



## **Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE)**

**Date**      **Thursday 3 November 2022**

**Time**      **1.30 pm**

**Venue**    **Committee Room 2, County Hall, Durham**

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### **Business**

#### **Part A**

**Items during which the Press and Public are welcome to attend.  
Members of the Public can ask questions with the Chairman's  
agreement.**

1. Introductions, Welcome and Apologies
2. Minutes of the meeting held on 9 June 2022 (Pages 5 - 10)
3. Declarations of interest, if any
4. Matters Arising
5. Chairs Comments
6. SACRE Self Evaluation Process (Pages 11 - 34)
7. Education Durham Report to SACRE (Pages 35 - 40)
8. Working Group Report on Religion & Worldviews
9. Community Cohesion
10. Date of the next meeting
11. Any other business
12. Any resolution relating to the exclusion of the public during the discussion of items containing exempt information

**Helen Lynch**

Head of Legal and Democratic Services

County Hall  
Durham  
26 October 2022

To: **The Members of the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education**

**1. Church of England**

Canon L Burton, N Dodd, K Passmore, H Tait and C Weir

**2. Other Religious Denominations and Faiths**

S Baker	- Roman Catholic
A Barron	- Roman Catholic
Revd R Fisher	- Methodist Church
W Gray	- Buddhism
F Johnson	- Methodist Church
J Nicholls	- Society of Friends (Quaker)
Bhakti Rasa Dasa	- Hinduism
C Singh	- Sikhism
C Spencer	- Bahá'í Faith
M Turner	- Islam
D Van der Velde	- Judaism

**3. Teachers Associations**

V Bain	- NEU
B Dunn	- RE Curriculum Group
A Hartley	- NASUWT
M Lowden	- NEU
S Lupton	- RE Curriculum Group
P Welch	- NEU

**4. County Council Representatives**

Councillors D Haney, S Townsend, C Varty and M Walton

**5. Co-opted Members**

M Dixon	
S Walker	- Humanist

**Specialist Inspector**

Phil Hodgson

**DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL**

**At a Meeting of Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE)**  
held in Committee Room 2, County Hall, Durham on **Thursday 9 June 2022 at 1.30 pm**

**Present:**

**P Welch (Chair) In the Chair**

**Church of England**

Canon L Burton

**Other Religious Denominations and Faiths**

S Baker	- Roman Catholic
W Gray	- Buddhism
Bhakti Rasa Dasa	- Hinduism
C Spencer	- Bahá'í Faith

**Teachers Associations**

B Dunn	- RE Curriculum Group
S Lupton	- RE Curriculum Group

**County Council Representatives**

Councillors M Walton

**Co-opted Members**

S Walker	- Humanist
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**Specialist Inspector (Religious Education)**

P Hodgson, Education Durham

**1 Introductions, Welcome and Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from V Bain N Dodd, A Hartley, F Johnson, K Passmore, H Tait, D Van der Velde, C Weir and S Townsend.

**2 Minutes of the meeting held on 3 March 2022**

Minutes of the meeting held on 3 March 2022 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

### **3 Declarations of interest, if any**

There were no declarations of interest submitted.

### **4 Matters Arising**

The Chair asked that his thanks be placed on record for the refreshments which had been provided by S Walker, Humanists NE.

L Burton commented that she felt that the lack of refreshments provided for SACRE by Durham County Council showed a lack of appreciation for the work and role of the volunteers on SACRE.

The Chair then welcomed B Dunn to provide an update on the working group and evaluation of the Agreed Syllabus.

B Dunn advised that the group were focusing on a 4-stage approach, looking at evaluation of the syllabus, how we as SACRE develop this and identifying training needs as an ongoing process. It was noted that it would be beneficial to SACRE to invited C Robson to a future meeting to discuss how to successfully deliver the agreed syllabus.

P Hodgson, Education Durham noted that despite C Robson recently changing jobs, she had indicated that she would be willing to continue to support SACRE and he could arrange for this to take place at a future meeting.

The Chair asked whether any update could be provided regarding the application from the Humanist Co-opted member to become a full SACRE member. P Hodgson advised that there was quite a lengthy process which had to take place in order change the Council's Constitution, and he would take all appropriate steps to progress this before the next meeting. In addition, work would be ongoing to address vacancies as identified through the ongoing process of evaluation.

**Resolved:** That the matters arising be noted.

### **5 Chairs Comments**

The Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education received an update from the Chair on the following matters for information.

NASACRE Annual Conference – this had been attended by two of the SACRE members, though not representing Durham SACRE who unfortunately were not in attendance at the meeting but had forwarded some reflections and thoughts following the session.

He further advised that regional hub leads for were being appointed by RE Today on a 24 days per year contract and this was something to be aware of going forward.

In addition, he noted that he had circulated a document to the working group (Draft Handbook Religion and Worldviews in the Classroom: developing a worldviews approach). A link could also be found to view the document online in the Education Durham report.

The Chair advised that in May 2021 and RE Research Review had been published by Ofsted and noted that another document looking at the quality of RE curriculums should be available soon. He suggested that this may be of interest to SACRE, and would make this available to SACRE when it was published.

L Burton asked whether any further information was available on the role of the Regional Hub Leads. The Chair provided some detail from the job description noting that they would be available for support for 2 days per month. It was further suggested that the newly appointed Hub Lead be invited to attend a future meeting of SACRE to discuss the draft handbook on Religion and Worldviews. The chair agreed to follow this up following their appointment.

**Resolved:**

That the update from the Chair be noted.

**6 RE Report Card**

The Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education received a report card provided by the Chair which aimed to help SACRE reflect on the performance of religious education in schools. The report card provided some performance highlights alongside some more negative facts and figures.

Councillor Walton added that she agreed that the report card started off very promising however she was alarmed to note that nothing had been spent on RE projects between 2016-2021 given the importance of this subject.

W Gray noted that she too agreed, in referencing page 43 that there was a real opportunity to embed RE in the next Agreed Syllabus and influence how schools in County Durham develop this subject.

S Lupton commented that it was good to see RE back on the Ofsted agenda again and looking at how the subject was delivered in schools as this was real motivation for schools to drive forward improvements in this area.

The Chair commented that he agreed with the points made and noted he had also seen positive improvements in this area.

W Gray further noted that whilst not all secondary schools were local authority schools, SACRE did have a responsibility to all schools including academies.

L Burton commented that she was delighted to hear about the quality of RE in S Lupton's school and this translated through to the quality of results. She did however note that one major barrier to delivering this subject successfully was a lack of subject specialists.

It was further discussed how schools could offer diametrically different ways of teaching this subject but yet deliver high results providing the environment was a diverse and stimulating one.

#### **Resolved:**

That the content of the RE Report Card be noted.

## **7 Education Durham Report to SACRE**

The Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education considered a report of J Rimmer, Education Durham which provided an overview of support provided to schools since April 2021 to date (for copy see file of Minutes).

Councillor Walton asked whether further information regarding SLAs with schools was available and what services these covered. P Hodgson advised that SLAs provided access to a number of contracted hours of general support, usually 6/9 hours.

Further to a question regarding 'deep dives' into Religious Education via Ofsted and P Hodgson explained that deep dive exercises were a process of gathering evidence on the effectiveness of the curriculum and how well it is being taught. The intent of the deep dive was to seek to interrogate and establish a better understanding on the quality of education provided in the school.

L Burton added that the quality of provision provided to schools by this local authority was not clear from reading the report and noted the excellent working relationship that Durham County Council had with SACRE. In response P Hodgson noted previous concerns raised regarding the previous

resources which had been made available to SACRE via Isobel Short. He further noted that many schools were no longer maintained and therefore the council had no mandate over them unless there was a standards' concern.

