

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education

Wednesday, 20 June 2018

2.00 pm

Kingston Centre, Fairway, Stafford ST16 3TW

John Tradewell
Director of Strategy, Governance and Change
12 June 2018

A G E N D A

1. **Apologies**
2. **Welcome to New Members**
3. **Declaration of Any other Business**
4. **Minutes of the SACRE Meeting held on 7 February 2018** (Pages 1 - 6)
5. **Update on Key Issues** (Pages 7 - 10)

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6. **Compliance at KS4** (Pages 11 - 18)

Report of the Deputy Chief Executive and Director for Families and Communities
7. **SACRE Self Review** (Pages 19 - 22)

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



8. **NASACRE Update** (Pages 23 - 24)

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

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

10. **SACRE Budget 2018-19** (Pages 27 - 28)

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

11. **AOB**

12. **Date of Next Meeting**

The next SACRE meeting is scheduled for Wednesday 7 November 2018, at 2.00 pm, venue to be confirmed.

Membership

Linda Goodwin	Mohamed Parekh
Andrea Hopkins	Phillips
Julie Thompson (Co-Optee)	Ian Lawson
Sonia Andjelkovic	Lauren Nicholson Ward
Mrs J Grundy	Mark Sutton
Diana Cutler	Syed Hussain
Tajinder Singh	Judy Wyman
G Devadason	Gabi Oldfield
Rev. Preb. M. Metcalf (Chairman)	Vickie Longson
Sam Kirwan	Bob Spencer
Dr Laow Panyasiri	

MINUTES

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education Meeting - 7 February 2018

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

Linda Goodwin, Mrs J Grundy, Sam Kirwan, Julie Thompson (Co-Optee), Diana Cutler, Tajinder Singh, Mohamed Parekh, Ian Lawson, Lauren Nicholson Ward, Mark Sutton, Judy Wyman and Vickie Longson

Apologies for absence: Paul Lewis, Dr Laow Panyasiri, Phillips, Bernard Peters and Syed Hussain

Also in attendance - Emma Jardine-Phillips and Julie Roberts

PART ONE

59. Welcome to New Members

The Chairman welcomed Gabi Oldfield, Society of Friends representative and Vickie Longson, Church of England representative, to the SACRE.

60. Minutes of the SACRE Meeting held on 8 November 2017

In relation to the election of Vice-Chairman the Chairman suggested that this be deferred to a later date.

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the SACRE meeting held on 8 November 2017 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

61. Update on Key Issues

The SACRE received an update on key issues that had occurred since their last meeting, including:

- a) Staffordshire schools had now received the SACRE Annual Report and a copy of the guidance on visits. Both documents had been well received.
- b) The Commission on RE: The Interim Report came out in late September. In order to debate the content, and hopefully influence the final report, NASACRE had held a joint conference with AREIAC in Birmingham on 24 November 2017. Conference delegates were able to discuss vital questions regarding The Commission on RE: The Interim Report, including what its recommendations might mean for pupils, teachers, advisers and SACREs. Amongst the recommendations were:
 - A National Entitlement to Religious Education for all pupils
 - Holding schools to account for their provision for religious education
 - A new and expanded role for SACREs
 - A National Plan for improving teaching and learning

The conference panel included: Rt Hon. Charles Clarke (patron of NASACRE); Denise Cush; Dr. Anthony Towey; and Lat Blaylock.

- c) NASACRE was working with AREIAC, AULRE and NATRE to organise a two-day conference in Crewe (13-14 October 2018) which aimed to enhance the quality of Religious Education by drawing together professionals in RE – teachers, academics, researchers, advisers, and providers of professional development. The organisers warmly invited proposals for a practical workshop, academic seminar, or talk, in one of the breakout sessions. They would consider all proposals and reserved the right to accept, reject or combine proposals where appropriate. They were particularly keen to draw on the expertise of members of SACREs from the faith communities, and were asking members of SACRE if they could offer a workshop/seminar/talk at the conference of 20, 30 or 60 minutes where they could help others from the world of RE to better understand their faith and how to present it to pupils.
- d) The 25th Jubilee Conference and Annual general Meeting of NASACRE would be held on Thursday 24 May 2018 in London. Full details of the conference, which would be themed “Stronger Together – Celebrating the Power of Community” would be circulated nearer the time. The cost would be £100 per delegate and would be funded from the SACRE budget. Members were asked to let the Chairman know if they wished to attend.
- e) In December 2017 the BBC produced its report “Religion and Ethics Review”. There was a definite focus on young people and enabling them to access high quality, age-appropriate information about religions and beliefs in an accessible way. This would be of interest to schools, as was the continued commitment shown to supporting Religious Studies GCSE. To improve religious literacy the “mainstreaming” of religion in drama was seen to be important – putting religion back into the minds of viewers in a positive way. Interesting points of action from the review included recognition that journalists needed to be trained in religion and belief and that editors should be much better educated about religion so that it could be appropriately represented. The BBC had also pledged to make 2019 a “Year of Religion” across all of its platforms. SACREs could capitalise on this and make 2019 a “Year for Religious Education” for all children and young people in schools in their geographic area, irrespective of whether they were LA schools or not.
- f) A report commending England’s 42 Anglican cathedrals for their continued importance as places of worship, their wider community work and their commitment to promoting local economic growth was published by the Department for Communities and Local Government on 29 December 2017. It was the culmination of a year-long tour which saw the Minister for Faith, Lord Bourne, visit all of England’s 42 Anglican cathedrals to better understand their continued importance both to local communities and wider society. The report set out the outcomes of Lord Bourne’s visits, but it was not intended for a school audience. However, it had some interesting findings which schools might find useful. It was 20 pages long and covered the sort of work that Anglican cathedrals did:
 - Helping refugees
 - Supporting the homeless and rough sleepers
 - How cathedrals can be hubs for regeneration and businesses
 - How cathedrals are architecturally, artistically and culturally significant.

