

**Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education**  
**13<sup>th</sup> May 2009**  
**Report of the Corporate Director (Children and Lifelong Learning)**

**SACRE Development Plan 2009-2010**

**1 Purpose of Report**

1.1 To review the development plan for 2008-2009 and to set targets for 2009-2010.

**2 Summary**

2.1 At the meeting held in June 2007 it was agreed to merge the existing Staffordshire action plan with the Ofsted self-evaluation documentation to create a single document addressing the key issues.

2.2 It was also proposed that progress against the self-evaluation document be reviewed at the summer term meeting annually, with targets also being set and agreed for the forthcoming academic year.

**3 Recommendation**

3.1 That members review the development plan and set targets for the academic year 2009-2010.

**4 Background**

4.1 SACREs are strongly encouraged to use the self-evaluation documentation provided by Ofsted to review their own practice. Staffordshire SACRE first addressed this process during the meetings held in 2005 and has reviewed its finding on a regular basis.

4.2 At the summer term meeting 2007 members agreed to merge the SACRE action plan with the self-evaluation document to form a single development plan which would clearly identify areas of good practice and issues to address.

4.3 A copy of the current development plan is attached to this document. Changes to practice and achievements over the year are highlighted in italics

4.4 Members are invited to note changes and progress and to review targets for the coming academic year.

4.5 Key areas for action in 2009-2010 could be identified as:

- Making greater use of the county's monitoring and progress check initiative to gather information
- Members' own professional development
- Closer monitoring of recruitment in the authority
- Commissioning work from the Student Council
- Supporting the development of guidance materials to accompany the 2009 syllabus.

**5 Equal Opportunities**

5.1 This report has been prepared in accordance with the County Council's policies on equal opportunities.

**6 Financial implications**

6.1 There are no immediate financial implications.

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# Staffordshire Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education

## Self evaluation and Development Plan

### 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	Established	Advanced	Current practice	Action to be taken Meeting at which to be discussed
<b>1a</b> Compliance and time allocation for 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.	<b>Well informed about levels of compliance and time allocations and factors impacting on these.</b> 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.	Questionnaires sent annually to special, middle and secondary schools Questionnaires sent once every three years to primary schools Summary of provision presented annually to SACRE <i>Questionnaires suspended for 2008-2009 to allow for questionnaire on the Agreed Syllabus Review</i>	Members to consider establishing a process for raising issues of concern with schools, particularly in the case of non-compliance <b>Autumn 2009</b>
<b>1b</b> Public examination entries in RE	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.	<b>Well informed about the number of pupils in the LA entered for GCSE, AS and A2 examinations and how this compares with national figures.</b> Clear strategies in place to increase the number of entries.	Detailed analysis of examination entries in RE presented annually by the LA, including a breakdown by gender.  Through the agreed syllabus and the LA, the SACRE promotes examination courses as a means of fulfilling statutory requirements.	Members to review provision at Key Stage 4 in the context of the 2009 syllabus. <b>Autumn term 2009</b>
<b>1c</b> Standards and achievement: including standards at the end of Key Stages 1, 2 and 3, GCSE, AS and A2 level	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.	<b>Detailed information about standards with careful analysis of data against national figures and trends.</b> Information about standards extends to primary schools and Key Stage 3. Clear strategies in place to tackle areas of weakness. <b>Developing independent mechanisms to gather data about performance.</b>	Detailed analysis of examination performance in RE presented annually by the LA  Schools that are performing well against a range of criteria are congratulated.  From September 2007 the LA has, on behalf of the SACRE, collated performance data on RE for Key Stage 3.	Members to review their response to the analysis of examination results, in particular to schools that are underperforming <b>Autumn term 2009</b>

