

Public Document Pack

ROYAL BOROUGH OF WINDSOR & MAIDENHEAD STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

will meet on Tuesday, 28th November, 2017

at 6.00 pm

www.rbwm.gov.uk



COUNCIL CHAMBER - TOWN HALL, MAIDENHEAD

Item	Subject	Page No.
1.	Welcome and Reflection To invite Hilary Harris to lead a moment's reflection at the start of the meeting.	
2.	Apologies For Absence To receive any apologies for absence.	
3.	Declarations of Interest To receive any declarations of interest.	3 - 4
4.	Minutes of Previous Meeting To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on June 6 th and to review the agreed actions.	5 - 10
5.	Membership Update To receive an update on group membership, and to discuss Humanist representation on the SACRE.	
6.	SACRE Member Training For members to receive a brief training session from Anne Andrews.	
7.	Annual Report and Building SACRE's Capacity To approve the wording of the introduction to the 2016/17 Annual Report and discuss the issue of building SACRE's capacity.	11 - 12
8.	Collective Worship To receive an update.	
9.	Crossing the Bridges Project Update To receive an update.	
10.	Commission on RE Interim Report To discuss the contents of the report.	13 - 28
11.	Any Other Business To consider any other items of business.	
12.	Dates Of Future Meetings March 27 th 2018	
13.	LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 - EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC To consider passing the following resolution:- "That under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting whilst discussion takes place on item 14 on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1-7 of part I of Schedule 12A of the Act"	
	Part II	
14.	NATRE State of the Nation Report To consider the contents of the report and how it relates to the Royal Borough.	29 - 30

Members of the Press and Public are welcome to attend this meeting.

Andy Carswell Democratic Services

Issued: Date Not Specified

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MEMBERS' GUIDE TO DECLARING INTERESTS IN MEETINGS

Disclosure at Meetings

If a Member has not disclosed an interest in their Register of Interests, they **must make** the declaration of interest at the beginning of the meeting, or as soon as they are aware that they have a DPI or Prejudicial Interest. If a Member has already disclosed the interest in their Register of Interests they are still required to disclose this in the meeting if it relates to the matter being discussed.

A member with a DPI or Prejudicial Interest **may make representations at the start of the item but must not take part in the discussion or vote at a meeting.** The speaking time allocated for Members to make representations is at the discretion of the Chairman of the meeting. In order to avoid any accusations of taking part in the discussion or vote, after speaking, Members should move away from the panel table to a public area or, if they wish, leave the room. If the interest declared has not been entered on to a Members' Register of Interests, they must notify the Monitoring Officer in writing within the next 28 days following the meeting.

Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPIs) (relating to the Member or their partner) include:

- Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain.
- Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit made in respect of any expenses occurred in carrying out member duties or election expenses.
- Any contract under which goods and services are to be provided/works to be executed which has not been fully discharged.
- Any beneficial interest in land within the area of the relevant authority.
- Any licence to occupy land in the area of the relevant authority for a month or longer.
- Any tenancy where the landlord is the relevant authority, and the tenant is a body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest.
- Any beneficial interest in securities of a body where:
 - a) that body has a piece of business or land in the area of the relevant authority, and
 - b) either (i) the total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body **or** (ii) the total nominal value of the shares of any one class belonging to the relevant person exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.

Any Member who is unsure if their interest falls within any of the above legal definitions should seek advice from the Monitoring Officer in advance of the meeting.

A Member with a DPI should state in the meeting: ***'I declare a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in item x because xxx. As soon as we come to that item, I will leave the room/ move to the public area for the entire duration of the discussion and not take part in the vote.'***

Or, if making representations on the item: ***'I declare a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in item x because xxx. As soon as we come to that item, I will make representations, then I will leave the room/ move to the public area for the entire duration of the discussion and not take part in the vote.'***

Prejudicial Interests

Any interest which a reasonable, fair minded and informed member of the public would reasonably believe is so significant that it harms or impairs the Member's ability to judge the public interest in the item, i.e. a Member's decision making is influenced by their interest so that they are not able to impartially consider relevant issues.

