

Portsmouth City Council

SACRE

ITEM 4

8 March 2007

Strong SACREs, Good RE. National Workshop

Report of the County Inspector for RE in Hampshire

Contact: Clive Erricker, County Inspector 02392 441459, email:
clive.erricker@hants.gov.uk

A. SUMMARY

1.1 This report summarises the activities of the national workshop: Strong SACREs, Good RE sponsored by Qualifications and Curriculum Authority(QCA), the RE Council and the National Association of Standing Advisory Councils for Religious Education (NASACRE) and was held in London on 1 November 2006. It relates to point A of the SACRE development plan, (evaluation of the impact of the Agreed Syllabus).

B. BACKGROUND

2.1 The Portsmouth Advanced Skills Teacher and the Hampshire County Inspector for RE attended the above national workshop on 1 November 2006. 62 delegates attended. The programme and procedures of the day are reported below.

2.2 Mark Chater of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) welcomed delegates and spoke of the good work done by SACREs that he had already witnessed since taking up his post.

2.3 John Keast reported on the National Framework for RE and gave the following key messages:

- It is non-statutory
- It does not change the current law in relation to RE whereby the local Agreed Syllabus is the statutory document
- It plays an important role in the way RE is developing through informing

Local Authorities reviews of their Agreed Syllabuses

- It contributes to faith community reviews of RE programmes in faith schools
- It underpins the partnership established between the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) and the Religious Education Council (REC) in creating a proposal for a national strategy for RE which involves both professional associations and faith communities. This strategy should strengthen SACREs, commission RE teacher training, address RE in the 14-19 curriculum developments now being undertaken and provide a new website through which SACREs can be informed of developments. It was not yet clear when this strategy would come into operation.

2.4 Denise Chaplin, deputy chair of the National Association of SACREs (NASACRE), reported on proposals NASACRE had submitted, but which have not yet been published, on how to strengthen SACREs. They included guidance on:

- Recruitment and training of new SACRE members
- Good partnership with Local Authorities
- NASACRE partnership with the RE Council
- SACRE self-evaluation and RE specific school self-evaluation and the sharing of self-evaluation judgements

Denise also reported that updates on this will be posted on the NASACRE and RE Council websites and that opportunities for regional SACRE meetings will be promoted for SACREs to share information and good practice.

2.5 Julie Grove reported on a pilot project to improve recruitment and training of SACRE members. She explained its rationale and structure:

- The Home Office had invited projects to assist with the integration of faith communities. The RE Council had made a successful bid based on the development of SACREs
- Julie was responsible for training on the pilot project which focused on recruitment and training for committee A members of SACRE (representatives of faith communities)

- Initial efforts will be focused in the North-West (Greater Manchester) and Muslim community recruitment and the South-East (London) through a wider range of faith representation. These pilots will be evaluated and the results disseminated to SACREs through the RE Council National Strategy
- The project will consist of two training days and linked field work experience through observing RE lessons, talking to teachers, experiencing SACRE meetings, observing collective worship and being accompanied by a SACRE 'buddy'
- The first training day will focus on raising awareness as to the role of RE, SACREs and Agreed Syllabus Conferences and how representatives of faith communities fulfil their role effectively.

2.6 Lat Blaylock of the Professional Council for Religious Education (PCfRE) spoke on what constitutes a good SACRE and presented a handout on 30 things a good SACRE can do. His emphasis was on how SACREs can continue to innovate and be pro-active as opposed to just seeing themselves as established (fulfilling their basic statutory duties). He gave examples of how SACREs can collaborate better with schools, their Local Authorities and County Councils.

2.7 Alan Brine, lead RE inspector for Ofsted, spoke on how SACREs can develop. He focused on the differing potential of different SACREs in relation to the size of the authority they serve and the Local Authority support they receive. He emphasised the need for SACREs to recognise their importance in relation to the social cohesion agenda and how they can support their Local Authorities in fulfilling responsibilities.

2.8 Deborah Weston, an RE teacher and SACRE member, gave examples of how SACREs can fulfil their monitoring role given the new Ofsted Framework for Inspection that does not provide regular subject reports. She gave examples of websites that can be useful for gaining helpful information on school policies, syllabuses they follow, schemes of work, attainment at key stages, and national GCSE data for RE. These included: www.ico.gov.uk; www.jcq.org.uk; and www.pcfre.org.uk for further teacher support.

