

NASACRE Conference and AGM: Ambitious SACRES

The NASACRE AGM, 2022, took place online on 23 May.

There were three keynote addresses:

1. **Ed Pawson**, deputy chair of the RE Council of England and Wales, who talked about the REC, its nature, work and current projects. Of key significance is the **Draft Handbook on Religion and Worldviews**, published in May, taking forward the recommendations set out in the report of the Commission on RE (CoRE). It can be found at:

<https://www.religiouseducationcouncil.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/REC-Worldviews-Project-Draft-Handbook-double-pages.pdf>

The Handbook offers a revised National Statement of Entitlement and suggests ways in which it can be used as the basis for constructing a syllabus and units of work on religion and worldviews. This project has been led by Stephen Pett of RE Today. There are three school-based teams which will test the contents of the Handbook with a view to publishing a final document in 2024.

The REC works closely with one of its members, the National Association of Teachers of RE which has appointed a Director, Claire Clinton, of their revised regional hubs project. There are nine hubs, each of which will have a 'lead' whose role will be to support and energise the teaching of religion and worldviews through the region. These posts have been advertised and we are part of the North East hub.

2. **Richard Kueh**, HMI, the subject lead for RE, who stated Ofsted's intention that RE should be 'intellectually challenging and personally enriching' for pupils as they explore our 'multi-religious and multi-secular society'. He reiterated the focus from last year's research review which identified three categories of knowledge: 'substantive' content and concepts; ways of knowing; and personal knowledge. The second part of this work will be a subject report, based on inspection data, which is in progress.

He emphasised the need for a curriculum that is 'collectively enough' for pupils to engage in our complex society rather than focusing on the weighting given to separate traditions - a focus on depth rather than breadth. On ways of knowing, he offered the analogy of 'percolating' knowledge from university level to classroom level (like all analogies, this is imperfect but his key point is the need for academic rigour).

3. **David Hampshire**, an RE Consultant, who has conducted an analysis of last year's annual SACRE reports for NASACRE which will be published in due course on their website. Out of a possible total of 153 annual reports, 57 were available at the time of the analysis. Many SACREs reported similar patterns and problems but of significance is that only a minority had fulfilled the statutory duty to offer advice to the local authority and a smaller minority gave the LA response. Where advice was offered it was in relation to the review of the Agreed Syllabus and to funding.

Additionally:

Each workshop was followed by break-out discussion groups and the day ended with a business meeting, the election of officers and the launch of the new website, which is much improved.

The Westhill awards were announced for this year: three were successful from four applications for five awards.

Workshops:

Following the AGM, a number of workshops will take place online. Those (to be) attended by us include:

- Reviewing the RE curriculum
- Ofsted support to schools
- Supporting RE teachers with enhanced subject knowledge (Westhill/NASACRE award)
- Developing the three VAT strands of Vocabulary, Art(efacts), and Texts within RE

Two of the workshops are given by SACREs which were awarded Westhill funding for their projects.

Actions and issues arising from the AGM

1. The Draft Handbook on Religion and Worldviews to be an agenda item at a SACRE meeting next year so that we can familiarise ourselves with its work and, if necessary, comment on the project.
2. The Ofsted subject report to be an agenda item when it is published.
3. SACRE should check the analysis of annual reports to see if there are ways in which we can improve our performance.
4. If all schools are to be academised following the White Paper, then the future role of SACREs is unclear.
5. SACRE should follow developments on the website: REthink.org.
6. SACRE members should familiarise themselves with the new NASACRE website and aim to keep up-to-date with national developments.
7. Members who attend any of the NASACRE training events can present a brief report to SACRE.

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