

Public Document Pack  
SOUTHEND-ON-SEA CITY COUNCIL

**Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education**

Date: Thursday, 23rd November, 2023

Time: 2.00 pm

Place: Committee Room 2 - Civic Suite

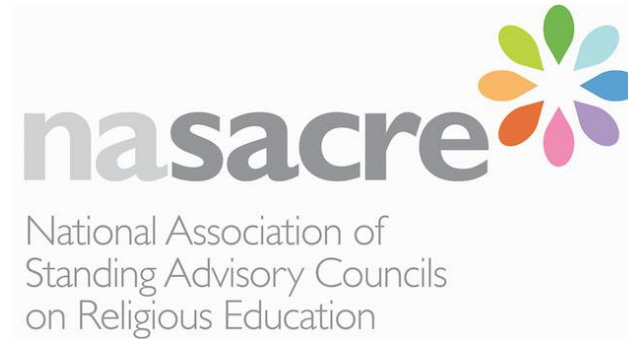
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**A G E N D A**

- 1 **Apologies for Absence**
- 2 **Declarations of Interest**
- 3 **Membership and SACRE Constitution Review**  
Verbal report (no papers)
- 4 **SACRE Self-Assessment Tool** (Pages 3 - 36)  
Paper attached
- 5 **SACRE Annual Report 2022** (Pages 37 - 40)  
Paper attached
- 6 **New RE Syllabus for 2024-2029 - Consultation Process** (Pages 41 - 44)  
Paper attached
- 7 **Date and time of future meetings**

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# SACRE self-assessment tool

## SACRE - Southend on Sea 2023 to 2024

Page 1

# **The SACRE Self Evaluation Toolkit**

## **Introduction**

This tool has been created to help SACREs in their essential role to advise the Local Authority (LA) in meeting the entitlement of pupils across the LA to engage in high quality Religious Education (RE) and Collective Worship (CW) and to support the LA to reflect on its practice. 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 as 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 LA on matters of RE and CW. Like school governors, members are unpaid volunteers who give up their time to support RE and CW locally.

This toolkit is an amended version of the 2015 document. It takes account of changes in inspection arrangements and in the role of LAs, and of the development of maintained schools independent of their LA. It is designed to help individual SACREs evaluate their effectiveness, including considering their impact on pupils' educational experience and learning. It also helps SACREs review their organisational patterns and structures, and their partnership with the LA and other key stakeholders.

The toolkit highlights five key dimensions of 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 key priorities for action.

4 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 LAs as well as those of other stakeholders in RE. Key summaries from the Guidance are included in the Annex to this document.

## **Rationale**

The SACRE self-evaluation toolkit focuses on the following five aspects of the work of SACREs:

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

Each aspect forms a section within the toolkit and each section is divided into focus questions to help SACREs explore their provision. Descriptors for 'Requires improvement/struggling', '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 LAs. 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 the LA.

SACREs are invited to use the format of this evaluation in conjunction with their annual report.

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## Section 1: 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?*

*(Taken from 2010 DfE Checklist for an effective partnership between an LA and its SACRE/ASC)*

- Does the LA and the SACRE/ASC carry out their statutory duties?
- Is SACRE/ASC properly resourced and well supported by subject specialist advice and training?
- Do members of the SACRE/ASC have a shared vision and understanding of their aims and purpose, seeking to sustain their positive work in the light of changing needs and priorities?
- Are SACRE/ASC meetings purposeful and focused on the major priorities of improving the quality of RE (and CW) in schools?
- Is the SACRE/ASC well informed about the quality of RE in schools and about wider LA and national priorities and developments affecting the subject?
- Has the LA adopted a high-quality agreed syllabus that provides a good grounding for planning, teaching and learning in RE and enables the schools to deliver RE as part of a coherent curriculum?
- Is there an effective process of reviewing, revising, implementing, monitoring and evaluating the locally agreed syllabus?
- How far does the SACRE's partnership with the LA enable it to help teachers and schools raise standards in RE and the quality of RE teaching?
- How far does the SACRE contribute effectively to the community cohesion agenda by supporting inclusion in schools and improving engagement within the community?

LAs must adequately fund SACREs to enable them to carry out their statutory duties and to support high quality RE and collective worship in schools.<sup>1</sup> We consider 2% of the CSSB to be a reasonable spend to enable this. LAs must set aside sufficient money to ensure the Agreed Syllabus review can be effective every five years.

We reiterate that as a minimum expectation, LAs must provide the following:

- a clerk
- a professional officer who has expertise in RE curriculum design
- a publicly accessible place to meet
- the reasonable expenses of members
- publishing the agreed syllabus and other SACRE materials (including agendas and minutes), most usually on the LA website
- NASACRE subscription and AGM attendance.

1. The Minister for School Standards, Nick Gibb MP, included this statement in response to a parliamentary question from Stephen Timms MP: "If the Department is informed that an individual SACRE or ASC is experiencing difficulties in fulfilling its statutory duties, the Department will contact the local authority to remind them of their duty to support their activities satisfactorily."

2021HC Deb, 28 March 2018, cW <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2018-03-28/134697>

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<sup>1</sup> *ibid.*, page 11

The relationship between a Local Authority and its SACRE is essentially one of partnership and collaboration, with mutual obligations and statutory 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 LA, it is more likely that members of the SACRE will be able to contribute both to SACRE's work and to the LA's wider strategic objectives.

By bringing together many local stakeholders (faith/belief communities, teachers, local politicians and co-optees 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 CW, 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. 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.

- ✓ 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 meeting 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, 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: 1a – Funding: Professional and financial support		
How well supported and resourced is SACRE, by the LA exercising its statutory responsibilities?		
<b>Requires improvement/struggling</b> A SACRE in this position would:	have no financial or management support to help SACRE to meet and operate. Members are unable to communicate with each other. There is no professional support.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Developing</b> A SACRE with developing practice would:	have financial and management support to allow it to exist. Representatives of the LA receive papers and/or attend meetings but there is limited subject specialist advice available. There are resources for basic SACRE functions (such as a place to meet and a minute taker) but there is no specific budget for the SACRE and little opportunity for the SACRE to take initiatives requiring funding.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Established</b> A SACRE with established practice would:	access to some 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.	<b>X</b> <i>With elements of Advanced</i>
<b>Advanced</b> 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. SACRE has a strategic, costed development plan. The SACRE has access to funds to enable it to make decisions about its priorities and ensure these can be properly resourced.	<b>x</b>
<b>Where are we and where do we find evidence to support this?</b>	SACRE sits between elements of <b>Established and Advanced</b> There is a budget allocated to SACRE and Clerking services and a meeting room and an Independent Consultant / Adviser are provided. SACRE need to establish where the LA sits in relation to the national picture for funding, so the following statement can be applied: <b>“The SACRE has access to funds to enable it to make decisions about its priorities and ensure these can be properly resourced.”</b> The SACRE can then assess where their funding sits in relation to the NASACRE values of 2% of CSS The amount of funding should be established by members. Then the SACRE can assess and understand the effectiveness of its work and link to other work within the LA's plans. Meeting invitations within the LA's guidelines and associated papers are circulated one week in advance of the meeting. The Clerk, the Chair, and the LA's specialist RE Adviser (contracted by the LA) maintain contact with each	



