



STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

AGENDA

6.30 pm	Tuesday 14 July 2015	The Salvation Army Citadel High Road Romford
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Members **25**: Quorum **8** **BUT** a minimum of **one** representative **must** attend from each group

Representative Groups (current membership)

Group A

Representing
Christian denominations and
other religious
denominations (16):

Dr John Lester (Chairman), Baha'i faith
Mrs Christine Seymour (Vice Chairman), Humanist
Mrs Pamela Coles, Methodist
Mr Om Dhir, Hindu
Mr Sansar Narwal, Sikh
Mr Kamal Siddiqui, Sunni Muslim
Mr Tariq Mahmood, Sunni Muslim
Rabbi Lee Sunderland, Jewish
Saddhabhaya, Buddhist
Mr Kevin Walsh, Roman Catholic
Mrs Jenny Fox, Salvation Army
Mrs Dawn Ladbrook, Evangelical Free Church
Pastor Aloysius Peter, Pentecostal Church
Mr John Smailes, Evangelical Free Church
Mr Nasir Mubashar, Ahmadiyya Muslim
Revd. Dorothee Bührma, United Reformed Church

Group B

Representing the
Church of England (2):

Mrs Sue Freeman
Mrs Stephanie Ellner

Group C

Representing
teachers (2):

Ms Linda Munday, Teachers (NUT-Primary)
Mrs Kirsty Fanning (ATL)

Group D

Representing the
Local Authority (5):

Councillor Gillian Ford
Councillor Jason Frost
Councillor Dilip Patel
Councillor June Alexander
Councillor Joshua Chapman

Councillor Wendy Brice-Thompson (co-optee)

For information about the meeting please contact:
Grant Soderberg - Tel: 01708 433091
E-mail: grant.soderberg@onesource.co.uk

Protocol for members of the public wishing to report on meetings of the London Borough of Havering

Members of the public are entitled to report on meetings of Council, Committees and Cabinet, except in circumstances where the public have been excluded as permitted by law.

Reporting means:-

- filming, photographing or making an audio recording of the proceedings of the meeting;
- using any other means for enabling persons not present to see or hear proceedings at a meeting as it takes place or later; or
- reporting or providing commentary on proceedings at a meeting, orally or in writing, so that the report or commentary is available as the meeting takes place or later if the person is not present.

Anyone present at a meeting as it takes place is not permitted to carry out an oral commentary or report. This is to prevent the business of the meeting being disrupted.

Anyone attending a meeting is asked to advise Democratic Services staff on 01708 433076 that they wish to report on the meeting and how they wish to do so. This is to enable employees to guide anyone choosing to report on proceedings to an appropriate place from which to be able to report effectively.

Members of the public are asked to remain seated throughout the meeting as standing up and walking around could distract from the business in hand.

Announcement of the arrangements in case of fire or other events which might require the evacuation of the meeting-room or building.

Please turn off or mute any mobile phone

AGENDA ITEMS

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE - IF ANY, TO RECEIVE

2 NEW OR SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

To note any substitute members present at the meeting and welcome any new members.

3 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING (Pages 1 - 4)

To agree as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 26 March 2015 and to authorise the Chairman to sign them and to address any matters arising therefrom.

4 UPDATE ON SCHOOL ACTIVITY (Pages 5 - 14)

To receive oral and written reports (see attached) from the Primary and Secondary phase representatives and to comment on them or propose action as necessary.

5 NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (Pages 15 - 18)

To receive oral and written reports (see attached) and to comment on, or propose action as appropriate.

6 UPDATE ON THE JOINT AGREED SYLLABUS CONFERENCE WITH REDBRIDGE (Pages 19 - 20)

An opportunity for Havering members to raise any final observations, or propose any minor amendments for inclusion in the final Syllabus.

7 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Any member may raise issues previously notified to either the Chairman or the Clerk (unless the issue relates to a matter arising from the meeting itself or is of an urgent nature, when the Chairman will determine whether to allow it or not).

