

Appendix to SACRE Monitoring Sub-Group report

**Commentary on the Survey Monkey Questionnaire (undertaken late 2012)
prepared for SACRE Monitoring sub-group 13.5.13**

112 responses in total, 28 secondary and 84 primary.

Q1. 1. The school satisfies the recommended time allocation for RE according to Living Difference Revised. (KS1- 36 hours per year, KS2- 45 hours per year, KS 3 and 4- 45 hours per year).

83% respondents indicate they agree or strongly agree that the school satisfies the recommended time allocation for RE. Our view is that there is room for improvement here because 17% are not ensuring the required time allocation.

Q2. The school has a qualified subject leader with responsibility for leadership and management of RE.

It is possible the term 'qualified leader' was open to interpretation; 'qualified' could mean either non specialist but qualified teacher or non qualified teacher i.e. LSA. Our view is that the reported 4% without either is a good response and likely to be much better than the APPG report would indicate is the case around the country.

Q3. The school ensures high quality teaching of RE from qualified teachers.

There are two elements to this – high quality teaching and qualified teachers. The response does not fully allow for distinction between the two, but our view is the 84% positive response here is good. We suspect that there could therefore be 10% of teaching from either LSA's in the primary or non specialist RE teachers in the secondary school. Either way we can cautiously conclude that this is better than the APPG report would lead us to believe is the case in the rest of the country.

Q4. All teachers of RE have accessed CPD (externally or internally) within the last 2 years in order to teach RE according to Living Difference Revised

That only 64% accessed Continuing Professional Development (CPD) in the past 2 years is disappointing. Probing the questionnaires rather more through the comments reveals that perhaps attendance at the Secondary RE Conference, which could be regarded as good CPD, was not identified as such by respondents. CPD could also be a matter of definition. However clearly there is a level of need for CPD that we must find a way to meet and enable higher level of engagement with the CPD on offer. We do offer plenty of courses which are well advertised.

Q5. The school has received further support from the HIAS RE team within the last 2 years.

The fact of over 50% not accessing HIAS support is disappointing and continuing to raising awareness of what is on offer seems important. Pat has made a presentation about Living Difference Revised 2011 to the District Managers in 2012. . It has been suggested that a presentation might be made to Head teacher groups and to run some courses in relation to the possibilities for teaching literacy through RE, a current primary priority.

Q6. All teachers of RE have sufficient subject knowledge to teach RE effectively according to the requirements of Living Difference Revised

We are pleased that 80% feel they have sufficient subject knowledge. We need to attract the other 20% to the CPD we have on offer which relates to subject knowledge in particular.

Q7. All teachers of RE are confident with the requirements of Living Difference Revised.

Our view is that the figure of 30% of teachers not being confident with their statutory obligations is not good enough. It is possible that some have accessed CPD but still do not feel confident. In primary schools it is hard to maintain consistency in terms of the Subject Lead for RE, therefore with a high turnover, the need for CPD is constant. It is also important to remember that primary teachers are rarely subject specialists and that by the nature of their role they are generalists.

Q8. Schemes of work are in place to meet the requirements of Living Difference Revised. 88% say they are teaching according to the methodology, and we regard this as good; however we need to consider what impact we can have on those who are not. 3% say they are definitely not teaching to the methodology, this is a cause for concern.

Q9. All teachers of RE teach RE according to the required methodology for teaching and learning in Living Difference Revised. We are pleased with the 91% of respondents who either agreed or strongly agreed with this statement.

Q10. Assessment opportunities are in place in accordance with the required methodology.

We are pleased with the 75% positive response to this question. There is room for improvement in the secondary school, however we know there has been oversubscription to all the primary assessment courses that have been run. There is also some improvement in response to this question compared to the previous one in 2006/7.

Q11. Pupils/students are involved in assessing and levelling their own work on occasions Research tells us that self assessment of work is a good educational strategy at times. It enables children and young people to think more carefully through their work and to consider quite precisely where their work needs developing. It has been shown to raise achievement in all groups of children and young people. However it is not appropriate in all situations, as for example very young children in KS1 won't have such a high level of self-reflectiveness and so can't undertake this in the same way as older children. It is a well-regarded strategy in the secondary school.

Q12. There is evidence of enquiry into concepts appropriate for the key stage for all pupils/students. Responses to this question were positive with over 94% of respondents indicating enquiry into concepts was in place for all students. However, a picture is emerging of a small group of schools where this is not the case (just 7 schools out of the 112 who responded).

