

# Swindon Borough Council

## Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education

**Tuesday, 17 June 2014**

Dorcan Academy, St Paul's Drive, Swindon, SN3 5DA

At 6.00 p.m.

<b>Group A:</b>	Mr David Burbidge, Baptist Church
<b>Christian Denominations</b>	Mr Mark Cawte, Methodist Church
<b>and Other Religions or</b>	Mrs Sarah Lane Cawte, United Reformed Church
<b>Religious Denominations</b>	Reverend David Howell, Swindon Evangelical Alliance
	Mr M S Khan, Muslim Community
	Mr Tony McAteer, Catholic Community
	Mr Dinesh Patel, Hindu Community
	Vacancy, Buddhist Community
	Vacancy, Jewish Community

<b>Group B:</b>	Miss Janet French
<b>The Church of England</b>	Reverend Norma McKemey
	Ms Steph Mundin
	Mrs Penny Summers
	Vacancy

<b>Group C:</b>	Mrs Tracy Mason, NUT
<b>Teacher Associations</b>	Mrs Lottie O'Brien, NASUWT
	Mrs Mandy Sandleton, NASUWT
	Mrs Mel Shepherd, NASUWT
	Ms Catherine Lomax, NASUWT - Deputy
	Mr Paul Sunners, NAHT

<b>Group D:</b>	Councillor James Robbins
<b>The Local Authority</b>	Councillor Alan Bishop
	Councillor Fionuala Foley
	Councillor Cindy Matthews
	Councillor Gemma McCracken

Co-Opted:	Freddy Pound, Swindon Humanists
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Support Officers:	Katy Staples, SACRE Advisor
	Sarah Foulkes, School Improvement Adviser

**Committee Officer:** Stuart Figini (Telephone 01793 463612)  
email: [sfigini@swindon.gov.uk](mailto:sfigini@swindon.gov.uk)

## **AGENDA**

**1. Appointment of Chair and Vice-Chair for Municipal Year 2014-15**

Nominations are invited for the roles of Chair and Vice-Chair.

The SACRE Constitution requires that the Chair and Vice-Chair are appointed from different representative groups.

Voting for the Chair and Vice-Chair will take place in constituent groups, with each group entitled to a single vote for each role.

**2. Welcome from Dorcan Academy**

Mel Shepherd will provide the SACRE with a brief introduction to Dorcan Academy and their approach to RE.

**3. Apologies for Absence**

**4. Declarations of Interest**

Members are reminded that at the start of the meeting they should declare any known interests in any matter to be considered, and also during the meeting if it becomes apparent that they have an interest in the matters being discussed.

**5. Public Question Time**

See explanatory note below. Please phone the Committee Officer whose name and number appears at the top of this agenda if you need further guidance.

**6. Chair's Announcements**

**7. Minutes** (Pages 1 - 6)

To receive the minutes of the meeting held on 18 March 2014.

**8. National Updates** (Pages 7 - 18)

To receive updates on the following:

- The NASACRE AGM 2014
- The NASACRE Chair's Report
- Teach RE
- RE and Good Community Relations
- RE and Collective Worship in Academies and Free Schools

**9. Progress Reports SACRE Working Parties** (Pages 19 - 22)

To receive updates on the following:

- Working Group looking at developing new distinctively local Swindon RE units of work for Swindon schools and academies
- Publicity and Communication Working Group – SACRE Website

- 10. Feedback from RE Teachers' Network Meetings** (Pages 23 - 28)  
To receive feedback from the recent Secondary RE Teacher's meeting.
- 11. Governor Training** (Pages 29 - 30)  
To receive an update on Governor training held at the Civic Offices, Swindon on Wednesday 6 May 2014.
- 12. Date and Time of the Next Meeting**  
The next meeting of the SACRE is on 14 October 2014. Members of the SACRE are asked to suggest venues or indicate where this and future meetings of the Panel should be held.

**Date of Despatch:** 09 June 2014

**Public Question Time** - Swindon Borough Council is committed to increasing its accountability to the public and to promoting active citizenship. Up to 15 minutes will be allowed at the start of all Council meetings for questions to the Chair from members of the public about the work of the Committee (except for confidential matters and specific planning applications). Questions must be relevant, clear and concise. Because of time constraints Public Question Time is not an opportunity to make speeches or statements. Prior notice of a question to the Director of Law and Democratic Services is desirable - particularly if detailed background information is needed.

**Access Arrangements** – The Venue is wheelchair accessible and an infrared receiver hearing system is provided. If you would wish to attend the meeting but have any special requirement to enable you to do so please contact the Committee Clerk above, as soon as possible prior to the date of the meeting.

If you would like to receive any of the pages contained in this agenda in a larger print size please contact the Committee Officer whose name appears on the first page of this agenda.

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**STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

**TUESDAY, 18 MARCH 2014**

**PRESENT:-**

**Group A:** Mr David Burbidge (Baptist Church), Mrs Sarah Christian Denominations and Lane Cawte (United Reformed Church), Other Religions or Religious Reverend David Howell (Swindon Evangelical Denominations Alliance), Mr M S Khan (Muslim Community) and Mr Dinesh Patel (Hindu Community)

**Group B:** Miss Janet French, Reverend Norma McKemey Church of England and Mrs Penny Summers

**Group C:** Miss Lottie Rowe - Vice-Chair, Mrs Mel Teacher Organisations Shepherd and Mr Paul Sunners

**Group D:** Councillors James Robbins and Alan Bishop Councillors

Co-Opted: Freddy Pound (Swindon Humanists)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Fay Howard, Ms Steph Mundin, Reverend Beth Brown, Mrs Tracy Mason, Mrs Mandy Sandleton, Ms Catherine Lomax, Mr Mark Cawte - Chair, Mr Tony McAteer, Councillor Fionuala Foley and Councillor John Haines

**34. Declarations of Interest**

The Chair reminded Members of the need to declare any known interests in any matters to be considered at the meeting. No declarations were made.

