

SACRE briefing 17

1 message

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National Association of
Standing Advisory Councils
on Religious Education

SACRE BRIEFING

Issue: 17

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Welcome from the Chair

Well last term seemed to be busier than ever! I hope that 2018 turns out to be a fantastic year for you and your SACRE, and everyone involved in RE in our schools. 2018 marks the **25th anniversary of NASACRE** and we are holding a Silver Jubilee Conference in London to mark it – see below for more details.

Last term I took part in the Theos Think Tank sessions with other policymakers to try to build consensus around some of the big issues in RE. We discussed teacher recruitment and initial and continuing training, RE's relationship to - and role in combatting - extremism, and once again the role that SACRE should play in organising and monitoring the RE curriculum. Watch out for the report from Theos in the new year.

A highlight of the last term was the joint conference we held with AREIAC in Birmingham in November. This was hugely informative and challenging, looking at the response to the **Commission on RE's Interim Report**. We are pleased that so many individuals and SACREs responded to the second call for evidence. Executive member Sushma represented us at the Consultation event in December. This was an interactive day of feeding back to Commissioners on the proposed new National entitlement, debating accountability, new roles and powers for SACREs and ways to raise the quality of Teaching and Learning. It was heartening to hear the appreciation for SACREs' work from Commissioners and other organisations, as well as advocate for additional practical support and resourcing for SACREs.

NASACRE is continuing to meet with officials from the DfE to discuss how we can best hold schools, academies and LAs to account. One very interesting discussion has been around the need for each Agreed Syllabus (funded by public money) to be publicly accessible under the terms of the 1996 Act. We understand this has implications for SACREs who try to claim copyright for a syllabus, or place it behind a password-protected paywall. Our discussions are continuing, and we will let you know the outcome in due course.

These discussions have informed the revision of the **FAQs** section of the NASACRE website; several sections have been slimmed down and made more current.

We have also been working with Deborah Weston (Tower Hamlets, Redbridge, Thurrock and Havering SACREs and NATRE) to put together a really useful guide about why and how a SACRE, in fulfilling its monitoring role, can complain when a school is not fulfilling its statutory duties with regard to RE.

A pdf of Deborah's useful information sheet and links to further information can be located [here](#) to download as a paper for your next agenda.

We know of one SACRE that wrote to an academy in its area, as it appeared - from the School Workforce data - not to be teaching any RE. The SACRE was invited to a meeting with the headteacher and he was able to show how he was putting units of discrete RE into Key Stage 3, with a plan to expand into KS4 over time. Sometimes success is easily won, sometimes it takes more determination, as [this case study shows](#).

Vice Chair of NASACRE vacancy

NASACRE has been operating without a Vice Chair this year. Please consider nominating someone from your SACRE who may be able to fill this role for a year before becoming Chair in May 2019. Contact Paul on his email chair@nasacre.org to arrange an informal discussion if you wish, and be ready when the nomination forms come out for our **AGM** in May. There will also be some Executive Committee vacancies to fill.

Non-compliance of LAs

The NASACRE Executive has recently been in touch with two Local Authorities which we believe are failing in their statutory duty to establish a SACRE. We have offered support to these LAs as they seek to re-establish their SACREs, and will be keeping in touch this term to see how they are doing. The DfE is keen to hear of any Authority that is failing in its statutory duty and is not receptive to NASACRE's offers of support.

Constitutional Changes by online vote

SACREs were advised in the last Briefing that the following motion will be included in the Agenda for NASACRE's AGM in May 2018:

"That the Annual Subscription to NASACRE be increased to £105 per SACRE for the Academic Year 2018-19 and thereafter."

SACREs should vote on whether to support this motion or not (some may already have done so) and should record their vote EITHER at the AGM through their representative(s) in person, OR by submitting their vote in advance of the AGM on

the **electronic form**

In the absence of a recorded vote, it will be assumed that a paid-up member SACRE is in favour of the motion.

If you have problems with the form, please contact admin@nasacre.org.uk in the first instance.

