

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education

Thursday 1 July 2021

14:00

Council Chamber, County Buildings, Stafford

John Tradewell
Director of Corporate Services
23 June 2021

A G E N D A

1. **Welcome to New Members** (Pages 1 - 2)
Membership list attached for information.
2. **Apologies**
3. **Minutes of the meeting held on 3 February 2021** (Pages 3 - 8)
4. **An Update on Key Issues report** (Pages 9 - 12)
5. **An Update on NASACRE (including conference feedback)** (Pages 13 - 14)
6. **Procedures for Agreed Syllabus review** (Pages 15 - 18)

It is possible that at this point that the SACRE meeting may be suspended in order to convene the Agreed Syllabus Conference.
7. **Religious Education Agreed Syllabus conference** (Pages 19 - 20)
8. **Ofsted research into the teaching of RE under the 2019 Education Framework (EIF)** (Pages 21 - 28)
9. **Current budget 2021-22 and previous budget 2020-21** (Pages 29 - 32)



10. **Applications for variation of practice**

(Pages 33 - 34)

11. **Date of future meetings**

All meetings to start at 2pm at a venue to be confirmed.

2021	2022	2023
3 February	2 February	1 February
1 July	29 June	29 June
17 November	16 November	15 November

Membership

Mohamed Sedky	Vickie Longson
Linda Goodwin	Lydia Bartlett
Julie Thompson	Shaun Miles
Tajinder Singh	Maddy Bell
G Devadason	Harold Gurden
Rev. Preb. M. Metcalf (Chairman)	Zoe Cahalan
Sam Kirwan	Vicky Priestley
Dr Laow Panyasiri	Philip Atkins, OBE
Mohamed Parekh	Paul Northcott
Sam Phillips	Jonathan Price
Lauren Nicholson Ward	Thompson
Judy Wyman	Mike Wilcox
Gabi Oldfield	Ian Horsewell

SACRE Membership

Last updated June 2021

**Committee A
Christian and other Religious Denominations**

Name	Representing	Term of office
Free Churches (4)		
Maddie Bell	Baptist Free Church	2019-2024
Vacancy		
Sam Phillips (Mrs)	Methodist	2019-2024
Vacancy	Free Church	
Muslim (2)		
Mohamed Sedky	Muslim	2019- 2024
Mohamed Parekh (Mr M.Y.)	Muslim	2019- 2024
Catholic (2)		
Vacancy	Roman Catholic	
Vacancy	Roman Catholic	
Sikh (2)		
Tajinder Singh	Sikh	2019- 2024
Vacancy		
Hindu (2)		
G. Devadason	Hindu	2020-2025
Vacancy		
Quakers (1)		
Gabi Oldfield	Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)	2017-2022
Jewish (1)		
Vacancy	Stoke-on-Trent & North Staffs Hebrew Congregation	
Salvation Army (1)		
Lydia Bartlett	Salvation Army, West Midlands Division	2019-2024
Buddhist (1)		
The Ven. Dr Laow	The Council of Thai Buddhist Monks, UK	2019- 2024
Humanist (1)		
Ian Horsewell	Humanism	2021-2026
Baha'i (1)		
Julie Thompson	Baha'i	2019-2024

Committee B (5) Church of England

Vicky Priestley	Lichfield Diocesan Board of Education	2021-2026
Vickie Longson	Lichfield Diocesan Board of Education	2018-2023
Lauren Nicholson-Ward	Lichfield Diocesan Board of Education	2021-2026
Rev Preb Michael R. Metcalf	Lichfield Diocesan Board of Education	2019-2024
Zoe Cahalan	Lichfield Diocesan Board of Education	2021-2026

**Committee C (5)
Teacher Associations**

Name	Representing	Term of office
Mrs Samantha Kirwan	NEU	2019- 2024
Mrs Linda Goodwin	NEU	2019- 2024
Harold Gurden	NASUWT	2021-2026
Shaun Miles	NAHT	2018-2023
Judy Wyman	ASCL Association of School & College Leaders (was SHA)	2017- 2022

**Committee D
Local Authority 5 places Appointed annually**

Name	Nominating Body	Term of office
Philip Atkins	County Council	Appointed by Leader(s)
Paul Northcott	County Council	as above
Jonathan Price	County Council	as above
Samantha Thompson	County Council	as above
Mike Wilcox	County Council	as above

Co-opted Members

Name	Representing	Nominating Body	Term of office
Vacancy	Spiritualists' National Union	SNU	-

MINUTES

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education Meeting - 3 February 2021

Present: **Rev. Preb. M. Metcalf**

Mohamed Sedky, Linda Goodwin, Julie Thompson, Sam Kirwan, Mohamed Parekh, Ian Lawson, Lauren Nicholson Ward, Mark Sutton, Syed Hussain, Judy Wyman, Vickie Longson, Bob Spencer, Lydia Bartlett and Shaun Miles

Apologies for absence: Sam Phillips, Gabi Oldfield and Maddy Bell

Also in attendance - Mary Gale (SACRE advisor) and Mandy Pattinson (Clerk)

PART ONE

79. Welcome to New Members

There were no new members at the meeting. It was confirmed that a replacement from the Free Churches had been requested, but none had been received as yet.

80. Minutes of the Previous Meeting held on 18 November 2020

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the SACRE meeting held on 18 November 2020 be approved and signed by the Chairman.

It was noted that there was a spelling mistake on page 6 Minute 76 (e) should read 'Judy Wyman' not Julie.

