



Phil Norrey  
Chief Executive

To: The Chair and Members of the  
Standing Advisory Council for  
Religious Education

County Hall  
Topsham Road  
Exeter  
Devon  
EX2 4QD

(See below)

Your ref :  
Our ref :

Date : 7 November 2017  
Please ask for : Gerry Rufolo 01392 382299

Email: gerry.rufolo@devon.gov.uk

## **STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

Wednesday, 15th November, 2017

A meeting of the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education is to be held on the above date at 10.00 am in the Committee Suite - County Hall to consider the following matters.

P NORREY  
Chief Executive

## **A G E N D A**

### **PART I - OPEN COMMITTEE**

- 1 Apologies for Absence
- 2 Minutes (Pages 1 - 6)  
Minutes of the meeting held on 7 July 2017, attached
- 3 Items Requiring Urgent Attention  
Items which in the opinion of the Chair should be considered at the meeting as matters of urgency.
- 4 Devon SACRE Membership Update  
Mr Pawson to report
- 5 Holocaust Memorial Day 2018: Planning  
Mr Pawson to report
- 6 Learn/Teach/Lead Religious Education (LTLRE): Conference and Hub Groups Update  
Mr Pawson to report

- 7 Interfaith focus: Interfaith Week 2017, Interfaith Conference 2018  
Mr Roberts to report
- 8 Reviewing SACRE Documentation: Collective Worship and RE Agreed Syllabus (Pages 7 - 24)  
Mr Pawson to report
- 9 National Developments (Pages 25 - 40)  
Mr Pawson to report on:
- (a) RE Commission interim report and consultation, (Executive summary attached) and link below for the full document:
- <http://www.commissiononre.org.uk/religious-education-for-all-commission-interim-report/>
- (b) NATRE State of the Nation Report, link below
- <https://www.natre.org.uk/uploads/Free%20Resources/SOTN%202017%20Report%20web%20version%20FINAL.pdf>
- 10 Local Authorities Funding for SACRE: NATRE Campaign (Pages 41 - 42)  
Mr Pawson to report on paper attached
- 11 Zero Tolerance to Hate Crime  
Ed Pawson to report
- 12 LGBT + Tool Kit  
Mr Pawson to report
- 13 Planned CPD for Devon Schools  
Mr Pawson to report
- 14 SW SACRE Conference Monday, 5 March 2018, Dillington House  
Mr Pawson to report
- 15 Dates of Future SACRE Meetings  
Tuesday, 6 February 2018 (at the Exeter Mosque, subject to confirmation)

The morning meeting will be followed by lunch and an afternoon training session

Afternoon training (1.30-3.00pm):

The afternoon training session will explore the findings of the Commission on Religious Education Interim Report in detail, making a detailed response to the consultation.

**PART II - ITEMS WHICH MAY BE TAKEN IN THE ABSENCE OF PRESS AND PUBLIC ON THE GROUNDS THAT EXEMPT INFORMATION MAY BE DISCLOSED**

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## MEMBERS ARE REQUESTED TO SIGN THE ATTENDANCE REGISTER

Membership	
<i>Members are reminded that Substitutes are permitted</i>	
<b>Group A: Christian and Other Religion and Belief Communities, with the Exception of the Church of England</b>  K Chape (Baptist Representative) K Denby (Devon Humanists Representative) R Halsey (Jewish Representative) H Hastie (Baha'i Representative) M Hext (Methodist Representative) R Khreisheh (Muslim Representative) B Lane (United Reformed Church Representative) M Miller (Pagan Community Representative) R Nathwani (Hindu Representative) N Nation (Roman Catholic Representative) C Singh (Sikh Representative) J Taylorson (Buddhist Representative)	
<b>Group B: The Church of England</b>  C Hulbert (Chairman) E Pawson M Dearden T Wilson	
<b>Group C Teachers' Associations</b>  J Goody P Hammett W Harrison P Cornish L Clay E Mihas S Shute K Walshe G Winnall  <b>Group D Devon County Council</b>  Councillor E Brennan Councillor C Channon Councillor I Chubb Councillor P Colthorpe Councillor G Hook Councillor M Squires  <b>Co-opted Members</b>  P Fletcher T Griffiths J Marshall J Roberts S Spence G Teece	

**Declaration of Interests**

Members are reminded that they must declare any interest they may have in any item to be considered at this meeting, prior to any discussion taking place on that item.

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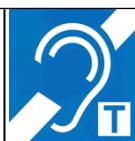
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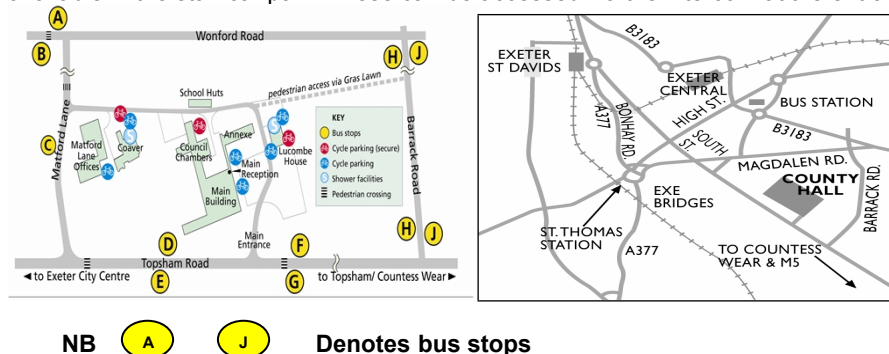
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## STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

7 June 2017

### Present:-

#### Group A: Christian and Other Religion and Belief Communities (with the exception of the Church of England)

K Denby (Humanist representative), H Hastie (Baha'i representative), M Hext (Methodist representative), R Khreishah (Muslim representative), M Miller (Pagan representative), R Nathwani (Hindu representative), B Lane (United reformed Church representative), N Nation (Roman Catholic representative) and J Taylorson (Buddhist representative)

#### Group B: The Church of England

C Hulbert (Chairman), M Dearden, R Ingraille and T Wilson

#### Group C: Teachers' Associations

J Goody, P Hammett, W Harrison, P Cornish, S Shute and G Winnall

#### Group D: The County Council

Councillors E Brennan, C Channon, G Hook and M Squires

#### Co-opted Members

T Griffiths, J Roberts and S Spence

#### Advisor

E Pawson

#### Observer

H Timpson (University of Exeter)

### Apologies:-

R Halsey, K Chape, L Clay, E Mihas, K Walshe, J Marshall and Councillor P Colthorpe

## **1 Minutes**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 8 February 2017 be signed as a correct record.

## **2 Items Requiring Urgent Attention**

Mr Pawson reported on a forthcoming march on Saturday, 10 June at 5.30 pm from Exeter Mosque to Bedford Square to show solidarity and support for the citizens of Manchester and London following the recent attacks.

## **3 Devon SACRE Membership**

Mr Pawson reported the resignation of Tanya Pritchard (Church of England) and Karen Chape (Baptist Representative) and said goodbye to Tanya Pritchard and the Members thanked them for their services to SACRE.

Teresa Griffiths (Co-opted) reported her resignation as a result of a move to another part of Country and Members thanked her for her services and relayed their good wishes for the future.

Mr Pawson also reported the appointment of Ruth Ingrouille as a Church of England representative and welcomed Ruth to her first meeting.

Mr Pawson referred to all members, particularly new members, the National Association of Standing Advisory Council for RE Handbook for SACRE Members, as an informative and useful guide on their role.

Mr Pawson reported the resignation of Tanya Pritchard (Church of England) and Karen Chape (Buddhist Representative) and the Members thanked them for their services to SACRE.

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Mr Pawson also reported the appointment of Ruth Ingraille as a Church of England representative and welcomed Ruth to her first meeting.

Mr Pawson referred to all members, particularly new members, the National Association of Standing Advisory Council for RE Handbook for SACRE Members, as an informative and useful guide on their role.

## 4

### **SACRE Budget 2017/18 (Minute 33)**

Following the resolution at the last meeting Mr Pawson reported on correspondence with the County Council's Head of Education and Learning on the current budget funding (14% reduction) to implement its Development Plan 2017 – 2019. As a result a meeting had been arranged to involve Mr Pawson and Mr Roberts with Babcock with the aim of reducing any further year-on reductions of this dimension and to discuss the structure and current commitments with particular reference to the organisation and budget for the Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD) and the significant cost implications of the Review of the Agreed Syllabus over the next 18 months.