What may also be of interest to pupils was the number of jobs that a cathedral generated in the local area.

RESOLVED – That the update on key issues be noted.

62. GCSE Results 2017

SACRE received a statistical analysis of the standards achieved in GCSE and GCE Advanced Level Religious Studies by pupils examined in the summer of 2017. In accordance with the SACRE remit, the analysis of GCSE and A level results only took account of local authority maintained schools. However, as more schools became academies it was commented that the list would become less and less and would not demonstrate a meaningful picture of Staffordshire's results. It was suggested that for the future it would be more helpful to include the results of academies.

Overall, both national results and Staffordshire's results for GCSE Religious Studies in 2017 were broadly in line with overall results achieved in 2016. Results for all pupils showed that pupils in Staffordshire achieved slightly below the national average at grades A*-C but in line with the national average for grades A*-G. It was important to take note of the number of pupils on role versus the number of entries. This gave an insight into the provision that different schools had in place for pupils at Key Stage 4.

This year there was a gap in results achieved nationally in comparison with those achieved locally for A level grades A-B. National results for A level Religious Studies in 2017 were broadly in line with overall results achieved in 2016, but Staffordshire's results were lower than national. Results for all pupils showed that although pupils in Staffordshire achieved slightly below the national average at grades A*-B, they performed very well across the full spectrum of grades A*-E. It was noted that the number of entries per school was small, but that this was not unexpected at Key Stage 5 for which examination courses would be optional. It was agreed that Staffordshire schools were to be commended for continuing to offer their pupils the opportunity to study for an A level qualification in Religious Studies.

SACRE requested that letters of congratulation be sent to those schools whose pupils had achieved commendably above the national average results for those achieving A*-C in GCSE RE. They agreed that letters should also be sent to those high achieving schools at A level.

RESOLVED – That:

- a) The report be received; and
- b) Letters of congratulations be sent to the schools whose pupils achieved results above the national average in GCSE and A Level Religious Studies.

63. Compliance at KS4

The Staffordshire Agreed Syllabus required all pupils in Key Stage 4 (KS4) to follow an accredited examination syllabus in RE. However, the 2017 examination results suggested a varied picture of compliance with this requirement at KS4 in maintained

schools. The DfE had published its response to the consultation over the EBacc in July. In paragraph 72 there was a re-affirmation of the statutory nature of RE in all maintained schools:

“We have considered suggestions to include additional subjects or pillars with the EBacc but have decided that this could reduce pupil choice at GCSE to the point where no other subjects can be studied. Religious Education must be taught to all pupils until the end of Key Stage 5, a qualification (such as GCSE religious studies) should be offered at the end of Key Stage 4 to accredit pupils’ knowledge and understanding. The proportion of pupils in state funded mainstream schools entering a GCSE in religious studies remains high at 47% in 2015/16.”

The SACRE, in fulfilling its monitoring role, could act when a school was not fulfilling its statutory duties with regard to RE.

Members were asked to consider the current wording of the Staffordshire Agreed Syllabus, as it applied to KS4. In particular, if the wording “all pupils should” should be strengthened by changing it to “all pupils must” follow an accredited course. They were also asked to consider using some of the SACRE budget to commission the RE Consultant’s time to visit Staffordshire’s maintained secondary schools to gather an accurate picture of compliance in RE. The findings of this research could then be presented at the summer meeting to enable member to determine what, if any, action was required to ensure that schools were fulfilling their statutory obligations with regard to RE. It was agreed that it was important to gather this information before considering any amendment to the wording of the Agreed Syllabus.

