



SACRE self-assessment tool

SACRE

The SACRE self evaluation Tool

Introduction

This tool has been created to help SACREs in their essential role to advise its Local Authority (LA) and the local authority's schools in meeting the entitlement of pupils across the local authority to engage in high quality Religious Education and Collective Worship and support them to reflect on their practice. In an educational context where standards and accountability are at the top of the agenda, a SACRE's work has become increasingly challenging and diverse, but also more rewarding and stimulating. Good SACREs will therefore tackle their responsibilities and opportunities with enthusiasm, whilst recognising the need for realistic and ongoing appraisal and self-review.

In many ways SACREs reflect the work of governing bodies in schools, in so far as they act as critical friends to the local authority on matters of religious education and collective worship. Like school governors, members are unpaid volunteers who give up their time to support religious education (RE) and collective worship locally.

This Toolkit is an amended version of the 2015 update of this document. It takes account of changes in inspection arrangements and in the role of local authorities, and of the development of maintained schools independent of their local authority. It is designed to help individual SACREs evaluate their effectiveness, including considering their impact on pupils' educational experience and learning. It also helps SACREs review their organisational patterns and structures, and their partnership with the local authority and other key stakeholders.

The Toolkit highlights five key dimensions of a SACRE's work and provides exemplification of good practice. A SACRE that uses this self-evaluation guidance should gain a clear picture of its strengths, identify areas for further development, and establish its key priorities for action.

The DCSF publication "Religious education in English schools: Non-statutory guidance" (2010) ("the Guidance") remains the most recent official statement in this field: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/religious-education-guidance-in-english-schools-non-statutory-guidance-2010>. The Guidance sets out the responsibilities of SACREs and Local Authorities as well as those of other stakeholders in RE. Key summaries from the Guidance are included in the Annex to this document.

Rationale

The SACRE self-evaluation toolkit focuses on the following five aspects of the work of SACREs:

1. Management of the SACRE and building the partnership between the SACRE, the LA and other key stakeholders
2. Promoting improvement in the standards, the quality of teaching, and provision in RE
3. Evaluating the effectiveness of the locally agreed syllabus
4. Promoting improvement in the provision and quality of collective worship
5. Contributing to cohesion across the community, highlighting diversity and the promotion of social and racial harmony.

Each aspect forms a section within the toolkit and each section is divided into focus questions to help SACREs explore their provision. Descriptors for 'Requires improvement/struggling', 'Developing', 'Established' and 'Advanced' practice will enable SACREs to evaluate their standing within each focus question.

In the final column SACREs may wish to identify any issues and action points within that focus as appropriate. Key priorities can then be identified at the end of each section to inform the development of an action plan.

The intention is that, over time, exemplars of good practice from different SACREs will be made available on an open website, together with annual reports, as a way of adding further support to SACREs and local authorities. Clearly the capacity of any SACRE to make the most of this will be dependent on the extent of the support it receives from, and the quality of its relationship with the Local Authority.

SACREs are invited to use the format of this evaluation in conjunction with their annual report.

Section 1: Management of the SACRE and partnership with the LA and other key stakeholders

How far does the SACRE's partnership with the LA enable it to carry out its responsibilities effectively?

(Taken from 2010 DfE Checklist for an effective partnership between an LA and its SACRE/ASC should consider)

- Do the LA and its SACRE/ASC carry out their statutory duties?
- Is SACRE/ASC properly resourced and well supported by subject specialist advice and training?
- Do members of the SACRE/ASC have a shared vision and understanding of their aims and purpose, seeking to sustain their positive work in the light of changing needs and priorities?
- Are SACRE/ASC meetings purposeful and focused on the major priorities of improving the quality of RE (and CW) in schools?
- Is the SACRE/ASC well informed about the quality of RE in schools and about wider LA and national priorities and developments affecting the subject?
- Has the LA adopted a high-quality agreed syllabus that provides a good grounding for planning, teaching and learning in RE and enables the schools to deliver RE as part of a coherent curriculum?
- Is there an effective process of reviewing, revising, implementing, monitoring and evaluating the locally agreed syllabus?
- How far does the SACRE's partnership with the LA enable it to help teachers and schools raise standards in RE and the quality of RE teaching?
- How far does the SACRE contribute effectively to the community cohesion agenda by supporting inclusion in schools and improving engagement within the community?
(move to section 5)

LAs must adequately fund SACREs to enable them to carry out their statutory duties and to support high quality RE and collective worship in schools.¹ We consider 2% of CSSB to be a reasonable spend to enable this. LAs must set aside sufficient money to ensure the Agreed Syllabus Review can be effective every five years.

We reiterate that as a minimum expectation, LAs must provide the following:

- a clerk
- a professional officer who has expertise in RE curriculum design;
- a publicly accessible place to meet;
- the reasonable expenses of members;
- publishing the agreed syllabus and other SACRE materials (including agendas and minutes), most usually on the LA website.
- NASACRE subscription and AGM attendance.

1. The minister for school standards; Nick Gibb MP included this statement in response to a parliamentary question from Stephen Timms MP. "If the Department is informed that an individual SACRE or ASC is experiencing difficulties in fulfilling its statutory duties, the Department will contact the local authority to remind them of their duty to support their activities satisfactorily." 2021 ¹ HC Deb, 28 March 2018, cW <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2018-03-28/134697>

The relationship between a Local Authority and its SACRE is essentially one of partnership and collaboration, with mutual obligations and statutory responsibilities. So that a SACRE can advise and act effectively for the LA in the field of Religious Education and collective worship, the LA must ensure not only that there is a local SACRE, but also that it is able to fulfil its functions. The extent to which a SACRE is supported, by funding and personnel, will determine how well individuals and committees can work together. Where a SACRE is valued by the Local Authority, it is more likely that the members of the SACRE will be able to contribute both to the SACRE's work and to the LA's wider strategic objectives.

