

18 January 2023		ITEM: 8
Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education		
Annual Report 2021-2022 Thurrock SACRE		
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

This report presents the Annual Report to members of SACRE for approval

- 1. Recommendation(s) that SACRE:**
 - 1.1 Accept this report as an accurate record of its work for the period September 2021 – July 2022**
 - 1.2 Requests that the Assistant Director Education and Skills continues to include discussions about RE provision in the scheduled discussions with senior leadership teams**
 - 1.3 Requests that the school effectiveness team include a review of schools' provision for RE and Collective Worship as part of their annual conversations. Specifically, that they consider:**
 - **whether the level and quality of provision in academy schools is similar in breadth and ambition to that provided in LA maintained schools (i.e. through compliance with the Thurrock Agreed Syllabus including the knowledge, understanding specified and the standards for each key stage. This is the expectation of the DfE and Ofsted**
 - **If timetabling of RE in secondary schools ensures that those delivering RE are suitably trained/qualified to do so.**
 - **Whether RE is treated differently from other subjects on the secondary curriculum, such as being offered in tutor time, drop**

down days, taught by teachers who mainly teach other subjects etc.

- **the impact on pupil outcomes of the combination of subjects such as RE, RSE, Citizenship and PSHE**
- **the level of training provided to those teaching RE in all phases especially when they have no previous experience of teaching the subject**
- **the impact on pupil attainment of pupils being entered for a GCSE at the end of year 10**

2. Introduction and Background

It is a legal requirement that SACRE submit an annual report of its activities to the local authority. A copy should also be sent to the Department for Education and is requested by the National Association of SACREs (NASACRE).

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

Members are requested to accept, amend or reject the report.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

In order that SACRE fulfils its statutory duty to publish an annual report and to advise the LA on RE given in accordance with the agreed syllabus, and on matters related to its functions, whether in response to a referral from the LA or as it sees fit.

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

- Not applicable

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

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.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **David May**
Strategic Lead Finance

There are no financial implications for this report.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Daniel Longe**
Principal Solicitor

SACRE is asked to accept, reject or amend the report. S391 of the Education Act 1996 requires SACRE to publish a report as to the exercise of its functions and any action taken by representative groups on the council during the last year. The section states that “The council’s report shall in particular—

- a) specify any matters in respect of which the council have given advice to the authority,
- b) broadly describe the nature of the advice given, and
- c) where any such matter was not referred to the council by the authority, give the council’s reasons for offering advice on that matter.”

The Committee is requested to accept the report, and also that it makes two decisions that are related to the report findings.

7.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Becky Lee**
Team Manager Community Development and Equalities Adults, Housing and Health Directorate

Although there are no direct diversity implications, the Annual Report demonstrates how the work of SACRE continues to promote an understanding of different religions in education therefore promoting cohesion.

7.4 Other implications (where significant) – i.e. Staff, Health Inequalities, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder or Impact on Looked After Children

- Not applicable

8. Background papers used in preparing the report (including their location on the Council’s website or identification whether any are exempt or protected by copyright):

- None

9. Appendices to the report

- Appendix 1 – Annual Report Of The Thurrock Standing Advisory Council On Religious Education (SACRE) For 2021 – 2022

Report Author:

Deborah Weston, Associate Adviser for RE

Appendix 1

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE THURROCK STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE) FOR 2021 – 2022



This artwork by David O (Quarry Hill Academy Key Stage 2) was inspired by Psalm 19:1
“The heavens declare the glory of God. The skies proclaim the work of His hands.”

David was one of the prize winners in the Thurrock Spirited Arts Competition.

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Introduction

Since 1988, it has been a requirement that every local authority (LA) has a Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE).

Though legislation sets out both the structure and the remit of a local SACRE - principally, overseeing religious education (RE) and collective worship - in practice every SACRE has developed its own particular style and character.

Thurrock SACRE developed its own particular style and character has over the years, as this report will testify.

It is a legislative requirement that each SACRE produces an annual report of its work and that this is published, sent to the local authority, to local schools and to other interested parties. One important element of the report is performance data and an analysis of the extent to which schools are meeting their legal duties in relation to RE. Validated GCSE data was not available until this month, hence the delay in the publication of the report. More recently, other datasets have been made available by the DfE, most significantly the school workforce data that supports the monitoring of the level of provision in secondary schools.

