

Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE)

Thursday 11 July 2024 at 5.00 pm

To be held as an online meeting

Membership:

Chair: Basma ElShayyal (Chair)

Vice Chair: Ian Slade

Adviser: Nadia Nadeem

Representatives of:

Brent's faiths and denominations Local Authority
Church of England
Teacher Organisation representatives
Local Authority representatives

For further information contact: Abby Shinhmar, Governance Officer
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The SACRE meeting will be open for the public and press to attend as an online virtual meeting. The link to view the meeting live will be available [HERE](#)

Agenda

Item Page

1 **Welcome and Introductions**

2 **Apologies for Absence**

3 **Minutes of the previous meeting** 1 - 7

To consider and approve the minutes from the last SACRE meeting held on Thursday 8 February 2024.

4 **Tributes to Lesley Prior**

5 **Determinations (if any)**

Members are asked to note there are no applications for determinations to be considered at this meeting.

6 **General RE & NASACRE Updates** 8 - 23

To receive an update from the SACRE Advisor on any general RE & NASACRE related issues.

7 **Any Other Business**

7.1 Date of Future Meetings

SACRE are asked to note the programme of dates agreed for future meetings during the 2024 – 25 academic year as follows:

- Wednesday 9 October 2024 at 5:30pm – to be undertaken in hybrid format involving both in person and online attendance
- Thursday 6 February 2025 at 5pm – to be undertaken online
- Thursday 10 July 2025 at 5pm – to be undertaken online

Date of the next meeting: Wednesday 9 October 2024

MINUTES OF THE STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE)

Held as an online virtual meeting on Thursday 8 February 2024 at 5pm

Attendees (in remote attendance):

GROUP A <i>(A committee of persons representing such Christian denominations and other religions and denominations of such religions as, in the opinion of the authority, will appropriately reflect the principal religious traditions in the area)</i>	Sagar Forouhi (Baha'i) Dr Kavita Koka (Zoroastrianism) Bhupinder Singh (Sikhism) Sally Strauss (Judaism) Amanda Whelan (Roman Catholicism)
GROUP B <i>(A committee of persons representing the Church of England)</i>	Steve Taylor (Church of England) Tim Wright (Church of England)
GROUP C <i>(A committee of persons representing such associations representing teachers as, in the opinion of the authority, ought to be represented, having regard to the circumstances of the area)</i>	Ian Slade (Vice Chair) Varsilla Bhudia (Association representing Teachers)
GROUP D <i>(A committee of persons representing the authority)</i>	Cllr Neil Nerva Cllr Tazi Smith

In attendance:	Shaun Cremin (Associate Member) Nadia Nadeem (SACRE/RE Advisor) Shirley Parks (Brent Council – Director Safeguarding Performance and Strategy) Jen Haskew (Brent Council - Head of Setting and School Effectiveness Service) Helen Tulloch (Brent Council - School Effectiveness Service) Abby Shinhmar & James Kinsella (Brent Council - Governance Team)
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1. Welcome and Apologies for Absence

The meeting opened by noting that apologies had been received from Basma ElShayyal (Sunni Islam, Chair). Given her absence, it was confirmed that Ian Slade (as Vice Chair) would take over as chair for the meeting. In welcoming everyone to

the meeting it was noted apologies had also been received from Michelle Goldsmith (Humanism) and Kim Wilson (Association representing Teachers).

2. **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

It was **AGREED** to approve the minutes of the previous SACRE meeting held on Wednesday 11 October 2023.

3. **Determinations**

3.1 Ian Slade, Chair, advised that there were six determinations to be considered at the meeting as follows:

- (a) Anson Primary School
- (b) Brentfield Primary School
- (c) Mitchell Brook Primary School
- (d) Mount Stewart Federation & Mount Stewart Infants
- (e) Newfield Primary School
- (f) Northview Junior and Infant School

In considering each determination application members of SACRE were keen to recognise the quality of the applications which had been submitted for consideration having noted the wider context of collective worship within the determination process and current statutory requirements in relation to the application process. Whilst recognising, as an example, the value in the provision of supporting information designed to outline how the RE curriculum had been tailored to reflect different religions in each school, members were reminded this did not form part of the formal application requirement to SACRE.

In addition, members were keen (in reviewing the Collective Worship Policy provided by each school in support of their applications) to recommend as good practice the inclusion of details, as part of any application moving forward, should any parents/carers at the school have indicated they wished to withdraw their children from collective worship.