By bring together many local stakeholders (faith/belief communities, teachers, local politicians and co-optees such as universities and parents) into a statutory body, SACREs can act positively for LAs as a sounding board on their core business of RE and collective worship, and also on wider strategic educational objectives such as raising standards, narrowing the gap and promoting community cohesion, as well as community matters related to interfaith collaboration and wellbeing. These core and value added functions work best when the SACRE is appropriately supported, resourced and managed, and when channels of communication with the LA are good.

The potential for SACREs to contribute more widely is dependent on SACRE members feeling that the meetings are outward looking, focused on pupil needs, purposeful and enjoyable. This can be achieved, for example, by meeting in different locations (schools, places of worship, cultural centres and Council meetings rooms) and by ensuring that all members feel they are equal partners whose views and experiences are sought, listened to and valued.

Alongside this, SACRE has the power to develop structural relationships with academies etc by exploring ways in which an academy "presence" can be incorporated into SACRE itself, e.g. by co-options (non-voting), through additional places in Group C (teacher organisations), or by creating a non-voting notional "Group E" (as had been envisaged in the Grant Maintained era). Similar considerations apply to the ASC. Although the legal framework would currently not allow voting rights to any distinct academy representation, SACREs and ASCs would surely not wish to proceed with decisions which were clearly not acceptable to the academy sector represented in their wider membership.

Key Area: 1a – Funding: Professional and financial support		
<i>How well supported and resourced is SACRE by the LA exercising its statutory responsibilities?</i>		
Requires improvement/struggling A SACRE in this position would:	not have financial or management support to help SACRE to meet and operate. Members are unable to communicate with each other. There is not professional support.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Developing A SACRE with developing practice would:	have financial and management support to allow it to exist. Representatives of the LA receive papers and/or attend meetings but there is limited subject specialist advice available. There are resources for basic SACRE functions (such as a place to meet and a minute taker) but there is no specific budget for the SACRE and little opportunity for the SACRE to take initiatives requiring funding.	<input type="checkbox"/>

Established A SACRE with established practice would:	access to some subject specialist advice and is informed of local and national initiatives. The LA is represented at meetings and can provide a means of communication with the wider LA. The SACRE has a modest budget which enables it to fund some initiatives. Meetings are clerked and the clerk maintains communication with the Chair and other members between meetings as needed.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advanced A SACRE with advanced practice would:	be well supported by a subject specialist who provides effective advice and is well informed about the provision and quality of RE in the LA and about national developments. Representatives of the LA attend meetings and the SACRE is also attended by a lead officer from the LA who can provide a strong link between the work of the SACRE and the wider LA. SACRE's plans are linked to other local work and projects. SACRE has a strategic costed development plan. The SACRE has access to funds to enable it to make decisions about its priorities and ensure these can be properly resourced.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Where are we and where do we find evidence to support this?		

Key Area: 1b – SACRE meetings <i>How purposeful, inclusive, representative and effective are SACRE meetings?</i>		
Requires improvement/struggling A SACRE in this position would:	Not hold meetings regularly if at all. Any meeting is held is purely to demonstrate that the LA has allowed SACRE to meet.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Developing A SACRE with developing practice would:	hold meetings regularly with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● routine administrative arrangements ● appropriate distribution of agendas and papers Business is dealt with in a prompt and orderly way. There is limited opportunity for SACRE members to contribute to the work apart from attending meetings. Business tends to be focused solely on routine statutory requirements.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Established A SACRE with established practice would:	have good attendance where all four committees are well represented and meetings are quorate. Agendas and papers are distributed well in advance ensuring all members have time to consider them carefully, consulting when relevant their representing/sponsoring bodies. There are some opportunities for teachers and representatives of faith and worldview communities to be invited to share their work. Meetings are well managed with strong contributions from a wide range of members. Meetings move beyond routine matters to consider wider issues about the quality of RE and collective worship.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advanced A SACRE with advanced	have SACRE members contributing to the development of the agenda and strategic development plan. Meetings will be lively and purposeful with a wide variety of contributions focused on the major priorities for	<input type="checkbox"/>

practice would:	improvement in schools. Teachers and representatives of faith and worldview communities regularly attend and participate fully in meetings, sharing their experience and insights. Meetings are held in a variety of venues, including council venues, local places of worship and schools. Procedures have been put in place so that meaningful contact can be made with and between members outside of SACRE meetings.	
Where are we and where do we find evidence to support this?		

Key Area: 1c – Membership and training		
<i>To what extent is the membership of SACRE able to fulfil SACRE's purpose?</i>		
Requires improvement/struggling A SACRE in this position would:	not have a membership list. SACREs constitution is not fit for purpose and needs revision. The Local Authority struggles to fill all places on SACRE, SACRE members have no regular training provided.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Developing A SACRE with developing practice would:	have a membership that fulfils the basic statutory obligations. Arrangements to fill vacancies are not always pursued effectively. There are limited induction and training opportunities for SACRE members.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Established A SACRE with established practice would:	have an active membership that strongly reflects the diversity of the wider religious/worldview and professional community. There is regular induction training and processes for new members. There are good opportunities for SACRE members to participate in training activities.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advanced A SACRE with advanced practice would:	make good use of co-option to ensure membership of the SACRE is well informed and is highly representative of the diversity of the local community. There is a strong and co-ordinated programme of induction, and training opportunities for SACRE members. There are robust systems in place for succession planning for members and SACRE roles.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Where are we and where do we find evidence to support this?		

