

10th November 2008

SELF-EVALUATION OF THE WORK OF SACRE

REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS - LEARNING

1. Background

1.1 SACRE is a statutory committee set up to advise the local authority on all matters relating to religious education and collective worship. In West Sussex SACRE was originally set up in 1983 and restructured in 1989 following the Education Reform Act which made having a SACRE a requirement for all local authorities.

1.2 In its plan for 2008-09 SACRE planned to complete a self-evaluation exercise. This exercise was to be based on the self-evaluation format published by Ofsted in 2005.

2. The responsibilities of SACREs

2.1 The legal responsibilities of the LA are to:

- ensure that there is a SACRE
- ensure all four committees¹ are represented on the SACRE
- ensure there is an agreed syllabus which is reviewed at least once every five years
- ensure that support is in place for the SACRE to enable it to discharge its responsibilities
- take note of, and respond to, any advice it receives from the SACRE.

2.2 Reference to SACREs from the LA may include advice on methods of teaching, the choice of teaching material and the provision of teacher training.

2.3 A SACRE must:

- publish an annual report of its work and send this to QCA
- consider requests for determinations on collective worship when required
- advise the LA upon such matters as collective worship and the religious education to be given, in accordance with an agreed syllabus.

2.4 A SACRE is also likely to:

- monitor the provision for both RE and collective worship
provide support and advice on RE and collective worship to schools.

3. Self-evaluation

- 3.1 The West Sussex self evaluation exercise is designed to be completed over 2008-09 and to inform the plan for 2009-2010. This first stage is to complete the self-evaluation forms identifying where we judge the performance of the SACRE. To aid this process a copy of the Ofsted guidance is attached along with a draft of the self-evaluation.

Charlie Stewart
Director of Operations - Learning

1. Standards and quality of provision of religious education

How effectively does the SACRE, in partnership with the LA, monitor and evaluate standards and the quality of provision for RE in schools?

How effective are the strategies to improve standards and the quality of provision?

Key area	Developing	Established	Advanced	Comments
1a Compliance and time allocation for RE	Little knowledge of levels of compliance with the legal requirements for RE in schools. Little information about the time schools are allocating to RE.	Informed about levels of compliance and time allocations but limited opportunities to establish strategies for action where evidence of non-compliance or inadequate time allocation is reported.	Well informed about levels of compliance and time allocations and factors impacting on these. Clear understanding of effective ways schools can provide adequate time for RE. Established strategies to take action to support schools which are non-compliant and receive feedback on the impact of interventions.	Some work on collecting the data and analysing it was completed a few years ago but has not been repeated recently.
1b Public examination entries in RE	Limited knowledge of the number of pupils in the LA entered for GCSE, AS and A2 examinations.	Informed about the number of pupils in the LA entered for GCSE, AS and A2 examinations and how this compares with national figures but few strategies to increase the number of entries.	Well informed about the number of pupils in the LA entered for GCSE, AS and A2 examinations and how this compares with national figures. Clear strategies in place to increase the number of entries.	SACRE receives a detailed analysis of examination entries in RE from the LA, including a breakdown by grouping (e.g. gender and ethnicity) and how this compares with national figures. SACRE works collaboratively with the LA to promote examination courses as a means of fulfilling statutory requirements. SACRE has received and analysed examination data for a long time and is able to

				question trends as well as spot issues.
<p>1c Standards and achievement: including standards at the end of Key Stages 1, 2 and 3, GCSE, AS and A2 level</p>	<p>Limited knowledge about standards within schools and no clear SACRE or LA strategies to address areas of concern or share good practice.</p>	<p>Informed about standards of RE in schools locally and by comparison with national figures, but limited analysis of the data and little opportunity to develop strategies to address weaknesses.</p>	<p>Detailed information about standards with careful analysis of data against national figures and trends. Information about standards extends to primary schools and Key Stage 3. Clear strategies in place to tackle areas of weakness. Developing independent mechanisms to gather data about performance.</p>	<p>The SACRE receives detailed analysis of examination performance and requires the LA to explain how it will intervene in schools where there is clear evidence of under-performance.</p> <p>The SACRE requests schools to provide details of pupils' levels of performance at the end of each key stage. Key stage 4 and 5 data is well understood but not information about key stages 1 to 3.</p>