Having considered the applications, it was therefore unanimously **RESOLVED** (with each of the four membership groups voting in favour) to approve and grant the renewal of the following determinations:

- (1) Anson Primary School
- (2) Brentfield Primary School
- (3) Mitchell Brook Primary School
- (4) Mount Stewart Federation & Mount Stewart Infants
- (5) Newfield Primary School
- (6) Northview Junior and Infant School

- 3.2 Following the decision made at the previous meeting, members were also advised that the Governing Body minutes in support of the determination application from Stonebridge School had now been received, with members noting the determination application had subsequently been approved.

4. **SACRE Membership Review**

James Kinsella (Brent Council – Governance Manager) advised that following the discussion at the previous meeting on 11 October 2024 the review of current SACRE membership had been completed. The review had sought to identify and seek replacements for any vacancies within the existing membership as well as remind members about the need to ensure they attend at least one SACRE meeting each academic year.

Members were advised that as a result of the review and vacancies reported at the last meeting, the following changes in membership had been approved by the Local Authority:

Group A: Faith Group representatives

- Amanda Wheelan had replaced Dawn Titus as the new Roman Catholic representative.
- Saghar Forouhi had replaced Sheralyn Snaith as the new Baha'i representative.

Group B: Church of England representatives

- Tim Wright had replaced Mark Newton as the new Church of England representative.

Group C: School & Teaching Association representatives

- Varsilla Bhudia (Oakington Manor) had filled one vacancy.

Members were advised that contact had also been made with the London Diocesan Board for Schools regarding the exiting vacancy in Church of England representation and need to replace Graham Marriner as an existing member on SACRE.

In relation to the School and Teaching Association (Group C) representation, SACRE noted that one vacancy remained with Ian Slade advising he was aware of a potential expression of interest from a primary school colleague that he would encourage to make the necessary contact to progress.

The Chair thanked officers and members for their hard work and ongoing contribution with SACRE noting the outcome of the membership review and welcoming the appointments made as a result. At this stage no further action was identified as required in relation to the membership review, with SACRE to be kept updated on any further appointments needing to be made.

5. **SACRE Annual Report 2022-23**

Nadia Nadeem (SACRE Advisor) introduced the item, which presented a final draft of the 2022-23 Annual Report.

In considering the report, members noted the detail provided in terms of the activities undertaken by SACRE to support schools in relation to delivery of their RE responsibilities, collective worship and determinations supported by the latest census data. Following on from the discussion earlier in the meeting, it was noted that no schools had indicated they had pupils who had been withdrawn from collective worship, which it was felt reflected the high quality of RE provision across the borough.

SACRE was advised that the report had been presented in final draft with members welcoming the update on implementation of the Agreed Syllabus and encouraged to submit any final comments they may have direct to Nadia Nadeem for incorporation in the final version of the Annual Report.

In highlighting the value of the work being undertaken by SACRE as detailed within the Annual Report, Shirley Parks (Brent Council – Director Safeguarding Performance and Strategy) took the opportunity to thank Nadia Nadeem for her work in preparing the report and SACRE **AGREED** to approve the final draft of the 2022-23 Annual Report, subject to any final comments submitted by members following the meeting.

6. **General RE Update**

SACRE received an update from Nadia Nadeem (SACRE Advisor) which covered the following issues:

- In July 2023 the RE Council had released a preliminary report on the new national content standard for RE. This report provided guidance on the quality of the RE education that needed to be provided with a further report available at the end of March 2024. The DfE were in support of this guidance.
- The publication of the Annual OFSTED report at the end of Autumn 2023, which had included reference to individual subjects including RE. The comments made had focussed on the way in which it appeared RE (despite being a statutory subject) appeared to be undervalued as a subject on the curriculum with a lack of clarity and support from the government making the position more complex. In highlighting a number of concerns the report had identified a need for co-ordinated effort amongst stakeholders to improve the quality of RE in schools including the provision of high quality professional development for RE teaching staff and clarity in terms of the breadth and depth of curriculum to be followed and government expectations regarding RE provision in schools.

SACRE noted that the findings reflected the views of NASACRE and a number of other RE organisations with the issues highlighted in relation to the recruitment, retention and professional development of RE teaching staff recognised as being of specific concern given the national shortage already identified across the sector and with SACRE keen to ensure the position and support available to schools across Brent remained under review. In terms of specific outcomes, it was agreed that arrangements should be made for the Ofsted report and any available supporting resources to be shared with schools, which Jen Haskew advised could be arranged

(in conjunction with Nadia Nadeem) via the Head Teacher School Bulletin. ACTION: Jen Haskew & Nadia Nadeem.

Details were also sought on the level of feedback received from schools who had implemented the new Local Agreed RE Syllabus. In response, Ian Slade advised that feedback from the RE Teachers Panel had been very positive which had also been supported by feedback from individual schools. SACRE advised they would be keen to explore how this feedback could be captured and reviewed in a more formal way, which Jen Haskew advised could be considered as an action moving forward. In terms of implementation of the new syllabus, SACRE were advised that whilst not an issue which fell under their direct remit, support continued to be provided to individual schools through Stacey Burman (RE Advisor), and the School Effectiveness Service.