Q13. There is evidence of contextualising the concepts within the studied beliefs and practices for all pupils/students in all RE cycles. Although 89% of respondents strongly agree or agree with the statement, there is some concern about the 10% here who are looking for more evidence to be sure they are undertaking the contextualisation step. We would have assumed that the same schools would respond in the same way to this question as to the previous question (12), or even more positively since we often regard the 'contextualisation step' as the more straight forward element of the cycle. It is possible that teachers are simply worried about not having evidence.

Q14. There is evidence of evaluation from both "within" and from "without" according to the agreed syllabus. Evidence for the evaluate step of the cycle seems more tricky for schools. 66% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. The difference between responses to this and the other elements of cycle is worrying, and likely to indicate that this is the part of the cycle that teachers are less confident with. However this is the element that teachers really like once they really understand the process.

Q15. There is evidence of communication of responses to the identified concepts based on pupils'/students' own experiences.

Responses to this question at 86% show agreeing or strongly agreeing - similar to Q12 and 13.

Q16. There is evidence of application of pupils'/students' responses to the identified concepts in their own and others' lives. 87% agree or strongly agree or disagree – similar to Q 15.

Q17. There is evidence of the required enquiry approach adopted resulting in a consistently high level of engagement in RE. We are pleased by the responses to this question (80% agree or strongly agree) which are higher than in the previous survey (73%). This would indicate that the embedding of the Agreed Syllabus over time is having further impact over all Key Stages now.

Q18. There is evidence of the required enquiry approach adopted resulting in high levels of challenge for pupils /students in RE. This result (71% agree or strongly agree) shows similar result to the previous questionnaire (70%).

Q19. There is evidence of the required enquiry approach adopted resulting in progression over time in pupils'/students' achievement in RE. This result (78% agree and strongly agree) shows evidence of continued progress over time. The result is greatly improved over the previous questionnaire (63%). This particular response is especially pleasing and important in light of Ofsted demand that teachers demonstrate progress over time.

Q20. There is evidence of teachers regularly and accurately assessing and levelling pupils'/students' attainment in RE. We are less pleased with this response (58% agree and strongly agree), and wonder how progress can be ascertained without regular assessment. However, it represents an improvement over the result to a similar question in the previous questionnaire – a 50% increase.

Q21. There is evidence of assessment informing planning and provision in RE. See Q20. 59% agree or strongly agree with this statement. We would like to see this as a higher figure as this is a mark of good teaching and planning.

Q22. There is evidence of improving attainment in RE as pupils/students' progress through a key stage. The response to this question represents a huge improvement since the last questionnaire. With 80% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing with this statement compared to 50% last time in the primary school and 35% at GCSE. This is evidence of the Syllabus embedding over time and working through the primary and secondary schools where children have received all their RE now through the living difference pedagogy. This is triangulated with two other piece

of evidence. One being a study which revealed that supported pedagogy can make a critical difference to achievement and also the data we have of the improvement in Hampshire GCSE results over time.

Q23. There is evidence that pupils'/students' attainment in RE is equal to or better than their performance in other subjects. We regard this response of 50% as a strongly positive result with only 8% disagreeing.

Q24. Pupils'/students' engagement in Living Difference Revised has impacted on their Spiritual, Moral, and Social and Cultural development. We regard there as being a positive response to this question with 77.5% in agreement or strong agreement, and only 1 respondent disagreeing with this statement. Written responses (available on request) make particularly interesting reading.

Q25 For Primary phase schools only.

RE is taught in blocked units of time (i.e. a whole day or 3 or 4 consecutive afternoons) in all classes.

62% of respondents (50 schools) said 'yes' to this question. This is regarded as disappointing since Judith has worked with schools over several years strongly recommending that RE works best when taught in Blocked Units. There have been several interventions to schools in recent years, including letters from the Chairman of SACRE and the General Inspector (Judith). There have been articles in Primary RE News as well as strong references to this as the best option in the Ofsted Report in 2010 'Transforming RE'.

Q26. For Primary phase schools only. RE is taught by class teachers and linked with other areas of the curriculum where possible. 80% agree and strongly agree with this statement. This question was not asked last time, however we this response reveals that in some cases either one teacher is teaching all the RE lessons. The problem of this is that RE can become marginalised. The alternative explanation is that RE is being taught by Learning Support Staff.

Q27. Please add any further comments about the implementation of the County Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education: Living Difference Revised 2011 in your school. Individual responses are interesting reading and particular ones are available as part of the whole reports printed out for some responses.

Patricia Hannam May 2013.