

16 July 2014		ITEM: 14
Thurrock Standing Advisory Council On Religious Education		
Provisional GCSE Results 2013		
Report of: Deborah Weston: Associate RE Adviser		
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Non-Key	
Accountable Head of Service: Mike Peters, (Interim) Strategic Lead for School Improvement, Learning and Skills		
Accountable Director: Carmel Littleton, Director of Children's Services		
This report is Public		

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1. RECOMMENDATIONS:**
 - 1.1 SACRE should consider making an investigation in relation to academies that appear not to be making provision for RE in accordance with their funding agreement.**
 - 1.2 If that investigation concludes that there appears to be no appropriate provision, then SACRE should consider informing the Education Funding Agency of its findings.**
- 2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND:**
 - 2.1 SACRE has a statutory duty to monitor provision for RE to be given in accordance with its agreed syllabus. It might be argued that where an academy has made the decision to follow that Agreed Syllabus that SACRE should therefore provision in Academies also.
 - 2.2 Thurrock SACRE has taken the view that it has a concern for the Religious Education of all the children and young people in Thurrock irrespective of the type of school they attend and will therefore offer support and advice as far as it is able.

In addition, the following guidance can be found on the DfE website:

“An LA does not have any such direct responsibilities for the performance of successful academies. In terms of standards in academies (and holding sponsors to account for this), the lead responsibility sits with the Department

and the Schools Commissioner. Despite this, local authorities retain a legal responsibility for performance in the area as a whole, under the 1996 Education Act. They also have a considerable pool of expertise available that can help academies to drive up standards.

Therefore, if there is a local academy which is struggling to achieve the expected level of performance, the local authority may wish to offer its support to help raise standards. Although there is no requirement for the academy to work with the local authority, it should consider carefully whether or not to accept any such offer of support.”

<http://www.education.gov.uk/a0063423/local-authorities-faqs#faq6>

3. ISSUES, OPTIONS AND ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS:

SACRE must decide whether or not it can and should respond to any concerns it may have about the provision for RE in academies given their status.

GCSE Results

- 3.1. See appendix 1 for tabulated GCSE entries and results 2011-13.
- 3.2 As in previous years, there are four schools in the authority where entries for GCSE RE remain very high, almost the whole year group in fact; these are Grays Convent High School, Grays School Media Arts College (now the Hathaway Academy), the Ockendon Academy and St Clere's School.
- 3.3 For the Grays Convent and the Ockendon there is no significant change in entries with almost all being for full course GCSE.
- 3.4 For Grays School Media Arts College entries have shifted almost entirely from short course to full course RE this year.
- 3.5 For St Clere's, where overall entries have risen from 86% in 2012 to 95% in 2013, these are divided more equally between full and short course reversing a trend at that school toward a much larger proportion of full course entries in 2012.
- 3.6 Results for Grays Convent remain outstanding and those for the Ockendon Academy are improving year on year. At Grays School Media Arts College attainment, while much lower has improved significantly in the last year with the change to full course RE. The situation at St Clere's is more worrying with a dip in attainment for both courses this year.
- 3.7 Aside from these four schools, there appears to be a far more limited degree of engagement with RE in Thurrock.
- 3.8 At the Harris Academy entries, which are entirely for full course, have doubled this year to 30% of the year group and whilst attainment has slipped a little

from that of previous years it is still very good with 85% of pupils attaining A*-C. Overall this is a positive picture.

- 3.9 At William Edwards school the trend for entries is the opposite of this, they have halved in 2013 over 2012, down to 19% of the year group, however attainment has risen drastically to the points where 100% of pupils entered achieved A*-C. So a worrying picture for entries but a very positive one for results.
- 3.10 Another minor positive development has been the take up of RE at Ormiston Park which although limited to 13% of the year group is an improvement on zero or practically zero in previous years. Attainment is rather poor though with only 22% of the year group achieving A*-C.
- 3.11 Finally Hassenbrook and Gable Hall whilst entering only 9% and 4% respectively for RE (full course) are achieving excellent results for those pupils with 93% and 100% in the respective schools attaining A*-C.
- 3.12 Overall the picture authority wide remains broadly similar to previous years with the same schools engaging a significant proportion of their pupils in RE and a much more limited degree of engagement in the rest of the authority. Whilst there are some changes there is no identifiable broad trend, either positive or negative and it would seem that to encourage the former more direct engagement with and support of individual schools is likely to be needed.

4. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION:

- 4.1 The recommendation recognises that SACRE does not have a statutory responsibility for the provision for RE in Academies but SACRE may consider action within its powers in order to maintain standards of religious education in the area as a whole.
- 4.2 The recommendation arises from the evidence set out in this report that some children and young people may be leaving secondary education in Thurrock without the necessary knowledge, skills and understanding that represent a proper religious education.