As no further issues were raised the Chair thanked Nadia Nadeem for the update provided.

7. **NASACRE Update**

Having considered the report from the Ofsted Chief Inspector under the RE Update, SACRE received a further NASACRE update from Nadia Nadeem (SACRE Advisor) which covered the following issues:

- Details were provided on the NASACRE AGM and Annual Conference which was scheduled to take place on Monday 20 May 2024 in York. Members were advised that the theme of the conference would be how SACREs could support high quality RE & Collective Worship. The cost per delegate would be £120 excluding travel and accommodation. Whilst a small budget was held to cover the administration of SACRE meetings it was confirmed that should any members be interested in attending the conference, further funding support would need to be obtained to cover the cost of travel and accommodation. It was agreed that any members interested in attending the NASACRE Conference should contact Jen Haskew/Abby Shinhmar so further details could be provided and, if necessary, additional funding sought to cover the cost of attendance.
- Members noted the NASACRE Briefing (No.37) which had been circulated as an additional supporting document with the agenda.
- Members were reminded that Ramadan was due to commence in early March, with SACRE keen to ensure that appropriate guidance was issued to schools regarding the support needs of Muslim pupils and staff during the fasting period.
- The opportunity was also taken to remind members of the available training and professional development available through NASACRE for SACRE members including the training offer and information available through the RE Hub. This included a range of upcoming training available for those members of SACRE visiting schools, which Nadia Nadeem advised she had included details on with the update and could arrange to share further details on with any interested members. As an example of the development opportunities available Bhupinder Singh advised he had recently been accredited as a Sikh Advocate

and RE Advisor via the RE Hub and as a result was now delivering faith presentations to a range of schools.

- As a final update, SACRE members were advised of the opportunity currently available to stand for election to the NASACRE Executive. Members were asked to contact Abby Shinhmar or Nadia Nadeem should anyone be interested in being nominated for appointment.

As no further issues were raised the Chair thanked Nadia Nadeem for the update provided.

8. Any Other Business

8.1 Members were advised about a range of upcoming activities and events, which included:

- A play and supporting talk that would be taking place on 19 February 2024, called 'Kindness' by Holocaust survivor Susan Pollock for which tickets could be made available for school representatives.
- The establishment of a Jewish living web-resource that would be available shortly to support teaching in relation to Judaism.
- Sally Straus had also gained accreditation to present at schools and act as an RE Advisor/Advocate on Judaism and would also be keen to share these details with schools. SACRE noted that Saghar Farouhi had also been accreditation through the RE Hub as an Advisor and Advocate for the Baha'i faith with SACRE keen to ensure that the list of accredited advocates and advisers available to support schools was updated on the RE Hub.
- Concern was expressed at a recent press article from the Trustees of the UK Board of the Inter-Faith Network which had advised that due to the withdrawal of Government funding the charity would need to consider closing. Members hoped it would be possible for a solution to be reached enabling the network to continue given the benefits the network had been able to provide over a number of years in sharing good practice and encouraging dialogue amongst representatives from different faiths.

8.2 Dates of Future Meetings

SACRE NOTED the date for their final meeting during the 2023-24 Academic Year as follows:

- Thursday 11 July 2024 at 5pm to be undertaken online.

The following dates were approved as the draft programme for meetings during the 2024-25 academic year:

- Wednesday 9 October 2024 at 5:30pm – it was agreed that, subject to sufficient interest being expressed, this meeting should be offered in hybrid format enabling members able to do so to attend in person.
- Thursday 6 February 2025 at 5pm – to be held online
- Thursday 10 July 2025 at 5pm – to be held online

