



Appendix 1

Steve Crocker
Director of Children's Services

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Dear Director of Children's Services

The Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) is responsible for advising the County Council on Religious Education (RE). I write here as Chairman of Hampshire SACRE, to share SACRE's pressing concerns about the provision of RE at KS4 in some of our secondary schools and to make some suggestions as to how this might be remedied.

These concerns arise from SACRE's monitoring of the take-up of Full Course RS GCSE, which has declined sharply from being taken by 37% of Hampshire young people in 2017 to 27% in 2018. This percentage seems to have stabilised in 2019, nevertheless it shows that fewer young people in Hampshire are taking RS GCSE than is the case nationally. There are several reasons for this decline, one being that RS GCSE has been excluded from the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) collection of GCSE qualifications.

However, RE remains part of the statutory curriculum for all young people at KS4. Studying for a GCSE qualification in RS, whilst an invaluable academic experience, is not the only way young people can access their statutory entitlement to high quality RE. SACRE monitors the provision and quality of RE. At both KS3 and KS4 RE should be taught according to the Locally Agreed Syllabus: *Living Difference III*. Some excellent core RE KS4 courses exist in the county, taught by specialist teachers.

However, we are aware of some LA schools where the numbers of students entered for GCSE are either very low or even zero. In these cases, SACRE is concerned whether all students can access their statutory entitlement to RE in KS4. SACRE is also concerned about the quality of the curriculum of these non-examination courses as well as the quality of teaching. Too often teachers without a specialist qualification in RE, with little specialist subject knowledge, are teaching RE at KS4. In a time when there is a well-documented increase in the incidence of religiously motivated hate crime, high quality religious education for all Hampshire young people has perhaps never been more important. SACRE's monitoring of RE over many years reveals that RE is best in schools where the head teacher and senior

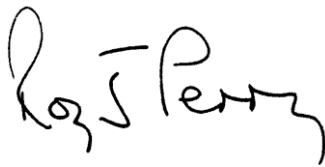
team understand Living Difference III as well as value the contribution RE can make to the vision and values of the school and to the broad balanced curriculum offered. In order to make positive change SACRE would like to ask the County Council to support it ensuring

- (i) that all new and aspiring head teachers have, as part of their induction, a presentation on *Living Difference III*, the statutory position of RE and its value to the whole curriculum.

- (ii) that regular updates on the educational position of *Living Difference III*, and the value of RE to a broad balanced curriculum, forms part of the regular programme offered to head teachers in Hampshire – especially to secondary head teachers.

- (iii) That SACRE receives encouragement and support to devise, with its professional adviser, a core RE course that can be a model of excellence nationally and recognised by 6th form colleges. Further, that head teachers of LA schools are encouraged to enable this to be taught by specialist teachers to all KS4 students in addition to GCSE provision.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Roy Perry". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath it.

Cllr Roy Perry
Chairman of Hampshire SACRE

cc

Executive Lead Member for Children's Services
Executive Member for Education
Chairman of the Children and Young People's Select Committee
Chairman of the Education Advisory Panel