	<p>other between meetings and the Clerk sends out announcements of meetings and the meeting invitations with the agenda. The Clerk, Chair and Adviser meet pre-meetings and converse between meetings. Membership of SACRE still being re-built 'post-pandemic'; a Chair is in place and Councillors were appointed by end of May 2023, an additional meeting, so four instead of three, is proposed during the 23-24 academic year to drive SACRE's agenda forward and catch up on SACRE's work.</p> <p><b>SACRE's plans are linked to other local work and projects:</b> The LA's Adviser has worked with the Faith and Belief network and contributed to bringing together the work of that forum and schools/teachers. Links are being built by the Adviser with the area's local SCITT and the Schools Governors' Forum and there are other opportunities here which need exploration by SACRE.</p> <p><b>SACRE has a strategic, costed development plan:</b> This document will be presented to SACRE in November 2023 and edited to recognise progress after following meetings in 2024 and beyond.</p> <p>The LA's Adviser will continue liaising and engaging in discussion with the LA Lead Officer and support team where good professional working relationships have been built so SACRE's decisions are well-informed and there is cohesion between the SACRE's and the LA's priorities.</p>
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Key Area: 1b – SACRE meetings		
<i>How purposeful, inclusive, representative, and effective are SACRE meetings?</i>		
<b>Requires improvement/struggling</b> A SACRE in this position would:	not hold regular meetings, if they meet at all. Any meeting held is purely to demonstrate that the LA has allowed SACRE to meet.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Developing</b> A SACRE with developing practice would:	hold meetings regularly with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• routine administrative arrangements</li> <li>• appropriate distribution of agendas and papers</li> </ul> Business is dealt with in a prompt and orderly way. There is limited opportunity for SACRE members to contribute to the work apart from attending meetings. Business tends to be focused solely on routine statutory requirements.	<b>X</b>
<b>Established</b> A SACRE with established practice would:	have good attendance where all four committees are well represented, and meetings are quorate. Agendas and papers are distributed well in advance ensuring all members have time to consider them carefully, consulting when relevant their representing/sponsoring bodies. There are some opportunities for teachers and representatives of faith and worldview communities to be invited to share their work. Meetings are well managed with strong contributions from a wide range of members.	<input type="checkbox"/>

<p><b>Advanced</b> A SACRE with advanced practice would:</p>	<p>Meetings move beyond routine matters to consider wider issues about the quality of RE and CW. have SACRE members contributing to the development of the agenda and strategic development plan. 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 and worldview communities regularly attend and participate fully in meetings, sharing their experience and insights. Meetings are held in a variety of venues, including council venues, local places of worship and schools. Procedures have been put in place so that meaningful contact can be made with and between members outside of SACRE meetings.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><b>Where are we and where do we find evidence to support this?</b></p>	<p><b>Post-pandemic the SACRE is “Developing.”</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ However, a return to “<b>Established</b>” is expected by the end of the Summer Term SACRE meeting in 2024 if members attend or substitute as required and meetings are called. Dates to ensure good attendance and so diaries can be arranged to facilitate good attendance are to be set in November for the spring and summer terms.</li> <li>▪ Membership of SACRE is currently the challenge <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ the City’s elected councillors attended pre-pandemic and there are procedures for ensuring the hitherto good representation continues <b>such as substitution</b>.</li> <li>▪ SACRE’s relationship with most of the faith and worldview representatives has been re-established as their representatives had changed.</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Primary: The importance of RE Teachers’ Networks is evident here. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Members of the networks can be invited to attend SACRE. In this case it would be best if the meeting to which teachers are invited takes place at a time conducive to their attendance (<b>i.e. outside of usual school hours</b> or cover costs prevent schools engaging). This has been difficult as the attendance by members at other meetings causes clashes to the timetable so a way needs to be found to accommodate and encourage teacher / HT membership if it is desired by SACRE</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Primary Teachers’ Network meetings were held by Zoom in 2022/3 and meetings are planned for 23-24</li> <li>▪ Secondary Teachers’ Network need restarting.</li> <li>▪ For Secondary Schools, external examination results have not been available post-pandemic due to the cessation of DFE gathering this information and no comparisons can be made for the 2022 to 2023 results as advised by DFE.</li> </ul>	

Key Area: <b>1c – Membership and training</b> <i>To what extent is the membership of SACRE able to fulfil SACRE's purpose?</i>		
<b>Requires improvement/struggling</b> A SACRE in this position would:	have no membership list. SACREs constitution is not fit for purpose and needs revision. The Local Authority struggles to fill all places on SACRE, SACRE members have no regular training provided.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Developing</b> A SACRE with developing practice would:	have a membership that fulfils the basic statutory obligations. Arrangements to fill vacancies are not always pursued effectively. There are limited induction and training opportunities for SACRE members.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Established</b> A SACRE with established practice would:	have an active membership that strongly reflects the diversity of the wider religious/worldview and professional community. There is regular induction training and processes for new members. There are good opportunities for SACRE members to participate in training activities.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Advanced</b> 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. There are robust systems in place for succession planning for members and SACRE roles.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Where are we and where do we find evidence to support this?</b>	<p>The SACRE considered and agreed to co-option of members from those who have expressed an interest to attend.</p> <p>LA's RE/SACRE Adviser has acted upon SACRE's existing instructions to contact and encourage the allocation of representative/s (as appropriate) to Southend SACRE. 2023 membership as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ RE Adviser for Essex County Council and Chelmsford Diocese (contacted and in attendance since 2022</li> <li>▪ Awaiting representation from Brentwood Diocese (PA to Diocesan Director of Education contacted and representation sought).</li> <li>▪ the local branch of Teachers and Headteachers' Unions (NEU/NAHT) to be sought as one previous SACRE member is to change to a different group</li> <li>▪ representatives of faith and worldview groups (C / E, Free Churches, Hindu, Sikh) achieved</li> <li>▪ Clerk has been securing membership of other representative groups</li> <li>▪ Post local elections City Councillors have been nominated and contacted re meetings</li> </ul>	

Key Area: <b>1d – Improvement/development planning</b> <i>How effective are the priorities and actions identified by SACRE in improving the experience of pupils in schools?</i>		
<b>Requires improvement/struggling</b> A SACRE in this position would:	have no development plan to focus future work. There is no knowledge of areas where the priorities of the LA's development / improvement plan potentially could link to the work of the SACRE.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Developing</b> A SACRE with developing practice would:	have little overt linkage between the priorities of the LA's development / improvement plan and the work of the SACRE. SACRE has limited awareness of national projects or initiatives related to the work of SACRE and so is unable to plan any work or request funding to initiate new work.	<b>X</b>
<b>Established</b> A SACRE with established practice would:	have a costed development 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. SACRE has awareness of national projects or initiatives related to the work of SACRE and so is able to plan work or request funding to update and review their development plan. The SACRE is regularly represented at national events relevant to its work; for example, NASACRE.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Advanced</b> A SACRE with advanced practice would:	have a well-defined development plan with clear objectives and success criteria. Resource implications are clearly defined and funding negotiated with the LA or outside funding streams. There is a clear link between the plan and the wider objectives of the LA and also to national innovations.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Where are we and where do we find evidence to support this?</b>	<p>RE Adviser will present this edited SEF to SACRE at the first meeting of the 23 – 24 academic year and invite considerations and after informed discussions at that meeting any edits will be completed and the agreed SEF will be adopted by SACRE. The RE Adviser will complete this SEF and use it and the survey results collated to develop the Action Plan. The Adviser is in communication with the LA's Education Lead and office. Information gathered, together with information from the LA will be reported to SACRE. Both primary and secondary Teachers' Network meetings are a source of information. Data regarding Ofsted reports will be collected from CES / Diocesan / schools' websites.</p> <p>Position of RE in schools has been ascertained by website scrutiny by the Adviser and LA has been contacted regarding any concerns about non-fulfilment of DFE 'must/should' of publications regarding RE and Collective Worship.</p> <p>The concerns reported to the LA often/mainly surround the parental right to withdrawal for their children from RE and/or Collective Worship being published in prospectuses (whether online or in hard copy documentation) for parents and carers. The Adviser is to attend a school Governors' Forum in the spring term and will raise this, and the processes of withdrawal from RE / Collective Worship with governors and encourage them to begin discussions with their schools to bring about improvements where needed. Some schools have already responded to this being raised in a feedback letter to schools which the Adviser and LA's education office including the results from</p>	

