

Governors' Information Bulletin

SEPTEMBER 2007

No 60

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE)

Governors' Guide to Self-Evaluation in Religious Education and Collective Worship

Under the Ofsted inspection system, governors' duties in relation to RE and collective worship are noted in Part C of the school self-evaluation form. This refers to a school's level of compliance with statutory requirements. Governors have a responsibility, together with headteachers, to ensure that:

- the school provides teaching of religious education for all learners in accordance with the locally agreed syllabus and has informed parents of the right of withdrawal where applicable
- it provides a daily act of collective worship for all learners (in special schools as far as is practicable) and has told parents of the right to withdraw their children.

In order to help schools respond to the statutory requirements for RE, a self-evaluation toolkit has been produced by the Association of RE Inspectors, Advisors and Consultants (AREIAC). The toolkit is designed to be used by RE leaders in Primary, Secondary and Special schools so that they can indicate how the subject contributes to the life of the school in all areas listed for inspection. We would encourage governors to draw the attention of headteachers to the toolkit, which is available along with a self-evaluation form that can be filled in on a word-processor, as a FREE download from <http://www.betterre.org.uk/toolkit/>. Alternatively, we as the local SACRE (Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education) have produced a cut-down version that may be more 'user-friendly' in the short-term. (See attached Copy)

Governors' Guide to RE and Collective Worship

Governors have a responsibility to ensure that RE and collective worship are being well provided in the school, so it is important to include these areas of school life on the agenda for at least one meeting a year. This could be placed in the wider context of the school's provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

It is important to distinguish between RE and collective worship and to ensure that RE is given specific curriculum time in order to meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus.

Collective worship should be provided outside of curriculum hours and is not to be counted



instead of time for any curriculum subject: 'schools should make adequate time available for collective worship in addition to the suggested minimum hours for lesson time' (DES circular 7/90, para 2).

Religious Education

Below you may find some helpful ideas for a discussion governors might have with the headteacher and the RE subject manager:

- Has use been made of the self-evaluation toolkit for RE?
- What curriculum time is allowed for RE and does that match the expectation of the locally agreed syllabus?
- How do we know how well pupils are achieving in RE?
- Are the teachers of RE well-trained? What professional development has been undertaken in recent years?
- How does RE contribute to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils in the school?
- Is parents' right to withdraw their children from RE included in the school prospectus?
- Why do parents have such a right and what is the school's response to parental requests to withdraw children from RE?
- How can we improve RE further?

Collective Worship and Spiritual Development

Below are some questions about collective worship and spiritual development that could form the basis of a discussion with the headteacher and any other members of staff involved in organising collective worship. Note that it is not the RE co-ordinator or Head of RE's role to be involved in organising or presenting collective worship. That is a separate responsibility.

- Is there a daily act of collective worship? If not, why not?
- Do we keep any records of acts of collective worship?
- Are most acts of collective worship 'broadly Christian'?
- How do we distinguish between collective worship and assembly?
- Do we know what we mean by *collective* as opposed to *corporate* worship?
- Do we have policies on collective worship and spiritual development?
- How do they reflect the aims, ethos and (religious) character of the school?
- Do we know what we mean by spiritual development?
- How does the act of collective worship contribute to pupils' spiritual development?
- Is parents' right to withdraw their children from collective worship included in the school prospectus?
- Why do parents have such a right and what is the school's response to parental requests to withdraw children from collective worship?
- How are pupils and parents involved in the collective worship programme?
- How can we improve collective worship further?

Governors could keep a record of these discussions and this could form the basis of an annual review.

Mark Stephenson – Consultant for Religious Education in Calderdale