8 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Autumn Term: **Wednesday 21st October**. To set a date for the Spring Term 2016 if possible

GRANT SÖDERBERG
Clerk to SACRE

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**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
Town Hall Main Road Romford
26 March 2015 (7.00 - 8.15 pm)**

**Representing other
Christian and religious
denominations
(Group A)**

Dr John Lester
Mrs Jenny Fox
Pastor Aloysius Peter
Saddhabhaya
Mr John Smailes
Mr Kevin Walsh
Mr Kamal Siddiqui
Mr Tariq Mahmood
+Ms Natalie Kehr

**Representing the
Church of England
(Group B)**

Mrs Susan Freeman

**Representing the
Teaching
Profession
(Group C)**

Mr Nick Hills
Ms Linda Munday
Mrs Kirsty Fanning

**Representing the
Local Authority
Councillors
(Group D)**

Gillian Ford
Alex Donald

Ms Susan Sutton representing Hsis in the absence of a Primary Advisor was also present.

18 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE & NEW OR SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Meg Davis, Jason Frost and Dilip Patel, Mrs Christine Seymour (+Mrs Natalie Kehr substituted) and Mr Sansar Narwal, Revd Dorothee Bűrma of the United Reformed Church, Mrs Pamela Coles and Mrs Stephanie Ellner tendered apologies after the meeting.

19 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING

The Minutes of the meeting held on 9 October 2014 were agreed and signed by the Chairman. There were no matters arising from that meeting.

20 UPDATE ON SCHOOL ACTIVITY

The current position was that the Senior Advisor was on extended leave and until other arrangements could be put in place, there would be no – or very little - information for SACRE concerning this area. Since Mrs Payne's retirement, Ms Sutton would provide members with updates on the activities of Hsis in relation to Primary education. Mrs Fanning said that she would be willing to consider the role of Secondary Advisor during Daniel's absence and this was welcomed by members.

Primary / Secondary:

Ms Sutton informed SACRE that the RE Networks would be meeting on 28th March and the central subject being considered would be “Preventing Extremism”. It would be held at St Ursula’s and feature Kate Christopher who had a widely published background.

She confirmed that the Joint Agreed Syllabus was on track for completion this summer and that a launch date had been proposed – 25th September and this would be a time for both Havering and Redbridge SACREs to join up. She reported that over the previous couple of months there had been a rise in interest in RE. Training for school governors was including RE and Mrs Jackie Keylock (Hsis) had run the programme and 25 governors had attended. Ms Sutton added that the course would be re-run in the Summer Term.

Ms Sutton then informed SACRE that there was to be an audit of RE skills across both the Primary and Secondary sectors. Whilst there was a good deal of positive developments in the Primary Phase, sadly there was no interest in taking the Primary Lead.

Concerning SMSC (Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural) development, some 30% of schools had shown interest. Councillor Ford observed that RE in schools was being criticised. There were reports about racism from parents and she wondered whether this would be something SACRE could become involved in: providing information to parents about the importance of RE. Ms Sutton said that this could be tried through the Primary Panels and she thought it could be taken forward by them. Councillor Ford wondered just how much RE was being promoted and Ms Sutton replied that schools had to make an RE statement on their websites, though Mrs Fanning said that she had not seen much of that.

The discussion continued with Councillor Ford arguing that any meaningful change had to be started at Primary level and whilst this received general agreement, it was observed that in order to address some religious-based issues, it might be prudent to target resources at schools which had problems rather than across all of them. All agreed that this would be a subject that would be returned to often in the future.

21 NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

In the absence of Mr Hugill, Mrs Fanning stated that she considered that reformed RE studies could be the answer to current pressures. Pupils would have to study two religions. This would be more contextual with less emphasis on philosophy and ethics and could be a positive way to explore the subject. There was some discussion about whether this was the best way to promote RE, but in general, members were of the opinion that despite a sense of national unease, RE study was being positively promoted in local “pockets” of excellence and that these needed to be encouraged and adapted to the needs of other localities. The answer might lie in networking.

