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National Association of
Standing Advisory Councils
on Religious Education

SACRE BRIEFING

Issue: 37

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Welcome from the Chair

Welcome to the NASACRE Briefing and we wish you a peaceful and productive year. As you can see from this edition, the NASACRE Executive committee is already busy supporting members and liaising with subject associations and partners, and we are planning our AGM and conference in May.

Our theme in this Briefing seems to one of celebration in challenging times. Looking back over introductions to past Briefings, this isn't new. I have been overwhelmed again by the evidence of great RE – or in Religion and Worldviews education. There is some evidence to show the opposite, but we won't dwell on that here, although the OFSTED annual report findings are evidenced **below**. The report is clearly pointing towards government action on RE.

Where there is good or excellent practice, it's important to celebrate it locally and nationally, and the Westhill Awards (**item below**) are a great opportunity to engage in promotion and celebration of innovative and positive practice. The **NATRE 'Spirited Arts' competition** (in its 20th year), and the **RE Quality Mark** and **WIRE Awards** are also used by some SACREs and schools to achieve similar aims. Is your SACRE aware of schools with these awards? Could you set up a project or event to share their work?

The Association is also aware of the need for members to be supported through challenges as well as positive achievements. The two are often co-dependent. As many prepare for Agreed Syllabus reviews, we offer training and networking to see you through the complexities of curriculum change and professional development (see **webinar programme section** and our March webinar). We have also noted key events for religions and worldviews below and encourage you all to discuss the significance of commemorations, festivals and rites of passage in your communities. SACREs have a vital part to play in interfaith dialogue and adult education, and the shared resources section of the website (see **website update section**) is where to look for SACREs that have experiences and resources to pass on.

And it is time (again) to start thinking about who could join us here on our Executive committee - please raise this on your agendas. NASACRE is not a national SACRE, it is a membership organisation that only exists because of the volunteer time and expertise shared with others, and the subscriptions from the membership and their local authorities.

Thank you all for your work locally, regionally, nationally – and we look

forward to hearing from you soon.

Linda

We're sad to report the peaceful passing of our Baha'i colleague Elizabeth Jenkerson, who faithfully served on the Exec for 10 years or more. We acknowledge her valued contribution to NASACRE, especially her enthusiastic work on planning our annual conference and AGM over several years.



Westhill Awards

It's the time of year for SACREs to submit their applications for a Westhill/NASACRE Award. The £4000 (max) award is intended to fund a SACRE-led project that will enhance the quality of RE and or collective worship in local schools, with the potential to have wider, lasting impact. The theme for this year is ***Education into Diversity***. The **Westhill website** has further information and reports from many winning projects.

The **NASACRE website** has more information, providing links to the application form/notes, as well as to a **recording of the autumn term webinar**. This session demonstrated the application process, the criteria and some examples of recently successful projects.

The closing date for applications is 31 March and winners will be announced at our 2024 AGM and Conference in May.

AGM and Conference

Monday 20 May 2024 #NASACRE24

Venue: Hilton York

Theme: *How can SACREs support high quality RE & Collective Worship?*

Maximum 2 delegates per SACRE, after which a waiting list will be offered.

Whilst we hope that many of you will join us in person, we also offer an online Zoom

option at the same price.

For further details and to book, please visit the [Conference page](#) on our website.

Subscribed SACREs

£120 per delegate, including a choice of 2 online workshops to be delivered in June*

£170 per delegate, including a choice of 2 online workshops to be delivered in June*

which 2 additional SACRE members may attend

Non-subscribed SACREs

£160 per delegate, including a choice of 2 online workshops to be delivered in June*

£30 per delegate per online workshop

***ONLINE CONFERENCE WORKSHOPS**

Dates: Monday 3 June - Thursday 6 June on Zoom at various times - details will be on the [website](#) once confirmed.

We will be running an inspiring range of workshops, and if your SACRE would like the opportunity to present work you are proud of, please email

admin@nasacre.org.uk by the end of February. SACRE winners of

Westhill/NASACRE Awards will be sharing their projects. Our conference organisers would be delighted to discuss with you how best to share your work.

Executive Committee Elections

We ask your SACRE to consider nominating up to two candidates to the NASACRE Exec. At the AGM, there will be elections for at least 3 new members, plus the Secretary and Treasurer roles. We shall be looking for skills in managing conference, communications and development planning. Further details, once confirmed, will be on the [website](#) with nomination forms.

Catherine Hughes, a member of St Helens SACRE, was elected last year.

She writes:

It has been a privilege to be elected on to the NASACRE Executive after being nominated by my SACRE. I have felt welcomed and that my personal skills and experience are valued, especially when I share my current experience from the classroom and from other teachers. It is a great opportunity to be part of such an important organisation that has such a national voice and a clear drive to ensure all students receive quality RE across the country. It has allowed me to develop my own CPD and understanding of SACRE and the work of NASACRE, as well as growing my own network of support and making national links.