	<p><b>the survey.</b> SACRE can consider re-issuing a version of this newsletter to the schools whose information still does not contain this message.</p> <p>Ofsted Reports will be read and information collected although many now only have a comment about the leadership and management of PSHE / SMSC, within which RE is an element.</p> <p>Deep dives into the curriculum by Inspectors may include RE/PSHE and preparation for this has been the subject of Lead RE Teachers' Network meetings.</p>
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<p><b>Key Area: 1e - Information and advice</b></p> <p><i>How well informed is SACRE to be able to advise the LA appropriately?</i></p>		
<p><b>Requires improvement/struggling</b> A SACRE in this position would:</p>	<p>not be supported to gather information (exam results, data, links to schools) or to link with national initiatives including membership of NASACRE.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><b>Developing</b> A SACRE with developing practice would:</p>	<p>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 when the LA wishes to give it rather than ask questions of the LA or receive answers to its request. There is little opportunity to be a critical friend.</p>	
<p><b>Established</b> A SACRE with established practice would:</p>	<p>be regularly provided with clear information relevant to the quality and provision for RE and CW in local schools and given a context within which any school is working. The SACRE receives the information in a way that enables it to act as a critical friend and question the LA's work.</p>	X
<p><b>Advanced</b> A SACRE with advanced practice would:</p>	<p>receive detailed and well-analysed information about the quality and provision for RE and CW. As a result, SACRE uses this information effectively to give advice to the LA which leads to strategic action and/or partnership work to improve standards. This can include advice related to the review of the AS. The SACRE has a strong partnership with the LA and plays an active role in promoting ideas and initiatives.</p>	X
<p><b>Where are we and where do we find evidence to support this?</b></p>	<p><b>Between Established and Advanced:</b> Detailed information has been regularly and routinely shared. Opportunities for SACRE to be 'a critical friend' need to be developed alongside the current membership and encouragement of their understanding of the role.</p> <p>The RE/SACRE Adviser provides detailed reports to SACRE, an Annual Report and information about wider national and local developments.</p> <p><b>Renewal of the NASACRE subscription for SACRE is essential for members and the RE Adviser as this important source adds to that which is readily available</b> from other sources the Adviser receives and researches publications, information via online forums and maintains memberships of and regular contact with important groups, people and forums to be able to attend CPD and National Conferences to remain upskilled and in touch with developments and literature, so to inform and advise schools, teachers, the LA and SACRE,</p> <p>To this end training for SACRE members is being sought by the Adviser through NASACRE.</p>	

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	The locally Agreed Syllabus (LAS) is in place and its current 5-year time span ends in 2023 with arrangements to review and replace/update this are currently being investigated by the LA Adviser for presentation to SACRE. Schools are especially keen to embrace and widen the scope of an updated/new LAS to include RE and Worldviews to recognise and represent the diversity of the cultural, worldviews, faith and belief landscape of its locality and of England, especially given the Commission on RE (CoRE) Report which recommended this. Schools also wish support on the balance of green and environmental issues with in RE.
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<b>Key Area: 1f - Partnerships with key stakeholders</b>		
<i>What partnerships does the SACRE have with key local and national stakeholders, and what quality are these?</i>		
<b>Requires improvement/struggling</b> A SACRE in this position would:	be unaware of local or national agencies. SACRE has no links with sponsoring bodies in their location.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Developing</b> A SACRE with developing practice would:	have little contact with or awareness of other local agencies (e.g. interfaith groups, dioceses), and rarely hears from pupils/students.	<b>X</b>
<b>Established</b> A SACRE with established practice would:	be well informed about other key stakeholders supporting RE and have some meaningful contact with the groups involved. SACRE members are supported at a national level by their sponsoring body. SACRE members attend the annual NASACRE conference and other training opportunities. Hear from pupils/students as part of their work around high-quality RE and CW.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Advanced</b> A SACRE with advanced practice would:	build its activities effectively on local networks. Links with other bodies, such as local interfaith 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 about RE. Representatives of key support networks and higher education providers are regularly involved with the SACRE.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Where are we and where do we find evidence to support this?</b>	<p><b>A priority to move to Established and then Advanced in 23-24.</b></p> <p>These links need to be rebuilt following the pandemic and difficulties in holding meetings due to clashes of elections and other dates. Opportunities to work more closely with teachers, pupils/student and schools also need to be provided by SACRE through: invitations to meetings attending Teachers' meetings which are held over Zoom and feeding back to SACRE. Attending the launch for schools of a new/updated LAS expected within this academic year. SACRE members' links to other groups that they may attend such as the Faith and Belief network need to be explored, encouraged and feedback s they can be recorded within SACRE's meetings.</p>	

<b>Key Area: 1g – Relations with the Academies sector</b>
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<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>		
<b>Requires improvement/struggling</b> A SACRE in this position would:	have no opportunity to network with local academies.	<b>X</b>
<b>Developing</b> 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"/>
<b>Established</b> A SACRE with established practice would:	have made attempts to include academies on 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, or what is possible between academies in an area.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Advanced</b> SACRE with advanced practice would:	have established the place of academies on SACRE. SACRE has considered systematically the legal and structural options, and established a permanent and sustainable academy presence on SACRE. A high proportion of academies in the area regard themselves as stakeholders and partner with SACRE.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Where are we and where do we find evidence to support this?</b>	<p>Referring to the Schools Workforce survey 2022/3 we are in the position to know the responses regarding their provision for RE Teaching from all the Secondary schools in the City as <b>all</b> these are academies.</p> <p>Further investigation is needed regarding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• primary schools, both maintained and academies, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ provision regarding CW: throughout the whole of the City, primary and secondary, maintained and academies.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>There is a history of non-engagement, mainly by “not knowing of SACRE and its work” rather than any other concerns or professional difficulties, information gathering and sharing from academies will be carefully managed by the Adviser to overcome gaps in SACRE's knowledge.</p>	

### Successes/ What are we good at?

**Barriers to success** Non responsiveness from one or two academies. Schools Workforce data to be scrutinised by SACRE

**Areas for development/ Action points:**

- For the SACRE - Adviser role discussed RE Adviser and gathering information from academies.
- For the LA: Support from SACRE re Adviser's role working with Academies especially those from whom no information is offered through the Schools' Workforce Survey or recent survey conducted by the Adviser.

**Date of review :September 2024**

## Section 2. 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 aspiration and a spur for action.

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 LA which appointed SACRE. In the light of the current inspection culture of partnership and self-evaluation, SACREs will need to adopt an astute and sensitive approach to achieve this overview.

Information to assist SACRE in carrying out its role is likely to come from a range of sources, which 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: <b>2a - RE provision across the LA.</b> <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>		
<b>Requires improvement/struggling</b> A SACRE in this position would:	have no routes by which SACRE can gain information about RE provision in schools.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Developing</b> 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 (e.g. a website trawl)	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Established</b> 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 LAS. SACRE's process for acquiring this information is adequate but lacks coherence. Have limited opportunities to implement strategies in support of pupil entitlement. Ofsted reports are read and any comments on RE noted and brought to SACRE.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Advanced</b> A SACRE with advanced practice would:	build upon a strong relationship with the LA, whereby the LA shares its information and from this SACRE gains an 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Where are we and where do we find evidence to support this?</b>	Historically this data is available from the LA and an Annual Report to SACRE has been written by the RE Adviser and received by SACRE. No such data has been available for academic years <b>2019 - 2022</b> due to Covid and the cessation of external examinations. This also means another difficulty in tracking the provision and position of RE in secondary schools i.e., how many students were entered for GCSE / for A level RE, and the points / passes secured in each school.	

