

EAST RIDING OF YORKSHIRE COUNCIL

Report to: Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Committee
4th March 2015

Wards:

The East Riding of Yorkshire Standing Advisory Council of Religious Education

Report of the Director of Children, Family and Adult Services.

A. Executive Summary

This report provides an overview of the activities of the East Riding of Yorkshire Council's Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) so that members of the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee can consider the extent to which the SACRE has fulfilled its role and the extent to which it has adapted to the staffing changes and reduction in support introduced after 31 August 2011.

B. Corporate Priorities 2011-2015

Maximising our Potential
Valuing our Environment
Supporting Vulnerable People, Reducing Inequalities
Promoting Health, Wellbeing and Independence
Reducing Costs, Raising Performance

C. Portfolio

Children, Young People and Local Authority Schools
Community Partnerships
Council Support Services
Performance, Transformation and Strategic Partnerships

D. Matters for Consideration

1. Background Information

- 1.1 Every maintained school in England must provide a daily act of collective worship and Religious Education (RE) for all registered pupils at the school, including those in Reception classes and Sixth Forms, except for those withdrawn by their parents (or

withdrawing themselves if they are aged 18 or over) in accordance with Schedule 19 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. Collective worship should, in the main, reflect the Christian traditions but may also take into account other religions. RE in voluntary aided schools must be provided in accordance with the trust deed of the school and the wishes of the governing body. In community and voluntary controlled schools it must be provided in accordance with the locally agreed syllabus. All academies are required to teach RE; for academies without a religious character, this will be in accordance with the requirements for locally agreed syllabuses.

1.2 In this Local Authority (LA) guidance on collective worship is provided through its publication 'Worship Works' and the key document in determining the teaching of RE is the locally agreed syllabus. Each locally agreed syllabus for RE must be reviewed and revised at least once every five years.

1.3 Each LA must:

- establish a permanent body called a Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE);
- secure appointments to all four committees of the SACRE and ensure adequate representation on each one as follows:
 - Group A: Christian denominations and such other 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 Unions
 - Group D: the LA consisting of elected members

Provision may also be made for co-opted representatives. Co-opted members will provide educational expertise; and religious or non-religious views that reflect local diversity in a multi-cultural society.

- ensure that there is an agreed syllabus for RE which is reviewed and/or revised at least once every five years;
- fund and support its SACRE in line with its duty to enable the SACRE to effectively carry out its duties, and
- take note of, and respond to, any advice it receives from the SACRE.

1.4 A SACRE must:

- consider requests for determinations on collective worship when required;
- advise the LA upon such matters as collective worship and the religious education to be given, in accordance with the agreed syllabus;
- establish an occasional body called an Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC) to review the agreed syllabus for RE adopted by the LA every five years. The ASC may have common membership with the SACRE but is a separate entity and must therefore be separately convened, and
- consider and respond to any complaints made by pupils or parents about the provision of collective worship and/or RE.

All meetings of SACREs should be held in public unless confidential information is to be disclosed; and minutes of its meetings must be made available for inspection.

In addition it is expected (Ofsted 2005) that SACREs will:

- monitor the provision and quality of collective worship and the RE taught according to its agreed syllabus, together with the overall effectiveness of the syllabus;
- in partnership with its LA, provide advice and support on the effective teaching of RE in accordance with the locally agreed syllabus, and
- make provision for the induction and ongoing training of SACRE members.

1.5 The Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC)

- Once established, the ASC must consider whether any changes need to be made to the agreed syllabus or in the support offered to schools in the implementation of the agreed syllabus, to improve the quality of teaching and learning of RE.
- If revisions and/or changes are needed it must secure the appropriate professional advice to enable it to make such changes. (It may recommend the adoption of the Agreed Syllabus from another LA if another syllabus that meets local needs is available).
- It should then make recommendations to the SACRE concerning the revision or replacement of the Agreed Syllabus.

