

# NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNCIL

## CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICE DIRECTORATE

### NORTH YORKSHIRE STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

19<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2023

#### WORKING PARTY RE SACRE SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOLKIT

##### PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. The purpose of this report is four-fold:-
  - to advise SACRE of the outcome of the meeting of the Working Party on the SACRE Self-Assessment Toolkit;
  - to seek any additional views that SACRE may have;
  - to identify areas for development and raise questions with SACRE; and
  - to seek SACREs thoughts on how best to proceed with working through the toolkit

##### KEY BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2. At the last meeting of SACRE, on 20<sup>th</sup> June 2023, I presented a report about the toolkit produced by NASACRE (The National Association of Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education), created to help SACREs in their essential role to advise the Local Authority in meeting the entitlement of pupils across the Local Authority to engage in high quality Religious Education and Collective Worship and to support the Local Authority to reflect on its practice.
3. The toolkit focuses on five aspects of the work of SACREs:-
  - Management of the SACRE and building the partnership between the SACRE, the Local Authority and other key stakeholders
  - Promoting improvement in the standards, the quality of teaching, and provision in Religious Education
  - Evaluating the effectiveness of the locally agreed syllabus
  - Promoting improvement in the provision and quality of collective worship
  - Contributing to cohesion across the community and the promotion of social and racial harmony
4. It was agreed that a Working Party be set up to consider, initially, one of the five aspects and report back its findings to today's meeting. The Chair, Councillor Alyson Baker, Professor John Adams and Dr. Abhijeet Kulkarni, volunteered to be on the first Working Party, which met on 5<sup>th</sup> September. Officer support was provided by Olivia Seymour, Professional Religious Education Adviser, Heather Russell, Senior Education Adviser and Patrick Duffy and Owen Griffiths from Democratic Services. Professor Adams was unable to attend but helpfully provided his comments in advance of the meeting.
5. The Working Party examined the second of the five aspects – *Promoting involvement in the standards, the quality of teaching and provision in Religious Education*.

### The outcome of the meeting

6. For ease of reference, the Working Party's views are included in tabular form as Appendix A to this report. Does SACRE agree with these views – does it have any additional comments?

### Areas for development and questions for SACRE to consider

7. Appendix A also includes areas for development and questions from the Working Party for the wider SACRE to consider. The questions for SACRE are in blue type, for ease of reference. Also enclosed, at Appendix B, is an extract from an earlier report by the Professional Religious Education Adviser, which outlined *What we do already* against this aspect of the toolkit and *What we could do in North Yorkshire to develop this further*.

### How does SACRE wish to proceed with working through the toolkit?

8. In my report to the last meeting, it was envisaged that a Working Party be set up on each occasion to look at one of the five aspects of the toolkit, with a different membership each time, so that the task was shared.
9. Appreciating the calls on Members time, an alternative approach would be for the whole of SACRE, working in groups (this can be done for those attending in-person and those attending remotely - via the *breakout rooms* facility on Microsoft Teams) to look at a different aspect of the toolkit at each of the next four meetings, commencing from December 2023.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

10. There are no direct financial implications.

## **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

11. There are no direct legal implications.

## **EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

12. There are no direct equalities implications.

## **CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**

13. There are no direct climate change implications.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

14. That SACRE consider whether or not they agree with the findings of the Working Party and provide any additional comments they may wish to make.
15. That SACRE consider the questions in blue type in Appendix A.
16. That SACRE consider how they wish to proceed with working through the remainder of the toolkit. The suggestions are that this be by a) holding future Working Parties to look at individual aspects (as outlined in paragraph 8), or by the whole of SACRE considering the aspects (as outlined in paragraph 9).

