

Public Document Pack
SOUTHEND-ON-SEA BOROUGH COUNCIL

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education

Date: Wednesday, 20th January, 2016

Time: 2.00 pm

Place: Edwards Hall Primary School,

Macmurdo Road, Eastwood,

Leigh-on-Sea, SS9 5AQ

Contact: Robert Harris

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A G E N D A

- 1 Apologies for Absence**
- 2 Declarations of Interest**
- 3 Minutes of the meeting held on 8th June 2015 and Matters Arising (Pages 1 - 4)**
Minutes attached.
- 4 RETool - SACRE Self-Evaluation (Pages 5 - 34)**
Report attached.
- 5 Review of the SACRE Constitution & Membership 2015/16 (Pages 35 - 42)**
Report attached.
- 6 Draft Code of Conduct for SACRE Members (Pages 43 - 44)**
Report attached.
- 7 SACRE Members Handbook (Pages 45 - 60)**
Report attached.
- 8 NASACRE Conference and AGM 17th May 2016, Central Hall, Westminster, London**
- 9 Any other business**
- 10 Date and time of next meeting**

Members:

Ryan (Chair), M Buckley, Mrs Larkin, Ms P Draycott, Ms L Hopkinson, Werrett, C Pegler, S Tinning, Dr Khokha, Mr J Greenstein, Ms S Hart, Mr G Licence, Mr B Maddison, Cllr Betson, Cllr Davidson, Cllr Evans, Cllr Davies, Cllr Borton, Cllr Ware-Lane and Cllr McGlone

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SOUTHEND-ON-SEA BOROUGH COUNCIL

Meeting of Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education

Date: Monday 8th June 2015
(Draft Minutes)

Place: St Laurence & All Saints Church, Eastwoodbury Lane, Southend-on-Sea

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Present: Mr K Ryan (Chairman)
Councillors Betson and Evans
Mr J Graham

In Attendance: J Dyson, F Neil, R Harris, K Christopher (RE Today) and Rev. Spencer

Start/End Time: 2.30pm/4.15pm

**** **Part I**

1 Apologies and substitutions.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Davidson, Davies, Ware-Lane and McGlone (no substitutes).

Apologies for absence were also received from Mr C Pegler, Mr M Buckley, Ms L Hopkinson and Mr I Pringle.

2 Declarations of interest.

No declarations of interest were made at the meeting.

3 Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday 2nd February 2015

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 2nd February 2015, subject to minor amendments and corrections, be received and confirmed as a correct record.

4 Matters Arising from the Minutes not covered elsewhere on the Agenda

4.1 Review of Membership (item 5 refers) – The SACRE discussed and undertook a further review of its current membership. It was AGREED in principle (as the meeting was not quorate) that those members who had not been in attendance in accordance with the SACRE constitution be removed.

The SACRE recognised the ongoing challenges in respect to filling the vacancies on the SACRE and it was AGREED in principle that Robert Harris, Frances Neil, Kevin Ryan and Janet Dyson meet to discuss appropriate way forward.

It was also suggested that the SACRE needs to have a higher profile with local communities and it would be worthwhile approaching the local faith groups and congregations to 'promote' and highlight the work of SACRE. This could lead to identifying local faith group representatives to fill the vacancies and encourage wider participation.

4.2 SACRE Annual Report (Item 8 refers) – Janet Dyson advised that the final version had been completed and sent to the Clerk and Jane Theadom for final submission to NASACRE and circulation to schools, etc. It was AGREED in principle that the Clerk follow up with the education department as to the current status of the Annual Report.

5 Review of Membership

This was discussed under Matters arising, Item 4 above.

6 Report from NASACRE AGM

The SACRE noted that there had been some complications and a breakdown in communication in booking the NASACRE AGM and unfortunately Frances Neil and Kevin Ryan were unable to attend the AGM. The process of booking the AGM would take place much earlier to ensure appropriate attendance of the Southend SACRE.

Frances Neil made reference to a number of other SACRE annual events, such as Redbridge Annual SACRE lecture/conference, the London RE Hub conference/meeting, Islington which has similar issues to Southend's SACRE. It was noted that Frances Neil would look into the possibility of attending some other SACRE's to share good practice, etc. It was also suggested that if its possible a SACRE member could attend as well.

7 SACRE Self-Evaluation and Action Plan

The SACRE discussed the need to prepare and undertake a Self-Evaluation to identify the gaps, inform the development of an action plan. The evaluation once completed would need to be reviewed annually. It was noted that the last self-evaluation was undertaken in 2006 and it was timely to undertake one, given the recent changes in RE nationally.

It was AGREED in principle that a new self-evaluation framework be adopted and that other SACRE's Self-Evaluations be looked at for good practice, etc. Essex SACRE would be a good starting point.

8 Update on Work with Schools

The SACRE received an in-depth update on the current work taking place with schools around RE, summarised below:

- RE Today Teacher Training – 15 teachers had attended the teacher training funded by RE Today. The training covered a range of aspects including how to develop RE in their classrooms and supporting teachers subject knowledge of RE. The training also helped teachers identify their needs and gaps. The final session will take place on 23rd June 2015 and a short report covering the training would be made available to the SACRE.
- Frances Neil had met with the Council's engagement team and a survey of RE, collective worship and SMSC will be carried out with all schools. The survey aims to identify the quality of training in schools and how well RE, collective worship and SMSC are being delivered. It was AGREED in principle that the draft survey is considered by the SACRE at its next meeting to agree the final version.
- Reference was made to the NATRE 'Respect for All' conference offered to Southend Schools via Frances Neil.
- Reference was made to OfSTED reports covering SMSC, collective worship. Frances Neil will compile a report for the next SACRE;
- NATRE/RE Today – there was funding available through NATRE/Re Today for the provision of teacher training in September 2016. To access funding a bid would need to be submitted by March 2016.
- A primary school / teacher network was being explored and should be set-up early in the autumn term 2015.
- To engage young people the possibility of inviting the Youth Council to set up a Youth SACRE was being explored.

The SACRE discussed the OfSTED criteria and framework for RE and collective worship.

It was emphasised that SACRE's role is to support and provide advice to schools on the provision of collective worship and ensure they are delivering against the DFE Guidelines in Circular 1/1994 . . Frances Neil informed SACRE that part of the survey already being planned included a request for schools to identify their RE Governor leads. School Governing Bodies will be contacted via the survey (above) to ask how collective worship, etc was being delivered / monitored and evaluated in schools. This was AGREED in principle.

SACRE also discussed the limited access to training for RE in early years. Frances Neil offered to speak to EYs Lead at SBC to investigate CPD needs.

Frances Neil introduced Kate Christopher from 'REToday' who is to support Frances with provision training for schools on British Values. *REToday's* programme in this area has been successfully 'rolled' out nationally. SACRE was pleased to have access to this high quality provision for schools in Southend.

National Developments in RE – GCSE/A-Level Changes

The SACRE received an extract from the NATRE website which highlights the changes to the examination criteria for GCSE and A-level in RE.

The SACRE generally welcomed the changes recognising that they could revolutionise the teaching of RE.

Any other business

(a) Education Representation at SACRE –With the announcement that Jane Theadom would be leaving the Council shortly, it was discussed and agreed that the Corporate Director for People, Simon Leftley, be approached to enquire whether an independent person could become the appointee to be the Director's Representative, in order to support and represent the Council's education department on SACRE. The SACRE members present nominated a specific person to be put forward, who had done the job previously. It was AGREED in principle that the Chairman writes to the Corporate Director for People with this suggestion.

(a)

(b) Janet Dyson – The SACRE noted with sadness that this would be Janet Dyson's last meeting for Southend SACRE. The SACRE expressed its deepest thanks and appreciation for all her work and support over the years.

8 Date, Time and Venue of Next Meeting

Tuesday 29th September 2015 at 2pm. Possible venues suggested included St Michaels, Heycroft School and Edwards Hall.

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SACRE RETool

SACRE

The SACRE RETool: Reporting and Evaluating Toolkit

Introduction

The essential role of the SACRE is to support its Local Authority (LA) and the local authority's schools in meeting the entitlement of pupils across the local authority to engage in high quality Religious Education and Collective Worship. In an educational context where standards and accountability are at the top of the agenda, a SACRE's work has become increasingly challenging and diverse, but also more rewarding and stimulating. Good SACREs will therefore tackle their responsibilities and opportunities with enthusiasm, whilst recognising the need for realistic and ongoing appraisal and self-review.

In many ways SACREs reflect the work of governing bodies in schools, in so far as they act as critical friends to the local authority on matters of religious education and collective worship. Like school governors, members are unpaid volunteers who give up their time to support religious education (RE) and collective worship locally.

This Reporting and Self-Evaluating Toolkit is an amended version of the original SACRE SEF (2004). It takes account of changes in inspection arrangements and in the role of local authorities, and of the development of maintained schools independent of their local authority. It is designed to help individual SACREs evaluate their role and, in particular, to consider their impact on pupils' educational experience and learning. It also helps SACREs review their organisational patterns and structures, and their partnership with the local authority and other key stakeholders.

The Toolkit highlights five key dimensions of a SACRE's work and provides exemplification of good practice. A SACRE that uses this self-evaluation guidance should gain a clear picture of its strengths, identify areas for further development, and establish its key priorities for action.

- 9 The DCSF publication "Religious education in English schools: Non-statutory guidance" (2010) ("the Guidance") remains the most recent official statement in this field: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/religious-education-guidance-in-english-schools-non-statutory-guidance-2010>. The Guidance sets out the responsibilities of SACREs and Local Authorities as well as those of other stakeholders in RE. Key summaries from the Guidance are included in the Annex to this document.