**35. Public Question Time**

No public questions were received during the meeting.

**36. Chair's Announcements**

The Vice-Chair made the following announcements:

- a) That Mark Cawte, Chair, was not very well and that she would be taking the Chair for this meeting. The SACRE passed on their best wishes to the Chair.
- b) Freddy Pound, Swindon Humanists was welcomed to his first meeting of SACRE.
- c) SACRE were reminded that two NASACRE briefing papers had been circulated to members. Members were encouraged to read the briefing papers as they contained valuable information.
- d) Informed SACRE that Paul Sunners was attending the South West

### **37. Minutes**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 3 December 2014 be confirmed and signed as a correct record subject to Mel Shepherd being recorded as 'Mrs' rather than 'Ms' on page one.

### **38. Draft Swindon SACRE Annual Report**

The SACRE received its draft Annual Report, along with the Chair's introduction, covering the period September 2012 to August 2013.

The Annual Report set out the membership, meetings held, challenges and opportunities that lay ahead, standards and quality of Religious Education, examination results data, managing the SACRE and partnership with the local authority and other key stakeholders, the effectiveness of the Local Agreed Syllabus, collective worship and SACRE as a representative in a diverse community.

In considering the Report the following amendments were suggested:

- Page 4 – Group C – Teacher Association Representatives – 'Ms Mel Shepherd' be amended to read 'Mrs Mel Shepherd'
- Page 5 – Challenges and Opportunities that Lie Ahead – 4<sup>th</sup> bullet point to read 'To ensure that the work of SACRE 'is' understood by different stakeholders in Swindon'

The SACRE were informed that the Annual Report once finalised would be submitted to the National Association of SACRE's along with a copy to the Children's Trust Board. The role of the Children's Trust Board was explained by Paddy Bradley, Head of Economy and Attainment.

#### **Resolved:**

1. That the draft SACRE Annual Report be approved, subject to the amendments detailed above, and that the SACRE Advisor be authorised to finalise the report and to submit it to the National Association of SACREs (NASACRE).
2. That the draft Annual Report be forwarded to the Swindon Children's Trust Board to heighten the awareness within the Council of the work of Swindon SACRE.

### **39. Swindon SACRE Web Pages**

The SACRE considered a report by the Chair, Mark Cawte suggesting ways in which the Swindon SACRE web page could be reorganised to make Swindon SACRE more visible on the web.

The report indicated that currently there was a page on the Swindon Council

website to access the minutes, agenda and reports and the Local Agreed Syllabus with the Syllabus at a different location on the website. There was a need for a single point of access for the SACRE Committee papers, syllabus and additional information. The report detailed the possible shape of the site, detailed content, presentation, design idea, up-keep, cost and legal implications.

The SACRE expressed appreciation to the Chair for the initial work undertaken and suggested that it needed further consideration especially in relation to the design, existing websites that could host the web page, for example Schools on Line and South West Grid for Learning or a link to Bristol Diocese and publicity.

**Resolved:**

- 1) That the Chair, Mark Cawte be thanked for all his excellent hard work in preparing the ground work for the re-organisation of the Swindon SACRE web page
- 2) That the Committee members be asked to investigate various options for the hosting and design of the new website and report back progress to the next meeting.

**40. Religious Education Public Examination Data**

The SACRE considered a report by Paddy Bradley, Head of Economy and Attainment about examination results for Religious Education at GCSE (Key Stage 4) and A-Levels for 2012-13. See minute 38 above.

The report summarised the examination results for Religious Education for 2013. The Head of Economy and Attainment advised that there had been an increase in the number of students entered into public examination for both full and short courses. There was a slight increase in the number of pupils achieving A to C at GCSE and the level was above the national average.

The SACRE noted that there had been a slight decrease in the number of pupils taken A and AS Level (from 67 to 55) and an increase in proportion of A\*-B grades for A level and a slight decrease for AS level. It was noted that the numbers of pupils were small, and therefore it was difficult to compare across years, but overall the level of performance of pupils had generally been maintained over the last few years.

In considering the examination results the SACRE made a number of comments and raised a number of comments, including:

- Historically Swindon had a lower percentage of pupils entered for Religious Education at GCSE level and this was likely to Swindon schools concentrating their efforts on other subjects that required performance data to be made available for inspection
- Concern that the number of hours allocated to teaching Religious Education in some schools was not sufficient, therefore placing additional pressures on teachers in those schools
- Additional information was required about the number of pupils entered for Religious Education at A and AS level, along with comparisons with statistical neighbours

The SACRE Advisor highlighted the importance of schools being aware that pupils had access to Religious Education up to Key Stage 4 and indicated that there was still a need to promote SACRE as Religious Education was a very important subject for pupils to study.

It was suggested that, in order to increase the number of pupils studying and entering Religious Education exams that contact be made with School Student Councils' and the Youth Parliament to establish a forum to investigate what it was like to study Religious Education in Swindon schools.

**Resolved:**

- 1) That the summary of Swindon Religious Education Examination Results for 2013 be noted.
- 2) That the Summary be incorporated into the Swindon SACRE Annual Report - see minute 38 above.
- 3) That SACRE continue to support all schools in Swindon in relation to the provision of Religious Education to all pupils and that contact be made with School Student Councils' and the Youth Parliament to establish a forum to investigate what it was like to study Religious Education in Swindon schools.

#### **41. Progress Reports SACRE Working Parties**

The SACRE received updates from the following Working Parties:

- Working Party to develop a strategy and actions to promote the role of Swindon SACRE in schools and academies for Headteachers. Met on 28 January 2014
- Working Party to look at developing new distinctively local Swindon RE units of work for Swindon schools and academies. Met on 5 February 2014

The SACRE Advisor referred to the Promotion of SACRE Working Party and an excellent article written by Steph Mundin about 'What is SACRE?'. SACRE members were encouraged to circulate the article to all faith leaders and community associations.

The SACRE Advisor explained that the Distinctively Local RE Working Party considered issues about a) Swindon Foodbanks, b) How to use your local Church as a resource for RE c) How do Muslims worship in Swindon. It was suggested that an approach to the Youth Parliament and Youth Forum could be of benefit to pupils in Swindon in order to establish what they thought was most important for students in Swindon to study in Religious Education about local beliefs.

SACRE were reminded that, in addition to the main town, Swindon Borough also included a large rural community and that the villages and rural lifestyle would need to be taken into account when considering distinctively local RE.

**Resolved:**

- 1) That the work of the Working Parties be noted
- 2) That Steph Mundin be thanked for the excellent article on 'What is SACRE?'
- 3) That all SACRE members be asked to circulate the article to all faith leaders



and community associations to show the importance of Religious Education to all pupils

#### **42. Feedback from RE Teachers' Network Meetings**

The SACRE received a report from the SACRE Advisor on a recent RE Teachers' Network meeting.

The SACRE Advisor explained that the meeting was very positive with the main topic of discussion being 'Compelling, exciting and reflective RE' and how to assess pupils learning in a creative way.

It was suggested that representatives of the Youth Forum and Schools Council could attend future meetings to discuss ideas about the issues they would like to see included in RE lessons.

#### **Resolved:**

That the comments of the SACRE Advisor be noted

#### **43. Proposal for a Charitable Bid to Support RE in the Area: St Matthias**

The SACRE Advisor spoke about a very successful project undertaken in Cornwall and Devon funded by the St Luke's Charitable trust.

The project's aim was to identify and address unmet needs of RE teachers in Devon, Cornwall, Plymouth and Torbay and thereby improve the quality of teaching and learning outcomes and leadership.

The Diocese of Bristol had proposed to make an application to the St Matthias Trust to undertake a similar project in this area. This project would seek to build the RE leaders and advisers of the future by empowering teachers of religious education to become leaders of RE.

The SACRE Advisor asked for Swindon SACREs support in making the bid and requested RE teachers to complete a survey in order to establish unmet needs.

#### **Resolved:**

- 1) That the application by the Bristol Diocese to the St Matthias Trust to undertake a project in the Swindon and surrounding area be supported.
- 2) That teachers of RE in Swindon be asked to complete a survey to establish unmet needs,

#### **44. Date and Time of the Next Meeting**

It was noted that the next meeting of SACRE would be held on 17 June 2014, commencing at 6:00pm at a venue to be agreed.

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### National Updates

#### **Report of NASACRE AGM 2014**

**Rising to the Challenge Keynote speaker** Stephen Lloyd, MP, Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for Religious Education

Spoke with passion. Though it was polling day he still gave us his time, though he was expecting the audience to be made up mainly of teachers. As an atheist teenager, he enjoyed arguing with his RE teacher. There is so much misinformation about the world's religions that RE is more important than ever. Young people need to address the big questions such as 'Why are we here? It empowers them to be free from zealots and from suspicion of people who are different. It is about freedom and truth. The APPG has 80 members and has been lobbying the DFE over the unintended consequences of the government's reforms. He is concerned that many free schools are run by fundamentalists. He believes that the passion is stronger and that grassroots teachers are undervalued by the secretary of state, the DSFE and even, sometimes, their own schools.

Because of slashed budgets, many SACREs lack administrative support. Get your local MP and Eric Pickles to remind local authority of its responsibilities.

Education is not a commodity but contributes to the health of democracy.

The LA is still responsible for children, even if they are in academies and free schools (these schools get funding for RE so SACREs have a right to advise and support them.)

#### **Chair's Report**

In December, David Hampshire and I had a very useful meeting with officials at the Department for Education in which the statutory role of SACREs was once again recognised and where we were assured that the government has no plans to change the current legislative arrangements for RE.

NASACRE hopes that an annual analysis of SACRE Reports might be reinstituted in the coming academic year, subject to a bid for charitable funding which is being made in collaboration with the RE Council

#### **Other national updates**

##### **Teach RE Course**

The Culham St Gabriel's *Teach RE* course has been revised to try to meet many of the needs identified in both the Ofsted *Realising the Potential* report and the APPG report on RE: *The Truth Unmasked*. This distance learning course is designed to support teachers' subject knowledge, and also to provide opportunities to apply this to classroom practice. The course is appropriate for all teachers of RE or those planning to teach the subject.

Teachers from primary, special and secondary schools are already signing up for the course, and many have begun to develop schemes of learning and multi media presentations as part of their course work. A limited number of funded places are still available for HLTAs to take the course. If you would like more information about the course or funded places please email [trec@cstg.org.uk](mailto:trec@cstg.org.uk).

# RE AND GOOD COMMUNITY RELATIONS



All Party Parliamentary Group on RE

## Cohesive schools – Cohesive communities – Cohesive society

### Foreword: Endorsement from Stephen Lloyd MP

Good community relations are at the heart of a society where people can live together harmoniously as neighbours, work colleagues and fellow citizens even if they may disagree over some of their fundamental religious beliefs or worldviews. Religious education is uniquely placed to help children and young people develop the knowledge and skills they need to play their part in today's society and tomorrow's world. There are many elements to RE.

