

15 January 2015		ITEM: 8
Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education		
Thurrock SACRE – Academy Responses To The Local Agreed Syllabus		
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Non-Key	
Report of: Deborah Weston, Associate Adviser for Religious Education		
Accountable Head of Service: Ruth Brock, School Improvement Manager		
Accountable Director: Carmel Littleton, Director of Children’s Services		
This report is Public		

Executive Summary

This report is an update on a report commissioned in 2014 in order to identify the level of demand for the local Agreed Syllabus in the Academies in Thurrock. It shows that the majority of Academies who have a choice over whether or not to adopt the local Agreed Syllabus for RE have chosen to do so. This means that SACRE can expect a good level of commitment and support for the revision to the Agreed Syllabus.

1. Recommendation(s) that SACRE:

That SACRE:

- 1.1 Ask all schools to allow their subject leaders to be involved in the Agreed Syllabus working group**
- 1.2 Continue to make its Agreed Syllabus and supporting materials available to all schools in Thurrock whether or not they are academies**

2. Introduction and Background

In order to prepare for the revision of the Agreed Syllabus, SACRE asked the Associate Adviser to survey the Academies in Thurrock to determine the level of support for the Agreed Syllabus. In addition to the list of academies whose response was included in last term’s report, those italicised have also responded:

Abbots Hall Primary Academy	TAS
Beacon Hill Academy	Own syllabus

Belmont Castle	TAS
Benyon Primary School	TAS
Dilkes Academy	TAS
<i>East Tilbury Infant School & East Tilbury Junior School</i>	<i>TAS</i>
Gable Hall school	TAS
Gateway Academy	Own Syllabus
GLC Academy	TAS
<i>Graham James Primary Academy</i>	<i>Own syllabus</i>
Harris Academy Chafford Hundred	TAS
Harris Primary Academy Chafford Hundred	TAS
<i>Hassenbrook Academy</i>	<i>Own syllabus</i>
Hathaway Academy	TAS
Herringham Primary Academy	TAS
<i>Kenningtons Primary Academy</i>	<i>TAS</i>
<i>Lansdowne</i>	<i>TAS</i>
Ockendon Academy	TAS
<i>Purfleet primary Academy</i>	<i>TAS</i>
Quarry hill Academy	TAS
Shaw Primary Academy	Own syllabus
St Cleres	TAS with some adaptation
Stanford -le - Hope as part of St Cleres Multi Academy Trust	TAS and own syllabus
Thameside Primary School	Essex
West Thurrock Academy	TAS
William Edwards	Own syllabus
Woodside Academy	TAS

- 1.2** SACRE has a legal responsibility to recommend an Agreed Syllabus to the council irrespective of how many schools or academies chose to adopt it. The council is legally obliged to fund the development of that Agreed Syllabus once every five years.
- 1.3** This additional data however, reinforces the argument that revising the Agreed Syllabus is a worthwhile activity since around 70% of academies have chosen to follow the Agreed Syllabus even when they have a choice over whether to do so or not
- 1.4** Responses to the survey would suggest that some academies are unclear about their responsibilities in relation to RE and have responded that they do not follow the syllabus when they actually do follow it but have devised their own scheme of work.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

3.1 SACRE should to continue to discuss how it might build on the commitment of academies to the Agreed Syllabus and to continue to build understanding about the Agreed Syllabus, provision for RE and collective worship.

3.2 Options for achieving this aim might include:

3.2.1 Further written communication with schools, addressing headteacher meetings, publication on the SACRE website, encouraging involvement with the London RE Hub and/or revitalising the local teacher group

4. Reasons for Recommendation

4.1 The positive response of schools to the Agreed Syllabus would suggest that the revision of the Agreed Syllabus is worthwhile both educationally and in terms of value for money

4.2 Given the council is statutorily obliged to revise the Agreed Syllabus, it would seem sensible to ensure that best use is made of it by as many schools as possible.

5. Consultation (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)

5.1 Not applicable

6. Impact on corporate policies, priorities, performance and community impact

6.1 Not applicable

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

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

There are no financial implications contained within the report.

7.2 Legal

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

Academies are required to teach RE by their funding agreements. The Education Act 1996 s391 makes provision for the functions of SACREs.

These include advising the Local Authority on matters connected with religious worship in community and foundation schools with non religious character and the religious education to be given in accordance with an agreed or other syllabus in accordance with Schedule 19 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. S375(2) of the Education Act 1996 defines “agreed syllabus”. There is a duty on the Authority, imposed by Schedule 31 of the Education Act 1996 to convene a conference to reconsider the agreed syllabus at least every five years.

7.3 **Diversity and Equality**

Implications verified by: **Rebecca Price**
Community Development Officer

The implications of this report are that commitment to the Agreed Syllabus by Thurrock schools suggests that the syllabus and associated materials has the potential to make a significant impact on pupils’ understanding of religion and belief and to ensure that they leave school fully equipped to take their place in a religiously diverse society.

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**

- None

Report Author:

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Associate Adviser for Religious Education