

4 November 2020		ITEM: 5
Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education		
Monitoring Provision for RE in Thurrock Schools		
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Non-Key	
Report of: Deborah Weston, Associate Adviser for Religious Education		
Accountable Assistant Director: Michele Lucas, Assistant Director Learning Inclusion and Skills		
Accountable Director: Shelia Murphy, Corporate Director of Children's Services		
This report is Public		

Executive Summary

In order to discharge its legal duties, SACRE monitors provision for Religious Education in its local area where RE is delivered in accordance with the local Agreed Syllabus. Thurrock introduced a new Agreed Syllabus in 2016 and regularly monitors data on provision for the subject to establish how effective the new syllabus has been in meeting its aim to raise standards of RE. This report is based on two sources of information. 1: the school workforce census for secondary schools collected in November each year. 2. A review of primary school websites.

1. Recommendation(s):

1.1 That SACRE considers

- **The school workforce data for 2019 in Appendix 1**
- **The task for reviewing primary school website in Appendix 2**

1.2 The SACRE consider any follow up action that might be warranted such as:

- **Where good practice is identified**
- **Where there is no evidence that the requirements of the Agreed Syllabus are met**
- **Where there looks to be limited or no provision.**

2. Introduction and Background

It has been possible in the past for SACRE to carry out its monitoring function using a variety of methods:

- a. School visits and lesson observations
- b. The collation of comments on RE found in Ofsted inspection reports
- c. Analysis of data

Smaller education budgets and less staff capacity mean that specific visits to schools by specialist advisers for RE are no longer possible for most local authorities, Ofsted no longer report on RE in particular and therefore SACREs around the country largely rely on data and information that schools are prepared to share from their own self-evaluative work.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

- 3.1 To comply with the School Information (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012, all schools including academies and free schools must publish the content of the religious education curriculum for each academic year on their school website.¹²
- 3.2 A census of the school workforce is carried out annual and for secondary schools, this includes data about the number of hours of provision for each year group for each subject of the curriculum
- 3.3 These methods of collective information on provision for RE cannot be used in isolation but the results should complement GCSE data and the pilot survey that are already part of this year's SACRE workplan.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

- 4.1 One of the responsibilities of a SACRE is to monitor provision for RE to be given in accordance with its Agreed Syllabus

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

- 5.1 Not applicable

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

- 6.1 The Local Authority reviews its Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education on a regular basis;
 - Publishes an Annual Report of its work;

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/what-maintained-schools-must-publish-online>

² <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/what-academies-free-schools-and-colleges-should-publish-online>

- Offers guidance on resources and methods of teaching and in consultation with Thurrock Schools;
- Monitors the quality of provision for RE and Collective Acts of Worship in Thurrock.

This exercise falls under the third element of this programme.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **David May**
Strategic Lead Finance, Corporate 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: **Lucinda Bell**
Education Lawyer

The legal duties on the advisory council are set out in s391 of the 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.

This report asks that the committee considers the attached documents and further action that may be warranted. No other decision is requested.

7.3 Diversity and Equality

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

The aim of this review is to collect information about the provision for RE in Thurrock, to address concerns and to celebrate success. Higher standards in the teaching of RE will help schools to fulfil their statutory duty to promote community cohesion and to encourage better respect and tolerance for those with different religions and beliefs.

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

- Not applicable

8. Appendices

- Appendix 1- School workforce data for 2019.
- Appendix 2 - task for reviewing primary school website.

Report Author:

Deborah Weston

Associate Adviser for RE

Appendix 2

Guidance for teacher members on SACREs for making judgements about RE on primary school websites:

Exceptional practice	Green (good or better RE)	Amber (unclear as to the quality of RE)	Red (concerns as to whether RE is being taught)
Excellent levels of detail on RE curriculum plans, which may include additional information about what will happen in RE lessons. You may also see reference to skills being taught and how it builds on prior learning.	The level of detail published on the RE curriculum plans for each year group is at least comparable to that for foundation subjects such as History and Geography (even if the subject is called something else)	The level of detail published on the RE curriculum is not comparable to that for foundation subjects such as History and Geography	The curriculum map does not give the reader a clear indication of what will be taught. For example, A list of religions or belief is provided with no indication about the content of the study
There is a clear and detailed statement of their compliance with their Agreed Syllabus or in the case of academies, the syllabus they have chosen to follow.	The school includes a statement of their compliance with their Agreed Syllabus or in the case of academies, the syllabus they have chosen to follow	There is no reference to the syllabus followed	There is no reference to the syllabus followed
RE features regularly on the website and may include photos of learning, visits and visitors, parent views and pupil feedback.	There are regular references to RE on the website	There is a little reference to RE on the website	There is no reference to RE on the website
There is a clear and detailed explanation of how RE supports spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and fundamental British values.	There is a clear explanation of how RE supports spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and fundamental British values.	There is little reference to how RE supports spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and fundamental British values.	There is no reference to how RE supports spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and fundamental British values.
A very clear and detailed statement of the aim, purpose or intent of RE.	A clear statement of the aim, purpose or intent of RE.	The aim, purpose or intent of RE is unclear.	There is no statement of the aim, purpose or intent of RE.
It is very easy to discover how parents or other members of the public can find out more about the RE curriculum the school is following.	It is easy to discover how parents or other members of the public can find out more about the curriculum the school is following.	It is difficult for parents to navigate the website to find out more about the curriculum the school is following.	It is impossible for parents or other members of the public to find out more about the curriculum the school is following.
There is a discrete policy for RE on the website which includes a statement of the aims for the subject and the right to withdraw.	There is a policy for RE on the website which includes a statement of the aims for the subject and the right to withdraw.	There is a policy for RE on the website but no statement of the aims of the subject aims and/or the right to withdraw.	There is no policy for RE on the website
Action: Send a congratulatory letter to the school on their excellent RE.	Action: Send a letter of congratulations and support for the good RE in the school.	Action: Send a letter of mild concern and support.	Action: Send a letter of serious concern. State SACRE's statutory duty and the school's need to be compliant with the law which states that all pupils in England must receive Religious Education.

This work was inspired by an activity conducted by Bristol SACRE