



NOTICE OF MEETING

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE)

WEDNESDAY, 8 NOVEMBER 2017 AT 4.30 PM

CONFERENCE ROOM A, 2ND FLOOR, PORTSMOUTH CIVIC OFFICES

Telephone enquiries to Peter Smith-Parkyn (023) 9268 8361

Email: peter.smith-parkyn@portsmouthcc.gov.uk

Membership

Councillor Ryan Brent (Chair)

Councillor Suzy Horton (Vice-Chair)

Group A - Christian denominations and other religions and their denominations reflecting the principal religious traditions of the area

Group B - Representatives of the Church of England

Group C - Teacher representatives

Group D - Representatives of the Local Authority

(Full Membership is located on Portsmouth City Council's website)

(NB This Agenda should be retained for future reference with the minutes of this meeting.)

Please note that the agenda, minutes and non-exempt reports are available to view online on the Portsmouth City Council website: www.portsmouth.gov.uk

A G E N D A

1 Welcome and Introductions

To welcome new members and introduce other members of the Council.

2 Moment for Quiet Reflection

Peter Davies is invited to lead on the moment for quiet reflection.

3 Apologies for Absence

To receive any apologies for absence.

4 Declaration of Members' Interest

Members are asked to identify any pecuniary, prejudicial or personal interests on any matters on the agenda.

Note: Should any indication of an interest arise during the meeting, members are asked to declare at that time, as soon as is practicable.

5 Minutes of the Previous meeting held on 13 July 2017 (Pages 5 - 10)

It is recommended the Council agrees the minutes of the previous meeting held 13 July 2017 as a correct record.

6 Matters Arising from the minutes

Members are invited to raise any matters from the minutes that are not otherwise identified on the agenda.

7 Brief updates or notification of items to be brought to a future meeting

To receive any updates from Members of SACRE.

Note: Items requiring decision will need to be brought to a future meeting.

8 Monitoring Group Report (Pages 11 - 14)

To note the report from the meeting held 26th October 2017.

It is recommended that SACRE Notes the findings of the monitoring group meeting.

9 Update regarding the implementation of the Agreed Syllabus

To receive a verbal report from Patricia Hannam (SACRE's Professional Adviser) updating SACRE on the implementation of the Agreed Syllabus.

10 Report on the interim report of the Commission on RE (Pages 15 - 34)

To receive a report from Patricia Hannam (SACRE's Professional Adviser) on the interim report of The Commission on RE (CoRE) and verbally on other national matters including REC meeting on 1st November.

SACRE are asked to read the Executive Summary of the Interim Report: <http://www.commissiononre.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Executive-Summary-FINAL.pdf> and to note the areas for consultation .

Responses to the interim report, through an on line consultation can be made here: <http://www.commissiononre.org.uk/consultation-interim-report/>

Recommended that

(1) The report from the Professional Adviser is noted and;

- (2) The interim report of the Commission on RE recommendations is noted and SACRE members encouraged to respond to the consultation before 09.00 on 4th December**

11 Annual Report 2016/2017

To receive the draft SACRE Annual Report for 2016/17 (to follow).

Recommended that

- (1) Delegated authority be given to the professional adviser to amend accordingly from member feedback and in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair finalise the Annual Report 2016/17 and;**
- (2) The final Annual Report be sent to agreed bodies by 1st January 2018**

12 Date and venue of the next meeting

The next scheduled meeting is 14 March 2018, starting at 4:30pm.

SACRE members are asked to suggest or volunteer a venue for this meeting, returning to the previously established of hosting at least one meeting a year at a faith venue, a school and the Civic Offices.

Recommended that the date and venue of the next meeting be noted.

Member Involvement and Information

Conferences & meetings

- Joint Conference. The RE Commission: The Interim Report Joint NASACRE & AREIAC conference on 24 November 2017 in Birmingham
- NASACRE Silver Jubilee Conference and AGM on 24th May 2018 in London.
- South Central SACRE hub meeting dates (Elizabeth Jenkerson is Portsmouth's representative).
13 November 2017; 7 March 2018 and 12 June 2018

NASACRE membership

Members should note the changes to the login and password details to enable access the NASACRE website.

SACRE members' involvement

Through HIAS, a number of school visits are being planned, as part of our on-going monitoring role, members are asked to express their interest to accompany the professional adviser on these visits.

Seasonal information

Carol Services (at Portsmouth Cathedral) 21st, 22nd and 23rd December all at 7pm.

Christmas lights switch-on
Southsea precinct 10 November, Commercial Road 16 November, Cosham 22 November. Festivities start from 4pm with the lights on at approx. 6pm

Armistice Day 11 November - from 10:55am at the Portsmouth Cenotaph
Remembrance Sunday 12 November from 10:30am at the Portsmouth Cenotaph

Members of the public are now permitted to use both audio visual recording devices and social media during this meeting, on the understanding that it neither disrupts the meeting or records those stating explicitly that they do not wish to be recorded. Guidance on the use of devices at meetings open to the public is available on the Council's website and posters on the wall of the meeting's venue.