W Gray added that she agreed with Councillor Walton and that sight of the Ofsted reports where a deep dive had been conducted would be useful.

Further discussion ensued regarding the resources which could be made available to SACRE. P Hodgson noted that there were obvious budget constraints and the climate of education had changed considerably over recent years, however he would endeavour to get the right support for SACRE.

**Resolved:** That the content of the report be noted.

## **8 SACRE Self Evaluation Process**

The Chair whilst noting the limited time remaining, requested that the meeting split in to two smaller groups to look at Key Area 1 and Key Area 5 of the Self Evaluation Toolkit with a view to coming together at the end of the meeting to share thoughts.

He further noted that the next agenda would allow for adequate time to prioritise the other key areas of self-evaluation.

Findings:

### **Key Area 1 a – d**

1a - The group found that SACRE was both **Developing** and **Established**.

1b – **Established** was being fully met.

1c – This was found to be sitting between **Developing** and **Established** due to there being some concerns regarding attendance and timing of meetings. The Chair agreed to follow up on this matter.

1d – This was found to be **Requiring improvement / struggling** and the group felt that this area was not well planned or set out for SACRE.

### **Key Area 5 a – c**

5a – This was found to be sitting between **Developing** and **Established** mainly due to the difficulties in maintaining active members, however following the pending review of SACRE membership this would likely move to Established.

5c – Was found to be **Established**, noting that improvements could be gained from the return of inter-faith events and rebuilding networks within schools.

**Resolved:**

That the comments of the two groups be noted and further work on SACREs self-evaluation be undertaken at the next meeting.

**9 Date of the next meeting**

The next meeting was scheduled to be held on 3 November 2022 at 1.30 p.m.





# SACRE self-assessment tool

## SACRE

# **The SACRE Self Evaluation Toolkit**

## **Introduction**

This tool has been created to help SACREs in their essential role to advise the Local Authority (LA) in meeting the entitlement of pupils across the LA to engage in high quality Religious Education (RE) and Collective Worship (CW) and to support the LA to reflect on its practice. In an educational context where standards and accountability are at the top of the agenda, a SACRE's work has become increasingly challenging and diverse, but also more rewarding and stimulating. Good SACREs will therefore tackle their responsibilities as opportunities, with enthusiasm, whilst recognising the need for realistic and ongoing appraisal and self-review.

In many ways, SACREs reflect the work of governing bodies in schools, in so far as they act as critical friends to the LA on matters of RE and CW. Like school governors, members are unpaid volunteers who give up their time to support RE and CW locally.

This toolkit is an amended version of the 2015 document. It takes account of changes in inspection arrangements and in the role of LAs, and of the development of maintained schools independent of their LA. It is designed to help individual SACREs evaluate their effectiveness, including considering their impact on pupils' educational experience and learning. It also helps SACREs review their organisational patterns and structures, and their partnership with the LA and other key stakeholders.

The toolkit highlights five key dimensions of SACRE's work and provides exemplification of good practice. A SACRE that uses this self-evaluation guidance should gain a clear picture of its strengths, identify areas for further development, and establish key priorities for action.

The DCSF publication "Religious education in English schools: Non-statutory guidance" (2010) ("the Guidance") remains the most recent official statement in this field: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/religious-education-guidance-in-english-schools-non-statutory-guidance-2010>. The Guidance sets out the responsibilities of SACREs and LAs as well as those of other stakeholders in RE. Key summaries from the Guidance are included in the Annex to this document.

## **Rationale**

The SACRE self-evaluation toolkit focuses on the following five aspects of the work of SACREs:

1. Management of the SACRE and building the partnership between the SACRE, the LA and other key stakeholders
2. Promoting improvement in the standards, the quality of teaching, and provision in RE
3. Evaluating the effectiveness of the locally agreed syllabus
4. Promoting improvement in the provision and quality of collective worship
5. Contributing to cohesion across the community and the promotion of social and racial harmony.

Each aspect forms a section within the toolkit and each section is divided into focus questions to help SACREs explore their provision. Descriptors for 'Requires improvement/struggling', 'Developing', 'Established' and 'Advanced' practice will enable SACREs to evaluate their standing within each focus question.

In the final column, SACREs may wish to identify any issues and action points within that focus, as appropriate. Key priorities can then be identified at the end of each section to inform the development of an action plan.

The intention is that, over time, exemplars of good practice from different SACREs will be made available on an open website, together with annual reports, as a way of adding further support to SACREs and LAs. Clearly the capacity of any SACRE to make the most of this will be dependent on the extent of the support it receives from, and the quality of its relationship with the LA.

SACREs are invited to use the format of this evaluation in conjunction with their annual report.

## Section 1: Management of the SACRE and partnership with the LA and other key stakeholders

### *How far does the SACRE's partnership with the LA enable it to carry out its responsibilities effectively?*

*(Taken from 2010 DfE Checklist for an effective partnership between an LA and its SACRE/ASC)*

- Does the LA and the SACRE/ASC carry out their statutory duties?
- Is SACRE/ASC properly resourced and well supported by subject specialist advice and training?
- Do members of the SACRE/ASC have a shared vision and understanding of their aims and purpose, seeking to sustain their positive work in the light of changing needs and priorities?
- Are SACRE/ASC meetings purposeful and focused on the major priorities of improving the quality of RE (and CW) in schools?
- Is the SACRE/ASC well informed about the quality of RE in schools and about wider LA and national priorities and developments affecting the subject?
- Has the LA adopted a high-quality agreed syllabus that provides a good grounding for planning, teaching and learning in RE and enables the schools to deliver RE as part of a coherent curriculum?
- Is there an effective process of reviewing, revising, implementing, monitoring and evaluating the locally agreed syllabus?
- How far does the SACRE's partnership with the LA enable it to help teachers and schools raise standards in RE and the quality of RE teaching?
- How far does the SACRE contribute effectively to the community cohesion agenda by supporting inclusion in schools and improving engagement within the community?

LAs must adequately fund SACREs to enable them to carry out their statutory duties and to support high quality RE and collective worship in schools.<sup>1</sup> We consider 2% of the CSSB to be a reasonable spend to enable this. LAs must set aside sufficient money to ensure the Agreed Syllabus review can be effective every five years.

We reiterate that as a minimum expectation, LAs must provide the following:

- a clerk
- a professional officer who has expertise in RE curriculum design
- a publicly accessible place to meet
- the reasonable expenses of members
- publishing the agreed syllabus and other SACRE materials (including agendas and minutes), most usually on the LA website
- NASACRE subscription and AGM attendance.

1. The Minister for School Standards, Nick Gibb MP, included this statement in response to a parliamentary question from Stephen Timms MP: "If the Department is informed that an individual SACRE or ASC is experiencing difficulties in fulfilling its statutory duties, the Department will contact the local authority to remind them of their duty to support their activities satisfactorily."

2021HC Deb, 28 March 2018, cW <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2018-03-28/134697>

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<sup>1</sup> *ibid.*, page 11

The relationship between a Local Authority and its SACRE is essentially one of partnership and collaboration, with mutual obligations and statutory responsibilities. So that a SACRE can advise and act effectively for the LA in the field of Religious Education and Collective Worship, the LA must ensure not only that there is a local SACRE, but also that it is able to fulfil its functions. The extent to which a SACRE is supported by funding and personnel, will determine how well individuals and committees can work together. Where a SACRE is valued by the LA, it is more likely that members of the SACRE will be able to contribute both to SACRE's work and to the LA's wider strategic objectives.