Key Area: 1d – Improvement/development planning		
<i>How effective are the priorities and actions identified by SACRE in improving the experience of pupils in schools?</i>		
Requires improvement/struggling A SACRE in this position would:	not have a development plan to focus its future work. There is no knowledge of areas where the priorities of the LA's development / improvement plan potentially could link to the work of the SACRE.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Developing A SACRE with developing	There is little, but some overt linkage between the priorities of the LA's development / improvement plan and the work of the SACRE. SACRE has limited awareness of national projects or initiatives related to the work	<input type="checkbox"/>

practice would:	of SACRE and so is unable to plan any work or request funding to initiate new work.	
Established A SACRE with established practice would:	have a costed development plan which is reviewed regularly and updated on an annual basis. This provides an effective focus for the SACRE's work. There is some attempt to link the plan to the wider LA priorities. SACRE has awareness of national projects or initiatives related to the work of SACRE and so is able to plan work or request funding to update and review their development plan. The SACRE is regularly represented at national events relevant to its work; for example, NASACRE.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advanced A SACRE with advanced practice would:	have a well-defined development plan with clear objectives and success criteria. Resource implications are clearly defined and funding negotiated with the LA or outside funding streams. There is a clear link between the plan and the wider objectives of the LA and also to national innovations.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Where are we and where do we find evidence to support this?		

Key Area: 1e - Information and advice		
<i>How well informed is SACRE in order to be able to advise the LA appropriately?</i>		
Requires improvement/struggling A SACRE in this position would:	not be supported to gather information (exam results, data, links to schools) or to link with national initiatives including membership of NASACRE.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Developing A SACRE with developing practice would:	receive limited information about public examination data from the LA. Limited information is provided about wider national and local developments. The SACRE tends to receive information from the LA when the LA wishes to give it rather than ask questions of the LA or receive answers to its request. There is little opportunity to be a critical friend.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Established A SACRE with established practice would:	be regularly provided with clear information relevant to the quality and provision for RE and collective worship in local schools and given a context within which any school is working. The SACRE receives the information in a way that enables it to act as a critical friend and question the LA's work.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advanced A SACRE with advanced practice would:	receive detailed and well-analysed information about the quality and provision for RE and collective worship. As a result SACRE uses this information effectively to give advice to the LA which leads to strategic action and/or partnership work to improve standards. This can include advice related to the review of the Agreed Syllabus. The SACRE has a strong partnership with the LA and plays an active role in promoting ideas and initiatives.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Where are we and where do we find evidence to support this?		

Key Area: 1f - Partnerships with key stakeholders		
<i>What partnerships does the SACRE have with key local and national stakeholders, and of what quality are these?</i>		
Requires improvement/struggling A SACRE in this position would:	not be aware of local or national agencies. SACRE has no links with sponsoring bodies in their location.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Developing A SACRE with developing practice would:	have little contact with or awareness of other local agencies (e.g. interfaith-groups; the dioceses), and rarely hear from with pupils/students.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Established A SACRE with established practice would:	be well informed about other key stakeholders supporting RE and has some meaningful contact with the groups involved. SACRE members are support at a national level by their sponsoring body. SACRE members attend NASACRE conference and training opportunities. Hear from pupils/students as part of their work around high-quality RE and collective worship.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advanced A SACRE with advanced practice would:	build its activities effectively on local networks. Links with other bodies, such as local Inter-Faith groups, are positive and able to support raising standards and developing community cohesion. The SACRE has opportunities to hear the views and experience of pupils about RE. Representatives of key support networks and higher education providers are regularly involved with the SACRE.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Where are we and where do we find evidence to support this?		

Key Area: 1g – Relations with the Academies sector		
<i>How effectively is SACRE encouraging academies etc to see themselves also as stakeholders in their local area, specifically by devising ways in which an academies presence is incorporated into SACRE itself?</i>		
Requires improvement/struggling A SACRE in this position would:	not have opportunity to network with local academies.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Developing A SACRE with developing practice would:	have nothing formal in place. Little encouragement, if any, is extended to academies to relate to the SACRE's proceedings, and there are no channels through which academies can contribute.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Established A SACRE with established practice would:	have made attempts to set up an academies presence in SACRE, but these have been hampered by e.g. lack of confidence or vision on the part of SACRE, or by confusion over what is legally valid and possible, or what is possible between academies in an area.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advanced A SACRE with advanced	have an established place on SACRE because SACRE has considered systematically the legal and structural options open to them, and have set up formal procedures for establishing a permanent and	<input type="checkbox"/>

practice would:	sustainable academies presence on SACRE through the LA. A high proportion of academies in the area regard themselves as stakeholders and partners with SACRE.	
Where are we and where do we find evidence to support this?		

Successes/ What are we good at?

Barriers to success

Areas for development/ Action points:

- **For the SACRE**

Date of review

Section 2. Standards and quality of provision of Religious Education

***How effectively does the SACRE, in partnership with the LA, evaluate standards and the quality of provision for RE in schools?
How effective are the strategies to improve standards and the quality of provision?***

In principle, every pupil is entitled to RE of the highest quality. At its best RE will be one of the most popular, relevant, stimulating and truly educative elements in the curriculum. This potential gives SACREs both a benchmark for their aspirations, and a spur for their actions.

A core duty of a SACRE is to gain an overview of the quality of the RE provision in local authority maintained schools and to develop effective strategies to promote the highest standards. SACREs may also request information from Academies, academy chains and Free Schools where they educate pupils from the local authority which appointed SACRE. In the light of the current inspection culture of partnership and self-evaluation, SACREs will need to approach the achieving of this overview with some sensitivity and astuteness.

Information to assist the SACRE in carrying out its role is likely to come from a range of sources. This may include:

- public examination results
- reports from School Improvement Partners
- analysing questionnaires
- sharing of information from subject self-evaluation forms as appropriate, and in agreement with schools
- feedback from professional development activities
- presentations to SACRE from local teachers

The Guidance offers analysis and advice to support SACREs in reviewing their own effectiveness, their patterns of partnership, and their strategies in relation to enhancing the quality of RE provision in local authority maintained schools. In addition, in the light of the development of academies and other non-LA maintained schools, SACREs also need to take note of and respond appropriately to this new diversified scenario. (In the ensuing pages, the phrase “academies etc” is used as shorthand to refer to all non-LA maintained schools within a particular LA area.)

