

WALSALL COUNCIL

***STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION***

MONDAY, 16 JULY 2018

**NOTICE OF MOTION TO COUNCIL ON
13 NOVEMBER, 2017**

1. Purpose of this report:

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide SACRE with a progress update following the Notice of Motion submitted to Council on 13th November, 2017.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That SACRE members note the content of the report and progress to date following the Notice of Motion.

3. Background

- 3.1 At its meeting held on 9 October, 2017, SACRE members resolved to co-ordinate a Notice of Motion in response to a document submitted by RE Today Services entitled 'Why Do Schools think it is OK to run Illegal RE?'
- 3.2 On 13 November, the following Notice of Motion was passed at full Council:-

Council notes that the National Association of Teachers of Religious Education (NATRE) analysis reveals that the results of a survey shows that 25% of all secondary schools failed to provide a weekly Religious Education (RE) lesson. This percentage rose to 34% for 11 to 13 year olds and 44 % of 14 to 16 year old in academies and free schools. This survey took evidence from over 790 secondary schools.

Council acknowledges the high importance of RE in promoting a cohesive society. A Cohesion and Integration Strategy is being developed here in Walsall, that will, amongst other objectives, equip pupils with the vital knowledge about different faiths and beliefs in community, public and world affairs and so resolves to:

- (1) *support the actions of Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) here in Walsall in researching the level of RE provision particularly KS4, in Walsall secondary schools.*
- (2) *join with Walsall SACRE to write to the Secretary of State for education to urge that Central Government will instruct OFSTED to also check on curriculum provision to ensure that schools comply to provide a legal amount of RE.*

- (3) *write to all secondary schools here in Walsall to remind them of their legal obligation to provide RE under the 1998 school standards and framework act.*

4.0 Progress to Date following the Notice of Motion

4.1 Following the Notice of Motion, the subsequent actions have been followed:-

4.1.1 A letter was from the Assistant Director – Access & Achievement was sent out to all Head Teachers of Secondary Schools reminding them of their legal obligations and the letter included a survey for completion which undertook to establish the level of RE provision in the Borough – a total of 19 secondary schools of which 18 are academies. A copy of the letter to all Head Teachers is enclosed at Appendix 1, along with an overview sheets and completed surveys received from the following schools at Appendix 2:-

- Aldridge School, An Academy
- Barr Beacon School
- Blue Coat Church of England Academy
- Brownhills School
- Grace Academy, Darlaston
- West Walsall E-Act Academy

4.1.2 A letter to the Rt Hon Damian Hinds MP, Secretary of State for Education was signed off by both the Chair of SACRE and the Chief Executive of Walsall Council advising him of the notice of motion and seeking his support to instruct OFSTED to review curriculum provision to ensure that all schools are providing a legal amount of Religious Education. A copy of this letter is attached at Appendix 3.

5.0 Financial

5.1 There has been no financial outlay for this report

Elaine Maher
Education Advisor



Children's Services

Your Ref:
Our Ref: LP / CB / JR
Date: 12 January 2018

Dear Head Teacher

Religious Education Survey

One of the responsibilities of the Local Authority through SACRE (Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education) is to monitor the provision and standards in Religious Education. As you will see from the motion below the Council wish to collate information about RE provision in Walsall. The information collated will be shared with all Walsall secondary schools and academies.

Therefore please would you complete the attached pro-forma and return it to Elaine Maher by 26 January 2018 at elaine.maher@walsall.gov.uk.

I also attach additional information which may be useful, however if the person completing the form has any questions, they should email Elaine Maher and she will be happy to help.

Notice of Motion 16 November 2017

Council notes that the National Association of Teachers of Religious Education (NATRE) analysis reveals that the results of a survey shows that 25% of all secondary schools failed to provide a weekly Religious Education (RE) lesson. This percentage rose to 34% for 11 to 13 year olds and 44 % of 14 to 16 year old in academies and free schools. This survey took evidence from over 790 secondary schools. Council acknowledges the high importance of RE in promoting a cohesive society. A Cohesion and Integration Strategy is being developed here in Walsall, which will, amongst other objectives, equip pupils with the vital knowledge about different faiths and beliefs in community, public and world affairs and so resolves to:

- (1) Support the actions of Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) here in Walsall in researching the level of RE provision particularly KS4, in Walsall secondary schools.***
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- (3) Write to all secondary schools here in Walsall to remind them of their legal obligation to provide RE under the 1998 school standards and framework act.***

I would like to thank you in anticipation of your help with this survey.