SACRE members discussed the need for dedicated County Council support for the HMD organisation and activities, noting the significant contributions in kind from Exeter City Council for this Devon-wide event centred in Exeter. The meeting noted the practical difficulties and limitations in extending activities to more distant parts of the County which the HMD working group had given much consideration over the years.

Councillor Channon indicated her willingness to introduce a Notice of Motion at the next County Council meeting calling for additional financial support from the County Council for HMD organisation and activities currently undertaken by this SACRE through its working party.

**RESOLVED** that the offer from Councillor Channon to submit a Notice of Motion to the next County Council calling for additional financial support for the HMD organisation and activities be supported.

## 5

### **Devon SACRE Annual Report including Analysis of GCSE Results**

Mr Pawson reported on the draft Devon SACRE Annual Report 2015/16 (previously circulated) covering standards in Religious Education, the Devon SACRE, training and CPD, and collective worship.

Members noted:

- Devon Schools performance (compared with national results) for the full and short courses from 2012 -2016, and the religious studies examination entry trends 2012 -16 for all Devon Schools (detailed according to maintained and academy Schools)



- the national picture (NATRE research) noting that 79 schools were doing no RE at all but none of these school were in Devon and on which NATRE was meeting Ofsted to address this area of concern
- school monitoring visits by Mr Pawson and Mr Roberts and positive discussions with schools causing concerns in terms of GCSE entries and results
- the shifting pattern between 2014 and 2016 with reduction of cohorts for both the short and full courses and the predicted further reductions with a more content intense GCSE for RE
- the encouraging increase in the GCSE cohort for GCSE RE in Devon compared to national figures but at the same time the disappointing 4 % gap in performance for students gaining A\*- C grades
- the increased rigour and increased expectations within KS4 RE teaching
- the difficulty in sustaining effective GCSE teaching with the very limited time allowed for RE
- research evidence showing incidences of references to different subjects in Ofsted reports.

**RESOLVED** that subject to any drafting errors the Annual report be approved for submission to the DfE.

## 6 **Attitudes towards Relationships and Sex Education**

(An item raised at the request of Councillor E Brennan)

Ms Wilson reported on the work of the Church of England Diocese in their development of clear guidance for the teaching of Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development (SMSCD) across the curriculum for its Schools in Devon which she was happy to share with Members. Members noted that this was largely dependent on the ethos of the school noting the limited time allowed for this, Sex and Relationship training in PGCE courses and the availability of teaching specialists within Schools.

## 7 **Interfaith Focus: Faith and Belief Training , Interfaith Conference, Feedback on Interfaith Week 2016 and Hindu Workshops**

Mr Roberts reported on the recent round of training for faith visitor speakers over three Saturdays.

In discussion with the members the following points were raised:

- although numbers of trainees were relatively low the quality of the participants had been excellent and with the support of Mr Pawson the trained speakers from the programme were having a real and positive impact in schools telling their 'own story' and experiences;
- one group of potential visitors that has not been reached through the programme was the Christian Clergy and whilst often used by Schools did not have the benefit of the training available;
- the Church of England Diocese did provide training for its clergy but there was possibly a need for further liaison with Mr Pawson and Mr Roberts in this area;
- following the success of the Inter-faith conference in 2016 and associated Hindu workshops organised by the Devon Faith and Belief Forum, initial planning for 2017 had started and given the recent events in Manchester and London the need for this work was greater than ever;
- the need for further exploration by the DFBF of themes relating to 'end of life' and cross cultural issues;
- availability of registered Faith and Belief training provided by the British Humanist Association (BHA);
- lack of any guaranteed funding for the Forum beyond 2017/18.

## 8 **Learn, Teach, Lead Religious Education (LTLRE): Hub Groups Update**

Ms Wilson reported on the latest project LTLRE news:

- the aim of the project was to improve the quality of the teaching of RE across Plymouth, Cornwall, Torbay and Devon via local hubs and the project group meetings held 3 times a year;
- the project was supported by St Luke's Trust and local SACREs including Devon with a £500 grant;
- whilst recent evaluation of LTLRE by the Trust had been positive, there was no guaranteed funding in place beyond 2017/18;
- the difficulties for teachers attending hub meetings and the value of LTLRE as part of their professional development, particularly for less experienced teachers where they are able to develop professional networks;
- breakdown of the LTLRE conference costs.

## 9 **Working Group: Assessment Project**

Mr Roberts reported on the Working Group which had met twice since the last meeting. There had been good progress with publication of the 'Guidance for Good Assessment Practice in RE' and the RE Assessment template' circulated to members. These offered clear and concise guidance for Devon schools and the template had been trialled in schools. The working group of teachers had also produced some exemplars to complement the documents to help teachers to use the assessment as effectively as possible. The work continued and real strength came from the commitment of talented and experienced teachers from Devon, Plymouth and Torbay. LTLRE was a critical and essential partner in this work as more exemplars were produced and more teachers were made aware of the resource.

Mr Pawson reported that the material had also been posted to the Babcock website.

## 10 **Planned CPD for Devon Schools**

Mr Pawson reported that The LTLRE hubs were offering excellent teacher CPD. Materials were available on-line and this work linked in with the LTLRE project and the hubs.

Members' discussion points included:

- attendance from community and church schools dependent on course content
- where properly targeted attendance was very good
- difficulties for schools in releasing teachers and attendance out of normal working hours
- useful promulgation of information about courses by hub leaders
- the need to encourage Chairs of Governing Bodies to allow for CPD.

## 11 **National Developments**

Mr Pawson reported on the Commission on RE with the aim to review the legal, education and policy frameworks for RE. The commission had arranged an evidence gathering session for 20 June at St Luke's campus, Exeter to give people an opportunity to make their views known on RE in schools and colleges.

Mr Pawson indicated that he would be attending and invited Members to suggest to him what he could relay in terms of the purpose and role of SACREs and views on the proposal for a national syllabus.

Members' views included:

- the Humanist view for a national curriculum with local SACRE support, and a more open SACRE with membership reflecting the demographic of the area
- the worry of a national curriculum which could be too narrow

- the view for a locally determined syllabus working within national guidance
- ongoing concerns about the level of local funding of SACREs and consideration of a national funding formula
- the importance of SACREs and RE in promoting community cohesion and a 'wider view' of the world
- the value of SACRE working with other groups such as the DFBF to help empower and support schools.

## **12 Holocaust Memorial Day 2018 : Planning**

Mr Pawson reported on the initial planning and outlined some of the developing events for the day including readings from Ann Frank and an extra event on 1 February at Exeter Cathedral, a Recital and Survivor Talk by Anita Lasker-Wallfisch, a surviving member of the Auschwitz orchestra and a recital by her Son the world-renowned cellist Raphael Wallfisch at an estimated cost of £6000. Members discussed the merits in requesting members (with support from the DCC group) of the County Council to make a contribution through their locality budgets to cover the £6000 cost.

Other discussion included the potential to have events in other parts of the County (other than Exeter) which was limited in terms of the resources available. The central location and good communications to Exeter was noted and that school children from across the county were invited to take part in the Day.

## **13 Reports on SW SACRE Conference 6 March 2017 at Dillington House, and NASACRE Annual Conference 16 May 2017 in York**

Mr Dearden reported on the NASACRE conference and excellent talks from Dr Joyce Miller (Associate Fellow in the Religions and Education Research Unit at the University of Warwick and a commissioner with the RE Council) on a review of RE and by Prof Aaqil Ahmed (Professor at the School of Media and Performing Arts, University of Bolton) on media involvement in RE.

Mr Pawson and Ms Griffiths reported on the South West Conference for SACREs (organised by the South West RE Advisers) which had included a keynote address from Dr Joyce Miller, identifying issues faced by the RE Commission and personal reflections on ways forward.

## **14 Future SACRE Meetings**

Wednesday, 15 November 2017 at County Hall, Exeter and Tuesday, 6 February 2018 at the Mosque Exeter (subject to confirmation) at 10.30 am

The County Council's calendar of meetings can be found at

<http://democracy.devon.gov.uk/mgCalendarMonthView.aspx?GL=1&bcr=1>

The Meeting started at 10.00 am and finished at 12.35 pm

## Agenda Item 2



## **STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL for RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

### **Guidance on Collective Worship**

**A Devon SACRE Publication**



# Agenda Item 8

## Foreword

‘All pupils in attendance at a maintained school shall on each school day take part in an act of collective worship.’