Rationale

The RETool focuses on the following five aspects of the work of SACREs:

1. promoting improvement in the standards, the quality of teaching, and provision in RE
2. evaluating the effectiveness of the locally agreed syllabus
3. promoting improvement in the provision and quality of collective worship
4. managing the SACRE and building the partnership between the SACRE, the LA and other key stakeholders
5. contributing to cohesion across the community and the promotion of social and racial harmony.

Each aspect forms a section within the RETool matrix and each section is divided into focus questions to help SACREs explore their provision. Descriptors for 'Developing', 'Established' and 'Advanced' practice will enable SACREs to evaluate their standing within each focus question.

In the final column SACREs may wish to identify any issues and action points within that focus as appropriate. Key priorities can then be identified at the end of each section to inform the development of an action plan.

The intention is that, over time, exemplars of good practice from different SACREs will be made available on an open website, together with annual reports, as a way of adding further support to SACREs and local authorities. Clearly the capacity of any SACRE to make the most of this will be dependent on the extent of the support it receives from, and the quality of its relationship with, its Local Authority.

SACREs are invited to use the format of this RETool to compile their annual report to their local authority. A copy of the annual report should also be lodged electronically with the central database memsec@nasacre.org.uk When compiling their report, SACREs could either use the entire RETool document, or copy sections of text from it into another document; the annual report could focus on specific areas in any given year.

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Section 1. Standards and quality of provision of Religious Education

***How effectively does the SACRE, in partnership with the LA, evaluate standards and the quality of provision for RE in schools?
How effective are the strategies to improve standards and the quality of provision?***

In principle, every pupil is entitled to RE of the highest quality. At its best RE will be one of the most popular, relevant, stimulating and truly educative elements in the curriculum. This potential gives SACREs both a benchmark for their aspirations, and a spur for their actions.

A core duty of a SACRE is to gain an overview of the quality of the RE provision in local authority maintained schools and to develop effective strategies to promote the highest standards. SACREs may also request information from Academies, academy chains and Free Schools where they educate pupils from the local authority which appointed SACRE. In the light of the current inspection culture of partnership and self-evaluation, SACREs will need to approach the achieving of this overview with some sensitivity and astuteness.

Information to assist the SACRE in carrying out its role is likely to come from a range of sources. This may include:

- ∞ ● public examination results
- reports from School Improvement Partners
- analysing questionnaires
- sharing of information from subject self-evaluation forms as appropriate, and in agreement with schools
- feedback from professional development activities
- presentations to SACRE from local teachers

The Guidance offers analysis and advice to support SACREs in reviewing their own effectiveness, their patterns of partnership, and their strategies in relation to enhancing the quality of RE provision in local authority maintained schools. In addition, in the light of the development of academies and other non-LA maintained schools, SACREs also need to take note of and respond appropriately to this new diversified scenario. (In the ensuing pages, the phrase “academies etc” is used as shorthand to refer to all non-LA maintained schools within a particular LA area.)

Key Area: 1a. RE provision across the LA. <i>How effectively does the SACRE gain information about RE provision in schools and put in place strategies to support the delivery of pupil entitlement?</i>		
Developing A SACRE with developing practice would:	have little knowledge of which schools are fulfilling pupil entitlement in RE because local processes are insufficient to gather such information.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Established A SACRE with established practice would:	have some knowledge of which schools are providing adequate time for effective learning in RE and have a scheme of work that enables them to deliver the Agreed Syllabus. SACRE's process for acquiring this information is adequate but lacks coherence. Have limited opportunities to implement strategies in support of pupil entitlement.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advanced A SACRE with advanced practice would:	have robust processes (for example effective and wide-spread use of the RE SEF) in place to gain a full and accurate overview of RE provision within the LA. It works effectively with the LA to support and promote pupil entitlement. Examples of different models for fulfilling pupil entitlement within local schools will be shared with all schools so that schools can have a menu from which to adapt an approach that delivers pupil entitlement whilst meeting the specific needs and priorities of their schools.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Where are we and where do we find evidence to support this?		

Key Area: 1b. Standards of achievement and public examination entries <i>How does SACRE use information about standards and examinations to target support and training for schools?</i>		
Developing A SACRE with developing practice would:	have limited knowledge of standards in primary and secondary schools including examination entries. The SACRE has no clear strategy to address this.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Established A SACRE with established practice would:	have some process in place to find out how well learners are doing in KS 1-3, (e.g. by meeting teachers, pupils and through the LA). SACRE will be provided with adequate information about examination entries and standards in examinations in secondary schools and how these relate to national figures. Analysis would be limited as would strategies to address issues.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advanced A SACRE with advanced practice would:	have robust processes (for example including effective and wide-spread use of the RE SEF) in place to gain accurate information about standards in all schools and examination entries in secondary schools, with useful analysis that enables it to address issues effectively in partnership with the LA. entitlement whilst meeting the specific needs and priorities of their schools.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Where are we and where do we find evidence to support this?		

Key Area: 1c Quality of learning and teaching.		
<i>How well does SACRE use knowledge of quality of learning and teaching to target support appropriately?</i>		
Developing A SACRE with developing practice would:	have little or no knowledge of the quality of learning and teaching in the LA schools and therefore is unable to provide appropriate challenge and support to the schools. The SACRE has no means to offer or recommend support to schools as there is little professional support in the LA working with the SACRE.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Established A SACRE with established practice would:	have some information regarding the quality of learning and teaching from LA SIPs, the RE SEF and from contact with teachers and pupils. Limited analysis of this information, however, means that SACRE's attempts to improve learning and teaching have limited effect. be able to circulate information about national courses and support mechanisms to schools	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advanced A SACRE with advanced practice would:	have a robust relationship with schools and the LA to gather meaningful information about the quality of learning and teaching in RE. This information is analysed to identify trends, areas of strength and areas for development and SACRE draws on expertise in effective schools to support all schools in the LA. advise the LA on the support that is needed and have access to professional support that can be linked to schools in need.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Where are we and where do we find evidence to support this?		

01

Key Area: 1d Quality of leadership and management, including the provision and management of resources.		
<i>To what extent does SACRE have and use information about the effectiveness of senior and middle leadership of RE in its schools?</i>		
Developing A SACRE with developing practice would:	have little knowledge about the quality of leadership and management in RE in local schools. They are unaware of issues relating to the availability of resources for RE in schools.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Established A SACRE with established practice would:	have some information regarding the quality of leadership and management (including senior leadership interest in RE) from the LA, the RE SEF and from contact with teachers and pupils. Limited analysis of this information, however, means that SACRE support to improve learning and teaching has little effect.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advanced A SACRE with advanced practice would:	have a robust relationship with schools and the LA to gather meaningful information about the quality of L&M (including senior leadership interest in RE). This information is analysed to identify trends, areas of strength and areas for development. SACRE draws on expertise in effective schools to support all schools in the LA.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Where are we and where do we find evidence to support this?		

Key Area: 1e. Recruitment and retention of skilled specialist RE staff.		
<i>To what extent does SACRE use information about specialist provision in their schools to target training and support recruitment?</i>		
Developing A SACRE with developing practice would:	have little knowledge of data and issues related to the recruitment and retention of subject specialists in schools. Little or no support from the LA.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Established A SACRE with established practice would:	have some processes in place, supported by the LA, to gather information on staffing in schools, both in relation to subject specialism and teacher commitment to RE. The SACRE would have limited opportunity to act effectively on this information.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advanced A SACRE with advanced practice would:	have a robust relationship with schools and the LA to gather meaningful information about specialist and committed staff in RE. This information is analysed to identify gaps, training needs and ways to support recruitment and retention.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Where are we and where do we find evidence to support this?		

Key Area: 1f. Relations with academies and other non-LA maintained schools.		
<i>To what extent has SACRE developed a pro-active strategy in relation to academies and other non-LA maintained schools in its area?</i>		
Developing A SACRE with developing practice would:	have haphazard information about the RE situation in local academies etc, and little or no established relationships and liaison with them. No serious attempt has been made to develop an overall strategy.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Established A SACRE with established practice would:	have made some effort to establish liaison with each academy etc and to keep updated SACRE's information about their RE situation. By and large academies co-operate with SACRE at this level. SACRE keeps under review the ongoing situation.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advanced A SACRE with advanced practice would:	have a pro-active policy of liaison with all academies etc and of sustaining a wider professional RE network within the area. While the independence of academies etc is genuinely respected by SACRE, many academies value this network and look to SACRE for ongoing advice and leadership in RE.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Where are we and where do we find evidence to support this?		

Successes/ What are we good at?

Barriers to success

Areas for development/ Action points:

- **For the SACRE**

- **For the LA**

Date of review (1)

Date of review (2)

Date of review (3)

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Section 2: The effectiveness of the locally agreed syllabus

How effectively does the SACRE, in partnership with the LA, monitor the impact and evaluate the effectiveness of the agreed syllabus in raising standards? How effectively does the Agreed Syllabus Conference in partnership with SACRE make decisions about the use of national guidance and exemplar material in a review of the agreed syllabus?

The locally agreed syllabus is the bedrock on which schools will build robust sequences of effective learning experiences in RE. A good modern AS will support both the delivery of high quality RE in schools and RE's contribution to the schools' wider curriculum aims and impact measures.

The major factors to be considered in creating or revising an AS include statutory requirements, non-statutory guidance and exemplar material, developments in the school curriculum generally, and local circumstances. Key advice on producing an AS is given in the Guidance. SACREs and ASCs are recommended to take note of this advice in their work on the AS.

Local authorities are required to review their locally agreed syllabus at least every five years. This cycle of reviewing, revising, re-launching and re-implementing the AS gives SACREs and ASCs opportunities for ongoing development and improvement of their effectiveness in providing schools with a locally agreed syllabus that is truly "fit for purpose".