Book early for our 25th Jubilee Conference and AGM in London, 24 May 2018

Theme: Stronger Together - Celebrating the power of Community

We are excited to announce that the 25th Annual General Meeting and Conference of NASACRE will be held **Thursday 24 May 2018** at **Merchant Taylors' Hall** in the City of London. The closest underground station is Bank and the closest railway stations are Cannon Street, Fenchurch Street and Liverpool Street.

Merchant Taylors' Company is one of the Great Twelve Livery Companies of the City of London; and today operates mainly as an educational charity. The Guild has been located at this site since 1327, though the Great Fire of London and the Blitz destroyed and damaged a great deal of the site. We look forward to welcoming you to this historic building to celebrate our 25th anniversary.

Full details of the Conference will be circulated nearer the time. If SACREs are concerned about their LA's SACRE budget for the next financial year, they may wish to register and pay for delegates before the end of the current financial year in March. The cost will be £100 per person for delegates from member SACREs and £130 for others.

In the past, applicants have not always indicated their personal dietary requirements when booking. Please double check these have been filled in on the form.

To book, visit the **Conference and AGM 2018** page of the website.

20:20 RE: Practice, Policy and Powerful Knowledge

A conference for professionals in religious education

NASACRE is working with AREIAC, AULRE and NATRE to organise a **two-day conference** in Crewe (13-14 October 2018) which aims to enhance the quality of Religious Education by drawing together professionals in RE – teachers, academics, researchers, advisers, and providers of professional development.

The conference organisers warmly **invite your proposals** for a practical workshop, academic seminar, or talk, in one of the breakout sessions. We will consider all proposals and reserve the right to accept, reject or combine proposals where appropriate. We are particularly keen to draw on the expertise of Members of SACREs from the faith communities: could you offer a workshop/seminar/talk at this conference, of 20, 30 or 60 minutes where you help others from the world of RE to better understand your faith and how to present it to pupils? If so, please read the **invitation** and send in your proposal using the **form**, by **February 18th** to **chair@nasacre.org.uk**

The Westhill/NASACRE Awards 2018-19 - a reminder

Over the last twelve years, the Westhill/NASACRE Awards have successfully given SACREs opportunities to enhance their capacity to generate high quality experiences in RE (or collective worship) for their schools.

NASACRE is now encouraging and inviting individual SACREs (or SACREs in partnership) to apply for a Westhill/NASACRE Award of up to £4,000 for 2018-19 via the **application form** on our website.

Projects should offer pupils opportunities to engage in compelling learning experiences in RE (or collective worship), within the broad theme of "education into diversity".

Any SACRE wishing to submit an application is strongly advised to look at the **briefing notes** which accompany the application form at the website location. For queries, advice or further information, please contact **Michael Metcalf**, the convenor of the Awards Panel.

Closing date: 31 March 2018

RE Quality Mark

The RE Quality Mark is an RE Council project and has been developed to celebrate high quality religious education, providing all schools at primary and secondary level

with a framework to capture good practice.

Thanks to funding from the Westhill Trust, the RE Council is able to offer FREE assessments to a limited number of schools in Staffordshire, Warwickshire, Shropshire, Worcestershire, Herefordshire and the West Midlands. The REC can also offer subsidised assessments to eligible schools in Bristol, Bath and Wells, Gloucester and Somerset thanks to support from St Matthias Trust.

The REQM does not currently have funding to support schools in other areas, and would ask SACREs, where they are able, to consider helping their local schools to meet the cost of the assessment, to help raise the profile of RE.

For more information about the RE Quality Mark, please download the **flyer**, visit the **REQM website** or email the office at **admin@reqm.org**.

Lynda Rudge & Naomi Dalton

Discovering Sacred Texts at the British Library

The British Library houses one of the world's greatest collections of sacred texts. These range from some of the best-known and most beautiful manuscripts of the scriptures of various religions, to an extensive collection of printed editions, both early and modern. Items include one of the earliest surviving manuscripts of the Hebrew Bible from the 10th century, the earliest known manuscript of the complete Greek New Testament, the Codex Sinaiticus which dates from the 4th century and rare fragments of first-century Kharosthi scrolls from Afghanistan, thought to be the oldest surviving Buddhist texts.