A Member with a Prejudicial interest should state in the meeting: ***'I declare a Prejudicial Interest in item x because xxx. As soon as we come to that item, I will leave the room/ move to the public area for the entire duration of the discussion and not take part in the vote.'***

Or, if making representations in the item: ***'I declare a Prejudicial Interest in item x because xxx. As soon as we come to that item, I will make representations, then I will leave the room/ move to the public area for the entire duration of the discussion and not take part in the vote.'***

Personal interests

Any other connection or association which a member of the public may reasonably think may influence a Member when making a decision on council matters.

Members with a Personal Interest should state at the meeting: ***'I wish to declare a Personal Interest in item x because xxx'. As this is a Personal Interest only, I will take part in the discussion and vote on the matter.***

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ROYAL BOROUGH OF WINDSOR AND MAIDENHEAD

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

6 June 2017

PRESENT: Richard Kellaway, Anne Andrews, Michael Gammage, Karen Butler, Hilary Harris, Barbara Meaney, Ila Gangotra, Ravinder Singh Zandu, Deborah Firth, Ceri Neil and Sally Lynch.

Officers in attendance: Andy Carswell

ACTION

1 Welcome

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced a new member, Sally Lynch. The Chairman explained that she would be replacing Joan Hicks, who was resigning and was unable to attend the meeting. The Chairman thanked Joan Hicks for her service on the SACRE Panel.

2 Collective Worship

ORDER OF BUSINESS

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That the order of business as detailed in the agenda, be amended.

The Chairman reminded members that the RE Toolkit had been covered in detail at the last meeting, with the exception of the section relating to Collective Worship. Members were reminded that part of SACRE's role was to support the provision of Collective Worship in schools, and where necessary to respond to requests for determinations. There was an acceptance amongst members that Collective Worship had not been discussed much by SACRE in recent times and that members were not fully aware of all of the issues affecting schools in relation to Collective Worship.

Anne Andrews informed members that, although she often attended schools for networking meetings with RE subject leaders, she was not be able to provide advice on Collective Worship during the course of those meetings; that would have to be done separately on a one-to-one basis with the subject leader. This was because the networking meetings were separate from her role with SACRE, and because some of the schools she visited did not come under SACRE's remit.

In relation to Key Area 3a mentioned in the Toolkit, members felt that the SACRE could be considered as being above 'Developing' but had not reached the level of practice to consider itself as 'Established' and the SACRE should be considered a borderline between the two. It was felt that issues relating to supporting pupil entitlement had not been discussed much and had been neglected, and that more resources should be put into supporting this. However it was felt that the debate in relation to this point had been a useful exercise.

In relation to Key Area 3b, after some discussion members agreed that the SACRE should be considered as having 'Developing' practice regarding enhancing the quality of provision of collective worship.

In relation to Key Area 3c, members noted that the SACRE had only ever received one request to deal with a determination. There had also been very little by way of training and as a result it was agreed that the SACRE should be considered as 'Developing' in terms of responding to requests for determinations.

With regards to areas for development, Anne Andrews stated that in her role as advisor to Bracknell Forest Council she had searched the websites of all schools for their Collective Worship policy and arranged for the Local Authority to contact all the schools that did not have their policy publicly available. She said this raised the profile of Collective Worship and made schools aware of it. The Chairman said SACRE should focus its attention on identifying which schools that it had responsibility for and ask about their Collective Worship policy, in order to work out what steps should be taken next. Members agreed to review this against the guidelines relating to types of schools included in the NASACRE Handbook.

Members also reviewed a sample policy and guide to Collective Worship, along with draft copies of forms for applying for a determination and a review of that determination. After some discussion it was agreed to defer the item to the next meeting for further debate.

Action: An item on Collective Worship to be included on the agenda for the next meeting.