2.9 Three workshops based on how SACREs can develop from the “established” category of self-evaluative judgement through to “developing” and then “advanced” in their self-evaluation focused on the following issues and examples of good practice:

- Difficulties in acquiring self-evaluating data from schools in order to monitor school provision in RE. It was suggested that advisers and Advanced Skills Teachers (ASTs) could be pro-active in this role through their interventions in schools and their monitoring of schools’ performance
- Problems for smaller authorities where SACREs have a marginalised role and where specialist RE advisers do not exist. It was suggested that RE is often not seen as having high importance within school self-evaluation but examples were provided by Newham and Tyneside of how effective partnership between SACREs, Local Authorities and local councils could facilitate effective monitoring and structures that allow SACRE do be effectively involved in social cohesion
- It was suggested that within the Agreed Syllabus a requirement could be included that schools report to SACREs on their Ofsted inspections in relation to RE provision and that this could be done by providing a short pro-forma that SACRE provide and schools could use
- It was suggested that SACREs could promote closer relationships with their Local Authorities and Councils by ensuring that their work is presented within yearly reports to Children’s Services and meetings with Head Teacher panels to ensure that there was greater visibility of SACREs role and contribution. Also, it was suggested that senior officers within the local Council be appointed to SACREs to establish SACRE’s involvement within the overall remit of the Council
- The importance of SACREs recognising their new role in promoting social cohesion was emphasised in relation to promoting the importance of SACREs and this needed to be advertised to Local Authorities and local Councils. In order for this to be recognised it was suggested that SACREs must address the overall representative nature of its faith community membership

It was agreed that the most difficult areas for SACREs to perform according to the Advanced category were those of monitoring provision in schools and

compliance with provision for collective worship. In respect of the latter it was agreed that, within secondary schools, the lack of compliance required SACREs to consider its position on the legal expectations for collective worship. NASACRE, Ofsted and the Association of RE Inspectors, Advisers and Consultants (AREIAC) had all lobbied for a change in the interpretation of the law on collective worship given in Circular 1/94 produced by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES). Portsmouth SACRE may wish to consider their position on this matter when addressing point D in their own development plan (support for collective worship in secondary schools).

C. RECOMMENDATIONS

That SACRE note the report and consider how initiatives reported on from this national workshop could contribute to its development plan.

D. BACKGROUND PAPERS

The following documents disclose facts or matters on which this report or an important part of it, is based and has been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report.

NB The list excludes:

1. Published works.
2. Documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.

Portsmouth City Council

SACRE

ITEM 5

8 March 2007

**Proposed project on social cohesion in Hampshire to link with
Portsmouth and other neighbouring local authorities
Report of the County Inspector for RE in Hampshire**

Contact: Clive Erricker, 02392 441459, email: clive.erricker@hants.gov.uk

A. SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report sets out a proposal for a new project to address social cohesion in Hampshire and in partnership with Portsmouth City Council and other local authorities. The purpose of this report is to seek SACRE's interest in a strategy for addressing social cohesion in relation to community diversity and conditions for effective learning of pupils in schools.
- 1.2 The proposal supports the following aims of the Children Act:
(Being healthy; Staying safe; Enjoying and achieving; Making a positive contribution; Economic well-being) by ensuring that social cohesion is addressed in Hampshire and its neighbouring communities to enhance the safety of environments, positive relations between different groups, achievement and enjoyment of children in schools and their larger learning, improving the prospect of economic well-being for minorities of different faiths.

B. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 There is increasing evidence from schools in Hampshire and mosques in Southampton and Basingstoke and neighbouring Local Authorities that parents, children and others are receiving and forming negative impressions of Islam, in particular, and other minority religions in general.
- 2.2 The evidence received from Headteachers and Faith Group representatives relates to parents refusing to allow their children to go on visits to mosques, in particular, and other places of worship; to negative impressions of Islam being voiced on visits and to an incidence of a leading professional in education voicing negative

understandings of religion in relation to education.

