

Report of: Corporate Director of People

| Meeting of: | Date: | Ward(s): |
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| Childrens Scrutiny | 3 November 2020 | N/A |

| Delete as appropriate: | Exempt | Non-exempt |
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SUBJECT: SACRE ANNUAL REPORT 2020

| 1. | Synopsis |
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| 1.1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Religious Education encompasses religious literacy and the knowledge of the values and insights of religious and non-religious world views. We are proud that it also provides the endorsement of diversity and the encouragement of tolerance, respect, and mutual understanding within our neighbourhood, our nation, and the wider world. Since RE is the only strand of the Curriculum which can be moulded by local perspectives, SACRE is in a unique position to listen to, and take account of, local needs and circumstances. Above all, we seek to provide the encouragement, support and subject knowledge that local schools need as they seek to provide teaching of the highest quality. |
| 1.2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In implementing the agreed Islington Agreed Syllabus of 2017, we have sought to provide a framework for the teaching of Religious Education based on current thinking on religious education, but attentive to local circumstances and needs of Islington schools. With the invaluable support and expertise of School Improvement, Islington SACRE's CS Islington now publishes a range of resources and guidance for schools. |
| 1.3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unfortunately, the past few months of the Covid-19 pandemic, and its deep impact on schools along with the rest of society, has curtailed and limited both the work of SACRE, and particularly its ability both to convene and to connect. We are also conscious that school leaders are working extremely hard to provide the safe and |

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| | <p>productive teaching and learning environments, maintaining teaching best practice whilst keeping teachers, students, and their families safe. Confident that the work of the past year has provided solid foundations on which to build, SACRE waits for less fraught times to take forward its agenda.</p> |
| 1.4 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Looking ahead, the implementation of the syllabus and scheme of works, broadening the range of resources directly available to schools and discovering new ways to engage with local schools continue to be important ongoing tasks for SACRE. SACRE continue to seek to broaden and renew the membership of Islington SACRE, recruiting faith and belief representatives from a number of traditions, as well as local teachers, young people, and others. The essential value of SACRE to local schools is that all voices are heard and every perspective is included. |
| 2. | Recommendations |
| 2.1 | <p>To accept this report and agree the recommendations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recommendation 1: increase the diversity and membership of SACRE, and to work collaboratively with the Islington Youth Council Recommendation 2: continue to develop a range of resources that support the Islington Syllabus and Scheme of Work Recommendation 3: continue to develop professional development opportunities for staff across Islington Recommendation 4: implement the RE Syllabus and Scheme of Work in light of the Islington Recovery Curriculum and the Children’s Scrutiny Education Inequalities 14 recommendations with a particular focus at KS3 and KS4. |
| 3. | Background |
| 3.1 | <p>Advice to statutory bodies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SACRE has written up-to-date advice which is shared on Islington Council’s website. This advice is for schools, parents, Local Authority parties or any other interested member of the community. An online function enables members of the public to contact Anthony Doudle, Head of School Improvement and SACRE lead on the council, to ensure SACRE can receive questions and comments. So far SACRE have published national guidance about diversity of religion and belief as well as the 2017 Agreed Syllabus for Islington. SACRE also provides guidance (via CS Islington) on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting students during Ramadan Matters of religion and belief associated with PE (Physical Education) Collective Worship in schools Sex and Relationships education requirements. <p>Additionally, the Head of School Improvement: Primary, works directly with Heads and Deputies across Islington. Where necessary this provides a platform for keeping senior leaders abreast of news about SACRE. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinating and convening support groups and the summer Conference (impossible in 2020). Supporting schools to be well prepared for an Ofsted “Deep Dive” in light of the renewed focus that schools are providing a curriculum is broad and balanced. |

3.2 Standards and Quality of Provision of RE:

- From 2018 Religious Studies at GCSE are graded using a 1-9 system, rather than A*-G, known now as the 'legacy' system.

| GCSE RS entries & results 2020 compared to 2019 and 2018 | | | |
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| Grade | Results 2018 | Results 2019 | Results 2020 |
| 9 | 12 | 34 | 32 |
| 8 | 26 | 55 | 31 |
| 7 | 43 | 74 | 46 |
| 6 | 70 | 79 | 79 |
| 5 | 71 | 84 | 65 |
| 4 | 59 | 60 | 67 |
| 3 | 49 | 62 | 77 |
| 2 | 19 | 35 | 33 |
| 1 | 13 | 9 | 16 |
| U | 3 | 4 | 6 |
| X | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| # Entries | 365 | 497 | 452 |
| # 7+ | 81 | 163 | 109 |
| # 4+ | 318 | 386 | 320 |
| 7+ grades included in performance tables* as % of entries | 22.2 | 32.8 | 24.1 |
| 4+ grades included in performance tables* as % of entries | 87.1 | 77.7 | 70.8 |
| Entries included in perf. tables as % of Roll. | 25.9 | 33.8 | 30.8 |
| Average Point Score | 5.0 | 5.36 | 4.95 |

