero hours of RE in year 11 was suggesting that they might not be fulfilling the terms of its funding agreement. SACRE has asked the school improvement team to investigate*
- d. Furthermore, the website states, “Only students from 9 Violet, Indigo and Yellow will be passing their final GCSE exam at the end of year 10. There is no coursework requirement for this GCSE, just 2 end of year exams in May on two beliefs, teachings and practices of both religion as well as their ethics beliefs.”. This begs the question of what those students who are not in Violet, Indigo and Yellow receive in terms of provision for RE.
- e. SACRE notes that Ofsted has judged this school as requiring improvement and that the school is part of the ORTU Federation.

2. Grays Convent High School

- a. Enters almost all students for a full course GCSE and achieves results that are above the national average. The number of hours provided for RE follows Diocesan guidelines for a school with a Catholic Religious Character.

3. Harris Academy Chafford Hundred

- a. The school workforce data reported by the school suggests that there are no hours for RE in year 7,8 or 9 and year the school website includes long term plans for all three-year groups under the heading Humanities and RS KS3.
- b. Closer inspection of these plans suggests that there is no explicit teaching about religions and beliefs and that the Agreed Syllabus is not being followed. SACRE resolved to write to the school to enquire which syllabus is being followed and how the funding agreement is being met.

c. The entry figures for GCSE suggests there is a small option group that is achieving very good results for the full course GCSE; above the national average. However, there is no evidence on the website of RE in year 10 or 11 for students who do not opt for RS GCSE. SACRE *has asked the school improvement team to investigate*

4. St.Clere's School

- a. The school workforce data suggests that there is no provision for RE in year 11 which would be a breach of the academy funding agreement
- b. Likewise, the data suggests that only those students that opt for RE short course (28%) study the subject in year 9 and 10
- c. The outcomes for the GCSE short course for this group of students are outstanding, being significantly above the national average.
- d. Provision in the shortened key stage 3 covers a range of topics related to religions and beliefs but because GCSE begins in year 9, the academy can not be said to be following the Thurrock Agreed Syllabus. SACRE *has asked the school improvement team to investigate*

5. The Ockendon Academy

- a. The school workforce data suggests that there is a very good level of provision for RE at the academy.
- b. The number of entries and results at GCSE have steadily declined over recent years.

6. William Edwards School

- a. The school workforce data suggests there is no Religious Education provision in years 7 and 10. Year 7 follow a creative curriculum programme which commands four hours of curriculum time per week and includes Religious Education.
- b. The workforce data for year 10 is confusing however, since there were GCSE entries in 2017 which would suggest there was an option group on the timetable for key stage 4: years 10-11.
- c. SACRE was concerned about the level of provision and wrote to the Headteacher who replied stating that all students in Key Stage 4 receive RE through a series of focus days delivered throughout the year. SACRE was unconvinced that pupils would make the expected level of progress and *has asked the school improvement team to investigate*.

7. Hathaway Academy

- a. The Hathaway Academy reports no hours for RE in years 7,8 and 9.
- b. In 2015, almost the full year 11 cohort were entered for GCSE full course and achieved excellent results; above the national average. By 2016, this decision had been reversed and only a small option group were entered with significantly poorer results.
- c. SACRE were concerned about the level and standard of provision and wrote to the Headteacher. No reply has been received SACRE *has asked the school improvement team to investigate*.

8. The Gateway Academy

- a. The Gateway reports no hours for RE in years 7 and 8 but does make provision in years 9,10 and 11.

- b. Between 2016 and 2017, the proportion of the year 11 cohort entered for GCSE increased from 58% to 75% but the results remained significantly below the national average.
- c. SACRE was concerned that there appeared to be no provision for RE for those pupils that did not opt for RS at Key Stage 4 and about the standards achieved. The Chair wrote to the Headteacher accordingly.
- d. SACRE was delighted to learn through a reply from the Headteacher that an experienced Head of RE had been appointed by the Academy and that the lack of hours in year 7 and 8 could be explained by the fact that RE was taught alongside History and Geography prior to September 2017 but was now delivered a separate discipline. Over 95% of the Gateway students sat a RS examination in 2018 and are now achieving grades above the national average. The remaining issue is that there appears to be **no provision in year 11** and that early entry may be restricting pupils' opportunity to make even more progress.

9. Ormiston Park Academy

- a. The school workforce data appears to indicate that there is no provision for Religious Education in any school year.
- b. There were no GCSE entries in 2016 or 2017
- c. The school website here, reports that there is one lesson of CPRE in years 7-8 and two in years 9,10 and 11. SACRE could find no information published about the content of the curriculum as required by the [schools publication regulations](#).
- d. SACRE were concerned that the Academy appears to be in breach of its funding agreement and the Chair wrote to the Headteacher. **No reply was received. SACRE has asked the school improvement team to investigate**

10. Hassenbrook Academy

- a. The school workforce data appears to indicate that there is no provision for Religious Education in any school year however, there is RE content in the PRE/PSHE [curriculum map](#) though this does not follow the Agreed Syllabus nor appear to provide sufficient timetable time or content to meet the equivalent standards.
- b. There were no GCSE entries between 2016-18
- c. SACRE were concerned that the Academy might not be offering provision that meets the expected standards for RE and **SACRE has asked the school improvement team to investigate**. SACRE notes that the school is now part of the ORTU Federation.