<p><b>1d</b> Quality of teaching</p>	<p><b>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.</b></p>	<p>Clear and detailed information about the quality of teaching, with some analysis of trends and strengths and weaknesses. <b>Good strategies to share good practice and target improvement strategies on areas of weakness.</b></p>	<p>Presentations by teachers are an occasional feature of SACRE's termly meetings</p> <p>The SACRE endorses the LA programme of professional development which offers support and guidance on teaching and learning</p> <p><i>The SACRE has endorsed the county's subject monitoring initiative over a period of four years</i></p>	<p>Members to suggest ways to extend their knowledge and understanding of the quality of teaching in the LA, for example through presentations at the meeting <b>2009-2010</b></p> <p>Outcomes to be presented to SACRE <b>2009-2010</b></p>
<p><b>1e</b> Quality of Leadership and management.</p>	<p><b>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.</b></p>	<p>Clear and detailed <b>information about the quality of leadership and management</b>, with some analysis of trends and strengths and weaknesses. <b>Good strategies to share good practice and target improvement strategies on areas of weakness.</b></p>	<p><i>Some information gleaned from the county's monitoring initiative.</i></p> <p>The SACRE endorses the LA programme of professional development which includes training for new subject leaders as well as regular network meetings to support middle managers.</p> <p>The SACRE supports the development and publication of support materials for subject leaders</p>	<p><i>Information to be shared with members 2009-2010</i></p> <p>Members receive information about professional development opportunities for subject leaders annually and are invited to make recommendations. <b>Summer term</b></p> <p>Members to continue to endorse support materials for subject leaders, <i>in particular in relation to the 2009 Agreed Syllabus</i></p>
<p><b>1f</b> Recruitment and retention issues. Level of specialist provision</p>	<p><b>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.</b></p>	<p>Detailed knowledge of patterns of recruitment, retention and specialist provision. <b>The SACRE is active in promoting strategies to improve recruitment and provide training to address the needs of non-specialist teachers of RE.</b></p>	<p>A comprehensive analysis of questionnaire returns gives members a clear picture of RE staffing including the use of non-specialists and Teaching Assistants</p> <p>In partnership with the LA, the SACRE supports professional development opportunities for non-specialists and Teaching Assistants through the central programme</p>	<p><i>Members to be informed of recruitment patterns from autumn 2009</i></p>
<p><b>1g</b> Resources</p>	<p>Some information about issues related to resources for RE in schools but limited opportunity to address areas of concern.</p>	<p>Detailed <b>knowledge of issues related to resources for RE in schools. The SACRE is active in promoting the development of resources</b> and setting benchmarks about appropriate levels of funding for the subject in schools.</p>	<p>The SACRE supports, through the LA, a subject website</p> <p>The SACRE endorses, through the LA, the regular offer of high quality resources at reduced rates.</p> <p>The SACRE works in partnership with the LA to alert teachers to high quality resources through regular electronic newsletters</p>	<p>Members may wish to consider further ways to support teachers with appropriate resources.</p>

## 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	Established	Advanced	Current practice	Action to be taken
2a SACRE meetings	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.	<b>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.</b> Meetings are held in a variety of venues, including local places of worship and schools.	Feedback from NASACRE is a standing agenda item.  SACRE members have been involved in a series of presentations outlining their beliefs and commitments  Teachers, including the local AST, have attended the meetings. Teachers have also made presentations highlighting good practice.  Members of the Student Council have also attended the meeting	Members to consider increasing the number of presentations from teachers <b>2009-2010</b>          Members to commission work from the Student Council <b>2009-2010</b>
2b Membership and training	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.	<b>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.</b> There is a strong and co-ordinated programme of induction, and training opportunities for SACRE members.	The membership is, overall, representative of the local community and <i>was reviewed autumn 2008</i>  Regular efforts are made to extend the representation of a range of faith communities on SACRE  Teachers are represented in all appropriate groups  SACREs terms of membership have been reviewed, including those relating to membership	Members are invited to make suggestions about a programme of induction and training opportunities for new members <b>Summer term 2009</b>
2c Improvement/ development planning	The SACRE has a basic 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.	<b>The SACRE has a well-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.</b>	The SACRE has a development plan which is linked to the self-evaluation document and identifies actions against meetings.  This is presented to members on a regular basis and updated before each meeting  From September 2007 the self-evaluation document links directly with the LA objectives of raising standards, improving the quality of leadership and management, providing the appropriate level of support and challenge and promoting community cohesion  The chair of SACRE is the treasurer of NASACRE and also represents the	

			SACRE at national level	
<b>2d</b> Professional and financial support	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.	<b>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.</b> 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. <b>The SACRE has access to funds to enable it to make decisions about its priorities and ensure these can be properly resourced.</b>	A Senior Adviser with responsibility for RE supports the SACRE  A Deputy Director (C&LL) has oversight of the SACRE at senior management level. There is an open invitation to attend meetings.  The SACRE is provided with an annual budget to pay for the support of the Senior Adviser. This also funds the development of support materials and a range of initiatives to promote RE in schools, including the SACRE Awards, the Student Council and the Sixth form Conference	
<b>2e</b> Information and advice	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.	<b>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.</b>	Responses to annual questionnaires are collated and presented to members to give a picture of the quality and provision for RE  The SACRE makes recommendations and requests further information as appropriate  A questionnaire relating to practice in collective worship was circulated to a sample of schools in spring 2008 and the findings were presented to members at the summer term meeting 2008.  There is a strong partnership with the LA. The LA supports the SACRE with funding and provides the services of an officer whose brief is to support RE and collective worship across the authority.	
<b>2f</b> Partnerships with other key stakeholders	The SACRE is well informed about other key stakeholders supporting RE and has some contact with the groups involved.  (for example pupils, parent, ASTs, specialist schools, ITT providers, local religious organisations and groups, Commission for Racial Equality)	<b>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.</b> The SACRE's activities build effectively on local networks.	Members of the Student Council attend the meeting as appropriate to present the views of students.  <i>The Advanced Skills Teacher attends meetings when these coincide with her schedule of work</i>  The vice-chair of SACRE is also a representative of Staffordshire University.	Members to consider commissioning projects from the Student Council to collect the views of students and parents. <b>2009-2010</b>