While the ASC holds the legal responsibility for revising the agreed syllabus, in practice much of the preparatory and supplementary work will be carried by the SACRE within its routine business. Moreover, in most LAs the membership of SACRE and ASC overlap substantially or are identical. This can contribute to greater inclusiveness and coherence, but good practice will ensure that it is always clear at any time which body is in place at a meeting, and that it is the ASC which is in session when formal decisions about the AS are to be considered.

Academies etc are in principle free to choose their own RE syllabus. In practice, however, many may well continue to use their local AS. There are some sound reasons for SACRE and the LA to encourage this where possible, and to enable academies etc to have some involvement in the process of revising the AS or of devising a new AS. Relationships between SACREs and academies will necessarily be entirely voluntary and not covered by existing legislation or guidance. SACREs should therefore approach such relationships in a spirit of mutual respect and collegiality. These issues have not been incorporated into the matrix below, but see Section 4.

Key Area: 2a – The review process		
<i>How does the SACRE review the success of the existing agreed syllabus?</i>		
Developing A SACRE with developing practice would:	have limited arrangements in place to monitor the impact of the agreed syllabus, particularly in raising standards. This provides little or no opportunity to review the effectiveness of the agreed syllabus. not know the views of teachers and have had no systematic evaluation of the strengths/weaknesses of the syllabus. The SACRE is unclear how to proceed with the five-yearly syllabus review and there is little or no budget allocation made by the LA.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Established A SACRE with established practice would:	have reviewed the opinions of schools and RE teachers in several ways and have a good idea of the strengths/areas of weakness of the current agreed syllabus. have devised a costed action plan in partnership with the LA, and have been allocated a sufficient budget for the agreed syllabus review and relaunch.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advanced A SACRE with advanced practice would:	have a clear and systematic process for monitoring the effectiveness of the agreed syllabus built into its development plan. Reviewing the agreed syllabus includes full consultation with schools and other key stakeholders, including faith communities. Issues that have arisen have been discussed and addressed in planning for a Review. An ASC budget has been planned and allocated in partnership with the LA to include consultation meetings, administrative support and printing/ distribution costs. There is a strong sense of shared ownership of the prospective agreed syllabus review, with clear targets for what needs to be achieved.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Where are we and where do we find evidence to support this?		

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Key Area: 2b – The quality of the local Agreed Syllabus		
<i>How well does the locally Agreed Syllabus promote effective learning & teaching in religious education? Is it “fit for purpose”?</i>		
Developing A SACRE with developing practice would:	ensure that the Agreed Syllabus sets out what is to be learnt at each Key Stage. Levels are made available, but do not link directly to the learning and there is no clear expectation of quality learning in the Agreed Syllabus.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Established A SACRE with established practice would:	ensure that the Agreed Syllabus provides a clear framework for and expectations of learning in RE. make clear the value of RE in school both in terms of learning and of wider issues.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advanced A SACRE with advanced practice would:	ensure that the Agreed Syllabus provides a thoroughly professional and inspirational framework for effective learning in RE which is proactively supported and promoted by the LA. have set out clear expectations of the role of the LA and school leadership in ensuring adequate resource and provision in schools.	<input type="checkbox"/>

Where are we and where do we find evidence to support this?	
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Key Area: 2c – Launching and implementing the Agreed Syllabus
How well does SACRE promote the AS and provide training to prepare teachers to use it effectively?

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Developing A SACRE with developing practice would:	<p>provide for no special launch or other publicity, so that schools are unaware of the significance of the syllabus revisions for learning and teaching in RE.</p> <p>have little training provision for implementing the revised syllabus.</p> <p>be prevented from providing any significant additional guidance or extended training on using the agreed syllabus by a shortage of financial and human resources.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Established A SACRE with established practice would:	<p>use other forms of communication (for example the LA website) to promote the launch.</p> <p>have clear arrangements for training teachers on implementing the syllabus provided by the LA; this training is well supported and managed.</p> <p>provide additional guidance or extended training on using the Agreed Syllabus over the life of the Agreed Syllabus.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advanced A SACRE with advanced practice would:	<p>Involve the wider community and use strong media coverage, to give the Agreed Syllabus a high profile as an important development in the work of the LA and SACRE. The launch event would include high quality presentations from a range of local faith or belief groups and schools.</p> <p>provide effective training on implementing the Agreed Syllabus, which is supported by all schools, leads to teachers being clear about standards and expectations in the Agreed Syllabus and the implications for teaching and learning. The SACRE provides clear guidance about ways in which schools might begin the process of reviewing their own provision for RE in the light of the revised syllabus.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Where are we and where do we find evidence to support this?		

Key Area: 2d – Membership and training of the Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC)

To what extent is the membership of ASC able to fulfil its purpose?

<p>Developing A SACRE with developing practice would:</p>	<p>have a membership that fulfils basic statutory requirements. There are limited induction and training opportunities; members are unclear of their roles, or how an agreed syllabus can be structured. Particular faith or belief groups or teachers from different phases do not attend.</p> <p>provide clerking, admin and advisory support for only a very limited amount of time or range of work. Routine admin arrangements are in place. Agendas and papers are distributed.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Established A SACRE with established practice would:</p>	<p>have a membership that strongly reflects the diversity of the wider religious and professional community. There are some opportunities for members' training and the purpose and action plan for the work of the ASC are clear.</p> <p>have all four committees well represented at meetings. Agendas and papers are distributed well in advance so all members have time to consider them carefully. Meetings are well managed with strong contributions from a wide range of members.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Advanced A SACRE with advanced practice would:</p>	<p>have a membership that is well informed and highly representative of the diversity of the local community. Where particular faith or belief expertise is missing locally there are arrangements to work with consultants. There is a strong, co-ordinated programme of induction and training opportunities for members.</p> <p>Have lively and purposeful meetings with a wide variety of contributions. Members of all 4 groups regularly attend and participate fully in meetings, sharing their experience, expertise and insights.</p> <p>provide effective admin to support the process</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Where are we and where do we find evidence to support this?</p>		

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Key Area: 2e - Developing the revised agreed syllabus		
<i>How robust are the processes for producing a strong educational Agreed Syllabus?</i>		
Developing A SACRE with developing practice would:	have no clear structure for developing a new agreed syllabus. It does not undertake a thorough revision, tending to add material rather haphazardly to the existing syllabus, leading to lack of coherence in the final outcome. There is little or no consultation during the development of a new agreed syllabus.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Established A SACRE with established practice would:	have clear objectives for the revision and involve a wide range of local expertise in its construction. The LA and the ASC in partnership ensure that strong direction is provided to design an agreed syllabus which is coherent, clear and accessible. Working parties and consultations are reasonably managed and supported.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advanced A SACRE with advanced practice would:	ensure that high quality advice is sought to review and advise on the revisions as they develop. The ASC in partnership with the LA holds well attended consultation meetings and briefings to ensure teachers are fully involved in, and have a sense of ownership of, the revision process. The Agreed Syllabus has a clear framework for progression and challenging learning	<input type="checkbox"/>
Where are we and where do we find evidence to support this?		

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Key Area: 2f - Making best use of National Guidance		
<i>How does the Agreed Syllabus Conference make choices relating to the use of national documentation? (See footnote*)</i>		
Developing A SACRE with developing practice would:	have a limited awareness and understanding of national documentation in relation to the agreed syllabus review process and are unable to use national guidance in a coherent way. have members not fully understanding the broader curriculum and how this is organised and have no opportunity for training to give them the skills to understand how RE might best play a part in the education of the whole child.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Established A SACRE with established practice would:	be aware of national documentation and some of its implications for the Agreed Syllabus review process, but does not ensure its use reflects local circumstances. Have ASC members who take note of the broader curriculum picture but do not link the Agreed Syllabus to it systematically or appreciate how teachers will be able to make use of it to link to the wider curriculum in schools.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advanced A SACRE with advanced practice would:	take full account of national documentation in the construction of the revised Agreed Syllabus, while ensuring their work reflects local circumstances. The syllabus is devised so that RE fits appropriately with other curriculum areas at all key stages and guidance about how to make the best links is given to schools.	<input type="checkbox"/>

Where are we and where do we find evidence to support this?	
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*Documentation includes: the Non-Statutory National Framework in RE; the Programmes of Learning in RE (Primary) and Programmes of Study in RE (Secondary), the new Primary and Secondary Curriculums, and "Religious education in English schools: "Non-statutory guidance 2010".

Successes/ What are we good at?

Barriers to success

Areas for development/ Action points:

- **For the SACRE**

- **For the LA**

Date of review (1)

Date of review (2)

Date of review (3)

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Section 3. Collective worship

How effectively does the SACRE fulfil its responsibilities for the provision and practice of collective worship?

Maintained schools are required to provide a daily act of collective worship for every pupil. In community schools not having a religious foundation, the acts of collective worship should be “wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character”, without being distinctive of any particular denomination. Part of a SACRE’s role is to support the effective provision of collective worship in community schools and to advise the LA on issues related to provision and quality. It must also consider applications from head teachers in community schools that the requirement for collective worship to be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character be disapplied for some or all of the pupils in that school. SACRE ‘determines’ the appropriateness of that application and grants a ‘determination’ to those schools where the application is judged to be in the best interests of the pupils. All pupils in schools with determinations continue to have an entitlement to daily collective worship.

Collective worship can be a rich and rewarding element of the curriculum as a whole. SACREs have the opportunity to enhance the quality of collective worship by appropriate guidance and support.

Key Area: 3a – Supporting pupil entitlement

What strategies are in place to enable the SACRE to support the delivery of pupil entitlement in the LA's schools?

