

SACRE briefing 24

1 message

NASACRE Administrator <admin@nasacre.org.uk>
Reply-To: NASACRE Administrator <admin@nasacre.org.uk>
To: Andrea.Todd@northumberland.gov.uk

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National Association of
Standing Advisory Councils
on Religious Education

SACRE BRIEFING

Issue: 24

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Welcome from the Chair

As always, a busy last term! However, it was a great pleasure to be able to visit both Cumbria and Lancashire SACREs in the autumn term.

Cumbria SACRE

Cumbria met in a school, and during the afternoon, Year 8 pupils, as part of their RE lesson, came into the SACRE and quizzed SACRE members about their faith and their involvement in RE and SACRE. I thought this was a brilliant idea! Does your SACRE do something similar?



Lancashire SACRE

I also attended, on your behalf, the RE Council, and met with Rudolf Elliott Lockhart, the CEO, and also with officials from the DfE, primarily to discuss SACREs and RSHE (more details below). You will also see below that I have been keeping a close eye on Ofsted's reports and have written to Ofsted.

As an Exec we have met regularly to ensure members are being supported and have been very busy planning the AGM and Conference for May.



NASACRE Executive Membership Updates

At our next AGM, we will be holding elections for 3 NASACRE Executive positions. We will also be looking to appoint a Vice Chair as Paul Smalley will be handing over the chair to our current Vice Chair, Robert Morgan. We also continue to seek a replacement for our long-standing treasurer, Michael Metcalf. If you would be interested in one of these positions, please contact **NASACRE** for more information. Nominations need to be made by the member's SACRE, in advance of the AGM on 18 May.

NASACRE National Conference and AGM 2020: Monday 18th May "Authority in RE"

The **2020 NASACRE Conference and AGM** will be held on Monday 18 May at: Crowne Plaza London - The City, [19 New Bridge St, London EC4V 6DB](#)

The hotel is across the road from Blackfriars underground (Circle and District line) and mainline station. It is less than a 10 minute walk from the excellent, modern and very fast Thameslink service.

Coffee and tea and pastries will be available from 10,30 and we will start at 11 AM. Our keynote speaker is Matthew Purves, Ofsted's Deputy Director, Schools.

A number of excellent workshops will be offered (see **conference programme**); you will need to indicate your preference of workshops when you book. Also, please make certain you indicate any dietary requirements.

At the conference, there will be some filming for an informational video about SACREs and NASACRE at the conference. If you don't wish to be filmed, there is a place on the booking form to indicate this. Please make sure you complete this; you will then be issued with a special badge to indicate that you should not be filmed.

This promises to be an outstanding conference and all SACREs are encouraged to send

representatives.

Bookings can be made [here](#).

Reasons to Subscribe to NASACRE

We have a huge array of resources available to subscribing SACREs, in our members' section, such as our FAQs. With topics such as:

- SACRE groups and memberships
 - Ensuring representation
 - Agreed Syllabus Conference procedures
 - What can the agreed syllabus require?
 - Adopting another LA's syllabus or buying a syllabus from a commercial body
 - SACREs and monitoring
 - Key Stage 4 and examinations
 - SACREs and Academies
 - Collective worship
 - Withdrawal from RE/Home education
- ...there is something for every SACRE!

To find out more about the benefits of subscription, read our Vice Chair's paper from briefing 23 here: [Why subscribe to NASACRE?](#)

SACRE Membership follow up

Do you have representatives on your SACRE who are not attending? NASACRE has drawn together some sample letters from SACREs to create an [exemplar letter](#) that you can tailor to your own context, to deal with non-attendance appropriately.

FOI requests - an example of how to respond

Does this sound familiar?

'My SACRE has received a Freedom of Information Request asking about the number of schools in our LA with determinations, waiving their obligation to provide a majority of Acts of Collective worship which are wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character. How should we respond?'

NASACRE has produced an [example response](#) that you are welcome to use and make specific to your own context.

Ofsted

The new **Ofsted schedule** is in full swing now, with 100s of schools having been inspected. Do you know of anyone who has had an experience of an Ofsted 'deep dive' in RE this term? We would love to hear from you, if so. It would be really helpful to share experiences so that SACREs know what their schools can expect, and can support them accordingly. For example, SACREs may want to summarise their agreed syllabi into a short overview to enable inspectors to know what to look for in schools in their area.