Key Area: 2a. RE provision across the LA. <i>How effectively does the SACRE gain information about RE provision in schools and put in place strategies to support the delivery of pupil entitlement?</i>		
Requires improvement/struggling A SACRE in this position would:	have no routes by which SACRE can gain information about RE provision in schools.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Developing A SACRE with developing practice would:	have little knowledge of which schools are fulfilling pupil entitlement in RE because local processes are insufficient to gather such information (e.g. a website trawl)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Established A SACRE with established practice would:	have some knowledge of which schools are providing adequate time for effective learning in RE and have a scheme of work that enables them to deliver the Agreed Syllabus. SACRE's process for acquiring this information is adequate but lacks coherence. Have limited opportunities to implement strategies in support of pupil entitlement. Ofsted reports are read and any comments on RE is noted and brought to SACRE.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advanced A SACRE with advanced practice would:	build upon a strong relationship with the LA, where by the LA shares its information and from this SACRE gains an overview of RE provision within the LA. It works effectively with the LA to support and promote pupil entitlement. Examples of different models for fulfilling pupil entitlement within local schools will be shared with all schools so that schools can have a menu from which to adapt an approach that delivers pupil entitlement whilst meeting the specific needs and priorities of their schools.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Where are we and where do we find evidence to support this?		

Key Area: 2b. Standards of achievement and public examination entries <i>How does SACRE use information about standards and examinations to target support and training for schools?</i>		
Requires improvement/struggling A SACRE in this position would:	not be given any data to work from, and has no professional support to investigate this at a local and national level.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Developing A SACRE with developing practice would:	have limited knowledge of standards in primary and secondary schools including examination entries. The SACRE has no clear strategy to address this and the local authority does not adequately invest in professional support for this. Analysis would be limited as would strategies to address issues.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Established A SACRE with established practice would:	have some process in place to find out how well learners are doing in KS 1-3, (e.g. by meeting teachers, pupils and through the LA). SACRE will be provided with adequate information about examination entries and standards in examinations in secondary schools and how these relate to national figures.	<input type="checkbox"/>

Advanced A SACRE with advanced practice would:	have robust processes with the LA whereby SACRE can gain accurate information about standards in schools and examination entries in all secondary schools, with useful analysis that enables it to address issues effectively in partnership with the LA.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Where are we and where do we find evidence to support this?		

Key Area: 2c Quality of learning and teaching.		
<i>How well does SACRE use knowledge of quality of learning and teaching to target support appropriately?</i>		
Requires improvement/struggling A SACRE in this position would:	not have any knowledge of quality of learning and teaching to target support from the LA and professional support/advisor.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Developing A SACRE with developing practice would:	have little knowledge of the quality of learning and teaching in the LA schools and therefore is unable to provide appropriate challenge and support to the schools. The SACRE has no means to offer or recommend support to schools as there is little or no professional support in the LA working with the SACRE.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Established A SACRE with established practice would:	have some information regarding the quality of learning and teaching from a range of sources including contact with teachers and pupils. Limited analysis of this information is undertaken; however, this means that SACRE's attempts to improve learning and teaching have limited effect. be able to circulate information about national courses and support mechanisms to schools	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advanced A SACRE with advanced practice would:	have a robust relationship with schools and the LA to gather meaningful information about the quality of learning and teaching in RE. This information is analysed to identify trends, areas of strength and areas for development and SACRE draws on expertise in effective schools to support all schools in the LA. advise the LA on the support that is needed and have access to professional support that can be linked to schools in need.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Where are we and where do we find evidence to support this?		
Key Area: 2d Quality of interaction and communication with leadership and management of RE in schools		
<i>To what extent does SACRE have and pass on information that supports high quality RE in schools</i>		
Requires	Not engage in communication with schools.	<input type="checkbox"/>

improvement/struggling A SACRE in this position would:		
Developing A SACRE with developing practice would:	have little communication with schools. They occasionally contact schools with resources for RE and attend a head teachers meeting.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Established A SACRE with established practice would:	have RE key messages communicated regularly into schools. They send regular updates and information to schools, head teachers and governors. SACREs discussions from their meetings are used to enhance leadership and management of RE in schools.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advanced A SACRE with advanced practice would:	have a constructive relationship with leaders and managers in schools to develop the subject.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Where are we and where do we find evidence to support this?		

Key Area: 2e. Relations with academies and other non-LA maintained schools.		
<i>To what extent has a SACRE developed a pro-active strategy in relation to academies and other non-LA maintained schools in its area?</i>		
Requires improvement/struggling A SACRE in this position would:	not have the mechanisms and not have the knowledge of making contact.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Developing A SACRE with developing practice would:	have haphazard information about the RE situation in local academies etc, and little or no established relationships and liaison with them. No serious attempt has been made to develop an overall strategy.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Established A SACRE with established practice would:	have made some effort to establish liaison with each academy etc and to keep updated SACRE's information about their RE situation and share their advice to these schools to. By and large academies co-operate with SACRE at this level. SACRE keeps under review the ongoing situation.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advanced A SACRE with advanced practice would:	have a pro-active policy of liaison with all academies etc and of sustaining a wider professional RE network within the area. While the independence of academies etc is genuinely respected by SACRE, many academies value this network and look to SACRE for ongoing advice and leadership in RE.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Where are we and where do we find evidence to support this?		

Successes/ What are we good at?

Barriers to success

Areas for development/ Action points:

- **For the SACRE**

- **For the LA**

Date of review (1)

Date of review (2)

Date of review (3)

Section 3: The effectiveness of the locally agreed syllabus

How effectively does the SACRE, in partnership with the LA, monitor the impact and evaluate the effectiveness of the agreed syllabus in raising standards? How effectively does the Agreed Syllabus Conference in partnership with SACRE make decisions about the use of national guidance and exemplar material in a review of the agreed syllabus?

