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| <b>5 June 2019</b>   |                                 | <b>ITEM: 7</b> |
| <b>Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education</b>  |                                 |                |
| <b>Monitoring Provision for RE in Thurrock Schools</b>   |                                 |                |
| <b>Wards and communities affected:</b><br>All  | <b>Key Decision:</b><br>Non-Key |                |
| <b>Report of:</b> Deborah Weston, Associate Adviser for Religious Education                            |                                 |                |
| <b>Accountable Assistant Director:</b> Michele Lucas, Assistant Director Learning Inclusion and Skills |                                 |                |
| <b>Accountable Director:</b> Rory Patterson, Director of Children's Services                           |                                 |                |
| <b>This report is</b> 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 has conducted regular monitoring exercises to establish how effective the new syllabus has been in meeting its aim to raise standards of RE. At the last meeting of SACRE resolved to ask the associate adviser to approach schools with a brief questionnaire to help them understand some of the choices schools have made concerning the use of the Agreed Syllabus and scheme of work.

### **1. Recommendation(s) that SACRE Members:**

- **Consider**
  - **The information collected to date (May 2019) (Appendix 1)**
  - **Any lessons learned from these responses**
- **Consider what action might be necessary to collect more responses**

### **2. Introduction and Background**

DfE guidance for Academies published explains that Academy Funding Agreements require these schools to make one of three choices about their provision for Religious Education. This questionnaire aims to collect information about that choice in Thurrock Academies.

The rapid turnover of subject leaders in primary schools means that not all teachers appear to have access to the Thurrock Agreed Syllabus and schemes of work. The questionnaire is an opportunity to inform schools about the available resources.

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>1</sup> and <sup>2</sup>

### **3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options**

- 3.1 A request to complete this questionnaire has appeared in several Headteachers' Bulletin, messages have been sent directly to class teachers and subject leaders who have requested access to the password protected RE section of the Thurrock website.
- 3.2 The number of responses received both to the questionnaire and letters remains disappointing. SACRE will need to consider its options in trying to collect this information. E.g. abandoning the questionnaire and letters, repeating the requests, for example for the questionnaire the Headteacher Bulletin, informing schools by another method of the request for this information.

### **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>

## 7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **David May**  
**Strategic Lead Finance 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: **Lindsey Marks**  
**Deputy Head of Legal Social Care & Education**

The legal duties on the advisory council are set out in section 391 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 Community Development & Equalities**

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

Appendix 1 – Information collected from Schools questionnaire.

### Report Author:

Deborah Weston

Associate Adviser for RE