

Report to: Children’s Services Scrutiny Committee

Date of meeting: 16 March 2015

By: Councillor Roy Galley

Title: Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE)

Purpose: To update members on the role and work of the East Sussex SACRE.

RECOMMENDATIONS: The Committee is recommended to:

- 1) note the work of SACRE in improving the quality of religious education, collective worship and pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development 2014-2015;
 - 2) note the three year development plan for SACRE; and
 - 3) continue to support SACRE in its role in promoting British values.
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1 Background

1.1 The role of SACRE

Since 1988 local authorities have had a statutory duty to establish a Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE).

1.2 Duties

- It is the duty of SACRE to advise the Local Authority (LA) on matters relating to religious education, collective worship and pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC).
- It is the duty of the LA to provide a locally agreed syllabus for religious education which must be reviewed every five years. Religious Education is a statutory element of the curriculum for all pupils, which is determined locally.
- The Education Act 1996 requires that each year the SACRE from each LA publish a report on standards of religious education in its schools and of the functions and actions taken by the representative groups on the council during the preceding year.

1.3 How SACRE works

- SACRE meets each term and includes representation from elected members who are appointed at the annual council meeting each May. Members’ places are currently allocated on a proportionate basis (2 conservatives, 1 liberal democrat, 1 labour and 1 UKIP).
- Christian denominations and those other faith groups who represent the principal religions locally (in East Sussex this includes: the Jewish tradition, the Muslim tradition, the Buddhist tradition and the Baha’i tradition); The Church of England; Members of the Teacher Associations.
- The SACRE budget of £5,000 funds a Religious Education consultant and costs of training.
- The consultant writes a termly newsletter which goes to schools and covers National and Local issues on RE, collective worship and pupils’ SMSC development.
- SACRE also deals with complaints about RE.

2. Supporting Information

2.1 The National picture for RE: 'Realising the Potential' (Ofsted 2013)

- This report identified weaknesses in the provision and teaching RE, which meant that too many pupils were leaving school with low levels of subject knowledge and understanding.
- Weaknesses in teachers' subject knowledge; poor weak assessment practice and ineffective monitoring.
- Limited access to effective training for teachers.
- Secondary provision was often inadequate and did not meet statutory entitlement for pupils.

2.2 Letter from Lord Nash to all SACREs

This letter was sent on 7 January 2015 reminding SACREs and local authorities of their statutory duty for Religious Education, collective worship and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. It also highlights the recent events in Birmingham schools and the need for schools to 'promote British values of the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.' **Appendix 1** – full letter.

2.3 Religious Education in East Sussex and the work of East Sussex SACRE

- Analysis of GCSE outcomes considers full and short courses and both outcomes and take-up. Across the variables East Sussex trends, in 'comparison' to the national picture, is mixed. **Appendix 2** for full analysis of GCSE RE results in East Sussex 2014.
- During 2014/15 the following training for RE has taken place in East Sussex: termly twilight network sessions for RE subject leaders; training on assessment in RE; self-evaluation in RE; teaching Christianity in the primary school; annual RE conference.
- SACRE has a three-year development plan 2015 – 2018 which outlines the work of SACRE – **Appendix 3**.
- New DfE guidance was published in November 2014 on promoting British values through SMSC. Ofsted now inspects schools on their promotion of British values. The SACRE consultant will provide training for headteachers in April 2015 to ensure that East Sussex schools are prepared for this element of an Ofsted inspection.
- Members of SACRE and the RE Consultant will attend Governor training sessions to talk about the role of SACRE and to ensure that governors are fully aware of their statutory responsibility for RE, collective worship and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education and understand the emphasis on British values.
- One complaint was received and resolved by SACRE during the past year.

3. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

3.1 The Committee is asked to note the work of SACRE and to continue to support its work with schools.

COUNCILLOR ROY GALLEY
Chair of East Sussex SACRE

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LOCAL MEMBERS: All

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS: None



Lord Nash

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Schools

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7 January, 2015

Dear colleague

I am writing to you as Minister responsible for faith schools. I have recently had many conversations about the important role SACREs and local authorities have in supporting this area, which have encouraged me to write.