The RE Consultant confirmed that there was sufficient funding in the budget to cover the time it would require to undertake the school visits, and agreed that it was important to talk to the staff actually delivering the teaching, not just the SLTs in schools. In response to a query around the powers of SACREs to take action on this issue members were informed that a test case was currently being brought by NASACRE to establish this.

RESOLVED – That funding from the SACRE budget be used to commission the RE Consultant’s time to visit Staffordshire’s maintained secondary schools to gather an accurate picture of compliance in RE at KS4.

64. SACRE Budget 2017-18

SACRE received a breakdown of the current budget for the financial year 2017-18. Members were reminded that the total budget allocation was £12,860, with an additional Westhill/NASACRE Award of £2725. There was an amount remaining of £5110.42 with a further £500 committed for outstanding invoices from the Explore-Engage-Reflect project.

RESOLVED – That the current budget position be noted.

65. NASACRE Update

- a) Members were informed that a debate was currently taking place over the question of whether Agreed Syllabuses should be publicly available and free of charge. This was the case for the Staffordshire Syllabus, with the proviso that

anyone using it acknowledged that it belonged to Staffordshire. However some Syllabuses were password protected and a charge was made for others, particularly if fees had been paid for consultancy work on them.

- b) On the NASACRE website the Frequently Asked Questions section had been slimmed down.
- c) The next round of bidding for the Westhill/NASACRE Awards was commencing, but as Staffordshire SACRE had received an award in the last round no bids would be made this time.

RESOLVED – That the Update be noted.

66. Applications for Variation of Practice

There were none on this occasion.

67. Explore - Engage - Reflect

Staffordshire SACRE had been awarded £2,725 to complete the Explore-Engage-Reflect project. This consisted of a Christian and Muslim experience which was led by adherents to the faiths who were skilled in the field of education. It was designed to be fully interactive with pupils exploring artefacts, images and text; engaging with key questions relevant to the faith in question; and reflecting on what it means to live your faith within England through a real opportunity for dialogue. It had taken place on 22 November 2017, and had proved very successful. Over 80 young delegates had attended, and were provided with an ipad to use to document their experiences. Using an app called “Book Creator” pupils were able to video, photograph, record voice notes and add text to enable them to capture their learning in a virtual environment. At the end of the event schools were asked to upload their e-books into a virtual classroom hosted by the Showbie platform (Showbie was available either as an app on ipads or on any android device). A resource pack of preparation and follow up materials was provided to prepare schools for using the technology and to support pupils to get the maximum benefit from the experience. The virtual Showbie classroom now acts as a legacy resource, supporting our schools. It has documented the experience of the exhibition, allowing pupils to share their learning creatively with their peers and also acting as an inspiration for schools wishing to put together their own interfaith experience in school. The virtual classroom has been made available to all Staffordshire schools as a supportive aspect for the syllabus. The two organisations involved in creating the exhibition had managed to create a mobile resource that could be used in any school or venue wishing to use them. Feedback from pupils had been positive and enthusiastic. An article on the event would be forwarded to RE Today and distributed to Staffordshire schools.

RESOLVED – That the success of the Explore-Engage-Reflect project be noted.

68. AOB

A member reported that they had recently attended a conference of middle schools heads of RE, where there had been very positive and complimentary feedback on the Staffordshire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education.

69. Date of Next Meeting

RESOLVED – That the next SACRE meeting be held on Wednesday 20 June 2018, at 2.00 pm at The Kingston Centre, Stafford.

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

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education 20th June 2018

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 summer term meeting 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.

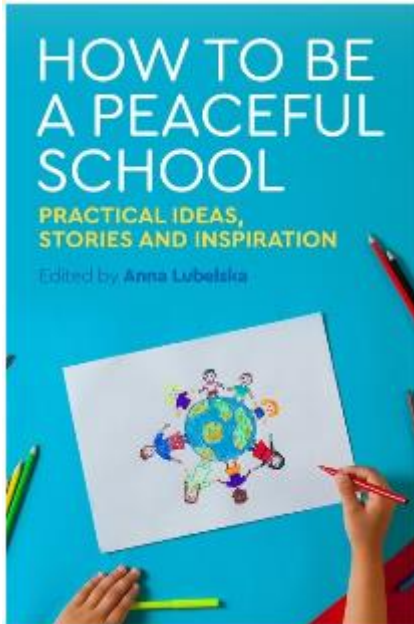
6 Financial implications

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
Telephone number:

Emma Jardine-Phillips
07805 692573

Staffordshire SACRE gets a mention!



How to Be a Peaceful School
Practical Ideas, Stories and Inspiration
Edited by Anna Lubelska

Quick Overview

Promote peace at school with this practical guide, which provides a simple four step system for improving wellbeing and nurturing the potential of pupils and staff. It is full of easy-to-implement anti-stress and anti-bullying strategies, plus ideas for getting children interested in peace on a global level.