‘Subject to the following provisions of this section, in the case of an LA school the collective worship required in the school, by section 6 of this Act, shall be “wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character. i.e. reflect the broad traditions of Christian belief.”

It is our hope that this guidance will allay some fears, give some confidence, and help its readers see a way forward that can be positive, exciting, and educationally enriching. We recognise that only if the act of collective worship is seen in these terms can it rightfully demand a proper share of resources.

It is our belief that the daily act of collective worship can provide a focus and a unifying dimension to the whole life of the school community. Thus it is deserving our attention and commitment, and can be welcomed, especially in its contribution to both spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and community cohesion.

So we offer this report as a contribution to the thinking of staff and governors in this critical area. We trust that it will be seen and used as a helpful and timely encouragement to all concerned with providing the very best for the whole child within the community of the school.

Devon SACRE wishes to acknowledge the help of the following in writing and editing this document :-

Cllr Polly Colthorpe  
Peter Faulkner  
Richard Hilkin  
Graham Langtree  
Roger Lawrence  
Dr Jatindra Saha  
Cllr Saxon Spence  
Tatiana Wilson  
Dr. Barbara Wintersgill  
Dr. Karen Walshe

Non Devon schools, LAs and other interested groups who wish to use/ adopt this guidance should contact Graham Langtree, Devon RE Adviser in the first instance  
Tel. 01392 384865  
E mail: [graham.langtree@babcockinternational.com](mailto:graham.langtree@babcockinternational.com)

**THIS GUIDANCE IS DEDICATED TO THE LATE, GREAT PROFESSOR TERENCE COPLEY  
WHO WAS AN INSPIRATION TO DEVON TEACHERS AND AN OUTSTANDING  
PRACTITIONER AND THINKER IN COLLECTIVE WORSHIP**

## **Legal Requirements**

‘Daily flexibility in groupings and timings but must be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character i.e. reflect the broad traditions of Christian belief’.



**COLLECTIVE  
WORSHIP**

**The Triangle of  
Tension**

Integrity of all children  
and adults present

Educationally valid  
and worthwhile e.g.  
contributes to pupils'  
SMSC, their well-  
being and their sense  
of belonging

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| 1. WORSHIP:                              | Basic principles   |
| 2. EDUCATION REFORM ACT 1988:            | Legal requirements |
| 3. THE ACT INTERPRETED:                  | Observations       |
| 4. SOME EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE FROM RESEARCH |                    |
| 5. EDUCATIONAL PURPOSES                  |                    |
| 6. THE WAY AHEAD                         |                    |



## 1. WORSHIP - SOME BASIC PRINCIPLES

- 1.1 A core purpose of education is to promote pupils spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
- 1.2 Acts of worship are there first and foremost for the educational benefit of pupils. As well as enhancing the spiritual dimension of human experience, they can promote moral, aesthetic social, cultural and creative awareness and help children recognise, reflect upon and evaluate the meaning of their own existence and their relationship with others. In a busy, demanding curriculum it is important children have space and time to stop and think and be reflective.
- 1.3 It follows therefore that like any other educational activity worship needs to be effectively planned, resourced and monitored if it is to have a positive impact on children's learning. This has implications for planning, staffing and positions of responsibility.
- 1.4 The fact that the Act uses the word collective, not corporate, indicates that worship is a shared activity which allows a variety of responses. The policy of Devon LA is that worship is an inclusive not exclusive activity which has an educational rather than liturgical foundation. It seeks to build links with all dimensions of the curriculum. Acts of worship should involve activities in which the values of the school are celebrated, affirmed and reflected upon. The traditional elements of Christian worship such as prayers, bible readings and songs will be greatly enhanced where it is made clear that they are offered rather than imposed.
- 1.5 The Act does not define worship. Etymologically worship is connected with ascribing worth or recognising the worth of someone or something. It can be defined as a response to an experience where the worth of someone or something beyond *ourselves* is acknowledged. Worship will often involve celebration, thanksgiving, praise, adoration and affirmation and can be an expression of humility, awe and mystery. In schools worship is directly linked to pupils' spiritual development for worship

'can help pupils to reflect upon those aspects of human life and the natural world, which raise questions of ultimate meaning and purpose'.

(HMI: Curriculum Matters)

- 1.6 Worship therefore, in the context of school life, is a celebration of all that is of supreme worth to the school community. It can heighten the value of the curriculum and help to create a sense of purpose and direction in life. Therefore worship includes social concerns and personal development as well as exploring religious beliefs, ideas, teachings and values. While worship is usually affirmatory - in character it can often be expressed as an admission of need or cry for help. Collective acts of worship need to recognise that doubts and anxieties may be present in the hearts and minds

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of pupils and staff so it is inappropriate to develop worship in a rigid 'no questions asked' manner which stifles valid response.

- 1.7 Compulsory worship is a contradiction in terms for worship is a free-will response from the heart. To impose an outward form of worship on what is an inward spiritual experience could damage the integrity of children and teachers. This could give rise to hypocrisy and ridicule. Acts of worship should provide an opportunity for those of all faiths (*and none*) to focus and reflect on stimuli which allow the human spirit to respond with integrity.

- 1.8 The traditional elements of worship such as prayers, hymns and sacred readings may have a role to play in collective worship but great care and consideration needs to be given when these stimuli are used to ensure that they are helpful in enhancing the learning experience.

'A school is not a worshipping community but rather a worship enabling community'.

(*'Schools for Tomorrow'* ed B O'Keefe, Falmer Press)

- 1.9 As stated in 1.4 the use of the word collective allows for a variety of responses. For some children the opportunity to worship will be seen as an expression of faith, for some an expression of the desire for faith, for some an expression for an expansion of experience and some an awareness of the spiritual dimension of life. Worship therefore can cover a spectrum of responses including:

- awareness of .....
- respect for .....
- commitment to .....
- appreciation of .....
- preference for .....
- dedication .....

## **2. EDUCATION REFORM ACT 1988: Legal requirements**

### **2.1 Organisational**

Collective worship must be daily for all registered pupils (including sixth form pupils in schools with sixth forms and sixth form colleges but not colleges under FE regulations).

- 2.2 Acts of worship can be at any time of the school day and in whatever groupings the school wishes to use e.g. whole school year groups, tutor groups, houses etc.

- 2.3 Acts of worship must take place on school premises.

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- 2.4 It is the responsibility of the LA to set up a Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) which will report annually to the LA and keep the school worship under review.
- 2.5 If a school wishes it can, after consultation with governors, apply to the SACRE to alter or modify the requirements on acts of worship if it considers that the requirements conflict with the ages, aptitudes and family backgrounds of the pupils. The application can be made on behalf of a group of pupils within the school as well as the school itself. These requests known as determinations only apply to a small number of SACREs and LAs.
- 2.6 SACRE can then make a determination order which lasts for a period of five years and is notified in writing to the headteacher. Daily collective worship must still be provided and may not be distinctive of any particular denomination or religious group but it may be distinctive of a particular faith.
- 2.7 The responsibility for ensuring that the law is fulfilled lies with the headteacher and governors. However HTs are not required to participate in worship. Both parents and sixth form students may withdraw from acts of worship, as may teachers.

## **STYLE AND CONTENT**

- 2.8 The majority of acts each term should be 'wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character' i.e. they should reflect the 'broad traditions of Christian belief'. In legal terms majority probably means more than half. This raises important questions as to what is meant by 'broadly' and 'Christian' and attempts need to be made to do justice to both words.
- 2.9 Acts of worship must not be distinctive of any particular Christian denomination.
- 2.10 Regard must be given to the ages and aptitudes of children in the school and their family background. This means that the faith background of pupils and their families should be an important consideration.

## **THE ROLE OF THE RE TEACHER IN WORSHIP**

- 2.11 As stated in 2.7 the responsibility for the organisation of school worship rests with the head and governors. Where schools have an RE specialist available the teacher(s) concerned may wish to offer ideas and resources. It must be stressed however that the RE teachers do not automatically have any kind of responsibility for organising and conducting collection acts of worship. In the past some RE teachers have avoided involvement in collective worship as they felt collective worship and RE have conflicting aims. Linking aspects of worship with schools' RE programme can sometimes enhance both areas for both are part of the whole curriculum.