The locally agreed syllabus is the bedrock on which schools will build robust sequences of effective learning experiences in RE. A good modern AS will support both the delivery of high quality RE in schools and RE's contribution to the schools' wider curriculum aims and impact measures.

The major factors to be considered in creating or revising an AS include statutory requirements, non-statutory guidance and exemplar material, developments in the school curriculum generally, and local circumstances. Key advice on producing an AS is given in the Guidance. SACREs and ASCs are recommended to take note of this advice in their work on the AS.

Local authorities are required to review their locally agreed syllabus at least every five years. This cycle of reviewing, revising, re-launching and re-implementing the AS gives SACREs and ASCs opportunities for ongoing development and improvement of their effectiveness in providing schools with a locally agreed syllabus that is truly "fit for purpose".

While the ASC holds the legal responsibility for revising the agreed syllabus, in practice much of the preparatory and supplementary work will be carried by the SACRE within its routine business. Moreover, in most LAs the membership of SACRE and ASC overlap substantially or are identical. This can contribute to greater inclusiveness and coherence, but good practice will ensure that it is always clear at any time which body is in place at a meeting, and that it is the ASC which is in session when formal decisions about the AS are to be considered.

Academies etc are in principle free to choose their own RE syllabus. In practice, however, many may well continue to use their local AS. There are some sound reasons for SACRE and the LA to encourage this where possible, and to enable academies etc to have some involvement in the process of revising the AS or of devising a new AS. Relationships between SACREs and academies will necessarily be entirely voluntary and not covered by existing legislation or guidance. SACREs should therefore approach such relationships in a spirit of mutual respect and collegiality. These issues have not been incorporated into the matrix below, but see Section 4.

Key Area: 3a – The review process		
<i>How does the SACRE review the success of the existing agreed syllabus?</i>		
Requires improvement/struggling A SACRE in this position would:	not have any way of contacting schools to carry out a review of the existing syllabus. It will not be supported by the LA or professional support.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Developing A SACRE with developing practice would:	have limited arrangements in place to monitor the impact of the agreed syllabus, particularly in raising standards. This provides little or no opportunity to review the effectiveness of the agreed syllabus. not know the views of teachers and have had no systematic evaluation of the strengths/weaknesses of the syllabus. The SACRE is unclear how to proceed with the five-yearly syllabus review and there is little or no budget allocation made by the LA. have little knowledge of wider recent RE national guidance, research and developments.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Established A SACRE with established practice would:	have reviewed the opinions of schools and RE teachers in several ways and have a good idea of the strengths/areas of weakness of the current agreed syllabus. have devised a costed action plan in partnership with the LA, and have been allocated a sufficient budget for the agreed syllabus review and relaunch.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advanced A SACRE with advanced practice would:	have a clear and systematic process for monitoring the effectiveness of the agreed syllabus built into its development plan. Reviewing the agreed syllabus includes full consultation with schools and other key stakeholders, including faith communities and academics. Issues that have arisen have been discussed and addressed in planning for a review. An ASC budget has been planned and allocated in partnership with the LA to include consultation meetings, administrative support and design/distribution costs. There is a strong sense of shared ownership of the prospective agreed syllabus review, with clear targets for what needs to be achieved.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Where are we and where do we find evidence to support this?		

Key Area: 3b – The quality of the local Agreed Syllabus		
<i>How well does the locally Agreed Syllabus promote effective learning & teaching in religious education? Is it “fit for purpose”?</i>		
Requires improvement/struggling A SACRE in this position would:	not have knowledge of other agreed syllabi nationally. not have access to professional support with a national knowledge of high quality teaching and learning in RE.	<input type="checkbox"/>

Developing A SACRE with developing practice would:	ensure that the Agreed Syllabus sets out what is to be learnt at each Key Stage. Progression in RE is stated, but this does not link directly to the learning and there is no clear expectation of quality learning in the Agreed Syllabus.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Established A SACRE with established practice would:	ensure that the Agreed Syllabus provides a clear framework for and expectations of learning in RE. make clear the value of RE in school both in terms of learning and of wider issues. ensure that the Agreed syllabus provided has involved teachers and meets their needs.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advanced A SACRE with advanced practice would:	ensure that the Agreed Syllabus provides a thoroughly professional and inspirational framework for effective learning in RE which is proactively supported and promoted by the LA. have set out clear expectations of the role of the LA and school leadership in ensuring adequate resource and provision in schools. References latest RE research that is relevant and helps pupils makes good progress in RE.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Where are we and where do we find evidence to support this?		

Key Area: 3c – Launching and implementing the Agreed Syllabus		
<i>How well does SACRE promote the AS and provide training to prepare teachers to use it effectively?</i>		
Requires improvement/struggling A SACRE in this position would:	not have a launch for the new syllabus. not have any in-service training for teachers/schools for implementing the new agreed syllabus. not have the mechanisms to advertise, promote and share the syllabus to schools locally.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Developing A SACRE with developing practice would:	provide for no special launch or other publicity, so that schools are unaware of the significance of the syllabus revisions for learning and teaching in RE. have little training provision for implementing the revised syllabus. be prevented from providing any significant additional guidance or extended training on using the agreed syllabus by a shortage of financial and human resources.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Established	use other forms of communication (for example the LA website) to promote the launch.	<input type="checkbox"/>

