

Meeting:	STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE)
Meeting date:	Friday 9 November 2018
Title of report:	Commission on RE Report
Report by:	Director of Children and Families and RE Consultant – RE Today

Classification

Open

Decision type

This is not an executive decision

Wards affected

(All Wards);

Purpose and summary

1. To review the implications for SACRE of the Commission on Religious Education (RE) Report published in September 2018.

Recommendation(s)

That: SACRE notes the outcomes, recommendations and implications of the Commission on RE report

Alternative options

2. The broad role of SACRE is to support the effective provision of Religious Education and collective worship in schools. This report enables SACRE to fulfil this role therefore no alternative options are proposed.

Key considerations

3. The Commission on RE has recently reported its findings and recommendations. The Religion and worldviews report reaffirms the central importance of learning about religious and non-religious worldviews for all pupils, regardless of their background,

personal beliefs or the type of school they attend. Knowledge of religious and non-religious worldviews is an essential part of all young people's entitlement to education.

4. The commission on RE has analysed the evidence it received and has made recommendations designed to set out a coherent structure to retain the best of the excellent practice that exists in some schools and localities, and to strengthen the subject across all schools and localities.
5. There are implications for SACRE contained within the Commission's report. If the recommendations are accepted by the Department for Education, and if there is legislative change to remove the statutory duty on SACREs and Agreed Syllabus Conferences to produce an agreed syllabus, the Commission recommends that SACREs' make-up shifts to include teachers, school leaders, teacher educators and school governors, as well as representatives from faith and belief, who may also be drawn from 'local museums and galleries'
6. In addition that SACREs are to be supported with allocated funding to support and develop local RE, such as through continuing professional development, but no longer the curriculum.
7. A summary of the responses and implications is attached as appendix 1 and the executive summary is contained in appendix 2.

Community impact

8. The provision of Religious Education and collective worship seeks to increase understanding and tolerance of all religions in local communities. A stated aim in Herefordshire Council's Corporate plan is to ensure that there is access to excellent education and learning opportunities at all levels (includes early years/schools, Further Education, Higher Education and adult learning)

Equality duty

9. Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the 'general duty' on public authorities is set out as follows:

A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to -
 - (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
 - (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
10. The public sector equality duty (specific duty) requires the council to consider how it can positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations and demonstrate that 'due regard' is paid during decision making concerning the design of policies and the delivery of services. The provision of religious education seeks to contribute positively to the specific duty by increasing the understanding and tolerance of all religions in local communities. SACRE contributes to this duty by advising the LA on its arrangements for religious education.

Resource implications

11. There are no resource implications involved in the production and consideration of this report.

Legal implications

12. Section 390 of the Education Act 1996 requires the council to establish a permanent body, called a Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE), to advise them on matters concerned with the provision of Religious Education and Collective Worship.
13. SACRE's main function is to advise the council upon matters connected with religious worship in County Schools and with the religious education to be given in accordance with an agreed syllabus as the LA may refer to the SACRE or as the LA may see fit. The organisation of the annual conferences and this report assist SACRE to fulfil its statutory function.

Risk management

14. During the production of this report there has been an assessment of the likely risk management implications. It is not considered that risk of any significance arises from the production or contents of this report.

Consultees

15. No consultees have been consulted in the production of this report and its recommendation. The Commission conducted a consultation survey and received over 900 responses including a large number from teachers. The Commission also conducted a consultation event with a good turnout from a diverse range of faith and belief communities in attendance.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Summary of responses and implications - Commission on RE report
Appendix 2 – Executive Summary - Commission on RE report

Background papers

None identified