Nominations must be received by 5pm on Friday, 10 May 2024

Subscribing to NASACRE

Is your SACRE a **subscribed member** of NASACRE?

If not, you are missing out on the subscriber-only content and a range of other benefits such as:

- answers to FAQs about SACRE's work
- opportunity to take advantage of a generous **virtual training package** for any number of your SACRE members
- access to training resources
- opportunity, at reduced cost, to attend NASACRE conference and other meetings.

If you want to check your subscriber status, look for the coloured logo after the name of your LA on the **SACRE Contacts** page for further information. The rates for 2023-24 are:

Annual subscription: **£105**

Additional training package: **+£50**

Contact **admin@nasacre.org.uk** to update your subscription.

Webinar Programme

Since September we have run 5 webinars with over 145 people attending – so a lot has been going on and this next term is no less busy!

Recent feedback from participants:

The webinar programme is great as there is always clear information given, you get to see what others are doing around the country and often get to chat with colleagues.

Webinars provide me with lots of clarification. Good sharing of best practice always enriches me.

Please see below our webinars in the next three months.

(Sometimes we also have joint seminars with AREIAC.)

Thursday 18th January 2024, 6:30-8pm:**Using data effectively as a SACRE**

Special guest: Deborah Weston

Description: This session will help SACRE chairs/vice chairs and professional support officers to make effective use of the data that NATRE, NASACRE and the DfE provides, as well as ensuring that local data can be drawn upon.

Free to SACREs who have bought an annual webinar package.

£20 for a subscribed SACRE and £30 for a non-subscribed SACRE.

Thursday 22nd February 2024, 4-5:30pm:**Being an effective SACRE clerk, part 2**

Led by David Levien, Catherine Hughes and Claire Clinton

Description: This session will help SACRE clerks to reflect on their present practice and share with other clerks around the country some top tips for fulfilling the clerk's role within SACRE, focusing on minute-taking, SACRE composition and your constitution/terms of reference.

Free to SACREs who have bought an annual webinar package.

£20 for a subscribed SACRE and £30 for a non-subscribed SACRE.

Monday 26th February 2024, 7-8pm:**Dealing with beliefs and practices about loss & death in your Agreed Syllabus**

Led by: Denise Chaplin and Paul Smalley with the National Association of Funeral Directors

Description: This session will help SACREs to reflect on what they do at present to cover this aspect of the curriculum in schools. It will provide input from the national body of funeral directors, as well as examples from 2 different SACREs of their support work around these themes in their Agreed Syllabus.

Free to SACREs who have bought an annual webinar package.

£20 for a subscribed SACRE and £30 for a non-subscribed SACRE.

Tuesday 12th March 2024, 7-8pm:**Convening an Agreed Syllabus Conference – legalities and processes**

Led by: Paul Smalley with Linda Rudge

Description: This session will share the legal process and best practice suggestions for convening an Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC) for your SACRE.

Free to SACREs who have bought an annual webinar package.

£20 for a subscribed SACRE and £30 for a non-subscribed SACRE.

For further details, please contact admin@nasacre.org.uk

Website Update

The Communications Group on the Executive, working closely with our Administrator Marie, is working hard to revamp the NASACRE website. We aim to make it more accessible and useful to all SACREs. You will find some new sections and see that others have been revised. One new page, which draws together materials previously posted in a range of sections, is the '**Managing SACREs**' page which is accessible to all SACREs and contains some items, e.g. relevant FAQs and responses that were previously password-protected for subscribing SACREs.

A **Noticeboard** is now included for all SACREs, where news and up-to-date information will be posted regularly.

Meanwhile, the '**Shared Materials from SACREs**' subscriber-only section where SACREs share their work with others, is reorganised. If you are a subscribing SACRE, please share useful advice and guidance when you can. If SACREs want to rebadge or use the work of others, please make sure you inform the original creators and acknowledge the work of others within your document.

The NASACRE website revamp is work in progress, so keep looking for more changes going live. We welcome your comments and suggestions to make the site even better!

