

Update on National Developments in Relation to SACRE

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE)

Date: 15th June 2010.

Author: SACRE Adviser

Parish / Wards Affected: All

Purpose

- To update the SACRE on national policy developments in relation to the provision of RE and to consider implications for Swindon Agreed Syllabus.

Recommendation

SACRE is requested -

1. To note the report and the new national developments in relation to RE.
2. To ask the Group Director Children to convene an Agreed Syllabus Conference to begin the review of the Locally Agreed Syllabus.

1. Reasons

- 1.1 The SACRE is required to request the Local Authority to review the Locally Agreed Syllabus every five years, and can advise the local authority and schools on teaching materials and teacher training to support the delivery of RE in the Agreed Syllabus.

3. Detail

National Approach to RE / Locally Agreed Syllabus

- 2.1 The SACRE has previously been advised that the implementation of the Rose Review creating a new Primary Curriculum would be delayed until after the election. Early indications are that the new Government will not be implementing the recommendations of the Rose review. It is understood that a new committee is being set up to write a new national framework for RE. A small number of SACREs have been asked to look at the development of a recommended model in relation to which elements should be part of a National RE curriculum, and which should be locally determined. It is understood that this may be offered for SACREs in 2011.
- 2.2 Swindon currently has an adopted Locally Agreed Syllabus which runs from September 2005 to September 2010. In line with advice from the National Association of SACREs (NASACRE) the SACRE had not begun

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its review of the syllabus, as it was awaiting implementation of the changes in the Primary Curriculum, and receipt of the RE Guidance in English Schools 2010.

- 2.3 However, the SACRE is required to ask the Local Authority to call an Agreed Syllabus Conference every five years to review the Agreed Syllabus. As the national picture in relation to RE seems uncertain in the near future, it is recommended that the SACRE asks for the Local Authority to convene an Agreed Syllabus Conference to agree the way forward. This would largely comprise representatives of the current SACRE. Options before the Conference would be to:
- a) To agree a timetable and process for a substantial review of the Syllabus. There are potential difficulties with following this course given the current uncertainty as to the Government's review of the primary curriculum.
 - b) To consult with school and other relevant bodies about adopting the current Syllabus for a further two or more years or until there is clarity in the national picture.
 - c) Option b, but to provide additional guidance to Schools in relation to the changes in national policy since it was first published including a great emphasis on Every Child Matters and the role of RE in enabling schools to meet their duty to promote community cohesion.
- 2.4 The current agreed syllabus was drafted in conjunction with Wiltshire Local Authority. It is understood that Wiltshire LA convened an agreed syllabus conference at the end of their last SACRE Meeting in March to begin the process and agree the terms of reference for their own review of the Agreed Syllabus. The SACRE Advisor will provide an update at the meeting in relation to their progress.

Religious Education Council of England and Wales (REC) – Training and Events

- 2.5 The Religious Education Council of England and Wales are promoting a range of resources and events of which the SACRE should be kept informed:

REsilience Project

- 2.5.1 The REC was commissioned by the former DCSF (Department for Children, Schools and Families) to design, develop and deliver a Resilience training programme for RE Teachers in maintained secondary schools in England and Wales. This initially ran as a

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pilot in early 2010, but schools can now apply to be part of the programme in September 2010 to March 2011.

2.5.2 The intention is to train RE teachers to give them confidence when addressing contentious issues in the classroom, including potentially extremist views, and to support individual schools to better promote community cohesion. The programme involves mentors working with individual schools over a six-week period.

2.5.3 Swindon schools have been sent information about the Resilience project and can apply to take part.

RE Handbook for Teachers

2.5.4 The Religious Education Council of England and Wales have published a Religious Education Handbook. This is a new electronic handbook for RE teachers in all sectors and is a very useful guide. This is the first time there has been something so comprehensive available electronically, and can be found at www.re-handbook.org.uk.

2.5.5 The handbook draws on information from a range of expert contributors from different faith traditions, teachers, advisers and academics, and includes sections on the history of RE, religious traditions and beliefs, the RE curriculum, approaches to teaching, learning and assessment, among others.

2.5.6 Teachers will be advised of this resource through Network meetings.

Celebrating RE Month – March 2011

2.5.7 The Religious Education Council of England and Wales have announced a celebrating RE Month for March 2011. Flyers for the event will be available to SACRE members at the meeting and further information is available on www.celebratingre.org.

Alternative Options

- The alternative options, where applicable, are set out in the body of this report.

Risk Management

<i>Financial and Procurement Implications</i>

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- The Local Authority is required to support the costs of any Local Agreed Syllabus Conference. Currently the SACRE has an annual support budget of budget of £5k for its work, which includes the support costs of a SACRE Advisor.

Legal / Human Rights Implications

- This report has no specific legal or human rights implications.

Links to Corporate Plans and Policies

- The work of the SACRE contributes to the Councils aims to improve the opportunities for children and young people, and to support local communities by empowering people to participate in local decision-making and overcoming social exclusion.

Consultees

- The Director of Finance (Section 151 Officer) and Director of Law and Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer) are consulted on all reports.
- Paddy Bradley, Director of Schools and Learning.
- Sarah Foulkes, School Improvement Adviser

Background Papers and Appendices

- None

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