<p>1d Quality of teaching</p>	<p>Limited knowledge about the quality of RE teaching in schools.</p>	<p>Information provided about findings in relation to quality of teaching derived from LA intelligence and RE subject self-evaluations, but limited analysis of strengths and weaknesses and little opportunity to develop strategies to tackle weaknesses.</p>	<p>Clear and detailed information about the quality of teaching, with some analysis of trends and strengths and weaknesses. Good strategies to share good practice and target improvement strategies on areas of weakness.</p>	<p>SACRE has some idea about what constitutes good teaching and learning in RE but with the passing of Ofsted has little information about the quality of teaching in the schools.</p>
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<p>1e Quality of leadership and management.</p>	<p>Limited knowledge about the quality of leadership and management of RE in schools.</p>	<p>Information provided about findings in relation to quality of leadership and management derived from LA intelligence and RE subject self-evaluations, but limited analysis of strengths and weaknesses and little opportunity to develop strategies to tackle weaknesses.</p>	<p>Clear and detailed information about the quality of leadership and management, with some analysis of trends and strengths and weaknesses. Good strategies to share good practice and target improvement strategies on areas of weakness.</p>	
<p>1f Recruitment and retention issues. Level of specialist provision</p>	<p>Little knowledge of data and issues related to the recruitment or retention of specialist RE teachers in schools.</p>	<p>Some investigation and analysis of subject recruitment and retention issues. The SACRE is aware of the level of non-specialist teaching of RE but has limited opportunity to take action to deal with its concerns.</p>	<p>Detailed knowledge of patterns of recruitment, retention and specialist provision. The SACRE is active in promoting strategies to improve recruitment and provide training to address the needs of non-specialist teachers of RE.</p>	<p>Knowledge about teacher recruitment and shortages is confined to the secondary phase.</p>

1g Resources	Little knowledge about issues related to the quality of resources for RE in schools	Some information about issues related to resources for RE in schools but limited opportunity to address areas of concern.	Detailed knowledge of issues related to resources for RE in schools. The SACRE is active in promoting the development of resources and setting benchmarks about appropriate levels of funding for the subject in schools.	SACRE is supported by a specialist subject adviser who advises schools on resources and occasionally reports to SACRE
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2. Management of the SACRE and partnership with the LA and other key stakeholders

How far does the SACRE's partnership with the LA enable it to carry out its responsibilities effectively?

Key area	Developing	Established	Advanced	Comments
2a SACRE meetings	Meetings are held regularly. Routine administrative arrangements are in place. Agendas and papers are distributed appropriately. Attendance is satisfactory. Business is dealt with in a prompt and orderly way. There are limited opportunities for teachers and representatives of faith communities to be invited to share their work. Business tends to be focused solely on routine statutory requirements.	Attendance is good and all four committees are well represented. Agendas and papers are distributed well in advance ensuring all members have time to consider them carefully. Meetings are well managed with strong contributions from a wide range of members. Meetings move beyond routine matters to consider wider issues about the quality of RE and collective worship.	SACRE members contribute to development of the agenda. Meetings are lively and purposeful with wide variety of contributions. Teachers and representatives of faith communities regularly attend and participate fully in meetings, sharing their experience and insights. Meetings are held in a variety of venues, including local places of worship and schools.	Meetings are generally well attended and are purposeful and deal with important agenda items. Members can contribute to the agenda but this is not well structured. Meetings always happen in County Hall.
2b Membership and training	The membership fulfils the basic statutory obligations. The arrangements to fill vacancies are not always effective. There are limited induction and training opportunities for SACRE members.	The membership strongly reflects the diversity of the wider religious and professional community. There are some opportunities for SACRE members to participate in training activities.	Very good use is made of co-option to ensure membership of the SACRE is well informed and is highly representative of the diversity of the local community. There is a strong and co-ordinated programme of induction, and training opportunities for SACRE members.	Induction on the four yearly cycle is completed and occasional seminars are held before or after a meeting.
2c	The SACRE does not have	The SACRE has a basic	The SACRE has a well-	

