

NAME OF COMMITTEE:	STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
DATE OF MEETING:	10th July 2014
SUBJECT:	Summary of monitoring visits to Lincolnshire schools.
REPORT BY:	Religious Education Adviser
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IS THE REPORT EXEMPT?	No
IS THE REPORT CONFIDENTIAL?	No

SUMMARY: The report summarises the positive features and areas for development in schools monitored during the spring and terms 2014.

DISCUSSION: These school visits assist Lincolnshire SACRE to carry out its statutory functions, i.e. *Circular 1/94 states that the main function of SACREs is 'to advise the authority upon such matters connected with religious worship in county schools and the religious education to be given in accordance with an agreed syllabus...'* (p.26, para 90). It also states that 'the broad role of a SACRE is to support the effective provision of RE and collective worship in schools' (p.26, para 91) and 'LEAs are encouraged to keep their SACRE fully informed on all matters relating to RE and collective worship in their schools' (p.27, para 95)

RECOMMENDATION: That the report be noted.

APPENDICES – these are listed below and attached at the back of the report.

BACKGROUND PAPERS: No background papers of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the preparation of this report.

RE monitoring visits: Spring/summer term 2014

Introduction

This report is based upon visits to 14 primary schools, one secondary and one special school.

Primary Schools

Strengths

- Strong support from headteachers helps to give the subject a high profile. Headteachers had some input in the majority of visits.
- RE is well led and managed by subject co-ordinators, many of whom are subject specialists.
- There are positive attitudes towards learning.
- RE is delivered in a way that is engaging and relevant.
- Effective cross-curricular links and increasingly creative approaches - this makes the subject more relevant for pupils.
- An increasing emphasis on questioning and enquiry.
- Good practice in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Areas for improvement

- More opportunities are required for pupils to have first hand experiences of faiths other than Christianity.
- While there are some good examples of systems in place for assessment these need to be developed further so that there is a clear view of achievement and progress. These systems need to be fully understood by teachers and pupils and applied consistently.
- More effective monitoring of RE needs to take place and needs to include things like scrutiny of work and interviews with pupils.
- In some schools the RE curriculum is too content heavy and teachers are trying to cover too many religions.

Other comments

In two of the schools there were significant problems. In the first, pupils' books are dominated by worksheets with little opportunity for them to think through their own ideas or explain their points of view. In addition there are very few opportunities for independent writing or enquiry. Teaching appears to be directed at learning **about** religion rather than **from** religion. Systems for assessment are unclear so the school does not know what standards are like in RE. However, based on work seen, standards are below expectations. WH visited the school in July 2008 and one of the areas for development then was to 'put in place systems for assessment along with monitoring and evaluation to ensure that all pupils are receiving the appropriate level of challenge and are achieving at least in line with expectations'. This does not appear to have been addressed. It may be difficult to follow up issues with this school, as it is about to become an academy.

In the second school almost every aspect of the subject is in need of development. There is a lack of coherence in relation to planning and this leads to issues around continuity and progression. This limits pupils' opportunities for learning and provides insufficient challenge across the board. Assessment needs to be much tighter in order to give a clear view of standards across all years. *It needs to be stressed that the school had identified these areas for development before WH's visit.*

Secondary school

Strengths

- Positives attitudes towards the subject from pupils.

Areas for improvement

- Lack of a subject leader and subject specialism generally.
- No provision for RE at examination level.
- Lack of opportunities for pupils to experiences faiths at first hand.
- Unclear systems for on-going assessment of pupils' work - do all pupils receive work that is adequately challenging?

Special School

Strengths

- The RE co-ordinator is an RE specialist and this ensures that teaching and learning is of a high standard.
- Community cohesion is well developed and is shown, for example, through support for a range of national and international charities.

Areas for development

- The RE co-ordinator would like to develop further the opportunities for pupils to visit different places of worship.
- The school has identified the need to develop RE within the framework of the new National Curriculum - the co-ordinator is very keen to ensure that RE does not get lost in the development of new topics, etc.

Other support

Support was provided for the RE co-ordinator at Holy Trinity CE Primary School. This was requested by the school.

Wendy Harrison
RE Adviser
June 2014