31 October 2017

Agenda Item 5

PORTSMOUTH STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

MINUTES OF THE MEETING held on Thursday 13 July 2017 at
4.30 pm in Ground Floor Meeting Room 5, Portsmouth Civic Offices.

Present

Christian denominations and other religions and their denominations reflecting the principal religious traditions of the area

(Group A Representatives)

Elizabeth Jenkerson, Baha'i Faith

Ruth Guyer, Judaism

Peter Davies, The Fellowship of Independent
Evangelical Churches

Renuka Vyas, Hinduism

Syed Aminul Haque, Islam

Honorary Alderman Tom Blair, Roman Catholic

Representatives of the Church of England

(Group B Representatives)

Brian Hay, Anglican Diocese

Teachers representing the various key stages and an association recognised by the Authority for the purposes of consultation and negotiation

(Group C Representatives)

Sarah Sadler, Primary School Representative

Representatives of the Authority, at least two of whom shall be elected members of the Authority

(Group D Representatives)

Councillor Ryan Brent (Vice Chair, in the Chair)

Councillor Suzy Horton

Also in Attendance

Mike Stoneman, Deputy Director for Education

Patricia Hannam, Professional Advisor (Hampshire
Inspection and Advisory Service (HIAS))

Peter Smith-Parkyn, Clerk, Democratic Services, PCC

Observer: Dr Eugenio Echeverria

1 Welcome and Introduction

The Vice-Chair, Councillor Ryan Brent welcomed everybody to the meeting.

2 Moment for Quiet Reflection

Honorary Alderman Tom Blair led the moment of reflection, asking that
SACRE consider the atrocities in Manchester, Finsbury Park London mosque
and more recently the Grenfell Tower disaster. Imploring that people come

together to help one another, citing Cardinal Nichols', 'We must all be builders of understanding, compassion and peace'.

3 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Captain Teresa Everett, Geoff Wheeler, Reverend Jane Ball, Sue Bowen, Sarah Coote and Councillor David Tompkins.

4 Declaration of Interests

Elizabeth Jenkerson declared a non-prejudicial interest in that she is on the selection board for Westhill grants.

5 Minutes of the Previous Meeting held on 1 March 2017

Amendment to the minutes with regard to Minute 12, to add the inclusion of the word "University" after Winchester. Also, in the final sentence of Minute 15 that "troubled" be replaced by "young people".

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 1 March 2017 be confirmed and signed by the Chair as a correct record subject to the changes identified.

6 Matters Arising

It was requested that actions be bullet pointed, for ease of future reference.

Agreed.

7 Brief Updates or Notifications of items to be brought to a future meeting

There were none.

8 Monitoring Group Report

SACRE received a written report from the newly re-constituted monitoring group, including revised terms of reference.

It was recognised that it will be more than challenging for the monitoring group to compare the new 1 to 9 graded GCSE results, with the former A to F grading method. It was explained that the new grading method is based on a distribution curve and not criteria referencing. Meaning that only a certain percentage will receive the top marks in any given year.

It was agreed that

(1) SACRE endorses the Terms of Reference for the Monitoring sub-committee and;

(2) Notes the findings of this group's first Monitoring group meeting.

9 Report regarding the implementation of the Agreed Syllabus

Patricia Hannam presented her report, stating that a number of secondary headteachers had attended the briefing on the new syllabus. Patricia suggested another briefing next spring for teachers.

Mike Stoneman said he is aware that half the Portsmouth schools have been covered and have engaged with the new syllabus. Mike agreed to further highlight the matter at half term breakfast meetings.

Sarah Sadler agreed to report feedback from her Headteachers' meetings.

Patricia Hannam reported that in her experience, it is known that the teaching of Religious Education works best when schools' senior management are both aware and support the syllabus. Further to this, as Ofsted have regard to School Governors as part of the leadership team of a school, that the School Governor Forums be invited and included in future briefings.

It was agreed that Mike Stoneman and Patricia Hannam will liaise to ensure full coverage of the Living Difference III syllabus.

10 Report on "The Commission on RE"

Patricia Hannam presented her report on the work of the "Commission on RE".

Patricia further reported that based on previous reports, the legal framework could be revisited, this however could be quite complex.

The Commission's terms of reference are appended to the report, which SACRE members noted. It was further noted that such concepts as the "right to withdraw" (from attending a subject) have some strong and compelling reasons from the parent's point of view. Caution however was asked that withdrawal in all cases may not be in the best overall interests and may equally be for the wrong reasons.

The Commission is holding numerous evidence gathering hearings, in addition to the significant evidence already gathered. Patricia indicated that it would be her intention to present the final report for SACRE.

SACRE members discussed the matter of locally determined RE syllabus versus the concept of introduction of a national curriculum. It was pointed out that Academies would not be required to follow a national curriculum. SACRE members would like RE to have equal status with other subjects such as History.

ACTION:

- Patricia Hannam with Mike Stoneman are to invite the RE commissioner to Portsmouth, with a view of also attending a future SACRE meeting.