By bringing together many local stakeholders (faith/belief communities, teachers, local politicians and co-optees such as universities and parents) into a statutory body, SACREs can act positively for LAs as a sounding board on their core business of RE and CW, and also on wider strategic educational objectives such as raising standards, narrowing the gap and promoting community cohesion, as well as community matters related to interfaith collaboration and wellbeing. Core and value-added functions work best when the SACRE is appropriately supported, resourced and managed, and when channels of communication with the LA are good.

The potential for SACREs to contribute more widely is dependent on SACRE members feeling that the meetings are outward looking, focused on pupil needs, purposeful and enjoyable. This can be achieved, for example, by meeting in different locations (schools, places of worship, cultural centres and council meeting rooms) and by ensuring that all members feel they are equal partners whose views and experiences are sought, listened to and valued.

Alongside this, SACRE has the power to develop structural relationships with academies, etc. by exploring ways in which an academy "presence" can be incorporated into SACRE, e.g., by co-options (non-voting), through additional places in Group C (teacher organisations), or by creating a non-voting notional "Group E" (as had been envisaged in the Grant Maintained era). Similar considerations apply to the ASC. Although the legal framework would currently not allow voting rights to any distinct academy representation, SACREs and ASCs would surely not wish to proceed with decisions which were clearly not acceptable to the academy sector represented in their wider membership.

Key Area: 1a – Funding: Professional and financial support		
<i>How well supported and resourced is SACRE, by the LA exercising its statutory responsibilities?</i>		
<b>Requires improvement/struggling</b> A SACRE in this position would:	have no financial or management support to help SACRE to meet and operate. Members are unable to communicate with each other. There is no professional support.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Developing</b> A SACRE with developing practice would:	have financial and management support to allow it to exist. Representatives of the LA receive papers and/or attend meetings but there is limited subject specialist advice available. There are resources for basic SACRE functions (such as a place to meet and a minute taker) but there is no specific budget for the SACRE and little opportunity for the SACRE to take initiatives requiring funding.	X
<b>Established</b> A SACRE with established practice would:	access to some subject specialist advice and is informed of local and national initiatives. The LA is represented at meetings and can provide a means of communication with the wider LA. The SACRE has a modest budget which enables it to fund some initiatives. Meetings are clerked and the clerk maintains communication with the Chair and other members between meetings as needed.	X
<b>Advanced</b> A SACRE with advanced practice would:	be well supported by a subject specialist who provides effective advice and is well informed about the provision and quality of RE in the LA and about national developments. Representatives of the LA attend meetings and the SACRE is also attended by a lead officer from the LA who can provide a strong link between the work of the SACRE and the wider LA. SACRE's plans are linked to other local work and projects. SACRE has a strategic, costed development plan. The SACRE has access to funds to enable it to make decisions about its priorities and ensure these can be properly resourced.	<input type="checkbox"/>

Key Area: 1b – SACRE meetings		
<i>How purposeful, inclusive, representative and effective are SACRE meetings?</i>		
<b>Requires improvement/struggling</b> A SACRE in this position would:	not hold regular meetings, if they meet at all. Any meeting held is purely to demonstrate that the LA has allowed SACRE to meet.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Developing</b> A SACRE with developing practice would:	hold meetings regularly with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• routine administrative arrangements</li> <li>• appropriate distribution of agendas and papers</li> </ul> Business is dealt with in a prompt and orderly way. There is limited opportunity for SACRE members to contribute to the work apart from attending meetings. Business tends to be focused solely on routine statutory requirements.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Established</b> A SACRE with established practice would:	have good attendance where all four committees are well represented and meetings are quorate.	X

	Agendas and papers are distributed well in advance ensuring all members have time to consider them carefully, consulting when relevant their representing/sponsoring bodies. There are some opportunities for teachers and representatives of faith and worldview communities to be invited to share their work. Meetings are well managed with strong contributions from a wide range of members. Meetings move beyond routine matters to consider wider issues about the quality of RE and CW.	
<b>Advanced</b> A SACRE with advanced practice would:	have SACRE members contributing to the development of the agenda and strategic development plan. Meetings will be lively and purposeful with a wide variety of contributions focused on the major priorities for improvement in schools. Teachers and representatives of faith and worldview communities regularly attend and participate fully in meetings, sharing their experience and insights. Meetings are held in a variety of venues, including council venues, local places of worship and schools. Procedures have been put in place so that meaningful contact can be made with and between members outside of SACRE meetings.	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>Key Area: 1c – Membership and training</b> <i>To what extent is the membership of SACRE able to fulfil SACRE's purpose?</i>		
<b>Requires improvement/struggling</b> A SACRE in this position would:	have no membership list. SACREs constitution is not fit for purpose and needs revision. The Local Authority struggles to fill all places on SACRE, SACRE members have no regular training provided.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Developing</b> A SACRE with developing practice would:	have a membership that fulfils the basic statutory obligations. Arrangements to fill vacancies are not always pursued effectively. There are limited induction and training opportunities for SACRE members.	X
<b>Established</b> A SACRE with established practice would:	have an active membership that strongly reflects the diversity of the wider religious/worldview and professional community. There is regular induction training and processes for new members. There are good opportunities for SACRE members to participate in training activities.	X
<b>Advanced</b> A SACRE with advanced practice would:	make good use of co-option to ensure membership of the SACRE is well informed and is highly representative of the diversity of the local community. There is a strong and co-ordinated programme of induction, and training opportunities for SACRE members. There are robust systems in place for succession planning for members and SACRE roles.	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>Key Area: 1d – Improvement/development planning</b> <i>How effective are the priorities and actions identified by SACRE in improving the experience of pupils in schools?</i>		
<b>Requires improvement/struggling</b> A SACRE in this position would:	have no development plan to focus future work. There is no knowledge of areas where the priorities of the LA's development / improvement plan potentially could link to the work of the SACRE.	X



<b>Developing</b> A SACRE with developing practice would:	have little overt linkage between the priorities of the LA's development / improvement plan and the work of the SACRE. SACRE has limited awareness of national projects or initiatives related to the work of SACRE and so is unable to plan any work or request funding to initiate new work.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Established</b> A SACRE with established practice would:	have a costed development plan which is reviewed regularly and updated on an annual basis. This provides an effective focus for the SACRE's work. There is some attempt to link the plan to the wider LA priorities. SACRE has awareness of national projects or initiatives related to the work of SACRE and so is able to plan work or request funding to update and review their development plan. The SACRE is regularly represented at national events relevant to its work; for example, NASACRE.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Advanced</b> A SACRE with advanced practice would:	have a well-defined development plan with clear objectives and success criteria. Resource implications are clearly defined and funding negotiated with the LA or outside funding streams. There is a clear link between the plan and the wider objectives of the LA and also to national innovations.	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>Key Area: 1e - Information and advice</b> <i>How well informed is SACRE in order to be able to advise the LA appropriately?</i>		
<b>Requires improvement/struggling</b> A SACRE in this position would:	not be supported to gather information (exam results, data, links to schools) or to link with national initiatives including membership of NASACRE.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Developing</b> A SACRE with developing practice would:	receive limited information about public examination data from the LA. Limited information is provided about wider national and local developments. The SACRE tends to receive information from the LA when the LA wishes to give it rather than ask questions of the LA or receive answers to its request. There is little opportunity to be a critical friend.	X
<b>Established</b> A SACRE with established practice would:	be regularly provided with clear information relevant to the quality and provision for RE and CW in local schools and given a context within which any school is working. The SACRE receives the information in a way that enables it to act as a critical friend and question the LA's work.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Advanced</b> A SACRE with advanced practice would:	receive detailed and well-analysed information about the quality and provision for RE and CW. As a result, SACRE uses this information effectively to give advice to the LA which leads to strategic action and/or partnership work to improve standards. This can include advice related to the review of the AS. The SACRE has a strong partnership with the LA and plays an active role in promoting ideas and initiatives.	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>Key Area: 1f - Partnerships with key stakeholders</b> <i>What partnerships does the SACRE have with key local and national stakeholders, and what quality are these?</i>		
<b>Requires improvement/struggling</b> A SACRE in this position would:	be unaware of local or national agencies. SACRE has no links with sponsoring bodies in their location.	<input type="checkbox"/>