Key Area: <b>2b - Standards of achievement and public examination entries</b> <i>How does SACRE use information about standards and examinations to target support and training for schools?</i>		
<b>Requires improvement/struggling</b> A SACRE in this position would:	not be given any data to work from and has no professional support to investigate this at a local and national level.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Developing</b> 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 and the local authority does not adequately invest in professional support for this. Analysis would be limited as would strategies to address issues.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Established</b> 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.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

<b>Advanced</b> A SACRE with advanced practice would:	have robust processes with the LA whereby SACRE can gain accurate information about standards in schools and examination entries in all secondary schools, with useful analysis that enables it to address issues effectively in partnership with the LA.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Where are we and where do we find evidence to support this?</b>	RE Teachers Network provides some information from Primary schools. Comparisons with previous years for external examinations for RE by secondary students are currently discouraged by DFE due to Covid difficulties. information can be shared with SACRE from secondary schools regarding RE teaching from the workforce survey <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ for all year groups from year 7 onwards</li> <li>○ including the provision for students beyond year 9 who are NOT studying RE in examination groups</li> </ul>	

<b>Key Area: 2c - Quality of learning and teaching.</b> <i>How well does SACRE use knowledge of quality of learning and teaching to target support appropriately?</i>		
<b>Requires improvement/struggling</b> A SACRE in this position would:	not have any knowledge of quality of learning and teaching to target support from the LA and professional support/adviser.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Developing</b> A SACRE with developing practice would:	have little 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 or no professional support in the LA working with the SACRE.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Established</b> A SACRE with established practice would:	have some information regarding the quality of learning and teaching from a range of sources including contact with teachers and pupils. Limited analysis of this information is undertaken; however, this 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	<b>X</b>
<b>Advanced</b> 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, linked to schools in need.	<b>X</b>
<b>Where are we and where do we find evidence to support this?</b>	SACRE is between Establish and Advanced.	

<b>Key Area: 2d Quality of interaction and communication with leadership and management of RE in schools</b> <i>To what extent does SACRE have and pass on information that supports high quality RE in schools</i>		
<b>Requires improvement/struggling</b>	not engage in communication with schools.	<input type="checkbox"/>

A SACRE in this position would:		
<b>Developing</b> A SACRE with developing practice would:	have little communication with schools. It occasionally contacts schools with resources for RE and attends Headteachers meetings.	√
<b>Established</b> A SACRE with established practice would:	have RE key messages communicated regularly into schools. Sends regular updates and information to schools, headteachers and governors. SACRE discussions are used to enhance leadership and management of RE in schools.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Advanced</b> A SACRE with advanced practice would:	have a constructive relationship with senior leaders and subject managers in schools to develop the subject.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Where are we and where do we find evidence to support this?</b>	An area where SACRE needs to develop further.	

<b>Key Area: 2e - Relations with academies and other non-LA maintained schools.</b>		
<i>To what extent has a SACRE developed a proactive strategy in relation to academies and other non-LA maintained schools in its area?</i>		
<b>Requires improvement/struggling</b> A SACRE in this position would:	not have the mechanisms and not have the knowledge of making contact.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Developing</b> 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.	√
<b>Established</b> 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 and share their advice to these schools. By and large, academies co-operate with SACRE at this level. SACRE keeps under review the ongoing situation.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Advanced</b> A SACRE with advanced practice would:	have a proactive 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"/>
<b>Where are we and where do we find evidence to support this?</b>	<p>The situation in the LA differs between primary and secondary schools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RE Lead Teachers' and Teachers have attend the Network from both maintained schools, and academies.</li> <li>• The adviser is aware that little support has been sought by or offered to Special schools (all of which are academies).</li> <li>• There has been a decline of secondary teachers attending the Teachers Network:</li> </ul> <p>The adviser</p>	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ does not distinguish between academies at primary level nor secondary level within the City when support has been requested or when support or attendance at the Teachers' Network has been sought</li> <li>○ has recently reviewed the list of schools who have moved to academy status owing to there having been of changes to the status of several primary schools who have now moved to academisation</li> </ul>
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**Successes/ What are we good at?**

**Barriers to success**

**Areas for development/ Action points:**

- **For the SACRE**
- **For the LA**      The adviser will seek to address the question of support for secondary schools with the LA

**Date of review (1)**

**Date of review (2)**

**Date of review (3)**

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## Section 3: 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 (AS) is the bedrock on which schools will build robust sequences of effective learning experiences in RE. A good, recent AS will support both the delivery of high quality RE in schools and RE's contribution to the schools' wider curriculum aims and impact.

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.

LAs are required to review their AS 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 an AS that is truly "fit for purpose".

While the ASC holds the legal responsibility for revising the AS, 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 inclusivity 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 decisions about the AS are 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 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: 3a – The review process <i>How does the SACRE review the success of the existing agreed syllabus?</i>		
<b>Requires improvement/struggling</b> A SACRE in this position would:	not have any way of contacting schools to carry out a review of the existing syllabus. It will not be supported by the LA or professional support.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Developing</b> A SACRE with developing practice would:	have limited arrangements in place to monitor the impact of the AS, particularly in raising standards, providing little or no opportunity to review the effectiveness of the AS. Not know the views of teachers and have had no systematic evaluation of the strengths/weaknesses of the syllabus. Unclear how to proceed with the five-yearly syllabus review and there is little or no budget allocation from the LA. Have little knowledge of wider recent RE national guidance, research and developments.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Established</b> 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 LAS. Have devised a costed action plan in partnership with the LA, and been allocated a sufficient budget for the LAS review and relaunch.	<b>X</b>
<b>Advanced</b> A SACRE with advanced practice would:	have a clear and systematic process for monitoring the effectiveness of the AS built into its development plan. Reviewing the AS includes full consultation with schools and other key stakeholders, including faith communities and academics. 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 design/distribution costs. There is a strong sense of shared ownership of the prospective AS review, with clear targets for what needs to be achieved.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Where are we and where do we find evidence to support this?</b>	<p><b>Established</b> RE Teachers' Network meetings and the schools survey are the main opportunities to collect views of those who lead /teach RE and use the Locally Agreed Syllabus which is well-liked and used /applauded widely by primary teachers.</p> <p>The information for a review was gathered that allows this to feed into a constructive debate through which adjustments are being considered and shared to adopt the CoRE recommendations (of May 2021) which strongly recommend the change to Religious Education and Worldviews.</p> <p><b>To move to "Advanced":</b> An RE Survey has provided some information but further information will be needed and gathering and analysing this should be a priority in 2022-23 to begin the process of reviewing the current LAS. An ASC will feature in this Action Plan with a budget for the process in 2023-24.</p>	

Key Area: <b>3b – The quality of the local Agreed Syllabus</b> <i>How well does the locally Agreed Syllabus promote effective learning &amp; teaching in RE? Is it “fit for purpose”?</i>		
<b>Requires improvement/struggling</b> A SACRE in this position would:	not have knowledge of other agreed syllabi nationally. Not have access to professional support with a national knowledge of high-quality teaching and learning in RE.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Developing</b> A SACRE with developing practice would:	ensure that the AS sets out what is to be learnt at each Key Stage. Progression in RE is stated, but this does not link directly to the learning and there is no clear expectation of quality learning in the AS.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Established</b> A SACRE with established practice would:	ensure that the AS 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. Ensure that the AS development has involved teachers and meets their needs.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Advanced</b> A SACRE with advanced practice would:	ensure that the AS 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 resources and provision in schools. References latest RE research that is relevant to help pupils make good progress in RE.	<b>X</b>
<b>Where are we and where do we find evidence to support this?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The current LAS is a high-quality document having been written by RE Today, a well-respected RE specialist charity who have employed published authors, advisers and consultants to write it.</li> <li>• It must be used by maintained primary schools.</li> <li>• It is also widely used by primary academies (if not being used, SACRE could enquire what they are using in its place)</li> <li>• The current LAS is also respected by the Chelmsford Diocese and recommended to their Local C/E Primary who use it.</li> <li>• Feedback from primary teachers / schools is that the current LAS is a very good syllabus.</li> <li>• The provision by the LA including the purchase of the more “in-depth” additional units and the PDF availability is welcomed by teachers.</li> <li>• <b>The current LAS has a lifespan until 2023 and its replacement will be considered by SACRE in the 23-24 academic year.</b></li> <li>• SACRE will need to ascertain the syllabi used by secondary academies for Year 7-9 and for RE for non-examination groups beyond (in Yr 10 onwards)</li> </ul>	