3.3 GCSE examination results:

- The table above illustrates the 3 year trend for Religious Studies at GCSE level. **2019** outcomes are better than those for 2018 for all indicators - % 4+, % 7+ whether we look at % of entrants passed or % of roll that passed. In 2019 there was a large increase in the number of pupils taking RE compared to 2018 (497 compared to 365, an increase of 36%).
- 2020** results are a reflection on the impact of COVID-19, the lockdown of schools and the partial reopening and the challenges of the teacher assessment processes that secondary schools were asked by the DFE to implement. The number of entries decreased by 45 in 2020. Pupils achieving the highest grade (9) remained stable compared to 2019. Work is being planned to work with secondary schools to raise the profile of Religious Education studies at KS3 and KS4

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| 3.4 | <p>Quality of RE provision in schools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At primary, SACRE has begun to reap the rewards of a deliberate effort to reach out to and support teachers of RE at Primary. In 2017- 2018 network meetings focussed on the Agreed Syllabus; sharing information for those not at the launch, workshopping teaching approaches and sharing best practice. The focus in 2018-19 was on assessment of the Agreed Syllabus. In 2019 – 2020 the focus had been prior to lock down was the preparation of subject leaders for a “Deep Dive” during an Ofsted inspection of a school. • At Secondary, since the loss of the Secondary lead teacher, contact between SACRE and Secondary teachers has declined somewhat. The 2017 Agreed Syllabus made full provision for Secondary however nationally there is a tendency for Secondary’s to engage with their locally Agreed Syllabus only so far as it supports the GCSE. Ofsted do not recommend this, but it happens. There is much in the Agreed Syllabus that could support teachers at KS3 in offering a rich and age-appropriate learning experience at KS3, which is also good preparation for KS4. • SACRE continue to encourage all schools to achieve RE Quality Mark (REQM) • Exploring the establishment of a Youth SACRE |
| 3.5 | <p>Withdrawal and Complaints:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There have been no complaints about RE and no requests for withdrawal. • There have been no requests for change of designation and no complaints about collective worship. • There have been two FOI requests which were responded within the statutory time frame. |
| 3.6 | <p>Agreed Syllabus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Agreed Syllabus for Islington was launched in 2017 and has been well received by schools, thanks to the ongoing support from external support from RE Today and the Islington School Improvement Service, in highlighting and disseminating information about the syllabus and the concomitant resources. • SACRE is aware that the Commission of RE (Report, 2018) has recommended changes to SACREs in future, to be renamed Local Advisory Networks for Religion and Worldviews, and significantly to lose their statutory duty to review and produce an Agreed Syllabus every 5 yrs. • SACRE will keep abreast of any policy or pressures which suggest such changes might be underway through the input of the RE adviser and updates from NASACRE. • SACRE will prepare to review the 2017 Agreed Syllabus in 2022 as it is uncertain whether changes to primary legislation will occur before then. This work will begin in 2021. |
| 3.7 | <p>Collective Worship:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SACRE provides a comprehensive guidance on Collective Worship (CW) on the website covering the legal requirements, its presence in different school types and the difference between ‘collective’ and ‘corporate’ worship. • Collective Worship is a statutory requirement in all schools. The legal requirement to provide a daily act of Collective Worship and religious education in the curriculum, known as the ‘religious clauses’, stems from the 1944 Education Act. • In this Act RE was included in the school day as Christian faith nurture rather than an academic subject of the curriculum. Some schools find the requirement for Collective Worship an anomaly, other schools do not offer worship in a religious sense but bring pupils together to celebrate shared values and develop a sense of |