- 2.3 This increasingly negative impression of religion within society has been informed by publicity given to world events and this, in turn, is impacting upon the implementation of government policy on social cohesion and respect for diversity.
- 2.4 The premise of this proposal is that locally and regionally we need to counter the effects of inadequately informed judgements about the role religion can play in creating a cohesive society, through promoting mature democratic citizenship, and informed debate.
- 3.1 The 'war on terror', the war in Iraq, the Palestinian – Jewish territorial problem and subsequent events in New York, Madrid, Amsterdam and London are the larger canvas for this paper.
- 3.2 In Britain, the government agenda for social cohesion is impacting locally through a questionnaire sent out by the newly formed Commission on Integration and Cohesion which states 'There is arguably no more important issue facing the country today than how we promote integration between communities and improve cohesion at a local level'.
- 3.3 NASACRE (the National Association of Standing Advisory Councils for Religious Education) has taken the initiative of allocating funding, provided by the Westhill Trust for youth inter-faith projects. This is in response to the new remit given to SACREs to address social cohesion as well as RE and collective worship. NASACRE, with QCA (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority) has urged more effective SACREs to provide support for other SACREs and for SACREs to work together locally.
- 3.4 The QCA (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority) has produced its 'big picture' of the curriculum that identifies learning as needing to be addressed both within and beyond the classroom emphasising the importance of community responsibility for the Every Child Matters agenda and the need to focus on children becoming effective citizens.

These changes within the social environment and the policy and strategy responses that have been made at a national level require further responses at a local level.

- 3.5 Living Difference, the Agreed Syllabus for religious education in Portsmouth, Hampshire and Southampton promotes engagement with different faiths through a methodology for conceptual enquiry which is meant to encourage making informed judgements about religion and diversity. It also promotes visits to places of worship to gain first-hand experience of religious and cultural diversity locally and regionally.

C. PROPOSAL AND STRATEGY FOR ADDRESSING SOCIAL COHESION

- 4.1 If pupils receive negative impressions and judgements from their parents, carers and community leaders, that will mitigate against the progress they make in their learning and impede the experiences available to them. At the same time it is likely to lead to certain pupils becoming vulnerable due to attitudes expressed toward them on the basis of religious adherence or ethnicity.
- 4.2 In order to progress children's and young people's educational development it is important that the wider environment that they inhabit is supportive of them and consonant with the educational purpose being promoted. Therefore a project is proposed to inform and promote the aims expressed in Living Difference in relation to social cohesion with the intention to develop an integrated yet diverse society which can function effectively. This entails educating adults into a commitment to the philosophy and aims encompassed within the agreed syllabus, Living Difference.
- 4.3 It is also proposed that this project should not just restrict itself to Hampshire but should be an initiative led by Hampshire in partnership with other neighbouring local authorities. Hampshire children are already visiting places of worship in Southampton, Portsmouth, Woking, Reading and London to enhance their provision in religious education and schools in Portsmouth and other authorities will similarly be making use of these opportunities and facing the same challenges.
- 4.4 Policy: To promote a more integrated approach to social and cultural diversity such that varied communities within our society will agree to the promotion of common aims and values whilst embracing differences.

- 4.5 Strategy: It is proposed that the following strategy be employed to enhance understanding of diversity and its contribution to positive democratic debate and outcomes in society:
- Training of those involved with organisation of visits to places of worship and faith visitors to schools.
 - Training of youth workers involved in local democratic procedures, e.g. Local County Youth Council and the Youth Inter-Faith Forum
 - Participation of stakeholders: parents, senior managers in schools, leaders of faith communities, policy and strategy makers in local government members of SACREs.
 - Participation of regional representatives in promoting common aims and strategies for common outcomes across the south of England (e.g. RE inspector/advisors, SACREs, local government officials, school governors).

D. OUTCOMES/ IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 Increased positive parental, school and other stakeholders' support for learning about and supporting the diversity of British society, in a local and regional context.
- 5.2 Positive children's responses to encounters with diverse groups and individuals within their educational provision.
- 5.3 An effective and pro-active youth inter-faith project that educates and influences local County Youth Councils and other local and regional democratic decision making bodies.
- 5.4 Increased local and regional participation of diverse, and particularly Muslim, representation within the decision making processes of local government.
- 5.5 Evaluation: Formal evaluation of the impact of the project through a questionnaire sent to stakeholders after 2 years:
e.g. schools, faith communities, governing bodies of schools, community leaders. Informal interim and continuous evaluation through reports to bodies to which it is responsible:

E. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That Portsmouth SACRE considers involvement in Hampshire's planned strategy.

Portsmouth City Council

SACRE

ITEM 6

8th March 2007

Report on the Portsmouth Youth Diversity Forum

Report of the Coordinator for the Interfusion Project (Portsmouth Youth Interfaith Forum)

Contact: Sue Ganter, Interfusion Coordinator (02392 597466)

A. SUMMARY

- 1.1 "Interfusion" has representation from Christian, Muslim, Bahai, Buddhist and Sikh traditions and an 'Abstract Thinker'. A delegate from Interfusion has been nominated to attend SACRE on its behalf.