Key Area: <b>3c – Launching and implementing the Agreed Syllabus</b> <i>How well does SACRE promote the AS and provide training to prepare teachers to use it effectively?</i>		
<b>Requires improvement/struggling</b> A SACRE in this position would:	not have a launch for the new syllabus. Not have any in-service training for teachers/schools for implementing the new AS. Not have the mechanisms to advertise, promote and share the syllabus with local schools.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Developing</b> A SACRE with developing practice would:	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. Have little training provision for implementing the revised syllabus. Be prevented from providing any significant additional guidance or extended training on using the AS by a shortage of financial and human resources.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Established</b> A SACRE with established practice would:	use other forms of communication (for example the LA website) to promote the launch. Have clear arrangements for training teachers on implementing the syllabus provided by the LA; this training is well supported and managed. Provides additional guidance or extended training on using the AS over its life.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Advanced</b> A SACRE with advanced practice would:	Involve the wider community and use strong media coverage, to give the AS a high profile as an important development in the work of the LA and local community. The launch event includes high quality presentations from a range of local religious and worldviews groups, schools and professional LA officers/councillors. Provides effective training on implementing the AS, which is supported by all schools, leads to teachers being clear about standards and expectations in the AS and the implications for teaching and learning. 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.	√
<b>Where are we and where do we find evidence to support this?</b>	Advanced: A launch event will be considered and planned and it will include information from a wide range of local religious and non-religious worldviews and environmental / green issues in the next LAS. SACRE will begin to plan for it to be in place by September 2024.	

Key Area: <b>3d – Membership and training of the Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC)</b> <i>To what extent is the membership of ASC able to fulfil its purpose?</i>		
<b>Requires improvement/struggling</b> A SACRE in this position would:	not have the structures in place to convene an ASC. Not have any admin and advisory support for its work.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Developing</b> A SACRE with developing practice would:	have a membership that fulfils basic statutory requirements. Limited induction and training opportunities; members are unclear of their roles, or how an AS can be structured. Particular faith or belief groups or teachers from different phases do not attend. 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.	<input type="checkbox"/>



<b>Established</b> A SACRE with established practice would:	have a membership that strongly reflects the diversity of the wider religious/worldview and professional community. Some opportunities for members' training and the purpose and action plan for the work of the ASC are clear. 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.	X
<b>Advanced</b> A SACRE with advanced practice would:	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 to ensure this voice is added into the process. There is a strong, co-ordinated programme of induction and training opportunities for members. 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. Provide effective admin to support the process	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Where are we and where do we find evidence to support this?</b>	This area has been one of SACRE's most significant challenges as membership of SACRE was a major concern. SACRE is underrepresented in significant faith groups and efforts to improve this have been undertaken to ensure membership is more representative of the local community.	

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<b>Key Area: 3e - Developing the revised agreed syllabus</b> <i>How robust are the processes for producing a strong educational Agreed Syllabus?</i>		
<b>Requires improvement/struggling</b> A SACRE in this position would:	not have an agreed plan linked to finance for developing their AS. Have met the five-year review deadline of revising and publishing a new AS.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Developing</b> A SACRE with developing practice would:	have no clear structure for developing a new AS. 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 AS with teachers, SACRE members and the local religious/worldview communities.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Established</b> 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 AS which is coherent, clear and accessible. Working parties and consultations are reasonably managed and supported.	✓
<b>Advanced</b> A SCRE 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 AS has a clear framework for progression and challenging learning	✓
<b>Where are we and where do we find evidence to support this?</b>	Between <b>Established</b> and heading towards <b>Advanced</b> .	

Key Area: <b>3f - Making best use of National Guidance</b> <i>How does the Agreed Syllabus Conference make choices relating to the use of national documentation? (See footnote*)</i>		
<b>Requires improvement/struggling</b> A SACRE in this position would:	not be aware of national documentation in relation to the AS review process and are therefore unable to use this guidance appropriately.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Developing</b> A SACRE with developing practice would:	have a limited awareness and understanding of national documentation in relation to the AS 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 holistic education of the child.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Established</b> A SACRE with established practice would:	be aware of national documentation and some of its implications for the AS 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 AS 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"/>
<b>Advanced</b> A SACRE with advanced practice would:	take full account of national documentation in the construction of the revised AS, 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"/>
<b>Where are we and where do we find evidence to support this?</b>	The RE Adviser to make SACRE aware of National Guidance, including but not restricted to those sources named below and has an awareness of the need to keep pace with new initiatives and documentation from: Ofsted, CoRE, REToday, NATRE, DFE, The Association of RE Inspectors, Advisers and Consultants (ARIAC) <b>Subscription to</b> National Association of Standing Advisory Councils for Religious Education ( <b>NASACRE</b> ) is essential and must be maintained so the Clerk, Chair, members and the Adviser can access important information and updates.	
*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"; CoRE; Big Ideas in RE publication 1 & 2; Ofsted RE literature review		

## Successes/ What are we good at?

### Barriers to success

### Areas for development/ Action points:

- **For the SACRE          Attendance by SACRE member at NASACRE AGM**
  
- **For the LA**

LAs must adequately fund SACREs to enable them to carry out their statutory duties and to support high quality RE and collective worship in schools.<sup>2</sup> We consider 2% of the CSSB to be a reasonable spend to enable this. LAs must set aside sufficient money to ensure the Agreed Syllabus review can be effective every five years. We reiterate that as a minimum expectation, LAs must provide the following:

- a clerk
- a professional officer who has expertise in RE curriculum design
- a publicly accessible place to meet
- the reasonable expenses of members
- publishing the agreed syllabus and other SACRE materials (including agendas and minutes), most usually on the LA website
- NASACRE subscription and AGM attendance.

• Academies should publish: • the content of the curriculum your school follows in each academic year for every subject, including for mandatory subjects such as Religious Education even if it's taught as part of another subject or subjects or is called something else • your approach to the curriculum • how parents or other members of the public can find out more about the curriculum your school is following  
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/what-academies-free-schools-and-colleges-should-publish-online#curriculum>

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<sup>2</sup> *ib id.*, page 11

## Section 4. 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 CW 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 CW in community schools and to advise the LA on issues related to provision and quality. It must also consider applications from headteachers in community schools that the requirement for CW 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 CW.

CW can be a rich and rewarding element of the curriculum as a whole and SACREs can enhance its quality by offering appropriate guidance and support.

Key Area:4a – Supporting pupil entitlement		
<i>What strategies are in place to enable the SACRE to support the delivery of pupil entitlement in the LA’s schools?</i>		
<b>Requires improvement/struggling</b> A SACRE in this position would:	not have any knowledge regarding the provision of CW nor have any mechanism in place to gain such knowledge.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Developing</b> A SACRE with developing practice would:	be unaware of the issues facing schools in providing CW as part of the pupil entitlement. Provide little advice or support towards fulfilling pupil entitlement to CW.	√
<b>Established</b> A SACRE with established practice would:	understand local issues of delivering pupil entitlement and of the challenges schools face in providing CW. Provide some advice in support of delivering pupil entitlement. Seek to ensure that schools had access to, and advice on, appropriate resources for the delivery of CW.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Advanced</b> A SACRE with advanced practice would:	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. Periodically review its strategies for supporting pupil entitlement.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Where are we and where do we find evidence to support this?</b>	SACRE have the results of the last survey conducted by the RE Adviser and for those schools who replied to the relevant /appropriate questions and the findings are currently being compiled for SACRE / LA to consider.	