1.6 At the national level RE is being seen as a key subject that contributes to pupils' academic and personnel development., with SACREs playing a key role in contributing to the development of appropriate and demanding RE syllabuses, and their support of schools on the effective teaching of RE, including the continuing professional development of RE teachers. Lord Nash (Under Secretary of State of Schools) in an open letter 7th January 2015 (full version in section 6) wrote:

I would like to emphasise the importance of good teaching of religious education and the central role of SACREs and local authorities. All pupils benefit from good quality religious education teaching. RE makes a significant contribution to pupils' academic and personal development. It also plays a key role in promoting social cohesion and the virtues of respect and empathy, which are vitally important in our diverse society. The recent events in some schools in Birmingham have highlighted the importance of promoting the crucial values of respect and tolerance in our schools.

The role of a SACRE is to support the religious education curriculum and collective worship within schools. Local authorities have a duty to enable SACREs to fulfil their statutory responsibilities in these areas. They should assure themselves that the SACRE is functioning well and holding regular meetings. It may also be appropriate for the local authority to support the SACRE's work to provide teacher training in RE and collective worship training.

2. Current Performance Information

2.1 “Religious education: realising the potential” (2013) reported on the impact on SACREs as a result of the change of government in 2010. Its key findings were as follows:

- Access to high-quality RE training for teachers was poor. Training had a positive impact on improving provision in only a third of the schools visited; its impact

was poor in a further third. Many of the schools surveyed said that support from their local authority and SACRE had diminished.

- The effectiveness of the current statutory arrangements for RE varies considerably. Recent changes in education policy are having a negative impact on the provision for RE in some schools and on the capacity of local authorities and SACREs to carry out their statutory responsibilities to monitor and support it.

Its recommendations were that:

Local authorities, in partnership with SACREs and agreed syllabus conferences, should:

- ensure that sufficient resources are available for SACREs and agreed syllabus conferences to carry out their statutory functions with regard to RE and provide schools with high-quality guidance and support
- review their expectations about arrangements for RE, particularly at Key Stage 4, to ensure that schools have sufficient flexibility to match their provision more effectively to pupils' needs
- work in partnership with local schools and academies to build supportive networks to share best practice.

2.2 *Inter-alia*, the report also states that more effort is required from LAs and their SACREs to ensure that:

- SACREs have good access to subject expertise to enable them to support schools effectively in promoting high quality RE;
- high quality professional development in RE is available to schools and that schools are encouraged to take up opportunities to improve the quality of RE teaching;
- agreed syllabuses and related advice offer guidance about the systematic use of enquiry skills in RE to enable schools to plan the subject in a more coherent and rigorous way;
- greater clarity about the use of key concepts and the definition of progression in RE is offered to schools, and
- better guidance about ways of incorporating RE within more innovative and creative approaches to curriculum planning is offered to schools.

2.3

The new Ofsted schedule has been written in the light of the Ofsted enquiry into the apparent shortcomings that were highlighted in some Birmingham schools and academies during 2014. The so-called 'Trojan Horse' enquiry highlighted issues to do with protecting students from possible extremism and ensuring that the curriculum is sufficiently broad that pupils would be well equipped to live in modern Britain. Much of this new inspection guidance therefore seeks to ensure that schools are offering students a broad, balanced and rich curriculum that will ensure that they understand core British values and learn to live with difference well.

This new inspection framework also serves to recognise the key role that Spiritual, Moral,

Social and Cultural development (SMSC), Religious Education (RE) and Collective Worship(CW) all play in ensuring a security and breadth of education that will offer children and young people a vision and understanding of Britain and the wider world as populated by diverse peoples.