A SACRE with established practice would:	<p>have clear arrangements for training teachers on implementing the syllabus provided by the LA; this training is well supported and managed.</p> <p>provide additional guidance or extended training on using the Agreed Syllabus over the life of the Agreed Syllabus.</p>	
<p>Advanced A SACRE with advanced practice would:</p>	<p>Involve the wider community and use strong media coverage, to give the Agreed Syllabus a high profile as an important development in the work of the LA and local community. The launch event would include high quality presentations from a range of local religion and worldviews groups, schools and professional LA officers/councillors.</p> <p>provide effective training on implementing the Agreed Syllabus, which is supported by all schools, leads to teachers being clear about standards and expectations in the Agreed Syllabus and the implications for teaching and learning. The SACRE provides clear guidance about ways in which schools might begin the process of reviewing their own provision for RE in the light of the revised syllabus.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Where are we and where do we find evidence to support this?</p>		

<p>Key Area: 3d – Membership and training of the Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC) <i>To what extent is the membership of ASC able to fulfil its purpose?</i></p>		
<p>Requires improvement/struggling A SACRE in this position would:</p>	<p>not have the structures in place to convene an ASC.</p> <p>not have any admin and advisory support for their work.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Developing A SACRE with developing practice would:</p>	<p>have a membership that fulfils basic statutory requirements. There are limited induction and training opportunities; members are unclear of their roles, or how an agreed syllabus can be structured. Particular faith or belief groups or teachers from different phases do not attend.</p> <p>provide clerking, admin and advisory support for only a very limited amount of time or range of work. Routine admin arrangements are in place. Agendas and papers are distributed.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Established A SACRE with established practice would:</p>	<p>have a membership that strongly reflects the diversity of the wider religious/worldview and professional community. There are some opportunities for members' training and the purpose and action plan for the work of the ASC are clear.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	have all four committees well represented at meetings. Agendas and papers are distributed well in advance so all members have time to consider them carefully. Meetings are well managed with strong contributions from a wide range of members.	
Advanced A SACRE with advanced practice would:	<p>have a membership that is well informed and highly representative of the diversity of the local community. Where particular faith or belief expertise is missing locally there are arrangements to work with consultants to ensure this voice is added into the process There is a strong, co-ordinated programme of induction and training opportunities for members.</p> <p>have lively and purposeful meetings with a wide variety of contributions. Members of all 4 groups regularly attend and participate fully in meetings, sharing their experience, expertise and insights.</p> <p>provide effective admin to support the process</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Where are we and where do we find evidence to support this?		

Key Area: 3e - Developing the revised agreed syllabus		
<i>How robust are the processes for producing a strong educational Agreed Syllabus?</i>		
Requires improvement/struggling A SACRE in this position would:	<p>not have an agreed plan linked to finance for developing their agreed syllabus.</p> <p>have met the five year review deadline of revising and publishing a new agreed syllabus.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Developing A SACRE with developing practice would:	have no clear structure for developing a new agreed syllabus. It does not undertake a thorough revision, tending to add material rather haphazardly to the existing syllabus, leading to lack of coherence in the final outcome. There is little or no consultation during the development of a new agreed syllabus with teachers, SACRE member and the local religion/worldview communities.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Established A SACRE with established practice would:	have clear objectives for the revision and involve a wide range of local expertise in its construction. The LA and the ASC in partnership ensure that strong direction is provided to design an agreed syllabus which is coherent, clear and accessible. Working parties and consultations are reasonably managed and supported.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advanced A SACRE with advanced practice would:	<p>ensure that high quality advice is sought to review and advise on the revisions as they develop.</p> <p>The ASC in partnership with the LA holds well attended consultation meetings and briefings to ensure teachers are fully involved in, and have a sense of ownership of, the revision process. The Agreed Syllabus</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	has a clear framework for progression and challenging learning	
Where are we and where do we find evidence to support this?		

Key Area: 3f - Making best use of National Guidance		
<i>How does the Agreed Syllabus Conference make choices relating to the use of national documentation? (See footnote*)</i>		
Requires improvement/struggling A SACRE in this position would:	not be aware of national documentation in relation to the agreed syllabus review process and are therefore unable to use this guidance appropriately.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Developing A SACRE with developing practice would:	have a limited awareness and understanding of national documentation in relation to the agreed syllabus review process and are unable to use national guidance in a coherent way. have members not fully understanding the broader curriculum and how this is organised and have no opportunity for training to give them the skills to understand how RE might best play a part in the education of the whole child.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Established A SACRE with established practice would:	be aware of national documentation and some of its implications for the Agreed Syllabus review process, but does not ensure its use reflects local circumstances. Have ASC members who take note of the broader curriculum picture but do not link the Agreed Syllabus to it systematically or appreciate how teachers will be able to make use of it to link to the wider curriculum in schools.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advanced A SACRE with advanced practice would:	take full account of national documentation in the construction of the revised Agreed Syllabus, while ensuring their work reflects local circumstances. The syllabus is devised so that RE fits appropriately with other curriculum areas at all key stages and guidance about how to make the best links is given to schools.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Where are we and where do we find evidence to support this?		
*Documentation includes: the Non-Statutory National Framework in RE; the Programmes of Learning in RE (Primary) and Programmes of Study in RE (Secondary), the new Primary and Secondary Curriculums, and “Religious education in English schools: “Non-statutory guidance 2010”; CoRE; Big		

Ideas in RE publication 1 & 2; Ofsted RE literature review;

Successes/ What are we good at?

Barriers to success

Areas for development/ Action points:

- **For the SACRE**

- **For the LA**

Date of review (1)

Date of review (2)

Date of review (3)

Section 4. Collective worship

How effectively does the SACRE fulfil its responsibilities for the provision and practice of collective worship?

Maintained schools are required to provide a daily act of collective worship for every pupil. In community schools not having a religious foundation, the acts of collective worship should be “wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character”, without being distinctive of any particular denomination. Part of a SACRE’s role is to support the effective provision of collective worship in community schools and to advise the LA on issues related to provision and quality. It must also consider applications from head teachers in community schools that the requirement for collective worship to be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character be disapplied for some or all of the pupils in that school. SACRE ‘determines’ the appropriateness of that application and grants a ‘determination’ to those schools where the application is judged to be in the best interests of the pupils. All pupils in schools with determinations continue to have an entitlement to daily collective worship.