<b>Developing</b> A SACRE with developing practice would:	have little contact with or awareness of other local agencies (e.g. interfaith groups, dioceses), and rarely hears from pupils/students.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Established</b> A SACRE with established practice would:	be well informed about other key stakeholders supporting RE and have some meaningful contact with the groups involved. SACRE members are supported at a national level by their sponsoring body. SACRE members attend the annual NASACRE conference and other training opportunities. Hear from pupils/students as part of their work around high-quality RE and CW.	X
<b>Advanced</b> A SACRE with advanced practice would:	build its activities effectively on local networks. Links with other bodies, such as local interfaith groups, are positive and able to support raising standards and developing community cohesion. The SACRE has opportunities to hear the views and experience of pupils about RE. Representatives of key support networks and higher education providers are regularly involved with the SACRE.	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>Key Area: 1g – Relations with the Academies sector</b> <i>How effectively is SACRE encouraging academies etc to see themselves also as stakeholders in their local area, specifically by devising ways in which an academies presence is incorporated into SACRE itself?</i>		
<b>Requires improvement/struggling</b> A SACRE in this position would:	have no opportunity to network with local academies.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Developing</b> A SACRE with developing practice would:	have nothing formal in place. Little encouragement, if any, is extended to academies to relate to the SACRE's proceedings, and there are no channels through which academies can contribute.	X
<b>Established</b> A SACRE with established practice would:	have made attempts to include academies on SACRE, but these have been hampered by e.g. lack of confidence or vision on the part of SACRE, or by confusion over what is legally valid and possible, or what is possible between academies in an area.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Advanced</b> SACRE with advanced practice would:	have established the place of academies on SACRE. SACRE has considered systematically the legal and structural options, and established a permanent and sustainable academy presence on SACRE. A high proportion of academies in the area regard themselves as stakeholders and partner with SACRE.	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Section 2. Standards and quality of provision of Religious Education

***How effectively does the SACRE, in partnership with the LA, evaluate standards and the quality of provision for RE in schools?  
How effective are the strategies to improve standards and the quality of provision?***

In principle, every pupil is entitled to RE of the highest quality. At its best, RE will be one of the most popular, relevant, stimulating and truly educative elements in the curriculum. This potential gives SACREs both a benchmark for aspiration and a spur for action.

A core duty of a SACRE is to gain an overview of the quality of the RE provision in local authority maintained schools and to develop effective strategies to promote the highest standards. SACREs may also request information from academies, academy chains and free schools where they educate pupils from the LA which appointed SACRE. In the light of the current inspection culture of partnership and self-evaluation, SACREs will need to adopt an astute and sensitive approach to achieve this overview.

Information to assist SACRE in carrying out its role is likely to come from a range of sources, which may include:

- public examination results
- reports from School Improvement Partners
- analysing questionnaires
- sharing of information from subject self-evaluation forms as appropriate, and in agreement with schools
- feedback from professional development activities
- presentations to SACRE from local teachers

The Guidance offers analysis and advice to support SACREs in reviewing their own effectiveness, their patterns of partnership, and their strategies in relation to enhancing the quality of RE provision in local authority maintained schools. In addition, in the light of the development of academies and other non-LA maintained schools, SACREs also need to take note of and respond appropriately to this new diversified scenario. (In the ensuing pages, the phrase “academies etc” is used as shorthand to refer to all non-LA maintained schools within a particular LA area.

Key Area: <b>2a - RE provision across the LA.</b> <i>How effectively does the SACRE gain information about RE provision in schools and put in place strategies to support the delivery of pupil entitlement?</i>		
<b>Requires improvement/struggling</b> A SACRE in this position would:	have no routes by which SACRE can gain information about RE provision in schools.	X
<b>Developing</b> A SACRE with developing practice would:	have little knowledge of which schools are fulfilling pupil entitlement in RE because local processes are insufficient to gather such information (e.g. a website trawl)	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Established</b> A SACRE with established practice would:	have some knowledge of which schools are providing adequate time for effective learning in RE and have a scheme of work that enables them to deliver the AS. SACRE's process for acquiring this information is adequate but lacks coherence. Have limited opportunities to implement strategies in support of pupil entitlement. Ofsted reports are read and any comments on RE noted and brought to SACRE.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Advanced</b> A SACRE with advanced practice would:	build upon a strong relationship with the LA, whereby the LA shares its information and from this SACRE gains an overview of RE provision within the LA. It works effectively with the LA to support and promote pupil entitlement. Examples of different models for fulfilling pupil entitlement within local schools will be shared with all schools so that schools can have a menu from which to adapt an approach that delivers pupil entitlement whilst meeting the specific needs and priorities of their schools.	<input type="checkbox"/>

Key Area: <b>2b - Standards of achievement and public examination entries</b> <i>How does SACRE use information about standards and examinations to target support and training for schools?</i>		
<b>Requires improvement/struggling</b> A SACRE in this position would:	not be given any data to work from, and has no professional support to investigate this at a local and national level.	X
<b>Developing</b> A SACRE with developing practice would:	have limited knowledge of standards in primary and secondary schools including examination entries. The SACRE has no clear strategy to address this and the local authority does not adequately invest in professional support for this. Analysis would be limited as would strategies to address issues.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Established</b> A SACRE with established practice would:	have some process in place to find out how well learners are doing in KS 1-3, (e.g. by meeting teachers, pupils and through the LA). SACRE will be provided with adequate information about examination entries and standards in examinations in secondary schools and how these relate to national figures.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Advanced</b> A SACRE with advanced practice would:	have robust processes with the LA whereby SACRE can gain accurate information about standards in schools and examination entries in all secondary schools, with useful analysis that enables it to address issues effectively in partnership with the LA.	<input type="checkbox"/>