NOTE:

1. It was noted that the SACRE advisor had contacted local universities (Minute 74) offering support to post graduate students, but no requests had been received as yet due to the universities concentrating on the challenges of Covid-19.
2. The SACRE advisor had provided her email address for Chris Giles to support him in his project, but there had been no contact to date. (Minute 71)
3. Minute 76 (e) Judy Wyman had contacted the County Council accounts team to ask if unused budget could be carried over, but no response had been received.

81. An update on Key Issues including COVID 19

SACRE considered the report which covered the main issues affecting Religious Education (RE) in Staffordshire since the last meeting. Further to the written report, the following information was provided:

- Continuous Professional Development – Only one school had taken up the offer of support in the form of RE training. Unfortunately, one school did not make the offer financially viable. Entrust would offer to schools again later in the year.
- With regard to the Sacred spaces project, this had been put on hold until summer 2021 due to Covid-19.

- The Advisor, Mary Gale's continued support for Staffordshire SACRE had been confirmed until the end of April 2022.
- It was reported that 5 schools had been allocated grants to support RE and Collective Worship (CW) in their schools.
- The use of the Governor Information Pack had been an effective way of contacting school leaders/governors and informing them of Religious Education and Collective Worship. This method of communication would continue to be utilised. The Advisor provided information for this pack.

RESOLVED: That the report be received.

82. Reflections on a research paper on Religious Education

SACRE considered the research paper produced by the Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues from the University of Birmingham which was published in Autumn 2020. The report focused on pupil character development as defined by Ofsted and the influence a teacher of RE could have on character development of pupils' dependent on their own views.

The report found that:

1. Personal worldviews informed RE teachers approaches in the classroom.
2. RE teachers were found to have fair and tolerant views of other religions and worldviews.
3. There was strong agreement among RE teachers that RE contributes to pupils' character development.
4. RE teachers that have a religious faith were more likely to think religions promote good character.

Lauren Nicholson Ward declared an interest in this item as she had been interviewed as part of the project.

The study had been online and seemed to have been sent to all schools in all areas of the country.

The report was welcomed, members thought that it was an encouraging report. It was felt that it demonstrated the professionalism of RE teachers. There was a concern that a broader view of beliefs, which could be called 'British Values or World Views' and how they fit into the broader social setting, was not as explicit as it could have been. This was acknowledged but the report was more related to character development and the attention this was now receiving due to the change in Ofsted criteria.

Members felt that the document was useful as it could have implications for the RE rationale within the Agreed Syllabus which was due to be reviewed this year and was subject to a later report on the agenda.

RESOLVED: That the report be received.

83. Procedures for Agreed Syllabus review

The Education Act requires a Local Authority to review its locally agreed syllabus every five years. Staffordshire's syllabus was due to be reviewed in 2021. An Agreed Syllabus Conference would have to be organised in order to review the current syllabus which would then eventually be formally approved by the County Council.

The Chair outlined the 4 stages to facilitate the review of the current syllabus and provided information on the makeup of the people who would be part of the Agreed Syllabus Conference. This would include current SACRE members. The ASC would run parallel to the termly SACRE meeting, commencing in June 2021. The LA would adopt the members of SACRE to be members of the ASC.

The ASC would carry out the formal review, reflecting on current RE studies, seeking the views of teachers, pupils and other interested parties through working groups and surveys. The ASC would then reflect on this information and decide the next course of action eg re-write the AS, tweak the AS, expand the current AS. This revised version would then be passed on to the LA and rolled out to schools.

Entrust and the County Council were reviewing options on how to carry out the review and would report back to the next meeting. This has cost implications for the LA.

Members asked questions about the external scrutiny procedures. The chair provided reassurance that the process would be open and transparent adhering to the regulations.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

84. Collective Worship (CW)

SACRE was reminded of the legislation regarding school worship. The report provided a summary of the school requirements. As schools often require support such as ideas and inspiration with the delivery of CW, SACRE had commissioned their advisor to develop a resource to provide support. The draft document entitled "Staffordshire Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education – collective worship support – exploring the role of collective worship in the life of a school" had been produced. The draft document had been received by Entrust.

It was noted that there were many opportunities for schools to develop non-Christian themes such as '*great world leaders*' and '*festivals*' to support diversity. All of the themes would support the Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) curriculum. Remote learning links, where appropriate would also be added.

The final draft would be considered at the June SACRE meeting and then circulated to schools in time for preparations for the Autumn term 2021.

It was acknowledged that RE and CW are closely linked and that faith and non-faith schools could during CW support the broader curriculum whilst remaining sensitive to the individual beliefs of pupils and staff. The draft CW document was designed to generate ideas and support schools rather than instruct them on what to cover or how. It was stated by the advisor that CW should be invitational in nature.

RESOLVED: That the report be received and that the final draft be considered at the next meeting.

85. An Update on NASACRE

The Chairman included the following information as part of the NASACRE update:

- NASACRE had been in discussions with the Department of Education (DfE) on the delivery of collective worship in schools during Covid-19. Guidance was that this could be achieved if done within bubbles. This information had been sent to schools in the Governor Information Pack.
- With regard to determinations. Due to Covid-19, extensions in timescales had been given to LA for schools re renew their determinations. (These have to be done every five years). Hampshire SACRE were carrying out some research into what was happening,
- It was reported that some SACREs were commissioning private consultants to develop their Agreed Syllabus and that a copyright had been applied. Some LA's now no longer displayed their syllabus on the web site for this reason but produced a description of what the document covered. Staffordshire have in the past, made theirs available on the internet for others to use on the proviso that it is acknowledged if it is used.
- NASACRE, in conjunction with the DfE was working on a standardised format for Annual Reports. The results of their work should be available in Summer 2021.
- Liverpool SACRE had produced an online clip for Holocaust Memorial Day which included an interview with Ziggy Shipper. It can be downloaded from YouTube via: www.youtube.com/watch?v=gQQLnpchn9c

RESOLVED: That the update report be noted.