Action: Details of which categories outlined in the NASACRE Handbook schools within the Royal Borough fitted into, and, as far as possible, for information on their Collective Worship policies, to be sought from the Local Authority Officer.

3 Apologies For Absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Airey, Cllr Majeed, Joan Hicks, Clive Haines and Liz Jenkins.

4 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

5 Minutes of Meeting on March 13th

The Minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as an accurate record, save for the final sentence on the minute relating to the NASACRE Big Survey being amended to 'Members felt it would be more productive if SACRE members were to visit a school to observe teaching and learning in RE and Collective Worship, and provide feedback at the next meeting'.

Members discussed the actions arising from the previous meeting.

Action	Responsibility	Progress
Arrangements to be made to identify two new members	Anne Andrews/Joan Hicks	Completed
Response to NASACRE Big Survey to be sent	Anne Andrews	Completed
School visit to be arranged and members	Karen Butler/Louise Ceska	Completed

to receive update		
Details of member training session to be circulated	Andy Carswell	Completed
Item on Collective Worship to be included on next agenda	Andy Carswell	Completed
Desborough College, Windsor Boys' and Windsor Girls' Schools to be contacted about RE teaching provision	Anne Andrews	Completed
Exam results to be removed from Annual Report	Anne Andrews	Completed

6 Membership Update

The clerk informed members that Liz Jenkins had resigned from her position on SACRE the day before the meeting. The clerk stated that Anthea West had suggested avenues to pursue in terms of seeking a replacement Buddhist member; however a replacement had not yet been found.

It was noted that a change to the SACRE Constitution was needed as two of the teaching unions that were represented were due to merge in time for the next school year. After some discussion members agreed that the six teaching representatives on SACRE should come from each of the four Key Stages, along with a headteacher and a representative from an Academy. It was felt that taking this course of action would make it easier to fill the vacancies. The clerk informed members that any changes to the SACRE Constitution would need to be agreed at a meeting of the full Council. It was agreed that a change to the Constitution should be investigated, and if possible to be implemented in time for the next meeting.

Action: The clerk to enquire about amending the SACRE Constitution at a meeting of full Council at RBWM.

Cllr Kellaway and Sally Lynch left the meeting at 6.55pm.

7 Syllabus Review

It was agreed that all members of the SACRE would become members of the Agreed Syllabus Review Conference. However the teaching representatives said they had not seen any email correspondence relating to feedback of the Syllabus survey. It was noted that feedback from teachers needed to be submitted by July 21st. The response to a separate SACRE questionnaire had been agreed at the Hub meeting, when three SACRE members had been present along with Jan Lever. Members were informed that the results of the survey were to be confirmed at the next Hub meeting on September 12th. Members were informed that an additional meeting would take place in May 2018 to agree and ratify the Syllabus in time for it to be introduced in July 2018, for implementation at the start of the 2018/19 academic year. It was anticipated that the main content of the Syllabus would not be radically altered as feedback on the current Syllabus had generally been positive.

Members said during discussions that they felt there was a lack of training available to teachers, leading to a lack of RE specialist teachers. It was also felt that if this issue was ignored by Ofsted, it sent out a message that RE was

not considered an important aspect of the curriculum.

Members were reminded that they were all welcome to attend the Hub meeting on September 12th. Members were also informed that a consultation event for members of religious groups was taking place on October 4th at Wokingham Borough Council. Full details of this had not yet been confirmed however.

Action: Anne Andrews to ask the Local Authority Officer if correspondence relating to the Syllabus survey had been circulated amongst teachers.

Action: Details of the Consultation event for religious groups to be confirmed and circulated to members.

