

COUNCIL, 15 JULY 2015

**STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
(SACRE)**

SUBJECT: ANNUAL REPORT 2014/15

SACREs were set up to ensure that religious and moral education was promoted and maintained throughout the nation's education system through both the Primary and Secondary phases.

This was a fairly straight-forward process as most schools were state funded and overseen by local authorities – with a few Voluntary Aided and church, faith and private schools making up the balance. This changed with the advent of the academies and – more recently – with the addition of “free schools” none of which are bound by the legislation under which SACREs operate.

This has seen some quite dramatic changes – particularly marked in the Secondary phase – of education establishments seeking to marginalise the already much diminished RE element of the syllabus (or remove it altogether or subsume it within PHSE) or find ways to minimise its presence. Curiously, this trend is being “bucked” by a number of schools which have strong RE heads of department and heads and principals who are prepared to support them and in these places, RE is thriving and even expanding.

Havering's schools have always been closely supported by its local SACRE, which in turn has been supported both in its funding and through the input of staff from the Education Service and it has sought ways to engage with practitioners and pupils alike in presenting RE in an engaging, informative and holistic manner.

The attached Annual Report from SACRE for the last academic year provides an overview of what has been achieved in the schools across the borough and what SACRE itself has been concerned with. In this last respect, the past year has been dominated by the preparation of the Agreed Syllabus. This document, the central pillar of SACRE's activities, is required, by law, to be reviewed every five years and revised (if necessary). In 2014, SACRE decided to use the opportunity to work with Redbridge's SACRE and produce a joint Syllabus and, by pooling resources, and employing the skills of nationally recognised RE experts, produce a first-class document which would serve both boroughs for the next five years and which could be made available to other local authorities.

The new Joint Agreed Syllabus will be presented to Council later this year and will be launched in late September. After that it will be in place in all the local authority's schools for use from September 2016 and all those academies which elect to use it.

Recommendation:

The Council note the attached Annual Report of SACRE.