Foreword by the Chair of SACRE – Mr Phil Anderson

Membership of Thurrock Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education 2021-2022						
Committee	Representing	Nominating Body	No. of Reprs	Names of Reprs.	Date Appointed	Date due for re-election
A	Christian Denominations & other RE Denominations		9			
A	Free Church Christian	Free Church Federal Council	2	Mrs S Lawson	June 2019	May 2023
A		Free Church Federal Council		Mr P Anderson	June 2019	May 2023
A	Roman Catholic	Diocese of Brentwood	1	Mrs R Saul	March 2020	May 2024
A	Muslim	Thurrock Islamic Education & Cultural Association	2	Mr J Hussein	October 2019	September 2023
A		Thurrock Islamic Education & Cultural Association		Vacancy	Vacancy	Vacancy
A	Sikh	Local Sikh Guru Gudwara Committee.	1	Ms H Kaur Takhtar	May 2018	June 2022
A	Pentecostal		1	Mr T Ojetola	July 2018	June 2022
A	Buddhist	Buddhist Society	1	Mr A Kariyawasam	June 2019	May 2023
A	Jewish	Board of Deputies of British Jews	1	Ms S Perlmutter	June 2019	May 2023
A	Hindu	Vacancy	1	Vacancy	Vacancy	Vacancy

Committee	Representing	Nominating Body	No. of Reps	Names of Reps.	Date Appointed	Date due for re-election
B	Church of England		4			
B	Church of England	Diocese of Chelmsford		Mr P Anderson	June 2019	May 2023
B	Church of England	Diocese of Chelmsford		Mrs L Fry	March 2020	February 2024
B	Church of England	Diocese of Chelmsford		Ms L Olajide	2021	2025
B	Church of England	Diocese of Chelmsford		Vacancy	Vacancy	Vacancy

Committee	Representing	Nominating Body	No. of Reps	Names of Reps.	Date Appointed	Date due for re-election
C	Teachers' Associations (pref. Primary, Secondary & Special Schools)		6			
C	Teachers' Associations Primary	Professional Associations Group		Ms J Culloty	May 2022	June 2026
C	Teachers' Associations, Primary	Professional Associations Group		Mrs C Pumfrey	March 2020	February 2024
C	Teachers' Associations, Secondary	Professional Associations Group		Ms A Jellicoe	May 2021	May 2024
C	Teachers' Associations Secondary	Professional Associations Group		Vacancy	Vacancy	Vacancy

C	Teachers' Associations	Professional Associations Group		Vacancy	Vacancy	Vacancy
C	Teachers' Associations	Professional Associations Group		Vacancy	Vacancy	Vacancy

Committee	Representing	Nominating Body	No. of Reps	Names of Reps.	Date Appointed	Date due for re-election
D	Local Education Authority		3			
D	Local Education Authority	Thurrock Council		Councillor M Kerin	May 2018	May 2022
D	Local Education Authority	Thurrock Council		Councillor G Collins	May 2019	May 2023
D	Local Education Authority	Thurrock Council		Vacancy	Vacancy	Vacancy

Committee	Representing	Nominating Body	No. of Reps	Names of Reps.	Date Appointed	Date due for re-election
(non-voting)	Co-opted Member		1			
	Vacancy	SACRE		Vacancy	Vacancy	Vacancy

SACRE Meetings Held

The following SACRE meetings were held during the reporting period:

3rd November 2021

5th January 2022

8th June 2022

All meetings were held remotely on Microsoft Teams and were quorate.

Membership and attendance

SACRE are pleased to report that attendance at SACRE has improved during the pandemic. It appears that remote meetings are easier for people to attend than face to face. SACRE have agreed to meet remotely for the Autumn and Spring meetings and face to face or hybrid in the Summer.

ADVICE:

SACRE wishes to thank officers for their support in ensuring places on all four committees of SACRE are filled.

Work Plan 2021-22

The work plan for 2021-2022 is reported as Appendix A

Monitoring and Evaluation

Standards in Thurrock Schools.

SACRE undertakes a number of activities annually to fulfil its responsibilities including the monitoring of:

School websites

Schools are required to publish their curriculum for each subject for each school year. This includes Religious Education, "even when it is called something else." SACRE investigated school websites in order to learn more about how RE, including the Thurrock Agreed Syllabus was being used. Some schools published a comprehensive RE programme and were clearly using the Agreed Syllabus and accompanying scheme of work. Others failed to publish information on RE or reported a curriculum that did not appear to comply either with the Agreed Syllabus or, in the case of some academies, their academy funding agreement.

SACRE Advice: SACRE has advised the council to carry out an investigation into these cases.

School Workforce Data (Secondary)

Schools complete the school workforce census every November and this allows SACRE to discuss the number of teaching hours each secondary school reports for RE. Although not all schools appear to complete the census accurately, it appears that more schools are reporting RE and there are fewer incidents of a mismatch between different sources of data on the same school i.e. a website check, GCSE entry data and school workforce figures.. SACRE is pleased that steps to encourage schools to report their provision for RE accurately are having a positive effect.