Key Area: <b>2c - Quality of learning and teaching.</b> <i>How well does SACRE use knowledge of quality of learning and teaching to target support appropriately?</i>		
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<b>Requires improvement/struggling</b> A SACRE in this position would:	not have any knowledge of quality of learning and teaching to target support from the LA and professional support/adviser.	X
<b>Developing</b> A SACRE with developing practice would:	have little knowledge of the quality of learning and teaching in the LA schools and therefore is unable to provide appropriate challenge and support to the schools. The SACRE has no means to offer or recommend support to schools as there is little or no professional support in the LA working with the SACRE.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Established</b> A SACRE with established practice would:	have some information regarding the quality of learning and teaching from a range of sources including contact with teachers and pupils. Limited analysis of this information is undertaken; however, this means that SACRE's attempts to improve learning and teaching have limited effect. Be able to circulate information about national courses and support mechanisms to schools	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Advanced</b> A SACRE with advanced practice would:	have a robust relationship with schools and the LA to gather meaningful information about the quality of learning and teaching in RE. This information is analysed to identify trends, areas of strength and areas for development and SACRE draws on expertise in effective schools to support all schools in the LA. Advise the LA on the support that is needed and have access to professional support, linked to schools in need.	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>Key Area: 2d Quality of interaction and communication with leadership and management of RE in schools</b> <i>To what extent does SACRE have and pass on information that supports high quality RE in schools</i>		
<b>Requires improvement/struggling</b> A SACRE in this position would:	not engage in communication with schools.	X
<b>Developing</b> A SACRE with developing practice would:	have little communication with schools. It occasionally contacts schools with resources for RE and attends Headteachers meetings.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Established</b> A SACRE with established practice would:	have RE key messages communicated regularly into schools. Sends regular updates and information to schools, headteachers and governors. SACRE discussions are used to enhance leadership and management of RE in schools.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Advanced</b> A SACRE with advanced practice would:	have a constructive relationship with senior leaders and subject managers in schools to develop the subject.	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>Key Area: 2e - Relations with academies and other non-LA maintained schools.</b> <i>To what extent has a SACRE developed a proactive strategy in relation to academies and other non-LA maintained schools in its area?</i>		
<b>Requires improvement/struggling</b>	not have the mechanisms and not have the knowledge of making contact.	<input type="checkbox"/>

A SACRE in this position would:		
<b>Developing</b> A SACRE with developing practice would:	have haphazard information about the RE situation in local academies etc, and little or no established relationships and liaison with them. No serious attempt has been made to develop an overall strategy.	X
<b>Established</b> A SACRE with established practice would:	have made some effort to establish liaison with each academy etc and to keep updated SACRE's information about their RE situation and share their advice to these schools. By and large, academies co-operate with SACRE at this level. SACRE keeps under review the ongoing situation.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Advanced</b> A SACRE with advanced practice would:	have a proactive policy of liaison with all academies, etc. and of sustaining a wider professional RE network within the area. While the independence of academies, etc. is genuinely respected by SACRE, many academies value this network and look to SACRE for ongoing advice and leadership in RE.	<input type="checkbox"/>



## Section 3: The effectiveness of the locally agreed syllabus

***How effectively does the SACRE, in partnership with the LA, monitor the impact and evaluate the effectiveness of the agreed syllabus in raising standards? How effectively does the Agreed Syllabus Conference in partnership with SACRE make decisions about the use of national guidance and exemplar material in a review of the agreed syllabus?***

The locally agreed syllabus (AS) is the bedrock on which schools will build robust sequences of effective learning experiences in RE. A good, recent AS will support both the delivery of high quality RE in schools and RE's contribution to the schools' wider curriculum aims and impact.

The major factors to be considered in creating or revising an AS include statutory requirements, non-statutory guidance and exemplar material, developments in the school curriculum generally, and local circumstances. Key advice on producing an AS is given in the Guidance. SACREs and ASCs are recommended to take note of this advice in their work on the AS.

LAs are required to review their AS at least every five years. This cycle of reviewing, revising, re-launching and re-implementing the AS gives SACREs and ASCs opportunities for ongoing development and improvement of their effectiveness in providing schools with an AS that is truly "fit for purpose".

While the ASC holds the legal responsibility for revising the AS, in practice much of the preparatory and supplementary work will be carried by the SACRE within its routine business. Moreover, in most LAs the membership of SACRE and ASC overlap substantially or are identical. This can contribute to greater inclusivity and coherence, but good practice will ensure that it is always clear at any time which body is in place at a meeting, and that it is the ASC which is in session when decisions about the AS are considered.

Academies, etc. are, in principle, free to choose their own RE syllabus. In practice, however, many may well continue to use their local AS. There are some sound reasons for SACRE and the LA to encourage this where possible, and to enable academies, etc. to have some involvement in the process of revising the AS or of devising a new AS. Relationships between SACREs and academies will necessarily be entirely voluntary and not covered by legislation or guidance. SACREs should therefore approach such relationships in a spirit of mutual respect and collegiality. These issues have not been incorporated into the matrix below, but see Section 4.

Key Area: <b>3a – The review process</b> <i>How does the SACRE review the success of the existing agreed syllabus?</i>		
<b>Requires improvement/struggling</b> A SACRE in this position would:	not have any way of contacting schools to carry out a review of the existing syllabus. It will not be supported by the LA or professional support.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Developing</b> A SACRE with developing practice would:	have limited arrangements in place to monitor the impact of the AS, particularly in raising standards, providing little or no opportunity to review the effectiveness of the AS. Not know the views of teachers and have had no systematic evaluation of the strengths/weaknesses of the syllabus. Unclear how to proceed with the five-yearly syllabus review and there is little or no budget allocation from the LA. Have little knowledge of wider recent RE national guidance, research and developments.	X
<b>Established</b> A SACRE with established practice would:	have reviewed the opinions of schools and RE teachers in several ways and have a good idea of the strengths/areas of weakness of the current AS. Have devised a costed action plan in partnership with the LA, and been allocated a sufficient budget for the AS review and relaunch.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Advanced</b> A SACRE with advanced practice would:	have a clear and systematic process for monitoring the effectiveness of the AS built into its development plan. Reviewing the AS includes full consultation with schools and other key stakeholders, including faith communities and academics. Issues that have arisen have been discussed and addressed in planning for a review. An ASC budget has been planned and allocated in partnership with the LA to include consultation meetings, administrative support and design/distribution costs. There is a strong sense of shared ownership of the prospective AS review, with clear targets for what needs to be achieved.	<input type="checkbox"/>

Key Area: <b>3b – The quality of the local Agreed Syllabus</b> <i>How well does the locally Agreed Syllabus promote effective learning &amp; teaching in RE? Is it “fit for purpose”?</i>		
<b>Requires improvement/struggling</b> A SACRE in this position would:	not have knowledge of other agreed syllabi nationally. Not have access to professional support with a national knowledge of high quality teaching and learning in RE.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Developing</b> A SACRE with developing practice would:	ensure that the AS sets out what is to be learnt at each Key Stage. Progression in RE is stated, but this does not link directly to the learning and there is no clear expectation of quality learning in the AS.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Established</b> A SACRE with established practice would:	ensure that the AS provides a clear framework for and expectations of learning in RE. Make clear the value of RE in school, both in terms of learning and of wider issues. Ensure that the AS development has involved teachers and meets their needs.	X
<b>Advanced</b>	ensure that the AS provides a thoroughly professional and inspirational framework for effective learning in RE which is proactively supported and promoted by the LA. Have set out clear expectations of the role of	<input type="checkbox"/>



A SACRE with advanced practice would:	the LA and school leadership in ensuring adequate resources and provision in schools. References latest RE research that is relevant to help pupils make good progress in RE.	
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Key Area: <b>3c – Launching and implementing the Agreed Syllabus</b> <i>How well does SACRE promote the AS and provide training to prepare teachers to use it effectively?</i>		
<b>Requires improvement/struggling</b> A SACRE in this position would:	not have a launch for the new syllabus. Not have any in-service training for teachers/schools for implementing the new AS. Not have the mechanisms to advertise, promote and share the syllabus with local schools.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Developing</b> A SACRE with developing practice would:	provide for no special launch or other publicity, so that schools are unaware of the significance of the syllabus revisions for learning and teaching in RE. Have little training provision for implementing the revised syllabus. Be prevented from providing any significant additional guidance or extended training on using the AS by a shortage of financial and human resources.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Established</b> A SACRE with established practice would:	use other forms of communication (for example the LA website) to promote the launch. Have clear arrangements for training teachers on implementing the syllabus provided by the LA; this training is well supported and managed. Provides additional guidance or extended training on using the AS over its life.	X
<b>Advanced</b> A SACRE with advanced practice would:	Involve the wider community and use strong media coverage, to give the AS a high profile as an important development in the work of the LA and local community. The launch event includes high quality presentations from a range of local religious and worldviews groups, schools and professional LA officers/councillors. Provides effective training on implementing the AS, which is supported by all schools, leads to teachers being clear about standards and expectations in the AS and the implications for teaching and learning. Provides clear guidance about ways in which schools might begin the process of reviewing their own provision for RE in the light of the revised syllabus.	<input type="checkbox"/>