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Key Area: <b>4b – Enhancing the quality of provision of collective worship</b> <i>How does SACRE seek to influence the quality of collective worship in the LA's schools?</i>		
<b>Requires improvement/struggling</b> A SACRE in this position would:	not be able to influence the quality of CW due to lack of support either from the LA or CW/RE professional. Have no knowledge of what good quality CW in schools looks like.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Developing</b> A SACRE with developing practice would:	not be adequately supported by the LA / RE professional to promote quality provision of CW. Have agenda items about CW dominated by the issue of how SACRE obtains data. Have little understanding of the nature and potential of CW and of what effective provision in each school might be.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Established</b> A SACRE with established practice would:	have occasional agenda items on CW, with some insight into how it is being delivered in the LA's schools. Understand what effective provision is, but SACRE members have little 'hands-on' experience of CW. Promote in-service support for teachers with responsibility for CW. Advise on enhancing quality of provision.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Advanced</b> A SACRE with advanced practice would:	have a good overview of quality of provision across the LA, with information from the LA and from presentations by schools. Have first-hand experience of CW in schools. Disseminate good practice in consultation with schools and teachers. Sponsor an ongoing programme of in-service development, and assist schools in evaluating and enhancing the quality of their provision.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Where are we and where do we find evidence to support this?</b>	Refer to question 4a above and proposed solution to finding answers. More information and guidance is to be sought.	

Key Area: <b>4c – Responding to requests for determinations</b> <i>How robust are SACRE's procedures for responding to requests from schools for a determination?</i>		
<b>Requires improvement/struggling</b> A SACRE in this position would:	not have any understanding of what a determination is. Have no documentation for schools to use to make application for a determination.	√
<b>Developing</b> A SACRE with developing practice would:	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, due to a lack of support provided to SACRE by the LA via a professional officer. Found unprepared and at risk of making an unsound decision or giving erroneous advice by a request for a determination.	√
<b>Established</b> A SACRE with established practice would:	be aware that schools have the option of requesting a determination, and that SACRE has a major role in this process. Have provided some training to its members regarding determinations, either directly through working on earlier requests, or through specific elements in developmental sessions. Responds in an adequate but piecemeal fashion, when requested for a determination, without a systematic overview of this area of work.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Advanced</b>	be fully equipped for responding to requests for determinations, with a good understanding of SACRE's responsibilities. Have a well-established and effective framework for responding to requests, with which	<input type="checkbox"/>

A SACRE with advanced practice would:	members are familiar and comfortable. 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. Periodically review all existing determinations together with keeping the guidance from the RE professional.
<b>Where are we and where do we find evidence to support this?</b>	Between improving and developing. RE Adviser suggests a training module from the NATRE training offer for SACRE to be accessed for members. This may be for them to watch independently or as a part of a SACRE Meeting. No determinations have been sought of SACRE within the City for a very long time but this should not prevent members from being prepared should it happen.

**Successes/ What are we good at?**

**Barriers to success      A lack of knowledge or experience of determinations/ policy and legal requirements**

**Areas for development/ Action points:**

- **For the SACRE -**
  - **To be aware of CW's status in schools**
  - **to receive training to be fit to make determinations should requests to do so arise**
- **For the LA      Support adviser with circulation of projected survey to all schools In City including academies/Primary/Infant/secondary with response expected (or school instruction to do so)**

**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”<sup>3</sup>.

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.

Key Area: <b>5a – SACRE’s membership</b>		
<i>How representative is SACRE’s membership of the local community?</i>		
<b>Requires improvement/struggling</b> A SACRE in this position would:	rarely meet and its membership will include many vacancies. The LA needs to review its membership and constitution in partnership with the SACRE and fulfil its obligations to convene an appropriately diverse SACRE	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Developing</b> A SACRE with developing practice would:	have a membership that is not necessarily strongly representative of the religious diversity of the local community. Membership needs to be reviewed.	
<b>Established</b> 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.	<b>X</b>
<b>Advanced</b> 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 or Christian communities). Endeavours 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"/>

<sup>3</sup> 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.



<b>Where are we and where do we find evidence to support this?</b>	<p>Clerk is addressing the membership of SACRE with the support of the RE Adviser.  For clarification re Membership Adviser has contacted</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NAHT / NEU (teachers' unions)</li> <li>• Church of England Diocese Chelmsford for C o E representation</li> <li>• Roman Catholic Diocese of Brentwood for RC representation</li> <li>• Hindu representation</li> <li>• Sikh representation</li> </ul> <p>At the first meeting of the 23-24 academic year this is to be reviewed and updated as membership is shared with SACRE</p>
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<b>Key Area: 5b SACRE's understanding of the local area</b> <i>How much do SACRE members know and understand the local community in its religious, cultural, and ethnic dimensions?</i>		
<b>Requires improvement/struggling</b> A SACRE in this position would:	meet rarely and this aspect of membership would not be an agenda item when they meet.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Developing</b> A SACRE with developing practice would:	have limited knowledge about the religious, cultural, and ethnic diversity in the local area.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Established</b> A SACRE with established practice would:	<p>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.</p> <p>Know about and have a relationship with local interfaith groups and Faith and Belief network and the work that they do in the locality.</p>	√
<b>Advanced</b> A SACRE with advanced practice would:	<p>have detailed knowledge of the nature of the religious, ethnic and cultural diversity in the local area.</p> <p>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 interfaith groups. Be aware of the impact of this local context on schools and on the provision for RE and CW in those schools.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Where are we and where do we find evidence to support this?</b>	<p>SACRE clerk to bring to next meeting in November 2023</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• information relating to the figures in the 2 most recent census</li> <li>• SACRE to review membership quotas accordingly taking note of changes reflected in the data</li> <li>• SACRE members who are also involved with the Faith and Belief network to feedback on the work of the group so SACRE awareness and opportunities for shared work are raised.</li> </ul>	

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Key Area: <b>5c – SACRE’s engagement with the community cohesion agenda.</b> <i>How much does SACRE understand the contribution which RE/CW can make to a schools’ provision for community cohesion?</i>		
<b>Requires improvement/struggling</b> A SACRE in this position would:	have little or no grasp of what community cohesion means and little understanding of the contribution which RE can make to the community cohesion agenda. Have no opportunity to promote RE’s contribution to cohesion.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Developing</b> 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. Have little opportunity to promote RE’s contribution to cohesion.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Established</b> A SACRE with established practice would:	understand what community cohesion means and the duty on schools to promote this. Understand and have a clear commitment to the part RE can play in promoting community cohesion and seek to promote this throughout its work.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Advanced</b> 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. SACRE members 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 AS and related guidance.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Where are we and where do we find evidence to support this?</b>	This to be ascertained at the next series of 2023 to 24 SACRE meetings with new membership.	

Key Area: <b>5d – SACRE’s role within wider LA initiatives on community cohesion</b> <i>How well is SACRE linked to or consulted about LA initiatives promoting community cohesion?</i>		
<b>Requires improvement/struggling</b> A SACRE in this position would:	be given no information about, or contact with, wider LA initiatives linked to the promotion of community cohesion.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Developing</b> 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"/>
<b>Established</b> 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.	√
<b>Advanced</b> A SACRE with advanced practice would:	be a key partner and stakeholder in the work of the local authority in this area. Aware of local interfaith groups and in regular communication with them to ensure opportunities to support high quality RE/CW in schools.	<input type="checkbox"/>

<p><b>Where are we and where do we find evidence to support this?</b></p>	<p>This to be ascertained in 2023 to 24 meetings with new membership of SACRE          There is a local Faith and Belief Network whose members may support (or be members of) SACRE in this aspect of its work.          The RE Adviser to attend when the Network's agenda is appropriate and feedback to SACRE .          SACRE members who are involved to be encouraged to feedback to SACRE at each meeting.</p>
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**Successes/ What are we good at?            TBA**

**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.

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## Information for Draft Annual report for SACRE 2020 to 2021 and 2021 – 2022

### 1) Overview of SACRE

There were no meetings of SACRE between early 2020 and October 2021 due to the Covid-19 pandemic. SACRE meetings resumed at the beginning of the 2021 to 2022 academic year with the first meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> October 2021 at The Tickfield Centre but this was not quorate.

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#### **SACRE Membership Issues**

These have been addressed between the Clerk and the RE Adviser as requested by SACRE in October 2021. Civic elections have also taken place in May 2022 and Councillors will have been appointed for the SACRE.

#### **SACRE Self Evaluation Tool (SET)**

I have appended a draft SEF in the format recommended by the National Association OF Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education (NASACRE, July 2021) to this report. This is provided as a discussion document for SACRE Members to enable SACRE to evaluate its needs and priorities as it moves forward into the forthcoming 2022 to 2023 academic year.