Improvement / development planning	an action plan to focus its future work and there is little overt linkage between the priorities of the LA's development / improvement plan and the work of the SACRE.	action plan which is reviewed regularly and updated on an annual basis. This provides an effective focus for the SACRE's work. There is some attempt to link the plan to the wider LA priorities.	defined action plan with clear objectives and success criteria. Resource implications are clearly defined. There is a clear link between the plan and the wider objectives of the LA. The SACRE is regularly represented at national events relevant to its work; for example, NASACRE.	The action plan is based on areas of work to be covered rather than outcomes. It ensures we cover a range of areas required by SACRE. Members of SACRE attend national events but this is done in a rather ad hoc way.
2d Professional and financial support	Representatives of the LA attend meetings but there is limited subject specialist advice available. There are resources for basic SACRE functions but there is no specific budget for the SACRE and little opportunity for the SACRE to take initiatives requiring funding.	The SACRE has some access to subject specialist advice. The LA is represented at meetings and can provide a means of communication with the wider LA. The SACRE has a modest budget which enables it to fund some initiatives.	The SACRE is well supported by a subject specialist who provides effective advice and is well informed about the provision and quality of RE in the LA and about national developments. The SACRE is also attended by a lead officer from the LA who can provide a strong link between the work of the SACRE and the wider LA. The SACRE has access to funds to enable it to make decisions about its priorities and ensure these can be properly resourced.	Funding is an issue we often get asked about. In West Sussex SACRE is funded like all other committees including the cost of running meetings.

<p>2e Information and advice</p>	<p>The SACRE receives limited information about public examination data from the LA. Limited information is provided about wider national and local developments. The SACRE tends to receive information from the LA rather than ask questions of the LA and challenge its work.</p>	<p>The SACRE is regularly provided with clear information relevant to the quality and provision for RE and collective worship in local schools. The SACRE receives the information in a way that enables it to challenge and question the LA's work.</p>	<p>The SACRE receives detailed and well-analysed information about the quality and provision for RE and collective worship. As a result SACRE uses this information effectively to give advice to the LA which leads to strategic action to improve standards and quality in schools. The SACRE has a strong partnership with the LA and plays an active role in promoting ideas and initiatives.</p>	<p>Since the changes in Ofsted SACRE's knowledge of RE is limited to examination results and advice from officers.</p>
<p>2f Partnerships with other key stakeholders (for example pupils, parent, ASTs, specialist schools, ITT providers, local religious organisations and groups, Commission for Racial Equality)</p>	<p>The SACRE has little contact with or awareness of other local agencies, and rarely has contact with pupils or parents.</p>	<p>The SACRE is well informed about other key stakeholders supporting RE and has some contact with the groups involved.</p>	<p>The SACRE has opportunities to hear the views and experience of pupils and parents about RE. Representatives of key support networks such as ASTs and higher education providers are regularly involved with the SACRE. The SACRE's activities build effectively on local networks.</p>	<p>SACRE has had few direct contacts with parents or pupils.</p>

3. The effectiveness of the locally agreed syllabus

How effectively does the SACRE, in partnership with the LA, monitor the impact of the agreed syllabus in raising standards, use national guidance (e.g. the non-statutory national framework) and evaluate the effectiveness of the previous agreed syllabus?