8 Feedback from NASACRE Conference and AGM

Barbara Meaney provided members with an overview of the NASACRE AGM and Conference. The title of the Conference was 'Preparing for Life in Britain Today: The Contribution of RE'. The first speaker was Dr Joyce Miller, who discussed the several major reports to make up the RE Commission and spoke at length about the Commission on Religious Education, or CoRE. The second presentation was provided by Prof Aaquil Ahmed, whose talk was entitled 'Why Religious Literacy is Important for Community Cohesion'. The talk looked at how SACREs could help with community cohesion, such as sharing good practice, celebrating RE, creating strategies to support development of religious literacy across the whole teaching force, and using networks to support schools and religious communities.

9 Update on Crossing the Bridges project

Anne Andrews advised members that collating details for the Crossing the Bridges directory had now been completed and it was hoped that the full directory would be available before the end of the school term. Anne Andrews stated that she would be raising Crossing the Bridges at her next Subject Leader Team meeting in order to remind attendees of the value of children attending places of worship. She also stated that it was important not to lose the impetus from compiling the directory.

10 Feedback from SACRE Hub

Karen Butler informed members that the key updates on the project had been highlighted in the document circulated with the agenda, and that there were no further updates.

11 Feedback from SACRE training event

Anne Andrews informed members that the training event had looked at the role of a SACRE. She said around a dozen people from each of the six Berkshire SACREs had attended. The next training event was scheduled for September 12th and would focus on RE; the spring term training session would focus on a SACRE's responsibility regarding Collective Worship.

The Chairman asked if it would be possible for members to receive a brief training session at the next meeting. This was agreed, with members to decide what they wanted to receive training on.

Ila Gangotra asked if people's roles on SACRE could be clarified. Members were informed that this was included in the SACRE Handbook. It was agreed

to distribute the Handbook to all members.

Action: Members to receive a brief training session from Anne Andrews at the next meeting, on a topic to be agreed.

Action: The clerk to circulate the SACRE Handbook to all members.

12 Pan Berkshire Conference

Members were informed that the next Conference would take place on September 28th at the Holiday Inn at Winnersh Triangle, and that it was scheduled to take place from 6.30-9pm. Members were informed that the SACRE had a budget of £2,000 set aside for attendance at Conferences, and it was hoped as many members as possible would be able to attend.

13 Newlands School Visit

Karen Butler gave an overview to members about her visit to Newlands School. She explained that she saw parts of three lessons; two of which were Key Stage 3, the other was an A Level lesson. Karen Butler explained that she did not have the opportunity to witness any Collective Worship but had the opportunity to speak to the person responsible for it. She also spoke to the Head of RE and the headteacher at the end of the day.

Karen Butler explained that, in particular, she was looking for examples of learning objectives, with a focus on what the teachers were asking pupils and how they responded. She said the teachers encouraged and stressed the importance of independent thinking, and of paired thinking. She said the strengths of the school were the way pupils would be challenged in terms of questions and expected to collaborate with one another.

Karen Butler stated that she was very impressed with the Year 12 pupils, particularly their articulacy when discussing complex issues. It was also noted that the school had a 'thought for the week' that pupils abided by, and that youngsters would sometimes help with preparing and leading assemblies.

Karen Butler said the main priority for the school is to improve the quality of its teaching resources. It was explained that the number of available textbooks had decreased over time, meaning there weren't enough for pupils to take one home to complete homework assignments. The school was also working hard to increase the number of pupils that took RE at GCSE, as the school's exam results were among the best in the Royal Borough. Visits to places of worship were popular among staff and pupils, but additional funding was required in order to arrange these.

Karen Butler explained that she had filled out a form outlining what she had observed and said blank copies of this form could be made available to other members who wished to attend a school visit.

Deborah Firth asked members if anyone wanted to visit Boyne Hill School, adding that it would be possible to view a Collective Worship. It was agreed that Ceri Neil would attend at a date to be arranged, and her report to be circulated to members.

Action: Ceri Neil and Deborah Firth to arrange visit to Boyne Hill School, and the report to be sent to the clerk for distribution to all members.