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In order for effective links to be built careful planning is required. It is of paramount importance that no pressure is exerted on teachers to participate in, or contribute to, any act of worship in which they feel their integrity is compromised.

## 3. THE ACT INTERPRETED: SOME OBSERVATIONS

3.1 According to the ERA, worship must be 'wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character', reflecting the broad traditions of Christian belief and 'regard must be taken of pupils' ages, aptitudes and family background'.

3.2 Acts of worship in school should reflect the **broad** traditions of Christian **belief** (not the varying traditions of church worship). It is important that children are helped to become aware of the ways in which the Christian faith influences aspects of life. Within this framework certain key concepts which reflect the broadest traditions of Christian belief can be developed. First and foremost is the Christian understanding of love. Other concepts which are broadly but not exclusively Christian include:

Compassion	Humility	Justice
Trust	Courage and Integrity	Co-operation and Service
Forgiveness	Respect for life	Honesty and Truthfulness
Mercy	Value of all individuals	

3.3 Schools need to take the clauses of the Act, which relate to the pupils' ages, aptitudes and family backgrounds, seriously. Consideration must be given not just to children who come from homes where the Christian faith is practised, but also to children whose parents are adherent to other faiths) e.g. Judaism, Islam etc.) or children who are from a secular background.

3.4 Many children have little or no familiarity with religious worship either in the home or the community. This needs to be remembered when planning collective acts of worship.

3.5 Good practice in education has always considered the ages of children. Activities and stimuli in primary schools will need to be different from those in secondary schools. Schools need to consider how collective acts of worship can play a significant role in children's spiritual development and their awareness and understanding of religion and beliefs.

3.6 More recently schools have linked their provision with other important educational initiatives. In particular collective worship can be closely linked to Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) and Community Cohesion provision (especially helping pupils develop their understanding of school, local, wider, UK and global communities) but these are not a replacement for current legislative requirements for Collective Worship

## 4. SOME EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE FROM RESEARCH

- 4.1 The limited research carried out on collective acts of worship suggests that acts of worship may need a great deal more planning, resources and evaluation than has been the case.
- 4.2 Research indicates that some schools do not give sufficient thought to the climate and environment in which worship takes place. For some children, assembly, which remains the main vehicle by which acts of worship are delivered, is an uncomfortable and tiring experience.
- 4.3 Schools do not always link their acts of worship either to the wider curriculum or areas such as SEAL and Community Cohesion.
- 4.4 The purpose of acts of worship varies considerably from school to school. Educational purposes are often intertwined with legalistic and administrative functions. Schools do consider however that acts of worship can affirm human values, develop understanding and awareness, stimulate discussion and provide a meeting point for the whole curriculum.
- 4.5 There are other functions of a school assembly. These include establishing a group identity, a platform for the discussion of moral issues, an opportunity for senior management to see children, recognition of achievements, raising the school's consciousness of community life and problems, and dealing with disciplinary questions. At times however it is unclear when the 'assembly' element ends and the 'worship' element begins.
- 4.6 There are acts of worship which are well planned and imaginatively presented in which pupils take an active role and use supportive audio-visual material but for some pupils their feelings on collective worship are rather negative indicating resignation and even resentment. It is unclear in some schools how acts of worship are increasing pupils awareness and understanding of worship. If school worship takes place in an atmosphere of indifference and boredom then its value is clearly lost.

## 5. EDUCATIONAL PURPOSES

- 5.1 As already indicated the purpose of acts of worship vary considerably but there is a clear need for schools to give serious thought to aims and objectives. These might include the following principles.

### **Collective worship:**

- provides opportunities for pupils to reflect on the aims of the school and celebrate the values and worth of the school community
- reflects upon the meaning and purpose of life, developing a sense of awe and wonder
- develops an understanding of the nature and language of worship
- explores and develops spirituality and fosters sensitivity to the beliefs, practices and values of others within the school and a community
- explores and evaluates children's own beliefs in relation to those of others

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- celebrates special occasions and shows appreciation of the gifts and talents of the school community
- promotes good practice in community cohesion, especially in links with the school, local, wider, UK and global communities
- develops a key understanding of important Christian beliefs and teachings
- relates their experiences in social and emotional learning.
- Relates to special celebrations and festivals in religion and beliefs

## 5.2 **MONITORING PROVISION**

Monitoring of school worship needs to be exercised with care and discretion not just to ensure that the law is carried out but that the activities presented are educationally valid and worthwhile. In observing acts of worship some key questions need to be addressed. These include:-

- Is the collective worship appropriate to the ages, aptitudes and family backgrounds of the children?
- How involved are pupils both in terms of active participation and opportunity for reflection and follow-up?
- Does it fulfil the requirements of the Act in being 'wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character'?
- Does collective worship demonstrate evidence of celebration, affirmation and exploration?
- Is the climate and environment helpful in creating an atmosphere which is conducive to reflection and response?
- Does the collective worship contribute towards children's spiritual development?
- In individual acts of worship do children have something to look at, listen to, engage with, respond to and reflect on?

Are there opportunities to suggest that the act of worship is a meaningful experience for children and how are children involved in planning, delivery and reviewing collective worship?

## 6. **WAYS FORWARD**

The purpose of document has been to raise some issues connected with collective worship in the 1988 Education Reform Act. As stated in 1.3 the principles governing collective worship are the same as any other educational activity. The following points are recommended as suggestions for developing good practice.

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- 6.1 Effective co-ordination of acts of collective worship needs to take place in order to avoid repetition both in content and methodology. In schools where it is appropriate a collective worship committee, drawn from a variety of sources (including pupils), would be helpful in terms of co-ordinating themes, speakers, ideas and activities.
- 6.2 Schools need to link their acts of worship with other aspects of the curriculum to show how they are a part of school's educational programme. A thematic approach may be a helpful contribution to the whole curriculum.
- 6.3 By their very nature acts of worship should involve the wider community. Members of the local community can share their experiences which provoke a greater understanding and appreciation of the value of worship. Visitors can provide interest, change, a different experience but schools need to provide clarity of purpose for the visit, ensure the visitor feels welcome and is aware of the current policy of collective worship in schools.
- 6.4 The roots of worship in awe, wonder, reflection and joy can be part of an assembly programme which encourages spiritual development. The traditional elements of worship such as prayers, music and sacred writings can be supported by other elements to create stimulating and imaginative assemblies. These include:

Poetry	Mime	Audio visual aids
Songs and other forms of music	Creative Silence	Pupils' contribution
Art	Stories and Readings	Interviews
Use of DVD clips	Display of Artefacts	Dance and Drama
	Use of Internet	Use of CD ROM

It is important to note that some of the above means of worship are not appropriate to all faith communities and consideration needs to be given as to whether these means will help pupils' understanding of worship.

- 6.5 Because of the complexities and sensitivities involved in collective acts of worship it is vital that they are led with care and understanding. There are a number of skills which both children and staff require if acts of worship are to be fulfilling and stimulating experiences. These include the ability to:-
- be still and not fear silence
  - contemplate and reflect upon that which is offered
  - use all the senses e.g. listen, see, touch, which leads to a greater awareness of the spiritual dimension to identify with others and their experiences, to respond to exposure of appropriate stimuli.
- 6.6 If these skills are to be developed it follows that consideration must be given to the actual content of the collective acts of worship and how they relate to other activities. Some skills and aspects of worship may be developed most effectively in smaller group situations e.g. through experience and learning in stilling exercises or in opportunities for quiet reflections on values and aspirations.

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Many schools work out a programme for worship in which clear objectives are stated. It is important to realise that acts of worship have often been linked with other ideas for assembly e.g. opportunities for praise and sanction and the giving out of information. Some schools have used assemblies to articulate the school's values and to motivate caring action. Assemblies can provide a meeting point for the whole curriculum. Therefore it is essential that those planning assemblies bear in mind the place and time of acts of worship within them. It would be difficult for children to respond to a reflective thought if this had been accompanied by a range of administrative and disciplinary matters. Schools need to take care to see that their objectives can actually be realised.

