

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education
29th June 2022
Report of the Deputy Chief Executive and Director for Families and
Communities
An Update on NASACRE

1 Purpose of Report

1.1 To present members of SACRE with a brief update on key issues that have developed or arisen since the last meeting of SACRE.

2 Summary

2.1 Members of SACRE will receive a brief report on a number of NASACRE issues. These are matters on which it is appropriate to brief members of SACRE.

3 Recommendation

3.1 That members of SACRE receive the report.

4 Background

4.1 NASACRE is the national body of SACRE's. National meetings and conferences are held to which members of SACRE are invited and encouraged to attend. These have been held virtually due to Covid-19. Issues are discussed which have local or national importance for RE. The chair and the adviser attended a National conference on May 23rd 2022.

4.2 Members will be briefed on any key developments.

5 Equal Opportunities

5.1 This report has been prepared in accordance with the County Council's policies on equal opportunities.

6 Financial implications

6.1 Financial implications may be raised by individual items. These have been dealt with elsewhere or will be raised at future meetings of SACRE.

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NASACRE CONFERENCE AND AGM MONDAY 23rd MAY 2022

About 150 delegates from SACREs across the country met for the NASACRE AGM and conference held online for the second time. The conference was opened by Linda Rudge, chair of NASACRE, welcoming delegates and celebrating the continued and varied work of SACREs and NASACRE over the last two years. She set the context for the title 'Ambitious SACREs', pointing out that ambition can be 'admirable or unrealistic'. SACREs need to aim for admirable, and SACREs are still standing, not standing still. The 'Still Standing' report is available to download from the NASACRE website.

The first two presentations and discussions focused on Religion and Worldviews as well as the substance of the curriculum. The third was an analysis of SACRE reports submitted to NASACRE and the DfE. There were three keynote speakers, and each was followed by time in breakout rooms discussing what had been heard.

The first keynote speaker was Ed Pawson, the Vice Chair of the REC. He shared the new vision for the Religious Education Council that 'Every young person experiences an academically rigorous and personally inspiring education in religion and worldviews.' The role of the REC is to campaign and advocate for good RE. It is a group with representatives from over 60 religious and non-religious groups. He also talked about the recent publication of a Draft Handbook on Religion and Worldviews, SACREs need to engage in the discussion about religion and worldviews.

Dr Richard Kueh (HMI) raised the challenge to SACREs about how they can support scholarly RE. He reiterated many of the key points raised in the Ofsted RE Research Review, published in May 2021. On the selection of content for a syllabus, he suggested that including a greater number of religions and non-religious worldviews did not guarantee a high quality of RE and that is an essential component of the discussion around syllabus design. Ambitious end goals, that reflect the scholarly nature of RE, are needed. A subject report on RE from Ofsted will be published this summer.

Just after lunch, the winners of this year's Westhill Awards were announced and Bristol, Leicester and Luton were successful. NASACRE and Westhill were disappointed by the low number of applicants and SACREs are urged to consider making a bid. If you need inspiration, remember that three of the June workshops will showcase last year's winners.

There is also a recording of how to apply for an award in the online training section of the NASACRE website.

Dr David Hampshire, former chair of NASACRE, presented his initial findings of the analysis of SACRE annual reports. The final report will be on the website and circulated to SACREs later this term. The key findings make for interesting reading, raising many questions that SACREs may wish to discuss. For example, resources made available to SACREs are very variable and the level of financial support had an impact on the effectiveness of SACREs. He focused on the fact that the primary function of a SACRE is to advise the Local Authority on RE and collective worship, and only a minority of SACREs reported that they had done that.

NASACRE is in discussion with the DfE about the findings of report and further advice and training will likely be forthcoming.

The business meeting was short and as no nominations had been received for vacancies on the Exec, other than the formal appointment of Saquat Ali as Treasurer and the reappointment of Sue Holmes as Secretary, the Chair expressed the need for need for more people with the right skills to be nominated by SACREs to work with the Executive committee to help with challenges raised by the White Paper.

After the business meeting, for which all the reports are available on the NASACRE website, Webmaster Matthew Tullett gave delegates an overview of the new website, which was launched at the conference. The new site should be easier to use, more streamlined, with a better search function and aimed to work better on mobile devices. SACREs using the new website are asked to contact NASACRE if they experience any difficulties.

During her closing remarks, NASACRE Chair, Linda Rudge, thanked retiring Executive members Alex Klein and Roy Galley for their work. It was also time to say farewell to our Treasurer, Michael Metcalf, after 29 years and welcome Saquat Ali to the role.

As they left, delegates posted comments in the Chat, such as: *Such a lot of supportive information and discussion. A day full of brilliant insight and interest.*

Many thanks to all the Exec for an excellent and informative conference. Making the absolute best out of having to make it all happen on ZOOM