Key Area: <b>3d – Membership and training of the Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC)</b> <i>To what extent is the membership of ASC able to fulfil its purpose?</i>		
<b>Requires improvement/struggling</b> A SACRE in this position would:	not have the structures in place to convene an ASC. Not have any admin and advisory support for its work.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Developing</b> A SACRE with developing practice would:	have a membership that fulfils basic statutory requirements. Limited induction and training opportunities; members are unclear of their roles, or how an AS can be structured. Particular faith or belief groups or teachers from different phases do not attend. Provide clerking, admin and advisory support for only a very limited amount of time or range of work. Routine admin arrangements are in place. Agendas and papers are distributed.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Established</b>	have a membership that strongly reflects the diversity of the wider religious/worldview and professional community. Some opportunities for members' training and the purpose and action plan for the work of the	X

A SACRE with established practice would:	ASC are clear. Have all four committees well represented at meetings. Agendas and papers are distributed well in advance so all members have time to consider them carefully. Meetings are well managed with strong contributions from a wide range of members.	
<b>Advanced</b> A SACRE with advanced practice would:	have a membership that is well informed and highly representative of the diversity of the local community. Where particular faith or belief expertise is missing locally there are arrangements to work with consultants to ensure this voice is added into the process. There is a strong, co-ordinated programme of induction and training opportunities for members. Have lively and purposeful meetings with a wide variety of contributions. Members of all 4 groups regularly attend and participate fully in meetings, sharing their experience, expertise and insights. Provide effective admin to support the process	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Key Area: 3e - Developing the revised agreed syllabus

*How robust are the processes for producing a strong educational Agreed Syllabus?*

<b>Requires improvement/struggling</b> A SACRE in this position would:	not have an agreed plan linked to finance for developing their AS. Have met the five-year review deadline of revising and publishing a new AS.	X
<b>Developing</b> A SACRE with developing practice would:	have no clear structure for developing a new AS. It does not undertake a thorough revision, tending to add material rather haphazardly to the existing syllabus, leading to lack of coherence in the final outcome. There is little or no consultation during the development of a new AS with teachers, SACRE members and the local religious/worldview communities.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Established</b> A SACRE with established practice would:	have clear objectives for the revision and involve a wide range of local expertise in its construction. The LA and the ASC in partnership ensure that strong direction is provided to design an AS which is coherent, clear and accessible. Working parties and consultations are reasonably managed and supported.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Advanced</b> A SCRE with advanced practice would:	ensure that high quality advice is sought to review and advise on the revisions as they develop. The ASC in partnership with the LA holds well attended consultation meetings and briefings to ensure teachers are fully involved in, and have a sense of ownership of, the revision process. The AS has a clear framework for progression and challenging learning	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Key Area: 3f - Making best use of National Guidance

*How does the Agreed Syllabus Conference make choices relating to the use of national documentation? (See footnote\*)*

<b>Requires improvement/struggling</b> A SACRE in this position would:	not be aware of national documentation in relation to the AS review process and are therefore unable to use this guidance appropriately.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Developing</b> A SACRE with developing practice would:	have a limited awareness and understanding of national documentation in relation to the AS review process and are unable to use national guidance in a coherent way. Have members not fully understanding the	<input type="checkbox"/>

	broader curriculum and how this is organised and have no opportunity for training to give them the skills to understand how RE might best play a part in the holistic education of the child.	
<b>Established</b> A SACRE with established practice would:	be aware of national documentation and some of its implications for the AS review process, but does not ensure its use reflects local circumstances. Have ASC members who take note of the broader curriculum picture but do not link the AS to it systematically or appreciate how teachers will be able to make use of it to link to the wider curriculum in schools.	X
<b>Advanced</b> A SACRE with advanced practice would:	take full account of national documentation in the construction of the revised AS, while ensuring their work reflects local circumstances. The syllabus is devised so that RE fits appropriately with other curriculum areas at all key stages and guidance about how to make the best links is given to schools.	<input type="checkbox"/>
*Documentation includes: the Non-Statutory National Framework in RE; the Programmes of Learning in RE (Primary) and Programmes of Study in RE (Secondary), the new Primary and Secondary Curriculums, and "Religious Education in English schools: "Non-statutory guidance 2010"; CoRE; Big Ideas in RE publication 1 & 2; Ofsted RE literature review		

## Section 5: Contribution of SACRE to promoting cohesion across the community

### *How effectively does SACRE, in partnership with the Local Authority and the faith communities, contribute to the promoting of cohesion across the community?*

“By community cohesion, we mean working towards a society in which there is a common vision and sense of belonging by all communities; a society in which the diversity of people’s backgrounds and circumstances is appreciated and valued; a society in which similar life opportunities are available to all; and a society in which strong and positive relationships exist and continue to be developed in the workplace, in schools and in the wider community”<sup>2</sup>.

Schools play a major role in helping to shape the future of our society, and the duty laid on each school to promote community cohesion is a significant part of that role. One of the most obvious and effective contributors to the community cohesion agenda is Religious Education. SACREs should take every opportunity to promote the contribution of RE to the community cohesion programmes in local schools. Where properly supported by the LA, SACREs themselves can act as powerful vehicles for promoting community cohesion in schools, in education more widely, and in the local community. SACREs should exemplify good practice in their internal relations and in the ways in which they go about their business. Advice on the contribution of SACREs and RE to community cohesion is given in the Guidance.

Key Area: <b>5a – SACRE’s membership</b> <i>How representative is SACRE’s membership of the local community?</i>		
<b>Requires improvement/struggling</b> A SACRE in this position would:	rarely meet and its membership will include many vacancies. The LA needs to review its membership and constitution in partnership with the SACRE and fulfil its obligations to convene an appropriately diverse SACRE	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Developing</b> A SACRE with developing practice would:	have a membership that is not necessarily strongly representative of the religious diversity of the local community. Membership needs to be reviewed.	X
<b>Established</b> A SACRE with established practice would:	have membership that broadly reflects the religious diversity of the local community. This is regularly reviewed by the SACRE in partnership with the LA particularly where there is a high mobility of communities.	X

<sup>2</sup> Alan Johnson, Secretary of State for Education and Skills, speaking in Parliament on 2 November 2006. Based on the Government and the Local Government Association’s definition first published in Guidance on Community Cohesion, LGA, 2002 and resulting from the Cante Report in 2001.