<p>Developing A SACRE with developing practice would:</p>	<p>be unaware of the issues facing schools in providing collective worship. provide little advice or support towards fulfilling pupil entitlement to collective worship.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Established A SACRE with established practice would:</p>	<p>understand local issues of delivering pupil entitlement and of the challenges facing schools in providing collective worship. provide some advice in support of delivering pupil entitlement and would seek to ensure that schools had access to, and advice on, appropriate resourcing towards delivering collective worship.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Advanced A SACRE with advanced practice would:</p>	<p>have a balanced and realistic overview of provision and its challenges across the LA. provide or arrange for systematic support and guidance for schools experiencing difficulty in delivering pupil entitlement. obtain feedback from schools to evaluate the impact of advice and support, and periodically reviews its strategies for supporting pupil entitlement.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Where are we and where do we find evidence to support this?</p>		

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Key Area: 3b – Enhancing the quality of provision of collective worship <i>How does SACRE seek to influence the quality of collective worship in the LA's schools?</i>		
Developing A SACRE with developing practice would:	<p>not be adequately supported for promoting quality of provision of collective worship.</p> <p>have agenda items about collective worship dominated by the issue of SACRE trying to find a mechanism for obtaining data.</p> <p>have little understanding of the nature and potential of collective worship and of what effective provision in each school might be.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Established A SACRE with established practice would:	<p>have occasional agenda items on collective worship, with some insight into how collective worship is being delivered in the LA's schools.</p> <p>understand what effective provision is but members of the SACRE have little 'hands-on' experience of collective worship in schools.</p> <p>promote in-service support for teachers with responsibility for collective worship, and provides advice on enhancing quality of provision.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advanced A SACRE with advanced practice would:	<p>have a good overview of quality of provision across the LA, with information from the LA and from presentations by schools.</p> <p>have first-hand experience of collective worship in schools.</p> <p>disseminate good practice in consultation with schools and teachers, sponsors an ongoing programme of in-service development, and assist schools in evaluating and enhancing the quality of their provision.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Where are we and where do we find evidence to support this?		

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Key Area: 3c – Responding to requests for determinations		
<i>How robust are SACRE's procedures for responding to requests from schools for a determination?</i>		
<p>Developing A SACRE with developing practice would:</p>	<p>have had little or no experience of any requests for a determination, and have given at most only minimal attention as to how it might respond to such a request.</p> <p>be found unprepared and at risk of making an unsound decision or giving erroneous advice by a request for a determination.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Established A SACRE with established practice would:</p>	<p>be aware that schools have the option of requesting a determination, and that SACRE has a major role in this process.</p> <p>have provided some training to its members regarding determinations, either directly through working on earlier requests, or through specific elements in developmental sessions.</p> <p>be found by a request for a determination able to respond in an adequate but piecemeal fashion, without a systematic overview of this area of work.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Advanced A SACRE with advanced practice would:</p>	<p>be fully equipped for responding to requests for determinations, with a good understanding of SACRE's responsibilities.</p> <p>have a well-established and effective framework for responding to requests, with which members are familiar and comfortable.</p> <p>Meet a request with a judicious and well-informed appraisal of the request by SACRE, leading to a sound decision communicated clearly to the school in a context of ongoing advisory support. SACRE periodically reviews all existing determinations.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Where are we and where do we find evidence to support this?</p>		

Successes/ What are we good at?

Barriers to success

Areas for development/ Action points:

- **For the SACRE**

- **For the LA**

Date of review (1)

Date of review (2)

Date of review (3)

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Section 4: Management of the SACRE and partnership with the LA and other key stakeholders

How far does the SACRE's partnership with the LA enable it to carry out its responsibilities effectively?

The relationship between a Local Authority and its SACRE is essentially one of partnership and collaboration, with mutual obligations and responsibilities. So that a SACRE can advise and act effectively for the LA in the field of Religious Education and collective worship, the LA must ensure not only that there is a local SACRE, but also that it is able to fulfil its functions. The extent to which a SACRE is supported, by funding and personnel, will determine how well individuals and committees can work together. Where a SACRE is valued by the Local Authority, it is more likely that the members of the SACRE will be able to contribute both to the SACRE's work and to the LA's wider strategic objectives.

By bring together many local stakeholders (faith/belief communities, teachers, local politicians and cooptees such as universities and parents) into a statutory body, SACREs can act positively for LAs as a sounding board on their core business of RE and collective worship, and also on wider strategic educational objectives such as raising standards, narrowing the gap and promoting community cohesion, as well as community matters related to interfaith collaboration and wellbeing. These core and value added functions work best when the SACRE is appropriately supported, resourced and managed, and when channels of communication with the LA are good.

24 The potential for SACREs to contribute more widely is dependent on SACRE members feeling that the meetings are outward looking, focused on pupil needs, purposeful and enjoyable. This can be achieved, for example, by meeting in different locations (schools, places of worship, cultural centres and Council meetings rooms) and by ensuring that all members feel they are equal partners whose views and experiences are sought, listened to and valued.

Alongside this, SACRE has the power to develop structural relationships with academies etc by exploring ways in which an academy "presence" can be incorporated into SACRE itself, e.g. by co-options (non-voting), through additional places in Group C (teacher organisations), or by creating a non-voting notional "Group E" (as had been envisaged in the Grant Maintained era). Similar considerations apply to the ASC. Although the legal framework would currently not allow voting rights to any distinct academy representation, SACREs and ASCs would surely not wish to proceed with decisions which were clearly not acceptable to the academy sector represented in their wider membership.

Key Area: 4a – SACRE meetings		
<i>How purposeful, inclusive, representative and effective are SACRE meetings?</i>		
Developing A SACRE with developing practice would:	hold meetings regularly with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • routine administrative arrangements • appropriate distribution of agendas and papers Business is dealt with in a prompt and orderly way. There are limited opportunities for teachers and representatives of faith communities to be invited to share their work. Business tends to be focused solely on routine statutory requirements.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Established A SACRE with established practice would:	have good attendance where all four committees are well represented. Agendas and papers are distributed well in advance ensuring all members have time to consider them carefully. Meetings are well managed with strong contributions from a wide range of members. Meetings move beyond routine matters to consider wider issues about the quality of RE and collective worship.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advanced A SACRE with advanced practice would:	have SACRE members contributing to the development of the agenda. Meetings will be lively and purposeful with a wide variety of contributions focused on the major priorities for improvement in schools. Teachers and representatives of faith communities regularly attend and participate fully in meetings, sharing their experience and insights. Meetings are held in a variety of venues, including local places of worship and schools.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Where are we and where do we find evidence to support this?		

Key Area: 4b – Membership and training		
<i>To what extent is the membership of SACRE able to fulfil SACRE’s purpose?</i>		
Developing A SACRE with developing practice would:	have a membership that fulfils the basic statutory obligations. Arrangements to fill vacancies are not always effective. There are limited induction and training opportunities for SACRE members.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Established A SACRE with established practice would:	have a membership that strongly reflects the diversity of the wider religious and professional community. There are some opportunities for SACRE members to participate in training activities.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advanced A SACRE with advanced practice would:	make good use of co-option to ensure membership of the SACRE is well informed and is highly representative of the diversity of the local community. There is a strong and co-ordinated programme of induction, and training opportunities for SACRE members.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Where are we and where do we find evidence to support this?		

Key Area: 4c – Improvement/development planning		
<i>How effective are the priorities and actions identified by SACRE in improving the experience of pupils in schools?</i>		
Developing A SACRE with developing practice would:	not have an action plan to focus its future work and there is little overt linkage between the priorities of the LA’s development / improvement plan and the work of the SACRE.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Established A SACRE with established practice would:	have a basic action plan which is reviewed regularly and updated on an annual basis. This provides an effective focus for the SACRE’s work. There is some attempt to link the plan to the wider LA priorities. The SACRE is regularly represented at national events relevant to its work; for example, NASACRE.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advanced A SACRE with advanced practice would:	have a well-defined action plan with clear objectives and success criteria. Resource implications are clearly defined. There is a clear link between the plan and the wider objectives of the LA.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Where are we and where do we find evidence to support this?		

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Key Area: 4d – Professional and financial support		
<i>How well supported and resourced is SACRE?</i>		
Developing A SACRE with developing practice would:	have financial and management support to allow it to exist. Representatives of the LA attend meetings but there is limited subject specialist advice available. There are resources for basic SACRE functions but there is no specific budget for the SACRE and little opportunity for the SACRE to take initiatives requiring funding.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Established A SACRE with established practice would:	have some access to subject specialist advice and is informed of local and national initiatives. The LA is represented at meetings and can provide a means of communication with the wider LA. The SACRE has a modest budget which enables it to fund some initiatives. Meetings are clerked and the clerk maintains communication with the Chair and other members between meetings as needed.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advanced A SACRE with advanced practice would:	be well supported by a subject specialist who provides effective advice and is well informed about the provision and quality of RE in the LA and about national developments. Representatives of the LA attend meetings and the SACRE is also attended by a lead officer from the LA who can provide a strong link between the work of the SACRE and the wider LA. SACRE's plans are linked to other local work and projects. The SACRE has access to funds to enable it to make decisions about its priorities and ensure these can be properly resourced.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Where are we and where do we find evidence to support this?		