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| | <p>trust, commitment and community. The future for RE seems to be as an academic subject rather than personal growth.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We believe Islington SACRE’s continued guidance on Collective Worship, including non-religious approaches to Collective Worship, is an example of good practice. • As noted, there have been no requests for change of determination or complaints about Collective Worship |
| 3.8 | <p>Management of SACRE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two meetings of SACRE were held in 2019, including the AGM in May. The meeting of 4th November was cancelled due to the General Election and the absence of Local Authority representatives. Ordinary meetings in 2020 were cancelled due to the pandemic. • Islington Council is responsible for the composition of SACRE. Islington SACRE is made up of three groups: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Representatives of the Church of England, other Christian denominations and other religions and world-views to reflect broadly the diversity of belief in the area. Currently this includes representatives of Christian, Muslim and Jain faiths and Humanist worldview ○ Associations representing teachers. Currently this includes both Primary and Secondary school teachers from Islington Schools ○ Local Council representatives ○ Local authority adviser |
| 3.9 | <p>Contribution of SACRE to the wider Local Authority agenda:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School partnerships: supporting groups of schools to work together share good practice, and understand for themselves their strategic goals and how to achieve them. In bringing teachers together for network/CPD meetings and conference SACRE is contributing to school’s ability to collaborate effectively. In briefing Deputies and Governors on RE-related matters, including the work of teachers, SACRE supports schools’ knowledge and understanding of the wider educational picture. • Attainment measures: in line with national levels. With a focus on assessment and learning outcomes Islington, SACRE enables teachers of RE to create high quality teaching and learning and assessment materials. This means pupils have the opportunity to achieve the highest levels in RE. Teachers’ understanding of (a) high quality learning and (b) how to assess this are the essential first steps in raising attainment and SACRE is supporting Primary teachers well with this. • SACRE’s contribution to the LA’s public sector equality duty: Islington SACRE contributes to the borough’s wider equality duty by actively recruiting and welcoming people from diverse backgrounds. Islington is a diverse borough and SACRE reflects this. Members are not expected to integrate into a dominant culture, but each represent their own particular background, expertise and commitments. In this sense SACRE is a good example of collaboration and shared goals achieved in a pluralistic culture. A Youth SACRE could offer the same plural, collaborative culture for young people in Islington. It is hoped to make progress with involving younger voices once there is capacity to do so. • However, diversity of faith and belief is only one type of diversity. The Commission of RE final report recommends SACREs enlarge to include expertise from education, academia, museums and galleries, as well as faith and belief ‘insiders’. A next step will be to consider what strategic relationships and partnership with local educational and cultural organisations may support the work of SACRE. |

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| 3.10 | <p>Planned future work:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Published guidance on religious observance days ● Supporting families and young people with the implementation of Relationship and Sex Education and how the teaching of RE can support this ● Continue to work with schools to improve RE provision and making better use of “Places of Interest/Worship” to enhance and engage learning opportunities ● Produced exemplars of learning outcomes to support the Agreed syllabus ● Continue to brief school leaders and Governors on RE-related matters ● Continue to support schools develop their preparedness for a “Deep Dive” during an Ofsted inspection ● Enlarged and renew the SACRE membership ● Organise a summer/autumn conference (2020) for teachers and SACRE members ● Begin a process of reviewing the current RE Syllabus and Schemes of Work which will inform the Children Service’s Education Equalities Plan and discussion with schools will explore good practice and challenges. |
| 4. | Implications |
| 4.1 | Financial implications: |
| | There are no financial implications from the recommendations in this report. |
| 4.2 | Legal Implications: |
| | <p>The authority must constitute a standing advisory council on religious education (SACRE), to advise the authority on religious worship in community and non-denominational foundation schools and religious education to be given in connection with an agreed or other syllabus (sections 390 and 391 Education Act 1996). SACRE must publish an annual report, in particular in relation to advice given to the authority (section 391(6) and (7) Education Act 1996).</p> |
| 4.3 | Resident Impact Assessment: |
| | <p>The council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and to advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations, between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it (section 149 Equality Act 2010). The council has a duty to have due regard to the need to remove or minimise disadvantages, take steps to meet needs, in particular steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities, and encourage people to participate in public life. The council must have due regard to the need to tackle prejudice and promote understanding.</p> <p>A Resident Impact Assessment has not been completed because Religious Education is a statutory requirement and it supports schools and settings to enact the Equality Act of 2010.</p> |
| 4.4 | Environmental Implications and contribution to achieving a net zero carbon Islington by 2030: |
| | There are no environmental Implications as a result of the recommendations in this report. |
| 5. | Reason for recommendations |

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| 5.1 | No further recommendations – please refer to section 2 |
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Final report clearance:

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| Signed by: | | |
| | Corporate Director, People | Date: |

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