Resolved that

(1) the report be noted and;

(2) "The Commission on RE" Terms of Reference are noted

11 Verbal Report on the Southampton Guidance Document

Patricia Hannam reported that Hampshire had taken a slightly difference approach to that of Southampton, which the Clerk will circulate to members of SACRE. Broadly, the advice is simple and encourages a common sense, sensitive and open dialogue approach, as matters must be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Patricia shared a number of examples she had come across, demonstrating sensitivities, such as wearing a veil in school, or separating boys and girls swimming lessons.

SACRE felt that a Portsmouth document would be advantageous to be drafted to aid in city wide consistent approach to dealing with such sensitive matters. It was further suggested that added value would be given to the drafting of a Portsmouth guidance document by consulting with Head Teachers.

Elizabeth added that with the Southampton guidance document (previously circulated), the emphasis was also placed on being mindful of both parents' and child's wishes and always err on the side of respect and sincerity.

Resolved that

- (1) the Clerk circulate to all members of SACRE the Hampshire guidance document and;**
- (2) Mike Stoneman to prepare with Patricia Hannam a draft document for SACRE to consider.**

12 Appointment of a SACRE member to serve as our Representative on the South Central HUB

Patricia Hannam explained that approximately 5 years ago the South Central HUB became much larger, with 12 SACREs attending. There focus on CPD, advance Networks for teachers and the establishment of the reading & research group (in Winchester).

The South Central HUB is keen to meet at least once a term and in addition to an appointed representative, encourages other members of SACREs to also attend.

Elizabeth Jenkerson agreed to be Portsmouth SACRE representative.

Patricia Hannam to provide the clerk with dates of their meetings for circulation.

Resolved that Elizabeth Jenkerson is appointed as the Portsmouth SACRE representative to the South Central HUB.

13 Hallmarks of a successful SACRE

Patricia Hannam presented her overview report on NASACRE's chair, Paul Smalley's report. The importance of being well represented at meetings by the four constituent groups and be representative of area in which the SACRE operates Portsmouth SACRE currently achieves these aims.

SACRE considered the concept of creating a youth SACRE to consider the same SACRE matters by young people, it was felt important that the views from local schools be considered before progressing. Councillor Brent suggested the representative groups on SACRE could ask their own young people to be involved, should this be progressed. The premise is to help encourage both participation, understanding and importantly engagement with the SACRE's role and functions. It was further felt that young people need to be worked with any proposals and not have concepts imposed on them.

Patricia Hannam shared that in Hampshire 5 to 7 schools bring young people to a once a term event. Patricia provides the materials and leads on appropriate workshops and mixing children from different schools. An example of a previous event posed the question "Reality verses Religion?" encouraging the safe place that primarily exists within RE teaching to discuss such matters.

Peter Davies reminded SACRE members that we previous ran a Student Enrichment Conference which was last held on 3rd July 2014 at Portsmouth College.

SACRE welcomed the suggestion by Mike Stoneman that he will bring the matter to the attention of headteachers through the new Network meetings.

ACTION : Would await feedback from headteachers on whether a youth SACRE would be welcomed.

Resolved that SACRE noted the report.

14 Election of Chair and Vice-Chair

Following the re-appointment of the City Council representatives on SACRE a vacancy has arisen for the position of Chair.

Nominations of Councillor Ryan Brent for Chair and Councillor Suzy Horton for Vice-Chair were received.

Resolved that

- (1) Councillor Ryan Brent is elected Chair of SACRE for the period of 2 years and;**
- (2) Councillor Suzy Horton is elected as Vice-Chair of SACRE for the period of 2 years.**

15 Date and venue of the next meeting

The next SACRE meeting will be on Wednesday 8 November 2017, starting at 4:30pm, venue to be confirmed by the clerk.

Before concluding the meeting, Councillor Ryan Brent welcomed Dr Eugenio Echeverria (Latin American Centre for Philosophy for Children) who observed the meeting to address SACRE.

Dr Eugenio Echeverria from Mexico, who had recently attended the International Conference For Philosophy for Children in Madrid, thanked SACRE for the opportunity to observe the meeting. Dr Echeverria expressed his appreciation and admiration for the work of SACRE in promoting tolerance and respect through supporting good RE teaching.

Dr Echeverria further expressed his approval that RE embraces philosophical enquiry, enhancing children young people's ability to think clearly, to construct good arguments and as well as express them thoughtfully with others. Dr Echeverria also conveyed his appreciation of the Agreed Syllabus, *Living Difference III* which is reaching the International audience.

The meeting concluded at 5:52pm.

Chair



Agenda Item 8



Title of meeting: Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education

Date of meeting: Thursday 8 November 2017

Subject: SACRE Monitoring Group Report

Report by: Patricia Hannam

1. **Purpose of report:** The purpose of this report is to inform SACRE of the findings and discussions that took place during the meeting of the SACRE monitoring sub-group on 26 October 2017. The group is working to support SACRE in fulfilling its duty to ensure the effectiveness of RE through the implementation of the Agreed Syllabus
The group received an update on primary and secondary Ofsted reports mentioning or alluding to religious education that had been undertaken in Portsmouth since the last meeting.
2. **Recommendations:** That SACRE receive the report
3. **Background:** The monitoring group met on 26 October 2017 at 15.30.

Present:- Cllr Ryan Brent (SACRE Chair chaired the meeting), Elizabeth Jenkerson, ,
Brian Hay, Patricia Hannam, Peter Smith-Parkyn.