Yours faithfully

Lynda Poole

Assistant Director – Access & Achievement

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Extract from Religious Education In English Schools 2010

The RE Curriculum in different types of schools

In all maintained schools RE must be taught according to either the locally agreed syllabus or in accordance with the school's designated religion or religious denomination, or in certain cases the trust deed relating to the school.

Community, foundation and voluntary-aided or voluntary-controlled schools without a religious character

RE must be taught according to the locally agreed syllabus adopted by the LA by which the school is maintained.

Foundation and voluntary-controlled schools with a religious character

RE provision in foundation and voluntary-controlled schools with a religious character is to be provided in accordance with the locally agreed syllabus. However, where the parent of any pupil at the school requests that RE is provided in accordance with the provisions of the trust deed relating to the school (or, where there is no provision in the trust deed, in accordance with the religion or denomination mentioned in the order designating the school as having a religious character), then the governors must make arrangements for securing that RE is provided to the pupil in accordance with the relevant religion for up to two periods a week unless they are satisfied that there are special circumstances which would make it unreasonable to do so.

Voluntary –aided schools with a religious character

In these schools RE is to be determined by the governors and in accordance with the provisions of the trust deed relating to the school or, where there is no provision in the trust deed, with the religion or denomination mentioned in the order designating the school as having a religious character.

However, where parents prefer their children to receive RE in accordance with the locally agreed syllabus, and they cannot reasonably or conveniently send their children to a school where the syllabus is in use, then the governing body must make arrangements for RE to be provided to the children within the school in accordance with the locally agreed syllabus unless they are satisfied that there are special circumstances which would make it unreasonable to do so.

If the LA is satisfied that the governing body is unwilling to make such arrangements, the LA must make the instead.

Academies

Academies are all-ability, state-funded schools managed by independent sponsors, established under Section 482 of the Education Act 1996. Some academies have a religious character.

All academies are required, through their funding agreements, to teach RE. For academies without a religious character, this will be the locally agreed syllabus Schedule 19(3), School Standards and Framework Act 1998 Schedule 19(2), School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

For denominational academies with a religious character (Church of England or Roman Catholic – but also Muslim and most Jewish academies), this will be in line with the denominational syllabus, For non-denominational (such as Christian) faith academies this can be either or the above, depending on the wishes of the sponsor and what is agreed by Ministers.



Overview of Returned R.E. Surveys

- 19 secondary schools and academies in Walsall, of which 18 are academies.
- 6 returned the R.E. survey – responding to queries re:-
 - Current number of pupils studying R.E.
 - Weekly allocation for R.E.
 - Students opting for R.E.
 - How R.E. is delivered
- Academies do not have to reply to this survey
- The responses show a varied picture of R.E. provision, but 4 of the 6 replies show that in those settings, 100% of pupils received R.E.
- At least 240 pupils (in the survey) have opted to take R.E. at GCSE, School E says:-
'Hearing R.E. as an option and the amount of time that is given is fantastic. It allows for the depth in study that is needed to analyse, as well as cover content.'

To The Rt Hon Damian Hinds MP
Secretary of State for Education
Department for Education,
Ministerial and Public Communications Division,
Piccadilly Gate,
Store Street,
Manchester,
M1 2WD

Dear Minister

Notice of Motion – Religious Education

I write to advise that the following notice of motion was passed at a meeting of Council held on 13th November, 2017:-

Council notes that the National Association of Teachers of Religious Education (NATRE) analysis reveals that the results of a survey shows that 25% of all secondary schools failed to provide a weekly Religious Education (RE) lesson. This percentage rose to 34% for 11 to 13 year olds and 44 % of 14 to 16 year old in academies and free schools. This survey took evidence from over 790 secondary schools.

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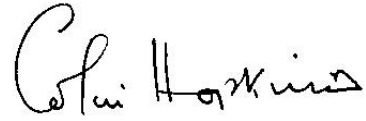
- (1) support the actions of Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) here in Walsall in researching the level of RE provision particularly KS4, in Walsall secondary schools.*
- (2) join with Walsall SACRE to write to the Secretary of State for education to urge that Central Government will instruct OFSTED to also check on curriculum provision to ensure that schools comply to provide a legal amount of RE.*
- (3) write to all secondary schools here in Walsall to remind them of their legal obligation to provide RE under the 1998 school standards and framework act.*

In relation to points 1 and 2, the Council has written to Walsall schools to remind them of their legal obligations and undertook to establish the level of RE Provision in the Borough.

However, as this is a national matter, your support is being sought to instruct OFSTED to review curriculum provision to ensure that all schools are providing a legal amount of Religious Education.

We would welcome a response from you in relation to this matter.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Colin Hopkins". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'C'.

Dr Helen Paterson
Chief Executive

Colin Hopkins
Chair - Standing Advisory
Council on Religious Education