86. SACRE Budget 2020-21

SACRE considered the update report on both the 2019/2020 and the 2020/21 budget. The meeting was informed that the figures in red for the 2019/20 indicated an overspend which had been carried forward from the Westhill Endowment project. The Key Stage 3 project would not now happen due to the pandemic and Mary Gale was trying to ensure that the funds would be carried forward and not lost. Apparently, this was for the Entrust Auditors to decide and this would be reported back to the SACRE.

Officers had informed Mary Gale that there would be no roll over at the end of the financial year, however, Judy Wyman was talking to senior officers to see if this was still the case.

It was felt that should any excess budget not be able to be carried forward, schools should be provided with updated support materials on RE or CW.

Mary Gale reported that she had approached the LA to see if there were any additional funds to support the syllabus review. This would be reported to the next meeting.

RESOLVED: That the update be noted.

87. Applications for variation of practice

There were none on this occasion.

88. Date of Next Meeting

It was noted that the next meeting was due to be held on Wednesday, 30 June 2021.

SACRE Members were requested to remember the challenges faced by the Burton-upon-Trent area due to Covid-19.

**Rev. Preb. M. Metcalf
Chairman**

**Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education
1st July 2021**

**Report of the Deputy Chief Executive and Director for Families and
Communities**

An Update on Key Issues

1 Purpose of Report

1.1 To present members of SACRE with a brief update on key issues that have developed or arisen since the last meeting of SACRE.

2 Summary

2.1 Members of SACRE will receive a brief report on a number of key issues. These are matters which have either been raised at previous SACRE meetings and which have moved forward or matters on which it is appropriate to brief members of SACRE.

3 Recommendation

3.1 That members of SACRE receive the report and note the contents

4 Background

4.1 Since the Spring term meeting in February of the SACRE there have been developments in a number of areas which had previously been agenda items for SACRE or which have local or national importance for RE.

4.2 Members will be briefed on these key developments.

5 Equal Opportunities

5.1 This report has been prepared in accordance with the County Council's policies on equal opportunities.

6 Financial implications

6.1 Financial implications may be raised by individual items. These have been dealt with elsewhere or will be raised at future meetings of SACRE.

Contact Officer

Mary Gale 07816374873

Key Issues Report July 1st 2021

Westhill Legacy project- Explore, Engage, Reflect in conjunction with Youth Net

This project continues to be halted due to Covid-19

Continuous Professional Development

Schools were offered the opportunity to attend RE training through a virtual platform, no body took up the offer.

It is hoped that the offer will be taken up for the summer term.

Mary Gale has also been supporting RE leaders in schools through email.

This has involved supporting schools in understanding *greater depth* in RE assessment, whole class reading through RE texts, planning and preparation for Ofsted 'deep dives'.

Church of England schools have also asked for support with preparation for their next SIAMS inspection. Mary Gale has facilitated this.

Update on Sacred Spaces/ Christianity The Big Picture work in conjunction with Youth net

This project has now been put on hold until autumn 2021 due to Covid-19

Support for Collective Worship

This resource is now complete and is ready to be sent to schools to support them for the start of the new academic year.

Agreed Syllabus review- Please see agenda item 6

Mary Gale through the Governor Information Pack has invited comments from governors, leaders and staff about the current Agreed Syllabus. Schools have been invited to respond through email to Mary. One school requested a face-to-face meeting to put forward their thoughts. This took place on 23rd June. Seven more schools have expressed an interest in supporting the review.

Mary Gale emailed SCC and Entrust to explore ways in which the LA could be supporting the AS review. This resulted in a teams meeting and a request for a business case to be put together by Mary Gale on how this could be achieved within the constraints of current budgets. To be discussed in agenda item 6.

NASACRE Conference and ARIEAC update

Mary Gale attended the NASCARE virtual annual conference on May 24th 2021 with the Chair of Staffordshire SACRE- Michael Metcalf. See separate agenda item 5.

AREIAC virtual meeting

Mary Gale attended the virtual meeting on 9th March 2021. Topics for discussions continue to centre around the following:-

Starter activity:

Members present were invited to consider the words spoken by Pope Francis on the 6 Mar 2021, "Hostility, extremism and violence are not born of a religious heart. They are betrayals

of religion.” Pope Francis 6 March 2021. How might these words form the basis of a valuable RE lesson which encouraged young people to be aware of contemporary events in the world? What might be an appropriate, or perhaps provocative question, that young people could suitably be invited to discuss?

REQM The online assessment process

The Five Cities Project of the Religion Media Centre

The meeting was told this project initiated by the “Religion Media Centre” which fact checks and seeks to help the media be better informed when reporting on religion and worldviews in the UK. Their intention is to provide an opportunity for faith communities to meet journalists and other media professionals in Leicester, Birmingham, Manchester, Leeds and Plymouth and that these meetings will take place in the autumn.

Behind the classroom wall: the power structures that hold reform back

The meeting discussed the website, “Reforming RE: A blogspace for a Worldview Curriculum”. <https://reformingre.wordpress.com/> The site contains over 30 blogs written by a range of RE professionals. BM described some of the ideas, language and principal views reflected in Mark Chater’s blog, “*Behind the classroom wall; the power structures that hold reform back*”. Mark’s main claim is that there is a power structure in RE which holds the subject back. This power is held by faith and belief groups that exert influence on policy, curriculum and resources. To illustrate this point it is reported that pupils are asked to respond to questions that assume a religious interest, e.g. “How do Christians live out their belief in the resurrection?” “What questions would you want to ask God?” The meeting recognised that the blog made points with which there was some agreement. However, the view was also expressed that the blog lacked nuance and failed to recognise the contribution SACREs made both to the development of the subject and in limiting undue central government interference. The blog made use of questionable analogies and vague assertions which lacked detail making them difficult to verify

The Worldview paradigm

A bullet pointed summary of the views of supporters of the “worldview paradigm” and of criticisms of the proposal was tabled. Participants at the meeting shared their views and thoughts. Mention was made of the four documents released by the REC, of the three online seminars and of a CofE seminar. Mention was also made of the criticisms made by Philip Barnes of the worldview paradigm. Expressions of doubt were expressed about the claim that the Worldview paradigm was a “game changing” departure from the “religion paradigm”, the lack of clarity in statements like “opens up new ways of studying religion and belief” were made as were of crowding an already overcrowded curriculum. The “disciplinary” three-legged stool was mentioned as was the Staffordshire, explore, engage and reflect approach. The benefits of teaching “Fewer things in greater depth” and of specifying in more detail content was also mentioned

Next meeting Mary Gale will attend this meeting on 22nd June 2021. A report will be provided in the November meeting.

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education
1st July 2021
Report of the Deputy Chief Executive and Director for Families and
Communities
An Update on NASACRE

1 Purpose of Report

1.1 To present members of SACRE with a brief update on key issues that have developed or arisen since the last meeting of SACRE.

2 Summary

2.1 Members of SACRE will receive a brief report on a number of NASACRE issues. These are matters on which it is appropriate to brief members of SACRE.

3 Recommendation

3.1 That members of SACRE receive the report and note the contents

4 Background

4.1 NASACRE is the national body of SACRE's. National meetings and conferences are held to which members of SACRE are invited and encouraged to attend. Michael Metcalf and Mary Gale attended the virtual conference held on May 24th 2021. Issues were discussed which have local or national importance for RE.

4.2 Members will be briefed on any key developments including feedback from the conference.

5 Equal Opportunities

5.1 This report has been prepared in accordance with the County Council's policies on equal opportunities.

6 Financial implications

6.1 Financial implications may be raised by individual items. These have been dealt with elsewhere or will be raised at future meetings of SACRE.

Contact Officer: Mary Gale 0781637487

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education
1st July 2021
Report of the Deputy Chief Executive and Director for Families and
Communities
Procedures for Agreed Syllabus review

1 Purpose of Report

1.1 To introduce the review process for the Staffordshire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education to SCARE Members.

2 Summary

2.1 Members of SACRE are reminded of the following-

2.2 The Education Act 1996 requires the Local Authority to institute a review of its locally agreed syllabus every five years after the completion of its last review.

The legal requirements regarding RE and school worship can be found in the Education Reform Act 1988 (Sections 6-13). They are reaffirmed in the Education Act 1996 (Sections 375-389) and the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 (Sections 69-71)

2.3 The Staffordshire Agreed Syllabus was last reviewed and issued to school in 2016. A review therefore falls due in 2021.

3 Recommendation

3.1 That members of SACRE receive the information

4 Background

4.1 The Staffordshire Agreed Syllabus was last reviewed and issued to schools in 2016. A review therefore is due in 2021.

4.2 Members will be briefed on the process for the process of the review in summer 2021

5 Equal Opportunities

5.1 This report has been prepared in accordance with the County Council's policies on equal opportunities.

6 Financial implications

6.1 Financial implications may be raised by individual items. These have been dealt with elsewhere or will be raised at future meetings of SACRE.

Contact Officer:

Mary Gale

0781637487

Appendix

Procedures for AS review July 2021- reminder

Staffordshire SACRE Agreed Syllabus review information due to be reviewed 2021.

Requirements:

SACRE must consider reviewing its RE Agreed Syllabus after five years. An Agreed Syllabus Conference can be set up to conduct the review.

Background:

The provision of a clear, well-structured, up-to-date and professional agreed syllabus is probably the single most important function of SACRE. Combined with on-going implementation training and resources, a new syllabus offers the possibility of raising achievement in RE in all local schools.

An agreed syllabus must *'reflect the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are, in the main, Christian while taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain'*.

Education Act (1996 Section 375 (3)) / School Standards and Framework Act (1998, Schedule 19, para.5)

In 2021 and going forward... it is essential to consider how this relates to

- the revised inspection requirements
- to developments in assessment and in teaching and learning
- revised GCSEs
- the National Report from the Commission on RE
- the 'British Values' agenda
- all related educational change.
- Ofsted emphasis on curriculum planning-their intent, implementation and the impact.

An effective AS needs to be able to support schools in all three of these aspects.. It needs to have a good rationale for its structure; it needs to be operable in diverse school settings; it needs to show schools how they can see what impact the syllabus is having on pupil achievement.

- In addition it is essential that the AS
- be clear about expected knowledge and understanding about religion(s) and belief(s)
- support and empower teachers to plan effectively
- offer coherent progression across the ages and key stages
- support clear and focused assessment

Religious education is not a national curriculum subject but it must be taught in all state funded schools as enshrined in the 1988 Education Reform Act.