- 6.7 Acts of worship need to be occasional matter for discussion in governing bodies, senior management and other groups in school decision making. At their best they can enrich the life of the school and the community and encourage spiritual development. They need time, energy, sensitivity and commitment but the benefits of a thoughtful, considered approach are enormous. In practical terms, a record of dates, times and content of acts of worship need to be maintained to ensure coherence and to satisfy any legal enquiries.
- 6.8 Within the wide spectrum of definition of worship there exists many different modes of expression and response. This must be reflected in school practice. In schools the aim of collective worship 'is to take the most transparent, the most symbolic of the concerns of our pupils in the hope that they will be led from the trivial and the immediate and the local to the significant, the enduring and the universal concern'
- 6.9 This policy statement is intended to help all involved in education in Devon understand and consider the implications for schools of the current legislation on collective worship.

**Appendix 1 Exemplar Policy Primary**  
**Appendix 2 Exemplar Policy Secondary**  
**Appendix 3 A Summary of Effective Practice**



### COLLECTIVE WORSHIP FOR PRIMARY SCHOOLS

#### EXEMPLAR POLICY STATEMENT

##### DEEP VALLEY PRIMARY SCHOOL

#### Introduction

At Deep Valley we believe that Collective Worship plays a very important role in the life of our school. It is an opportunity to celebrate all aspects of school life to support our curriculum and to provide an opportunity for stillness and reflection in what is often a very busy, active day for our children.

#### Aims

The central aims of Collective Worship at Deep Valley are to:

- provide our children with regular opportunities for stillness and reflection
- promote children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
- celebrate the values and worth of the school community and all who belong in it, including the sharing of the gifts and talents of our children.
- help children develop and understanding both of the nature and language of worship
- help children develop respect and sensitivity to the beliefs and values of others
- support the broader curriculum through the use of art, music, dance, story, drama and other visual and oral means of communication.

#### The Legal Position

The 1988 Education Reform Act states that collective worship must be on a daily basis for all registered pupils. Furthermore, acts of worship "must be wholly or mainly of a broadly christian character, i.e. reflect the broad traditions of christian belief." At Deep Valley we have developed a range of themes and topics through which collective worship takes place. Key themes include love, joy, trust, forgiveness, justice and the value of all human life. We believe these themes are clearly Christian in nature but are universal in their application. We recognise that in our school we have children from a variety of faith backgrounds and that many children have no religious background at all. Great care is taken in our collective worship to ensure that all children feel valued and special and that their integrity as human beings is consistently upheld. Collective Worship at Deep Valley is an inclusive activity. Parents do have, of course, the right of withdrawal from Collective Worship. Parents who have any concerns about the provision and practice of our Collective Worship are strongly encouraged to contact the Head teacher.

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## Context of Collective worship

In order to promote children's learning, our acts of worship vary in size. Our pattern is set out below:

Monday	-	Whole school (introduction of special theme)
Tuesday	-	Theme developed through music
Wednesday	-	Class-based worship on theme
Thursday	-	Year group development of theme
Friday	-	Whole school (celebration / conclusion of theme involving pupil's work and outside speakers)

Visitors play an important part in the life of our school and regularly contribute to acts of worship. We record our acts of worship to inform our learning and plan for further developments. We are developing a range of resources to enhance children's learning. These include stories, music, slides, poems, pictures and posters and dvds all of which we hope contribute to a stimulating and thoughtful time for our children. We also believe collective worship makes a very important contribution to Community Cohesion in the following ways

**School Community-** through our key themes and children's participation in Collective worship we develop respect, sensitivity, self esteem and compassion.

**Local Community-** we encourage a range of regular visitors from our local community to enrich collective worship and support our children's understanding of faith and beliefs

**UK Community-** we use powerpoints, dvds, stories and other resources in our acts of worship to reflect the diversity of life and faiths in the UK as well as utilising our links with other schools in the UK

**Global Community-** we use stories, music and dvds to enrich children's understanding of faiths and cultures around the world and, at times, focus on giving to specific causes. While the charitable aspect of the school life is important we stress the educational importance of learning about other faiths, cultures and lifestyles

## Conclusion

Collective Worship plays a very important role in our school as we seek to develop our children in the skills of reflection and empathy, to encourage and celebrate their talents and to promote their spiritual and moral development.

### COLLECTIVE WORSHIP FOR PRIMARY SCHOOLS

#### EXEMPLAR POLICY STATEMENT

#### TALL MOUNTAIN SECONDARY SCHOOL

##### Introduction

At Tall Mountain we believe that Collective Worship plays a very important role in the life of our school. It is an opportunity to celebrate all aspects of school life to support our curriculum and to provide an opportunity for stillness and reflection in what is often a very busy, active day for our pupils.

##### Aims

The central aims of Collective Worship at Tall Mountain are to:

- provide our pupils with regular opportunities for stillness and reflection
- promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
- celebrate the values and worth of the school community and all who belong in it, including the sharing of the gifts and talents of our pupils.
- help pupils develop and understanding both of the nature and language of worship
- help pupils develop respect and sensitivity to the beliefs and values of others
- support the broader curriculum through the use of art, music, dance, story, drama and other visual and oral means of communication.

##### The Legal Position

The 1988 Education Reform Act states that collective worship must be on a daily basis for all registered pupils. Furthermore, acts of worship "must be wholly or mainly of a broadly christian character, i.e. reflect the broad traditions of christian belief." At Tall Mountain we have developed a range of themes and topics through which collective worship takes place. Key themes include love, joy, trust, forgiveness, justice and the value of all human life. We believe these themes are clearly Christian in nature but are universal in their application. We recognise that in our school we have pupils from a variety of faith backgrounds and that many pupils have no religious background at all. Great care is taken in our collective worship to ensure that all pupils feel valued and special and that their integrity as human beings is consistently upheld. Collective Worship at Tall Mountain is an inclusive activity. Parents do have, of course, the right of withdrawal from Collective Worship. Parents who have any concerns about the provision and practice of our Collective Worship are strongly encouraged to contact the Head teacher.

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## **Context of Collective Worship**

Collective Worship at Tall Mountain takes place in a range of settings (the school has no individual building large enough to accommodate the whole school), in order to provide different learning experiences for pupils. Acts of Worship take place in the broader framework of school assemblies and are planned thematically. The usual pattern is outlined below:

Monday	-	Combined Year Groups	Introduction to the theme
Tuesday	-	Tutor Groups	Reflection on the theme
Wednesday	-	Year Group	Development of the theme (active involvement from pupils)
Thursday	-	Tutor Group	Further reflection / discussion of the theme
Friday	-	Combined Year Groups	Celebration / summary of the theme.

This pattern enables our pupils to learn in different settings and to make an active contribution to our acts of worship. The school frequently invites visitors to play an active role in our acts of worship and we are currently developing a resource bank (based on our themes), which includes stories, poems, music and other support materials to enable our pupils to learn more effectively. We do keep a record of our acts of Worship.

## **Conclusion**

Collective Worship plays a very important role in our school as we seek to develop our pupils in the skills of reflection and empathy, to encourage and celebrate their talents and to promote their spiritual and moral development.

## COLLECTIVE WORSHIP:

Effective practice includes

- Children participating/leading
- Elements of genuine reflection
- Using feedback from children
- Creative use of music both in terms of atmosphere and exploring lyrics
- Creating a stimulating, reflective environment
- Developing lively, thought-provoking visual aids
- Using story in an inter-active engaging way.

Follow-up Activities

- Developing a thematic approach to collective worship
- Using school council and other groups to develop children's feedback on the purpose and quality of collective worship
- Develop a team approach to collective worship
- Create more opportunities for stillness and reflection in collective worship
- Make greater use of music in collective worship
- Develop a wider range of resources (linked to the key themes) for collective worship.







Commission on  
Religious Education

INTERIM REPORT **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

# RELIGIOUS EDUCATION FOR ALL

SEPTEMBER 2017



## Agenda Item 9



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This interim report is published with the intention of creating an opportunity for as many people and organisations as possible to engage with the Commission on Religious Education (CoRE) about our developing thoughts on RE in schools in England. The interim report explores a number of issues which have emerged during our deliberations on the evidence presented to us during the initial consultation, at the evidence gathering sessions held around the country and in written submissions received during the 2016/17 academic year. It sets out initial recommendations alongside a range of issues on which we are seeking to consult further before drawing any conclusions. We hope that there will be a full and vigorous consultation on the content of this interim report, and that this will help to inform the final report of the Commission, due to be published in 2018.