Key area	Developing	Established	Advanced	Comments
3a Review of the agreed syllabus	Little opportunity to review the effectiveness of the previous agreed syllabus. Teachers' views are not known and there has been no external evaluation of strengths/weaknesses of the existing version. There is little budget for agreed syllabus development and no clear action plan to structure the review process.	The SACRE has a good idea of the strengths/weaknesses of the previous agreed syllabus. Teachers' views and some external evaluation are carefully taken into consideration and there is a clear action plan and sufficient budget for the agreed syllabus review.	The SACRE has a clear and systematic process for reviewing the agreed syllabus including full consultation with schools and other key stakeholders, particularly faith communities. The budget is clearly allocated including consultation meetings, external evaluation and printing/distribution costs. There is strong sense of ownership of the agreed syllabus review, with clear targets for what needs to be achieved.	
3b Using the National Framework for Religious Education	The SACRE has a limited view of the role and significance of the National Framework in relation to the agreed syllabus review process and does not use the Framework in a coherent way.	The SACRE is aware of the National Framework and uses it in their agreed syllabus review but does not extend the Framework to reflect local circumstances.	The SACRE fully uses the National Framework in the construction of the revised agreed syllabus, understanding fully the importance of retaining the coherence and integrity of the Framework. It uses and extends the Framework in a coherent way to reflect local circumstances.	

<p>3c Developing the revised agreed syllabus.</p>	<p>The SACRE has no clear structure for developing a revised agreed syllabus. It does not undertake a thorough revision, tending to add material rather haphazardly to the existing syllabus, leading to lack of coherence in the final outcome. There is little or no consultation during the development of a new agreed syllabus.</p>	<p>The SACRE has clear objectives for the revision and involves a wide range of local expertise in its construction. The SACRE ensures that strong direction is provided to design an agreed syllabus which is coherent, clear and accessible. The SACRE, in partnership with the LA, holds consultation meetings which are reasonably supported.</p>	<p>The SACRE ensures that high quality advice is sought to review and advise on the revisions as they develop. The SACRE, in partnership with the LA, holds very well attended consultation meetings and briefings to ensure teachers are fully involved in, and have a sense of ownership of, the revision process.</p>	
<p>3d Consultation / launch / implementation of the agreed syllabus</p>	<p>No special launch is planned and schools are not aware of the significance of the revisions for their teaching and learning in RE. There is little training provision for implementing the revised syllabus.</p>	<p>A launch event is organised and other forms of communication (for example the LA website) are used to promote the launch. There are clear arrangements for training teachers on implementing the syllabus; this training is well supported and managed.</p>	<p>A successful launch, involving the wider community and strong media coverage, gives the agreed syllabus a high profile as an important development in the work of the LA and SACRE. Effective training on implementing the agreed syllabus, which is supported by all schools, leads to teachers being clear about standards and expectations in the agreed syllabus and the implications for teaching and learning.</p>	

<p>3e Additional guidance / monitoring and evaluating the agreed syllabus</p>	<p>A shortage of financial and human resources prevent the SACRE from providing any significant additional guidance on using the agreed syllabus. It has limited arrangements in place to monitor the impact of the agreed syllabus, particularly in raising standards.</p>	<p>The SACRE, through its costed development plan, has arrangements in place to develop additional guidance. The SACRE is able to monitor the impact of the agreed syllabus, particularly in raising standards.</p>	<p>The SACRE has fully costed precise plans for further guidance and support and has consulted extensively with schools on what these should be. Teachers are actively involved in the development of support materials ensuring the process provides a strong professional development opportunity. There are clear arrangements in place to monitor the impact of the new agreed syllabus and to measure its effectiveness in raising standards.</p>	<p>Guidance on supporting the Agreed syllabus is done through the RE Adviser who works with AST's and other to support the development and guidance.</p>
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4. Collective worship

How effectively does the SACRE fulfil its responsibilities for the provision and practice of collective worship?