Ofsted and RE

At the end of the Autumn Term, Ofsted published its **Annual Report** from the Chief Inspector. This year there were references to individual subjects, including RE:

RE in schools is generally of poor quality. Although it is a statutory subject, schools often consider RE as an afterthought. As a subject on the curriculum, it is undervalued. RE is a complex subject, and the lack of clarity and support from government makes schools' job harder. Some schools steer through these challenges well, but most do not. We found that:

- *many schools do not meet the statutory requirement to teach RE at all stages*
- *pupils are rarely taught enough substance to prepare them to engage in a complex, multi-religious and multi-secular society (where religion and non-religion play different parts in different people's lives)*
- *too often, schools do not teach topics in the RE curriculum deeply enough for pupils to develop a substantial understanding of the subject matter*
- *non-examined RE is typically not high quality.*

All pupils should develop a broad and secure knowledge of the complexity of religious and non-religious traditions. It will take coordinated effort by stakeholders to improve the quality of RE in schools:

- *schools need high-quality professional development to teach RE well*
- *curriculum publishers need to identify clearly what pupils will learn and when, building on knowledge over time, so that pupils develop a deep knowledge of the chosen religious and non-religious traditions*
- *the government should provide clear expectations about RE provision in schools. Schools should follow these. Current non-statutory guidance for RE should be updated and include clear information for schools about the breadth and depth of the syllabus they are expected to teach.*

These findings reflect what NASACRE and other RE organisations have been saying for many years, so there are really no surprises! Discuss this document at your next SACRE meeting and consider your response.

The long-awaited Ofsted *RE Subject Report* is due to be published soon, so please ensure that you keep your eyes open for that. We will get a link to it on our new **Noticeboard** page as soon after publication as possible.

RE Hubs Update

1. NASACRE was very pleased to partner with RE Hubs to hold nine *In Conversation* events across England during November. Notes were made of questions, ideas, concerns and developments at each meeting where SACREs sent a representative. The NASACRE Exec meets in early February to discuss and process these and we will let you know any updates. We are very grateful for the time given by many hard-working colleagues on SACREs and hope we can hold more such meetings in the future.
2. RE Hubs continue to run FREE Places of Interest and School Speaker training (POI & SS). Has your SACRE invited your religion and worldview representatives to do the training? Feedback from SACRE members: *The training was very informative, and it provided a good opportunity to discuss thoughts in the breakout groups. Very focused and engaging presentation where we were able to share and learn from experience. I thought that 90 minutes was just right! I will recommend this training to other SACRE members.*
Please advertise the **training flyer** to local worldview communities.
3. RE Hubs are now partnering with NATRE to run FREE training for those new to leading a local RE group and supporting other teachers.

If your SACRE has teacher members who are interested to help to lead your group or maybe to start up a new group, the next series of virtual trainings are:

Session 1 - Thursday 14th March @ 4-5:30pm

Session 2 - Thursday 18th April @ 4-5:30pm

Session 3 - Thursday 16th May @ 4-5:30pm

4. RE Hubs partner with NATRE and AREIAC to provide professional development opportunities for those advisers and teachers who already run a local RE support group. The next virtual meeting is:
Wednesday 17th April @ 4-5:30pm
5. RE Hubs partner with the REC, NATRE and AREIAC to work with MAT RE leads (those leading RE across several schools). Such new positions are starting to appear, so we are bringing colleagues together to learn from each other. The next virtual meeting is on 25th April @ 4-5:30pm and if your SACRE has a MAT rep or contact with local MATs, please highlight this opportunity.
6. SACRE members may find our website www.re-hubs.uk useful as we aim to be a one-stop resource for everyone involved in high quality RE/RVE/R&W.

Holocaust Memorial Day 2024

Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD) has been commemorated nationally on January 27th every year since 2001. This date was selected as it marks the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau, the largest concentration and death camp, by the Soviet army in 1945. This year's theme, '**Fragility of Freedom**', reflects the persecution and genocides of 6 million Jewish men, women and children by the Nazis and more recent genocides in Rwanda, Bosnia, Cambodia and Darfur.

Many areas hold local events to mark this day and details can be found on the internet. We would be happy to share details on the NASACRE website of any events that are being organised or supported by SACREs.

For further information, please see the [Holocaust Education Trust](#).

Ramadan 2024

The Islamic calendar is lunar and has 354 or 355 days. Therefore, precise dates cannot be forecast as they depend on the sighting of the moon.

In 2024 Ramadan begins on March 10th plus or minus a day, dependent on the

moon sighting. Prayer times for Ramadan may be found on many mosque websites.

Eid-ul-Fitr (the festival marking the end of Ramadan) falls on 9th April (plus or minus a day).

Your SACRE may wish to remind schools to support the needs of Muslim pupils and staff during the fast. As in previous years, teachers will appreciate that the routine of Muslim families is entirely different during Ramadan. Young children may well become more tired or excitable during school time, even if they are not fasting themselves. Those students who are fasting may become very tired and thirsty during the school day.

Items for your SACRE agenda

- Share materials with your schools about Holocaust Memorial Day
- Ensure that schools have up-to-date Ramadan guidance
- Sign up for NASACRE webinars
- Explore the RE Hubs website
- Discuss the Ofsted report
- Consider nominations to the Exec and who to book for conference



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