Chapter 6: A peaceful Classroom – Creating Space and Using Philosophy for Children was written by Christine Easom, a former Staffordshire RE teacher. At the start of her chapter Christine expresses thanks to Staffordshire SACRE for their support during the project and for helping to put her in touch with schools at which to conduct her research.

Explore – Engage – Reflect Legacy

Following the success of the Explore – Engage – Reflect student conference an email was received from The Youth Net, one of the organisations involved, to inform us that three additional schools have contacted them about booking the exhibition and that potentially a cluster of schools in Stone are planning a whole day conference in the Autumn term.

Additional funding for SACRE's

The Department for Education has offered support for SACREs facing financial and other challenges in meeting their statutory duties. This follows Nick Gibb's commitment to ensuring SACREs are properly funded in the latest settlement.

In response to a parliamentary question by Stephen Timms MP this week, the minister said:

'If the Department is informed that an individual SACRE or ASC is experiencing difficulties in fulfilling its statutory duties, the Department will contact the local authority to remind them of their duty to support their activities satisfactorily.'

A further paper from NATRE will be shared for discussion during the budget item.

A new consultant to SACRE

It is with mixed feelings that I bring to you the news that Emma Jardine-Phillips will be leaving Entrust (and Staffordshire SACRE) at the end of this term.

While we are naturally very pleased for Emma and her career development, we will be very sorry to lose her services to SACRE and her enthusiastic and very professional support of RE across the County.

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education
20th June 2018
Report of the Deputy Chief Executive and Director for Families and Communities
Compliance at KS4

1 Purpose of Report

1.1 To consider any issues pertaining to compliance in RE at KS4.

2 Summary

2.1 The Staffordshire Agreed Syllabus requires all pupils in KS4 to follow an accredited examination syllabus in RE.

2.2 The 2017 examination results suggest a varied picture of compliance with this requirement at KS4 in maintained schools. As a monitoring exercise all maintained secondary schools have been visited to review their RE provision.

2.3 The DfE published its response to the consultation over the EBacc in July. In paragraph 72, there was a re-affirmation of the statutory nature of RE in all maintained schools. The SACRE, in fulfilling its monitoring role, can act when a school is not fulfilling its statutory duties with regard to RE.

3 Recommendation

3.1 Congratulate schools with full provision, investigate aspects of good practice further.

3.2 Gain further clarity on the legalities of provision at KS3 and KS4, particularly in relation to the outcome of the two test cases currently in court and the further guidance given by the DfE regarding investigating complaints in relation to RE provision.

3.3 Contact schools where issues need further investigation to clarify the school position.

3.4 Consider re-wording certain aspects of the Agreed Syllabus changing 'should' to 'must'.

4 Background

4.1 DfE response to the Ebacc consultation. Paragraph 72.

72. We have considered suggestions to include additional subjects or pillars within the EBacc but have decided that this could reduce pupil choice at GCSE to the point where no other subjects can be studied. Religious education must be taught to all pupils until the end of key stage 5, a qualification (such as GCSE religious studies) should be offered at the end of key stage 4 to accredit pupils' knowledge and understanding. The proportion of pupils in state funded mainstream schools entering a GCSE in religious studies remains high at 47% in 2015/16.

4.2 The Minister of State for Education, Nick Gibb MP, in a response to a Parliamentary Question asked by Stephen Timms MP stated in March 2018:

"RE is compulsory for all state funded schools, including academies and free schools, at all key stages. The Department investigates complaints made about schools not fulfilling their statutory duties in respect of RE...If an individual is concerned that a school is not meeting its duty to provide religious education they should follow that school's complaint procedure in

the first instance. If the complaint is not resolved, then the issue can be escalated to the Department's School Complaints Unit for maintained schools, or the Education and Skills Funding agency for academies, free schools, university technical colleges or studio schools... My Rt Hon Friend, the Secretary of State for Education, has a range of powers to ensure schools comply with their statutory obligations, The powers used will depend on the nature of the statutory duty in question and the potential impact of any failure to comply. These powers include a direction under section 497 of the Education Act 1996, a performance and standards warning notice under the Education and inspections Act 2006 and a referral to Ofsted for an inspection. Where academies are subject to the same statutory duties as maintained schools, the Secretary of State has powers to enforce compliance via the terms of the funding agreement."

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:

Emma Jardine-Phillips

Telephone number:

07805 692573

Report to Staffordshire SACRE: Compliance at KS4 in Staffordshire's maintained Schools.

