

Lancashire SACRE
Meeting to be held on 25 November 2013

Responding to the OfSTED report into RE (Realising the potential)

The Report highlighted the following areas of concern in the national survey of RE:

- **Low standards and weak teaching**

These issues were highlighted in both primary and secondary schools but teaching was a particular concern in primary schools and at Key Stage 3 in secondary schools. Assessment is a particular area of concern and the situation is exacerbated by the gaps in training opportunities.

Response

The Development Plan identifies strategies to support teaching and learning in both primary and secondary schools through the provision of support networks, sharing of good practice and training opportunities. The development of assessment in RE is a key area for development.

- **Problems in developing a curriculum for RE and confusion about the purpose of RE**

This section of the report highlights concerns about the curriculum in primary schools and at Key Stage 3 and the overemphasis on knowledge rather than developing an enquiry based approach to RE. It also suggests that many teachers are unclear about the key elements of RE as against more general spiritual, moral social and cultural development.

Response

The Lancashire Agreed Syllabus has been praised for the focus placed on enquiry based learning and provides exemplification materials to support teachers and schools in developing the curriculum to meet their school needs. It is also clearly linked to exploring the key features of religions and what it means to follow a particular faith or set of beliefs. Through the Development Plan we are looking to develop the idea of "Hub" schools where good practice in using the Agreed Syllabus can be shared.

- **Concerns about the leadership and management of RE**

This section of the report indicates that there are a number of concerns about leadership in RE both in primary and secondary schools. These included the low priority given to RE in many schools, where the subject leader did not have sufficient time (and sometimes the skills) to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and achievement and provide training/support for staff.

Response

The professional development of teachers in RE is a key area of concern for SACRE and is highlighted in the development plan. The value of networks, good practice schools and the use of self evaluation frameworks such as the RE Quality Mark to support subject leaders is recognised. Again the development of effective assessment is a key issue for development.

- **Weaknesses in examination provision at Key Stage 4**

The report outlines concerns about the quality of some teaching at Key Stage 4 where there is not sufficient focus on enquiry based learning and extending pupils' learning about religion and belief.

Response

The sharing of good practice amongst secondary schools provides an opportunity to further strengthen the quality of teaching in Key Stage 4 but this remains a very difficult issue to resolve and one which is worth further consideration.

- **The impact of recent changes in education policy**

This section of the report highlights the negative impact of changes to the accountability framework of schools and the reducing effectiveness of many SACREs on RE provision.

Response

Whilst it is recognised that, in Lancashire as in the rest of England, RE is a subject which has come under increasing pressure as a result of the current accountability framework, it is evident that the Lancashire SACRE remains strong and vibrant and is working closely with schools to support and promote RE.