2.4 Inspection of religious education and collective worship

2.4.1 Schools with a religious character

If a voluntary or foundation school (including an academy) is designated as having a denominational religious character ('a school with a religious character'), then denominational religious education, school ethos and the content of collective worship are inspected under section 48 of the Education Act 2005. Academies designated as having a religious character by the Secretary of State are inspected in an equivalent way by virtue of a provision in the academy's funding agreement. The inspectors who conduct **section 48 inspections** are appointed by the school's governing body, or the foundation governors in a voluntary controlled school, having consulted with person(s) prescribed in regulations (normally the appropriate religious authority). The inspectors are normally drawn from the relevant faith group's section 48 inspection service, although not all faiths have their own inspectors organised in this way. Section 48 inspections should be conducted within five school years from the end of the school year in which the last section 48 inspection took place¹.

In schools with a religious character, section 5 inspectors may not comment on the content of religious worship or on denominational religious education. However, inspectors may comment on the contribution of assemblies and teaching (in any subject with the exception of RE) to pupils' personal and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and their behaviour and safety. In the case of other maintained schools and academies, including free schools that are not designated by the Secretary of State as having a religious character, and where RE is being provided in line with the locally agreed syllabus, RE is inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005².

The relationship between section 5 and section 48 inspections is governed by a protocol between Ofsted and signatory faith group inspectorates.

The Ofsted lead inspector should check the section 48 arrangements and:

if a section 48 inspection is occurring at the same time, the section 5 report should simply mention that a section 48 inspection also took place under the 'information about this school' section; evidence from the section 48 inspection should not be used in a section 5 report

if a section 48 inspection has been carried out since the previous section 5 inspection, inspectors should inform themselves of any key issues raised but should not use its evidence in their own inspection

if no section 48 inspection by a suitable person has taken place, the lead inspector should check the arrangements; if governors have not arranged for a section 48 inspection, then inspectors should conclude that they have failed to meet a key expectation.

¹. Regulation 4 of The Education (School Inspection) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2009.

² Inspectors must be mindful of certain circumstances when schools provide RE as part of the locally agreed syllabus irrespective of the schools religious designation.

2.4.2 Schools without a religious character

Schools, including academies, that are not defined as having a religious character must conform to the legal requirements for non-faith schools:

RE in maintained schools (except voluntary aided, those with specific trust requirements and voluntary controlled/foundation schools whose parents request denominational RE) should be based on the locally agreed syllabus established by the local Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE). RE should reflect the religious traditions in Britain, which are, in the main, Christian, while taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in Britain. It also means that a school or academy without a religious designation must not provide an RE syllabus (or any other) to pupils by means of any catechism or formulary that is distinctive of any particular religious denomination.

Academies may, but are not required to, follow the locally agreed RE syllabus. Alternatively, they can devise their own syllabus, but it must be in line with the legislation that underpins the locally agreed syllabus as mentioned above. Non-faith academies must provide collective worship that is wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character. Inspectors should note any requirements of their funding agreements.

A school can reflect the religious backgrounds represented in its community in its collective worship and RE, as long as the majority of provision is broadly Christian. Alternatively, the family backgrounds of some or all pupils may lead the headteacher and governing body to conclude that broadly Christian collective worship is not appropriate. The headteacher can apply to the local SACRE to have the broadly Christian requirement disapplied and replaced by collective worship distinctive of another faith. The headteacher should consult the governing body before doing so. Academies should apply to the Secretary of State via the Educational Funding Agency (EFA). It should be noted that the ERYC SACRE has no determinations in force (and we have never been asked to grant one!)

3. The work of the East Riding SACRE

3.1 Dates of meetings, attendance patterns

The East Riding SACRE met on the following dates :

27th February (Attendance 73%)
19 June (Attendance 80%)
18th September (Attendance 75%)
12th February 15 (Attendance 80%)

3.2 Membership

SACRE MEMBERSHIP – EAST RIDING OF YORKSHIRE COUNCIL

Committee A: Christian and other Religions / Denominations		
Tina Grant	Beverley Community Church	
Mr Michael Westerman	Jewish Orthodox	
Dennis Young	Yorkshire Baptist Association	
Rev Steven Knapton	United Reformed Church	