Key Area: 4e - Information and advice		
<i>How well informed is SACRE in order to be able to advise the LA appropriately?</i>		
Developing A SACRE with developing practice would:	receive limited information about public examination data from the LA. Limited information is provided about wider national and local developments. The SACRE tends to receive information from the LA rather than ask questions of the LA and challenge its work.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Established A SACRE with established practice would:	be regularly provided with clear information relevant to the quality and provision for RE and collective worship in local schools. The SACRE receives the information in a way that enables it to challenge and question the LA's work.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advanced A SACRE with advanced practice would:	receive detailed and well-analysed information about the quality and provision for RE and collective worship. As a result SACRE uses this information effectively to give advice to the LA which leads to strategic action to improve standards. This can include advice related to the review of the Agreed Syllabus. The SACRE has a strong partnership with the LA and plays an active role in promoting ideas and initiatives.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Where are we and where do we find evidence to support this?		

Key Area: 4f - Partnerships with key stakeholders		
<i>What partnerships does the SACRE have with key local and national stakeholders, and of what quality are these?</i>		
Developing A SACRE with developing practice would:	have little contact with or awareness of other local agencies, and rarely has contact with pupils or parents.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Established A SACRE with established practice would:	be well informed about other key stakeholders supporting RE and has some contact with the groups involved.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advanced A SACRE with advanced practice would:	build its activities effectively on local networks. Links with other bodies, such as local Inter-Faith groups, are positive and able to support raising standards and developing community cohesion. The SACRE has opportunities to hear the views and experience of pupils and parents about RE. Representatives of key support networks such as ASTs and higher education providers are regularly involved with the SACRE.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Where are we and where do we find evidence to support this?		

Key Area: 4f – Relations with the Academies sector		
<i>How effectively is SACRE encouraging academies etc to see themselves also as stakeholders in their local area, specifically by devising ways in which an academies presence is incorporated into SACRE itself?</i>		
Developing A SACRE with developing practice would:	have nothing formal in place. Little encouragement, if any, is extended to academies to relate to the SACRE's proceedings, and there are no channels through which academies can contribute.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Established A SACRE with established practice would:	have made some attempts to set up an academies presence in SACRE, but these have been hampered by e.g. lack of confidence or vision on the part of SACRE, or by confusion over what is legally valid and possible. Nevertheless, some academies are now committed to working with SACRE and to finding a constructive way forward.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advanced A SACRE with advanced practice would:	have considered systematically the legal and structural options open to them, and have set up formal procedures for establishing a permanent and sustainable academies presence on SACRE. A high proportion of academies in the area regard themselves as stakeholders and partners with SACRE.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Where are we and where do we find evidence to support this?		

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Successes/ What are we good at?

Barriers to success

Areas for development/ Action points:

- **For the SACRE**

- **For the LA**

Date of review (1)

Date of review (2)

Date of review (3)

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Section 5: Contribution of SACRE to promoting cohesion across the community

How effectively does SACRE, in partnership with the Local Authority and the faith communities, contribute to the promoting of cohesion across the community?

“By community cohesion, we mean working towards a society in which there is a common vision and sense of belonging by all communities; a society in which the diversity of people’s backgrounds and circumstances is appreciated and valued; a society in which similar life opportunities are available to all; and a society in which strong and positive relationships exist and continue to be developed in the workplace, in schools and in the wider community”¹.

Schools play a major role in helping to shape the future of our society, and the duty laid on each school to promote community cohesion is a significant part of that role. One of the most obvious and effective contributors to the community cohesion agenda is Religious Education. SACREs should take every opportunity to promote the contribution of RE to the community cohesion programmes in local schools. Where properly supported by the LA, SACREs themselves can act as powerful vehicles for promoting community cohesion in schools, in education more widely, and in the local community. SACREs should exemplify good practice in their internal relations and in the ways in which they go about their business. Advice on the contribution of SACREs and RE to community cohesion is given in the Guidance.

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¹ Alan Johnson, Secretary of State for Education and Skills, speaking in Parliament on 2 November 2006. Based on the Government and the Local Government Association’s definition first published in Guidance on Community Cohesion, LGA, 2002 and resulting from the Cattle Report in 2001.

Key Area: 5a – SACRE’s membership		
<i>How representative is SACRE’s membership of the local community?</i>		
Developing A SACRE with developing practice would:	have a membership that is not necessarily strongly representative of the religious diversity of the local community.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Established A SACRE with established practice would:	have membership that broadly reflects the religious diversity of the local community. This is regularly reviewed by the SACRE in partnership with the LA particularly where there is a high mobility of communities.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advanced A SACRE with advanced practice would:	have strong representation from all major local religious communities including different groups within the same religious tradition (e.g. different Muslim communities). It would also endeavour to include representation from small local faith communities and / or have links with national bodies that can broker advice from those communities elsewhere in the UK.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Where are we and where do we find evidence to support this?		

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Key Area: 5b SACRE’s understanding of the local area		
<i>How much do SACRE members know and understand the local community in its religious, cultural and ethnic dimensions?</i>		
Developing A SACRE with developing practice would:	have limited knowledge about the religious, cultural and ethnic diversity in the local area.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Established A SACRE with established practice would:	be provided with a detailed analysis of the religious and cultural diversity within the LA and therefore be well aware of different groups representing the diversity within the local area. know about local Inter Faith groups and the work that they do in the locality.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advanced A SACRE with advanced practice would:	have detailed knowledge of the nature of the religious, ethnic and cultural diversity in the local area and take active steps to inform itself further about the distinctive needs and opportunities created by this diversity. SACRE would have good liaison and seek to develop initiatives with local Inter Faith groups. The SACRE would be aware of the impact of this local context on schools and on the provision for RE and collective worship in those schools.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Where are we and where do we find evidence to support this?		

Key Area: 5c – SACRE’s engagement with the community cohesion agenda. <i>How much does SACRE understand the contribution which RE can make to a schools’ provision for community cohesion?</i>		
Developing A SACRE with developing practice would:	have a basic grasp of what community cohesion means and therefore a limited understanding of the contribution which RE can make to the community cohesion agenda. It may also have little opportunity to promote RE’s contribution to schools of faith communities.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Established A SACRE with established practice would:	have an understanding of what community cohesion means and the duty on schools to promote this. The SACRE would understand and have a clear commitment to the part RE can play in promoting community cohesion and would seek to promote this throughout its work.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advanced A SACRE with advanced practice would:	understand what community cohesion means and be clear about the duty on schools and the LA to promote this. The members of SACRE would appreciate their key role in promoting RE’s contribution to the community cohesion offer of its schools. SACRE would ensure this is explicit in the local Agreed Syllabus and related guidance. SACRE members, as representatives of different sections of the wider community, would appreciate how they and their wider constituencies can work in partnership with other agencies to enhance the promotion of community cohesion in schools.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Where are we and where do we find evidence to support this?		

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Key Area: 5d – SACRE’s role within wider LA initiatives on community cohesion <i>How well is SACRE linked to or consulted about LA initiatives promoting community cohesion?</i>		
Developing A SACRE with developing practice would:	be given little information about, or contact with, wider LA initiatives linked to the promotion of community cohesion.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Established A SACRE with established practice would:	be aware of some LA initiatives promoting community cohesion and have opportunity to discuss and contribute to this work.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advanced A SACRE with advanced practice would:	be a key partner and stakeholder in the work of the local authority in this area and take the initiative in promoting activities and links, which relate to this work. be aware of and work in partnership with local Inter-Faith groups to ensure the LA’s work has a broad consultation base.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Where are we and where do we find evidence to support this?		

Successes/ What are we good at?

Barriers to success

Areas for development/ Action points:

- **For the SACRE**

- **For the LA**

Date of review (1)

Date of review (2)

Date of review (3)

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ANNEX

The responsibilities of a Local Authority

The detailed rights and responsibilities of local authorities can be seen in full in *RE in English Schools: Non-statutory guidance 2010*. This can be found at <http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/teachingandlearning/subjects/re/guidance/>

In brief, local authorities are legally required to:

- establish a SACRE and appoint representatives to each of the four committees
- establish an occasional body called an agreed syllabus conference (ASC)
- institute a review of its locally agreed syllabus every five years
- appoint members of the committees represented on the ASC
- ensure that membership of group/committee A on the SACRE and ASC is broadly representative of the local area
- take all reasonable steps to ensure that SACRE and ASC membership is representative

The responsibilities of a SACRE

The detailed rights and responsibilities of SACREs can be seen in full in *RE in English Schools: Non-statutory guidance 2010*. This can be found at <http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/teachingandlearning/subjects/re/guidance/>

In brief, SACREs are legally required to:

- advise the local authority on RE and collective worship
- publish an annual report on their work
- send the annual report to QCDA (or its successor body)
- meet in public, unless confidential information is to be disclosed
- make their minutes available to the local authority and make provision for public access to their agenda and reports

The Guidance also indicates that SACREs should, as a matter of good practice:

- Monitor the provision for both RE and Collective Worship
- Provide advice and support on RE and Collective Worship to schools
- In partnership with the local authority, keep the locally agreed syllabus and provision in schools under review
- Offer advice to the local authority

In addition, SACREs may:

- Require their local authority to review the locally agreed syllabus
- Decide to advise their local authority
- Co-opt members who are not members of any of the four groups.

The Guidance also makes it clear that SACREs can and should make a strong contribution to the promotion of community cohesion in schools and in the local community through their promotion of good quality RE and through their operation as a SACRE.

Constitution of the Southend SACRE

Role and Functions

- i. To advise the LEA upon matters connected with religious worship in its schools.
- ii. To advise the Authority upon the religious education to be given in its schools in accordance with the Southend Agreed Syllabus. In particular it can offer advice on methods of teaching, the choice of materials and the provision of training for teachers.
- iii. To determine and review the cases in which the requirement for Christian collective worship is not to apply.
- iv. To review the Local Authority's Agreed Syllabus.
- v. To write an annual report on its work which will:
 - specify any matters in respect of which the SACRE has given advice to the Authority;
 - broadly describe the nature of the advice given;
 - where any such matter was not referred to the SACRE by the Authority, give the SACRE's reasons for offering advice on that matter.