<b>Advanced</b> A SACRE with advanced practice would:	have strong representation from all major local religious communities including different groups within the same religious tradition (e.g. different Muslim or Christian communities). Endeavours to include representation from small local faith communities and/or have links with national bodies that can broker advice from those communities elsewhere in the UK.	<input type="checkbox"/>
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<b>Key Area: 5b SACRE's understanding of the local area</b> <i>How much do SACRE members know and understand the local community in its religious, cultural and ethnic dimensions?</i>		
<b>Requires improvement/struggling</b> A SACRE in this position would:	meet rarely and this aspect of membership would not be an agenda item when they meet.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Developing</b> A SACRE with developing practice would:	have limited knowledge about the religious, cultural and ethnic diversity in the local area.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Established</b> A SACRE with established practice would:	be provided with a detailed analysis of the religious and cultural diversity within the LA and therefore be well aware of different groups representing the diversity within the local area. Know about and have a relationship with local interfaith groups and the work that they do in the locality.	X
<b>Advanced</b> A SACRE with advanced practice would:	have detailed knowledge of the nature of the religious, ethnic and cultural diversity in the local area. Take active steps to inform itself further about the distinctive needs and opportunities created by this diversity. SACRE would have good liaison and seek to develop initiatives with local interfaith groups. Be aware of the impact of this local context on schools and on the provision for RE and CW in those schools.	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>Key Area: 5c – SACRE's engagement with the community cohesion agenda.</b> <i>How much does SACRE understand the contribution which RE/CW can make to a schools' provision for community cohesion?</i>		
<b>Requires improvement/struggling</b> A SACRE in this position would:	have little or no grasp of what community cohesion means and little understanding of the contribution which RE can make to the community cohesion agenda. Have no opportunity to promote RE's contribution to cohesion.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Developing</b> A SACRE with developing practice would:	have a basic grasp of what community cohesion means and therefore a limited understanding of the contribution which RE can make to the community cohesion agenda. Have little opportunity to promote RE's contribution to cohesion.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Established</b> A SACRE with established practice would:	have an understanding of what community cohesion means and the duty on schools to promote this. Understand and have a clear commitment to the part RE can play in promoting community cohesion and seek to promote this throughout its work.	X
<b>Advanced</b> A SACRE with advanced practice would:	understand what community cohesion means and be clear about the duty on schools and the LA to promote this. SACRE members appreciate their key role in promoting RE's contribution to the community cohesion offer of its schools. SACRE would ensure this is explicit in the local AS and related guidance.	<input type="checkbox"/>

Key Area: <b>5d – SACRE’s role within wider LA initiatives on community cohesion</b> <i>How well is SACRE linked to or consulted about LA initiatives promoting community cohesion?</i>		
<b>Requires improvement/struggling</b> A SACRE in this position would:	be given no information about, or contact with, wider LA initiatives linked to the promotion of community cohesion.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Developing</b> A SACRE with developing practice would:	be given little information about, or contact with, wider LA initiatives linked to the promotion of community cohesion.	X
<b>Established</b> A SACRE with established practice would:	be aware of some LA initiatives promoting community cohesion and have opportunity to discuss and contribute to this work.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Advanced</b> A SACRE with advanced practice would:	be a key partner and stakeholder in the work of the local authority in this area. Aware of local interfaith groups and in regular communication with them to ensure opportunities to support high quality RE/CW in schools.	<input type="checkbox"/>

## ANNEX

### The responsibilities of a Local Authority

The detailed rights and responsibilities of local authorities can be seen in full in *RE in English Schools: Non-statutory guidance 2010*.

This can be found at <http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/teachingandlearning/subjects/re/guidance/>

In brief, local authorities are legally required to:

- establish a SACRE and appoint representatives to each of the four committees
- establish an occasional body called an agreed syllabus conference (ASC)
- institute a review of its locally agreed syllabus every five years
- appoint members of the committees represented on the ASC
- ensure that membership of Group/Committee A on the SACRE and ASC is broadly representative of the local area
- take all reasonable steps to ensure that SACRE and ASC membership is representative

### The responsibilities of a SACRE

The detailed rights and responsibilities of SACREs can be seen in full in *RE in English Schools: Non-statutory guidance 2010*.

This can be found at <http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/teachingandlearning/subjects/re/guidance/>

In brief, SACREs are legally required to:

- advise the local authority on RE and collective worship
- publish an annual report on their work
- send the annual report to QCDA (or its successor body)
- meet in public, unless confidential information is to be disclosed
- make their minutes available to the local authority and make provision for public access to their agenda and reports

The Guidance also indicates that SACREs should, as a matter of good practice:

- Monitor the provision for both RE and Collective Worship
- Provide advice and support on RE and Collective Worship to schools
- In partnership with the local authority, keep the locally agreed syllabus and provision in schools under review
- Offer advice to the local authority

In addition, SACREs may:

- Require their local authority to review the locally agreed syllabus
- Decide to advise their local authority
- Co-opt members who are not members of any of the four groups.

The Guidance also makes it clear that SACREs can and should make a strong contribution to the promotion of community cohesion in schools and in the local community through their promotion of good quality RE and through their operation as a SACRE.

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## Education Durham: Report to Durham SACRE 9<sup>th</sup> June 2022

In May 2021 Ofsted published '**Research review series: religious education**'. Its purpose was to identify factors that contribute to high-quality school RE curriculums, teaching, assessment and systems. It has been used as a basis by officers in the local authority to support reflection on R.E. teaching and to ensure the immediate relevance of network and in-school support. Durham local authority acknowledges that while all state-funded schools are legally required to provide R.E. as part of the curriculum, in all key stages, there are many varying ways that this can be done.

It should be considered that the Ofsted publication previous to '**Research review series: religious education**' in 2021 was '**Religious education: realising the potential**' (2013) which was broadly critical of local determination of the R.E. curriculum saying it had neither kept pace with changes in the wider educational world and made assessment of what constitutes a quality curriculum difficult to reach in any standardised, national sense. The 2021 document attempts to draw upon research published since 2013 to provide insights into the concept of high quality R.E. It is for this reason that the document has been used as a starting point for ongoing evaluation of the effectiveness of R.E. in Durham schools.

The main reports drawn upon in '**Research review series: religious education**' are:

- 'A new settlement: religion and belief in schools'
- 'R.E. for Real'
- 'Living with difference'
- 'The state of the nation' report on secondary R.E.
- 'A new settlement revised: religion and belief in schools'
- 'Religion and worldviews: the way forward' – a national plan for R.E.

What these reports all emphasise, among other things, is the importance of children and young people building accurate knowledge of the complexity and diversity of global religion and non-religion. But also central is the identification of chronic problems with school-level provision of high quality R.E.

### Key factors:

#### Reception/Primary

Most locally agreed syllabuses recommend spending approx. 60 mins per week on R.E. at KS1 and 75 mins per week at KS2. The National Association of Teachers of Religion (NATRE) surveyed primary schools in 2020 and concluded that approximately a quarter of these spend less than 45 minutes per week teaching R.E. However, half the schools surveyed said that curriculum time spent on R.E. had increased, and most had directly linked this with Ofsted's focus on the curriculum.

### ACTION:

Durham L.A. will be undertaking a MS survey of Durham primary schools in early December to determine the amount of designated curriculum time per week currently given to R.E.,

establishing if this has increased or decreased since the changed Ofsted Framework in 2019. The survey will also gather information on planned educational visits related to R.E. and how accessible these are to all children. Also the level of training and preparedness experienced by those teaching R.E.

## **Secondary**

Most local agreed syllabuses assume the curriculum time spent on R.E. is at or above 5%. National workforce data from 2017 indicated that more than a third of secondary schools (including 44% academies) did not meet this threshold. 34% academies at that time reported no timetabled R.E.