(Vice-Chairman)		
Mrs Sholeh Misaghi	Baha'i Faith	
4 Vacancies		
Committee B: Church of England		
Diocese of York	Mrs S Steel	
Diocese of York	Vacancy	
Diocese of York	Vacancy	
Sheffield Diocese	Vacancy	
3 Vacancies		
Committee C: Teacher Associations		
Mr Howard Nind	NASUWT (Headlands School)	
Mrs Wendy Butler	ATL (Beverley High School)	
Mrs Lucy Jordan	NAHT (St Marys CE Primary, Beverley)	
Mrs Caroline Swift	NUT (South Hunsley Academy)	
2 Vacancies		
Committee D: Local Authority Elected Members		
Councillor Josh Newlove	Labour Group	
Councillor Philip Davison (Chairman)	Liberal Democrat Group	
Councillor Chad Chadwick	Conservative Group	
Councillor David Rudd	Conservative Group	
Co-options		
Mr Mike May	School Improvement	
Mr Tim Stephenson	Humanist Representative	
Mrs Sue Holmes	RE Consultant	
Others Present		

CLERK – Iain Edmiston, Senior Committee Manager, East Riding of Yorkshire Council, County Hall, Beverley, HU17 9BA. Telephone – 01482 393208 Email – iain.edmiston@eastriding.gov.uk

3.3 Initiatives, Activities, Action Plan, support for CPD

The SACRE Action Plan, which runs until 2014 -16, has driven our actions this year. SACRE has supported the development of network meetings for teachers of RE. These take place each term across the county and are facilitated by Sue Holmes, our consultant.

SACRE members have continued to visit schools to advise and support teachers of RE.

Cllr Chadwick had attended a number of harvest festivals. Tina Grant spoke about the 'prayer space' event at Keldmarsh Primary School, which Irene Butterfield had been involved with. Cllr Davison had also visited this event.

Councillor Chadwick visited Holme on Spalding Moor Primary School and Headlands School as part of a Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Committee visit.

There had also been 2 Living Faith event at Keldmarsh Primary School. This had involved pupils from Beverley High School and some local primaries. Mike Westerman had been involved in this event and gave details.

Denis Young visited Martongate Primary School for the harvest festival, which had been conducted by the pupils.

The Holocaust event took place at Longcroft School 2014 and was attended by a number of SACRE members. Hornsea School was chosen as one of the 70 locations across the country where an 'official' candle will be lit and was the focus for the Holocaust event for 2015. Hornsea was fortunate to have one of the Sir Anish Kapoor designed candles - only 70 were made nationwide - and it made the event all the more poignant as the young people read poetry and prose written largely by them or their peers and the candle was lit by two Hornsea students with a direct link back to both Auschwitz and Belsen as descendants of both the liberated and the liberators.

- It was a fitting event and it made clear the need for us all to bear witness to the past but also to ensure that future generations understand the importance of the sacrifices made on our behalf that we may enjoy liberties and freedoms denied to those who perished in that dreadful time.

3.4 RE Network Meetings

There were a total of 12 meetings attended by 68 teachers/leaders. Topics included:

- Updates on the Government-stated position on RE and collective worship
- The implications of national curriculum changes on RE
- The All Party Parliamentary Group for RE and its Community Cohesion report
- Young RE Ambassadors initiative
- The publication of the RE Council's Review of RE (October 2013)
- Working towards the RE Quality Mark
- Review of new resources, especially those by *RE Today*
- New East Riding RE Syllabus appendix for Early Years Foundation Stage
- New East Riding RE Syllabus appendix for children with Special Educational Needs
- New draft East Riding assessment materials
- Meeting our local faith communities – visitors from Muslim, Sikh, Baha'i faiths
- Meeting a graphic designer - creative solutions for reward and praise, school ethos

3.5 REaction Days

SACRE supported the 2013-14 programme of REaction events. In total 2895 children and adults from 77 schools took part over 20 days held in churches across the county. SACRE helps to subsidise each event and SACRE members attend and participate as appropriate. REaction is fronted by Label of Love, a Christian charity working with

young people in Hull and the surrounding area. The fundamental aim of a REaction day is *'Bringing RE to life'*.