- 1.2 The group has met on several occasions and attended various events in order to raise the profile of its activities and recruit new members. This report provides an update on the group's activities. (See Appendix 1)

B. RECOMMENDATION(S)

1. That SACRE notes the report.

C. BACKGROUND PAPERS

The following documents disclose facts or matters on which this report or an important part of it, is based and has been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report.

NB The list excludes:

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2. Documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.



Interfusion: Portsmouth Youth Diversity Forum
Report for SACRE meeting March 2007 (Nov 06 to Jan 07)

Activities have included:

- Executive Committee meetings 13th Dec and 24th Jan, one at synagogue with guided tour (thanks Julius!). Decisions included: funding bid content & structure, website planning and selling logoed polo shirts to raise funds
- Writing CDF bid and BIG Lottery Reaching Communities outline proposal
- Co-ordinator meetings included: Connexions youth worker and Diocesan youth adviser; 'One City – Many Festivals' PIF event for March 07; Portsmouth Children and Young Peoples Voluntary and Community Sector Alliance; Portsmouth University Friendship Lunch – presentation with PIF; Motiv8; 'Seeking the Soul of the Community' with Archbishop of Canterbury at Anglican Cathedral
- Portsmouth Interfaith Forum - 2 Exec members and Co-ordinator represented Interfusion
- Interfaith discussion included prayer rituals in Judaism and Islam, fasting in Islam and Christianity, celebration of Christmas and Hanukah
- We continue to address local issues – providing advice and contacts for organisations and individuals: EG consultation on roadside memorials policy, Children and Young Peoples Plan for City Council

Main Events:

- Global Peace and Unity event, ExCel Centre London – 3 Exec Com reps & Co-ordinator: experience of event in itself and planning for Thursday's Child event 7th July 07
- Contributions and presentations by Co-ordinator and 2 Exec Com reps at Thursday's Child Reception, St Ethelburga's Centre for Peace and Reconciliation, London

There will be more to report by the time of the meeting!



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Portsmouth City Council

SACRE

ITEM 7

8 March 2007

Revision of the Constitution for SACRE

Report of the County Education Officer

Contact: Judith Lowndes, General Inspector for Religious Education
Hampshire (02392 441518)

A. SUMMARY

- 1.1 SACRE's constitution was outdated and in need of revision.
- 1.2 A revised constitution has been drafted (Appendix 2) following discussions at the last SACRE meeting in November. This has involved consultation with Portsmouth City Council's law department to ensure it meets legal requirements.

B. RECOMMENDATION(S)

That SACRE adopt the revised constitution and that it be brought to the attention of the Executive Member for Education.

C.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

The following documents disclose facts or matters on which this report or an important part of it, is based and has been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report.

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- 1. Published works.
- 2. Documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.
- 3. OFSTED inspection reports on Portsmouth schools.

PORTSMOUTH CITY COUNCIL

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

CONSTITUTION

1. TITLE

Constituted under the Education Act 1996, this body shall be the Portsmouth Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE). Throughout this constitution it shall be known as 'The Council' and 'The Authority' shall refer to the Portsmouth City Council

2. FUNCTIONS

The Council Shall: -

- (a) advise the Authority upon such matters connected with religious worship in city schools and the religious education to be given in accordance with an agreed syllabus as the Authority may refer to the Council, and as the Council may consider appropriate;
- (b) advise the Authority regarding its statutory duty to review its agreed syllabus every five years and to convene an Agreed Syllabus Conference;
- (c) determine any application from the headteacher of a city school following consultation with the governing body, for an amendment to the requirement that collective worship should be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character.
- (d) publish an annual report which:-
 - i. specifies any matter on which it has advised the Authority
 - ii. broadly describes the nature of that advice
 - iii. sets out its reasons for offering advice on any matters which were not referred to in the first place by the Authority.

In addition to making the report available for public inspection, a copy shall be sent to the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA), and to other organisations, as the SACRE considers appropriate, including: HMI/Ofsted, the Executive Member for Education, the Strategic Director for Children, Families and Learning and the Councillor representatives on the SACRE.