Copies of the report must be sent to schools, the Schools' Curriculum Assessment Authority and the local teacher training institutions.

- vi. At the discretion of the Authority the SACRE may:
 - monitor RE provision to inform their advice and reporting;
 - be involved in the Complaints Procedure;
 - arbitrate, as necessary, whether acts of worship provided for withdrawal groups meet the requirement of Section 351 of the Education Act 1996.

For i. and ii. above the Authority may refer matters to the SACRE or the SACRE may decide its own areas of work.

Officers

- i The Chief Executive and Town Clerk of Southend-on-Sea Borough Council shall be the Clerk to the SACRE.
- ii. The Corporate Director for People shall attend and participate in discussions of the SACRE as professional adviser.

Membership

In accordance with the provisions of the Education Act 1996 (Section 390);

i. the SACRE is to comprise four groups representing respectively:

a. such Christian and other religious denominations as, in the opinion of the Authority, will appropriately reflect the principle religious traditions in the area;

b. the Church of England;

c. such associations representing teachers as, in the opinion of the Authority, ought to be represented, having regard to the circumstances of the area;

d. the Local Education Authority:

ii. the Authority has to take all reasonable steps to assure itself that the persons appointed under i. are representative of the denominations or association in question;

iii. the Authority may remove a member of the SACRE if in the opinion of the Authority that member ceases to be representative of the denomination or association which he/she was appointed to represent;

iv. any member may resign at any time.

The composition of Southend-on-Sea Borough Council SACRE is set out in Annex A.

Term of Office of Members

The term of office for members of the SACRE shall be for four years from the date of appointment by the relevant body.

Disqualification from Membership

Where a nominated representative fails to attend three consecutive meetings of the SACRE she/he shall cease to be a member of the SACRE and the nominating body shall be invited to nominate another representative. See also 3 iii. above.

Vacancies

A member appointed to fill a vacancy shall hold office only for the unexpired term of office of the member in whose place he/she is appointed.

Any vacancy occurring within three months of the expiration of the term of office of a member need not be filled.

Deputies

i. Each nominating body* having not more than 5 representatives on the SACRE may nominate one named deputy.

ii. Nominating bodies having 6 or more representatives may appoint 2 named deputies.

iii. Only named deputies may attend or vote in place of a member.

Chairman & Vice-Chairman

i. The Chairman shall be elected annually for a period of one academic year. The election of Chairman shall be the first item of business on the agenda for the ordinary meeting held every Autumn Term. The election will be by a simple majority of those members of the SACRE present at the quorate meeting.

ii. The Vice-Chairman shall be elected annually for a period of one academic year. The election of Vice-Chairman shall be the second item of business on the agenda for the ordinary meeting held every Autumn Term. The election will be by a simple majority of those members of the SACRE present at the quorate meeting.

Voting

i. With the exception of the appointment of Chairman and Vice Chairman, on any question to be decided by the SACRE only the representative groups on the SACRE shall be entitled to vote, and each group shall have a single vote. Decisions made within each group require a majority vote as do decisions made by the SACRE.

ii. Each representative group has a single vote on the question of whether to require a review of the Authority's agreed syllabus except the Authority group (See 1 iv).

Co-options

The SACRE may co-opt members on the nomination of any of the groups. Such co-opted members may participate fully in the discussions of the SACRE but may not vote.

Quorum

The meeting of the SACRE shall be quorate only if each of the four groups is individually quorate as follows. A quorum shall consist of 5 members of each group or one third of the members of each group, rounded to the nearest whole number, whichever is the lower, i.e. a quorum shall consist of:

Church of England Group 2

Other Faiths Group 3

Teachers' Associations Group 2

Local Education Authority Group 2

* Note: Individual teacher associations within Group C and individual political parties within Group D are to be regarded as "nominating bodies" for this purpose.

Frequency of Meetings

The SACRE shall normally meet at least once in every school term. The four Groups may meet beforehand if they wish.

Notice of Meetings

At least 7 clear days before each meeting of the SACRE the clerk shall send notices to every member setting out the business to be transacted. Items for the agenda may be submitted by any of the four groups, and such items should be sent to the Clerk, and at the same time to the Corporate Director for People, not less than 14 days before a meeting.

Meetings of Four Groups

Each of the committees of the SACRE may hold its own meetings, and shall make its own arrangements to appoint a Chairman and Vice-Chairman.

Sub-Committees

The SACRE may constitute sub-committees to deal with particular matters as and when it sees fit. Seven clear days notice of meetings of any such sub-committees should be given to the members thereof.

Minutes

Minutes of each meeting shall be sent by the clerk to each member as soon as practical after a meeting. The minutes shall be confirmed and signed at the next meeting.

Submission of Minutes to the Local Authority's Cabinet

Decisions which cannot be made by the SACRE shall be referred to the Local Authority's Executive decision making body (The Cabinet) and shall be eligible for call-in to the People Scrutiny Committee. The Clerk shall submit the minutes of SACRE meetings.

Availability of Papers to the Public

- i. All papers of the SACRE shall be available to the public, except in relation to any information defined as confidential in regulation 9 of the Religious Education (Meetings of Local Conferences and Councils) Regulations 1994.
- ii. All meetings of the SACRE and of any sub-committee of the SACRE including the four groups which constitute the SACRE, shall be open to the public, except that the public may be excluded from any meeting during an item of business whenever it is likely that, if members of the public were present, confidential information as defined in regulation 9 of the Religious Education (Meetings of Local Conferences and Councils) Regulations 1994 would be disclosed.

Annex A

Composition of the Southend-on-Sea SACRE

Group	Membership
A. The Church of England Nominated by the Diocese of Chelmsford	5
B. Other Faiths Comprising:	12
Representatives of the Free Churches Nominated by the Free Churches Council	(3)
Representatives of the Roman Catholic Church Nominated by the Diocese of Brentwood	(2)
A representative of the Jewish Community	(1)
A representative of the Hindu Community	(1)
A representative of the Muslim Community	(1)
A representative of the Sikh Community	(1)
A representative of the Buddhist Community	(1)
A representative of the Humanist Community	(1)
A representative of the Salvation Army	(1)
C. Associations representing Teachers Nominated by the recognised Teachers' Associations	7
D. Southend-on-Sea LEA Elected Members of the Borough Council	7
Total:	31

Group A: Representatives of the Church of England:

Ms M Larkin

Ms P Draycott

Mr M Buckley

VACANCY x 2

Group B: Other Faith Group Representatives:

Free Churches (3):

Mr C Pegler (Vice-Chairman)

VACANCY x 2

Roman Catholic (2):

Ms L Hopkinson

VACANCY x 1

Jewish Community

Mr J Greenstein

Hindu Community

VACANCY x 1

Muslim Community

Dr N Khokha

Salvation Army

Ms S Hart

Sikh Community

VACANCY x 1

Humanist Community

Mr G Licence

Buddhist Community

VACANCY x 1

Group C: Representatives of the Teachers' Associations:

Mr K Ryan (NASUWT) - (Chairman),

VACANCY (PAT),

VACANCY (UCU)

Mr B Maddison (NUT)

VACANCY x 3 – NAHT, SHA, ATL

Group D: Representatives of the LEA:

Cllr Betson

Cllr Davidson

Cllr Evans

Cllr Davies

Cllr Borton

Cllr Ware-Lane

Cllr McGlone

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Code of Conduct

Southend SACRE encourages all its members to:-

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General Principles

- Attend SACRE meetings and take a full and active part in its work and deliberations;
- Express views and opinions openly and sensitively, recognising others may have views different from one's own;
- Listen with respect to the views of other members;
- Remember that our central aim is to improve the quality of provision in RE and collective worship for all Southend pupils;
- Actively consult, and report back to, the membership body which they represent so that debate is fully informed;
- Never denigrate or mock the views of other SACRE members and seek reasoned consensus where views diverge;
- Actively challenge and resist stereotyping.

Visiting Schools

A critical aspect of the Southend SACRE's work is its partnership with schools. At times, the SACRE members will have the opportunity to visit schools.

SACRE Members should remember that it is a privilege to visit a school and that they are not there to make judgements about the school or to "inspect" RE and collective worship.

Members should:

- Only visit a school when invited;
- Inform the Clerk of SACRE and the SACRE's RE Professional of any invitation received and visits made;
- Ensure that you do not say or do anything, which could be viewed as denigrating any religion or ethical belief system;
- Avoid being critical of others or imposing their own views;
- Any confidential information disclosed should not be passed on but along with any possible concerns or confusions about what may have been seen should be discussed with the LA Officer and RE Professional before being reported back to SACRE.

Visiting Schools as a representative of a faith community

Some faith community representatives may be more regular visitors to schools and invited to support Re and/or collective worship.

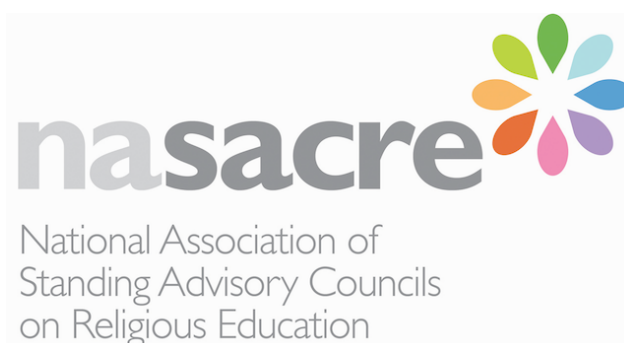
Visitors should be well-supported by the class teacher who should **always** be present and take an active role in question and answer sessions, and ensure visitors are well-briefed.