### 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	Established	Advanced	Current practice	Action to be taken
<b>3a</b> Review of the agreed syllabus	<b>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.</b>	<b>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.</b>	The agreed syllabus, introduced in 1991/92 was reviewed in 1997/8 and 2003/4 and has been reviewed in 2009.	Members are invited to support the launch and implementation of the 2009 syllabus <b>2009-2010</b>
<b>3b</b> Using the National Framework for Religious Education	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.	<b>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.</b>	The SACRE is aware of the Non-statutory framework and its status  <i>The SACRE has taken full account of the Non-statutory Framework and the QCA non-statutory secondary curriculum for RE in its review of the Staffordshire syllabus.</i>	

<p><b>3c</b> Developing the revised 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><i>The review has been supported by the Senior Adviser with responsibility for RE and the AST for RE</i></p>	
<p><b>3d</b> Consultation / launch / implementation of the agreed 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><b>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.</b></p>	<p>An effective launch is planned for the 2009 revision of the agreed syllabus.</p> <p>Training opportunities will be available to all through the LA central programme</p> <p>Currently all training offered through the central programme focuses on the effective implementation of the syllabus</p>	<p>Members may wish to make recommendations about an appropriate launch of the syllabus on completion of the revision <b>Meetings 2009</b></p>
<p><b>3e</b> Additional guidance / monitoring and evaluating the agreed syllabus</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><b>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.</b></p>	<p><i>Support materials to accompany the 2009 syllabus will be produced during the academic year 2009-2010</i></p> <p><i>Monitoring the impact of the 2009 syllabus will be incorporated in the annual monitoring visit and the annual questionnaire to schools.</i></p>	<p>On completion of the 2009 review, members to consider ways to support and monitor its implementation <b>Meetings 2009</b></p>

## 4 Collective worship

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

Key area	Established	Advanced	Current practice	Action to be taken
<b>4a</b> Practice and 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. <b>The SACRE is aware of national developments in collective worship. Training is provided for schools and is reasonably supported.</b>	<b>The SACRE provides high quality advice and support on collective worship</b> , sharing best practice, which leads to improvements in the quality of children's learning experiences. <b>The SACRE regularly focuses on collective worship in its meetings</b> and updates schools on new resources. The SACRE is actively involved in national developments in collective worship. <b>High quality, well-supported training enhances provision.</b>	A guidance document on collective worship is available to all schools, including advice on writing a policy  A questionnaire to identify current practice was sent to schools in the spring term 2008.  Professional development for collective worship was part of the central programme 2008-2009	
<b>4b</b> Monitoring the provision of collective worship and tackling issues of non-compliance	<b>The SACRE monitors provision of collective worship and is aware of non-compliance issues and the demands collective worship places on schools.</b> 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.	A questionnaire to identify current practice was sent to schools in the spring term 2008.	



## 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	Established	Advanced	Current practice	Action to be taken
<b>5a</b> Representative nature of the SACRE	<b>The SACRE and the LA ensure representation broadly reflects the religious diversity of the local community.</b>	The SACRE has strong representation from all major local religious communities, including different groups within the same religious tradition (for example, different Muslim communities).	The current membership of the SACRE offers a fair representation of the communities present in the authority  The SACRE through the clerk and the LA Adviser actively seeks to recruit members for groups which may be under-represented	
<b>5b</b> Knowledge and understanding of the local religious, cultural and ethnic community	<b>The SACRE is well aware of different groups representing the diversity within the local area.</b>	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.	The SACRE has been provided with a detailed analysis of the religious and cultural diversity within the LA.  <i>The membership of the SACRE was reviewed in autumn 2008 in accordance with the terms of reference</i>	
<b>5c</b> Understanding the intrinsic contribution which RE can make to social and racial harmony	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. <b>It ensures that this is embedded explicitly in the agreed syllabus and related guidance.</b>	The LA syllabus focuses clearly on developing religiously educated young people with a knowledge and understanding of religion and religions. It emphasises in particular the importance of employing skills gained through problem solving and challenges to promote mutual understanding and code for living in a diverse, rich and harmonious society.	