22 UPDATE ON THE JOINT AGREED SYLLABUS CONFERENCE WITH REDBRIDGE

It was reiterated that the launch was certainly scheduled for September and that it was being proposed for both SACREs to meet in June to consider and adopt the draft Joint RE Syllabus, which would then be presented to both Councils ahead of the launch. The Chairman stated that it would be good if the joint meeting happened ahead of the summer meeting and if the Syllabus was adopted by both SACREs, members could have an opportunity to consider it in more detail at its own meeting.

23 THE MICHAEL EDWARDS AWARD - WHAT NEXT?

Members were uncertain about whether the Michael Edwards Award really had a viable future. A new generation had grown up which had not known him and the pressures within RE at the Primary phase and the fragmentation in the Senior Phase with the proliferation of Academies, meant that the earlier cohesiveness which helped promote the ideals of the award, no longer existed.

Some members expressed a sadness about this change, but all appreciated that things do not stay the same and on being told that Michael's widow was moving away from the area, there was a general feeling that it might be time to move on.

A suggestion was made that once the new curriculum was in place and the general picture of RE settled down, something else would suggest itself and SACRE could promote that and if it could be associated with Michael Edwards's memory (if appropriate) that decision could be made then but for the present the Award would no longer continue.

24 THE ANNUAL REPORT - 2014

Members were invited to comment about this year's Annual Report and some comments were made about the content of the tables and Mr Hills observed that Secondary schools only had an hour a week for RE and this was barely sufficient to teach the GCSE Short Course. He observed that the three-year RE GCSE (full-course) was being offered in September and he feared that weaker students would be put off and that this would not be beneficial overall.

Whilst some members had some misgivings about the general state of RE within the school curriculum and the way it was perceived, they considered that the Annual Report as a whole reflected what was happening and what SACRE had done during the past year and approved it unanimously..

25 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Nick Hills announced that this was his last meeting as he was leaving the borough and going to the Anglo-European School in Essex. He was wished well by members.

The Chairman mentioned that the AGM of the Interfaith Group would be taking place on the 23rd April and Kevin Walsh reminded members that the Passion Play would take place again this Easter on the green outside the Queen's Theatre in Hornchurch and urged members to support it by attending.

Saddhabhaya said that he would be very happy to visit schools to talk to staff and pupils about Buddhism.

26 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Members were asked where the summer visit should be and on a request from the Chairman, Mrs Fox said that the Salvation Army would be pleased to host the meeting. This was welcomed and agreed, though no date was set as she would have to confirm availability. Members were also asked about an autumn date and the 22nd October was provisionally requested.

Chairman

SACRE Primary Update

1 Networks

A primary network event focused on the contribution of RE to British values and Social, Moral, Spiritual and Cultural (SMSC) education was held on x at St Ursula's Junior school on 28th April 2015. The event was well attended with 26 attendees. Kate Christopher from RE Today led the session. We looked at how teachers promote religious understanding and looked at some suitable resources for this. The network event also looked at how teachers tackle pre-conceived or stereotypical ideas pupils may bring to lessons.

Future Network dates are set for

1st October 2015

26th January 2016

27th April 2016

2 Islam workshops

The SMSC/EMA (Ethnic Minority Achievement) advisor from Hsis attended workshops and an assembly for pupils run by Imran Kotwal of Living Islam, who offers pupil workshops and teacher training on understanding Islam, also in St Ursula's Infants and Junior schools. She reported back that the sessions were excellent and that pupils were highly engaged. The pitch was right and the tone created a real sense of "awe and wonder". Michelle will be commissioning a session from the presenter for teachers cross phase and this will include some tasters of his work with pupils, with a view to schools commissioning sessions. Two schools in cluster could share a one day session.

The training session will be put on through Hsis and will run in November (date TBC).