I would like to emphasise the importance of good teaching of religious education and the central role of SACREs and local authorities. All pupils benefit from good quality religious education teaching. RE makes a significant contribution to pupils' academic and personal development. It also plays a key role in promoting social cohesion and the virtues of respect and empathy, which are vitally important in our diverse society. The recent events in some schools in Birmingham have highlighted the importance of promoting the crucial values of respect and tolerance in our schools.

The role of a SACRE is to support the religious education curriculum and collective worship within schools. Local authorities have a duty to enable SACREs to fulfil their statutory responsibilities in these areas. They should assure themselves that the SACRE is functioning well and holding regular meetings. It may also be appropriate for the local authority to support the SACRE's work to provide teacher training in RE and collective worship training.

It is vital to continue to improve the academic rigour of RE in schools so that pupils develop their knowledge and understanding of this subject. The last Ofsted review of the subject found that the potential of RE was not being realised in many schools. The introduction of the new and more demanding national curriculum makes the importance of improving religious education even clearer.

The recent events in Birmingham schools have also highlighted the importance of all schools promoting the fundamental British values of the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. In some schools in Birmingham, inappropriate religious education teaching and a distorted school ethos served to undermine those fundamental British values. We have recently publishing guidance for all schools to make clear their responsibilities in this area, and have introduced new legislation for independent schools, academies and free schools to actively promote fundamental British values. The guidance is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/improving-the-sm-sc-development-of-pupils-in-independent-schools>.

Good progress has been made recently to improve religious education. All students studying a GCSE in religious studies will now be expected to study two religions along

with textual analysis, or philosophy and ethics, which will broaden their knowledge and understanding. We have also taken measures to ensure we have sufficient high-quality religious education teachers, who have detailed subject knowledge and expertise. We have introduced a new bursary scheme for the recruitment of high-quality RE teachers in 2015/16. Trainees who hold a 1st class degree qualify for a £9,000 bursary, and those with a 2:1 £4,000.

SACREs are well placed to contribute to this important work through their development of appropriate and demanding RE syllabuses, and their support to schools on the effective teaching of RE, including continuing professional development for RE teachers.

It is inappropriate for any school, whether they are a faith school or not, to offer their pupils a narrow interpretation of religious education. All schools should ensure their pupils are aware of the tenets of all the major faiths represented in Great Britain. SACREs can support this through their development of locally agreed RE syllabuses, and their advice to schools on collective worship and on effective RE teaching. I would encourage SACREs to consider the ways in which their locally agreed syllabus helps pupils to develop an understanding of Christianity, whilst also learning about the teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain.

As part of their responsibilities, SACREs must provide an agreed syllabus to support the religious education curriculum in schools, which must be reviewed every five years. A report must also be produced annually outlining the activities of the SACRE. All SACREs are encouraged to submit their annual reports to NASACRE for inclusion on their website to enable members to showcase the important work that is going on around the country, share knowledge and learn from best practice. The Department intends to commission a review of SACRE annual reports to identify good practice, and ensure that all SACREs are fulfilling their statutory duties.

SACREs would not be able to exist without the advice, help and support of the many dedicated individuals and communities, who work together to fulfil their many and varied roles. I understand that many members offer their time and expertise voluntarily, and they continue to offer professional and personal support to schools and communities in an increasingly complex and demanding environment. I would like to offer my sincere thanks to everyone who serves the pupils in their area in such a way.

Yours sincerely



JOHN NASH

Analysis of GCSE results for Religious Studies 2014

Results in the GCSE Full Course % A*-C in East Sussex are in line with national averages of 71.8%. Results in East Sussex have been slightly above national for the last three years.

	2011	2012	2013	2014
National	73.8	74.2	73.6	71.5
East Sussex	73.8	76.8	77.5	71.8

GCSE Full Course % A*-C

13 schools achieved above the national average. The outcomes at St Richard's Catholic College, Uplands Community College, Willingdon Community School and The Cavendish School are significantly above national.