Appended to this report is also the main document from NASACRE's AGM

"Still Standing – A report on future directions for SACREs: A report on the joint REC/NASACRE LAN Pilot project 2020-21

(Clinton, C. (November 2021) Religious Education Council of England and Wales; National Association of Standing Advisory Councils on religious Education)

### 2) Statutory Responsibilities: Religious Education

#### **Monitoring of Schools**

I have conducted a school survey for Religious Education (RE) and Collective Worship (CoWo) over the last two terms across all schools (academies, maintained, independent and special settings of all phases) within the areas of our new Southend City. 31 schools responded out of 55 contacted. Information shared by schools is included within the text of this report with a more detailed report being currently compiled now the extended deadline for submission of data has been reached.

I also conducted analysis of all Southend City school websites so have information about their RE from those schools who have not responded via the survey. The results are being integrated into the report generated from the survey alongside data from those schools who did respond.

#### **The Locally Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education (LAS) and a Survey of School**

This is being widely used across the city Schools by academies and maintained schools of all phases. It is also being employed within two independent schools, one an independent primary Church of England School and one a secondary, within the city.

The Church of England Voluntary Aided School in the centre of the city have also purchased the LAS as it was recommended to them by the Diocese of Chelmsford and the school have welcomed the opportunity to have the syllabus.

Only 9 out of the 31 responding do not follow the LAS. Of these one is an independent school, 4 are secondary schools, two of whom have their own syllabus and two are Catholic Schools and four are Catholic Primary schools and these all follow the syllabus provided by the Brentwood Diocese.

Feedback on the LAS continues to be very positive with comments shared within the survey as follows:

*“Staff have had training on this delivered by our RE lead. The enquiry approach is liked by staff and children and has been successfully implemented”*

*“The syllabus a well rounded [sic] approach to RE, covering a variety of religions and beliefs. It is key to look carefully at each year group in the school to check the learning in being built upon and not purely overlapping and teaching the same lesson/religious stories.*

*“I feel confident following the guidance of a syllabus to ensure we are covering everything that we need to. I like the 'learning about' and 'learning from' elements. When the syllabus was introduced, we met as a MAT to discuss changes/how we would use in our schools.”*

There is a wish to widen the scope of the Southend LAS to embrace RE and Worldviews in a future LAS. This is to be welcomed as this is highly recommended by current RE thinking and policy. As the lifespan of the current syllabus comes to a close within the next academic year these are areas to recall when its successor is considered.

### **Teacher Training and Professional Development**

My work as RE Adviser did not stop during the pandemic as in schools. I circulated many resources to teachers throughout the lockdown such as access to online museum visits and online speakers, supplied links to teaching resources that could be employed online to help give teachers and their pupils / students a varied diet of lessons and subjects with which to engage. These were well received and as teachers were still teaching, initially online and then following a phased return of pupils to schools.

### **RE and Lead RE Teachers’ Networks**

One Teachers’ Network meeting takes place each school term usually in October, January, and June. Currently, these are mainly for primary schools.

The network meetings have been held throughout the 2020 to 2021 and the 2021 to 2022 academic years with successful attendance which were held over Zoom and I have continued these over Zoom, since. Teachers have expressed the wish for this format to continue for the following reasons:

- the traffic is heavy in our crowded city roads and streets (especially immediately post-school hours) which makes travelling difficult
- Parking is always problematical
- Leaving school promptly to arrive at a venue on time is itself often problematical

It meant that properly publicised the Zoom meetings were as well, if not better attended, than traditional face-to-face meetings. Teachers are very happy to continue with “online training” into 2022 to 2023 as:

- they can join from wherever suits them and their circumstances
- attend with a colleague/s
  - sharing their training and encouraging discussion in schools
- saves them time and the expense of travelling
  - this lowers costs for schools and individual teachers
- supports efforts to lower emissions and traffic in our crowded City streets

A variety of subjects have been addressed including:

- RE and worldviews
- What is meant by and how to prepare your own responses and leadership and that of your school to lead and manage an OFSTED “Deep Dive” into RE during an Inspection
- Working with National Advisors of RE from the National Association of Teachers of Religious Education (NATRE).

- Opportunity for fully funded training for teachers/Schools to attend NATRE’s research based “Excellent RE” Course from which feedback has been excellent.
  - Information about the course is appended to this document “RE Today project for Excellent RE / Religion and worldviews in the Primary School”

### **Examination Results Years 2019 to 2020 and 2020-2021**

There are no formal examination results for GCSE, AS or A level examinations from schools to include in this report as explained in the following Department of Education (DFE) statement (some links have expired):

*“Due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, most exams and assessments did not take place in the 2019 to 2020, or 2020 to 2021 academic years. The government also announced that it would not publish school or college level results data or compare school and college (also commonly referred to as school and college performance tables) in autumn 2020 or autumn 2021, and that this data would not be used to hold schools and colleges to account. We have also made clear that results data from 2020, and the 2020 to 2021 academic year will not be used in school and college level performance measures in future years”.*

**Department of Education** (19<sup>th</sup> July 2021) Policy Paper: School and college accountability: academic year 2021 to 2022 available from [School and college accountability: 2021 to 2022 academic year - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/school-and-college-accountability-2021-to-2022) (accessed 13 June 2022)

### **Examinations for the Current Academic Year 2021- 2022**

The DFE has informed school that examinations will have resumed and the examination results for the current academic year, 2021 to 2022, will be available once they are published by the DFE in the autumn 2022, however, following DFE advice in their Policy Paper cited above any conclusions and comparisons will need to be treated extremely carefully between these results and those of previous years or between schools or groups of students due to the understandable variability of the effect of the pandemic and its impact upon such results.

### **Successes in achieving the Religious Education Quality Mark (REQM)**

Edwards Hall Primary has achieved a “Silver standard” within REQM Virtual Assessment recently with the assessor recommending the silver standard with elements of Gold Standard was achieved.

I have also liaised with St Michael’s, an Independent Church of England School, within the City who have now embarked upon the REQM assessment process compiling their evidence and reporting to the assessors.

### **Complaints regarding RE:**

SACRE has received no complaints with regards to Religious Education in 2020 to 2021 nor in 2021 to 2022

#### **3) Withdrawal from Religious Education and Collective Worship (CoWo).**

Approximately 20 pupils are withdrawn from RE across the city with the numbers in individual schools being very small.

Similarly in Collective Worship the numbers of withdrawal are small at approximately 12 across the city. In addition to this number one larger secondary school reported that their number varies by up to 15 pupils across the year depending upon a range of variables (such as time of the year or content).

Within the RE and CoWo survey of schools and their websites the information gathered provides an insight into provision for pupils. A variety of provision is made for pupils/students such as joining a class studying another subject, area, topic, or continuing self-study for older students or providing a room to work, encouraging the pupils/ students to study their own religion if this is appropriate to the child’s circumstances or encouraging a project or self-study on an area of interested chosen by the child/student.

## **Determinations regarding Collective Worship**

SACRE have received no applications for determinations in the years 2020 to 2021 and 2021 to 2022.

## **Complaints regarding Collective Worship**

SACRE has received no complaints regarding Collective Worship in 2020 to 2021 nor in 2021 to 2022 (as of the date of this report).

### **4) SACRE's links with other bodies.**

SACRE is a member of The National Association of Standing Advisory Councils for Religious Education (NASACRE) and members can now log into the site and access important documents and information to aid their work and understanding in matters relating to their work as a member of SACRE.

I have successfully renewed a dialogue with the Brentwood Diocese and the RE Adviser who (jointly) advises Essex County Council and the Chelmsford Diocesan Director of Education.

### **5) SACRE Involvement locally**

During lockdown, when the subject matter was relevant, I attended the online meetings of the Faith and Belief Network working as the Local Authority's RE Advisor, although not on behalf of SACRE, this was a vehicle through which I could continue to support schools. I have reported back to SACRE as meetings recommenced. The Network led an online "Faith and Belief Festival". I was able to encourage teachers to engage and support their pupils to take part in this successful pilot event through their online learning in RE lessons.