Apologies: - Mike Stoneman and Sarah Sadler

3.1 Ofsted Visits: the group was reminded that the type of visit a school will receive from Ofsted is dependent on their existing Ofsted status. Where a school is already 'good' then usually the visit will be a single day and rarely is RE mentioned in this case. However if a school is likely to be moving categories in any direction, then there will be a two day inspection and a



longer report. The longer reports are more likely to mention RE but usually in relation to the way in which a school is promoting children or young people's Spiritual, Moral, Social or Cultural (SMSC) development which is a requirement for schools. A school's promotion of children and young people's SMSC development is also regarded as a key way in which a school can be judged as teaching 'British Values' and preparing children for life in modern Britain. Several reports were considered in light of this. One report from a Portsmouth secondary school and five primary school Ofsted reports were considered. One report mentioned religious education negatively and it was decided to follow this up informally.

3.2 Monitoring Visits: No monitoring visits have been undertaken in this period; however monitoring visits are arranged for the coming months. SACRE members are requested to contact Patricia Hannam if you would like to accompany and advise on one of these visits. A protocol for SACRE members who are interested to join with one of these visits is being prepared.

Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972

The following documents disclose facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:

Title of document	Location

The recommendation(s) set out above were approved/ approved as amended/ deferred/ rejected by on



.....
Signed by:

This page is intentionally left blank



Agenda Item 10



Portsmouth
CITY COUNCIL

Title of meeting: Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education

Date of meeting: Thursday 8 November 2017

Subject: The Commission on RE

Report by: Patricia Hannam

-
1. **Purpose of report:** The purpose of this report is to inform SACRE of the activities of the Commission on RE in particular of the interim report
 2. **Recommendations:** That SACRE receive the report and recommend that SACRE members respond to the consultation invitation
 3. **Background:** The Commission on RE is a high-profile independent Commission with a remit to make recommendations designed to improve the quality and rigour of religious education, and its capacity to prepare pupils for life in modern Britain. The interim report was published in September 2017. Five key areas are open for consultation :-
 - (i) **For a a nationally agreed entitlement for religious education.** The entitlement is not envisaged as a national syllabus or curriculum. it would be a basic statement of what all pupils are entitled to, whatever type of school they attend.
 - (ii) **Ways to better hold schools to account for the provision and quality of RE**
 - (iii) **A renewed and expanded role for SACREs**
 - (iv) **Further evidence is sought regarding the right of withdrawal**
 - (v) **A national plan for improving teaching and learning in RE**



4. The Full Interim Report can be found here:

<http://www.commissiononre.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Commission-on-Religious-Education-Interim-Report-2017.pdf> The Executive Summary of the Interim Report can be found here: <http://www.commissiononre.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Executive-Summary-FINAL.pdf> (appendix A)

5. Responses to the interim report, through an on line consultation can be made here: <http://www.commissiononre.org.uk/consultation-interim-report/>

Recommended that

- (1) The report from the Professional Adviser is noted and;**
- (2) The interim report of the Commission on RE recommendations is noted and SACRE members encouraged to respond to the consultation before 09.00 on 4th December**

6. Reasons for recommendations:

The Commission on RE is currently a highly significant activity currently taking place in England in relation to RE and it is essential that SACRE is well informed with regard to its activities nationally and locally.

Appendices:

Appendix A - Executive Summary

Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972

The following documents disclose facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:

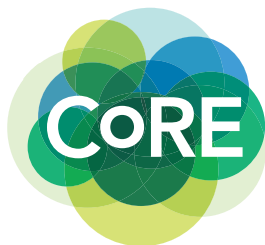
Title of document	Location
-------------------	----------



The recommendation(s) set out above were approved/ approved as amended/ deferred/
rejected by on

.....
Signed by:

This page is intentionally left blank



Commission on
Religious Education

INTERIM REPORT **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION FOR ALL

SEPTEMBER 2017



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This interim report is published with the intention of creating an opportunity for as many people and organisations as possible to engage with the Commission on Religious Education (CoRE) about our developing thoughts on RE in schools in England. The interim report explores a number of issues which have emerged during our deliberations on the evidence presented to us during the initial consultation, at the evidence gathering sessions held around the country and in written submissions received during the 2016/17 academic year. It sets out initial recommendations alongside a range of issues on which we are seeking to consult further before drawing any conclusions. We hope that there will be a full and vigorous consultation on the content of this interim report, and that this will help to inform the final report of the Commission, due to be published in 2018.

RE remains a vital academic subject for education in the 21st century. Studying RE gives young people the knowledge, understanding and motivation they need to understand important aspects of human experience, including the religious, spiritual, and moral. It gives insights into the arts, literature, history, and contemporary local and global social and political issues. It provides them with a space in the curriculum to reflect on their own worldview and to engage with others whose worldview may be different. The young people that we have spoken to have told us that RE enables them to have better friendships and to develop greater respect and empathy for others. RE is highly valued by many employers, who increasingly understand that in a globalised world, understanding others' worldviews and their impact on people's lives is essential to success.