Patrick Duffy, Clerk to North Yorkshire SACRE

September 2023

Background papers relied upon in the preparation of this report – None

FINDINGS OF THE WORKING PARTY – SACRE SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOLKIT

<p><b>How effectively does the SACRE, in partnership with the LA, evaluate standards and the quality of provision for RE in schools? How effective are the strategies to improve standards and the quality of provision?</b></p>
<p><b>Key Area 2a How effectively does the SACRE gain information about RE provision in schools and put in place strategies to support the development of pupil entitlement?</b></p>
<p><b>Requires improvement/struggling</b> A SACRE in this position would have no routes by which SACRE can gain information about RE provision in schools.</p>
<p><b>Developing</b> A SACRE with developing practice would have little knowledge of which schools are fulfilling pupil entitlement in RE because local processes are insufficient to gather such information (e.g. a website crawl)</p>
<p><b>Established</b> A SACRE with established practice would have some knowledge of which schools are providing adequate time for effective learning in RE and have a scheme of work that enables them to deliver the AS. SACRE’s process for acquiring this information is adequate but lacks coherence. Have limited opportunities to implement strategies in support of pupil entitlement. Ofsted reports are read and any comments on RE noted and brought to SACRE.</p>
<p><b>Advanced</b> A SACRE with advanced practice would build upon a strong relationship with the LA, whereby the LA shares its information and from this SACRE gains an overview of RE provision within the LA. It works effectively with the LA to support and promote pupil entitlement. Examples of different models for fulfilling pupil entitlement within local schools will be shared with all schools so that schools can have a menu from which to adapt an approach that delivers pupil entitlement whilst meeting the specific needs and priorities of their schools.</p>
<p><b>Where are we and where do we find evidence to support this?</b> <u>View of the Working Party:</u> Established (solidly so).  <u>Evidence:</u> Adviser Group Networks in place. Annual School Questionnaire. On-going engagement through RE Networks and Briefings for Head Teachers and Governors. Local Authority Report each meeting outlines OFSTED Inspections and whether any references to Religious Education.</p>
<p><b>Areas for development/questions for SACRE</b> <a href="#">How do we strengthen further the relationship between SACRE and the wider School Improvement Team?</a> This could be via School Visits to see examples of good practice - Pupil Voice.  <a href="#">What should be the approach/style of the Local Authority and SACRE on OFSTED Inspections?</a> An on-going dialogue would enable awareness of good practice occurring or whether a School required further support.  <a href="#">Does there need to be a process for reporting OFSTED Inspections to SACRE, in terms of references made to RE? E.g. should SACRE receive an overview; was RE mentioned and, if so, what might SACRE want to do? Possibly a letter to the Head Teacher congratulating the School/offering support, as appropriate.</a>  <a href="#">Does SACRE feel it would be useful to use the National Association of Teachers of Religious Education (NATRE) Audit Tool whereby each SACRE Member could be asked to look at the content of the websites of two or three Schools, against the NATRE Checklist?</a></p>

<p><b>Key Area 2b Standards of achievement and public examination entries</b>  <b>How does SACRE use information about standards and examinations to target support and training for schools?</b></p>
<p><b>Requires improvement/struggling</b>  A SACRE in this position would: not be given any data to work from, and has no professional support to investigate this at a local/national level.</p>
<p><b>Developing</b>  A SACRE with developing practice would have limited knowledge of standards in primary and secondary schools including examination entries. The SACRE has no clear strategy to address this and the local authority does not adequately invest in professional support for this. Analysis would be limited as would strategies to address issues.</p>
<p><b>Established</b>  A SACRE with established practice would have some process in place to find out how well learners are doing in KS 1-3, (e.g. by meeting teachers, pupils and through the LA). SACRE will be provided with adequate information about examination entries and standards in examinations in secondary schools and how these relate to national figures.</p>
<p><b>Advanced</b>  A SACRE with advanced practice would have robust processes with the LA whereby SACRE can gain accurate information about standards in schools and examination entries in all secondary schools, with useful analysis that enables it to address issues effectively in partnership with LA.</p>
<p><b>Where are we and where do we find evidence to support this?</b>  <u>View of the Working Party:</u> Developing (with the scope to become Established)</p> <p><u>Evidence:</u> Patchy, as a result of COVID. Data is received but it is not used to engage Secondary Schools. We can do more to ascertain curriculum models. Particularly the <i>softer</i> data, such as what happens to those pupils not entered for RE examinations; do they still receive RE? Processes have been established, but they can be developed further.</p>
<p><b>Areas for development/questions for SACRE</b>  While the Council has tried, over the years, to obtain information about RE provision, the data remains patchy and the support that SACRE has provided for schools has been modest.</p> <p>An overview of the curriculum is required but it is important not to make assumptions. <a href="#">Should a trawl of Secondary Schools websites be undertaken to have a clearer picture of what their offer for RE is? Each SACRE Member could be asked to look at two websites.</a> Again, the NATRE Audit Tool could be utilised here.</p> <p>Workforce data also provides information about examination entry numbers for RE. This could also be utilised as a basis to decide whether or not to write to particular Schools.</p> <p>Based on the outcome of an analysis of websites and workforce data, the Chair could, for example, write to particular Schools to say that SACRE is impressed with their website or that it would like to find out more. There are standard templates available. <a href="#">Does SACRE feel this is something that should be considered? It could form a focus for the Autumn Term.</a></p> <p>The Council does regularly review and reflect upon the results in RE from public examinations. It is difficult to judge the impact that these deliberations have on provision in schools, or changes in that provision.</p>