The curriculum for religious education is to be determined locally by Agreed Syllabus Conferences (ASCs) (Bastide, 2007), formed under Standing Advisory Councils for Religious Education (SACREs).

The main focus is that: 'Every agreed syllabus shall reflect the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian whilst taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain.' (Great Britain. Education Act, 1996, section 375)

Local authorities are required to establish a SACRE which, as its chief aim, is to advise the said authority upon matters pertaining to religious education and collective worship.

The Education Reform Act states the composition of SACRE members, who may also comprise Agreed Syllabus Conferences, are drawn from: Christian and other faith communities, the Church of England, teachers' groups and democratically elected councillors.

In addition to this role, it can require a local authority to review its agreed syllabus which then necessitates a standing conference to review it. It is called an agreed syllabus because it must be agreed by those with an interest in the teaching of religious education.

This process commences in this July 2021 meeting.

SCC and Entrust are aware of the need to review the syllabus and have agreed in principle for this to be carried out in house by the current advisor if the members of SACRE are in agreement. There will be separate funding for this. Mary Gale has produced a draft business case to that effect. See agenda item 7.

Religious Education Agreed Syllabus conference July 2021

Members of the Standing Advisory Committee for Religious Education (SACRE) are responsible for the review and rewrite if needed of the RE syllabus for schools in their Local Authority.

Outcomes (background information)

The provision of a clear, well-structured, up-to-date and professional agreed syllabus is probably the single most important function of SACRE. Combined with on-going implementation training and resources, a new syllabus offers the possibility of raising achievement in RE in all local schools.

An agreed syllabus must *'reflect the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are, in the main, Christian while taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain'*.

Education Act (1996 Section 375 (3)) / School Standards and Framework Act (1998, Schedule 19, para.5)

In 2021 and going forward... it is essential to consider how this relates to

- the revised inspection requirements
- to developments in assessment and in teaching and learning
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- the National Report from the Commission on RE
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- all related educational change.
- Ofsted emphasis on curriculum planning-their intent, implementation and the impact.

An effective AS needs to be able to support schools in all of the following aspects..

- It needs to have a good rationale for its structure;
- it needs to be operable in diverse school settings;
- it needs to show schools how they can see what impact the syllabus is having on pupil achievement.

In addition it is essential that the AS

- be clear about expected knowledge and understanding about religion(s) and belief(s)
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The curriculum for religious education is to be determined locally by Agreed Syllabus Conferences (ASCs) (Bastide, 2007), formed under Standing Advisory Councils for Religious Education (SACREs).

The main focus is that: 'Every agreed syllabus shall reflect the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian whilst taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain.' (Great Britain. Education Act, 1996, section 375)

Suggested Milestones

Convening of SACRE conferences to review and consider the recommendations for the new AS on the following dates

July 1st 2021, November 17th 2021, February 2nd 2022 and June 29th 2022

Set up SACRE mini working group to formulate exact wording

Discussions with stakeholders Summer 2021 through to early Spring 2022.

First presentation of the reviewed AS after discussions Feb 2022.

Entrust support for illustration between Feb 2022 and June 2022

Final presentation June 2022 ready for confirmation by Cabinet Member, Councillor Jonathan Price

Launch event if deemed appropriate- twilight event

Roll out to schools ready for September 2022

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education

1st July 2021

**Report of the Deputy Chief Executive and Director for Families and
Communities**

**Ofsted research into the teaching of RE under the 2019 Education Framework
(EIF)**

1 Purpose of Report

1.1 To present SACRE members with an opportunity to reflect on the implications for the teaching of RE when referencing research.

The full report can be read by following this link.

[Research review series: religious education - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/research-review-series-religious-education)

2 Summary

2.1 Ofsted published its research review into RE on 12th May 2021. All pupils in maintained schools are required to study the national curriculum, which includes the national curriculum, religious education and age-appropriate relationship and sex education. Inspectors considered the following aspects:-

Developments in RE

RE at different stages of education

Ambition for all

RE and the quality of education judgement within the EIF

Curriculum progression

Teaching the curriculum

Assessment Systems

Culture and policies

3 Recommendation

3.1 That members of SACRE use this opportunity to reflect on the research paper and consider its implications for the review of the AS.

4 Background

4.1 Ofsted have published a number of review research papers. RE is the second publication.

5 Equal Opportunities

5.1 This report has been prepared in accordance with the County Council's policies on equal opportunities.

6 Financial implications

6.1 There are no immediate financial implications.

Contact Officer: **Mary Gale 07816374873**

Appendix

Ofsted's Research Review on Religious Education

Comments

Professor Trevor Cooling, Chair, Religious Education Council of England and Wales:

“The timing of the Ofsted report on Religious Education sends a powerful message to all those with an interest in the status of RE. As only the second subject review after science and the first Arts and Humanities subject in the schedule, it is a clear indication of the importance of Religious Education as a discrete subject, and the need for a broad and balanced curriculum.”

“The review spells out the essential role that RE plays in every young person’s academic and personal development and emphasises the value that an education in religious and non-religious worldviews provides in later life.”

Katie Freeman, Chair, National Association of Teachers of RE:

“The need for high quality teaching in all schools for all pupils, both from an academic perspective and for each pupil’s personal development, is abundantly clear in the Ofsted report.”

“It sends out a strong reminder to all school leaders of the requirement to teach the subject at all key stages, including sixth form, and to consider the professional development and subject knowledge needed for teachers to deliver a high quality RE curriculum.”