SACRE members visiting a school to share their beliefs, values and experiences should:

- Have a clear, mutually agreed understanding of the purpose of the visit with the school before the visit takes place;
- Appreciate that they are not there to convert or proselytise;
- Be willing to share their beliefs, values and experiences but without being critical of others or imposing their own views;
- Be familiar with the school's aims, ethos and policies in RE and collective worship;
- Have an understanding of where the lesson will fit into the unit of work from the Southend Agreed Syllabus and what the learning objectives are, but at no time touch pupils or behave favourably towards pupils of particular faiths, ethnic groups or genders;
- Use a variety of teaching and learning methods and approaches;
- Ensure that pupils understand that the visitor is representing a particular faith view and their own personal interpretation of it and therefore that others from the same faith may not always interpret ideas in exactly the same ways;
- Communicate at an appropriate level for the age group concerned;
- Ensure that they do not say or do anything, which could be viewed as denigrating.

For many years RE struggled with being regarded as indoctrinatory (i.e. putting forward one view as though no other existed). RE Today is about developing pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding, and encouraging personal learning from the material which is encountered. This should be remembered and adhered to at all times.

January 2016



A reference handbook for SACRE members

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Introduction

Joining your local SACRE

This is a handbook for all SACRE members, new or experienced. It is designed to:

- help SACREs become more effective through the informed participation of their members
- introduce you to the context and work of a SACRE
- be a point of reference

As a member of a SACRE you are serving your local community in an important way. Whichever group you represent, your active participation makes a valuable contribution to the quality of religious education and collective worship that pupils experience in schools in your local area and also contributes to the coherence of your local community.

What is this handbook for?

The handbook is designed to be a point of reference for all SACRE members, and in particular to be of interest and support to those who are new to the role.

It:

- explains the work of a SACRE and the roles of its individual members;
- will help you to understand the nature and purpose of religious education (RE) and collective worship;
- explains clearly what the law says about RE and collective worship;
- will help you to work within your SACRE to support and encourage local schools to ensure high standards in RE and collective worship;

It is also designed to help SACREs become more effective through the informed participation of their members.

SECTION 1

SACREs: duties, roles and responsibilities

What is a SACRE?

The acronym SACRE stands for: **Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education**

Why is there a SACRE?

Every local authority (LA) has to have a SACRE by law. It is often the Children's Services division of the LA that takes responsibility for making sure SACRE works well and SACRE's work is related to schools and their curriculum.

What does a SACRE do?

There is no other group anywhere else like the SACRE; it is unique. The law says that RE must be taught in all schools and a SACRE's role is to advise its local authority on what needs to be done to improve religious education (RE) and collective worship for schools in its area. This is because RE is not part of the National Curriculum; it is a local responsibility. Through the SACRE, local communities and teachers have the opportunity to influence and support what pupils learn in RE.

The SACRE's main function is to advise the local authority on matters related to the religious education, which follows the locally agreed syllabus, and on collective worship in schools.

It:

- can require the LA to review its agreed syllabus;
- must consider applications from a head teacher that the school be allowed to modify the 'wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character' requirement for collective worship. (This is known as a determination.);
- must publish an annual report of its work.

What else can a SACRE do?

A SACRE's broad role is to support good RE and collective worship within its schools by:

- giving advice on ways of teaching agreed syllabus RE, including the choice of teaching materials;
- monitoring schools' provision for RE and collective worship as well as the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC) of pupils;
- advising the LA on the provision of training for teachers in RE;
- considering complaints about the provision and delivery of religious education or collective worship referred to it by the LA.

Assessment and testing

SACREs should monitor school approaches to assessing pupils' progress in RE. They should also be aware of the uptake of external examinations in RE and religious studies and monitor or review the standards achieved.

RE and SMSC

SACREs should be aware of the contribution RE and collective worship can make to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Members of Groups A and B have the opportunity to indicate awareness that pupils should have about religious beliefs and the influence these have on the formation of attitudes and values.

SACREs may

- monitor good practice in the delivery of the agreed syllabus in a range of ways and take note of any difficulties;
- disseminate good practice in the teaching of RE;
- review provision for in-service training and development;
- receive school inspection reports or sections of these reports.

SECTION 2

SACRE membership, composition, group representation, roles and responsibilities

Who attends the SACRE meetings?

A SACRE is set up to represent a balance of all the interests of the local community. You are likely to find elected councillors, representatives of faith communities and members of the education community (including teachers and head teachers) at a SACRE meeting. There may also be people representing teacher training in RE and local Academies.

SACRE members join one of four groups as a full member or if you have been co-opted to serve on SACRE, you will not be formally linked to any of the groups.

How is the membership of a SACRE decided?

The structure of the SACRE is defined by law. It is made up of four groups, sometimes referred to by some SACREs as committees.

Details such as the specific numbers of members in each of the groups will usually be set out in the individual SACRE's constitution. These are frequently decided by the LA, depending on local circumstances and in collaboration with the organisations and communities represented.

The composition of a SACRE

Group A	The Christian denominations and other religions and their denomination, reflecting the principal religions of the area.
Group B	The Church of England
Group C	Teacher and head teacher associations and often others representing education interests
Group D	The Local Authority

On the rare occasions when a formal vote is required, each of these groups has equal voting rights; there is one vote per group.

Co-options

SACREs may co-opt other members who have a particular expertise or represent a small local faith or belief community. Many bring in a Humanist representative, currently technically prevented by law from becoming full members of Group A. Co-opted members do not have voting rights.

Who are the representatives?

Group A

This group is made up of representatives of Christian denominations, (other than the Church of England). It may include, for example, representatives of the Roman Catholic Church, the Orthodox Churches, the Free Churches (e.g. Baptist, Methodist, United Reformed Church, Pentecostal, The Salvation Army) and The Society of Friends. It also has representatives from other faiths in the area, e.g. Buddhists, Baha'is, Hindus, Jains, Jews, Muslims, Parsees, Sikhs.

The make-up of Group A will vary from SACRE to SACRE as by law, it should reflect the diversity of the various faith communities in the locality.

Group B

This is made up of representatives nominated by the local Church of England diocese or dioceses.

Group C

The members of this group are usually representatives of professional teacher associations. It is usual for there to be representation also from the head teacher associations. It is the local authority that decides which associations will be invited to be represented. They will usually approach the teacher unions, but local associations of RE teachers may also be asked to provide a representative. Sometimes someone from a local teacher training establishment is also invited to be a member of this group, or someone representing the interests of local Academies or Free schools.

Group D

It is the local authority's responsibility to provide their own representatives for this committee. Usually these are elected members or other political nominees and also a representative of the Director of Children's Services. The LA may wish to have all parties and viewpoints from across the political spectrum represented on the SACRE. In some LAs, a representative of school governors may also be in this group.

What will be my responsibilities as a SACRE member?

As a SACRE member, you should be committed to education and to respecting the views of others. You have a responsibility to support children's learning in RE and collective worship, and to work for the highest standards in both. You should represent the perspective of your community or sponsoring group in the work of SACRE and communicate the interests and the work of the SACRE back to them. You should be able to network effectively in order to contribute to the relationship and dialogue between the SACRE, your sponsorship group, your local community and schools. The specific opportunities you have will also depend on the interest group you represent. Remember that how you present yourself and work with others will be seen as reflecting on the values and ethos of the group you represent.

This is a unique opportunity to serve your local community and influence the attitudes of others more widely. Social cohesion is recognised as being important to our society, now and in the future. The effective SACRE is in itself a model of social cohesion in which every member is heard and respected, even when there are many different positions or opinions on particular issues under discussion. In an effective SACRE potential conflict is managed harmoniously. By the same token, SACREs have the potential to promote social cohesion more widely, in schools and in the local community.

Do we all have the same responsibilities?

Everyone shares the responsibility to put children's' learning before personal interest.

Members of **Groups A and B**, each of whom represents a faith community within the locality:

- should present and foster a positive image of their religion, so that negative stereotyping is avoided. They must also make clear any grounds on which they may differ from each other, whilst showing respect for each other's viewpoints, since such convictions and mutual understanding both lie at the heart of effective classroom RE;
- can create opportunities within SACRE meetings to raise awareness of issues of sensitivity in the teaching of RE to the children of their faith community, and also in the presentation of their particular faith and religious tradition within school RE, always taking an educational approach;
- should appreciate the difficulties schools are facing in the area, support their best endeavours, and act, where necessary, as a link between schools and the faith communities;
- should be aware of other local minority faith communities not represented amongst their number. Some SACREs address this by co-opting representatives from these communities.

Members of **Group C**, representing teacher associations and education, should:

- have a real and positive interest in RE in primary, secondary or special schools;
- ensure that the needs of schools and teachers are considered by the SACRE in their discussions;
- provide the SACRE with information about the context in which RE is taught in the schools in the local authority;
- ensure that the bodies they represent are informed about the work of the SACRE and about RE in local schools;
- create opportunities for other teachers to learn more about the work of the SACRE and give them the opportunity to have their views expressed at SACRE meetings;
- consult their colleagues on matters of particular importance to the work of the SACRE;
- can bring 'public' dimensions to the debate about RE provision and support.

Members of **Group D**, representing the local authority:

- can bring to the meeting the breadth of educational issues and concerns which elected members are wrestling with, and place RE's role within it;
- can be the supporters of RE within the various committees and structures of the local authority;
- can give political support to enable locally determined RE to flourish within each LA, including advisory support etc.;
- can appreciate the issues raised by a multi-faith, multi-cultural society for the education of children in RE, and reflect these issues in support of RE in the relevant council structures, including Scrutiny Committee, Cabinet, etc.;
- can particularly support the efforts of the SACRE to be effective through publicising its work with fellow elected members and officers of the local authority, ensuring it is taken seriously and is appropriately funded and supported.

