

PEOPLE (CHILDREN) SCRUTINY PANEL

23 April 2015

RUTLAND STANDING ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE)

Report of the Director for People

STRATEGIC AIM:	Creating a Brighter Future for All
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1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 This report provides a summary of the role, responsibilities and progress of the Rutland Standing Advisory Committee for Religious Education (SACRE) for the period 2013-2015.
- 1.2 The report includes a copy of the Rutland SACRE Annual Report for 2013-14 which is a statutory requirement and should be placed on the local authority website.
- 1.3 This report provides a number of recommendations for further developing the work of the Rutland SACRE and continuing to meet its statutory duties.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That Scrutiny Panel considers the content of this report noting the 2013-14 Annual Rutland SACRE Report, the summary of activity undertaken by the Rutland SACRE in the period 2013-2015 and the specific recommendations for further development of the Rutland SACRE.**

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Rutland Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) is a statutory body which has a key role in monitoring the provision of Religious Education in schools in Rutland. It has an important role working on behalf of the local authority to advise on the provision of religious education in all forms of schools and educational establishments in the local area.
- 3.2 The main guidance provided for local authority SACREs is found in the DfE document *Religious Education in English School: non statutory guidance 2010*. A pdf copy can be provided upon request.
- 3.3 The DfE guidance emphasises the important of Religious Education and draws out three key contributions it makes to the educational experience of young people in schools:

- i. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
- ii. Personal development and well-being
- iii. Community cohesion

3.4 Further clarification of these features is found on page 7 of the above 2010 DfE Guidance.

Ofsted inspections are required to report on the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils at the school and introduces them to diversity and the wider society.

3.5 The legal framework, rights and responsibilities is also provided in the 2010 DfE Guidance (page 10) together with the role and responsibility of the local authority which includes:

3.6 The local authority must:

- i. establish a permanent body called a standing advisory council on religious education (SACRE)
- ii. LAs 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 LA

3.7 Regulation 5A, Education (Special Educational Needs) (England) (Consolidation) Regulations 2001, SI 2001/34555 Section 390, Education Act 1996 requires that the local authority:

- i. Establishes an occasional body called an agreed syllabus conference (ASC) to review the agreed syllabus for RE adopted by the LA.
- ii. This may have common membership with the SACRE but is a separate entity and must therefore be separately convened.
- iii. Institute a review of its locally agreed syllabus within five years of the last review, and subsequently every five years after the completion of each further review.
- iv. Appoint members of the committees represented on the ASC.
- v. Ensure that the composition of Group A on a SACRE and Committee A on an ASC is broadly representative of the proportionate strengths of the denominations and religions in the area. The statutory provisions recognise that there will be occasions when the interest of efficiency overrides the requirement for directly proportionate representation.

- vi. Take all reasonable steps when appointing a person to be a member of a group on a SACRE or a committee of an ASC to represent any religion, denomination or association, to ensure the person appointed is representative of the religion, denomination or associations in question.

3.8 A SACRE must:

- i. advise the local authority on RE given in accordance with the agreed syllabus, and on matters related to its functions, whether in response to a referral from the LA or as it sees fit
- ii. publish an annual report (see **Appendix 1** Rutland SACRE Annual report 2013-14) on its work and on actions taken by its representative groups, specifying any matters on which it has advised the LA, broadly describe the nature of that advice, and set out reasons for offering advice on matters not referred to it by the local authority
- iii. send a copy of the report to the Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency (QCDA)
- iv. meet in public unless confidential information is to be disclosed
- v. make minutes of its meetings available for inspection at the local authority's offices (so far as the minutes relate to the parts of meetings that were open to the public).

3.9 A SACRE should:

- i. monitor the provision and quality of RE taught according to its agreed syllabus, together with the overall effectiveness of the syllabus
- ii. provide advice and support on the effective teaching of RE in accordance with the locally agreed syllabus; provide advice to the LA and its schools on methods of teaching, the choice of teaching material and the provision of teacher training
- iii. in partnership with its LA, consider whether any changes need to be made in the agreed syllabus or in the support offered to schools in the implementation of the agreed syllabus, to improve the quality teaching and learning of RE
- iv. offer advice to the LA, and through the LA to schools, concerning how an existing agreed syllabus can be interpreted

3.10 A SACRE may:

- i. require the local authority to review the agreed syllabus and, if after discussion a vote is taken on this matter, the LA group on SACRE is not entitled to cast a vote. A majority decision by the three other committees is sufficient
- ii. decide to advise the local authority on matters related to its functions to the local authority
- iii. equally, a local authority may decide to refer matters to its SACRE
- iv. co-opt members who are not members of any of the four groups – such co-opted members may provide educational expertise, young peoples' views or religious and non-religious views that reflect a diverse multi-cultural society.