The knowledge gained through studying RE is central to good local, national and global citizenship. It enables young people to have a nuanced and informed understanding of key political and social issues that they will need to face as they grow up in an increasingly globalised world. RE helps pupils to deal positively with controversial issues, to manage strongly held differences of belief, and to challenge stereotypes.

As local and global demographics have changed, including patterns of affiliation to religious and non-religious worldviews, today's students will encounter people with a much more diverse range of beliefs, lifestyles and backgrounds than did the previous generations. Understanding religious and non-religious worldviews, and their impact on individuals, communities and wider society, has never been more essential to good citizenship than it is now. For these reasons, we argue throughout the report that all pupils, regardless of background or the type of school they attend, are entitled to high quality RE which enables them to develop the nuanced and informed

understanding of worldviews that they will need as citizens.

We were impressed by the evidence of high quality and innovative approaches to RE that were presented during our consultations.¹ At its best, the subject offers great educational benefit for pupils and the British model of RE is highly regarded and has earned international esteem. Of particular note has been the appearance in recent years of local and national support networks for teachers and also the high level of examination entry at GCSE and A level.

Having said that, we are unanimous in the view that RE faces a perilous future without strategic, urgent intervention. Examination entries fell for the first time in 2017, and many who gave evidence saw this as a sign of further decline in years to come. Amongst the many challenges the subject faces, the following are identified as particularly significant:

- The changed patterns of religious and non-religious belief from the time when the current system was enacted in 1944 present a requirement to ensure that RE's structures reflect the realities of contemporary society. The religious landscape in the UK has diversified with fewer people identifying as Anglican and more identifying with other Christian denominations or other religious traditions. Moreover, the number of people identifying as non-religious has increased: in 2017, 53% of the population described themselves as not having a religion.² The global religious landscape has also been undergoing rapid change, where religion is highly significant in many societies.
- There is inconsistency in the quality and provision of RE, with increasing numbers of schools not even meeting the basic legal requirement. Pupils are experiencing a lottery in their access to high quality RE. Evidence presented to the Commission made clear the impact that the type of school had on the extent to which RE is provided: while 6.5% of schools that follow an RE curriculum determined by their religious character devote no part of their curriculum time to RE at key stage 4, the figure is 20.7% for schools required to follow a locally agreed syllabus for RE and 43.7% for academies without a religious character.³ This inequality of provision means that many children are being disadvantaged by being denied RE.
- As more schools become academies, leaving ever fewer under local authority control, the current framework of determination of RE via local authorities and agreed syllabuses is ceasing to be fit for purpose. A decrease in local authority funding has exacerbated this problem.

¹ Please see Appendix 1: Evidence received by the Commission for details of how we collected evidence.

² NATCEN (2017). *British Social Attitudes Survey*.
<http://www.natcen.ac.uk/media/1469605/BSA-religion.pdf>

³ RE Council & National Association of Teachers of RE (2017, forthcoming). *The State of the Nation*.

Moreover, evidence submitted to the Commission makes clear that the current approach of relying on the requirements of academy funding agreements is not sufficient for ensuring the proper provision of RE across all academies. If no action is taken, there is a serious risk of increasing numbers of pupils leaving school with an inadequate level of knowledge and understanding of religious and non-religious worldviews at precisely the time when such understanding is becoming more important.

- RE has suffered from a policy environment that has not encouraged headteachers to regard it as a high-status subject. This environment includes insufficient processes to hold schools to account for their provision of RE and the omission of RE from key performance indicators published by DfE.
- There has been diminishing access to adequate training and support for teachers. This is particularly acute at primary level where the Commission heard that on average a primary trainee receives less than three hours of RE-specific training during a one-year PGCE or School Direct course.⁴
- The quality of RE is variable across schools. Low standards predominate across too many schools, including schools with and without a religious

character. Teachers are not always clear on the purpose of the subject and many lack the subject knowledge necessary to teach about sensitive and crucial issues with skill and nuance. Locally agreed syllabuses are also variable in quality. One

We are advocating RE for all not because children belong to religious traditions or not, but because in our age a nuanced understanding of the role of worldviews must be a part of citizens' intellectual make-up

issue that we have noted is the fact that religion is often presented in an essentialist mode that fails to help pupils understand the complexity, diversity and historicity of religious ideas, institutions and practices. This was most often mentioned in relation to the Dharmic traditions (i.e. Hindu, Buddhist and Sikh traditions) in the written and oral evidence but affects the presentation of all religions and worldviews in resources and in the classroom.