The focus of this summary report is RE's role in promoting good community relations. It shows the strengths which already exist in many schools and colleges; we in the All Party Parliamentary Group on RE would like to see them become universal so that both young people and society in general reap the benefit. The debate around religion is often misinformed and even, frankly, inaccurate. Good RE teaching in schools by properly trained RE teachers is all about educating young people in the different tenets of the world's religions, and those with none.

I believe this is particularly important today when there is so much inaccuracy in our mainstream media and the internet or from our own peer groups. High quality RE teaching allows children to make 'informed' decisions around religion, and when we are better informed we are wiser, and make wiser decisions! Our children are literally our nation's future, so it is both our responsibility and our duty to prepare them properly for the multi-faceted, diverse and complicated world they will inherit, and one day lead.

I would like to thank all those who contributed evidence both at our three parliamentary meetings and in writing. In particular I would like to thank Dr Joyce Miller for all her hard work in conducting this inquiry.

Stephen Lloyd MP  
Chair, All Party Parliamentary Group on RE

### Introduction

This summary report is the outcome of three oral evidence sessions that took place under the auspices of the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Religious Education<sup>1</sup> between December 2013 and February 2014. The inquiry has taken place at a time of rapid change and dwindling sources of information: for instance, Ofsted no longer inspects schools' duty to promote community cohesion. It was important that as much evidence as possible was gathered to inform the inquiry.

The evidence presented was often inspiring and demonstrated high quality RE and deep commitment to good community relations. It was heartening to learn that RE in England and Wales is highly regarded in Northern Ireland and in other European countries; the evidence set out below illustrated examples of excellent practice. But it also showed that some areas require continuing attention and the report includes some suggested actions and desired outcomes.

From the outset a short document was planned, so both evidence and outcomes are stated briefly; a longer paper will be published in due course on the REC website.

It is recognised that contributing to community relations is only one dimension of RE; it is also clear that good RE and the promotion of good community relations take place in a range of schools, including the voluntary aided sector and the increasing number of academies and free schools that sit outside the remit of SACREs.<sup>2</sup> Nonetheless, SACREs not only remain a statutory requirement, they are also uniquely placed to contribute to the areas this paper addresses, and while a growing number struggle, others thrive. Members of the APPG, the RE Council (REC) and its member organisations will continue to champion RE, aiming to improve further the quality of RE that young people experience in all our schools.

#### **RE can be a strong contributor to good community relations through enabling students to:**

- Acquire systematic knowledge and conceptual understanding of religions and worldviews
- Learn from visits and visitors through personal encounters
- Learn about religion and belief in local, national and global contexts
- Consider a range of viewpoints on religious, ethical and philosophical issues
- Articulate their own opinions while respecting the right of others to differ
- Develop their own beliefs, values and identities
- Participate with confidence and openness in dialogue
- Recognise and challenge ill-informed or prejudiced viewpoints, including those in the media
- Ask questions and address contentious issues in a safe space
- Explore reasons why misconceptions exist about some groups
- Evaluate attitudes and actions and how they impact on the community
- Be informed, active citizens and potential leaders.

<sup>1</sup> <http://religiouseducationcouncil.org.uk/appg>

<sup>2</sup> Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education

## A. THE IMPLEMENTATION OF LAW AND POLICY

### SACREs and Agreed Syllabus Conferences (ASCs)

#### EVIDENCE

- Can provide models of good community collaboration
- Can enable high quality religious education, including through specialist advisers
- Can provide a coherent, progressive, broad and balanced curriculum framework
- Can tailor the RE curriculum to meet the needs of their local communities through local determination
- Can provide evidence of their work and good practice in annual reports, including their contributions to good community relations
- Can help to increase parental and community confidence in the teaching of religions and worldviews

#### DESIRED OUTCOMES

- The Department for Education affirms and demonstrates its support for RE, SACREs and ASCs
- All local authorities provide specialist support to SACREs and ASCs to enable them to meet their statutory duties
- SACREs and ASCs collaborate at local/regional levels to enhance their effectiveness, including the sharing of good practice on monitoring and evaluating their work
- SACREs' annual reports, including their contribution to community cohesion, are analysed and the findings published

### Law and Policy

- Since Ofsted is no longer required to inspect the duty to promote community cohesion, there is insufficient evidence on which to evaluate progress
- Religion and belief are protected characteristics in the 2010 Equalities Act
- Some bullying based on religious identity and practice is taking place in schools

- The DfE obtains evidence on community relations by commissioning a new survey to parallel the Ipsos Mori 2011 investigation of community cohesion and Prevent<sup>3</sup> in schools
- All school and college senior leadership teams (SLTs) affirm staff/student/ community identities in the context of multi-faith Britain
- SLTs evaluate their equalities policy and practice in the light of the 'religion and belief' requirement of the Public Sector Equality Duty (2010)
- Schools and RE organisations share examples of good practice in promoting equalities, particularly with regard to religion and belief

## B. LEARNING IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

### Learning Outside the Classroom (LOtC)

#### EVIDENCE

- LOtC can support community relations through the involvement of local faith and belief communities
- The use of sacred space<sup>4</sup>, through enquiry-based, participative learning, can promote effective learning about and from religions and worldviews,<sup>5</sup> contribute to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and challenge negative stereotypes

#### DESIRED OUTCOMES

- SACREs support learning outside the classroom in their locality, including training and support for host communities where necessary
- SACREs support their schools in the use of visitors to classrooms
- Teachers in all phases and all types of schools make LOtC an integral part of their RE curriculum

<sup>3</sup> Prevent is one strand of the government's counter terrorism policy

<sup>4</sup> 'Sacred space' is the term used by the Learning Outside the Classroom Council. It is broader than 'places of worship' and is intended to be inclusive.

