

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education
9th November 2016

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.

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APPG Report on Religious Literacy - a reflection

The All Party Parliamentary Group on Religious Education (APPG/RE), under its new Chair Fiona Bruce, MP, has produced a report of its findings as a result of enquiring into Religious Literacy. The report "Improving Religious Literacy" was published in July 2016 and many of the notable points within it are reflected well within the new Staffordshire Agreed Syllabus for RE. Members are invited to read the report (attached) in full however here is a brief summary of some key points:

- "We are....entering a defining period for our country, our national life and our national identity. The shape of our religious landscape is changing, as is the place of religion in the public sphere, our private lives and our local communities..... It is more important than ever that....we all have the knowledge and skills required to engage effectively with religion." (p.1)
- "...the provision of high quality school-based RE, and good teaching and learning about religion beyond the school years in the whole of life context, cannot be allowed to fall off the agenda of the government or Parliament. I will continue....to highlight to government the importance of providing excellent RE for every child...." (p.1)
- The report contains twenty-four recommendations, the first ten relate to RE. Many of these ten are concerned with ensuring that RE is taught to a consistent standard of excellence specialist or properly prepared teachers who have good access to continuing professional development (CPD).
- The report calls for training in Religious Literacy to be incorporated into all Secondary Initial Teacher Training and to be available more widely in CPD programmes for all teachers.
- Ministers are asked to re-examine the exclusion of RE from the EBacc, and "for all relevant parties to participate in the ongoing discussions about the legal framework for RE in schools and other major issues."

The DFE issues further guidance to schools regarding GCSE Religious Studies

In a bid to halt any confusion surrounding the need to include both religious and non-religious views in GCSE religious studies the DFE have issued some clear advice. Members are invited to read the report (attached) in full.

The REC launches independent Commission on RE

An independent Commission has been established by the Religious Education Council (REC) to make wide-ranging recommendations in relation to Religious Education (RE) in schools. The Commission has been asked by the REC to review the legal, education and policy frameworks for RE in all primary schools, secondary schools and further education colleges in England. More information about the Commission, including its membership, can be found on the REC website.

NASACRE is an important member body of the REC and therefore encourages member SACREs to consider including a discussion about the Commission on agendas for future meetings and to send any recommendations, suggestions, etc., to the Chair. If members are happy to do this this can be tabled for the Spring term meeting.

Twitter

NASACRE and Entrust are both live on Twitter. Please check out the day's tweets and follow both on @NASACRE and @EntrustRE for news, ideas and updates.