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National Association of  
Standing Advisory Councils  
on Religious Education

## **SACRE BRIEFING**

### **Issue: 18**

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## Welcome from the Chair

Well, we'd hardly taken the Christmas decorations down before Easter was upon us! Hopefully that doesn't mean that the Summer term will feel too long. There is much to look forward to and we are expecting the highlight to be the **Silver Jubilee NASACRE Conference and AGM** of which there are details **below**. The briefing this time has some good examples of SACRE work from up and down the country and we have been able to see another flurry of Agreed Syllabi launched, in Westminster, Devon and Wakefield to name but three. Do keep us at NASACRE informed about what your SACRE is doing, either by **Twitter** or **email**, and share your good practice – especially practice that you think is ordinary; others will find it inspiring, I guarantee!

## Nominations for the NASACRE Executive

At the NASACRE AGM, which will be held at our annual conference on 24 May, we will be holding elections for the posts of:

- **VICE CHAIR** (to serve for two years) with automatic progression to Chair after 2 years
- **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**: 3 vacancies (to serve for three years)

SACREs in paid-up membership are invited to use the form on the **website** to nominate candidates for the above roles. These are active roles requiring a commitment of time and energy. Please note Officers and Executive members are primarily in role to support the work of NASACRE and SACREs, not to represent a specific SACRE or faith group.

The nomination should include:

- A brief biographical note (maximum 75 words) including, where applicable, the SACRE group to which the nominee belongs (i.e. Group A: Other Denominations and Faiths; Group B: Church of England; Group C: Teachers' Associations; Group D: the LA) or the role held on behalf of the SACRE.
- A brief statement (maximum 100 words) about the ways in which the nominee will be able to contribute to and support the work of NASACRE.
- A statement about each candidate's ability to contribute to and support the work of NASACRE (all roles) must be completed by the SACRE Chair or Vice Chair and all nominations confirmed with a declaration from the Chair or Vice Chair of the nominating SACRE. If this is a problem because your council is 'in purdah' please contact NASACRE.

Please return the nomination form by **Friday 18 May 2018** to:

**[secretary@nasacre.org.uk](mailto:secretary@nasacre.org.uk)**

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## Book now for our 25th Jubilee Conference and AGM in London, 24 May 2018!

### 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. Coffee and tea will be available from 10:45 and the conference will start at 11:15. We expect to end at 16:15. The cost will be £100 per person for delegates from member SACREs and £130 for others.

We are pleased to welcome **Dr Vanessa Ogden** as keynote speaker. Dr Ogden is the CEO of Mulberry Schools Trust, a Multi Academy Trust. She read Theology and Religious Studies at Manchester University, was an RE teacher, and is currently serving on the Commission on Religious Education. At the formation of the first APPG on Religious Education, Dr Ogden said on the subject, *"It fundamentally hits the heart of what it means to be a human being and anything that allows young people to take that apart for themselves... is just so exciting; I don't know how you can resist it really."*

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 Silver Jubilee.

**In the past, applicants have not always indicated their personal dietary requirements when booking. Please double check that these have been filled in when making your [application](#). Thank you.**

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## AREIAC Conference: The Bristol Hotel, Bristol, 2nd & 3rd July 2018

### REflecting Plurality in RE

SACRE members are invited to attend this year's AREIAC Conference. It promises to be a stimulating and thought provoking two days with guest speakers such as **Professor Bob Jackson**, **Professor Denise Cush** and **Dr Farid Panjwani**, alongside a range of engaging workshops and seminars.

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**Download** the flyer and draft programme along with the booking form to secure a place. **Please return the completed booking form by email.** An invoice will then be sent for payment.

If you are not already a member of AREIAC, why not check the eligibility criteria and see if you might benefit from joining, to take advantage of member conference rates? You could save up to £30 - in essence, reducing your membership fee from £70 to £40!

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## 20:20 RE Practice, Policy and Powerful Words in Religious Education

We along with three other RE professional associations (AULRE, AREIAC and NATRE) are collaborating to produce an exciting conference on Religious Education. We were overwhelmed with the quality and quantity of offers to come and lead a breakout session at the conference, but with difficulty managed to whittle it down to 40 top quality breakout sessions with a balance between policy, theory and practice including some sessions aimed particularly at primary and some at secondary, with others relevant to all.