Aim: To consider any issues pertaining to compliance in RE at KS4

Background:

- The Staffordshire Agreed Syllabus requires all pupils in KS4 to follow an accredited examination syllabus in RE.
- The 2017 examination results suggest a varied picture of compliance in Staffordshire with this requirement at KS4 in maintained schools.
- The DfE published its response to the consultation over the EBacc in July. in paragraph 72, there was a re-affirmation of the statutory nature of RE in all maintained schools. The SACRE, in fulfilling its monitoring role, can act when a school is not fulfilling its statutory duties with regard to RE:

72. We have considered suggestions to include additional subjects or pillars within the EBacc but have decided that this could reduce pupil choice at GCSE to the point where no other subjects can be studied. Religious education must be taught to all pupils until the end of key stage 5, a qualification (such as GCSE religious studies) should be offered at the end of key stage 4 to accredit pupils' knowledge and understanding. The proportion of pupils in state funded mainstream schools entering a GCSE in religious studies remains high at 47% in 2015/16.

Remit: The following Staffordshire schools were identified (correct 16.01.18) as maintained:

1. Abbot Beyne School
2. Blythe Bridge High School
3. Cheslyn Hay Sport and Community High School
4. Codsall Community High School
5. Endon High School
6. Great Wyrley High School
7. King Edward VI High School Stafford
8. King Edward VI School
9. Moorside High School
10. Nether Stowe School
11. Norton Canes High School
12. Paulet High School
13. Stafford Manor High School
14. The Friary School
15. The King's CofE (VA) School

All schools in the list were contacted formally by both email and letter to arrange a visit to review their RE provision (A copy of the letter is attached). A template was used to record the findings from each visit. The findings were also shared with the school to support their internal review processes.

The following schools failed to engage with the process:

King Edward VI High School Stafford

The King's CofE (VA) School (diocesan school)

Findings: See chart below

Schools causing concern:

- Codsall High School provision at KS3 and KS4
- Great Wyrley High School provision at KS4
- Nether Stowe School provision at KS4

Recommendations:

- Congratulate schools with full provision, investigate aspects of good practice further
- Gain further clarity on the legalities of provision at KS3 and KS4, particularly in relation to the outcome of the two test cases currently in court
- Contact schools where issues need further investigation to clarify the school position
- Consider re-wording certain aspects of the Agreed Syllabus changing 'should' to 'must'

DFE Complaints procedures: <https://www.gov.uk/complain-about-school>

Name of School	Compliance at KS3	Compliance at KS4	Full Compliance	KS5 provision	RE making a significant whole school impact	Good practice examples	Issue for further investigation
1. Abbot Beyne School	✓ across the KS	✓	✓	X		A local RE network has been established in the Burton area. This is providing invaluable support.	No distinct RE in Y7 however extra time allocated in Years 8 and 9 to ensure coverage.
2. Blythe Bridge High School	✓	✓	✓	✓		The school approach to core and examination RE ensures that all pupils receive a rounded experience.	
3. Cheslyn Hay Sport and Community High School	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Differentiation embedded, SPaG starters helping to embed literacy. Regular whole school themed days.	
4. Codsall Community High School	X	X	X	X			Core RE is delivered in Y9 and Y11 only. Pupils receive 6 hours RE in total in Y9 and in Y11. How far does the content of the 6 hours meet the required programme of study in the syllabus?
5. Endon High School	✓	✓	✓	N/A			
6. Great Wyrley High School	✓	Option group only, no core provision.	X	✓		The learning environment in the classroom supports pupils learning well.	One GCSE examination group at KS4. Outstanding results achieved. No Core RE for the rest of the year group.
7. King Edward VI High School Stafford							
8. King Edward VI School							
9. Moorside High School	✓	✓	✓	N/A	✓	Subsidised visit to 3 faith buildings for the entire Y8 cohort.	
10. Nether Stowe School	✓	Option group only, no core provision.	X	X		Access to useful revision materials.	From September 2018 RE will be an option subject only at KS4. No Core RE for the rest of the year group.
11. Norton Canes High School	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	The Norton Standard Lesson Planning Sheet supports effective progression. The Head of Faculty works closely with non-specialists to ensure a balance of Learning about and From Religion.	
12. Paulet High School							
13. Stafford Manor High School	✓	✓	✓	✓		Good Practice: Excellent links with the education team at Stafford Baptist Church. The team contribute to a debating club and breakfast club.	
14. The Friary School							
15. The King's CofE (VA) School							



Staffordshire SACRE
Staffordshire County Council,
2 Staffordshire Place,
Tipping Street,
Stafford.
ST16 2DH
Tel: 07805 692573

Tuesday 14th February, 2018

Please ask for: Emma Jardine-Phillips

Dear Headteacher

Monitoring the provision for RE in Staffordshire Schools

As a part of their statutory duty to advise the local education authority upon matters connected with religious education, (Staffordshire Standing Advisory Committee for Religious Education) SACRE have requested that all maintained secondary schools in Staffordshire are visited in relation to their provision for RE at KS3, 4 and 5.