Developments in RE

RE at different stages of education

Ambition for all

RE and the quality of education judgement within the EIF

Curriculum progression

Teaching the curriculum

Assessment

Culture and policies

Summary

In religious education (RE), pupils enter into a rich discourse about the religious and non-religious traditions that have shaped Great Britain and the world. RE in primary and secondary schools enables pupils to take their place within a diverse multi-religious and multi-secular society. At its best, it is intellectually challenging and personally enriching. It affords pupils both the opportunity to see the religion and non-religion in the world, and the opportunity to make sense of their own place in that world.

This review explores literature relating to the field of RE. Its purpose is to identify factors that contribute to high-quality school RE curriculums, the teaching of the curriculum, assessment and systems. In this review, they have:

- outlined the national context in relation to RE
- summarised their review of research into factors that can affect the quality of education in RE
- considered curriculum progression in RE, pedagogy, assessment and the impact of school leaders’ decisions on provision

The review draws on a range of sources, including our 'Education inspection framework: overview of research' and our 3 phases of curriculum research

Developments in RE

In RE, there are different issues that can affect quality of education. Ofsted's previous report on RE in 2013, 'Religious education: realising the potential', stated that the structures that underpin the local determination of the RE curriculum have failed to keep pace with changes in the wider educational world. The local determination of RE also means that a concept of quality is not straightforward to identify.

The quality of education established in this research review is based on the current legal framework, the most current non-statutory guidance available from the Department for Education (DfE) and national developments in RE which are concerned with quality of education. Since 2013, various subject and research reports have been published. These reports may supply further insights into the concept of high-quality RE. They include:

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

Much of this literature recommends some form of prescribed and detailed curriculum content (sometimes called a 'national entitlement') to support improvement in RE. Though common, not all within the RE community deem a movement from local to national determination necessary.

Much of this literature also suggests that RE curriculum development in England has not kept pace with the academic and intellectual developments that might help pupils to make sense of our complex multi-religious and multi-secular society.

The evolution of society's religious and non-religious landscape highlights that it is all the more important for pupils to build up accurate knowledge of the complexity and diversity of global religion and non-religion. The 2013 Ofsted report stated that many pupils leave school with scant subject knowledge in RE. The literature also references chronic and intractable problems with school-level provision for RE. These are factors that can affect quality of education in RE and will be discussed at various points of this curriculum research review.

RE at different stages of education

Reception and primary years

As at secondary level, arrangements for RE in Reception and primary years are localised. Most locally agreed syllabuses recommend spending the equivalent of approximately 60 minutes a week on RE at key stage 1 and about 75 minutes a week at key stage 2. Most RE provision in Reception would be integrated within the Reception curriculum, as opposed to a stand-alone subject (see, for example, the RE Council of England and Wales's 2013 non-statutory framework).

However, the National Association of Teachers of Religious Education (NATRE) argues that a significant number of schools give insufficient curriculum time to RE, based on responses to its regular primary school surveys. For NATRE, insufficient time is considered to be fewer than 45 minutes of teaching time a week. The surveys have suggested that:

- in 2016, this was just under 30% of schools
- in 2018, this was about 25% of schools
- in 2020, the figure remained at 25%

The latest survey did, though, note that, in almost 96% of schools, the curriculum time given to RE had either remained the same or increased. Almost half of academies without a religious character and almost a third of schools required to teach a locally agreed syllabus had increased the amount of curriculum time spent on RE. These positive changes were, in part, attributed to Ofsted's focus on the curriculum.

Secondary years

As at primary level, the arrangements for RE at secondary level are localised. Most locally agreed syllabuses are constructed on the assumption that the amount of curriculum time given to RE is at or above 5%.

However, using unweighted school workforce census data, the 2017 'State of the nation' report estimated that this threshold of curriculum time was only met in:

- 62% of schools where the locally agreed syllabus applies (including VC schools)
- 90% of other schools with a religious character
- 44% of academies

The report also found that 34% of all academies reported no timetabled RE. Overall, it estimated that, at key stage 3, 64% of state-funded schools gave 5% or more of their curriculum time to RE.

At key stage 4, the report estimated that 5% or more curriculum time was given to RE in 50% of state-funded schools. Specifically, the 5% threshold was met in 45% of schools where the locally agreed syllabus applies (including VC schools); in 91% of other schools with a religious character; and in 27% of academies.

Further, the report found that 44% of all academies reported no timetabled RE. If schools do not teach pupils any RE, this is illegal.

As part of RE teaching in key stage 4, schools may enter pupils for a religious studies qualification. Pupils in England can take either the full course GCSE in religious studies or the short course, which is equivalent to half a GCSE.

Ambition for all

A high-quality curriculum is ambitious and designed to give all learners the knowledge they need to succeed in life. This is particularly important for the most disadvantaged and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). All pupils are entitled to be taught RE. Leaders and teachers may, of course, need to adapt the curriculum depending on the specific needs of individual pupils.

There are different ways that leaders and teachers might reduce the barriers that pupils with specific needs may face in accessing the RE curriculum. For example, this could include leaders doing highly specific curriculum planning that considers in greater detail the building blocks of knowledge that specific pupils need to access the RE curriculum. It could also include teachers carefully considering the most appropriate ways for specific pupils to learn aspects of the curriculum. Leaders and teachers should also consider appropriate accessibility for educational trips and visits related to RE. RE makes a major contribution to the knowledge that pupils need to succeed in life. That knowledge entitlement is appropriate for all pupils.

