

PART 1 - PUBLIC

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Decision Maker: **Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education**

Date: **20 October 2010**

Decision Type: Non-Urgent Non-Executive Non-Key

**TITLE: SACRE MEMBERS TRAINING**

Contact Officer: Penny Smith-Orr, RE Adviser  
Tel: 020 8653 8606 Email: [penny.smith-orr@bromley.gov.uk](mailto:penny.smith-orr@bromley.gov.uk)

Chief Officer: Gillian Pearson, Director of Children and Young People Services

Ward: N/A

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1. Reason for report

1.1 NASACRE has produced training materials in the form of a CDROM for individual SACREs following the very successful national training programme.

1.2 At this meeting and subsequent meetings members will be shown a section of the training materials. This will help towards Bromley SACRE achieving advanced SACRE status.

1.3 Attached is a document that outlines the statutory work of a SACRE and other information on SACREs.

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2. **RECOMMENDATION(S)**

2.1 **Members to agree to adopt the training materials on improving the role of the Bromley SACRE.**

Background Documents: (Access via Contact Officer)	Nil
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## SECTION 1: ABOUT SACREs

### What is a SACRE?

SACRE stands for:

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education

A SACRE is part of the local government machinery; its main function is to advise the local authority on matters related to RE and collective worship in schools.

#### About SACREs

In 1944, Local Education Authorities (LEAs) were empowered by law to set up a Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE);

In 1988, LEAs had a duty laid upon them to do so;

So every local authority must have a SACRE and it must meet sufficient times to fulfil its statutory duties;

Most SACREs meet at least three times a year, ie once a term.

#### Statutory Responsibilities: A SACRE *must*:

- advise the local authority (LA) on matters related to agreed syllabus religious;
- education (RE) and collective worship (CW) either in response to a referral from the LA or as it sees fit;
- publish an annual report on its work and on actions taken by its representative groups;
- email a copy of its report to the Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency (QCDA) at: [sacres@qcda.gov.uk](mailto:sacres@qcda.gov.uk);
- meet in public, unless confidential information is to be disclosed;
- make minutes of its meetings available for inspection at LA offices.

#### A SACRE *should*:

- monitor the provision and quality of agreed syllabus RE and of CW;
- provide advice and support on teaching agreed syllabus RE;
- consider whether changes need to be made to the agreed syllabus, in partnership with the LA;
- offer advice to the LA in respect of the agreed syllabus and its implementation.

#### A SACRE *may*:

- require the LA to review its agreed syllabus and, if after discussion a vote is taken, the LA group is not entitled to a vote;
- decide to advise the LA on matters to do with RE and CW;

- co-opt individuals who are not members of any of the groups, to provide educational expertise, the views of young people, or religious and non-religious views that reflect a diverse multi-cultural society.

In addition, SACREs **must**:

- consider appeals from schools wishing to modify the legal requirement for collective worship to be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character; this procedure is called a '**determination**'.

### **Composition of a SACRE**

#### **Representation on a SACRE**

All four groups must be represented on the SACRE.

The number of members in each group will be determined by the individual SACRE's constitution.

The composition of Group A should be broadly proportionate to the religions and denominations represented in the local area.

#### **Group A**

Representatives of Christian denominations and other religions reflecting the principal religious traditions of the area.

#### **Group B**

Church of England representatives.

#### **Group C**

Teacher representatives (often from the teacher associations).

#### **Group D**

Local Authority representatives (often Councillors).

### **Organisation**

- Each of these groups has equal voting rights: one vote per group.
- Decisions within a group about how that vote is to be cast do not require unanimity.
- Each group has to regulate its own proceedings, including provision for resolving.
- deadlock. (In most SACREs, there is discussion and agreement about issues without the need for a vote.)

### **SACRE Annual Reports**

- The annual report includes details of the SACRE's activities, including advice given to schools and any monitoring that has been undertaken in the past year. In the best practice, it is accompanied by a development plan.
- It can be used to publicise the work of SACRE with schools, governors, elected members and the general public.