Take up of the full GCSE in East Sussex has been below national for the last three years, there is no national data for 2014 available at this time.

	2011	2012	2013	2014
National	31.1	33.9	36.2	
East Sussex	23.1	24.2	27.2	35.2

GCSE Full Course % Take-up

Take up at Uckfield Community College and St Richards Catholic College is consistently high, over 90% of all pupils are entered for the full GCSE. Three schools did not enter any students for the full course.

Take up of the short GCSE in East Sussex has been above or inline with national for the last three years. Take up in 2014 is significantly below 2013, although there is no national data for 2014 available at this time.

	2011	2012	2013	2014
National	31.7	28.5	25.0	
East Sussex	31.4	26.6	31.3	18.3

GCSE Short Course % Take-up

Results for the GCSE Short Course % A*-C have been just below national for the last three years, there is no national data for 2014 available at this time.

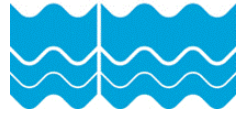
	2011	2012	2013	2014
National	50.6	50.3	50.0	
East Sussex	55.4	48.0	47.3	49.7

GCSE Short Course % A*-C

Five schools achieved above the national figure for 2013, Chailey School, ARK William Parker Academy, Robertsbridge Community College, Claverham Community College and The Cavendish School.

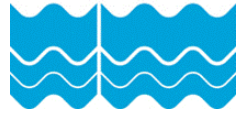
SACRE Development Plan 2015-2018

1. Monitor standards and provision of RE in East Sussex schools					
Action Points	Method	Lead/ By whom	Timescale	Success Criteria	Impact on Pupils
1.1 Develop a simple annual return for schools to include staff and curriculum information.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questionnaire to be sent during term 5 to RE Subject Lead within schools • Questionnaire to contain information around: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Meeting statutory requirements for RE (include detail of these) - Which examination board do you follow? - What are your examination results? - What are your development needs? - Have you been able to access training? - How and where are you getting support? - Awareness of local facilities - Would the school be happy to have a visit from a SACRE member 	RE Advisor Clerk	Once a year	75% of schools responding to questionnaire	
1.2 Report on how many schools have responded to questionnaire to be brought to SACRE meeting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short report on how many and which schools have responded to questionnaire. To be brought to SACRE meeting once a year. • Check on schools who have not replied 	RE Advisor Clerk	Annually	Report to be presented to SACRE meeting once a year	
1.3 Monitor self evaluation from schools around RE teaching.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A self evaluation form to be used in all schools • Support to be offered for RE clusters lead meetings to complete self evaluation 	RE Advisor	Ongoing	Schools submit an annual self evaluation.	Pupils receive better quality teaching around RE.



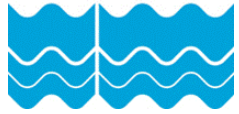
SACRE Development Plan 2015-2018

1. Monitor standards and provision of RE in East Sussex schools					
Action Points	Method	Lead/ By whom	Timescale	Success Criteria	Impact on Pupils
1.4 Deliver training for schools and governing bodies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RE advisor to run termly twilight network sessions for both RE subject leads and school staff. • Training sessions for school clusters to be offered. • Whole school training sessions to be offered. • Training to be offered to governing bodies on RE, SMSC and collective worship 	RE Advisor/ Training Events team	Each term	100% of RE subject leaders have attended one or more courses.	Pupils receive better quality teaching around RE.
1.5 Collate GCSE results for RE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyse the percentage of schools entering pupils for GCSE's, KS3 & KS4 	LA Advisor	Ongoing each year		