The Commissioners have therefore made initial recommendations in four areas:

⁴ Fiona Moss, oral evidence submitted to the Commission. See also NATRE (2016). *An analysis of the provision for RE in primary schools*. www.natre.org.uk%2Fuploads%2FAdditional%2520Documents%2FNATRE%2520Primary%2520Survey%25202016%2520final.docx&usg=AFQjCNFDWLUicovE8LOQEgZiiuHF7fFcAA

1. **A national entitlement for RE.** This would set out clearly the aims and purpose(s) of RE and what pupils should experience in the course of their study of the subject. This national entitlement should be for all pupils at all state-funded schools and we seek to consult with independent schools about whether they should adopt it. We are advocating RE for all not because children belong to religious traditions or not, but because in our age a nuanced understanding of the role of worldviews must be a part of citizens' intellectual make-up. It is to do with their ability to function effectively as citizens and as human beings. This is as important an aspect of education for pupils in schools of a religious character as it is in those without a religious character. It should be introduced through non-statutory guidance as early as possible with a view to it ultimately becoming statutory, either to supplement or replace the current legislation on agreed syllabuses. This national entitlement provides a reinvigorated vision for RE for all pupils in the future, drawing on the very best of the RE that we know happens in some schools. It seeks to be a basic statement of what all pupils are entitled to, but is not a national syllabus or curriculum. We hope that the flexibility of the proposed national entitlement will ensure that a diversity of high quality approaches will emerge and that this will best suit the landscape of a school-led system. We recognise that schools will need guidance and support to translate this entitlement into curriculum planning and we are reviewing where this guidance and support should come from.
2. **Holding schools to account for the provision and quality of RE.** The evidence presented to us indicates that at present too many schools are not being held to account for failing to provide adequate RE. Schools should be required to publish details on their website of how they meet the national entitlement for RE. Inspection frameworks should be revised to ensure that inspectors monitor whether schools meet the national entitlement for RE. The Commission has also given thought to how schools should provide for those Key Stage 4 pupils who are not taking the GCSE in Religious Studies and would like to consult on the possibility of a revised qualification for these pupils to ensure that their work can be accredited.
3. **A National Plan to improve teaching and learning in RE.** The Commission would like to develop a National Plan for developing teaching and learning in RE, along the lines of the National Plan for Music Education. The National Plan will bring together the Commission's recommendations for improving teacher subject knowledge and confidence and we seek to consult on how this can best be achieved.
4. **A renewed and expanded role for Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education (SACREs).** The evidence we have received suggests that SACREs can have an important role in promoting and supporting RE and in promoting good community relations more broadly, but that their capacity to deliver this role fully has been diminishing in many local authorities. The Commission's suggested recommendations, which are

consultative at this stage, call for consideration to be given to adding the promotion of improved community relations to the remit of SACREs and make proposals for the securing of resources for their work. There are also recommendations that seek consideration of the composition of SACREs with a call to ensure that they are fully representative, with representatives of non-religious worldviews as full members.

The full recommendations are set out on pages 8 to 12.

In addition, the Commissioners are seeking to undertake further consultation in these areas and have set out the issues that they are particularly interested in exploring. These areas for consultation are set out on pages 12 to 14.

LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

A NATIONAL ENTITLEMENT FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

- a. There should be a national entitlement statement for RE which sets out clearly the aims and purpose of RE and what pupils should experience in the course of their study of the subject. A draft statement for consultation is overleaf.
- b. This entitlement should become normative through non-statutory guidance as early as possible, and should ultimately become statutory, either to supplement or to replace current legislation on agreed syllabuses.
- c. The national entitlement should apply to all state-funded schools including academies, free schools and schools of a religious character.
- d. Independent schools should consider adopting the entitlement as an undertaking of good practice.

The National Entitlement for Religious Education

Overleaf is the draft text of the proposed national entitlement for RE. This draft is for consultation. We welcome comments on and refinements to the text.

A National Entitlement for RE

RE in schools should enable students to engage in an intelligent and informed way with the ideas, practices and contemporary manifestations of a diversity of religious and non-religious worldviews. It should enable them to understand how worldviews are inextricably woven into, influence and are influenced by, all dimensions of human experience. It should prepare pupils for life in modern Britain by enabling them to engage respectfully with people with worldviews different from their own. RE should equip pupils to develop their own beliefs, practices, values and identity in the light of their reflections on the worldviews they have studied.

Through their study of worldviews, pupils should develop a lifelong motivation to enquire into questions of meaning and purpose, and investigate others' worldviews and what they mean for individuals, communities and society. All of this will enable them to become responsible citizens and members of diverse and changing local, national and global communities.

Throughout their period of compulsory schooling, pupils should learn about, understand and engage with:

- a. The diversity of religious and non-religious worldviews and ways of life that exist locally, nationally and globally.
- b. The ways in which communities and individuals holding different worldviews interact, change and maintain continuity in different times and contexts and as the surrounding culture changes.
- c. The different ways that people interpret and respond to texts and other sources of authority.
- d. The ways that people communicate their beliefs, experiences, values and identities through verbal and non-verbal means (eg prose, story, poetry, art, music, dance, ritual, architecture).
- e. How people seek moral guidance from religious and non-religious worldviews and how they interpret this guidance in their lives.
- f. The importance of experience, including extra-ordinary experiences, in shaping people's worldviews and how worldviews are used to interpret experience.