Appendix B below sets out the data schools reported to the Department for Education.

SACRE advice: SACRE has advised the council to remind four schools that they appear not to be reporting their provision for RE accurately and should try to rectify that situation when completing the next census. We have also asked the council to discuss provision for RE in three schools where the available data might indicate that they are not providing RE for all pupils in accordance with their funding agreement.

GCSE Entries and Results

The Thurrock Agreed Syllabus requires that all students in all schools follow a course in Religious Education leading to a GCSE qualification. The publication of results therefore is another tool that helps us monitor levels and quality of provision. However, during the pandemic, DfE made a decision from the summer of 2020 to Summer 2021 that because qualifications such as GCSE and A were awarded based on school assessment, it would not be reasonable to use them in national performance tables. This means that 2022 is the first time that SACRE has had a chance to monitor GCSE entry and performance in three years.

SACRE noted that in 2019 74% of Thurrock children entered for GCSE RS were achieving a grade of 9-4, the national average was 78%. In 2022, only 55% of Thurrock students were achieving this grade. One explanation for this rapid fall might be that in some schools the recommended time for GCSE of 120-140 guided learning hours is not being offered and in others, entry appears to be made at the end of year 10 instead of year 11.

It was highlighted that Thurrock's position in a ranked list of local authorities by rate of entry for GCSE had fallen from 120 to 138 out of 151 local authorities when ranked according to entries for GCSE Religious Studies. This is because on 19% of pupils (down from 25%) completing year 11 are entered for GCSE in Thurrock. Members were disappointed by this figure. The highest ranked authority entered 87% and the lowest 14%.

SACRE ADVICE

SACRE wishes to advise the council of its agreed view that where SACRE has identified strengths or areas for development in relation to Religious Education in specific schools, the subject should form part of the annual conversations conducted by the School Effectiveness Team. This we believe is consistent with School Support Strategy 2019 and

the aim that by 2022, there will be an effective process to 'challenge and support all schools to increase quality and standards of education'.¹

Acts of Worship

Following a review of a small number of school policies for collective worship, SACRE resolved to provide revised guidance to schools including a model policy. SACRE agreed that even though this policy is not a required policy, it was important for schools to have a published document so that their practice was clear to parents and also in case there were to be a challenge to that practice.

¹ Thurrock Council Education Support Strategy 2019-2022
<https://www.thurrock.gov.uk/sites/default/files/assets/documents/education-support-strategy-2019-v02.pdf>

SACRE discussion of National Developments in RE

At each meeting, SACRE received an update of some of the national developments in RE. In this reporting year, these updates and publications included the following:

- i. the completion of a public perception survey on RE conducted by Culham St Gabriel's Trust <https://www.cstg.org.uk/activities/campaigns/public-perception/>
- ii. Publications from Ofsted and Ofqual in relation to examination
- iii. Resources published by organisations linked to specific religious or non-religious worldviews.
- iv. Government action related to RE including responses to parliamentary questions and the White Paper 2022.

Other matters discussed that fall under the remit of SACRE

Thurrock SACRE is pleased to be part of the National Association of SACREs (NASACRE) and welcomed the introduction of a comprehensive training programme for SACRE members.

Officers from the Chafford Hundred Teaching School Hubs attended SACRE during the year and briefed members about the services offered to schools. SACRE agreed to work closely with the hub, especially in relation to initial teacher education and addressing the shortage of secondary specialists in Thurrock schools.

Agreed Syllabus review

SACRE completed its Agreed Syllabus review in the spring of 2022 with a launch planned for Autumn 2022. SACRE and its Agreed Syllabus Conference resolved to renew the license with RE Today for their model syllabus A and to offer printed copies for all schools in Thurrock.

Teacher Education

SACRE noted the disappointing news that following the withdrawal of bursaries in the previous year, the number of recruits to training to teach RE had fallen again. Given that the DfE had failed to meet its target for recruiting teachers of RE for 9 years in the previous 10, and the fact that three times as many lessons of RE are taught by those with no-post A level qualification in the subject, it was difficult to see how this could be justified.

In more positive news, the government had decided to continue funding subject knowledge enhancement courses so that those with a degree in a subject outside the Theology and Religious Studies field could be better prepared to train as a teacher of RE.