Key area	Developing	Established	Advanced	Comments
4a Practice and provision for collective worship	The SACRE has not provided guidance to schools on collective worship and arrangements for determinations are not in place. Issues regarding collective worship have not featured as part of the SACRE's agenda and national developments are not known. There is no training provision for collective worship.	The SACRE has not provided guidance to schools on collective worship which focuses on good practice. Meetings of the SACRE regularly focus on provision and practice in collective worship, and schools consider they are well supported by their SACRE on matters related to collective worship. The SACRE is aware of national developments in collective worship. Training is provided for schools and is reasonably supported.	The SACRE provides high quality advice and support on collective worship, sharing best practice, which leads to improvements in the quality of children's learning experiences. The SACRE regularly focuses on collective worship in its meetings and updates schools on new resources. The SACRE is actively involved in national developments in collective worship. High quality, well-supported training enhances provision.	Guidance has been provided for schools on how to interpret the law and some practical advice. This has been circulated to schools and can be found on the RE pages of the WSGfL. A review of this guidance is in the development plan.
4b Monitoring the provision of collective worship and tackling issues of non-compliance	The SACRE does not monitor provision of collective worship. Members are unaware of the issues facing schools and do not provide advice on how issues of non-compliance can be addressed.	The SACRE monitors provision of collective worship and is aware of non-compliance issues and the demands collective worship places on schools. As a result of monitoring, further advice is provided to schools but members of the SACRE have limited 'hands-on' experience of collective worship in schools.	The SACRE closely monitors provision for collective worship, and provides guidance and support for schools, particularly on non-compliance. Members of the SACRE have direct experience of collective worship in schools through first-hand observation. They discuss key issues with staff and pupils and provide further advice in the light of their findings.	Since the change to Ofsted SACRE has not monitored collective worship in schools.

5. Contribution of the SACRE to the social and racial harmony agenda

How effectively does the SACRE, in partnership with the LA, contribute to the wider social and racial harmony agenda?

Key area	Developing	Established	Advanced	Comments
5a Representative nature of the SACRE	Membership of the SACRE meets statutory requirements but is not necessarily strongly representative of the religious diversity of the local community.	The SACRE and the LA ensure representation broadly reflects the religious diversity of the local community.	The SACRE has strong representation from all major local religious communities, including different groups within the same religious tradition (for example, different Muslim communities).	Membership of SACRE is set down by the LA after consideration of the religious make-up of West Sussex and creating a committee of a manageable size.
5b Knowledge and understanding of the local religious, cultural and ethnic community	The SACRE has limited knowledge about the religious, cultural and ethnic diversity in the local area.	The SACRE is well aware of different groups representing the diversity within the local area.	The SACRE is very aware of the nature of the religious, ethnic and cultural diversity in the local area and takes active steps to inform itself about the distinctive needs and opportunities created by this diversity.	
5c Understanding the intrinsic contribution which RE can make to social and racial harmony	The SACRE has a basic grasp of the contribution which RE can make to the social and racial harmony agenda but has limited opportunity to promote this further.	The SACRE has a clear commitment to the part RE can play in promoting the social and racial harmony agenda and seeks to promote this throughout its work.	The SACRE plays a key role in promoting activities to extend the contribution of RE to the development of social and racial harmony. It ensures that this is embedded explicitly in the agreed syllabus and related guidance.	A view has been clearly expressed in the new Agreed Syllabus

<p>5d Links to local authority initiatives promoting social and racial harmony</p>	<p>The SACRE has limited information about, or contact with, wider local authority initiatives linked to the promotion of social and racial harmony.</p>	<p>The SACRE is aware of the wider local authority initiatives promoting social and racial harmony and has the opportunity to discuss and contribute to this work.</p>	<p>The SACRE plays a key role in the work of the local authority in this area and takes the initiative in promoting activities and links which relate to this work.</p>	<p>This is an area of work that SACRE has not been involved in outside of religious education and collective worship.</p>
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West Sussex SACRE self-evaluation

What is distinctive about West Sussex SACRE?

Key strengths

Key areas for development