- g. The role of religious and non-religious rituals and practices in both creating and expressing experience, beliefs, values and commitments.
- h. The relationship between people's worldview and their thinking and actions concerning political, public, social and cultural life.
- i. Both the positive and negative exercise of power and influence resulting from people's worldviews.
- j. The important role that worldviews play in providing people with a way of making sense of their lives and in forming their identity.*

As part of a balanced programme aimed at meeting this provision, it is expected that pupils will:

- 1. Experience meeting and visiting people from their local community from a range of worldviews including those different from their own and that of the school.
- 2. Develop core skills for researching the beliefs, values and practices of individuals and groups in society.
- 3. Experience a range of approaches to the study of religions (e.g. phenomenology, philosophy, sociology, textual studies, theology).
- 4. Engage with questions of meaning and purpose and of the nature of reality raised by the worldviews that they study.
- 5. Think through and develop a reflective approach to their own personal responses and developing identity and learn to articulate these clearly and coherently while respecting the right of others to differ.
- 6. Develop the core skills and dispositions of careful listening, critical thinking, self-reflection, empathy and open-mindedness required for making wise judgments.
- 7. Learn to discuss controversial issues and work with others (including those that they disagree with) with the intention of securing a healthy and peaceful society in the context of significant diversity.

** We are indebted to Barbara Wintersgill, who presented her project on Big Ideas in RE. Her work has informed much of the content of this list.*

HOLDING SCHOOLS TO ACCOUNT FOR THE PROVISION AND QUALITY OF RE

- a. Schools should be required to publish on their website details of how they meet the national entitlement for RE.
- b. Inspection frameworks should be revised to ensure that inspectors monitor whether or not schools meet the national entitlement for RE, in the light of schools' duty to provide a broad and balanced curriculum.
- c. The DfE should either monitor, or give SACREs or other approved bodies the power and resources to monitor, the provision and quality of RE in all schools, including free schools, academies and schools of a religious character.
- d. The government should consider the impact of school performance measures, including the exclusion of RS GCSE from the EBacc, on GCSE entries and on the provision and quality of RE, and consider reviewing performance measures in the light of the evidence.

A RENEWED AND EXPANDED ROLE FOR SACRES

We seek to consult on all our recommendations relating to SACREs. (See page 12)

A NATIONAL PLAN FOR IMPROVING TEACHING AND LEARNING IN RE

We are considering developing a National Plan for developing teaching and learning in RE, along the lines of the National Plan for Music Education. This plan is likely to include the following recommendations:

- a. A minimum of 12 hours should be devoted to RE in all primary Initial Teacher Education (ITE) courses.
- b. Leading primary schools for RE should be identified and all primary trainees should be given the opportunity to observe RE teaching in such a school.
- c. Include under the Teachers' Standards, part 1, section 3 (Demonstrate good subject and curriculum knowledge), the requirement that teachers 'demonstrate a good understanding of and take responsibility for the sensitive handling of controversial issues, including thoughtful discussion of religious and non-religious worldviews where necessary.'
- d. Restore funded Subject Knowledge Enhancement (SKE) courses for those applying to teach RE and for serving teachers of RE without a relevant post A-level qualification in the subject.
- e. Restore parity of bursaries for RE with those for other shortage subjects.

- f. The government and relevant funding bodies should consider how funding of grassroots teacher networks can be made more sustainable.
- g. SACREs and local authorities should review existing good practice in developing and sustaining these grassroots networks and start their own if such a network does not exist in their local area.
- h. University performance measures should be updated to credit universities for their engagement with schools, including the provision of continuing professional development (CPD) and resource materials.
- i. University staff conducting research in areas related to RE should be encouraged to contribute to grassroots networks, lead teacher development days, develop resource materials or become SACRE members. This may provide opportunities for them to demonstrate the impact of their research or increase student recruitment.

LIST OF AREAS FOR CONSULTATION

A NATIONAL ENTITLEMENT FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

1. The entitlement is not a national syllabus or curriculum. It is a basic statement of what all pupils are entitled to, whatever type of school they attend. Many schools will need guidance and support to translate this entitlement into curriculum planning, particularly in relation to progression. We are still reviewing where this guidance and support will come from. We seek input on what bodies would be best placed to translate the entitlement into detailed programmes of study and how best to support schools to plan their curriculum in line with the entitlement. Several possibilities have been discussed by the Commission so far:
 - a. Removing the requirement for local authorities to hold Agreed Syllabus Conferences (ASCs). In a context where every school will eventually become an academy, this requirement is no longer proportionate for many local authorities and will become even less so over time. However, it might be possible for programmes of study to be developed at regional levels. It would also be possible to include regional universities on this model. A regional system might not provide sufficient support to academies unless they were explicitly included. If the requirement for local authorities to develop a locally agreed syllabus were to be removed, it would not preclude those local authorities that had the resource and expertise from convening ASCs and developing programmes of study that could be adopted by those schools that chose to, within or outside that local authority.
 - b. Recommending the development of a national set of programmes of study compliant with the entitlement. This may or may not be government-funded. This has the advantage of providing consistency

across localities, which was requested by some teachers in the written and oral evidence. However, there are a number of potential difficulties with it. First, there is the vexed question of who develops programmes of study. Second, there is the justified criticism that in the era of a school-led system a nationally agreed set of programmes of study is too rigid and leaves schools insufficient freedom to undertake RE that is appropriate for their pupils and immediate community. Third, there is the question of how to ensure that the syllabus is appropriately independent of political interference. Many of those who gave oral and written evidence were concerned about excessive political interference in the scope and content of RE.