The visits will be carried out by Emma Jardine-Phillips, who has been commissioned to complete this piece of work, and can be arranged for a mutually agreeable time. The visit will take no more than 3 hours and will broadly cover the following aspects:

- Leadership of RE within school
- Teaching and Learning in RE
- Outcomes for students in RE
- The wider contribution that RE makes to the school

The visit will take the form of a meeting with the Head of Religious Studies to gather a broad understanding of RE provision in the school. It would also be helpful to look at a small sample of pupils' work and see some teaching. An opportunity to meet with the headteacher during the visit would also be useful to fully ascertain the wider contribution that RE makes to the school.

These visits are being undertaken as part of a broader piece of work to gather an accurate picture of RE provision across the county in all phases of school, as well as providing an opportunity to celebrate, support and encourage excellence in religious education.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael R. Metcalf".

Rev. Prebendary Michael Metcalf,
Chair, Staffordshire SACRE.

A handwritten signature in black ink that appears to read "Emma".

Emma Jardine-Phillips,
Advisor to Staffordshire SACRE.

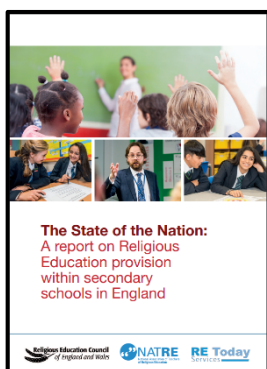
Why SACREs should complain to schools when they neglect RE



I think it is reasonable to say that almost all SACREs undertake activities that involve the monitoring of provision for RE as part of their work. This monitoring supports one of the main functions of SACRE and allows them to carry out the statutory duty to advise the local authority (see figure 1 below). These monitoring activities often include, reviews of Ofsted reports, reviewing published information on school websites, analysis of GCSE entry and performance data, consideration of school workforce data and visits to schools to observe RE.

to advise the local education authority upon such matters connected with ... religious education to be given in accordance with an agreed syllabus as the authority may refer to the council or as the council may see fit ...

Figure 1: Education Act 1996 c.56



All these are valuable activities and in the past, a report to the local authority from SACRE advising them of concerns about RE in a school would usually lead to the resolution of the problem. Sadly, for many reasons, that is no longer the most common pattern. The State of Nation Report¹ (left) makes clear that there are serious problems with the level of provision for RE in secondary schools in England and we know that this situation is almost certainly mirrored in primary schools.

What has changed?

In recent times, even when advice has been offered to a local authority or academy trust that a school is not meeting its legal responsibilities in relation to RE, it is increasingly common for no action to have been taken that results in those schools amending their provision. Chairs of SACRE sometimes write to Headteachers and/or a Governing Board but many annual reports that I have read recently as well as minutes of meetings indicate that the names of the same schools often appear as causes for concern year after year. This suggests that little has changed. In the case of Academies, local authorities have limited authority, but even for LA maintained schools without a religious character, the local authority officer is in an unenviable position since the possibility of academisation inevitably changes the nature of their conversations with school leaders.

A cloud of powerlessness seems to have descended over SACREs and, a myth has been shared suggesting that no one can do anything about the situation. **Put very simply, this is just not true.** The action I want to suggest is not without risk, but it is possible to effect change. Schools that are bound by the local agreed syllabus can be held accountable for their legal responsibility to 'make

¹ <https://www.natre.org.uk/uploads/Free Resources/SOTN RE 2017 Report web v4.pdf>

provision for Religious Education in accordance' with that Agreed Syllabus. NATRE has tested this process and shown that the Department for Education is ready, willing and able to act.

One note of caution about this exercise. Before making any complaint, it is wise to check the language of the legal requirements of your Agreed Syllabus. For example, if the stated requirement is that "schools *should* make provision ..." that is not the same as "It is mandatory for ..." or "It is a requirement of this syllabus that schools must ...". If SACRE "recommends" that, schools can choose not to follow that recommendation.

What can be done?

Step 1

If, as a consequence of a monitoring exercise, a SACRE becomes concerned about a school, then the first step will probably continue to be to send a letter to the school. Monitoring data can sometimes be misleading, and the school leadership team should obviously have the opportunity to respond. A suggested template for such a letter to a LA maintained school and an academy can be found on NATRE's website in the section "Being on your local SACRE" (additional Documents to support you) [here](#).

Step 2

If the Headteacher responds to the first letter, then SACRE will need to consider if the response is satisfactory. i.e. that the school is actually compliant with the Agreed Syllabus. If not, then a second letter will need to be written. On this occasion, the phrase 'formal complaint' will need to be mentioned. A suggested following up letter for such a letter can be found [here](#).

Step 3

If the Headteacher failed to respond to the follow up letter, then SACRE will need to consider making a formal complaint. A case study of the use of the complaints process can be examined [here](#). Appendix 2 explains how to use the complaints process. Appendix 3 is an exemplar letter beginning this process.