Some research findings contribute to the overall picture of RE for disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND. One study suggests that pupils attending schools with higher proportions

of disadvantaged pupils are less likely to have the opportunity to take GCSE religious studies.

RE and the quality of education judgement within the EIF

Within the EIF, there are 4 key judgements that sit underneath an overall judgement of effectiveness: quality of education; personal development; behaviour and attitudes; and leadership and management.

There are a range of different ways RE operates in schools. For example, in some, RE is also used as a vehicle through which to deliver whole-school moral and social initiatives. As such, RE may take various forms in school, and aspects of RE may sit in relation to 2 different judgements within the EIF: the quality of education and personal development.

The quality of education judgement is about the academic substance of what is taught. It looks at what pupils learn and know in each subject area. The personal development judgement explores how the curriculum may extend beyond the academic, technical or vocational. This may be, for instance, through the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils. It considers pupils' recognition of different people's values, feelings, faith and ways of living. What is learned and remembered by pupils in RE may, of course, contribute to personal development. However, this curriculum research review series is concerned with the factors that can affect quality of education in different subjects. As such, the scope of this review is primarily concerned with the school RE curriculum considered through the lens of the quality of education judgement.

The EIF considers the extent to which leaders of the curriculum adopt or construct a curriculum that is ambitious and designed to give learners the knowledge they need to succeed in life. As outlined previously, the extent to which school subject leaders are freely able to choose the content of their RE curriculums depends on the type of school and, where appropriate, its funding agreement.

Many academies have greater degrees of freedom about what to include within their RE curriculums. Schools that follow a locally agreed syllabus will use this as a basis for what pupils are taught. Typically, the content of this syllabus prescribes high-level outcomes that subject leaders go on to use as they design their school-specific RE curriculum. This contextualisation process is similar to the ways that schools may take high-level outcomes from the national curriculum in other subjects and use them to construct their school-specific subject curriculum. Non-statutory guidance might accompany an agreed syllabus to assist subject leaders in constructing their school RE curriculum.

However, to be clear: it is the enacted RE curriculum, in the context of the school, which is taught to and experienced by pupils, that is considered within the quality of education judgement. The contextualised school RE curriculum is also the focus of this research review.

Curriculum progression Summary

The RE curriculum should set out what it means to 'get better' at the subject as pupils move through the journey of the curriculum at primary and secondary level. Pupils build 3 different forms of knowledge in RE, which we will explain in this section. In high-quality RE at primary and secondary level, leaders and teachers think about how these 3 forms of knowledge are interconnected and sequenced within the RE curriculum. It is this RE curriculum that pupils need to know and to remember.

Curriculum progression and debates about knowledge in RE

The EIF considers the knowledge that pupils learn in the curriculum. As pupils journey through a planned and well-sequenced curriculum in primary and secondary schools, they will build these different types of knowledge as they ‘know more and remember more’ of the planned curriculum. Our previous research mentions that these types of knowledge are not isolated; they sit within interconnected webs in long-term memory. They will also differ between subjects.

The types of knowledge that pupils build within RE have not been extensively discussed or theorised. In some cases, this is because the ongoing debates about the aims and purposes of RE have led educators to claim that knowledge alone is insufficient for specific educational purposes such as fostering tolerance or mitigating xenophobia. Sometimes, the very idea of ‘knowledge in RE’ itself has been avoided because claims made about both religion and non-religion are contested, even though many educators recognise that the contention itself is part of the knowledge content of RE. Broadly speaking, teachers, practitioners and researchers in RE do not have well-established conventions to discuss the different types of knowledge that appear in RE curriculums.

Although educators make different claims about the purpose of RE, it is nonetheless vital for subject leaders, curriculum designers and teachers to be aware of different types of knowledge in RE. Without this awareness, misconceptions about the nature of religion can be taught. These misconceptions can be based on claims (for example, ‘only loving religion is true religion’) that are unwarranted by high standards of academic scholarship. A lack of consideration of the nature of knowledge can also result in pupils’ misunderstandings about the credibility of religion (for example, ‘science is about facts; religion is about opinions’), as well as the difference between types of knowledge in RE and in other subjects.¹

The importance of recognising different types of knowledge is also clear when thinking about the types of tasks pupils carry out in RE. For instance, when teachers plan for pupils to construct a response to a statement or question, there are at least 2 forms of subject-specific knowledge in operation: a knowledge of the topic that is being discussed and knowledge about the mode of enquiry that is being asked through the question. This is particularly important given different expectations about what constitutes an ‘argument’ in RE.

So, although the building of subject-specific knowledge may not be sufficient for every possible suggested aim for RE, it is necessary and beneficial for a range of purposes.

Three types of knowledge

This report refers to 3 different types of knowledge used in RE. These broad types of knowledge are ‘pillars of progression’ within RE. ‘Getting better’ at RE both at primary and secondary level comprises knowing more and remembering more of these pillars as they are set out within the RE curriculum:

- first, ‘substantive’ knowledge: knowledge about various religious and non-religious traditions
- second, ‘ways of knowing’: pupils learn ‘how to know’ about religion and non-religion
- third, ‘personal knowledge’: pupils build an awareness of their own presuppositions and values about the religious and non-religious traditions they study

We have used our own terms to define the types of knowledge due to a lack of established conventions within RE subject literature. Clearly, different professionals and researchers use a range of terms. However, following RE engagement events, our terms have already been taken up and referred to by researchers and educators in RE. [footnote 41](#) We will expand on our definitions in the coming sections.