<sup>5</sup> 'Religions and worldviews' is used to refer to Christianity, other principal religions, smaller religious communities and non-religious worldviews such as Humanism. The phrase is intended to be inclusive.

## Intercultural education

### EVIDENCE

- Participation of young people in intercultural, cross-school initiatives promotes deeper understanding, meaningful interaction, respect for difference and enables them to address controversial issues
- Initiatives to promote 'Youth Voice' have been successful in enhancing community relations

### DESIRED OUTCOMES

- RE professionals use existing organisations (such as 3FF, Face to Faith and the Schools Linking Network) to promote intercultural dialogue and links between schools, or develop their own. This focuses on learning and includes teachers and students in long-term collaboration, with support from governors and parents

## Conflict and extremism

- Inter- and intra-religious conflicts and religiously motivated extremism exist and schools can explore these issues in RE

- The REC to update its *REsilience* materials<sup>6</sup> to include resources on intra-religious conflict, the socio-political dimensions of religions and worldviews, anti-Semitism and Islamophobia.
- RE professionals to work alongside colleagues in other curriculum areas to further develop pupils' skills of critical enquiry and media literacy and their understanding of human rights and genocides

## C. TEACHING RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

## Professional development

### EVIDENCE

- It is through skills and attitudes, not just content, that RE can promote open-mindedness and an informed perspective on religions and worldviews
- Patterns of belief, practice and adherence are changing locally, nationally and globally in ways that need to be reflected in the RE curriculum
- There is a 'religious literacy gap' which schools can help address by teaching about religions and worldviews
- Young people's sources and use of information have changed because of social media and the internet

### DESIRED OUTCOMES

- All RE organisations explore ways in which they can provide training and support for their members on community relations and how they can share good practice and research findings
- All RE organisations promote the REC Code of Practice,<sup>7</sup> the PD Portal, the e-Handbook<sup>8</sup> and RE:ONLINE<sup>9</sup> to increase staff sensitivity, confidence and competence in teaching about religions and worldviews
- The new RE hubs consider prioritising community relations in their professional support for teachers and lecturers in FE
- Teachers develop their understanding of social media and the internet and the challenges and opportunities they bring to teaching RE
- RE teachers increase their understanding of globalisation and its impact on community relations
- Teachers are supported in their professional engagement with changing patterns of religions and worldviews
- RE advisers and teachers lead in-school professional development on understanding local communities, through structured visits and visitors.

<sup>6</sup> *REsilience* is a professional development programme, managed by the REC, to help increase teachers' confidence when addressing contentious issues, particularly where such issues are sometimes used to justify extremism and violence.

<sup>7</sup> [http://religiouseducationcouncil.org.uk/media/file/Practice\\_Code\\_for\\_Teachers\\_of\\_RE.pdf](http://religiouseducationcouncil.org.uk/media/file/Practice_Code_for_Teachers_of_RE.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.theredirectory.org.uk/pdportal>

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.reonline.org.uk>

## REMAINING QUESTIONS

- Can SACREs and ASCs continue to be viable given that an increasing proportion of schools no longer come under their remit?
- How can RE work more closely with other subject areas and curriculum initiatives to achieve shared aims for improving community relations? What other partnerships can be developed to make this happen effectively?
- How can RE professionals help to ensure that the whole school ethos supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and protects equalities in relation to religion and belief?
- How can learning about religions and worldviews be made more interesting and relevant for pupils of 'no religion'?
- How can the RE community collaborate with and better support colleagues in the Further Education sector, where there is no statutory requirement to teach RE to post-16 students?
- How far does RE address issues of socio-economic inequality? How important is this in developing social cohesion?
- How can the work of the Council of Europe on the religious and non-religious dimensions of intercultural education be more widely known and used in England and Wales?
- The 1988 Education Reform Act requires schools to contribute towards the spiritual, moral and cultural development of children **and society**. Can unpacking that phrase provide a rationale for and a means by which schools can work more effectively with and on behalf of their communities?

**The APPG:** The All Party Parliamentary Group on Religious Education was established in 2012. Its purpose is to provide a medium through which parliamentarians and organisations with an interest in religious education can discuss the current provision of religious education, press for continuous improvement, promote public understanding and advocate rigorous education for every young person in religious and non religious world views.

**Oral evidence was provided by:** Deborah Weston, Sharon Lambert, Aisling Cohn, Dr Julia Ipgrave, Jane Chipperton, Prof Adam Dinham; Helen Harrison, Dr Marius Felderhof, Patricia Hannam, Aliya Azam, Alastair Ross, David Raven-Hill; Young Ambassadors for RE from The Redhill Academy (Hannah Morley, Ryan Hutchings, Charlotte Hart-Shaw, Jake Chaplin and Holly Walker), Lesley Prior; Dr Norman Richardson, Robin Richardson, Revd Garry Neave, Jamie Bartlett.

**Written evidence was received from:** British Humanist Association; Deesha Chadha, Chinmaya Mission, UK; Prof. Robert Jackson; Lambeth SACRE; Lewisham SACRE; Mulberry School; National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United Kingdom; Riaz Ravat, St Philip's Centre, Leicester; Dr Lynn Revell, Canterbury Christ Church University; Dr Barbara Wintersgill; Dr John Wise, National Council of Faith and Beliefs in Further Education.

This report was written by Dr Joyce Miller who coordinated the inquiry on behalf of the APPG on RE.