The British Library is now creating a new online learning resource that allows visitors to explore the richness and diversity of the collection of sacred texts, contextualised through discursive articles exploring and celebrating this religious diversity.

Researchers are seeking feedback through a **survey**, the aim of which is to help them to understand best how to make the resource interesting, relevant and useful. It will take about 5-10 minutes to complete. Personal data will be treated as confidential, kept safe and won't be shared with any third parties.

Survey closes: 22 January 2018

BBC Religion & Ethics Review

In December 2017 the BBC produced its report **Religion and Ethics Review** which is interesting for SACREs for a number of reasons.

Firstly, there is a definite focus on young people and enabling them to access high quality, age-appropriate information about religions and beliefs in an accessible way. Naturally this will be of interest to schools as is the continued commitment shown to supporting Religious Studies GCSE.

Secondly, to improve religious literacy the 'mainstreaming' of religion in drama is seen to be important – putting religion back into the mind of viewers in a positive way.

Some interesting points of action from the review include recognition that journalists need to be trained in religion and belief and that editors should be much better educated about religion so that it can be appropriately represented.

One to watch out for is the pledge of the BBC to make 2019 a 'Year of Religion' across all of its platforms. SACREs could certainly capitalise on this and make 2019 a 'Year for Religious Education' for all children and young people in schools in their geographic area irrespective of whether they are LA schools or not.

David Hampshire, Inter Faith Network

CATHEDRALS AND THEIR COMMUNITIES: A report on the diverse roles of cathedrals in modern England

A **report** commending England's forty-two Anglican cathedrals for their continued importance as places of worship, their wider community work and their commitment to promoting local economic growth, was published by the Department for Communities and Local Government on 29 December 2017. The report is the culmination of a year-long tour which saw the Minister for Faith, Lord Bourne, visit all of England's forty-two Anglican cathedrals to better understand their continued importance both to local communities and wider society.

The report sets out the outcomes of Lord Bourne's visits, but it is not intended for a school audience. However, it has some interesting findings which schools might find useful. The report is twenty pages long and covers the sort of work that Anglican Cathedrals do:

- Helping refugees
- Supporting the homeless and rough sleepers
- How cathedrals can be hubs for regeneration and businesses.
- How cathedrals are architecturally, artistically and culturally significant.

What may also be of interest to pupils is the number of jobs that a cathedral generates in the local area.

Whilst this report is about Anglican cathedrals the eagle-eyed will spot that one Roman Catholic cathedral has slipped in. Perhaps this could be a starter exercise for SACRE members, before discussing the usefulness of sharing the report with the LA and its schools to support the teaching of Christianity as part of the Agreed Syllabus.

David Hampshire, Inter Faith Network

SACRE items for your Spring Term meeting

- Consider whether your SACRE has any training needs that might be met by using the NASACRE **resources** on the website.
- Ensure that your **Annual Report** has been completed and sent to the DfE and NASACRE.
- Take action on non-compliant Secondaries in your area:
 - Request the School Workforce data from Deborah Weston and review
 - Write to schools and academies which are not meeting their statutory duties.
 - Follow the procedure in Deborah's guide
 - Tell us of any good news, or contact us if schools are not responding to a formal complaint.
- Email chair@nasacre.org.uk with details of any events you are holding during this term and next.
- Discuss who your SACRE might nominate as Vice Chair or Executive Member of NASACRE.
- **Vote** on increase in subscriptions
- Book some of your members to attend the **Silver Jubilee AGM and Conference**, 24 May
- Consider which of your members might respond to the invitation to give a workshop/seminar/talk at the **20:20 RE Conference**, 13/14 October
- Check out the revised **FAQs** sections and give us feedback



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