## **The Broad Role of SACREs**

Effective SACREs also:

- give advice to schools on methods of teaching agreed syllabus RE;
- advise the LA on the provision of training for teachers;
- monitor the quality and provision of RE and collective worship in schools;
- consider complaints about RE and CW referred to them by their LA;

When SACREs were inspected by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) Inspectors (HMI) judged the overall effectiveness of SACREs on:

- the contribution they make to social harmony and community cohesion;
- their partnership with the local authority.

## **SACREs' remit for schools**

SACREs are responsible for oversight of religious education and collective worship in the majority of maintained schools.

The exceptions are:

- religious education in voluntary aided schools where RE is determined by the governors and taught according to the school's trust deed;
- collective worship in all schools with a religious character where worship can be reflective of that religious faith;
- academies (even those which follow the LA agreed syllabus).

## **Every Local Authority must:**

- ensure there is a SACRE;
- ensure all four groups are represented on the SACRE;
- establish an occasional body called an Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC) and appoint members to it;
- ensure there is an agreed syllabus, reviewed every five years;
- ensure funds and support are in place to enable SACRE to fulfil its duties;
- take note of and respond to advice from the SACRE.

## **Appointing members**

It is the responsibility of the LA to appoint members of the SACRE and the ASC.

The LA should:

- ensure those appointed are representative of the religion, denomination or association in question;
- seek nominations from the organisations to be represented.
- It is good practice for the SACRE to review its constitution periodically to ensure membership is appropriately representative and to advise the LA of any necessary amendments.

## **In Summary...**

### SACREs:

- are statutory bodies which all local authorities have to have and support;
- are representative of the local community;
- are responsible for RE and CW in most schools;
- have to report annually to QCDA;
- are instrumental in ensuring quality experiences for all pupils in RE and CW;
- have the potential to contribute to social harmony and community cohesion.

## **SECTION 2: What are SACRE's responsibilities? RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

In relation to RE, a SACRE **must**:

- advise the local authority (LA) on religious education given in accordance with the agreed syllabus, and on matters to do with RE as the SACRE sees fit or in response to those issues that might be referred to the SACRE by the LA.

In relation to RE, a SACRE **should**:

- monitor the provision and quality of agreed syllabus RE and the effectiveness of the syllabus itself;
- provide advice and support on teaching agreed syllabus RE;
- consider whether changes need to be made to the agreed syllabus;
- offer advice to the LA, and through the LA to its schools, concerning how an existing agreed syllabus can be interpreted so as to fit in with a broad, balanced and coherent curriculum.

In relation to RE, a SACRE **may**:

- require the LA to review its agreed syllabus and, if after discussion a vote is taken, the LA group is not entitled to a vote;
- advise the LA on matters to do with the work of the SACRE;
- co-opt individuals who are not members of any of the groups, to provide educational expertise, the views of young people, or religious and non-religious views to ensure RE reflects a diverse multi-cultural society.

### **The locally agreed syllabus**

- The locally agreed syllabus is the statutory document for RE in the local authority. It sets out what should be taught to pupils in all key stages and the standards expected of them at the end of each key stage.
- It is produced by an agreed syllabus conference (ASC).
- The agreed syllabus must be reviewed every five years. If, at some other time, a majority of the groups of the SACRE asks the LA in writing to reconsider its agreed syllabus, it must convene a conference for that purpose.

### **Agreed Syllabus Conference**

An agreed syllabus conference (ASC) is a statutory body brought together in order to produce an agreed syllabus for RE. It is a separate legal entity from a SACRE.

An ASC:

- has the same group structure as the SACRE but these are called committees;
- can be made up of SACRE members but need not be so;
- has no provision for co-opted members;
- may be chaired by an appointee of the local authority or may be permitted to choose its own Chair.

The LA's responsibility to convene the ASC implies a duty to provide funds and support for its work.

## **SACRE's remit in the LA**

SACRE is responsible for RE in all community, foundation, trust and voluntary controlled schools where the agreed syllabus must be followed.