The secretariat for the All Party Parliamentary Group on RE is provided by the Religious Education Council of England and Wales

The work for this inquiry has been made possible through financial support from the Culham St Gabriels Trust and the Hockerill Educational Foundation and practical support from RE Today Services and the National Association of Teachers of RE



Hockerill Educational Foundation





# Religious Education (RE) and Collective Worship in Academies and Free Schools Q&A

## **1. Are Free Schools subject to the same requirements as Academies?**

Free Schools are Academies in law and have the same requirement to provide RE and collective worship. In this document, any reference to Academies includes Free Schools.

## **2. Do Academies have to provide RE?**

Yes, under the terms of their Funding Agreement with the Secretary of State, all Academies have to provide RE for all their pupils, except for those whose parents exercise the right of withdrawal. The type of RE specified in the Funding Agreement depends on whether or not the Academy has a religious designation, and for converter Academies, on whether the predecessor school was a voluntary controlled (VC), Voluntary aided (VA) or foundation school.

## **3. Does an Academy with a religious designation have to follow a particular RE syllabus?**

Other than for Academies where the predecessor school was a VC or foundation school, the model funding agreement specifies that an Academy with a religious designation must provide RE in accordance with the tenets of the particular faith specified in the designation. They may, in addition, provide RE that is in line with a locally agreed syllabus and teach about other faiths if they choose.

## **4. What is a Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE)?**

A SACRE is a permanent body which must be established by each local authority. LAs must appoint representatives to each of four committees, representing respectively:

- Group A: Christian denominations and such other religions and religious denominations as, in the authority's opinion, will appropriately reflect the principal religious traditions in the area
- Group B: the Church of England
- Group C: teacher associations
- Group D: the LA

## **5. What is the role of a SACRE in relation to Academies?**

A Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) has a statutory remit to advise the Local Authority on Religious Education to be given in accordance with an agreed syllabus and to support the effective provision of collective worship. A SACRE also has within its powers to discuss any matter related to its functions as it sees fit and may therefore include the provision of RE in Academies in its discussions or address such matters as may be referred to

it. An Academy or group of academies can be represented through co-option onto the local SACRE (or indeed any SACRE) if all parties are in agreement.

## **6. What is a locally agreed syllabus?**

An agreed syllabus is a religious education syllabus that is designed by a local authority's Agreed Syllabus Conference ('ASC') primarily for use in the Local Authority's (LA) maintained schools but which may be adopted by a different local authority or Academy as its provision for Religious Education. The syllabus, like the provision for RE in Academies, must reflect that the religious traditions in Great Britain are, in the main, Christian while taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain. There is a structure for establishing an ASC which is defined in law. An ASC must have four committees, comprising representatives from the Church of England, other Christian denominations and religions, teachers and the LA. Each Committee has voting rights in coming to an agreement on the syllabus, which it recommends to the LA for adoption.

There is no requirement for an Academy to adopt a locally agreed syllabus. It may choose to adopt a different syllabus or develop its own, as long as it meets the requirements for such a syllabus as above. Academies are accountable for the quality of their curricular provision including RE.

## **7. What type of RE will an Academy that is not designated with a religious character provide?**

The Funding Agreement for an Academy without a religious designation states that it must arrange for RE to be given to all pupils in accordance with the requirements for agreed syllabuses that are set out in section 375(3) of the Education Act 1996 and paragraph '(5) of Schedule 19 to the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. This means a syllabus that reflects that the religious traditions in Great Britain are, in the main, Christian whilst taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain. It also means that an Academy without a religious designation must not provide an RE syllabus to pupils by means of any catechism or formulary which is distinctive of any particular religious denomination.

This gives an Academy without a religious designation the freedom to design its own RE syllabus (within those constraints) and not be bound by the specific locally agreed syllabus that maintained schools are required to follow. However, Academies are free to follow the locally agreed syllabus if they choose or they can choose another from a different Local Authority area.

## **8. Are there any variations to the general position as described?**

Some non-denominational Academies with a religious designation (e.g. those designated as 'Christian') have funding agreements specifying that they will use the locally agreed syllabus. Academies that opened early in the Academies Programme before around 2004 have a general requirement to provide RE and collective worship. However the detailed requirements may differ. It would be

wise for the EFA to check the specific FA wording if they receive a query about the detailed requirement for RE in a very old Academy. The position is also different in former foundation or voluntary controlled faith schools that have converted to Academies and this is explained below.

**9. What is the position for former voluntary controlled and foundation schools with a religious designation that have converted to Academies?**

Foundation or voluntary controlled schools with a religious designation that convert to Academies must arrange for RE in accordance with the requirements for agreed syllabuses (in the main Christian whilst taking account of the other principal religions etc as set out above) unless any parents request that their children receive RE in accordance with the tenets of the school's faith. If any parents do request this, the Academy must make arrangements for those children to receive such RE unless, because of special circumstances, it would be unreasonable to do so. The Funding Agreement sets this out (by applying the relevant provisions of the Education Act 1996 and the School Standards and Framework Act 1998). In practice these Academies generally choose to follow the locally agreed syllabus.

**10. Do all Academies have to offer a daily act of collective worship?**

An Academy's Funding Agreement is drafted to mirror the requirements for acts of collective worship in maintained schools. Each pupil must take part in a daily act of collective worship unless they have been withdrawn by their parents, or if in the sixth form they have decided to withdraw themselves. This applies to Academies with and without a religious designation.

**11. What kind of collective worship would an Academy with a religious designation provide?**

Such an Academy must provide collective worship in accordance with the tenets and practices of the Academy's designated faith. It can also choose to reflect the other principal religions and those found in the local community.

**12. Does the above apply to former voluntary controlled or foundation schools with a religious designation that have converted to Academies?**

Yes. They must provide collective worship in accordance with the tenets and practices of the Academy's designated faith.

**13. In an Academy without a religious designation, does the act of collective worship have to be broadly Christian in nature?**

Such an Academy must provide collective worship that is wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character. A school can reflect the religious backgrounds represented in its community, as long as the majority of provision is broadly Christian.

**14. Can an Academy without a religious designation apply for exemption from providing broadly Christian collective worship?**

Yes. A maintained school can apply to the local SACRE for an exemption not to provide broadly Christian collective worship for some or all of its pupils, having considered the family background of pupils attending the school. An equivalent provision applies to Academies but the Academy Trust would apply, through the EFA, to the Secretary of State for the determination. Such a determination does not mean that the Academy or school would be exempted from providing any collective worship. They would still be required to provide daily collective worship, but of a different character that is more appropriate given the family backgrounds of the pupils in the school. The Secretary of State may approach the local SACRE for its view when considering such an application.

**15. Can parents withdraw their children from religious education and collective worship?**

Yes. Parents of children in Academies have an equivalent right to parents of children in maintained schools, to withdraw their children from religious education and or collective worship.

Please note that pupils over compulsory school age (16) can opt out of collective worship if they wish however they cannot opt out of receiving Religious Education.

**16. Who inspects RE and collective worship in Academies with a religious designation?**

Religiously designated Academies are required by their funding agreement to arrange for the inspection of any denominational RE and collective worship. In line with the arrangements for designated maintained schools, Academies, when choosing an inspector, must consult the relevant religious authority.

- (a) CofE / Catholic: the appropriate diocesan authority;
- (b) Jewish (note this is non-denominational): the Jewish Studies Education Inspection Service;
- (c) Methodist: the Education Secretary of the Methodist Church;
- (d) Muslim: the Association of Muslim Schools;
- (e) Sikh: Network of Sikh Organisations;
- (f) Seventh Day Adventist: the Education Department of the British Union Conference of the Seventh Day Adventist

**17. How is RE and collective worship inspected in Academies without a religious designation?**

Section 48 inspections, section 5 and Ofsted subject survey visits of Academies follow the same format as those of maintained schools. Judgements about RE are made in relation to the requirements which are applied to RE in the funding agreement. Where an academy has chosen to follow a locally agreed syllabus that will be used as the basis for judging standards and provision. Where no alternative arrangement for judging standards and progress has been developed or adopted, the expectations set out in the non-statutory National Framework for Religious Education (2004) will be used as a benchmark for National Standards. The quality of the provision is judged in terms of how well it secures progress towards the expected pupil outcomes.

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## Report from The Locally Distinctive RE Sub committee

1.

On 9th May 2014 Miss Janet French and Katy Staples spent a morning at Gateway Church taking photographs and interviewing people about the work that they do in running a Food bank and a Furniture recycling centre for people in need.

This will be written up and trialled in schools in Terms 1 and 2.

Materials will be bought to SACRE in the Autumn.

2.

Sadly Rev Beth Brown who was leading on a

“How to use a Church to support RE: East Swindon example” is no longer in post.

If another SACRE member would like to work on this unit it would be most appreciated.

3.

Mr Khan has kindly supplied the contact details for making engagement with the Gorse Hill Mosque.

Katy Staples has yet to successfully make contact but hopes to make a visit in August when Ramadan has finished and will begin to see the opportunities for writing a Swindon Distinctive unit centred around the Mosque.

4. It would be good if any other SACRE members have ideas for writing other Swindon Distinctive units to attend the next overview meeting

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A response to the repost offered at the last SACRE meeting 18th March 2014 about :

**Swindon SACRE website -**

One solution offered by Bristol Diocese (Church of England)

The Diocese would be happy to host the Swindon SACRE website within their own website - but with its own URL - so when searching for Swindon RE or Swindon SACRE it would lead people straight to the Swindon website.

Initial conversations are that we would need to buy a URL at £20 a year ie Swindonsacre.org? and the diocese would charge £60 a year for admin costs – to upload materials and keep it fresh and ensure all the links work etc. **An annual budget of £80 in total**

I don't know if the SACRE has a budget for this solution – *but I suspect it is cheaper than other solutions.*

However neither the Clerk or the Chair would be able to have access to upload materials onto the website - as to do this they would have access to the whole diocesan website and that would breach diocesan security rules. However the Diocesan Education Communications officer Sam Ford would be happy to upload new materials - but it may take up to a fortnight for this to be done.

Katy Staples June 2014

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## Notes for Teachers

This base line test will give a broad idea of the prior learning of pupils and the levels that they are currently working at.

It may well be worth cross referencing this against the feeder primary schools from which the children have come - a gap in learning may be an indication of an absence of teaching rather than of student capability.

It should inform your later teaching and your differentiation and allow you more accurately to report on progress.

**From this task** - you should be able to determine literacy skills and

A) if pupils have acquired and retained basic knowledge about religious buildings and symbols - first two columns of questions 1 and 2 this would indicate that this student is capable of achieving a Level 1 and 2 (AT1)- it may also just inform you that they have not been taught this at Primary School

B) Q 1 and 2 Column 3 If they have been able to explain why it is important for the people of that faith and its meaning they would be achieving a level 4 ( AT1) They can use religious vocabulary to describe and show understanding of the key features of a religion ...or that it has not yet been taught...

C) Question 3 will demonstrate that they can make links between beliefs and actions and show that they understand that people will differ in their beliefs and actions. Level 4-5

D) Question 4 will if answered thoroughly allow the student to achieve a level 5 AT2

Mark Scheme will give you a rough guide - and serves the purpose of feeling like a test if that is what you want !