3.11 The Agreed Syllabus

The locally agreed syllabus is a statutory syllabus of Religious Education prepared under Schedule 31 to the Education Act 1996 and adopted by the local authority under that schedule. It must be followed in maintained schools without a designated denomination.

The current agreed syllabus is due to be reviewed and the process for undertaking the review is a matter currently being considered by the Rutland SACRE.

3.12 Academies

Academies are all-ability, state-funded schools managed by independent sponsors, established under Section 482 of the Education Act 1996. Some academies have a religious character.

All academies are required, through their funding agreements, to teach RE.

For academies without a religious character, this will be the locally agreed syllabus

For denominational academies with a religious character (Church of England or Roman Catholic – but also Muslim and most Jewish academies), this will be in line with the denominational syllabus.

For non-denominational (such as Christian) faith academies this can be either of the above.

3.13 Inspection

Whereas Religious Education in accordance with the locally agreed syllabus in maintained schools is inspected by Ofsted in the course of the periodic inspection of a school (under Section 5 of the Education Act 2005), it is for the governing body of foundation and voluntary schools with a religious character to ensure that they are inspected at regular intervals (Section 48 of the Education Act 2005).

Section 48 inspection reports have previously been provided to People (Children) Scrutiny Panel e.g. St Mary and St John CE Primary School (which achieved an overall Good judgement).

4. The Work of the Rutland SACRE 2013-2015

4.1 The Rutland SACRE has met on the following dates in 2013-2015:

- | | |
|--------------------|----------------------------------|
| ▪ 7 March 2013 | Oakham CEVC Primary School |
| ▪ 25 June 2013 | Empingham Methodist Church |
| ▪ 19 November 2013 | Oakham CEVC Primary School |
| ▪ 26 June 2014 | St Josepchs RC Church, Oakham |
| ▪ 18 November 2014 | Voluntary Action Rutland, Oakham |

4.2 Guidance from Ofsted

The Rutland SACRE has also carefully considered guidance published by Ofsted. In October 2013 Ofsted published Religious Education: realising Its Potential. This summary report provided an overview of findings regarding the provision of religious education from school inspections. A copy is provided at **Appendix 2**

5. Next Steps: Priorities

The priorities for the Rutland County Council for the period 2015-2016 are as follows:

- 5.1 Consider the process for and review the Agreed Syllabus and publish any changes as a new version. This to be made available to all Rutland schools and placed on the Rutland County Council website;
- 5.2 Make arrangements for a RE 'adviser' to be available to support the work of the Rutland County Council;
- 5.3 Introduce changes and improvements to the administrative support for the Rutland County Council including use of the RCC Corporate Support team;

SACRE will establish its own priorities at its meeting in the Summer term 2015.

6. RISK MANAGEMENT

RISK	IMPACT	COMMENTS
Time	Moderate	The Rutland SACRE has maintained a momentum to its work and has addressed its statutory duties within the required annual timeframe, including holding sufficient meetings.
Viability	Moderate	The Rutland SACRE does need to focus on its membership to ensure recruitment and that it is quorate at each meeting.
Finance	Low	The Rutland SACRE is supported by a small budget (£2k) provided by the People Directorate (via the Learning and Skills Service budget lines).
Profile	High	The Rutland SACRE should develop its profile across a number of approaches including website, correspondence to schools, attendance at regional events, contribution to Headteacher and governor events in Rutland and possibly arranging a Religious Education Conference which draws on a wide range of perspectives and social values.
Equality and Diversity	Moderate	The Rutland SACRE is mindful of the importance of observing all equality and diversity principles in its work.

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A Large Print or Braille Version of this Report is available upon request – Contact 01572 722577.