
PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

10th March 2020

Richard Burrett
Chairman, SACRE
West Sussex County Council

Dear Richard

Thank you for your letter regarding the West Sussex Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education and recent discussions that have taken place. I am pleased that the additional consultant support to the Council to support the development of the new Agreed Syllabus has been welcomed. Indeed, the existing syllabus does need significant review in light of developments nationally. Karen is a very experienced professional who I am sure will be able to guide the process through and also to provide examples of best practice. The Clerk to SACRE should be able to provide updates on national changes and developments of which you need to be aware.

In any launch of a new initiative in this way, schools will seek additional support and training. We will look at how to incorporate some training around implementation of the new syllabus into our continuing professional development (CPD) offer for the next year. Our CPD programme is through a traded service and therefore, schools will need to pay for attendance on any course in the same way they have for training and preparation around the new inspection framework for schools and the introduction of the relationships and sex education policy. However, I will speak with Karen about how best she and members of SACRE can build a training package for schools to support the implementation of the new syllabus.

With regard to monitoring religious education in schools, this is not something that we, as a local authority, have the resource or remit to undertake in the way it has been undertaken in the past. Our work in schools is guided through the Schools Causing Concern Protocol set by the Department for Education. Therefore, our School Effectiveness service is focused around this protocol and intervention in schools in inverse proportion to success. We do not and have not had subject specialists working in the service for some time. It would therefore be helpful to understand what SACRE would like to know and we will, in the meantime, research how other local authorities are responding to a similar brief. Summarising Ofsted inspection outcomes is not relevant as most inspections would not make reference to RE other than within the SIAMs Church School inspection reports. Although we do not have an officer who can regularly attend SACRE meetings, if we can agree how best to report back to SACRE, I am sure that we could provide a summary and officer attendance annually to feed into your discussions.

I hope that this helps and, in the meantime, we will explore how other local authorities provide feedback to SACRE.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Paul Wagstaff', with a large initial 'P' and 'W'.

Paul Wagstaff

Director of Education & Skills

C.C. Nigel Jupp, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills