

National Developments in Religious Education (RE)

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education 4 December 2012

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Wards: All

Locality Affected: All

Parishes Affected: All

1. Purpose and Reasons

- 1.1 To update the SACRE on national developments in relation to Religious Education.
- 1.2 The SACRE has a duty to help schools fulfil their statutory obligations with regard to religious education and to do so needs to keep up to date on the latest national developments in RE.

2. Recommendations

The SACRE is recommended to:

- 2.1 Note the update on national developments and to consider any response which might be required by the SACRE in relation to these developments.

3. Detail

Collective Worship and Circular 1/94

- 3.1 In October, the National Association of Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education (NASACRE) and the Association of Religious Education Inspectors, Advisors and Consultants (AREIAC) issued a joint statement on Circular 1/94, with respect to what it says about collective worship. A copy of their statement is attached at Appendix '1'. They have indicated that they believe the Government stance has changed, and the requirement of Circular 1/94 for schools to have collective worship in assemblies which is primarily Christian based will no longer be enforced, with schools able to reflect their local circumstances when forming their policy on Collective Worship.
- 3.2 However, it should be noted that this is the view of NASACRE and AREIC, but the Department for Education (DfE) is still showing Circular 1/94 as current on its website, and the formal legal position of the Guidance has not changed.
- 3.3 The SACRE is asked to note this potential shift in emphasis. The advice to local schools remains that they should follow the Collective Worship Guidance for Swindon which was published at the last meeting.

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The APPG (All Party Parliamentary Group) on RE

- 3.4 The All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Religious Education is conducting an inquiry on the supply of and support for religious education teachers. They have stated that this should be seen as an opportunity for all individuals and organisations concerned with RE to contribute to a major national project in the interests of the subject. They would like to consult widely with all key RE organisations and stakeholders asking some specific questions below. In addition they want to invite any individual or group (e.g. a school) to present information that they feel will strengthen this inquiry. If someone belongs to an organisation that has already responded to the formal consultation, they have also asked for an individual response. It has been indicated that this evidence could take a number of forms:
- Statistical data e.g. a SACRE might provide information about the number of secondary schools in the area with no RE specialist teachers
 - Research findings e.g. from academic research or a local survey
 - Case studies e.g. from an RE department
 - Personal experience e.g. from parents or students.
- 3.5 In addition, the Group is holding two oral evidence sessions in the House of Commons on the 28th November (5pm – 7pm), and 16th January (5pm – 7pm).
- 3.6 As requested at a previous meeting, Councillor Dart wrote to both the MPs to ask them to support the work of this Group. Both have written in response to these letters. Robert Buckland MP has confirmed that he is already a member of the Group, and Justin Tomlinson MP has confirmed that he supports its work. Copies of the letters will be available at the meeting for information.

4. Alternative Options

- 4.1 There are no alternative options for the SACRE.

5. Implications, Diversity Impact Assessment and Risk Management

Financial and Procurement Implications

- 5.1 There are no specific financial implications relating to this report.

Legal and Human Rights Implications

- 5.2 There are no specific legal or human rights implications relating to this report.

All Other Implications (including Staff, Sustainability, Health, Rural, Crime and Disorder)

- 5.3 No other implications have been identified.

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Links to One Swindon, Strategic Objectives, Plans and Policies

- 5.4 The work of the SACRE supports Theme 5 of the Community Strategy, for Swindon to be a place where high aspirations are supported by superb education provision for all ages.

Diversity Impact Assessment

- 5.5 A Diversity Impact Assessment has not been completed for this report, as it does not relate to a specific policy or strategy change.

Risk Management

- 5.6 There are no risk management factors which have been identified in relation to this report.

6. Consultees

- 6.1 The Board Director Finance, Revenues, Benefits and Property (Section 151 Officer) and Director of Law and Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer) are consulted in respect of all reports.

7. Background Papers

- 7.1 None

8. Appendices

- 8.1 Appendix 1 – NASACRE / AREIAC joint statement on Circular 1/94 and Collective Worship.