3. MEMBERSHIP

3.1 The Council shall comprise four groups of members appointed by the Authority as specified below :

(a) Group A

One representative of each of the religions and other bodies listed below:

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

The Roman Catholic Church The Methodist Church

The Baptist Union The United Reformed Church

The Religious Society of Friends The Assemblies of God

The Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches

The Salvation Army

Other Religions represented include:

Judaism Islam

Hinduism Sikhism

Buddhism Baha'i Faith

(b) Group B

Four Representatives of the Church of England

(c) Group C

Six teachers representing associations recognised by the Authority for the purposes of consultation and negotiation.

(d) Group D

Four representatives of the Authority, at least two of whom shall be elected members of the Authority.

3.2 Co-opted persons may be appointed by SACRE for example, teachers from local schools, Humanist representatives or members of local organisations such as Interfusion.

3.3 For a meeting to be quorate there shall be at least one representative present from each of the four groups A, B, C and D

4. VOTING

- 4.1 On any question to be decided by the Council only the representative groups on the Council shall be entitled to vote, and each representative group A, B, C and D shall be entitled to one vote. No other persons shall be entitled to vote.

5. DURATION OF MEMBERSHIP

- 5.1 Members of the Council shall be appointed for four years.
- 5.2 Any member of the Council may at any time resign from office.
- 5.3 A member of the Council appointed by the Authority may be removed from membership by the authority at any time if in the opinion of the Authority the person ceases to be representative of either the denomination or association which the member was appointed to represent the Authority.
- 5.4 Subject to the conditions of sections 5.3 above, members of the Council having served the full term are eligible for re-appointment.

6. CHAIRMAN AND VICE CHAIRMAN

- 6.1 The Authority shall appoint the Council Chairman from its members consulting group D. Such appointment shall be for four years or until the person elected ceases to be a member of the Council, whichever is the sooner.
- 6.2 The Vice-Chairman, being a member of Group A, B, C or D, shall be elected by the members of SACRE in accordance with the voting procedure stated in 4.1 above for a period of four years or until the person elected ceases to be a member of the Council, whichever is the sooner.
- 6.3 Persons continuing to be members of the Council are eligible for re-appointment to the position of Chairman or Vice-Chairman.

SACRE

8 March 2007

**Australian reviews of Living Difference, the Handbooks
Report of the County Education Officer**

Contact: Judith Lowndes, General Inspector for Religious Education
Hampshire (02392 441518)

A. SUMMARY

1.1 This report provides reviews of Living Difference, the Primary Handbook and Living Difference, the Secondary Handbook from an Australian publication. It relates to point A6 of the Portsmouth SACRE Development Plan (a new Handbook to accompany the Agreed Syllabus will be produced).

B. BACKGROUND

2.1 In September 2006 two publications were made available for Portsmouth schools to purchase, Living Difference, the Primary Handbook produced by Judith Lowndes and Living Difference, the Secondary Handbook, produced by Clive Erricker. These publications include units of work which have been provided by the Portsmouth Advanced Skills Teacher for RE and other Portsmouth teachers.

2.2 The reviews in Appendix 3 illustrate that these publications have been well received and are considered to be clear and helpful to support the RE curriculum. They were published in the Journal of Religious Education Volume 54 (2006) School of Religious Education, Australian Catholic University.

2.3 A paper by Clive Erricker is presented to SACRE which was published in the same journal (see Appendix 4). It explains the philosophy of Living Difference, the Agreed syllabus for RE in

Portsmouth, Hampshire and Southampton and illustrates the methodology for teaching and learning by drawing on examples from schools. The paper celebrates the successes of the agreed syllabus and it is particularly pleasing to note that Living Difference is being explored and supported on the other side of the world.

C. RECOMMENDATIONS

SACRE notes the report..

Living difference – The primary handbook.
Hampshire County Council. (2006).

This handbook, which outlines the agreed syllabus for Religious Education in Hampshire, Portsmouth and Southampton of England is a clearly presented, well-structured and comprehensive document.

The essential components of the document include concepts, content and contexts of learning. For example, if the concept of 'Belonging' is the focus for either the Foundation Stage or Key Stage 1, the context could be 'Church' and the content might include the church building, celebrations held in a church, and so on. Two logical diagrams graphically present the concept development and methodology for teaching and learning.

Concept development:

A triangle represents the hierarchy of concept development at three levels:

- Concept Type A are those concepts common to religious and non-religious experience, such as 'Belonging' or 'Freedom'.
- Concept Type B are concepts that are common to many religions and that are used in the study of religion, such as 'Myth'; and
- Concept Type C are concepts that are particular to specific religions, such as Umma, which is specific to Ramadan within Islam.