3 Other developments

Michelle Wain is also visiting a school in Northbury, noted for its excellent practice in understanding religious and cultural needs within a British context. We have recently had an increasing number of enquiries from schools regarding what constitutes appropriate provision with regards to issues such as changing for PE and fasting for example. This could then be used to disseminate some basic guidance and ideas to schools.

The national standards for RE have been put on the Hsis frontier site for schools.

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Update on School Activity

SECONDARY

The previous informal meets happening between teachers from mostly Secondary but some primary, progressed into the formal creation of 'The London RE Hub'.

Andy Lewis, from Sacred Heart of Mary Girls' School, along with Deborah Weston and lots of other helpers organised the Hub's first RE Conference on Saturday, 28th April. It was a sell-out and featured lots of passionate teachers and speakers running sessions for others to attend. The Ismaili Centre in Kensington generously hosted the event, and it created lots of positive feedback on social media. A big congratulation should be recorded for Andy especially, and to Deborah and others involved.

Next year, there will hopefully be some network meetings for RE teachers as part of the Teaching School model for CPD in Havering. Hall Mead School in Upminster is the designated teaching school from September 2014 so is in its first year but will look to expand and develop next year. This could include the first SLE (Specialist Leader of Education) for RE, who would then be available to help other schools and facilitate training and networks.

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Questionnaire for RE

School : Towers Junior School

Key stages covered:

Provision/ Curriculum

1 What is your current RE provision in each Key stage?

2 What other provision is made for teaching about religion/ religious tolerance?

- Assemblies?
- SMSC content?
- Trips/ visiting speakers?
- Other describe

3 Do you use the Havering locally agreed SACRE syllabus and /or schemes of work as a basis for your RE curriculum delivery?

5 If secondary Phase are all pupils able to study for an accredited course in RE if they choose to?

- If no – why not (it is a statutory requirement)?
- If yes – what courses are offered?
- What was the uptake in the current year 11 and year 10?
- Have there been any trends in recent years with uptake?
- Do you foresee changes to examinations and accountability measures having any impact of you choices of accreditation or uptake?

6 If secondary- do pupils in KS4 who have not opted to take an accredited course have curriculum time for RE?

- If no why not?
- If yes please describe your arrangements.

Standards and assessment

Leadership

9 Who is responsible for leading on RE?

- Is there a senior leader involved?
- Is the leader of RE a specialist RE teacher?

10 Do you have any specialist RE teachers?

- What are the qualifications of staff teaching RE?
- What support /training is in place or has taken place to ensure non-specialists teaching RE or elements of it have adequate subject knowledge?

Development

11 Do you think the role of RE is more important in the new curriculum and with the new Ofsted framework?

- Are you considering strengthening your offer?
- What changes are you hoping to make?

12 Would you have anyone on your staff that would be willing to serve as a teacher representative for one year minimum on SACRE?

(Very much need teacher involvement to shape practice, need not be RE specialist, good opportunity for professional development, approximately 3/4 evening meetings a year, possible involvement in consultation on new agreed syllabus development if wished to)

RE teaching survey- primary

17 Responses:

2 infants' schools

4 junior schools

5 primary schools

1 Church of England primary

3 Catholic primary schools

1 secondary academy

1 secondary Catholic school

Provision

RE is taught as a discrete subject by all respondents and also almost all schools covered elements of RE through other curriculum subjects, even though there is discrete provision. The most commonly cited links were PSHE, history, geography, and literacy, although, science, philosophy for children, art, design, ICT, expressive arts and circle time were also cited.

Discrete curriculum time was generally 10% of the timetable, or around an hour a week, though this did vary down to 30 minutes a week in some key stage 1. This is broadly in accordance with QCAD recommendations.

Teaching is often woven into the topics and assessed as part of understanding the world and personal development in early years or covered within topics in schemes such as The Edison curriculum or Discover schemes.

All respondents made the point that there are curricular links through other subjects and topics and this was a strong theme.