SACRE continued to monitor opportunities for training and to circulate these to teachers in Thurrock. These included:

[NATRE's New2RE programme](#) for primary and secondary Early Career teachers (in their first two years of teaching) and those trained in another subject but new to teaching RE

[Research of the Month](#) from RE:Online to help teachers keep up to date with the latest developments in their subject

[#REChatUK twitter forum](#)

Occurs the first Monday of every month in term time. The timetable is here: [#REchatUK](#)
(natre.org.uk)

Appendix A Workplan 2021-2022

SACRE WORK PLAN 2021-2022 To meet the statutory duties of a SACRE

Objective	Action	Responsibility	Date	Success criteria
1. 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
2. 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	Adviser	As information is published	Items on the Agenda for each meeting, Attendance at relevant meetings e.g. NASACRE AGM Minutes record discussions and actions
3. Produce annual report of the work of SACRE including advice to the council.	Consider the National Association of SACRES template for annual reports 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

<p>4. Engage with local schools and Academy Trusts to understand how Religious Education and Collective Worship are provided in Thurrock</p>	<p>Invite a sample of schools to complete the RE Quality Mark Template for self-evaluation.</p> <p>Share with school leaders and governors to encourage completion</p> <p>Committee considers school reports (REQM self-evaluations)</p>	<p>(SACRE members at least one per year)</p> <p>Associate Adviser with support from TPHA.</p>	<p>Up to 4 school visits – 2 per term</p> <p>Suggested schedule – schools to complete once every three years</p>	<p>Meaningful evaluation visits or discussion completed, and reports discussed at SACRE meetings.</p>
<p>5. Provide information on the RE curriculum to schools including through training</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>
<p>6. Monitor provision for RE and Collective Worship</p>	<p>Source and present national and local data as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – GCSE validated and unvalidated results and entries (local and national) – School workforce data (local and national) – Surveys of provision and of issues such as withdrawal, use of agreed syllabus, who teaches RE etc (local) – Review school websites – Write to schools about findings – Sample collective worship policies 	<p>Adviser</p> <p>All SACRE members</p> <p>LA representative</p>	<p>Annually</p>	<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>
<p>7. Evaluate SACRE work and establish priorities</p>	<p>Item at autumn term meeting</p>	<p>All SACRE members</p>	<p>Autumn term meeting</p>	<p>Evaluation identified success criteria are met</p>

Schedule 2021/22		
Date of meeting	Subject	Objective (note – objectives 1 and 2 apply to all meetings)
Autumn 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National developments - update • Monitoring provision via school workforce data / self-evaluation • Review of membership and attendance • Evaluation of work plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 • 7 • 2 • 6
Spring 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring provision via 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 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standards and Achievements in RE in schools • Review of SACRE website • Review of Collective Worship and right of withdrawal • Ofsted Framework on RE – latest reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 • 6 • 6 • 5

	• Spirited Arts Competition	• 4
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Appendix B - Provision for RE as reported in the workforce census -November 2021

November 2021

School name	% year 7 hours - RE	% year 8 hours - RE	% year 9 hours - RE	% year 10 hours - RE	% year 11 hours - RE	GCSE entries	GCSE Grade 9-4	Notes
Grays Convent High School	7.86	6.92	4.58	10.7	8.11	95%	85%	
Harris Academy Chafford Hundred	6.17	5.2	6.3	1.1 (Phil)	0.85 (Phil)	3%	2.2%	RE is optional at KS4
Harris Academy Ockendon	4.14	4.66	4.04	4.96	0	0%	N/A	RS is optional at KS4. Core RE delivered by tutors but planned by RE specialist
Harris Academy Riverside	0	1.85	0	0	0	21%	20.5%	RE is optional at KS4
Ormiston Park Academy	0%	N/A	Not reported in 2021
Orsett Heath Academy	2	4	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Ortu Gable Hall School	2.48	2.56	2.35	0	0	0.4%	0%	No GCSE offered
Ortu Hassenbrook Academy	5.45	4.9	5.76	4.5	0	0%	N/A	
St Clere's School	4.74	4.39	4.33	0	0	0%	N/A	There is a core RE lesson for pupils who do not opt for GCSE
Thames Park Secondary School	3.58	3.71	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
The Gateway Academy	3.68	3.49	0	0	0	96%	50.5%	No GCSE offered for 2022. There is no core RE lesson
The Hathaway Academy	4.44	5.01	3.85	2.19	2.07	9%	4.2%	RE is optional at KS4
William Edwards School	4.28	4.34	4.12	2.73	0.98	4%	1.7%	GCSE RS was offered in 2022 but insufficient pupils chose to allow the course to run

Key Blue Shading: Reporting Query

Orange Shading: Provision Query