



COUNCILLOR DR BARRY HENLEY  
LABOUR  
BRANDWOOD WARD  
COUNCIL HOUSE  
VICTORIA SQUARE  
BIRMINGHAM B1 1BB  
Tel: 07557 287 437 (Mobile)  
E-mail: Barry.Henley@birmingham.gov.uk

May 2 2014

Dear SACRE Chair,

Attached to this message you will find a copy of a commentary on the Religious Education Council's (REC) Review of Religious Education (available at <http://resubjectreview.recouncil.org.uk/re-review-report>) which was launched in October 2013. This commentary was approved and endorsed by Birmingham SACRE on February 10th, 2014.

Birmingham SACRE encouraged and supported the REC in conducting a review of RE and endeavoured to help by submitting evidence based on our experience. We were, however, disappointed with both the process and the outcome of the REC review and are not convinced that the RE curriculum it has formulated will best help children to flourish and to contribute to society.

One point we made to the REC was that any review should canvass as widely as possible alternative views of RE and draw on their respective strengths. We also noted that the REC is a voluntary body and that statutory responsibility for RE still resides with Local Authorities and their respective SACREs. Any recommendations with respect to RE will need to have the backing of SACREs if they are to be implemented in Local Authority schools. The REC should have consulted widely and thoroughly with all SACREs. In correspondence with this SACRE the REC has admitted that they did not study the existing 150 Local Authority syllabuses as they thought it was not feasible and if RE professionals wanted to know what was in them they are all available publicly on the internet.

We have sent you our commentary prior to the NASACRE AGM in the hope that it will prompt discussion at that event and in local SACRE meetings. Your views and constructive proposals could be included in a shared complementary RE Review which is being prepared and which the Schools Minister said she was prepared to receive. Please circulate our commentary on the REC Review amongst your members, and their nominating bodies. Please send me your comments and your views on what should be in a complementary review which would make up for the shortcomings, as we see it, of the REC review.

Yours faithfully,

**Councillor Dr Barry Henley**

Chair of Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education