- c. Leaving the market open for schools, groups of schools, dioceses, SACREs, commercial providers and other relevant groups to write their own programmes of study. This would allow maximum freedom for schools but might not resolve the inequality in provision and quality discussed above. Non-statutory guidance or a range of model programmes of study might also be developed to support relevant groups in writing their own programmes of study.
2. There is likely to be a range of possibilities within these broad categories and other possibilities that we have not yet considered. We seek views on what would be most helpful to support schools with curriculum planning and ensure that all schools can meet the entitlement effectively.
3. The question also remains as to whether the entitlement statement should replace or supplement the current legislation on agreed syllabuses, which requires that they must ‘reflect the fact that religious traditions in Britain are in the main Christian, whilst taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain’ (UK Parliament, Education Act 1996, Section 375.2). This legislative statement remains a statement of historical and social fact. Of those who identify themselves as having a religion, the majority are Christian, and Christianity has played a particular role in the history of Great Britain. However, the statement in and of itself does not specify how much time should be spent on any worldview. It also does not include non-religious worldviews. We seek views on whether the entitlement should specify a number and range of worldviews, or a minimum time to be spent on one worldview.
4. We have also discussed whether the name of the subject should be changed, to signify the renewed vision for the subject. It is difficult to find an alternative name that appropriately captures the breadth and depth of the subject as outlined in the entitlement statement. We have discussed a number of options. A small majority of the Commission preferred to call the subject Religion and Ethics (or Religions and Ethics) while others wished either to preserve the current name, or to change its name to Religions and Worldviews or Religion, Philosophy and Ethics (or Philosophy, Religion and Ethics). We seek views on which of these options best captures the nature of the subject outlined in the entitlement. We

also seek suggestions on alternative names which fit the entitlement and the renewed vision for the subject.

HOLDING SCHOOLS TO ACCOUNT FOR THE PROVISION AND QUALITY OF RE

1. We seek views on the most appropriate mechanisms for holding schools to account for the provision and quality of RE at both primary and secondary level.
2. We are considering recommending that a revised qualification at Key Stage 4, for those not taking Full Course GCSE RS, be developed. This would need to meet the requirements of the national entitlement for RE and have currency in school performance measures. This qualification would not be compulsory but would count in school performance measures and in individuals' applications for work or further study. We seek views on how effective this would be and what demand there would be for such a qualification.

A RENEWED AND EXPANDED ROLE FOR SACRES

1. We seek views on the following recommendations on the role of SACREs:
 - a. The Government should publicly highlight and reaffirm the important role of SACREs in supporting and resourcing RE.
 - b. The Government should consider whether the role of SACREs should be expanded to include a duty to advise on all matters relating to religion and belief in schools.
 - c. The Government should consider ways of securing funding to resource SACREs adequately. Options for this may include:
 - i. Ring-fenced funding for SACREs.
 - ii. Funding for SACREs from the Department of Culture, Media and Sport or the Department of Communities and Local Government.
 - iii. Specifying a minimum amount of funding (perhaps per school or per pupil) to which local authorities must adhere.
 - d. The Government should consider the composition of SACREs and the law should be changed to include representatives of non-religious worldviews as full members.
 - e. The Government should publish all SACRE annual reports publicly on a dedicated website.
2. We seek views on what the duties of SACREs should be in relation to promoting good community relations, beyond matters relating to religion

and belief in schools.

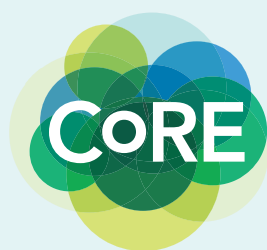
3. We are still considering how the composition of SACREs should be adapted to be fit for purpose in a changed social and educational landscape. In particular, we are considering whether the committee structure should be changed or abolished. We seek views and evidence on this.
4. We seek views on which groups and organisations should be represented on SACREs.

THE RIGHT OF WITHDRAWAL

1. We seek further evidence on the number of pupils being withdrawn from RE, and the reasons given, where these are given, as well as whether the number of cases and reasons given have been changing over time.
2. We seek views on the most effective ways to manage the right of withdrawal in practice.
3. We seek views on whether it is desirable to look to adopt an overall approach to the design of the RE curriculum in every school so that it is sufficiently 'objective, critical and pluralistic' as to render it capable of being compulsory without the right of withdrawal.

A NATIONAL PLAN FOR IMPROVING TEACHING AND LEARNING IN RE

1. We seek views on what should be included in the National Plan for RE, beyond the recommendations set out above.
2. We seek views on how the National Plan might best be implemented.
3. There are increasing expectations of teachers to be engaged with research, by keeping up to date with published research at minimum, and where possible by engaging in action research, lesson study and other forms of practitioner research. We seek views on the kinds of research which would be most helpful for RE teachers to engage with, and what mechanisms would support this.



Commission on Religious Education

Report drafter: Amira Chilvers
Report produced for the Commission on Religious Education
by NCVO-CES

© RE Council September 2017

Religious Education Council of England & Wales
CAN Mezzanine
49-51 East Road
London N1 6AH
020 7250 8166
religiouseducationcouncil.org.uk
facebook.com/religiouseducationcouncil
twitter.com/RECouncil