

# The role of SACRE

A Diocesan Perspective

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# A bit of history...

- The 1944 Education Act refers to religious education. Focus is on Christianity. It is locally determined through an agreed syllabus.
- 1988- Education Reform Act. Each local authority has to set up a Standing Advisory Council for RE ( SACRE). Agreed Syllabus to be reviewed every 5 years. RE is now 'multi faith'.
- RE today is non-confessional, non -denominational, locally agreed, with national guidelines, and compulsory ( but optional- withdrawal clause!) CONFUSED?!

# What does SACRE do?

A SACRE is a statutory body which advises the local authority on religious education (RE) and collective worship.

Its role includes:

- Reviewing the agreed syllabus for RE every five years
- Monitoring the provision of RE and collective worship
- Providing advice and support to schools in relation to RE and collective worship
- Challenging schools in relation to their responsibilities for RE and collective worship
- Promoting social and community cohesion
- Promoting spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

# Who are the SACRE?

- 4 committees
- Faith groups other than Church of England ( 15 representatives)
- Church of England ( 4 representatives, 3 from Norwich, 1 from Ely)
- Teachers ( 6 representatives)
- Local Councillors ( 4 representatives)
- In addition, SACRE co-opts a Humanist representative and someone from Higher Education

# What activities does SACRE undertake?

- Provides support and development of RE and collective worship in schools through the work of advisers e.g. talking with the newly qualified secondary RE teachers
- Provides guidance on difficult or challenging issues relating to RE and collective worship e.g. advice on withdrawal from RE or collective worship
- Provides contacts for speakers from faith communities e.g. our Muslim representative spoke to Post Graduate Certificate of Education students at the University of East Anglia (UEA)
- Continuing Professional Development opportunities e.g. conferences, networks
- Special events promoted by members of SACRE e.g. the Jewish Way of Life Exhibition, Muslim Packs for schools initiative, Interfaith Week 'Human Library' event for teachers

# Reviewing the syllabus

- SACRE convenes an Agreed Syllabus Conference
- Every 5 years
- Takes into account new educational thinking, context and research
- All Diocese of Norwich schools are advised to use the syllabus. VC schools have to follow it by law. VA schools we advise to use it, but encourage supplementing with extra Christianity focussed RE Days e.g. around festival times, or on themes such as the Lord's prayer, Hope and Reconciliation...

# Development work

- Norfolk SACRE undertakes a rigorous self evaluation and has a development plan.
- Norfolk SACRE must produce an annual report detailing its work, and also commenting on GCSE and A Level results across the county.
- Current development work includes:
- SACRE members visiting schools to talk about RE and collective worship to develop a better understanding of effective practice
- A project called 'Perspectives' exploring pupil views of RE. Led by Flegg High School with other SACRE partners.

# What is the role of the Diocesan representatives?

- Providing challenge and support to the Local Authority in relation to RE and Collective Worship
- Supporting schools e.g. resources and training available to all schools
- Providing the C of E perspective on the curriculum, training and wider educational issues.
- Making links with other partners e.g. Bahai rep, Humanist rep, LA advisers



- \* Norwich Diocese places RE at the heart of the curriculum

**‘Religious education is not just an academic subject, but, lying at the very heart of the curriculum, has an important role in reflecting and conveying the distinctively Christian character of the school.’**

Jan Ainsworth, National Society

# Providing a voice....

- \* **Personal Experience:** From April 2014, one of the Diocesan reps will be a primary RE Co ordinator. They will sign up for a year minimum. They can engage better with their peers and share first hand experiences of RE in the classroom.
- \* **Getting the message out:** Using social media, especially twitter to put RE on the map locally and nationally.
- \* **Equipping schools:** Provide resources through websites that are open to all schools. Could you contribute?

# At the forefront of change and development.... leading the way...

- \* We are exploring new ways of working e.g church schools leading local clusters/networks, REQM schools leading networks for others, use of Facebook, Twitter, Teachmeets, links to UEA
- \* We are funding or subsidising CPD through Keswick Hall Trust CPD e.g. REQM training for assessors and schools
- \* We are taking a lead in projects e.g. Eastern region project for secondary schools
- \* We are trailing materials for new Culham St Gabriel's Teach RE Course– for ALL teachers of RE

# Promoting research....

- \* Norwich diocese are actively promoting research through:
  - \* – local action research networks e.g linked to REQM. SMSC, assessment
  - \* – promoting Farmington Fellowships
  - \* – engaging in academic research and sharing outcomes through CPD
  - \* – promoting teaching as a Masters profession by highlighting MA opportunities e.g. 3forRE
  - \* – supporting funding applications to church college trusts

# The future

- Funding for SACREs reducing
- New educational and political landscape
- Importance of regional networking and sharing of effective practice using new and innovative ways of collaboration of which SACRE will be one part...