Collective worship can be a rich and rewarding element of the curriculum as a whole. SACREs have the opportunity to enhance the quality of collective worship by appropriate guidance and support.

Key Area:4a– Supporting pupil entitlement		
<i>What strategies are in place to enable the SACRE to support the delivery of pupil entitlement in the LA's schools?</i>		
Requires improvement/struggling A SACRE in this position would:	not have any knowledge regarding the provision collective worship nor have any mechanism in place to gain such knowledge.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Developing A SACRE with developing practice would:	be unaware of the issues facing schools in providing collective worship as part of the pupil entitlement. provide little advice or support towards fulfilling pupil entitlement to collective worship.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Established A SACRE with established practice would:	understand local issues of delivering pupil entitlement and of the challenges schools face in providing collective worship. provide some advice in support of delivering pupil entitlement and would seek to ensure that schools had access to, and advice on, appropriate resourcing towards delivering collective worship.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advanced A SACRE with advanced practice would:	have a balanced and realistic overview of provision and its challenges across the LA. provide or arrange for systematic support and guidance for schools experiencing difficulty in delivering pupil entitlement. obtain feedback from schools to evaluate the impact of advice and support, and periodically reviews its strategies for supporting pupil entitlement.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Where are we and where do we find evidence to support this?		

Key Area: 4b – Enhancing the quality of provision of collective worship		
<i>How does SACRE seek to influence the quality of collective worship in the LA's schools?</i>		
Requires improvement/struggling A SACRE in this position would:	not be able to influence the quality of CW due to lack of support either from the LA or CW/RE professional. have no knowledge of what good quality collective worship in schools can be or is.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Developing A SACRE with developing practice would:	not be adequately supported by the LA or a RE professional for promoting quality of provision of collective worship. have agenda items about collective worship dominated by the issue of SACRE trying to find a mechanism for obtaining data. have little understanding of the nature and potential of collective worship and of what effective provision in each school might be.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Established A SACRE with established practice would:	have occasional agenda items on collective worship, with some insight into how collective worship is being delivered in the LA's schools. understand what effective provision is but members of the SACRE have little 'hands-on' experience of collective worship in schools. promote in-service support for teachers with responsibility for collective worship, and provides advice on enhancing quality of provision.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advanced A SACRE with advanced practice would:	have a good overview of quality of provision across the LA, with information from the LA and from presentations by schools. have first-hand experience of collective worship in schools. disseminate good practice in consultation with schools and teachers, sponsors an ongoing programme of in-service development, and assist schools in evaluating and enhancing the quality of their provision.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Where are we and where do we find evidence to support this?		

Key Area: 4c – Responding to requests for determinations		
How robust are SACRE's procedures for responding to requests from schools for a determination?		
Requires improvement/struggling A SACRE in this position would:	not have any understanding of what a determination is. not have any documentation for schools to use to make an application for a determination.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Developing A SACRE with developing practice would:	have had little or no experience of any requests for a determination, and have given at most only minimal attention as to how it might respond to such a request. This is due to a lack of support provided to SACRE by the LA via a professional officer. be found unprepared and at risk of making an unsound decision or giving erroneous advice by a request for a determination.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Established A SACRE with established practice would:	be aware that schools have the option of requesting a determination, and that SACRE has a major role in this process. have provided some training to its members regarding determinations, either directly through working on earlier requests, or through specific elements in developmental sessions be found by a request for a determination able to respond in an adequate but piecemeal fashion, without a systematic overview of this area of work.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advanced A SACRE with advanced practice would:	be fully equipped for responding to requests for determinations, with a good understanding of SACRE's responsibilities. have a well-established and effective framework for responding to requests, with which members are familiar and comfortable. Meet a request with a judicious and well-informed appraisal of the request by SACRE, leading to a sound decision communicated clearly to the school in a context of ongoing advisory support. periodically review all existing determinations together with keeping the guidance from the RE professional .	<input type="checkbox"/>
Where are we and where do we find evidence to support this?		

Successes/ What are we good at?

Barriers to success

Areas for development/ Action points:

- **For the SACRE**

- **For the LA**

Date of review (1)

Date of review (2)

Date of review (3)

Section 5: Contribution of SACRE to promoting cohesion across the community

How effectively does SACRE, in partnership with the Local Authority and the faith communities, contribute to the promoting of cohesion across the community?

“By community cohesion, we mean working towards a society in which there is a common vision and sense of belonging by all communities; a society in which the diversity of people’s backgrounds and circumstances is appreciated and valued; a society in which similar life opportunities are available to all; and a society in which strong and positive relationships exist and continue to be developed in the workplace, in schools and in the wider community”².

Schools play a major role in helping to shape the future of our society, and the duty laid on each school to promote community cohesion is a significant part of that role. One of the most obvious and effective contributors to the community cohesion agenda is Religious Education. SACREs should take every opportunity to promote the contribution of RE to the community cohesion programmes in local schools. Where properly supported by the LA, SACREs themselves can act as powerful vehicles for promoting community cohesion in schools, in education more widely, and in the local community. SACREs should exemplify good practice in their internal relations and in the ways in which they go about their business. Advice on the contribution of SACREs and RE to community cohesion is given in the Guidance.

² Alan Johnson, Secretary of State for Education and Skills, speaking in Parliament on 2 November 2006. Based on the Government and the Local Government Association’s definition first published in Guidance on Community Cohesion, LGA, 2002 and resulting from the Cattle Report in 2001.