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

- 5.1 None.

6. IMPACT ON CORPORATE POLICIES, PRIORITIES, PERFORMANCE AND COMMUNITY IMPACT

- 6.1 None.

7. IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Kay Goodacre**
Telephone and email: **01375 652466**
kgoodacre@thurrock.gov.uk

There are no financial implications to this report.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Lucinda Bell**
Telephone and email: **Lucinda.bell@BDTLegal.org.uk**

Section 80 of the Education Act 2002 imposes a duty on every *maintained* school in England to provide a basic curriculum that includes provision for religious education for all registered pupils at the school, in accordance with Schedule 19 to the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 (Chapter 31). However, the section does not apply to academies or free schools, because they are not maintained by the Local Authority, so there is no statutory requirement to provide religious education in accordance with Sch. 19 to the SSFA 1998. The model *Funding Agreement*, however, requires the academy trust to 'make provision for the teaching of religious education and for a daily act of collective worship at the academy 'for every maintained school in England.

By the duty imposed by s390 of the Education Act 1996 every local authority (in England and in Wales) must constitute a SACRE.

The functions of a SACRE are listed at s391 of the same Act, as follows:

- (a) to advise the [local authority] on such matters connected with—
 - (i) religious worship in community schools or in foundation schools that do not have a “religious character” and
 - (ii) the religious education to be given in accordance with an agreed or other syllabus in accordance with Schedule 19 to that Act,

In addition, SACRE has a duty to publish annual reports about the exercise of their functions (in particular about any advice given) and any action taken by groups as above, and send a copy to the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority.

Because Academies do not provide religious education in accordance with Schedule 19 of the Schools Standard and Framework Act it is not a function under the Education Act 1996 for SACRE to advise the Local Authority about the religious education provided at such establishments. However, SACRE may chose to do so. The Local Authority may act on information it receives

when discharging its duties and in fulfilment of the strategic role it retains for education within its area.

7.3 **Diversity and Equality**

Implications verified by: **Samson DeAlyn**
Telephone and email: **01375652472**
Sdealyn@thurrock.gov.uk

This report has implications for the Council's approach to Diversity and Equality. If, as the data suggests, a number of local schools are not making provision for Religious Education for all of its students, there is a risk that children and young people leaving school in Thurrock may not have sufficient knowledge and understanding of religion and belief to be fully equipped to take their place in a diverse society.

7.4 **Other implications (where significant) – i.e. Section 17, Risk Assessment, Health Impact Assessment, Sustainability, IT, Environmental**

BACKGROUND PAPERS USED IN PREPARING THIS REPORT (include their location and identify whether any are exempt or protected by copyright):

None.

APPENDICES TO THIS REPORT:

Appendix 1 – analysis of GCSE results 2011-2013

Report Author Contact Details:

Name: Deborah Weston

Associate Adviser for Religious Education

Appendix 1 – analysis of GCSE results 2011-2013

GCSE Results	2011 A*-C Full Course	2012 A*-C Full Course	2013 A*-C Full Course	2011 A*-C Short Course	2012 A*-C Short Course	2013 A*-C Short Course
Gable Hall School	67%	100%	100%		100%	
Grays Convent High School	86%	89%	85%	50%	33%	40%
Grays School Media Arts College			46%	44%	32%	
Harris Academy Chafford Hundred	95%	96%	85%			
Hassenbrook Academy		75%	93%			
Ormiston Park Academy			22%		100%	
St. Clere's School	55%	42%	35%	47%	9%	7%
The Ockendon Academy	56%	64%	67%			
William Edwards School	43%	26%	100%			

GCSE Entries	2011 % of roll entered Full Course	2012 % of roll entered Full Course	2013 % of roll entered Full Course	2011 % of roll entered Short Course	2012 % of roll entered Short Course	2013 % of roll entered Short Course	2011 % of roll entered GCSE total	2012 % of roll entered GCSE total	2013 % of roll entered GCSE total
Gable Hall School	4%	4%	4%				4%	4%	4%
Grays Convent High School	95%	93%	95%	2%	2%	4%	97%	96%	99%
Grays School Media Arts College			98%	95%	95%	1%	95%	95%	99%
Harris Academy Chafford Hundred	13%	14%	30%				13%	14%	30%
Hassenbrook Academy		8%	9%					8%	9%
Ormiston Park Academy			13%		1%			1%	13%
St. Clere's School	43%	81%	40%	45%	6%	54%	89%	86%	95%
The Ockendon Academy	94%	99%	97%				94%	99%	97%
William Edwards School	28%	39%	19%				28%	39%	19%