**Key Area 2c How well does SACRE use knowledge of quality of learning and teaching to target support appropriately?**

**Requires improvement/struggling**

A SACRE in this position would not have any knowledge of quality of learning and teaching to target support from the LA and professional support/adviser.

**Developing**

A SACRE with developing practice would have little knowledge of the quality of learning and teaching in the LA schools and therefore is unable to provide appropriate challenge and support to the schools. The SACRE has no means to offer or recommend support to schools as there is little or no professional support in the LA working with the SACRE.

**Established**

A SACRE with established practice would: have some information regarding the quality of learning and teaching from a range of sources including contact with teachers and pupils. Limited analysis of this information is undertaken; however, this means that SACRE's attempts to improve learning and teaching have limited effect. Be able to circulate information about national courses and support mechanisms to schools.

**Advanced**

A SACRE with advanced practice would: have a robust relationship with schools and the LA to gather meaningful information about the quality of learning and teaching in RE. This information is analysed to identify trends, areas of strength and areas for development and SACRE draws on expertise in effective schools to support all schools in the LA. Advise the LA on the support that is needed and have access to professional support, linked to schools in need.

**Where are we and where do we find evidence to support this?**

View of the Working Party: Established (but with further work to do)

Evidence:

Senior Education Advisers question Schools and provide support where required.

School Improvement Team.

RE Networks.

School Questionnaire

**Areas for development/questions for SACRE**

There is a gap at Secondary School level.

What is missing is an on-going flow of information.

To avoid subjectivity, a second review would be required.

[How can SACRE strengthen communication with the School Improvement Team so there is an on-going sense of what Advisers are saying?](#)

**Key Area 2d Quality of interaction and communication with leadership and management of RE in schools**

**To what extent does SACRE have and pass on information that supports high quality RE in schools?**

**Requires improvement/struggling**

A SACRE in this position would not engage in communication with schools.

**Developing**

A SACRE with developing practice would have little communication with schools. It occasionally contacts schools with resources for RE and attends Headteachers meetings.

**Established**

A SACRE with established practice would have RE key messages communicated regularly into schools. Sends regular updates and information to schools, headteachers and governors. SACRE discussions are used to enhance leadership and management of RE in schools.

**Advanced**

A SACRE with advanced practice would have a constructive relationship with senior leaders and subject managers in schools to develop the subject.

**Where are we and where do we find evidence to support this?**

View of the Working Party: Between Established and Advanced.

Evidence:

The relationship between the SACRE and Schools in North Yorkshire is not necessarily a close one and it may be that not many RE Teachers are aware of SACRE Members or indeed of SACRE.

The Professional Religious Education Adviser produces a termly Newsletter for Schools and attends Head Teacher Briefings.

Governance Network in place.

SACRE Members are encouraged to share information about themselves and their faith in the Newsletter.

Teachers are aware of SACRE via documents such as the Newsletter and School Questionnaire.

**Areas for development/questions for SACRE**

The launch of the Locally Agreed Syllabus will be an opportunity to further highlight the role of SACRE to Teachers.

Ensuring that SACRE features prominently in the Children and Young People's Service web pages – for example, by including the Annual Report.

The relationship could be strengthened by looking for opportunities to work with SACRE, such as visits to Schools by SACRE Members to see RE in action. This is an action in SACREs Development Plan.

To help increase the awareness of SACRE, Members are encouraged to volunteer to be *spotlighted* in forthcoming editions of the Newsletter.