SACRE's responsibility does not extend to:

- voluntary aided schools where RE is determined by the governors according to the trust deed and reflects the religious character of the school;
- academies which are independent of the LA, although they are expected to use the locally agreed syllabus.

(DCSF Guidance on RE, 2010)

## **What else can a SACRE do?**

A SACRE's broad role with regard to RE is to support good practice within its schools by:

- giving advice on ways of teaching agreed syllabus RE, including the choice of teaching materials;
- monitoring schools' provision for the subject as well as for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC) of pupils;
- advising the LA on the provision of training for teachers in RE;
- considering complaints about the provision and delivery of religious education referred to it by the LA.

## **Giving advice on methods of teaching RE**

Questions which should concern SACRE include:

- How is the agreed syllabus best delivered to each age group?
- What mixture should there be of formal content, thematic work, group work, personal discovery, visits to specified buildings or events, and visitors?
- What is the relationship of RE to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, to cross curricular studies, to citizenship and to personal, social and health education (PSHE)?
- Is the distinctiveness of RE being maintained in such relationships?

## **Giving advice on resources for RE**

- The SACRE should offer advice on the most appropriate materials to use in delivering the aims, objectives and content of the agreed syllabus.
- Sometimes SACRE members review materials or investigate websites that could be useful for schools to use for RE, publishing their findings to schools.
- Some SACREs produce and circulate a newsletter every term.

## **Monitoring RE in schools**

SACREs should:

- monitor good practice in the delivery of the agreed syllabus in a range of ways and take note of any difficulties;
- maintain regular contact with teachers by inviting them to report to SACRE meetings and attend in-service training;
- disseminate good practice in the teaching of RE;

- review provision for in-service training and development;
- scrutinise examination results;
- receive and discuss relevant sections of school inspection reports.

### **Training of teachers of RE**

- If a new agreed syllabus is to be properly implemented, there needs to be training for all teachers in primary and special schools and all those teaching RE in secondary schools.
- SACREs should ensure that local authorities are aware of this need for training.
- SACREs also have a responsibility to be aware of the arrangements for preparing teachers in initial training to teach RE.



## **SECTION 3: What are SACRE's responsibilities? COLLECTIVE WORSHIP**

### **SACREs' statutory duty**

The SACRE has only one statutory duty with regard to CW. It is to grant a **DETERMINATION** to a community school where it is felt CW of 'a broadly Christian character' is not appropriate for all or some pupils. Granting such a determination does not lift the requirement for the school to provide CW.

### **A Reminder...**

The law requires all schools to provide CW for every pupil every day, unless withdrawn by a parent.

In the schools within the SACRE's remit, CW *must*:

- be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character;
- reflect the broad traditions of Christian belief;
- not be distinctive of any particular Christian denomination.

### **Context**

In these schools, collective worship (CW) must be educational and appropriate to the age, aptitude and family background of pupils. It must not be confessional.

### **The Determination Procedure**

- The application comes from the head teacher after proper consultation with staff, governors and parents. It must be accompanied by alternative plans for CW.
- This facility is only open to community schools; schools with a religious character are not eligible. It is for the individual SACRE to decide how applications should be made and to make the necessary advice available to schools.

It is the full SACRE that determines whether the application is justified. It would be considered good practice, however, for a SACRE to have a 'determinations panel' to consider such applications and make a recommendation to the SACRE. Since a controversial decision may be challenged by the school, it would be prudent for the SACRE also to have a separate 'appeals committee'. The SACRE should review each determination every five years.

### **SACREs' broader role**

In relation to CW, SACREs should also:

- receive inspection reports, noting any references to the quality of CW in the context of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development;
- monitor the quality of provision where possible;
- offer advice to head teachers and governors, including where there are difficulties.
- Schools should be able to look to their SACRE for advice about CW and many SACREs have produced guidance and resource materials.
- These can often be found for reference on local authority or SACRE websites.
- In the best practice, these are produced collaboratively between SACRE members, advisers/consultants and teachers, and trialled extensively in schools.