

2 October 2024		ITEM: 8
Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education		
Work Plan 2024-2025		
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Non-Key	
Report of: Associate Adviser for Religious Education		
Accountable Assistant Director: Michele Lucas, Assistant Director Education and Children's Commissioning		
Accountable Director: Sheila Murphy, Executive Director of Children's Services		
This report is Public		

Executive Summary

The work plan for SACRE in 2023-24 was agreed at the Autumn Term meeting in 2023. This report proposes a review of that plan and some suggestions for 2024-25

1. Recommendation(s) that SACRE:

1.1 Review the workplan for 2023-24 and consider recommendations for work in 2024-25

2. Introduction and Background

2.1 This workplan sets out a list of objectives for SACRE based on the responsibilities for SACRE described in the non-statutory guidance – Religious education (RE) and collective worship in academies and free schools published 18 December 2012. For each of these responsibilities, there follows a set of actions and success criteria.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

3.1 The scope of work plan must take account of the current SACRE budget which comes from the CSSB (central schools services block) of funding which is allocated to each local authority.

3.2 National and local developments in RE or in education more generally may require SACRE to edit the plan during the year.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

4.1 A well designed workplan specifies objectives for a **committee**, actions to meet the objective, criteria to evaluate the success of the actions and timelines for completion of the goals.

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

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.

6.2 This exercise falls under all three elements of this programme.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **David May**
Head of Finance

There are no financial implications to this report since the actions recommended in this report, if approved will be conducted by the Associate RE Adviser as part of her work.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Georgina Foster**
Legal

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.

As a local authority, Thurrock Council is required by law to have a Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE). The origins of SACREs go back to the Education Act of 1944 and were strengthened their place in

local authorities by the Education Reform Act 1988 and the Education Act 1996. The responsibilities of the SACRE are to:

- Provide advice to the Council on all aspects of its provision for religious education (RE) in its schools (not including voluntary aided schools).
- Decide whether the Council's agreed syllabus for RE needs to be reviewed and to ensure we do so.
- Provide advice to the Council on collective worship in its schools (not including voluntary aided or voluntary controlled schools).
- Consider any requests from headteachers to hold collective worship that is not of a broadly Christian character.
- Advise on matters relating to training for teachers in RE and collective worship.

This report asks that the workplan is reviewed and recommendations are considered. No other decision is required.

7.3 **Diversity and Equality**

Implications verified by: **Becky Lee**

Team Manager, Community Development and Equalities

SACRE will continue to dedicate time for the discussion of the way in which religious education can help improve the level of community cohesion in Thurrock. The Agreed Syllabus is specific about the expected outcomes of teaching of religious education in this respect. The teaching of RE should 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 and Looked After Children

Not applicable.

Report Author:

Deborah Weston, OBE

Associate Adviser for RE

**SACRE WORK PLAN 2023-24 (Suggestions for addition in 2024-2025 in red)
To meet the statutory duties of a SACRE**

Objective	Action	Responsibility	Date	Success criteria
SACRE meetings are planned and dates published annually	Agenda planning Liaison with relevant council departments Meeting preparation Report writing Meeting attendance Minute taking Publication of meeting agendas and minutes SACRE members to consider taking part in NASACRE provided online training	Clerk, Chair, Adviser LA representative, members	Termly SACRE meetings	Meetings are effective meetings with actions followed up between meetings Members have a working knowledge of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • issues affecting RE in the area • the Agreed Syllabus for RE • an understanding of the responsibilities of SACRE
SACRE have the opportunity to consider national developments in relation to RE in Thurrock	Consider relevant material from National organisations (AREAIC, NATRE, NASACRE/RE Council/ Culham St Gabriel's Trust as well as the DfE, Ofsted and Thurrock Council departments Engage with the call for evidence from the Government Curriculum and Assessment Review	Adviser	As information is published When announced	Items on the Agenda for each meeting, Attendance at relevant meetings e.g. NASACRE AGM Minutes record discussions and actions Thurrock SACRE is able to respond to the call for evidence with information from Thurrock Schools
Produce annual report of the work of SACRE including advice to the council.	Collate information, source data and draft report Ensure final report presented to LA Send copy to Department for Education and to NASACRE	Adviser to draft Chair to write introduction Clerk to circulate. Elected representative to present to council	Spring Term (to account for data publication dates)	Completed draft in time for Spring meeting Report presented to council Copies sent to all schools Copy acknowledged by DfE

Engage with local schools and Academy Trusts to understand how Religious Education and Collective Worship are provided in Thurrock	<p>Arrange visits to schools to gather information about the use of the Agreed Syllabus 2022-27</p> <p>Publicise the RE Quality Mark and encourage schools to share their submissions with SACRE as a means of self-evaluation</p> <p>Members to hold discussions with subject leaders using prepared template</p>	(SACRE members at least one per year)	Up to 4 school visits - 2 per term Suggested schedule	Meaningful evaluation visits or discussion completed, and reports discussed at SACRE meetings.
Provide information on the RE curriculum to schools including through training	<p>Update a mailing list for RE leads in primary and secondary schools to facilitate briefings.</p> <p>Update schools on current developments in RE (NATRE and other material requested by SACRE)</p>	<p>Adviser</p> <p>Adviser and RE Today</p>	<p>Termly</p> <p>Annually -Summer Term subject to funding</p>	<p>Schools in receipt of material</p> <p>Teachers respond to material received</p> <p>Teachers raise questions to the adviser</p>
Monitor provision for RE and Collective Worship	<p>Source and present national and local data as follows:</p> <p>GCSE validated and unvalidated results and entries (local and national)</p> <p>School workforce data (local and national)</p> <p>Surveys of provision and of issues such as withdrawal, use of agreed syllabus, who teaches RE etc (local)</p> <p>Review school websites</p> <p>Write to schools about findings</p> <p>Sample collective worship policies</p>	<p>Adviser</p> <p>All SACRE members</p> <p>LA representative</p>	Annually	<p>LA respond to advice offered on strengths of RE and collective worship, and areas in need of development</p> <p>Schools respond to feedback on their websites and policies</p>
Evaluate SACRE work and establish priorities	Item at autumn term meeting	All SACRE members	Autumn term meeting	Evaluation identified success criteria are met

Schedule 2024/25		
Date of meeting	Subject	Objective (note – objectives 1 and 2 apply to all meetings)
Autumn 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National developments - update • Review of membership and attendance (including review of membership criteria) • Evaluation of work plan 2023-24 • Agreement of workplan for 2024-25 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 • 7 • 2 • 6 • 4
Spring 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring provision via school workforce data and GCSE and A level results (if available) • Annual report approval/ using new template • Relationships e.g: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Schools and Academies ○ Teaching School Hubs ○ the Council ○ Governors ○ Communities of religion and belief ○ Thurrock work on Community Integration ○ NASACRE ○ Youth Cabinet ○ Regional Schools Commissioners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 • 3 • 4+5
Summer 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standards and Achievements in RE in schools • Review of SACRE website 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 • 6

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of Collective Worship and right of withdrawal• Ofsted Framework on RE – latest reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 6• 5• 4
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