Please note RE *can* be the subject of a deep dive; anyone hearing advice to the contrary should contact NASACRE about this.

Paul Smalley, our Chair, has probably looked at every Ofsted report in a state secondary and most if not all of the primary reports which comment on RE! It is clear that the number of RE Deep Dives in secondaries is small, but growing. He has had some **correspondence** with Sean Harford (Ofsted's National Director, Education) on this matter. There are more examples of primary Deep Dives into RE. Many reports, in the section about personal development have a comment about religious literacy, knowledge of world religions, often mentioning visits to places of worship as good practice, for example:

... Pupils learn about different faiths and cultures during lessons and by visiting places of worship. Last year pupils visited a synagogue in Liverpool to learn about Judaism. Leaders make sure that pupils are being well prepared for life in modern Britain.

Such comments are appearing in VA and VC schools as well as community schools and academies. The focus, however, is clearly on the curriculum. There are examples of schools with RE curricula clearly in line with their Agreed Syllabus that are being praised:



What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders' plans for curriculum development highlight the order in which subjects will be reviewed, the development of skills within a subject and a review of the sequence of learning. Where this has already been undertaken, in subjects such as mathematics, religious education, science and physical education, pupils are making strong progress. Leaders are focused on the sequencing of learning from Reception to Year 6 in all subjects. Leaders need to complete this work for history, geography and design and technology, so that the sequence in these subjects is as detailed as it is in other subjects.

And others, usually where the Agreed Syllabus is not being followed, where schools are being directed to improve their RE provision:

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school does not promote pupils' healthy lifestyles and wider understanding as well as it could through physical education, religious education and personal, social and health education. Leaders should review their provision for these subjects.

There are examples of schools who do not fulfil their statutory duties with regard to RE being judged quite harshly, such as this example from a secondary academy:

In key stage 3, pupils have too few opportunities to learn about some subjects, such as geography, history, and religious education (RE), in detail. Also, the range of

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subjects offered by the school at key stage 3 is narrow. For example, pupils in Years 7 and 8 do not currently get the chance to study technology. The curriculum at key stage 3 does not stay as broad as possible for as long as possible. It is not as ambitious as the national curriculum.

In key stage 4, pupils can choose to study from a wide range of subjects. However, older pupils do not have enough opportunity to study RE. f

It is worth remembering that the focus on RE in an inspection is not really to judge the RE, but as an indicator of all subjects in the school. However, these comments will be useful to SACREs, in order for them to monitor and support schools in their RE curricula, in line with the Agreed Syllabus. It is also a useful reminder to ensure that the Agreed Syllabus itself has logically sequenced knowledge and skills and clearly helps teachers know what pupils should learn in RE in each year or key stage, so that their understanding of religion, religions and beliefs develops and becomes increasingly sophisticated and secure. If it does not, then it may be time to review the AS.

SACREs & Relationships, Sex and Health Education

The requirement to provide RHE in primary schools and RSHE in secondary schools becomes **statutory** in 2020. We welcome this and see it as a hugely positive development. There are, however, some points of contention for various faith and non-faith groups about the content and approach schools may take toward RSHE. At NASACRE, we have been asked about the role of SACREs in supporting schools in this area.

Some SACREs enjoy the support of an advisor whose remit is for PSHE as well as for RE and Collective Worship, with specific expertise in this area. In such cases that individual may feel

able to provide support and advice to schools. One example of this is in Newham SACRE, which you can read about [here](#).

However, this is not the case for all SACREs, and so it is important that SACREs are clear about their *statutory* role in this respect and recognise the limits of their powers in this area. **It should be recognised that SACREs have no statutory duty or powers to provide RSHE advice or support to schools.** Therefore, no SACRE should feel duty-bound or be placed under pressure to provide such advice to their schools or local authority (LA).

It is the responsibility of the local authority, or Academy trust, to consult within the local community, including amongst faith groups. Faith representatives on SACRE have been appointed for their expertise in RE and collective worship and have not been given a remit to discuss issues of relationships or sex education. However, it may be that some SACREs are well-placed to be a space where faiths, schools and the authority can discuss concerns and offer feedback. Other SACREs may be able to signpost LAs/ MATs to faith representatives within the area, due to the relationships they have with faith communities. Some SACREs may have little capacity or expertise in this area and so, if schools specifically ask their SACRE for advice, they should be directed to their LA or MAT.