Focussing specifically on KS4, 55% of schools did not meet the 5% threshold. The number of students taking full-course GCSE has been decreasing steadily from a high point in 2016. Numbers had dramatically increased between 2009 and 2016 but, according to many sources including teachers, the failure to make R.E. part of the English Baccalaureate qualifications in 2010 contributed to its current decline as a preferred examination.

The number of A-level entries in R.E. has likewise declined, inevitably linked to the drop-off in GCSE studies meaning that students embarking on A-level do not have the subject as a foundation.

## **ACTION:**

Durham L.A. has commissioned the DCC Data and Performance team to provide an analysis of how Durham schools performed in GCSE R.E., comparing outcomes in 2022 to those of previous years and setting these against national outcomes for R.E. The national statistical release of GCSE results only took place on 20<sup>th</sup> October 2022, which means the details of the analysis will not be available for the November SACRE meeting. However, it will be reported in full at the subsequent meeting.

Included in the focus will be an attempt to determine whether wider research findings apply in County Durham schools. For example:

- research suggests that pupils attending schools with higher proportions of disadvantaged pupils are less likely to have the opportunity to take GCSE religious studies.
- pupils are frequently entered for GCSE early but then gain results statistically well below those pupils who are not entered early. Nationally, in 2019, 17,309 pupils were entered early for religious studies (the second-highest subject after English literature). This accounted for over 7.5% of the 2019 entries for GCSE religious studies. Those pupils with lower prior attainment who were early entrants, performed considerably worse than their peers with low prior attainment who were not early entrants.

The analysis described above, therefore will – in addition to determining outcomes and trends – attempt to establish patterns of early entry in County Durham schools, if any, and report on these.

## Ofsted deep dives

Ofsted does not publish any data on the number of 'deep dives' undertaken in primary school inspections. In July 2022 it issued a statement saying it did not hold this information and that inspections will always involve a 'deep dive' into reading and one or more foundation subjects.

NATRE continues to collect information that relates to R.E. deep dives from published Ofsted reports, including the following extracts. Although there is no NATRE information that relates to schools in County Durham, the extracts may prove useful in establishing the quality of teaching and curriculum provision likely to result in the following judgements:

**Good (R.E. deep dive - primary):** Teachers make lessons interesting. Pupils enjoy learning about other cultures, for example when handling Sikh artefacts. They debate arguments, for example 'for and against' having rules, with enthusiasm. Pupils find out about different cultures when listening to visiting speakers such as a rabbi.

**Good (R.E. deep dive - primary):** Pupils learn well because, linked to the school's agreed policy, teachers plan interesting and creative topics. They develop positive attitudes to learning. Following a visit to the church, for example, Year 2 pupils considered why it is a special place for Christians. They were articulate when asking questions and giving their views. They explained why the artefacts they saw are special to some people, including other pupils in their class, but not to others.

**Outstanding (R.E. deep dive - primary):** Leaders have thought carefully about what pupils should learn in each subject during their time at school. They have sequenced knowledge and skills well so that pupils build on what they already know. This is important because it helps pupils to have a secure understanding of their learning.

**Inadequate (R.E. deep dive - primary):** Leaders' ambition for pupils is not high enough, so pupils do not learn enough. Pupils study the full range of subjects, but teachers do not consider deeply what pupils need to learn and when. This means pupils do not gain as much knowledge as they should. This includes learning about, and appreciating, different religions and other cultures.

**Requires improvement (secondary):** Most teachers are now teaching pupils the subject content that matters the most, apart from religious education, which is limited. Currently, some pupils in key stage 3 do not cover subject content sufficiently well to be able to draw upon their learning in the future. This is because subjects such as religious education lack prominence in the curriculum.

**Good (secondary):** Most leaders ensure that subjects are planned in a logical sequence. For example, in Year 7 religious studies, pupils learn about how communities develop, through a well-sequenced series of learning activities.

However, in some subjects, such as geography and design technology, learning is not yet sequenced as well.

There have been no deep dives as part of Ofsted inspections undertaken in County Durham schools so far. There has also been no mention of R.E. curriculum or teaching made in published Ofsted reports of Durham schools during at least the last year. There have been two published reports including reference to Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural education:

- “In key stage 4, pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is not a high priority. Leaders do not provide enough opportunities for these pupils to talk in depth about issues, rights and responsibilities. Pupils in key stage 4 do not receive the support and guidance they need at a crucial time in their development.” (Durham Community Business College)
- “Pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered well.” (Durham Gilesgate primary)

### **ACTION**

A complete round up of Ofsted comments on R.E. (including SMSC) from reports published on Durham schools will be compiled and presented to Durham SACRE at each termly meeting.

As part of Ofsted inspections, schools should have an expectation that inspectors will seek evidence that the statutory compliance of teaching R.E. is being met which, as stated above, appears to be a major challenge especially in some secondary schools. The national HMI R.E. team is conducting work alongside Ofsted, gathering evidence about R.E. which, although not published in the main reports, will inform future Department for Education reviews. We have been advised that a R.E. subject review will be published in the new year.

### **Support and resources for schools:**

Networks and training have been arranged for R.E. teachers as follows:

- |          |   |
|----------|---|
| Autumn – | Network: Thursday 29 <sup>th</sup> September 2022 (Secondary & Special) – virtual   |
|          | Network: Thursday 10 <sup>th</sup> November 2022 (Primary & Special) - virtual  |
| Spring – | Course: Judaism explored in the primary classroom. Friday 3 <sup>rd</sup> February (Primary & Special) – all day face-to-face |
|          | Network: Fri 10 <sup>th</sup> March 2023 (Primary & Special) – face-to-face and virtual                                       |
|          | Network: Friday 3 <sup>rd</sup> March 2023 (Secondary & Special) – face-to-face   |
| Summer – | Network: Friday 30 <sup>th</sup> June 2023 (Primary & Special) – face-to-face and virtual                                     |
|          | Network: Friday 7 <sup>th</sup> July 2023 (Secondary & Special) – face-to-face  |

Network focus includes developing and articulating a well sequenced curriculum and supporting and developing non-specialist teaching. The MS Teams network site will continue to signpost low-cost/no-cost R.E. training and resources.

Current attendance for the Primary networks stands at autumn (x68), spring (x73), summer (x74). For the Secondary networks this is – Autumn (6), spring (9), summer (10). Except for the Secondary autumn network, which has already taken place, all these numbers are likely to increase as the closing dates get nearer.

### **Bespoke in school support for Religious Education – Sept 2022 to current.**

For delivery this term there have been 6 individual R.E. support contracts generated through the Education Durham School Support Service Level Agreement - primary (5) and special schools (1). This amounts to 16 hours of support requested and is mainly for new and existing leaders of R.E., reviewing provision and curriculum planning.

### **NASACRE virtual training events later this term are:**

17 November 2022, 7-8pm: **SACREs – a way forward...?** Chaired by Linda Rudge and Paul Smalley Special guest: Charles Clarke - £20 for a subscribed SACRE and £30 for a non-subscribed SACRE

6 December 2022, 7-8pm: **How to effectively use pupil and teacher voice in your SACRE** Hosted by Sukaina Manji and Claire Clinton - £20 for a subscribed SACRE and £30 for a non-subscribed SACRE

To book a place on this, or any, session please email [admin@nasacre.org.uk](mailto:admin@nasacre.org.uk).

### **End note**

Colleagues may find the link below useful - **Religious Education Policy Unit Virtual Parliamentary Roundtable Report** (March 2022)

<https://www.natre.org.uk/uploads/NATRE%20News/REPU%20March%20Roundtable%20Report.pdf>

**Phil Hodgson**

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