"Our RE teaching is the golden thread that runs through all that we do"

All respondents used assemblies to teach RE and in a small minority of schools this was included within the curriculum time specified. Assemblies all devoted some time to celebrating or educating about the key religious festivals associated with major world religions. However there was a clear predominant focus on Christianity as is required.

All respondents used assemblies to focus on religious, but also human values, drawing attention to the roles of these common values in other major religions.

All respondents considered that implicitly or explicitly their SMSC programme contributed to religious understanding through a focus on values, reflection and in many cases explored the similarities between cultures and faiths.

Just under half of respondents offered trips for pupils to places of worship. These were predominantly Church, but, Mosque, Synagogue and temples were also cited. A small number of respondents said that they invite faith representatives to speak on site, (other than faith schools). This included representatives from Christian, Muslim and Jewish faiths. Various faiths celebrated through assemblies and festivals, those names were Christian, Buddhist, Muslim, Jewish, Sikh and Hindu.

Schools also participated in other key religion related events, such as Holocaust Memorial Day and the Edwaredtide pilgrimage. School also had trips to places of religious significance through not worship, for example the Islamic Centre and the Holocaust

survivors centre Schools also used key cultural events from other cultures, such as Chinese New Year to explore both social and religious understanding of other cultures. A small number of schools had commissioned workshops in school to explore other religions with their pupils, for example Buddhist and Hinduism workshops.

Locally agreed syllabus

All but one respondent was aware of the locally agreed syllabus and that it was in the process of revision. All respondents to some extent use or refer to the locally agreed syllabus, though there were a number of responses which indicated that some links provided no longer work and that resources are often out of date, and in general there was eager anticipation regarding the launch of the new syllabus.

Faith school respondents use their own locally agreed diocesan schools' syllabus and therefore did not use the locally agreed syllabus. Two respondents used the locally agreed syllabus alongside QCA schemes of work. Many schools were reviewing their curriculum in line with the new national curriculum. There was a slight element of frustration that the new syllabus had not been made available this academic year since it is the time when schools have been reviewing their entire curriculum planning.

Teaching and leading RE

All respondents had someone leading on RE. This varied widely from the head teacher to other senior leaders, phase leaders, year leaders, the SMSC lead, subject coordinators and an HTLA.

About two thirds had involvement of a senior leader, whilst a third monitored this though the usual arrangements for non core subjects. Only two schools had someone with specialist training, but more often this was based on interest. One school used the specialist RE teacher to enable time for mentoring of pupil premium pupils by the class teachers.

In most schools, the RE lead was responsible for any training. Some reported no training for class teachers. There were very few sources of training or support mentioned, beyond the LA training and network events and the diocesan advisor/training. One school used a secondary RE specialist teacher as a source of advice.

Assessment

All but one school assess pupils for their progress in RE, though several schools commented that this is 'informal'. This is by work scrutiny, observation of participation in lessons, and portfolios of work. Most respondents used levels from the national curriculum (pre 2014) moving to the 2014 age related expectations, or were already using these. Some used I can statements within the agreed syllabus or SIMs KPIs. A significant number of schools had not yet considered how they will assess RE without levels.

The place of RE

Respondents were unanimous that they believe RE remains a key part of the curriculum. Many schools saw RE as part of their Strategy for promoting tolerance and understanding between cultures, though the approach and the coverage varied considerably.

A minority of schools indicated that the place of RE had increased as a result of the recent government and Ofsted focus on British values, including religious understanding and tolerance. It is seen as an academic subject, but also as a tool for community cohesion.

Secondary

Responses were too few to draw conclusions

Provision

Both schools provide discrete time for teaching RE at Key stages 3 and 4 so are in line with the national curriculum expectations. Both schools offer the opportunity for all pupils to take an accredited exam. 50 minutes - hour a week in Key stage 3 and 5x 50 minutes a fortnight in Key stage 4 / 2.5 hours a week for GCSE classes and an hour week within a combined RE/PSHE offer for core only pupils.

The faith school offer RE at key stage 5 this is 1x 50 minutes per fortnight.

Both school use assemblies to teach RE. Both schools make links between the wider curriculum and Re where appropriate and both make clear links to PSHE, SMSC and citizenship. Both schools offer pupils trips and wider opportunities, for example the Havering Youth Conference for RE 2014, Prayer space and Beliefs in Action and faith in action voluntary work group programmes.

Locally agreed syllabus

The faith school uses the local diocesan syllabus 'The Way, The Truth, The Life'. The academy uses the Havering agreed syllabus 'Pathways' and they have been on the working party for the on-going revision.

Teaching and leading RE

In both schools teachers and the RE lead are well qualified specialists

Assessment

All pupils are assessed. In the faith school this is based on the Bishop's Conference levels, in the academy this will be based on GCSE grades going forwards. Pupils are assessed through regular teacher assessment and through periodic testing.

Examinations

As might be expected take up is very high at the faith school at GCSE and A level is also offered. Most pupils sit accredited exams. These will not change as a result of new accountability measures.

At the academy, historically, pupils can study short or full course GCSE. This is the first year when RE examination has not been compulsory. 15 pupils are studying for GCSE in year 10. There is therefore evidential decline in numbers.

Conclusion

It seems that RE continues to be a priority in most schools, though few indicated that they felt this to be increasingly significant.

Schools were asked if there were many members of staff interested in joining the SACRE.

Wybridge Junior School indicated an interest.

National Developments

1. Teacher Supply and Bursary.

As a direct consequence of the removal of the bursary for teacher training places in RE, and the reduction in the number of places available on PGCE university based courses and Graduate Teacher Programmes, RE is now officially a shortage subject once again. My own school faced a late resignation, and despite the mammoth efforts and contacts of the Head, candidates are very few and far between. The Head reported that on the official site, RE and English are now 'RED' indicating a shortage – more so even than Physics etc.

However, in September 2014, the Government announced they were rectifying this by reinstating a bursary of up to £9000 for RE trainee teachers for 2015/16. This was welcomed by NATRE, teacher groups and faith bodies, but may not be of a sufficiently high amount to attract top candidates and if the shortage continues, they may have to raise this amount.

Please see <https://getintoteaching.education.gov.uk/bursaries-and-funding> for up to date information.

In response to the shortage in RE trainees and teachers the REC and NATRE have launched ***Beyond the Ordinary*** - a new campaign to find extraordinary individuals who have what it takes to train to become RE teachers.

You can read more about the campaign (including videos) here: <http://www.natre.org.uk/news/latest-news/re-teaching-beyond-the-ordinary/>

2. GCSE and A Level reform

The consultation on GCSE Religious Studies reform closed in January and following this, draft content was published by the DoFE. The main headlines are:

Students must study TWO faiths in equal proportion, covering beliefs and teachings AND practices: this will make up 50% of the course. Humanism is explicitly excluded from this; Catholicism can be studied distinctly from Christianity. The remaining 50% can be made up from a choice of textual studies and/or philosophy and ethical studies.

Assessment will continue to be an even split between AO1 (knowledge and understanding) and AO2 (analysis and evaluation).

All assessment will be through linear exams, no coursework, and will be assessed on a scale of 1-9 rather than the current G-A*. There will be an increase in exam time and the number of papers sat. Only OCR and WJEC

have announced their draft specifications, Edexcel and AQA are to do this in the summer.

The A Levels are also only at draft stage. The biggest changes are that the AS and A levels have been unlinked, so each is a stand-alone qualification. All assessment will be linear with papers sat at the end of each year.

3. Social Media/Twitter

The online community of RE teachers, providers and interested parties continues to grow and provides great networking, publicity and CPD opportunities.

NATRE continues to host via Twitter a monthly #rechatuk, with pre-notified topics being discussed, and all invited to comment and share. This is usually the first Monday of every month, between 8-9pm.

The next one is on Monday, 6th July, 8-9pm, questions include 'How do we teach pupils to be religiously literate about Judaism? What do they need to know? To join in or view, just use the hashtag #rechatuk.

4. NATRE Secondary Survey

NATRE has launched its annual survey on RE in secondary schools in England and urges all those who teach RE to complete it. The responses will provide NATRE with invaluable details to inform its on-going campaign to secure the place of RE in the curriculum in all types of schools in the face of significant challenges from changes in the curriculum.

As a thank-you for completing the survey, NATRE is offering a £5 voucher to use on any RE Today publications. Please encourage all secondary schools to complete this survey.

5. Impact of Government Policy on GCSE RS

This report conducted by NATRE, shows the impact that government policy has had on the GCSE entry patterns for short and full course Religious Studies.

Two elements of government policy have been described as having 'unintended negative consequences for Religious Education'. The first of these was the English Baccalaureate introduced in 2010 which was a school performance indicator measure for schools which were ranked according to the number of candidates who achieved a grade GCSE A*- C in five so-called academic subjects; English, Maths, Science, a language and History or Geography. The second decision was to change the method by which a

school's average point score was calculated. The performance indicator was a calculation of the average number of points achieved per pupil across their best 8 qualifications and is often used in league tables to rank schools by performance. From 2014, only full GCSEs could count in the calculation.

The recent release by Ofqual of provisional entries for GCSE in 2015 provides further evidence to support our claim, initially refuted by the government, that its policies were damaging the level of provision for Religious Education in England and that its legal status was insufficient as a safeguard.

Read the full report [here](#):

<http://www.natre.org.uk/uploads/Free%20Resources/Impact%20of%20government%20policy%20on%20GCSE%20RS%20270515.pdf>

6. Thinking Days

In March and April 2015, 25 leading RE practitioners were brought together for 'RE Thinking Days', organised by [Culham St Gabriel's Trust](#) and facilitated by Peter Batty.

Each practitioner was invited in a personal capacity, not representing any RE organisations. The participants were asked to envision a future for RE based on the year 2020.

The visions included a fictional Ofsted report for 2020, a grid plan showing actions at classroom, CPD and policy levels, and a timeline showing how we might get there. Vision A, which was worked on by a majority of participants, imagined significant legal and pedagogical changes. Vision B imagined continuity underpinned by widespread improvements.

All the participants in the Thinking Days agreed a convention that we would share the thinking as widely as possible with the RE community.

You can find links to the reports here: <http://www.natre.org.uk/news/latest-news/re-thinking-days-2015/>

7. *A New Settlement: Religion and Belief in Schools*

June saw the launch of the report *A New Settlement: Religion and Belief in Schools* written by Professor Linda Woodhead and The Right Honourable Charles Clarke. It contains wide-ranging proposals regarding the future of RE that will be of great interest to SACRE. You can find the full report at:

<http://faithdebates.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/A-New-Settlement-for-Religion-and-Belief-in-schools.pdf>

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UPDATE, LAUNCH & IMPLEMENTATION

The Joint Syllabus was adopted in general by representatives of both Havering & Redbridge SACRE's at a meeting held at the Salvation Army Citadel, High Road, Romford on Monday 29th June.

The draft Syllabus will need completion (with the addition of pictures, changes to text and the addition of schemes of work and other editorial changes), but each SACRE has a final opportunity to make any final suggestions which members have thought of since the draft was recently circulated.

Any proposals will be presented to the editorial team who have the final decision on whether they should be included in the final version which is due to be launched jointly by both SACREs on Friday 25th September which will also incorporate a day of study and activity. It is hoped that this will take place at CEME, but the venue and timings will be confirmed nearer the launch date. Ahead of the launch, the Syllabus will be presented to both Councils and for Havering this will be at its meeting on Wednesday 16th September.

Once the Syllabus has been launched, the Syllabus will be introduced into all the schools administered by the Local Authority and into as many other education establishments as wish to take it. It is proposed the Syllabus will "go live" at the start of the Autumn Term 2016.

GRANT SÖDERBERG
Clerk to SACRE

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