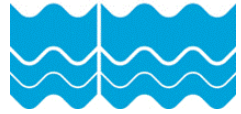
SACRE Development Plan 2015-2018

2. Raise profile of RE, Collective Worship and SMSC in East Sussex					
Action Points	Method	Lead/ By whom	Timescale	Success Criteria	Impact on Pupils
2.1 Develop a termly newsletter for RE teachers, RE subject leads, Headteachers and SACRE.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RE advisor to develop a newsletter to be circulated electronically • Newsletter to be sent through e-mail, Virtual Schoolbag. • Newsletter to be made available on Czone. 	RE Advisor Clerk Clerk	Quarterly Ongoing	Schools are aware of newsletter and content.	
2.2 Annual conference to be held.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual conference to be held each Autumn term but not on a Friday to ensure Muslim teachers are able to attend.. • RE subject leads and SACRE members to be invited • Faiths to be invited to run workshops. • Panel of multi-faith representatives to present and opportunity for Q&A session. 	RE Advisor Clerk Training events team	October /November each year	At least one member of staff from each school attends conference.	
2.3 Increase training on spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Run staff training courses on SMSC across the curriculum to improve the quality of pupils' SMSC development in East Sussex schools 	RE Advisor			



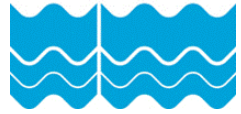
SACRE Development Plan 2015-2018

2. Raise profile of RE, Collective Worship and SMSC in East Sussex					
Action Points	Method	Lead/ By whom	Timescale	Success Criteria	Impact on Pupils
2.4 Training and induction for SACRE members.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information pack to be provided to new members • Provide SACRE members with the support they need. 	<p>Clerk</p> <p>LA Advisor/ RE Advisor</p>	Ongoing		
2.5 Improve SACRE members knowledge and understanding of East Sussex schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If a school requests a visit from a SACRE member, then make sure this happens 	SACRE	Ongoing		
2.6 Raise SACRE members understanding of other faiths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faiths to be asked to invite SACRE members to attend places of worship. 	SACRE	Ongoing	SACRE members are better aware of other faiths.	
2.7 Capture the views of children and young people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SACRE to write to Youth Cabinet to ask for views. • Pupils to be invited to speak at SACRE meetings when meetings based in a school. 	<p>Chair</p> <p>Clerk</p>	Ongoing	Views of children and young people are brought to SACRE.	Pupils have a 'voice' at SACRE meetings.



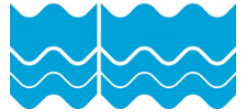
SACRE Development Plan 2015-2018

2. Raise profile of RE, Collective Worship and SMSC in East Sussex					
Action Points	Method	Lead/ By whom	Timescale	Success Criteria	Impact on Pupils
2.8 To encourage Academies to follow the SACRE syllabus and ensure Academies are following a syllabus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Officer from Education to attend SACRE meeting to advise on the role of SACRE with Academies. 	Clerk	Ongoing	Academies take up SACRE RE syllabus.	Academy pupils have good quality teaching in RE.
2.9 Increasing the effectiveness of SACRE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure representatives of all faiths attend SACRE meetings or alternatively send a substitute. 	Clerk	Ongoing	All meetings to be quorate	



SACRE Development Plan 2015-2018

3. Publicise range of resources which are available					
Action Points	Method	Lead/ By whom	Timescale	Success Criteria	Impact on Pupils
<p>3.1 Raise awareness of available resources</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Article to be included within the newsletter on what resources are available. Link on Czone to all resources 	<p>RE Advisor</p> <p>Clerk</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Schools are more aware of the resources which are available.</p>	<p>Pupils have access to better quality resources and information.</p>



SACRE Development Plan 2015-2018

4. Review RE Syllabus					
Action Points	Method	Lead/ By whom	Timescale	Success Criteria	Impact on Pupils
4.1 Review the agreed RE Syllabus in light of what happens nationally	•	RE Advisor	2016	New RE syllabus will be developed by September 2016.	Pupils have an updated syllabus to learn from.
4.2 Monitor changes at a national level which will impact SACRE.	• National changes to be brought to SACRE meetings.	RE Advisor	Ongoing	SACRE is aware of changes which are made at a national level.	