In high-quality RE curriculums, these 3 types of knowledge are not artificially separated from each other. For example, when subject leaders plan a sequence of specific content and concepts for pupils to study, they also need to consider the most appropriate methods that pupils need to know to study that content.

Conclusion

This RE research review outlines the factors that can contribute to the quality of education in RE. This document has drawn on a range of research, evidence and other literature to identify features of high-quality RE at primary and secondary level. As such, it explains the research basis for how we look at RE in schools (where RE falls within our inspection remit). This review is not a simple checklist of activities that we expect to see in school RE, since there are various ways that schools can construct and teach high-quality RE. Rather, it outlines a conception of quality of education in RE viewed through the lens of the EIF.

RE is vital in preparing pupils to engage in a diverse and complex multi-religious and multi-secular society. However, this review has also identified that there are significant challenges that limit high quality in RE, including:

- insufficient time to teach an ambitious RE curriculum
- school decisions that are not taken in the best interests of all pupils, such as decisions concerning the statutory teaching of RE, the opportunity to take a qualification in religious studies, or early examination entry
- a lack of consideration about what it means to 'be scholarly' in objective, critical and pluralistic RE
- a lack of clarity on what constitutes reliable knowledge about religion/non-religion, leading to teachers embedding unhelpful misconceptions
- teaching approaches that do not support pupils to remember the RE curriculum in the long term
- approaches to assessment that are poorly calibrated to the RE curriculum
- insufficient development of RE practitioners to address gaps in professional subject knowledge

That said, this review shows that there are well-warranted and constructive ways forward that could support improvements in RE. The literature suggests that many of these are already taking place in the sector in subject communities and in some schools. The significant interest that RE attracts from a range of organisations and associations may also indicate that there is sufficient capacity to support improvements in RE in primary and secondary schools for the benefit of pupils.

We hope that this research review will be useful for all those involved in the design, support and inspection of high-quality RE in schools in England, including agreed syllabus conferences, advisers, curriculum designers, ITE providers, local authorities, local standing advisory councils on RE (SACREs), other inspectorates of RE, researchers in RE, school leaders, subject organisations and teacher subject associations.

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education
July 1st 2021
Report of the Deputy Chief Executive and Director for Families and
Communities
Current budget 2021-22
Previous budget 2020-21

1 Purpose of Report

1.1 To advise members of SACRE on the current budget position for 2021-2022.

2 Summary

2.1 A breakdown of the current SACRE budget for the financial year 2021-2022, and a comment on the previous budget for 2020- 2021

3 Recommendation

3.1 That members of SACRE receive the report.

4 Background

4.1 A budget had been made available to support the work of SACRE during the financial year 2021-2022 as approved by the Corporate Director (Children and Lifelong Learning).

4.2 Please note information on the previous budget for 2020-2021

4.3 The 2021-2022 budget will continue to be monitored and clarified.

5 Equal Opportunities

5.1 This report has been prepared in accordance with the County Council's policies on equal opportunities.

6 Financial implications

6.1 Financial implications are indicated in the budget account.

Contact Officer:
Mary Gale 07816374873

NML400

Total allocation
£6160

GL Account Codes for : Enquiry Group: Curr Budget (v2) v Act + GRNI/GL Account Code Range: EM1100/***** to EM1100/***** / Enquiry Year: 2020/21

<u>GL Account Code</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Current Budget (v2)</u>	<u>Actual + Grni</u>	<u>Actuals</u>	<u>Variance Bud v(Act +GRNI)</u>
EM110010002	Grants/contingency	1003.50	0.00	0.00	0.00
EM110041008	SACRE Catering Provisions	0.00			
EM110044038	SACRE QLS Curriculum Advice	4600.00			
EM110046204	SACRE Conference Fees	0.00			
EM110047202	SACRE Subscriptions General	210			
EM110048342	SACRE Contingency				

346.50
underspend

0.00

0.00

Screen Data Export - SACRE (2021-22)

Total allocation £6220 an increase of £40

GL Account Codes for : Enquiry Group: Curr Budget (v2) v Act + GRNI/GL Account Code Range: EM1100/*** to EM1100/***** / Enquiry Year: 2020/21**

<u>GL Account Code</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Current Budget (v2)</u>	<u>Actual + Grni</u>	<u>Actuals</u>	<u>Variance Bud v(Act +GRNI)</u>
EM110010002	Grants/contingency	00000	0.00	0.00	0.00
EM110041008	SACRE Catering Provisions	00000			
EM110044038	SACRE QLS Curriculum Advice				
EM110046204	SACRE Conference Fees	40.000			
EM110047202	SACRE Subscriptions General				
EM110048342	SACRE Contingency	£6220			

**£6180
to
spend**

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education
1st July 2021
Report of the Deputy Chief Executive and Director for Families and
Communities
Applications for variation of practice

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To consider any applications for variation of practice to religious education and or collective worship.

2 Summary

- 2.1 Upon receipt of a written application from a headteacher of a county school SACRE should determine whether it is appropriate to dis-apply the requirement for broadly Christian collective worship and/or make amendments to the way the Agreed Syllabus is followed in the case of that school.

3 Recommendation

- 3.1 That members of SACRE are updated on any new developments in this area.

4 Background

- 4.1 No applications have been received at this time.

5 Equal Opportunities

- 5.1 This report has been prepared in accordance with the County Council's policies on equal opportunities.

6 Financial implications

- 6.1 There are no immediate financial implications.

Contact Officer:

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