If SACREs feel they are coming under pressure to provide advice or support they are unable to give, they should seek the support of NASACRE in dealing with this. Additionally, we would like to hear from SACREs who are engaging with work in this area.

Collective Worship

Some of you may have noticed some coverage in the [press](#) last term regarding two children who had been withdrawn from Collective Worship in a primary school in Oxfordshire. The school concerned is a community primary. Although it has joined the Oxford Diocesan MAT, Oxford Diocesan Schools Trust (ODST), this didn't change the status of the school. It must still provide daily collective worship of a 'wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character' in line with current legislation. One family, supported by Humanists UK, chose to withdraw their children from this Collective Worship, as is their right. The parents were seeking a judicial review because they felt that during CW, the school should provide an alternative of equal educational worth for their children to attend.

Before the Judicial Review took place the family and the school [agreed an out of court settlement](#).

The DfE have clearly stated that this case has no immediate implications for SACREs or schools.

'The complaint was settled by the two parties outside of court and as such has no bearing on current legislation or the current national policy on collective worship'.

Legislation and guidance have not been altered and community schools should still continue to provide a daily act of Collective Worship of a broadly Christian nature, unless a determination is in place, or parents withdraw their children. There is no requirement for the school to provide

alternatives for children withdrawn from CW, although as a result of the case, schools and SACREs may receive enquiries and requests.

Think piece: 'What's in a name?'

Exec member Michael Metcalf has written another thought-provoking piece providing a stimulus for SACREs:

'The Welsh Government's Department for Education and Skills has put forward proposals for Religious Education which include renaming the subject "Religions and World Views". This name is almost identical to that of the Report of the Commission on RE: "Religion and World Views: The Way Forward". Almost identical, but not quite. The addition of the "s" is apparently quite minor, but in fact it opens up a multitude of avenues for discussion and reflection. In exploring these avenues, I will use, for brevity, the acronyms RRWV (the Welsh preference) and RWV (the CoRE Report).

Religion or religions? Read more [here](#)

NATRE National RE Ambassadors - update from Claire Clinton, London

'All the RE Ambassadors are busy around the country building up contacts within their regions and encouraging RE leaders and teachers to work collaboratively across their areas to sustain and improve teaching in RE in schools. If as a SACRE you are not aware of who your RE Ambassador is then please visit <https://www.natre.org.uk/about-natre/re-in-your-region/re-ambassadors/>

I am the RE Ambassador in London and since September I have been working with the British Library education team to organise a day's training for RE teachers on Sacred Texts; this took place at the start of December. The day's training coincided with the library's launch of Discovering Sacred Texts, an on-line resource, and their Buddhist Sacred Texts exhibition. The day went really well and we had very positive feedback from the teachers who attended.

I am also working with the Ismaili Centre in Kensington to arrange a secondary and separate primary conference to help schools understand a little more about diversity within the Muslim faith.

I am pleased to report too that we have lots of new local groups being set up around London and more in the process of starting. This will allow more teachers to come together and share best practice around effective learning in RE. My next project is to organise a day's training for those who lead these local groups, especially our new leaders. If as a SACRE you have teachers who might be interested in leading a local group then do please get in touch with [Naomi](#) or [Juliet](#) and we would be delighted to work with your SACRE. More teachers having

regular professional development to help them in their task of looking after RE in their schools can only ever be a good thing.'

Culham St Gabriel's Pilot Leadership Programme

Culham St Gabriel's Trust are delighted to have the support of NASACRE for a pilot leadership programme for teachers of RE who are beginning to work regionally and nationally. The pilot programme will see approximately 16 teachers develop their expertise in four areas: Pedagogy, curriculum, research and policy. The Trust has created a small steering group representing the different RE organisations, including NASACRE, to oversee and shape the pilot programme over the coming year. If any SACRE members would like to know more about the programme please contact **Kathryn Wright**, CEO, Culham St Gabriel's

AREIAC 2020 Conference: 'Deep Dive or Shallow Swim: From Syllabus to Classroom'

Next year's AREIAC conference will be held on 6th-7th July 2020, at the Windmill Village Hotel, Coventry. Focusing on curriculum development at both a national and local school level, this conference is open to all those interested in supporting quality RE.