And a simpler vague + crude guide for the busy RE teacher

Pupils gaining 20 - 30 level 5 .....A-A\*

15 - 20 level 4 ..... C-B

10 - 15 level 3 ..... D-E

<10 Level 1-2..... E- U

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## Where can we find religion around us?

	Name two examples that you can see	Which Religions do they belong to?	Why are they important for the believers of that faith?
1. Religious Buildings	(1)	(1)	(2)
	(1)	(1)	(2)
2. Religious Symbols	(1)	(1)	(3)
	(1)	(1)	(3)

(18)

3. In the picture you can see examples of people doing things to try to make the world a better place.

Choose **one** example -a) Describe what they are doing (2)

b) Explain how it might make the world a better place (3)

c) Some of them might be doing this because of their beliefs - what beliefs might someone have that could make them want to make the world a better place in this way?

Someone else might be doing this for different reason - give an alternative reason (4)

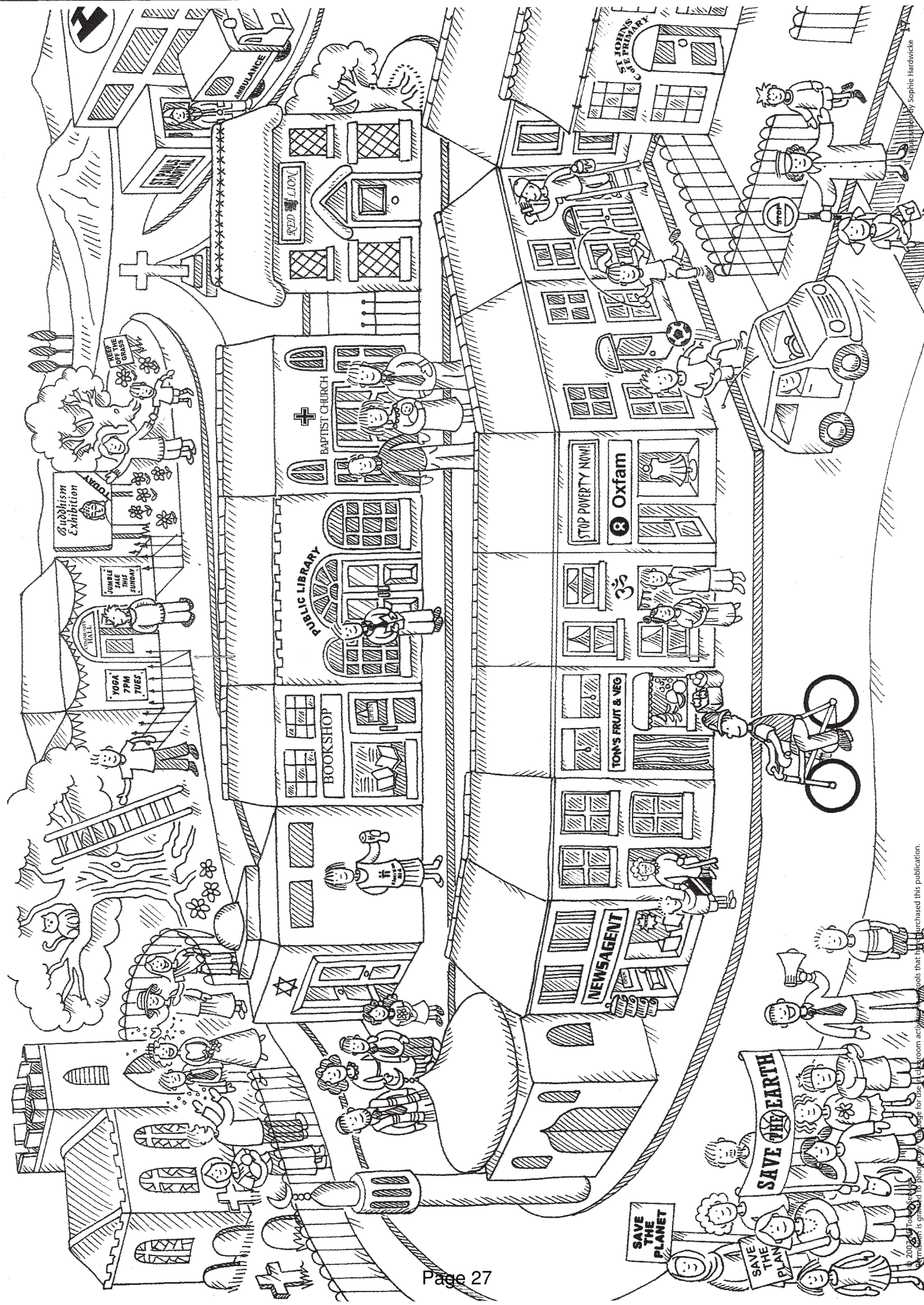
4. Not all cities, towns and villages are like this picture - what is similar to where you live and what is different? ( 2)

What would you think would like most and least about living in the town in the picture? (1)

(12)

Total /30

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### **Governors' Training about SMSC, RE and Collective Worship**

This training occurred on Wednesday May 6th at the Civic Offices 6.30 pm - 8.30 pm



This course helped attendees to understand their legal obligations for ensuring the school which they serve is meeting their statutory requirements for SMSC, Assemblies and Religious Education. It also covered the current Ofsted framework and SMSC

This course helped Governors understand what outstanding practice is like in all these areas.

Attendees were offered models to audit and challenge current provision and offer targets for school improvement and so improve their governance of these statutory elements of school life.

35 Governors attended from 25 schools

The feedback was all good or better.

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