RE remains a vital academic subject for education in the 21st century. Studying RE gives young people the knowledge, understanding and motivation they need to understand important aspects of human experience, including the religious, spiritual, and moral. It gives insights into the arts, literature, history, and contemporary local and global social and political issues. It provides them with a space in the curriculum to reflect on their own worldview and to engage with others whose worldview may be different. The young people that we have spoken to have told us that RE enables them to have better friendships and to develop greater respect and empathy for others. RE is highly valued by many employers, who increasingly understand that in a globalised world, understanding others' worldviews and their impact on people's lives is essential to success.

The knowledge gained through studying RE is central to good local, national and global citizenship. It enables young people to have a nuanced and informed understanding of key political and social issues that they will need to face as they grow up in an increasingly globalised world. RE helps pupils to deal positively with controversial issues, to manage strongly held differences of belief, and to challenge stereotypes.

As local and global demographics have changed, including patterns of affiliation to religious and non-religious worldviews, today's students will encounter people with a much more diverse range of beliefs, lifestyles and backgrounds than did the previous generations. Understanding religious and non-religious worldviews, and their impact on individuals, communities and wider society, has never been more essential to good citizenship than it is now. For these reasons, we argue throughout the report that all pupils, regardless of background or the type of school they attend, are entitled to high quality RE which enables them to develop the nuanced and informed

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understanding of worldviews that they will need as citizens.

We were impressed by the evidence of high quality and innovative approaches to RE that were presented during our consultations.<sup>1</sup> At its best, the subject offers great educational benefit for pupils and the British model of RE is highly regarded and has earned international esteem. Of particular note has been the appearance in recent years of local and national support networks for teachers and also the high level of examination entry at GCSE and A level.

Having said that, we are unanimous in the view that RE faces a perilous future without strategic, urgent intervention. Examination entries fell for the first time in 2017, and many who gave evidence saw this as a sign of further decline in years to come. Amongst the many challenges the subject faces, the following are identified as particularly significant:

- The changed patterns of religious and non-religious belief from the time when the current system was enacted in 1944 present a requirement to ensure that RE's structures reflect the realities of contemporary society. The religious landscape in the UK has diversified with fewer people identifying as Anglican and more identifying with other Christian denominations or other religious traditions. Moreover, the number of people identifying as non-religious has increased: in 2017, 53% of the population described themselves as not having a religion.<sup>2</sup> The global religious landscape has also been undergoing rapid change, where religion is highly significant in many societies.
- There is inconsistency in the quality and provision of RE, with increasing numbers of schools not even meeting the basic legal requirement. Pupils are experiencing a lottery in their access to high quality RE. Evidence presented to the Commission made clear the impact that the type of school had on the extent to which RE is provided: while 6.5% of schools that follow an RE curriculum determined by their religious character devote no part of their curriculum time to RE at key stage 4, the figure is 20.7% for schools required to follow a locally agreed syllabus for RE and 43.7% for academies without a religious character.<sup>3</sup> This inequality of provision means that many children are being disadvantaged by being denied RE.
- As more schools become academies, leaving ever fewer under local authority control, the current framework of determination of RE via local authorities and agreed syllabuses is ceasing to be fit for purpose. A decrease in local authority funding has exacerbated this problem.

<sup>1</sup> Please see Appendix 1: Evidence received by the Commission for details of how we collected evidence.

<sup>2</sup> NATCEN (2017). *British Social Attitudes Survey*.  
<http://www.natcen.ac.uk/media/1469605/BSA-religion.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> RE Council & National Association of Teachers of RE (2017, forthcoming). *The State of the Nation*.

Moreover, evidence submitted to the Commission makes clear that the current approach of relying on the requirements of academy funding agreements is not sufficient for ensuring the proper provision of RE across all academies. If no action is taken, there is a serious risk of increasing numbers of pupils leaving school with an inadequate level of knowledge and understanding of religious and non-religious worldviews at precisely the time when such understanding is becoming more important.

- RE has suffered from a policy environment that has not encouraged headteachers to regard it as a high-status subject. This environment includes insufficient processes to hold schools to account for their provision of RE and the omission of RE from key performance indicators published by DfE.
- There has been diminishing access to adequate training and support for teachers. This is particularly acute at primary level where the Commission heard that on average a primary trainee receives less than three hours of RE-specific training during a one-year PGCE or School Direct course.<sup>4</sup>
- The quality of RE is variable across schools. Low standards predominate across too many schools, including schools with and without a religious

character. Teachers are not always clear on the purpose of the subject and many lack the subject knowledge necessary to teach about sensitive and crucial issues with skill and nuance. Locally agreed syllabuses are also variable in quality. One

We are advocating RE for all not because children belong to religious traditions or not, but because in our age a nuanced understanding of the role of worldviews must be a part of citizens' intellectual make-up

issue that we have noted is the fact that religion is often presented in an essentialist mode that fails to help pupils understand the complexity, diversity and historicity of religious ideas, institutions and practices. This was most often mentioned in relation to the Dharmic traditions (i.e. Hindu, Buddhist and Sikh traditions) in the written and oral evidence but affects the presentation of all religions and worldviews in resources and in the classroom.

The Commissioners have therefore made initial recommendations in four areas:

<sup>4</sup> Fiona Moss, oral evidence submitted to the Commission. See also NATRE (2016). An analysis of the provision for RE in primary schools. [www.natre.org.uk%2Fuploads%2FAdditional%2520Documents%2FNATRE%2520Primary%2520Survey%25202016%2520final.docx&usg=AFQjCNFDWLUicovE8LOQEgZiiuHF7fFcAA](http://www.natre.org.uk%2Fuploads%2FAdditional%2520Documents%2FNATRE%2520Primary%2520Survey%25202016%2520final.docx&usg=AFQjCNFDWLUicovE8LOQEgZiiuHF7fFcAA)

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1. **A national entitlement for RE.** This would set out clearly the aims and purpose(s) of RE and what pupils should experience in the course of their study of the subject. This national entitlement should be for all pupils at all state-funded schools and we seek to consult with independent schools about whether they should adopt it. We are advocating RE for all not because children belong to religious traditions or not, but because in our age a nuanced understanding of the role of worldviews must be a part of citizens' intellectual make-up. It is to do with their ability to function effectively as citizens and as human beings. This is as important an aspect of education for pupils in schools of a religious character as it is in those without a religious character. It should be introduced through non-statutory guidance as early as possible with a view to it ultimately becoming statutory, either to supplement or replace the current legislation on agreed syllabuses. This national entitlement provides a reinvigorated vision for RE for all pupils in the future, drawing on the very best of the RE that we know happens in some schools. It seeks to be a basic statement of what all pupils are entitled to, but is not a national syllabus or curriculum. We hope that the flexibility of the proposed national entitlement will ensure that a diversity of high quality approaches will emerge and that this will best suit the landscape of a school-led system. We recognise that schools will need guidance and support to translate this entitlement into curriculum planning and we are reviewing where this guidance and support should come from.
2. **Holding schools to account for the provision and quality of RE.** The evidence presented to us indicates that at present too many schools are not being held to account for failing to provide adequate RE. Schools should be required to publish details on their website of how they meet the national entitlement for RE. Inspection frameworks should be revised to ensure that inspectors monitor whether schools meet the national entitlement for RE. The Commission has also given thought to how schools should provide for those Key Stage 4 pupils who are not taking the GCSE in Religious Studies and would like to consult on the possibility of a revised qualification for these pupils to ensure that their work can be accredited.
3. **A National Plan to improve teaching and learning in RE.** The Commission would like to develop a National Plan for developing teaching and learning in RE, along the lines of the National Plan for Music Education. The National Plan will bring together the Commission's recommendations for improving teacher subject knowledge and confidence and we seek to consult on how this can best be achieved.
4. **A renewed and expanded role for Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education (SACREs).** The evidence we have received suggests that SACREs can have an important role in promoting and supporting RE and in promoting good community relations more broadly, but that their capacity to deliver this role fully has been diminishing in many local authorities. The Commission's suggested recommendations, which are

consultative at this stage, call for consideration to be given to adding the promotion of improved community relations to the remit of SACREs and make proposals for the securing of resources for their work. There are also recommendations that seek consideration of the composition of SACREs with a call to ensure that they are fully representative, with representatives of non-religious worldviews as full members.

The full recommendations are set out on pages 8 to 12.

In addition, the Commissioners are seeking to undertake further consultation in these areas and have set out the issues that they are particularly interested in exploring. These areas for consultation are set out on pages 12 to 14.

## LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

### A NATIONAL ENTITLEMENT FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

- a. There should be a national entitlement statement for RE which sets out clearly the aims and purpose of RE and what pupils should experience in the course of their study of the subject. A draft statement for consultation is overleaf.
- b. This entitlement should become normative through non-statutory guidance as early as possible, and should ultimately become statutory, either to supplement or to replace current legislation on agreed syllabuses.
- c. The national entitlement should apply to all state-funded schools including academies, free schools and schools of a religious character.
- d. Independent schools should consider adopting the entitlement as an undertaking of good practice.

#### **The National Entitlement for Religious Education**

Overleaf is the draft text of the proposed national entitlement for RE. This draft is for consultation. We welcome comments on and refinements to the text.

## **A National Entitlement for RE**

RE in schools should enable students to engage in an intelligent and informed way with the ideas, practices and contemporary manifestations of a diversity of religious and non-religious worldviews. It should enable them to understand how worldviews are inextricably woven into, influence and are influenced by, all dimensions of human experience. It should prepare pupils for life in modern Britain by enabling them to engage respectfully with people with worldviews different from their own. RE should equip pupils to develop their own beliefs, practices, values and identity in the light of their reflections on the worldviews they have studied.

Through their study of worldviews, pupils should develop a lifelong motivation to enquire into questions of meaning and purpose, and investigate others' worldviews and what they mean for individuals, communities and society. All of this will enable them to become responsible citizens and members of diverse and changing local, national and global communities.

Throughout their period of compulsory schooling, pupils should learn about, understand and engage with:

- a. The diversity of religious and non-religious worldviews and ways of life that exist locally, nationally and globally.
- b. The ways in which communities and individuals holding different worldviews interact, change and maintain continuity in different times and contexts and as the surrounding culture changes.
- c. The different ways that people interpret and respond to texts and other sources of authority.
- d. The ways that people communicate their beliefs, experiences, values and identities through verbal and non-verbal means (eg prose, story, poetry, art, music, dance, ritual, architecture).
- e. How people seek moral guidance from religious and non-religious worldviews and how they interpret this guidance in their lives.
- f. The importance of experience, including extra-ordinary experiences, in shaping people's worldviews and how worldviews are used to interpret experience.

- g. The role of religious and non-religious rituals and practices in both creating and expressing experience, beliefs, values and commitments.
- h. The relationship between people's worldview and their thinking and actions concerning political, public, social and cultural life.
- i. Both the positive and negative exercise of power and influence resulting from people's worldviews.
- j. The important role that worldviews play in providing people with a way of making sense of their lives and in forming their identity.\*

As part of a balanced programme aimed at meeting this provision, it is expected that pupils will:

1. Experience meeting and visiting people from their local community from a range of worldviews including those different from their own and that of the school.
2. Develop core skills for researching the beliefs, values and practices of individuals and groups in society.
3. Experience a range of approaches to the study of religions (e.g. phenomenology, philosophy, sociology, textual studies, theology).
4. Engage with questions of meaning and purpose and of the nature of reality raised by the worldviews that they study.
5. Think through and develop a reflective approach to their own personal responses and developing identity and learn to articulate these clearly and coherently while respecting the right of others to differ.
6. Develop the core skills and dispositions of careful listening, critical thinking, self-reflection, empathy and open-mindedness required for making wise judgments.
7. Learn to discuss controversial issues and work with others (including those that they disagree with) with the intention of securing a healthy and peaceful society in the context of significant diversity.

*\* We are indebted to Barbara Wintersgill, who presented her project on Big Ideas in RE. Her work has informed much of the content of this list.*



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## HOLDING SCHOOLS TO ACCOUNT FOR THE PROVISION AND QUALITY OF RE

- a. Schools should be required to publish on their website details of how they meet the national entitlement for RE.
- b. Inspection frameworks should be revised to ensure that inspectors monitor whether or not schools meet the national entitlement for RE, in the light of schools' duty to provide a broad and balanced curriculum.
- c. The DfE should either monitor, or give SACREs or other approved bodies the power and resources to monitor, the provision and quality of RE in all schools, including free schools, academies and schools of a religious character.
- d. The government should consider the impact of school performance measures, including the exclusion of RS GCSE from the EBacc, on GCSE entries and on the provision and quality of RE, and consider reviewing performance measures in the light of the evidence.

## A RENEWED AND EXPANDED ROLE FOR SACRES

We seek to consult on all our recommendations relating to SACREs. (See page 12)

## A NATIONAL PLAN FOR IMPROVING TEACHING AND LEARNING IN RE

We are considering developing a National Plan for developing teaching and learning in RE, along the lines of the National Plan for Music Education. This plan is likely to include the following recommendations:

- a. A minimum of 12 hours should be devoted to RE in all primary Initial Teacher Education (ITE) courses.
- b. Leading primary schools for RE should be identified and all primary trainees should be given the opportunity to observe RE teaching in such a school.
- c. Include under the Teachers' Standards, part 1, section 3 (Demonstrate good subject and curriculum knowledge), the requirement that teachers 'demonstrate a good understanding of and take responsibility for the sensitive handling of controversial issues, including thoughtful discussion of religious and non-religious worldviews where necessary.'
- d. Restore funded Subject Knowledge Enhancement (SKE) courses for those applying to teach RE and for serving teachers of RE without a relevant post A-level qualification in the subject.
- e. Restore parity of bursaries for RE with those for other shortage subjects.



- f. The government and relevant funding bodies should consider how funding of grassroots teacher networks can be made more sustainable.
- g. SACREs and local authorities should review existing good practice in developing and sustaining these grassroots networks and start their own if such a network does not exist in their local area.
- h. University performance measures should be updated to credit universities for their engagement with schools, including the provision of continuing professional development (CPD) and resource materials.
- i. University staff conducting research in areas related to RE should be encouraged to contribute to grassroots networks, lead teacher development days, develop resource materials or become SACRE members. This may provide opportunities for them to demonstrate the impact of their research or increase student recruitment.

## LIST OF AREAS FOR CONSULTATION

### A NATIONAL ENTITLEMENT FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

1. The entitlement is not a national syllabus or curriculum. It is a basic statement of what all pupils are entitled to, whatever type of school they attend. Many schools will need guidance and support to translate this entitlement into curriculum planning, particularly in relation to progression. We are still reviewing where this guidance and support will come from. We seek input on what bodies would be best placed to translate the entitlement into detailed programmes of study and how best to support schools to plan their curriculum in line with the entitlement. Several possibilities have been discussed by the Commission so far:
  - a. Removing the requirement for local authorities to hold Agreed Syllabus Conferences (ASCs). In a context where every school will eventually become an academy, this requirement is no longer proportionate for many local authorities and will become even less so over time. However, it might be possible for programmes of study to be developed at regional levels. It would also be possible to include regional universities on this model. A regional system might not provide sufficient support to academies unless they were explicitly included. If the requirement for local authorities to develop a locally agreed syllabus were to be removed, it would not preclude those local authorities that had the resource and expertise from convening ASCs and developing programmes of study that could be adopted by those schools that chose to, within or outside that local authority.
  - b. Recommending the development of a national set of programmes of study compliant with the entitlement. This may or may not be government-funded. This has the advantage of providing consistency

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across localities, which was requested by some teachers in the written and oral evidence. However, there are a number of potential difficulties with it. First, there is the vexed question of who develops programmes of study. Second, there is the justified criticism that in the era of a school-led system a nationally agreed set of programmes of study is too rigid and leaves schools insufficient freedom to undertake RE that is appropriate for their pupils and immediate community. Third, there is the question of how to ensure that the syllabus is appropriately independent of political interference. Many of those who gave oral and written evidence were concerned about excessive political interference in the scope and content of RE.