Each year, REaction picks up topical themes linked directly to schemes of work for the East Riding Agreed Syllabus for RE, offering interactive workshops in music, dance, drama, creativity and reflection:

- The Autumn Term theme was *Light & Dark* for Years 2 and 3
- The Spring Term saw *Saints & Heroes* for Years 4 and 5
- The Summer Term, the centenary of the start of WW1, REaction offered *Peace & Conflict* for Years 6 and 7.

The latter has proved such a rich cross-curricular theme that further Autumn REaction days - *Remembering* - are planned for Years 2 and 3 to link with Remembrance Day in November 2014.

3.6 Information and advice

SACRE revised its leaflet "What is SACRE?", which was distributed to all schools. A more detailed reminder of the role and function of SACRE was issued via the weekly Headteachers' Bulletin.

SACRE distributed a leaflet advising schools on approaches to collective worship. There was one request for advice. A parent had expressed concerns to a primary school on the content of RE lessons for very young children. SACRE advised school on how to respond.

3.7 Partnerships with other key organisations

The Hull and East Riding SACREs meet formally once a term. Their consultants meet more frequently.

We have a shared Agreed Syllabus and both SACREs commissioned the production of two appendices (SEN and EYFS) this year.

Members attend meetings of HERI (Hull and East Riding Interfaith). Events this year were as follows :

Tuesday 25 March 2014 - For Lent - To eat or not to eat?

Tuesday 24 June 2014 - HERI AGM - The Common Good.

Tuesday 25th November War & Peace which was linked to WW1 work done in Reaction SACRE supports the work of 'Label of Love', an organisation which runs RE-focussed events for schools. We subsidise each event and members attend and participate as appropriate.

3.8 Effectiveness of locally agreed syllabus

This was launched in 2011 and due for review in 2014/15. A survey of schools showed that all schools were using the syllabus.. Two appendices were written this year : SEN and EYFS.

- A joint ASC has been convened to explore a joint LA approach to a review/rewrite of the shared agreed syllabus. A preparatory meeting of the joint ASC was held in October 2014 and cross-unitary scoping audits have been carried out to ascertain the extent of the

syllabus review/rewrite in the light of the new national curriculum introduced in 2014, and the recommendations of the national RE REview and non-statutory framework for RE (2013).The key date is March 2016, from when our existing syllabus becomes illegal.

3.9 Collective worship

SACRE members have attended schools to observe and take part in collective worship, but we are no longer able to conduct detailed audits to confirm that all East Riding schools are fulfilling their statutory requirement to hold a daily act of collective worship.

3.10 Consulting schools

RE teachers are invited to SACRE meetings, not only to inform members about their work in schools, but also to feedback how SACRE can support them better. Topics covered in network meetings are those requested by teachers.

When SACRE members visit schools to support assemblies, RE lessons and particular events, they use the opportunity to also gather and pass on the views of teachers and headteachers.

3.11 Consulting the wider community

Events such as REaction and Holocaust Memorial Day give SACRE members opportunities to come into contact with other groups and organisations. In addition, SACRE members bring to meetings the views and perspectives of the groups they represent.

