

**Executive Advisory Panel  
Future Communities  
7<sup>th</sup> November 2024**

<b>Report Title</b>	<b>Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) Annual report 2023-2024</b>
<b>Report Author</b>	Amy Crestanello – SACRE Advisor: SACRE Annual Report 2023-2024 Author  Jo Hutchinson – Head of School Effectiveness: Executive Advisory Panel – Future Communities Report Author

<b>Key Decision</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Is the decision eligible for call-in by Scrutiny?</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Are there public sector equality duty implications?</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Does the report contain confidential or exempt information (whether in appendices or not)?</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Applicable paragraph number/s for exemption from publication under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972</b>	

**List of Appendices**

**Appendix A – Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) Annual Report 2023-2024**

**1. Purpose of Report**

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- 1.1 Local authorities have a duty to establish a permanent body known as the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) in accordance with the Education Act 1996. The broad role of the SACRE is to support the effective provision of Religious Education (RE) and collective worship in schools and to enrich the experience of RE and collective worship for all pupils.
- 1.2 The SACRE's terms of reference require that an annual report on the work of SACRE is produced. It is considered best practice for the annual report to be received by the Executive.

## **2. Executive Summary**

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- 2.1 The SACRE annual report encompasses the academic year 2023/2024.
- 2.2 Since the last SACRE report was published, the local authority has recruited A SACRE Advisor. The SACRE Advisor has made significant strides in leading on and managing all aspects of the SACRE work programme.
- 2.3 The SACRE Advisor is the author of the annual report (**Appendix A**)
- 2.4 The work of the SACRE Advisor has involved:
- Supporting schools with advice such as curriculum planning, assessment for learning, revising and preparing to launch the Agreed Syllabus, ensuring progression and rigour in Religious Education (RE);
  - Supporting the monitoring of standards and achievement in RE through school visits and analysis of appropriate data such as external examination results;
  - Making necessary links with local authority processes and departments to ensure effective communications with schools and cross service working; and
  - Creating a robust development plan for the next three years (**Appendix B**)

## **3. Recommendations**

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- 3.1. It is recommended that the Executive Advisory Panel receives and notes the SACRE annual report for 2023-2024.
- 3.2 Reasons for Recommendation: To ensure that the following SACRE duties are met:
- To publish an annual report and share with councillors;
  - To advise the local authority on the provision of training for teachers in RE;
  - To consider complaints about the provision and delivery of religious education and collective worship referred to it by the local authority.
- 3.3 Alternative Options Considered: SACRE has a legal duty to publish an annual report. This report ensures that SACRE complies with that duty and therefore not to present it is not considered to be an alternative option. No alternative options are therefore proposed.

## **4. Report Background**

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- 4.1 Section 390 of the Education Act 1996 places a statutory duty on the Council to establish a permanent body called a Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) to advise the Council on matters concerned with Religious Education and Collective Worship.
- 4.2 Councils must appoint representatives to each of four committees, representing respectively:
- Group A: Christian denominations and such other religions and religious denominations as, in the authority's opinion, will appropriately reflect the principal religious traditions in the area;
  - Group B: the Church of England;
  - Group C: teacher associations;
  - Group D: the local authority.
- 4.3 An effective SACRE should:
- Monitor the provision and quality of Agreed Syllabus RE and of collective worship in order to provide targeted advice and support on teaching Agreed Syllabus RE;
  - Advise the local authority on the provision of training of teachers;
  - Consider complaints about RE and collective worship referred to them by their local authority;
  - Consider whether changes need to be made to the Agreed Syllabus, in partnership with the local authority;
  - Offer advice to the local authority in respect of the Agreed Syllabus and its implementation.

## **5. Issues and Choices**

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- 5.1 Section 391 (6) and (7), Education Act 1996 clarifies the background to the recommendations made in this report:

“Each SACRE must publish an annual report on its work and on action taken by its representative groups, specifying any matters on which it has advised the local authority, broadly describe the nature of that advice and set out reasons for offering advice not referred to the local authority”.