What are the challenges of using the complaints process?

Making a complaint against a local school may feel counter-intuitive to a SACRE, especially when so much effort is made to build relationships at all levels. I want to argue that the current situation for RE in English schools constitutes extreme circumstances and in many areas this means that extreme measures are justified. In the end, it is the students that are losing out as a consequence of schools failing to make provision for RE for all of its pupils or where tokenistic levels of RE are provided that fail to prepare pupils for life in the modern world.

What are the challenges of not using the complaints process?

If in one in four schools in England, there is no provision for RE at all, there cannot be many SACREs that are not aware of a school that is either partially or completely ignoring their responsibilities for pupils' RE. NATRE receives regular calls for help and support from teachers who are having teaching hours cut. Those people who follow RE social media, can be in no doubt of the scale of the problem. I believe that without action from all sectors of the RE community, the situation can only get worse. SACREs are arguably the best placed to deal with this issue and I believe it is important for them to do so to demonstrate their vital role in securing effective religious education for the children in their local area.

Deborah Weston is a teacher and the research officer for NATRE -the National Association of Teachers of RE and serves four SACREs as an associate adviser for RE.

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education
20th June 2018
Report of the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Families and
Communities
SACRE Self Review

1 Purpose of Report

1.1 To review the work of the SACRE over the past year and set priorities moving forward.

2 Summary

2.1 It is good practice for any organisation to review its effectiveness and set priorities moving forward. The NASACRE website provides some suggested strategies and tools to support this process.

3 Recommendation

3.1 That members complete the activity 'Effective SACRE's' and review the actions that the SACRE has been involved in to support and develop RE over the past academic year. From this activity members may like to discuss priorities moving forward.

4 Background

4.1 NASACRE provides a number of documents to support SACREs and their members in being effective in carrying out their work.

4.2 The activity grid provided invites SACRE members to rank what they consider to be the most important characteristics of an effective SACRE.

4.3 A copy of the actions completed by SACRE over the past academic year highlights achievements and provides a basis from which to set future priorities.

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 **Emma Jardine-Phillips**
Telephone number: **07805 692573**

A summary of the work of the SACRE September 2017-2018

- An official launch event for the new Staffordshire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education was held for pupils thanks to a successful Westhill/NASACRE bid. The Explore – Engage - Reflect pupil conference took place on the 22nd November 2017 and was attended by approximately 100 delegates.
- Additional SACRE guidance for schools' planning a visit to a sacred space was issued to Staffordshire schools in November 2017. This guidance was well received.
- Monitoring of Staffordshire primary school RE provision was carried out via survey monkey questionnaires. 83 responses were received from Staffordshire Primary Schools.
- Monitoring of Staffordshire secondary school RE provision was completed in person. Staffordshire's maintained secondary schools received a 3 hour visit from the consultant to SACRE during which all aspects of their RE provision was discussed.
- The Staffordshire Agreed Syllabus recommends that students at KS4 study an approved examination syllabus. The SACRE monitored provision and attainment in externally accredited courses in Religious Studies in 2017. Overall, both national results (71.2%) and Staffordshire's (68.7%) results for GCSE Religious Studies in 2017 are broadly in line with overall results achieved in 2016.
- Entrust offered a full programme of CPD to support RE teachers across the year. Bespoke support was also provided in response to individual school requests.
- Staffordshire SACRE was represented at the NASACRE (the National Association of SACREs) Conference and AGM, AREIAC Meetings and the AREIAC conference. There was also representation at the joint AREIAC/NASACRE one day conference in November 2017.
- The partnership with NASACRE remains strong. Members of SACRE are also representatives on other SACREs and on bodies such as Stafford and District Friends.
- No determinations have been requested during this academic year.

Activity



What makes an effective SACRE?

Look at the grid overleaf.

In pairs or groups discuss how you would rate each of the characteristics of an effective SACRE.

Agree on a ranking for them, the most important first and the least significant last, discarding any that you think are inappropriate.

An effective SACRE ...

... plans and evaluates its work rigorously.	
... is representative of the variety of beliefs within the local community.	
... has members who understand the difference between RE and religious indoctrination and focuses its work appropriately.	
... promotes inclusivity and social cohesion.	
... is well attended by committee members and consistently quorate.	
... is well chaired.	
... is one that works strategically.	
... is able to secure adequate funding from its LA.	
... has a good partnership with the LA.	
... is one that uses its resources wisely and efficiently.	
... has professional RE advice and support from the LA.	
... demonstrates a hands-on approach with schools and their staff.	
... is committed to making RE relevant, interesting, appropriate, exciting and thoroughly enjoyable.	
... is one where there is good listening and communicating.	
... gives information in plain English.	
... has a committed membership.	
... is able to offer schools advice and support through well informed members.	
... is generally aware of issues related to pupils' progress in RE.	
... is representative of the interests of the local community.	
... constantly seeks to self-evaluate and improve.	
... is proactive not passive.	
... provides or secures relevant training for RE teachers.	
... monitors its schools' RE provision and offers them support in self-review.	
... works to develop strong partnerships between SACRE members in order to model the cohesion they believe that should develop in their community.	
... advises its LA on RE, CW and the promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and social cohesion.	
... encourages and values the contribution of all its members and ensures they all know that they are appreciated.	
... responds readily to national or international issues relating to its sphere of interest.	