4. Details of Benchmarking Including any External Assessment Information

4.1 Analysis of examination entries and GCSE/A level results

54.1 % of East riding pupils took a GCSE in Religious Studies compared to 42.7 % nationally

Full GCSE

	2014 2039 students from 13 schools (National results in brackets)	2013 1836 students from 13 schools (National results in brackets)	2012 1516 students from 13 schools (National results in brackets)
A* - A	23.6% (27.9%)	22.3% (28.8%)	23.8% (29.1%)
A* - C	67.4% (70%)	69.7% (72.1%)	66.8%(72.1%)
A* - G	98.6% (97.9%)	98.6% (98.4%)	98.8%(98.4%)
Average points score	40.6(41.2)	40.9 (41.7)	40.8 (41.8)

Although percentages are reasonably static over the three years, RS results are significantly below national norms

A level ALPS Data

A Level	2012			2013			2014			
	School	Entris	Score	Grade	Entries	Score	Grade	Entries	Score	Grade
South Hunsley	-	-	-	-	9	1.04	4	5	0.96	5
Beverley Joint 6 th	13	0.89	7	17	1.11	2	12	.98	5	
Wolfreton	1	1.09	3	-	-	-	1	.88	7	
Hessle	6	1.02	4	5	.99	5	10	.92	6	
Cottingham	-	-	-	6	1.06	3	5	.74	8	
Driffield	11	.9	6	10	0.92	6	10	.87	7	
Woldgate	-	-	-	1	0.72	8	4	.86	7	
Student No's	31			48			47			

Blue denotes relatively poor performance against national; levels
 Red denotes top class performance against national; levels

At A level 47 students studied Religious Studies with an Authority ALPS score of 7 which is a decline on the previous years.

4.2

The LA no longer has the capacity to directly monitor the quality of teaching of RE. Although Ofsted inspectors are required to evaluate how schools promote pupils Spiritual, Moral, Social, and Cultural development (SMSC), inspection reports rarely refer directly to the quality of teaching of RE.

4.3 RE Inspections 2014

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS)

Bewick & Watton Primary	Good
Beverley St Mary's Primary	Outstanding
Bishop Wilton Primary	Good
All Saints Junior	Satisfactory
All Saints Infant	Good
Wilberfoss Primary	Outstanding
Roos	Outstanding
Kilham Primary	Good
North Ferriby	Good
Sledmere	Good

Inspection of RE /Collective Worship and the Catholic Life of the School

St Mary & St Joseph RC Primary

Good

4.4 Quality of leadership

Leaders of RE report feeling increasingly isolated and beleaguered. At primary school the focus on improving outcomes in English and Maths limits the capacity available to support RE. At secondary, the failure to include RE in the eBacc suite of subjects has led to a fall in 'status' for the subject, reductions in curriculum time, budget and training. However, attendance at network meetings is strong and growing - evidence of the commitment of subject leaders and their willingness to seek imaginative and innovative solutions to their problems.

4.5. Financial Implications

The SACRE receives £5,270 per annum from the Council to support its work. This budget supports the administrative costs of SACRE meetings, for example travelling expenses, training course attendance for members of SACRE (eg attendance at the annual National Association of SACREs Conference) and printing. In addition, this has enabled us to commission work on appendices to the agreed syllabus and to support the establishment of RE networks across the county.

SACRE is in the process of review/rewrite of the present syllabus, in cooperation with three other Local Authorities that has the potential of exceeding the resources of the budget allocation. SACRE is actively investigating sources of funding and financial strategies to ameliorate this difficulty. The allocated SACRE budget has been used to enable SACRE to discharge its statutory duties to support schools & teachers in RE & CW. The expenditure on REaction plays a significant role as it directly affects pupils. The budget allocation has never been meant to support the revision/rewrite of an agreed syllabus every 5 years, which has always been seen as a separate enterprise involving all 4 Humber LAs.

6. Legislation and Background Papers

Lord Nash Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Schools Sanctuary Buildings
Great Smith Street Westminster London SW1P 3BT tel: 0370 000 2288
www.education.gov.uk/help/contactus

7 January, 2015

Dear colleague

I am writing to you as Minister responsible for faith schools. I have recently had many conversations about the important role SACREs and local authorities have in supporting this area, which have encouraged me to write.