14 Any Other Business

Hilary Harris raised concerns that some schools had recently been left disappointed with the quality of visits from a representative of the Jewish community, and that the schools had been charged for the visits. She said that representatives from Maidenhead Synagogue would provide school visits for free and there should not be an expectation that schools should have to pay to receive a visitor. Hilary Harris raised concerns that these recent complaints could undermine the work put into collating the Crossing the Bridges directory.

Action: Anne Andrews to take the lead in investigating and/or passing on the concerns raised by Hilary Harris.

Action: Anne Andrews to consult with the Local Authority Officer regarding contacting subscribers to the SACRE Newsletter to note that SACRE cannot endorse any faith visitor, and that schools should exercise appropriate caution when inviting faith visitors; and that Maidenhead Synagogue can host school visits, and may provide school visitors, without charge.

15 Dates Of Future Meetings

The dates of the next two meetings were noted, with the venue confirmed as the Council Chamber.

The meeting, which began at 6.00 pm, ended at 8.17 pm

16
17

INTRODUCTION TO ANNUAL REPORT [Draft for Approval]

Our SACRE has continued to do its best in the last year – but with a growing realisation if the SACRE is to be truly effective then something significant needs to change.

The vital importance of high quality RE teaching – and SACREs' involvement in enabling it - is increasingly recognised:

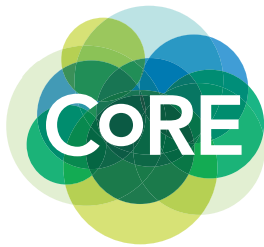
- The report of the Commission on Religion and Belief in British Public Life 'Living with Difference' identified good RE teaching as essential in developing religious literacy and a 'religiously astute' society
- The 'RE for Real' report, whose sponsors included Culham St Gabriel's, a charitable trust dedicated to excellence in RE, addressed the 'policy muddle about RE' and inter alia called for an urgent review of the role of SACREs
- A report by the National Association of Teachers of RE 'The State of the Nation' identifies the many deficiencies and challenges in providing high quality RE teaching in secondary schools in England
- The interim report for the Commission on Religious Education also catalogues the many inadequacies and inconsistencies in providing high quality RE in all schools. It too calls inter alia for an expanded role for SACREs.

There is a new interest too in another SACRE responsibility, collective worship. The statutory provisions for collective worship have been seen in many schools as appropriate for a former age and quietly forgotten. There is a new interest though in inclusive forms of collective worship which draw inspiration from all faiths. This year's winner of the Accord Coalition's award – Brent SACRE – provides one example: 'Rather than watching assemblies wither on the vine, Brent SACRE's approach helps secure for local pupils a valuable opportunity to communally explore and forge shared values, in a way that is respectful and workable'.

The Accord awards highlighted other ways in which SACREs have been innovative: Suffolk SACRE, for instance, provided its schools with a 'Teaching Controversial Issues Toolkit' intended to support teachers with respect to the Prevent programme, the promotion of pupils' SMSC development, and teaching 'British values'. The Toolkit had plans and resources organised around nine themes including extremism, tolerance, being British, and culture and faith.

So these are rapidly-changing times in RE and collective worship - there is clearly plenty of valuable work that our SACRE could be doing. What is becoming obvious though is that SACRE as it is currently operating is not capable of providing the impetus and energy required to make a difference. This will be the subject of consultation: can SACRE meet more regularly? Should it create sub-committees to help widen and accelerate its impact? Should there be some elementary form of secretariat? And can volunteers be found to take on some or all of the work which needs to be done if SACRE is to fulfil its potential? These are some of the questions with which we will be grappling this year.

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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

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:

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

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.

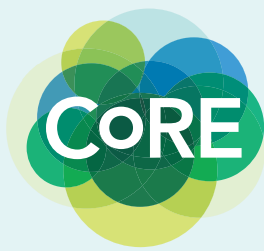
3. We are still considering how the composition of SACREs should be adapted to be fit for purpose in a changed social and educational landscape. In particular, we are considering whether the committee structure should be changed or abolished. We seek views and evidence on this.
4. We seek views on which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

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