

# **Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education**

**13<sup>th</sup> November 2013**

## **Report of the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of People**

### **Ofsted long report on RE**

#### **1 Purpose of Report**

1.1 To discuss the recently released Ofsted report on RE: realising the potential.

#### **2 Summary**

2.1 Members of SACRE will have an opportunity to discuss this report further.

#### **3 Recommendation**

3.1 That members of SACRE hear the update and note the contents

#### **4 Background**

4.1 In October 2013 Ofsted released it's long report on RE entitled Religious Education: realising the potential.

4.2 The report has been well received and it is hoped that it will do an amount of good for the future of RE.

#### **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 Financial implications may be raised by individual items. These have been dealt with elsewhere, or will be raised at future meetings of SACRE.

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## **The headlines:**

### **Ofsted's long report into RE released – religious education: realising the potential**

More than half of England's schools are failing pupils on religious education, the schools watchdog Ofsted has said. Its report accuses schools and the government of failing to focus effectively on the subject. It adds that six in 10 schools are not "realising the subject's full potential" in an increasingly globalised and multicultural century. The Religious Education Council for England and Wales called the findings disappointing but not surprising.

Ofsted's report, *Religious Education: realising the potential*, says the subject "plays a key role in promoting social cohesion and the virtues of respect and empathy, which are important in our diverse society" but it finds "many pupils leave school with scant subject knowledge and understanding". It adds: "Moreover RE teaching often fails to challenge and extend pupils' ability to explore fundamental questions about human life, religion and belief."

Inspectors visited a sample of 185 schools, both primary and secondary, between September 2009 and July 2012. They found achievement and teaching in RE was less than good in six out of 10 primary schools, and in fewer than half of secondary schools and that not enough had been done to improve provision since a previous report in 2010. Teaching in primary schools was "not good enough because of weaknesses in teachers understanding of the subject", they found.

Standards were higher for GCSE and sixth form students but even at GCSE level teaching often "failed to secure the core aim of the examination specifications, that is to enable pupils to adopt an enquiring, critical and reflective approach to the study of religion."