## **6. Next Steps**

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- 6.1. The SACRE annual report 2023-2024 should be shared with councillors, hence the recommendations in this report and subsequent report to the Executive Council.
- 6.2. Annual reports must be shared with the Secretary of State for Education, the Department for Education (DfE) and National Association of Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education (NASACRE).
- 6.3. The annual report should also be shared with key partners, including schools, teacher training institutions and libraries.

## **7. Implications (including financial implications)**

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### **7.1. Resources, Financial and Transformation**

7.1.1. Financial implications arising from the SACRE annual report are linked to provision of training for the SACRE Advisor and the provision by the local authority of an Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC).

7.1.2. £5000 was requested to cover any potential costs incurred for the statutory function of:

- Delivering an updated Agreed Syllabus;
- Convening an Agreed Syllabus conference;
- Establishing a working group of teachers to assist with the writing of the Agreed Syllabus.

7.1.3 No additional budget has been allocated for this purpose, therefore this will be noted as a pressure in the School Standards and Effectiveness budget.

### **7.2. Legal and Governance**

7.2.1 As set out in the report, section 390 of the Education Act 1996 requires the council to establish a permanent body known as the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE), to advise them on matters concerned with the provision of Religious Education and Collective Worship.

7.2.2 The main function of SACRE is to advise the council upon matters connected with religious worship in schools for which the council has responsibility and with the religious education to be given in accordance with an Agreed Syllabus.

Under Section 391(6) and (7), Education Act 1996, SACRE is required to publish an annual report each year to the exercise of its functions and any action taken by representative groups on the council. This report to the Executive Advisory Panel (EAP) ensures compliance with this statutory duty.

### **7.3. Relevant Policies and Plans**

7.3.1. The Council's Corporate Plan is relevant to the SACRE annual report 2023-2024 and to the statutory duties of SACRE.

7.3.2. The work of SACRE, through their statutory duties, link to the Corporate Plan key commitments:

- Better, brighter futures; and
- Connected communities.

7.3.3 Specifically, the statutory duties that SACRE must adhere to will assist the Council in meeting its commitment to:

- Ensuring that every child has equal access to a high standard of education; and

- Informing and listening to our communities, giving them a greater say in their future.

#### 7.4. **Risk**

7.4.1. There are no significant risks arising from the proposed recommendations in this report.

#### 7.5. **Consultation**

7.5.1 This academic year, the SACRE has requested a review of the Agreed Syllabus. The Agreed Syllabus sets out what pupils should be taught in religious education (RE) from ages 3 to 19. All maintained schools have a statutory duty to provide a broad and balanced curriculum which includes RE.

7.5.2 To gather feedback for the Agreed Syllabus review, the SACRE Advisor conducted several school visits and organised two consultations.

7.5.3 The first consultation included a survey distributed to all schools, garnering over ninety responses. The second consultation was a survey aimed to collect insights from all SACRE members regarding the Agreed Syllabus review process.

7.5.4 Since May 2024, the SACRE Advisor, alongside teachers from a working group, has been actively developing and refining the units within the updated Agreed Syllabus.

#### 7.6. **Consideration by Scrutiny**

7.6.1. This report has not been considered by the Council's scrutiny function.

#### 7.7. **Equality Implications**

7.7.1. There is no detrimental impact on any protected characteristic as a result of the recommendations in this report.

#### 7.8. **Climate and Environment Impact**

7.8.1. There is no detrimental impact on the climate or environment as a result of the recommendations in this report.

#### 7.9. **Community Impact**

7.9.1. There is no distinct community impact arising from the recommendations in this report.

## 7.10. **Crime and Disorder Impact**

7.11.1 The recommendations in this report will have negligible, if any, crime and disorder impact.

## **8. Background Papers**

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8.1 None