Key Area: 5a – SACRE’s membership		
<i>How representative is SACRE’s membership of the local community?</i>		
Requires improvement/struggling A SACRE in this position would:	rarely meet and its membership will include many vacancies. The LA needs to review its membership and constitution in partnership with the SACRE and fulfil its obligations to convene an appropriately diverse SACRE	<input type="checkbox"/>
Developing A SACRE with developing practice would:	have a membership that is not necessarily strongly representative of the religious diversity of the local community. Its membership needs to be reviewed.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Established A SACRE with established practice would:	have membership that broadly reflects the religious diversity of the local community. This is regularly reviewed by the SACRE in partnership with the LA particularly where there is a high mobility of communities.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advanced A SACRE with advanced practice would:	have strong representation from all major local religious communities including different groups within the same religious tradition (e.g. different Muslim or Christian communities). It would also endeavour to include representation from small local faith communities and / or have links with national bodies that can broker advice from those communities elsewhere in the UK.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Where are we and where do we find evidence to support this?		

Key Area: 5b SACRE’s understanding of the local area		
<i>How much do SACRE members know and understand the local community in its religious, cultural and ethnic dimensions?</i>		
Requires improvement/struggling A SACRE in this position would:	meet rarely and this aspect of membership would not be an agenda item when they meet.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Developing A SACRE with developing practice would:	have limited knowledge about the religious, cultural and ethnic diversity in the local area.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Established A SACRE with established practice would:	be provided with a detailed analysis of the religious and cultural diversity within the LA and therefore be well aware of different groups representing the diversity within the local area. know about and have a relationship with local Inter Faith groups and the work that they do in the locality.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advanced A SACRE with advanced practice would:	have detailed knowledge of the nature of the religious, ethnic and cultural diversity in the local area and take active steps to inform itself further about the distinctive needs and opportunities created by this diversity. SACRE would have good liaison and seek to develop initiatives with local Inter Faith groups. The SACRE would be aware of the impact of this local context on schools and on the provision for RE and	<input type="checkbox"/>

	collective worship in those schools.	
Where are we and where do we find evidence to support this?		

Key Area: 5c – SACRE’s engagement with the community cohesion agenda.		
<i>How much does SACRE understand the contribution which RE/CW can make to a schools’ provision for community cohesion?</i>		
Requires improvement/struggling A SACRE in this position would:	have little or no grasp of what community cohesion means and little understanding of the contribution which RE can make to the community cohesion agenda. It may also have no opportunity to promote RE’s contribution to cohesion.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Developing A SACRE with developing practice would:	have a basic grasp of what community cohesion means and therefore a limited understanding of the contribution which RE can make to the community cohesion agenda. It may also have little opportunity to promote RE’s contribution to cohesion.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Established A SACRE with established practice would:	have an understanding of what community cohesion means and the duty on schools to promote this. The SACRE would understand and have a clear commitment to the part RE can play in promoting community cohesion and would seek to promote this throughout its work.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advanced A SACRE with advanced practice would:	understand what community cohesion means and be clear about the duty on schools and the LA to promote this. The members of SACRE would appreciate their key role in promoting RE’s contribution to the community cohesion offer of its schools. SACRE would ensure this is explicit in the local Agreed Syllabus and related guidance.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Where are we and where do we find evidence to support this?		

Key Area: 5d – SACRE’s role within wider LA initiatives on community cohesion		
<i>How well is SACRE linked to or consulted about LA initiatives promoting community cohesion?</i>		
Requires improvement/struggling A SACRE in this position would:	be given no information about, or contact with, wider LA initiatives linked to the promotion of community cohesion.	<input type="checkbox"/>

Developing A SACRE with developing practice would:	be given little information about, or contact with, wider LA initiatives linked to the promotion of community cohesion.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Established A SACRE with established practice would:	be aware of some LA initiatives promoting community cohesion and have opportunity to discuss and contribute to this work.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advanced A SACRE with advanced practice would:	be a key partner and stakeholder in the work of the local authority in this area. be aware of local Inter-Faith groups and in regular communication with them to ensure opportunities to support high quality RE/CW in schools.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Where are we and where do we find evidence to support this?		

Successes/ What are we good at?

Barriers to success

Areas for development/ Action points:

- **For the SACRE**
- **For the LA**

Date of review (1)

Date of review (2)

Date of review (3)

ANNEX

The responsibilities of a Local Authority

The detailed rights and responsibilities of local authorities can be seen in full in *RE in English Schools: Non-statutory guidance 2010*. This can be found at <http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/teachingandlearning/subjects/re/guidance/>

In brief, local authorities are legally required to:

- establish a SACRE and appoint representatives to each of the four committees
- establish an occasional body called an agreed syllabus conference (ASC)
- institute a review of its locally agreed syllabus every five years
- appoint members of the committees represented on the ASC
- ensure that membership of group/committee A on the SACRE and ASC is broadly representative of the local area
- take all reasonable steps to ensure that SACRE and ASC membership is representative

The responsibilities of a SACRE

The detailed rights and responsibilities of SACREs can be seen in full in *RE in English Schools: Non-statutory guidance 2010*. This can be found at <http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/teachingandlearning/subjects/re/guidance/>

In brief, SACREs are legally required to:

- advise the local authority on RE and collective worship
- publish an annual report on their work
- send the annual report to QCDA (or its successor body)
- meet in public, unless confidential information is to be disclosed
- make their minutes available to the local authority and make provision for public access to their agenda and reports

The Guidance also indicates that SACREs should, as a matter of good practice:

- Monitor the provision for both RE and Collective Worship
- Provide advice and support on RE and Collective Worship to schools
- In partnership with the local authority, keep the locally agreed syllabus and provision in schools under review
- Offer advice to the local authority

In addition, SACREs may:

- Require their local authority to review the locally agreed syllabus
- Decide to advise their local authority
- Co-opt members who are not members of any of the four groups.

The Guidance also makes it clear that SACREs can and should make a strong contribution to the promotion of community cohesion in schools and in the local community through their promotion of good quality RE and through their operation as a SACRE.