These concepts are developed across four key stages at increasing levels of complexity. Key Stage 1 focuses on Type A concepts and simpler Type B concepts, whilst Key Stage 4 concentrates on type C concepts. There is also a Foundation Stage in which students are introduced to simpler type A concepts. It is expected that students in Key Stage 1 will study Christianity and one other religion; those in Key Stage 2 study Christianity and two other religions; and those in Key Stage 3 study Christianity and no fewer than two other religions. The document explicitly outlines the content to be included in each Key Stage for Christianity and other religions.

Methodology for teaching and learning:

A circle represents the process of teaching and learning of concepts. There are five elements: Enquire, Contextualise, Evaluate, Communicate and Apply. The process can commence with the Enquire element and end with Apply, or commence with Communicate

and conclude at Evaluate. Each of these elements is clearly described.

There is no room for ambiguity within this document, as it sets out clearly the suggested concepts and contexts for each year level from Reception through to Year 6 and teachers have many topics from which to choose to develop the concepts. Suggested units of work are included in the document with accompanying extensive background for all aspects of different religions including beliefs, teachings, festivals, celebrations, symbols and so on, as well as a wide range of teaching and learning strategies and a comprehensive list of resources. A chapter is devoted to assessment, recording, monitoring and self-evaluation.

This document contributes significantly to the area of religious education in schools and teachers will find it a most useful and practical curriculum with which to work.

Jan Grajezonek, & Brendan Hyde teach in the National School of Religious Education, Australian Catholic University.

Living Difference – The Secondary Handbook
Hampshire County Council. (2006).

The Hampshire County Council interpretation of the Agreed Syllabus is called *Living Difference* and has been produced by Clive Erricker. As with all curriculum materials the context is critical, and in this instance, one of the essential elements of the context is the manner and form of religious education in the UK. The UK Education Acts of 1988 and 1996 demand that religious education be taught in all schools. The nature of the religious education curriculum taught is one of openness and investigation of the major religious traditions, what is some times referred to as a phenomenological or comparative religion approach.

This is certainly a curriculum document that would be very useful supplementary material for secondary school teachers in Catholic, independent and state schools. Moreover it would be a beneficial resource for those

working in pre-service religious education courses in tertiary institutes.

As with many curriculum documents some of the best material is found in the conceptual framework and introductory sections. This is true also of *Living Difference*. The 99 pages before the units of work are excellent and the appendices there are a sea of information and formation. For example Appendix 6 is called observing the learning and teaching in RE. Staff reflecting on how they teach and how students learn will find this enormously helpful. One of many sections of the criteria sheet to guide teacher reflection is called sharing learning outcomes and these are the questions posed for teachers:

- Are the lesson outcomes shared with students and displayed during the lesson?
- Is it made clear what students learn/achieve by the end of the lesson?
- Are students given a clear sense of where the lesson fits into the topic they are doing?
- Do they know where the work is heading?
- Are they given a sense of the importance of this lesson in terms of the concepts being taught and skills and knowledge that are useful in larger life?

There is also material that in this curriculum that could easily be used by total school staff or even systems to evaluate the effectiveness of the religious education program in schools. Erricker has developed a range of criteria to help schools determine whether religious education in the school is: inadequate, satisfactory, good, or outstanding. These criteria cover six areas of religious education:

1. The characteristics of religious education in this school
2. The views of students, parents and other stakeholders
3. How well do learners achieve in RE?
4. How good is RE's contribution to the personal development and well being of the learners?
5. Quality of provision
6. Leadership and management.

Finally, there is a need to mention the actual units of work that have been put together for teachers. Each unit of work is based upon Erricker's cycle of learning which has elements called: communicate apply, enquire, contextualise and evaluate. The unit refers to these elements separately in the unit with everything laid out in an easy to follow order. What I think will be helpful for those working in educational systems where an outcomes based education philosophy dominates is the section called: expectations. In each unit Erricker has develop a range of expectations into three broad groups: a set of expectations that most students will reach; a set reduced expectations for some students who have not reached the desired expectations; a set of expectations for those who have progressed further.

In my judgement, this is an excellent religious education curriculum resource both from the soundness of its methodology, it exciting units of work and the wonderful support materials that are in the index. It will become one of the documents that will have a permanent place on my bookshelf and should be on your shelf as well.

Joe Fleming is a Consultant in Religious Education in Victoria.