I would like to emphasise the importance of good teaching of religious education and the central role of SACREs and local authorities. All pupils benefit from good quality religious education teaching. RE makes a significant contribution to pupils' academic and personal development. It also plays a key role in promoting social cohesion and the virtues of respect and empathy, which are vitally important in our diverse society. The recent events in some schools in Birmingham have highlighted the importance of promoting the crucial values of respect and tolerance in our schools.

The role of a SACRE is to support the religious education curriculum and collective worship within schools. Local authorities have a duty to enable SACREs to fulfil their statutory responsibilities in these areas. They should assure themselves that the SACRE is functioning well and holding regular meetings. It may also be appropriate for the local authority to support the SACRE's work to provide teacher training in RE and collective worship training.

It is vital to continue to improve the academic rigour of RE in schools so that pupils develop their knowledge and understanding of this subject. The last Ofsted review of the subject found that the potential of RE was not being realised in many schools. The introduction of the new and more demanding national curriculum makes the importance of improving religious education even clearer.

The recent events in Birmingham schools have also highlighted the importance of all schools promoting the fundamental British values of the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. In some schools in Birmingham, inappropriate religious education teaching and a distorted school ethos served to undermine those fundamental British values. We have recently publishing guidance for all schools to make clear their responsibilities in this area, and have introduced new legislation for independent schools, academies and free schools to actively promote fundamental British values. The guidance is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/improving-the-sm-sc-development-of-pupils-in-independent-schools>.

SACREs are well placed to contribute to this important work through their development of appropriate and demanding RE syllabuses, and their support to schools on the effective teaching of RE, including continuing professional development for RE teachers.

It is inappropriate for any school, whether they are a faith school or not, to offer their pupils a narrow interpretation of religious education. All schools should ensure their pupils are aware of the tenets of all the major faiths represented in Great Britain.

SACREs can support this through their development of locally agreed RE syllabuses, and their advice to schools on collective worship and on effective RE teaching. I would encourage SACREs to consider the ways in which their locally agreed syllabus helps pupils to develop an understanding of Christianity, whilst also learning about the teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain.

As part of their responsibilities, SACREs must provide an agreed syllabus to support the religious education curriculum in schools, which must be reviewed every five years. A report must also be produced annually outlining the activities of the SACRE. All SACREs are encouraged to submit their annual reports to NASACRE for inclusion on their website to enable members to showcase the important work that is going on around the country, share knowledge and learn from best practice. The Department intends to commission a review of SACRE annual reports to identify good practice, and ensure that all SACREs are fulfilling their statutory duties.

SACREs would not be able to exist without the advice, help and support of the many dedicated individuals and communities, who work together to fulfil their many and varied roles. I understand that many members offer their time and expertise voluntarily, and they continue to offer professional and personal support to schools and communities in an increasingly complex and demanding environment. I would like to offer my sincere thanks to everyone who serves the pupils in their area in such a way.

Yours sincerely
JOHN NASH

7. Conclusion

- 7.1 Attendance at meetings remains very high and we have welcomed a number of new members who have brought a fresh perspective and new ideas. Indeed it can be argued that curricular and budgetary pressures have actually strengthened the resolve and commitment of SACRE members to work together in new ways to support the teaching of RE in any way they can.
- 7.2 Restructuring within the local authority has left the SACRE without specialist support. However, we are fortunate to have retained a budget to support our activities and our professional officer and our consultant have established a very constructive method of working together.
- 7.3 In the light of events in Birmingham schools the work of SACRE in promoting mutual respect and tolerance of those of different faiths and beliefs is even more important. With the Government viewing SACRE's as ideally place to contribute to its objective of promoting the fundamental British values of the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance we have an opportunity to lead and influence like never before.
- 7.4 In order for the SACRE to fulfil its legal obligation to publish a new syllabus fit for purpose in 2016, in the light of 7.2, funding to commission such joint unitary work needs to be secured. The 4 unitary authorities have chosen to work in this way to share expertise and good practice in support of RE in our schools for 20 years, since the demise of Humberside in 1996; this will be our fourth joint syllabus.

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