**Key Area 2e Relations with academies and other non-LA maintained schools.**

**To what extent has a SACRE developed a proactive strategy in relation to academies and other non-LA maintained schools in its area?**

**Requires improvement/struggling**

A SACRE in this position would not have the mechanisms and not have the knowledge of making contact.

**Developing**

A SACRE with developing practice would have haphazard information about the RE situation in local academies etc, and little or no established relationships and liaison with them. No serious attempt has been made to develop an overall strategy.

**Established**

A SACRE with established practice would have made some effort to establish liaison with each academy etc and to keep updated SACRE's information about their RE situation and share their advice to these schools. By and large, academies co-operate with SACRE at this level. SACRE keeps under review the ongoing situation.

**Advanced**

A SACRE with advanced practice would have a proactive policy of liaison with all academies, etc. and of sustaining a wider professional RE network within the area. While the independence of academies, etc. is genuinely respected by SACRE, many academies value this network and look to SACRE for ongoing advice and leadership in RE.

**Where are we and where do we find evidence to support this?**

View of the Working Party: Between Developing and Established (keep under review).

Evidence:

Academies and other non-maintained Schools are included in the information sent to Local Authority Schools – the Newsletter and School Questionnaire, for example.

Two SACRE Members are from Academies and, whilst they cannot speak for their Academies, this is a useful link.

Academies are invited to the launch of the Agreed Syllabus.

**Areas for development/questions for SACRE**

Further work required on the relationship with Secondary School Academies.

[How do Academies access the Locally Agreed Syllabus and how do we ensure that there are no barriers to this?](#)

## APPENDIX B

### PROMOTING INVOLVEMENT IN THE STANDARDS, THE QUALITY OF TEACHING AND PROVISION IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

#### What do we do already?

<p><b>SACRE termly newsletter</b> An opportunity to communicate with schools, share best practice and ensure schools receive local, regional and national updates.</p>
<p><b>Termly RE Professional Practice groups</b> Termly training for RE Subject Leaders building on national curriculum conversations in RE e.g. Ofsted research review, Religion and Worldviews Project, Curriculum Symposium.</p>
<p><b>Stand-alone training opportunities</b> Opportunities to provide a conference or training sessions on key themes. We currently offer a subject leadership course. Do we want to offer anything further? e.g. curriculum, assessment, subject knowledge</p>
<p><b>Annual questionnaire to schools</b> We have an annual questionnaire to go out to schools. This enables us to meet some of our basic statutory role. Do the questions give us the information we need to fulfil our role?</p>
<p><b>Senior Education Advisers briefings</b> The Professional RE Adviser has briefed SEAs on two occasions on the legal context of RE, the Locally Agreed Syllabus and Ofsted and RE. A one minute guide and a suite of review documents have been produced.</p>
<p><b>Reports from officers</b> Previously we have had reports giving an overview of data e.g. GCSE/A-Level data in North Yorkshire, reporting in workforce data etc – how do we want to receive this in future?</p>
<p><b>Reports from Ofsted</b> In what format do we want to receive this information? What might it tell us?</p>
<p><b>Headteacher and Governor briefings</b> In 2022-23 the Professional RE Adviser had opportunities to feed in to LA briefings for Headteachers and Governors on the statutory aspects of RE, Ofsted messages etc</p>



## What could we do in North Yorkshire SACRE to develop this further?

### **Feedback from LA visits to schools**

An opportunity for partnership with the LA, to receive professional feedback on standards in RE across our schools.

### **Presentations from RE subject leads**

An opportunity to hear directly from RE subject leads about how they have developed their RE curriculum and the impact it has had. Support for members own subject knowledge about RE at different phases in education.

### **Presentations from pupils**

An opportunity to hear directly from pupils about the impact of their learning in RE.

### **Visits to schools**

An opportunity to see things in action, talk to teachers and pupils and build up our own understanding of RE and the curriculum.

### **Engagement with RE Quality Mark [www.reqm.org](http://www.reqm.org)**

Supporting schools to engage with the quality mark, offer bursaries/ incentive for schools to apply for the accreditation. Offer training for schools on how to apply.

### **Religion and Worldview events**

Opportunities for subject knowledge support for schools such as carousel of faiths events, visiting speakers to schools, events for pupils.