SECTION 3

Religious education and collective worship

What is a locally agreed syllabus?

The locally agreed syllabus is the statutory document for RE in the local authority. It sets out what should be taught to pupils in all key stages and the standards expected of them at the end of each key stage. It is produced by an agreed syllabus conference (ASC).

The agreed syllabus has to be reviewed every five years. If, at some other time, a majority of the groups of the SACRE asks the LA in writing to reconsider its agreed syllabus, it must convene a conference for that purpose. *Education Act 1996, Chapter III*

What is the Agreed Syllabus Conference?

An agreed syllabus conference (ASC) is a statutory body brought together in order to produce an agreed syllabus for RE. It is a separate legal entity from a SACRE. An ASC:

- has the same committee structure as the SACRE;
- can be made up of SACRE members but need not be so. There is no provision for co-opted members.

In some LAs, the Chair of the ASC is appointed by the local authority whilst in others, the ASC chooses its own Chair. The LA's responsibility to convene the ASC includes the duty to provide funds and support for its work.

RE and collective worship in school

Type of school	Religious education	Collective worship
Community schools	is taught according to the local authority's agreed syllabus and comes within SACRE's remit.	follows the 1996 Education Act and is 'wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character'.
Voluntary controlled (VC) schools	is taught according to the local authority's agreed syllabus and comes within SACRE's remit. ²	reflects the Christian character of the school.
Voluntary aided (VA) schools	is determined by the governors in accordance with the trust deed and reflects the religious character of the school. ¹	reflects the Christian character of the school.
Foundation schools without a religious character	is taught according to the local authority's agreed syllabus.	follows the 1996 Education Act and is 'wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character'.
Foundation schools with a religious character	is taught according to the local authority's agreed syllabus. ²	reflects the Christian character of the school.
Trust schools	is taught according to the local authority's agreed syllabus.	follows the 1996 Education Act and is 'wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character'.
Academies	must be part of the curriculum, but is taught according to the school's finding agreement.	must be offered to every pupil every day, but provision is determined by the schools funding agreement.

What should I know about religious education?

Religious education is a statutory element of the school curriculum although it is not part of the national curriculum; it is therefore part of every pupil's entitlement.

Agreed syllabus RE does not seek to nurture religious faith, but 'provokes challenging questions about the ultimate meaning and purpose of life, beliefs about God, the self and the nature of reality, issues of right and wrong and what it means to be human'.

What should I know about collective worship?

The schools where collective worship comes within the remit of the SACRE are required to provide a daily act of collective worship the majority of which would be 'wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character'. This means that it 'reflects the broad traditions of Christian belief without being distinctive of any particular Christian denomination'. It does not mean it has to be exclusively Christian. It must, however, be educational and appropriate to the age, aptitude and family background of pupils. When done well, collective worship provides an excellent opportunity for schools to contribute to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils and to the ethos of the school community.

Education Act 1996, Chapter III

In relation to collective worship, SACREs should :

- receive inspection reports, noting any references to the quality of collective worship in the context of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development;
- monitor the quality of provision where possible and share good practice;
- offer advice to head teachers and governing bodies, including where there may be difficulties.

Many SACREs produce their own statements and advice on collective worship. The SACRE may also be involved in providing training to teachers, head teachers and governors or other people who are involved in leading collective worship in school as visitors.

What should I know about determinations?

Schools apply for a determination if they feel that the proportion of collective worship which reflects the broad traditions of Christian belief as required by law is not appropriate for their pupils. That does not mean they do not have to offer collective worship at all.

The determination procedure allows this requirement to be lifted in respect of some or all of the pupils in a school.

They are called determinations because SACRE 'determines' whether the case being made in an application to modify the law for all or a group of pupils in a school is appropriate.

Applications for determinations are made to the SACRE by the head teacher of any community school after consultation with the school's governing body.

Determinations are only possible for schools that do not have a religious character. Many SACREs have an agreed process to enable such an application to take place.

The SACRE should review each determination every five years.

Parents' rights

Parents have the right, on conscience grounds, to withdraw their children, in any school, from RE and collective worship. Sixth form students may withdraw themselves from collective worship.

Parents also have certain rights with regard to the provision of RE in different categories of school. (However, these rights are rarely exercised.)

- In these schools^{1*}, parents can opt for their children to receive Agreed Syllabus RE.
- In these schools^{2*}, parents can opt for their children to receive RE in accordance with the religious character of the school.

In community schools and foundation schools without a religious character, where parents ask to withdraw their child from religious education alternative RE provision for that child can be made elsewhere by the parents.

The school continues to have responsibility for ensuring any pupil withdrawn from RE is supervised and safe.

(*See RE and collective worship in school table, page 9)

Religious teaching from within the faith community

SACRE members should be aware that some pupils will be formally receiving teaching about their own religion from their parents or through attendance at classes at or sponsored by their place of worship. The purpose of this teaching will differ from that of the religious education delivered in their schools, and the approach to learning may differ quite significantly from that in school.

There is a clear distinction between this religious nurture, which is the responsibility of the family and community, and religious education, by nature an open and explorative activity, appropriate in schools. It is important that the home and community background of the pupils is recognised and respected in school, but also that the educational approach is understood to promote reflection on faith and belief stances. SACREs might consider how they will support schools and communities in understanding each other's different roles and ensuring that any potential tension is creative rather than threatening.

SECTION 4

Local Authorities and SACREs

What are the local authority's responsibilities regarding its SACRE?

Every local authority has a duty to ensure that:

- there is a SACRE;
- all four groups are represented on it;
- there is an agreed syllabus, reviewed every five years;
- support is in place to enable SACRE to fulfil its duties, which includes providing appropriate clerking and specialist advice;
- it takes note of and responds to advice from the SACRE.

Does SACRE's remit cover all schools in the local authority?

The answer to that question is no. SACRE's responsibility covers the majority of schools, but there are some exemptions, depending entirely on the category of school. Some schools have a specific religious character and these are either voluntary aided (VA) ie: voluntary schools, aided by the LA but controlled by a religious body, or voluntary controlled (VC) ie: voluntary schools, controlled by the local authority and aided by a religious body; the difference, from SACRE's perspective, is crucial. There are also some non-religious schools for which SACRE has no responsibility, including new academies (*See RE and collective worship in school table, page 9*).

How does a SACRE make its work known?

1. Local Authorities

The relationship between SACREs, local authority officers and elected members is important. SACRE's proceedings need to be reported to the appropriate council committee in the LA where decisions are made about the education service and schools. The agreed minutes of meetings should be brought to their attention and the SACRE's Annual Report should be formally presented. Where such a person is in post, the local RE adviser is a vital source of professional guidance, support, advice, information, and practical expertise for the SACRE. His or her attendance at SACRE meetings is essential.

Local authority representatives on SACRE also have a role in ensuring SACRE's work, and any issues of concern it raises, are brought to the attention of the relevant sections of the council and the local authority.

2. Schools

Many schools seem unaware of the responsibilities and activities of their local SACRE. The specialist expertise on different faiths represented on a SACRE may be a source of advice to schools, which is reliably representative of the religion or denomination concerned. Some SACREs also hold their meetings in schools where they can meet and hear from teachers working in that school who have responsibility for RE or collective worship.

3. Faith communities

Sometimes SACREs hold meetings in local places of worship to build relationships. Individual faith community members have a responsibility to inform those they represent about the activities of the SACRE. They should also be available to receive the views of their community to feed into SACRE discussions.

It is good practice to send the SACRE annual report to the faith communities represented on the SACRE. It should also routinely be sent to local libraries and be on the agenda of the local Inter Faith Group or Faith Forum.

4. General public

SACRE meetings are by law open to the general public and notice of all meetings should be given, usually on the council's website. In the event of anyone requesting them, relevant documents should be made available.

SECTION 5

Frequently asked questions for new SACRE members

How often does a SACRE meet?

There is no hard and fast rule about the number of meetings a SACRE should hold each year. It must, however, meet sufficient times to fulfil its statutory duties. Almost all SACREs meet at least three times a year, i.e. once a term, and some are more active and meet more frequently. Sometimes working groups made up of SACRE members meet between full meetings to move forward specific areas of the SACRE's work.

Will I be asked to chair the meeting?

The law does not state how the Chair of a SACRE should be appointed. The local authority can appoint the Chair or it can allow the SACRE to elect the Chair from amongst its members. As a member of the SACRE you could, therefore, be appointed Chair of the SACRE, but not against your will!

Will I be asked to take the minutes?

The local authority's responsibility to set up a SACRE carries with it a duty to fund it and make sure it can function efficiently. This means the LA should provide a clerk for the SACRE who would attend and minute each meeting. The clerk is usually the point of contact for SACRE matters within the local authority.

If I'm not there, will it matter?

Your SACRE has a right to expect a level of commitment from its members that is reflected in regular attendance at meetings. When this is not possible, it is common practice and polite convention to send apologies for absence.

Some SACREs invite members from whom they have not received apologies for non-attendance on three consecutive occasions to confirm their interest in continuing to serve. Some SACREs allow members who cannot attend to send someone else on their behalf.

Remember that when you are not able to be present no-one else will be able to provide your special knowledge in any discussions or make connections to your specialist networks to support the SACRE's work.

Rules about quoracy are usually laid down in the individual SACRE's constitution, but generally, at each meeting:

- each committee should have a least one member present;
- decisions cannot be made unless there is a least one person present to cast the committee's single vote;
- co-opted members do not have a vote.

This applies particularly to meetings at which decisions are to be made.

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