### **6) SACRE's own arrangements to fulfil its Statutory Responsibilities**

SACRE is provided with:

- a Clerk, Mr Robert Harris, Principal Democratic Services Officer
- an Independent Adviser, Mrs Frances Neil.

The Chair of this SACRE, Mr Kevin Ryan, Mrs Neil and Mr Harris attended the NASACRE AGM and Training Day including additional courses as offered throughout June.

The Local Authority provide a venue, documentation, and a budget to enable SACRE Meetings to take place.



# Consultation Process for New Religious Education Syllabus for Southend on Sea Local Authority

## Section 1: The Background

# 6

Every local authority's Religious Education Agreed Syllabus has to be **reviewed every five years**. The Agreed Syllabus can be, as their local SACRE decides. either:

- given an extended life
- it can be reviewed and updated and rewritten
- replaced entirely

Southend on Sea's current syllabus was published and launched in the January of 2018 so within five years a review should be finalised and the results implemented, that being 2023, and the resulting updated or replacement syllabus available to schools preferably in the following autumn term.

The local authority's Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education must make its decision as to this process in time for the results of the review to be agreed and implemented and as reviewing the syllabus is a lengthy task. This process began in 2022 with an extension to the current syllabus agreed by SACRE to allow for the Adviser to investigate options and recommend actions to SACRE and for the decisions to take place.

Representation at SACRE includes different faith groups, members of groups representing those with world-views and teaching Unions and elected Councillors. The Local Authority's Education Officers are non-voting observers as is their independent RE Adviser to SACRE.

Schools welcomed and were very supportive of the 2018-2023 syllabus when it was first published and all of Southend's maintained schools and many of the City's academies followed it from school years one to year 6 and for some secondaries from yr. 7 to yr. nine.

Religious Education has grown in significance within schools' curriculum provision in the immediate past, especially given RE's links within schools to PSHE as this are now subject to more rigorous scrutiny and inspection. It is considered essential to foster a sense of understanding, celebration of diversity and community within schools through the teaching of good Religious Education. To support this the LAs Agreed Syllabus has to be fit for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and welcomed by the LA, schools and their teachers.

Five years on from the publication of Southend's RE Today's 2018-2023 Syllabus provided to schools the questions are:

- whether the current Agreed Syllabus, excellent though it has been since its publication in 2018 has now having reached the end of its lifespan?
- now provides enough depth or guidance for teachers, especially non-specialists, to teach religious and non-religious worldviews?
- Or is more support needed for teachers for their classroom use, as they request, especially when providing for a coherent programme of study, assessment of pupils and students and support for colleagues who are not subject specialists?

The following process sets out how and when these questions have been addressed.

## Section 2: The Process

### A survey of all schools

The review process began with an evaluation of RE provision of schools within the local authority in when a survey organised and written by the LA's Advisor for RE was presented to SACRE. The survey was then made available to all Southend schools, primary, infant, junior, special and secondary schools through its

## **Consultation Process for New Religious Education Syllabus for Southend on Sea Local Authority**

publication on the Southend's Schools' Learning Network (SLN) provided by Southend on Sea Local Authority. Amongst other questions, this requested feedback upon the current Locally Agreed Syllabus which showed it is still highly regarded within the city's schools.

Familiar themes emerged, however, with concerns expressed by Lead RE Teachers and the senior leadership, especially of primary schools, that the guidance and support for teachers within the current Agreed RE Syllabus in the areas of both long term and medium-term classroom planning and pupil assessment were warmly welcomed and continuation of these is necessary.

### **Current Position:**

Southend currently has RE Today's LAS 'Model A', so schools will be familiar with its layout and how the LAS is used in school, which they like.

Model A+ from RE Today is proposed as its successor, which includes more Worldviews and the 4 new units, below.

When asked in my survey, teachers' feedback was that they wanted units along these lines in a new LAS, but liked our current LAS too, so the Model A+ seems the best fit. Essex LA have just introduced Model A+ and it has been well-received.

The syllabus Model A+ is excellent and the document can be provided, either:

- 1) online only (downloaded PDFs for schools to have on their IT systems)
- 2) online + a folder for each school with paper-based enclosures
  - both online and hard copy versions are the same syllabus and both have licenses and updates will be included.

### **Syllabus Model A + The new units**

#### **Green religion? How and why should religious communities do more to care for the Earth?**

This investigation enables pupils to learn in depth about the challenges of climate justice issues and about how different religious and spiritual ways of life can contribute to the urgent human need to stop spoiling the environment and the Earth. Pupils will develop a rich knowledge of examples, concepts, sources of wisdom and authority and practice in different religions and worldviews with regard to climate change, environmental care and building a sustainable future.

#### **What can be done to reduce racism? Can religion help?**

This investigation enables pupils to learn in depth from different religious and spiritual ways of life through exploring ideas and examples of what religions do to reduce racism, including for example the work of different religious leaders in promoting respect and the teaching of different sacred texts about human unity.

#### **How do family life and festivals show what matters to Jewish people?**

The unit implements the principal aim of RE, which is to engage pupils in systematic enquiry into significant human questions which religion and worldviews address, so that they can develop the understanding and skills needed to appreciate and appraise varied responses to these questions, as well as develop responses of their own.

#### **How do people from religious and non-religious communities celebrate key festivals?**

This unit offers a multidisciplinary focus using the lens of a sociologist and of a religious studies expert.

### **The proposal and options:**

That RE Today provide the Model A+ RE Syllabus to Southend. RE Today provide a syllabus to a large number of other Local Authorities throughout England.

#### **Option A) continuing with the current syllabus and extending its life for another 5-year period**

This is not going to fulfil the need of schools to be supported in the additional areas of study outlined.

## **Consultation Process for New Religious Education Syllabus for Southend on Sea Local Authority**

### **Option B: sourcing a new syllabus**

The RE Today Syllabus currently is Model A. RE Today have now published **Model A+** which is very similar to the current syllabus and also includes the provision of both a PDF version available for downloading and a hard copy of the syllabus (in the form of a folder with contents).

In Model A+ with the addition of these new units, which bring additional study areas to pupils, students and teachers to share in the exploration, and thus broadens the understanding of, the major faiths, beliefs, and religious and non-religious world-views, present within Southend, the United Kingdom and the world of today.

The following are in Model A and which are continued in Model A+

- adheres to the statutory legislation and local directives that pertain to RE
- it is a more detailed and thorough syllabus that progresses through the school years
- it helps to build pupils' knowledge and support their growth in understanding
- it encompasses Early Years, through primary years and to the end of Key Stage 3, Year 9 in secondary and special schools with secondary pupils
- which included classroom, year group, medium and long term school planning
- that included suggestions as to appropriate resources, visits and activities
- has additional units in depth that schools can purchase if required but are optional and not necessary to cover the syllabus itself
- it has linked assessment and reporting to current National Standards
- it fosters interest and questioning by pupils and students
- prepares and encourages students them to make RE a choice at GCSE and beyond

All teachers liked the provision of both a PDF version available for downloading and a hard copy of the syllabus (in the form of a folder with contents which they say is vital in case of IT and copying difficulties) with updates as produced.

### **Conclusion**

On **23<sup>rd</sup> November** the SACRE minutes to record that the statutory requirement to review the Southend RE Agreed Syllabus be noted and that the Southend Agreed Syllabus Conference be set-up to undertake the review.

At the review SACRE will be in a position to consider the recommendation that, following the professional advice of the RE Adviser, the RE Today Syllabus Model A+ become its Agreed Syllabus for Southend on Sea Local Authority for the period from September 2024 to July 2029.

The Agreed Syllabus Conference to be convened by SACRE at their next meeting or a special meeting for a discussion and decision and the Local Authority funding be made available.

Frances Neil

RE Adviser, Southend on Sea Local Authority

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