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education

20th June 2018

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

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 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 are held to which members of SACRE are invited and encouraged to attend. Issues are discussed which have local or national importance for RE.

4.2 Members will be briefed on any 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
Telephone number:

Emma Jardine-Phillips
07805 692573

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education
20th June 2018
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 disapply 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: Emma Jardine-Phillips
Telephone number: 07805 692573

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education 20th June 2018

Report of the Deputy Chief Executive and Director for Families and Communities SACRE Budget 2018 - 2019

1 Purpose of Report

1.1 To advise members of SACRE of the current budget position

2 Summary

2.1 A breakdown of the SACRE budget to date for the financial year 2018 - 2019 to date will be presented at the meeting.

3 Recommendation

3.1 That members of SACRE receive the report.

3.2 That members investigate whether there are any implications now the SACRE Budget is being met by the CSSB.

4 Background

4.1 A budget has been made available to support the work of SACRE during the financial year 2018 – 2019 as approved by the Deputy Chief Executive and Director for Families and Communities.

4.2 NASACRE has been involved with discussions at the DfE around funding for SACREs. The cost of SACREs is being met from the Central School Services Block (CSSB) from 2018-19 onward. This is explained very well in the funding document provided.

4.3 It has been reported that in some places it appears that the LA is trying to cut the budget for SACREs claiming that the costs of the SACRE, which the DfE had clearly defined as forming part of the General Duties element of ESG, are now to be met from Retained Duties DSG– i.e. this will be a top slice off the money they have been given for other purposes. This interpretation is not correct. Since the cost of SACREs is being met from the CSSB, local authorities should not be charging maintained schools for this duty (which in effect they are doing by top-slicing money allocated for schools). If this is happening to Staffordshire SACRE NASACRE need to know what is being cut and what the justification is for these cuts. Only with this information will they be able to make a case to the DfE.

4.4 The budget is held by Staffordshire County Council. Claire Oswald is the budget administrator claire.oswald@staffordshire.gov.uk.

4.5 SACRE members may wish to discuss priorities with regard to spending the remaining budget.

4.6 Budget allocated: £12,860.

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.

Screen Data Export - SACRE (2017-18) Final outturn

Option																			
Username																			
Date																			
Time																			

GL Account Codes for : Enquiry Group: Curr Budget (v2) v Act + GRNI/GL Account Code Range: EM1100/*** to EM1100/***** / Enquiry Year: 2017/ Period: 00 to 12**

GL Account Code	Description	Current Budget	(Actual + Grni)	Actuals	Variance Bud v(Act+GRNI)
EM110010002	SACRE Teachers Gross	12,860.00	0.00	0.00	(12,860.00)
EM110019201	SACRE Insurance Charges Other	0.00	155.08	155.08	155.08 below the line
EM110044038	SACRE QLS Curriculum Advice	0.00	8,827.00	8,827.00	8,827.00
EM110044350	SACRE Premises Services	0.00	152.50	152.50	152.50
EM110046204	SACRE Conference Fees	0.00	1,170.00	1,170.00	1,170.00
EM110047202	SACRE Subscriptions General	0.00	170.00	170.00	170.00
EM110063008	SACRE General Grants	0.00	(2,725.00)	(2,725.00)	(2,725.00)
EM110064550	SACRE Tfrs to Oth Accounts	(9,000.00)	(9,000.00)	(9,000.00)	0.00
		3,860.00	(1,250.42)	(1,250.42)	(5,110.42)

Screen Data Export - SACRE (2018-19) as at 30.5.18

Option																			
Username																			
Date																			
Time																			

GL Account Codes for : Enquiry Group: Current Budget(V2) v Act + Com/GL Account Code Range: EM1100/*** to EM1100/***** / Enquiry Year: 2018/ Period: 00 to 12**

GL Account Code	Description	Current Budget	(Actual 2018)	Actuals + GRNI	Variance Bud v (Act+Com)
EM110010002	SACRE Teachers Gross	(6,910.00)	0.00	0.00	6,910.00
EM110046204	SACRE Conference Fees	0.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
EM110048342	SACRE Contingency	12,860.00	0.00	0.00	(12,860.00)
		5,950.00	100.00	100.00	(5,850.00)