The conference will be called 20:20 RE – Practical, Policy, Powerful Knowledge and will be held **Saturday 13 October – Sunday 14 October 2018 in Crewe.**

Click [here](#) to book a place.

You may wish to follow [@20\\_20RE](#) on Twitter for the latest information.

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## Ramadan Advice

Newham SACRE has recently reviewed advice around celebrating Ramadan in schools, supporting schools to be able to think about decisions around pupils fasting.

If you would be interested in reading it, then [email](#) Claire Clinton, the Newham SACRE RE adviser.

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## Youth SACREs

We are interested to find out how many Youth SACREs are operating in different

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of it, what sort of activities it undertakes. We will then create an overview, so we can consider how we can best support work with young people and advise SACREs wishing to set up a Youth SACRE.

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## The Awards Panel for the Westhill/NASACRE Awards

The Westhill Awards Panel makes awards of up to £4,000 to individual SACREs every year for specific projects in their locality. The applications are considered by a panel of volunteers. NASACRE is keen to plan for succession within the Awards Panel, and invites SACREs to put forward suitable people to join the Panel.

Who's on the Panel? How does it operate? Why Westhill, anyway? **This article** seeks to answer these questions.

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## REQM and NASACRE

The **RE Quality Mark** is an award scheme celebrating good RE and its impact on the wider school curriculum. It is also a powerful tool for professional and curriculum development. Details can be found on the REQM **website** and on the REQM Twitter account **@REQualityMark**.

The scheme is run by the RE Council of England and Wales, and the project manager is **Linda Rudge**. Linda attended a meeting of the NASACRE Executive in February to report on developments and to seek advice about how the award can do more to support SACREs.

Most REQM news is available to NASACRE members through the website and through the regular RE Council newsletter. Most recently, the REQM has been carrying out some research into the impact of the award in schools, and into their experience of the visit from their assessor. The results of the research are gradually being announced through the website.

NASACRE members might like to check where local award holders are (this is shown on a map and a list of award holders on the website) and further details can be obtained from the REQM administrator, Ffion, on **admin@reqm.org**. Many schools (and SACREs) use the self-evaluation process, which is freely available as a download, to benchmark school provision and progress in RE.

We are delighted that the REQM has attracted several recent grants. The Hockerill Foundation supports events for award holders each year. The Westhill, St Matthias

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applications, but we don't always know the details - thank you to any SACRE that has helped a school with its application costs, or to prepare for the REQM award visit.

Most recently, the Culham St Gabriel's Trustees have approved a grant to support the RE Council with a review of the REQM criteria and process. We look forward to involving the NASACRE Executive in this review.

Please let us know if there are ways to support your SACREs. For example, we have a PowerPoint presentation introducing the REQM which is available to local networks and REQM assessors. This is available from **Ffion**.

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## SACRE Budgets and the CSSB

We have been involved with discussions at the DfE around funding for SACREs. The cost of SACREs is being met from the Central School Services Block (CSSB) from 2018-19 onward. This is explained very well in **this document**.

We have heard that in some places it appears that the LA is trying to cut the budget for SACREs claiming that the costs of the SACRE, which the DfE had clearly defined as forming part of the General Duties element of ESG, are now to be met from Retained Duties DSG- i.e. this will be a top slice off the money they have been given for other purposes. This interpretation is not correct. Since the cost of SACREs is being met from the CSSB, local authorities should not be charging maintained schools for this duty (which in effect they are doing by top-slicing money allocated for schools). If this is happening to your SACRE we need to know what is being cut and what the justification is for these cuts. Only with this information will we be able to make a case to the DfE.

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## Developments re: Compliance

The Minister of State for Education, Nick Gibb MP, in a response to a Parliamentary Question asked by Stephen Timms MP stated in March 2018:

*"RE is compulsory for all state funded schools, including academies and free schools, at all key stages. The Department investigates complaints made about schools not fulfilling their statutory duties in respect of RE.*

*The Department does not gather data on schools' level of compliance with the requirement. One formal complaint was made to the Department about a school's noncompliance with its statutory duties in respect of RE in the period since 2010-*

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*Faith schools are required to arrange a separate inspection of denominational religious education and collective worship, leading to published reports. Ofsted does not inspect individual curriculum subjects, but is required to report on whether the curriculum offered by the school is broad and balanced and promotes the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils.*

*If an individual is concerned that a school is not meeting its duty to provide religious education they should follow that school's complaint procedure in the first instance. If the complaint is not resolved, then the issue can be escalated to the Department's School Complaints Unit for maintained schools, or the Education and Skills Funding agency for academies, free schools, university technical colleges or studio schools. Information about complaint procedures for schools can be found [here](#).*

*My Rt Hon Friend, the Secretary of State for Education, has a range of powers to ensure schools comply with their statutory obligations, The powers used will depend on the nature of the statutory duty in question and the potential impact of any failure to comply. These powers include a direction under section 497 of the Education Act 1996, a performance and standards warning notice under the Education and inspections Act 2006 and a referral to Ofsted for an inspection. Where academies are subject to the same statutory duties as maintained schools, the Secretary of State has powers to enforce compliance via the terms of the funding agreement."*

This appears to suggest that individuals, including SACREs will have the backing of the DfE if they complain about non-compliance. Last term we signposted the work of Deborah Weston and this [useful guide](#) is on our Website. Do let us know about your efforts to ensure ALL schools in your area are compliant with their statutory duties in respect of Religious Education.

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## **Case Study about tackling non-compliance – Newham SACRE**

Earlier this term, Newham SACRE got some information from NATRE's research officer, Deborah Weston, about levels of provision for RE in schools. The information was taken from the school workforce data given by schools to the DfE. If the data indicated that they were not teaching RE at KS3 or KS4, Newham SACRE followed up with each school. The Newham RE SACRE consultant got in touch with headteachers via email to ask about the RE teaching taking place in the school. In some cases, this involved educating the office staff about where RE is on the timetable (where taught under 'Humanities', office staff didn't realise that they needed to report on RE) thus accounting for the data on 3 or 4 schools that first appeared as non-compliant.

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the perfect time. The consultant was able to contact the headteacher to flag up the fact that NATRE and the DfE had this information and ask how they were going to fulfil the Agreed Syllabus. This was the additional prompt that the head of RE and the headteacher needed to action the issue. So it is a good news story, as the one secondary school that didn't previously have KS4 RE, will have it in place from September 2018. It goes to show how we can all support each other's work in the RE world and how SACREs can effect real and positive change in their schools.

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## Withdrawal

We are continuing to seek information from SACREs about how prevalent withdrawal from RE and Collective Worship is. Read [this article](#) and see if your SACRE could begin to gather data about withdrawal. Do let us know what you discover.

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## Reflections on the Commission for RE Interim Report

**We Need to Raise Our Game** – a personal reflection by **Dilwyn Hunt**

**A report** on the **joint NASACRE and AREIAC Conference**, Birmingham, 24 Nov 2017

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## Places of Worship planning visits with schools

In Spring Term 2018, Lewisham LA and SACRE working in partnership, commissioned from the LA's school visits provider *Wide Horizons*, a 90-minute free session informing faith venue representatives about the requirements on schools for Risk Assessments, Safeguarding and Health and Safety requirements. It introduced them to Lewisham's policy and handbook **There and Back Again** and also helped them to understand:

- the legislation and Health and Safety obligations schools need to follow when going on a school trip
- the particular requirements of Lewisham's local policy for school trips and educational visits
- what assurances they may need to provide to schools when hosting a visit

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The session was extremely successful and other SACREs may like to consider whether they could provide something similar for their local faith venues.

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## And Finally....

Hot on the heels of Cambridge Analytica, The RE Council have produced a **Facebook Quiz** to see how religiously literate you are. If you are on Facebook do have a go and share as widely as you can... we might get some more RE teachers out of it!

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### SACRE items for your Summer 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
- 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
- **Book** for some of your members to attend the Silver Jubilee AGM and Conference
- Consider which of your members might wish to attend the AREIAC or 20:20 RE Conference
- Let **Claire Clinton** know if you have a Youth SACRE
- Take action on non-compliant Secondary Schools in your area
  - Request the School Workforce Data from Deborah Weston and review
  - Write to schools and academies who are not meeting their statutory duties and remind them what they are. You may want to quote Nick Gibb!
  - 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.
- Consider a strategy for gathering information about withdrawal

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