- c. Leaving the market open for schools, groups of schools, dioceses, SACREs, commercial providers and other relevant groups to write their own programmes of study. This would allow maximum freedom for schools but might not resolve the inequality in provision and quality discussed above. Non-statutory guidance or a range of model programmes of study might also be developed to support relevant groups in writing their own programmes of study.
2. There is likely to be a range of possibilities within these broad categories and other possibilities that we have not yet considered. We seek views on what would be most helpful to support schools with curriculum planning and ensure that all schools can meet the entitlement effectively.
3. The question also remains as to whether the entitlement statement should replace or supplement the current legislation on agreed syllabuses, which requires that they must ‘reflect the fact that religious traditions in Britain are in the main Christian, whilst taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain’ (UK Parliament, Education Act 1996, Section 375.2). This legislative statement remains a statement of historical and social fact. Of those who identify themselves as having a religion, the majority are Christian, and Christianity has played a particular role in the history of Great Britain. However, the statement in and of itself does not specify how much time should be spent on any worldview. It also does not include non-religious worldviews. We seek views on whether the entitlement should specify a number and range of worldviews, or a minimum time to be spent on one worldview.
4. We have also discussed whether the name of the subject should be changed, to signify the renewed vision for the subject. It is difficult to find an alternative name that appropriately captures the breadth and depth of the subject as outlined in the entitlement statement. We have discussed a number of options. A small majority of the Commission preferred to call the subject Religion and Ethics (or Religions and Ethics) while others wished either to preserve the current name, or to change its name to Religions and Worldviews or Religion, Philosophy and Ethics (or Philosophy, Religion and Ethics). We seek views on which of these options best captures the nature of the subject outlined in the entitlement. We

also seek suggestions on alternative names which fit the entitlement and the renewed vision for the subject.

## HOLDING SCHOOLS TO ACCOUNT FOR THE PROVISION AND QUALITY OF RE

1. We seek views on the most appropriate mechanisms for holding schools to account for the provision and quality of RE at both primary and secondary level.
2. We are considering recommending that a revised qualification at Key Stage 4, for those not taking Full Course GCSE RS, be developed. This would need to meet the requirements of the national entitlement for RE and have currency in school performance measures. This qualification would not be compulsory but would count in school performance measures and in individuals' applications for work or further study. We seek views on how effective this would be and what demand there would be for such a qualification.

## A RENEWED AND EXPANDED ROLE FOR SACRES

1. We seek views on the following recommendations on the role of SACREs:
  - a. The Government should publicly highlight and reaffirm the important role of SACREs in supporting and resourcing RE.
  - b. The Government should consider whether the role of SACREs should be expanded to include a duty to advise on all matters relating to religion and belief in schools.
  - c. The Government should consider ways of securing funding to resource SACREs adequately. Options for this may include:
    - i. Ring-fenced funding for SACREs.
    - ii. Funding for SACREs from the Department of Culture, Media and Sport or the Department of Communities and Local Government.
    - iii. Specifying a minimum amount of funding (perhaps per school or per pupil) to which local authorities must adhere.
  - d. The Government should consider the composition of SACREs and the law should be changed to include representatives of non-religious worldviews as full members.
  - e. The Government should publish all SACRE annual reports publicly on a dedicated website.
2. We seek views on what the duties of SACREs should be in relation to promoting good community relations, beyond matters relating to religion

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and belief in schools.

3. We are still considering how the composition of SACREs should be adapted to be fit for purpose in a changed social and educational landscape. In particular, we are considering whether the committee structure should be changed or abolished. We seek views and evidence on this.
4. We seek views on which groups and organisations should be represented on SACREs.

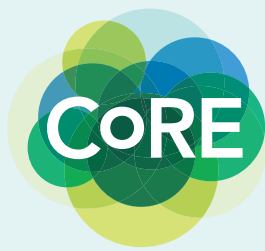
## THE RIGHT OF WITHDRAWAL

1. We seek further evidence on the number of pupils being withdrawn from RE, and the reasons given, where these are given, as well as whether the number of cases and reasons given have been changing over time.
2. We seek views on the most effective ways to manage the right of withdrawal in practice.
3. We seek views on whether it is desirable to look to adopt an overall approach to the design of the RE curriculum in every school so that it is sufficiently 'objective, critical and pluralistic' as to render it capable of being compulsory without the right of withdrawal.

## A NATIONAL PLAN FOR IMPROVING TEACHING AND LEARNING IN RE

1. We seek views on what should be included in the National Plan for RE, beyond the recommendations set out above.
2. We seek views on how the National Plan might best be implemented.
3. There are increasing expectations of teachers to be engaged with research, by keeping up to date with published research at minimum, and where possible by engaging in action research, lesson study and other forms of practitioner research. We seek views on the kinds of research which would be most helpful for RE teachers to engage with, and what mechanisms would support this.





## **Commission on Religious Education**

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by NCVO-CES

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## Local Authorities will continue to receive funding for SACREs and Agreed Syllabus Conferences.



Earlier this year, in response to a parliamentary question, Nick Gibb MP; Minister for School Standards, made a commitment that SACREs and Agreed Syllabus Conferences, **will continue to be funded by central government once the Education Services Grant is abolished** at the end of this financial year (2016-17).



In terms of future funding, NATRE has been in correspondence with the Department for Education and can now confirm that SACREs will be funded through the central school services block (CSSB) from 2018-19, which is one of the blocks in the national funding formula.



NATRE remains concerned that **there appear to be very large variations between local authorities in the proportion of this government grant that is spent on the work of SACREs.**

It might be interesting to those of you involved with SACREs to note that SACREs are listed under the column headed '**Responsibilities held for all schools**' as opposed to that headed, 'responsibilities held for maintained schools only'. This may be a recognition that the work of SACREs usually has an impact on academy schools and not just on the schools maintained by the local authority.

Teacher representatives involved in SACREs may wish to:

- share this document with your local SACRE Chair and Adviser (where there is one in post)
- ask that SACRE funding is placed on the agenda for the next meeting
- ask questions about funding at meetings. In particular:
  - what percentage is of the grant is spent on SACRE in the authority?
  - Has this figure been benchmarked against decisions in other authorities?
- share what they learn with NATRE so that we can monitor the situation in partnership with NASACRE (the National Association of SACREs).

### Technical Information to pass on to your local authority

For further information, see the [NFF Policy Document](#) and the [2018-19 Operational Guidance](#) (specifically paragraph 133 see extract in **appendix A**). Try to ignore the error in the title for SACRE 😞

The schedules (sch) referenced in the table are those in the School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations 2017. They concern expenditure in connection with the authority's functions in relation to the standing advisory council on religious education constituted by the authority under section 390 of the 1996 Act(b) or on the reconsideration and preparation of an agreed syllabus of religious education in accordance with Schedule 31 to the 1996 Act.

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[http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2017/44/pdfs/ukxi\\_20170044\\_en.pdf](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2017/44/pdfs/ukxi_20170044_en.pdf)

## Appendix A

### Statutory and regulatory duties -extract

Responsibilities held for all schools	Responsibilities held for maintained schools only
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Director of children's services and personal staff for director (Sch 2, 15a)</li> <li>• Planning for the education service as a whole (Sch 2, 15b)</li> <li>• Revenue budget preparation, preparation of information on income and expenditure relating to education, and external audit relating to education (Sch 2, 22)</li> <li>• Authorisation and monitoring of expenditure not met from schools' budget shares (Sch 2, 15c)</li> <li>• Formulation and review of local authority schools funding formula (Sch 2, 15d)</li> <li>• Internal audit and other tasks related to the authority's chief finance officer's responsibilities under Section 151 of LGA 1972 except duties specifically related to maintained schools (Sch 2, 15e)</li> <li>• Consultation costs relating to non-staffing issues (Sch 2, 19)</li> <li>• Plans involving collaboration with other LA services or public or voluntary bodies (Sch 2, 15f)</li> <li>• Standing Advisory Committees for Religious Education (SACREs) (Sch 2, 17)</li> <li>• Provision of information to or at the request of the Crown other than relating specifically to maintained schools (Sch 2, 21)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Functions of LA related to best value and provision of advice to governing bodies in procuring goods and services (Sch 2, 56)</li> <li>• Budgeting and accounting functions relating to maintained schools (Sch 2, 73)</li> <li>• Functions relating to the financing of maintained schools (Sch 2, 58)</li> <li>• Authorisation and monitoring of expenditure in respect of schools which do not have delegated budgets, and related financial administration (Sch 2, 57)</li> <li>• Monitoring of compliance with requirements in relation to the scheme for financing schools and the provision of community facilities by governing bodies (Sch 2, 58)</li> <li>• Internal audit and other tasks related to the authority's chief finance officer's responsibilities under Section 151 of LGA 1972 for maintained schools (Sch 2, 59)</li> <li>• Functions made under Section 44 of the 2002 Act (Consistent Financial Reporting) (Sch 2, 60)</li> <li>• Investigations of employees or potential employees, with or without remuneration to work at or for schools under the direct management of the headteacher or governing body (Sch 2, 61)</li> </ul>