Day 1 will focus on Agreed Syllabus development and aims to support advisers and consultants who might be working with SACREs as well as being valuable to Chairs of SACREs and members themselves.

Day 2 will build on this theme, with a focus on moving into school-based curriculum development and planning. We will also be exploring Ofsted's expectations in relation to a Deep Dive in RE. This day will be valuable for all those who promote excellence in RE and we welcome teachers and others working directly with pupils.

Delegates can choose to attend both days or either one. The programme will flow from Monday to Tuesday but each day will also be valuable as a stand-alone event.

Guest speakers so far, include, Paul Smalley, Kathryn Wright, Trevor Cooling, Paula Webber and Rudolph Elliott Lockhart and others will be announced as we develop the programme further.

There are a limited number of Winter Saver Rates on accommodation which reduce the usual cost of the conference by up to £39, so do try to take advantage of this Early Bird opportunity by **booking** asap!

LANRW Pilot Project

We are continuing to work on plans for a pilot of the Commission on RE's Recommendation 8. A number of SACREs have already volunteered to take part. If you need more details, do get in touch.

Westhill Awards

Over the last fourteen 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 for 2020-21. Awards of up to £4,000 may be applied for via the [application form](#) on our website.

Projects should offer school pupils the opportunity 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 online application form.

For queries, advice or further information, please contact [Michael Metcalf](#), the convenor of the Awards Panel.

Closing date: **31 March 2020**

Agreed Syllabi

In each briefing we have been alerting you to Agreed Syllabi which you might like to look at, adapt or adopt, if you are in the process of reviewing your own syllabus. We would like to remind SACREs that it is for each individual SACRE/Agreed Syllabus Conference to make its own decisions about what is best for their particular context. By naming local authorities, we are providing you with a range of different approaches and syllabi from which you can make an informed choice. NASACRE as a body does not endorse (or recommend) any particular syllabi.

The following SACREs have recently reviewed and published their agreed syllabi:

Norfolk

Norfolk have recently launched their revised [agreed syllabus](#) for 2020. Read this [interview](#) between our chair, Paul Smalley, and Kathryn Wright to find out more about the syllabus and how it was developed.

Calderdale, Kirklees and Leeds

Calderdale, Kirklees and Leeds' newly revised agreed syllabus 'Belonging and Believing' is available to view [here](#).

We also congratulate Devon, Torbay and Plymouth for reviewing their RE [agreed syllabus](#) this year.

REQM Update

The **REQM**, managed by the **RE Council of England and Wales**, is led by by NASACRE Exec member Linda Rudge from Cornwall SACRE, supported by a team of 80 assessors across England and Wales.

Schools are awarded the REQM by an accredited assessor, at one of three levels – Bronze, Silver or Gold. The award is valid for three years. The cost of the award is £475 each time the school applies. Some local SACREs have supported schools in their applications, either through advice or through subsidising the costs. Some SACREs find the scheme helpful in monitoring local RE, or in helping schools to plan their subject and professional development. REQM schools have reported back to SACREs, and some teachers have been asked to join their SACRE through this networking. The REQM criteria have been reviewed, and the new criteria and school evidence form will be available in early 2020.

Linda will be leading a workshop on the new REQM and how it can help SACREs at NASACRE's annual [conference](#).

Please contact [Linda](#) for further details, or to ask for a visit to your local SACRE from a member of the team.

Items for your Spring Term SACRE meeting

- Ensure that your **Annual Report** has been completed and sent to the DfE and **NASACRE**.
- If you have a new Agreed Syllabus to share, let us know!
- Consider if you have a project which you could apply for a **Westhill Award** to fund.
- Review any Ofsted reports from your area. Consider (along with school workforce data for secondaries) if schools might need help with their RE curricula that SACRE could offer.
- Continue to monitor and act upon non-compliant secondaries in your area and let the Exec know what you are doing.
- Tell us of any good news, of schools improving their RE offer 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, Treasurer or Executive Member of NASACRE.

- Book some of your members to attend the **AGM and Conference** in London in May.
- Consider whether your SACRE has any training needs that might be met by using the NASACRE **resources** on the website.
- Consider if there is someone who would benefit from the AREIAC/CStG Leadership programme.
- Encourage schools to apply for **REQM**.



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Our mailing address is:

NASACRE
CAN Mezzanine, 49-51 East Road
London, N1 6AH
United Kingdom

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