

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Report

Committee/Panel:	Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE)
Date:	3 March 2021
Title:	Key National RE Matters
Report From:	Director of Children's Services

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Purpose of this Report

1. The purpose of this report is to enable SACRE to consider key national RE matters especially regarding national discussions taking place regarding 'Worldviews' and RE.

Recommendation(s)

2. That SACRE notes the report and agrees to continue the discussion regarding the relationship of Worldviews to Religious Education.

Executive Summary

3. This report updates and informs SACRE of key national developments, especially the work of the Religious Education Council (REC)'s support of the move away from a 'world religions' paradigm for religious education to one that takes in a consideration of not only religion but also 'worldviews', as well as the REC's consideration of the future of local management of RE. This report will enable feedback from the South West SACRE conference organised by the Association of RE Inspectors, Advisers and Consultants (AREIAC) held on 1 March 2021, as well as seeking nominations to the NASACRE conference scheduled for May 2021. In addition, this report enables SACRE to consider broader national concerns about the well-being of children and young people in this time of a pandemic.

Contextual information

4. **The Religious Education Council (REC)**, following the 'Commission on RE' (CoRE) report published in September 2018, is taking a lead on initiatives in relation to the subject matter of RE. Patricia Hannam is a member of the REC Board since September 2020. The REC is made up of members from many organisations, including religious bodies in England and Wales, with an interest in RE.

National Association of SACREs (NASACRE). NASACRE is the national body representing and leading on SACRE's interests. NASACRE holds an annual conference as well as circulating a regular newsletter to SACRE members through their SACRE. SACRE members are encouraged to read this when received.

Association of RE Inspectors, Advisers, Inspectors and Consultants (AREIAC). Justine Ball is currently co-chair of AREIAC and is running a workshop at the South West AREIAC SACRE Conference on 1 March.

5. Religion and Worldviews

A critical aspect of the REC's current work is regarding the 'CoRE' recommendation to change the name of Religions Education to 'Religion and Worldviews'. The REC has embarked on a major project funded by the Templeton Foundation to develop understanding about what is intended by the concept of worldviews. This included a literature review which can be accessed here <https://www.religiouseducationcouncil.org.uk/news/literaturereview/>

as well as a discussion document that emerged from a meeting of 13 academics to discuss the literature review. A further report has been published by THEOS, launched in a well-attended evening virtual meeting and available here: <https://www.theosthinktank.co.uk/research/2020/10/21/worldviews-in-religious-education>

In January three virtual evening sessions took place for REC membership organisations to enable discussions by REC members, took place.

It is vital that Hampshire SACRE engages with the discussions in order to ensure that the forthcoming agreed syllabus has a considered position in relation to the proposals.

It is not likely that there will be any legislative adjustments to the legal requirements for RE. However, the CoRE report proposals as well as leading to considerable discussions has also raised concerns. The concerns vary according to how the concept of 'Worldviews' and its relationship to religion in RE is interpreted.

6. **REC's reconsideration of the local management of RE: Hampshire**
SACRE is being written up as a case study of an example of a successful SACRE for another REC project in relation to securing the future of SACREs.

7. **Children's Society 2020 Good Childhood Report: Recommendations**

- 7.1. The report, published in August 2020, suggests that for much of the past decade, children aged 10 to 15 have become steadily less happy with their lives. In 2020, as in previous years, children are most happy on average with their relationships with their family.

However, in contrast with previous years where the largest proportion were unhappy with the school that they go to, in 2020 it was found that a higher proportion of children were unhappy with the choice they have in life. At age 15 children in the UK are less happy with their lives across a range of well-being measures when compared to other European countries. The 2020 Good Childhood Report also highlights the relatively high levels of 'fear of failure' among 15-year-olds in the UK compared to other countries.

There are tentative conclusions that the coronavirus pandemic has, at least temporarily, increased the number of young people with low life satisfaction in this country.

The report recommends the collection of detailed data as a key priority so that every local authority can access data for the children who live within their boundary. This data should be collected regularly – ideally four times a year, but at least annually – so that changes can be identified relatively quickly.

- 7.2 What is significant for RE, and the review of the locally agreed syllabus at this time, is that the Children's Society Good Childhood Report recommends a curriculum that places well-being at the heart of all schools. The report emphasises the importance of promoting both good attainment as well as well-being in education.

Finally, it is recommended that young people's voices need to be heard better in order to discover what can make school more enjoyable for young people and how their well-being can be supported.

REQUIRED CORPORATE AND LEGAL INFORMATION:

Links to the Strategic Plan

Hampshire maintains strong and sustainable economic growth and prosperity:	yes
People in Hampshire live safe, healthy and independent lives:	yes
People in Hampshire enjoy a rich and diverse environment:	yes
People in Hampshire enjoy being part of strong, inclusive communities:	yes

EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT:

1. Equality Duty

The County Council has a duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ('the Act') to have due regard in the exercise of its functions to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by or under the Act with regard to the protected characteristics as set out in section 4 of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation).
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it.
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (see above) and persons who do not share it.

Due regard in this context involves having due regard in particular to:

- The need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic.
- Take steps to meet the needs of persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it.
- Encourage persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

2. Equalities Impact Assessment:

- (a) SACRE's core business is to ensure high quality religious education in Hampshire which, it is intended, will make a positive difference to the way young people 'think speak and act in the world' (See purpose statement of Living Difference III 2016, the agreed syllabus for religious education in Hampshire).