The meeting closed at 6.01pm

Ian Slade
Chair

NASACRE UPDATES

- #NASACRE24 Date: Monday 20 May 2024 Venue: Hilton York Theme: How can SACREs support high quality RE & Collective Worship?
- Tribute to Elizabeth Jenkerson and Lesley Prior, who sadly died this year.
- SACRE members were encouraged to think about how they might tackle the challenges of teacher recruitment - reinstatement of the RE Bursary, but the withdrawal of the subject knowledge enhancement (SKE) courses for RE continues to make things difficult for providers of ITE and trainees alike.
- Lack of SACRE funding – means difficult/expensive to review syllabus
- ^{Page} CSTG work around Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB) another current theme that SACREs may be well-placed to address.
- ^{Page} SACRE members were encouraged to use the hope offered by the sobering Deep & Meaningful? Ofsted RE report to push for action, engaging parliamentary candidates to talk about RE and the seriousness of the need to engage with religious and non-religious worldviews. Whenever and whatever changes in the months ahead, SACREs can talk to those in power to keep RE and matters of faith and belief on the agenda. That might be the retention of the bursary, the reintroduction of funding for SKE, for the Government (of whatever colour) to endorse the National Content Standard (NCS), and for RE to be part of a post-election curriculum review.
- SACREs were encouraged to keep up to date by subscribing to the NASACRE Noticeboard. The NASACRE website also has shared examples of Collective Worship guidance from a range of SACREs, from which subscriber SACREs may gather ideas about how to support and monitor provision.
- 35+ Ideas for activist SACREs presented by Lat Blaylock. – see attached document (Appendix A) on how we can become ‘Activists for RE’ as a SACRE.

Upcoming NASACRE Events

- '24-'25 webinar programme
- Inter Faith Week: 10 - 17 November 2024
- RE Hubs is pleased to announce that there are over 500 places of interest and school speakers live on www.re-hubs.uk, providing schools with kite-marked visitors and places to visit. Many SACREs have advertised the monthly webinar programme, but there's still room for more on the [RE Hubs website](http://www.re-hubs.uk). Can you help to advertise it to others? [Click here for a flyer](#) to share with your contacts.

RE Hubs now produces a termly newsletter to SACRE Clerks and Chairs, highlighting changes and improvements to the website, and welcomes SACRE feedback.

If your SACRE is holding events and training for teachers, you can freely advertise any free events on the RE Hubs calendar:

<https://www.re-hubs.uk/calendar/>

Upload an event here:

<https://www.re-hubs.uk/get-involved/register-cpd-event>

Have we done all this?

- Contact prospective parliamentary candidates to raise the importance of RE and inter faith dialogue
- Consider how your SACRE can answer the Call to Action and draw the attention of employers and business leaders to the #RE4Work Campaign
- Discuss the NCS and the R&W Toolkit
- Submit SACRE's annual report for 2022-23, if you've not already done so
- Familiarise your SACRE with changes to our NASACRE website and consider whether you have documents to share (subscriber SACREs)
- Pay your membership subscription & training package for 2024-25 (invoices will be sent to SACRE Clerks at the beginning of July)

Research and analysis

Deep and meaningful? The religious education subject report

Published 17 April 2024

'Main Findings (1)

- The RE curriculum often lacked sufficient substance to prepare pupils to live in a complex world. The RE content selected rarely was collectively enough to ensure that pupils were well prepared to engage in a multi-religious and multi-secular society.
- A superficially broad curriculum does not always provide pupils with the depth of knowledge they require for future study. In most cases, where the curriculum tried to cover many religions, like equal slices of a pie, pupils generally remembered very little. In cases where the curriculum prioritised depth of study, pupils learned much more.
- The RE curriculum rarely enabled pupils to systematically build disciplinary knowledge or personal knowledge.
- The content of some secondary curriculums was restricted by what teachers considered pupils needed to know for public examinations at the end of key stage 4. In a significant number of cases, teachers taught examination skills too prematurely. This significantly limited the range and types of RE content taught.
- In the secondary phase, most statutory non-examined RE was limited and of a poor quality. A notable proportion of schools did not meet the statutory requirement to teach RE to pupils at all stages of their schooling.
- Where RE was weaker, the knowledge of traditions specified for pupils to learn was overly and uncritically compartmentalised. Sometimes, pupils were presented with over-simplistic assertions about religious traditions, which were often based on visible entities, such as places of worship.' (P6)

Main Findings (2)

- 'What schools taught was rarely enough for pupils to make sense of religious and non-religious traditions as they appear around the world. Curriculums did not identify clearly the suitable mix of content that would enable pupils to achieve this.
- There was a profound misconception among some leaders and teachers that 'teaching from a neutral stance' equates to teaching a non-religious worldview. This is simply not the case.
- In some schools, leaders were rightly focusing on developing the curriculum before considering assessment. However, even when leaders had systems of assessment in place, these rarely gave them the requisite assurance that pupils were learning and remembering more and increasingly complex content over time.
- Long gaps between lessons hindered pupils' recall. When the timetable was organised so that pupils had regular RE lessons, they remembered more.
- Although a few teachers had received subject-based professional development in RE, the overwhelming majority had not. Given the complexity of the subject and the kind of misconceptions that pupils were left with, this is a significant concern.' P7

‘The government should urgently update guidance for schools about its statutory expectations for RE. The government should also ensure that there is appropriate clarity about what is taught in RE, and when and where it is taught, for those schools where Ofsted inspects the subject. This would help schools and, particularly, leaders and teachers of RE.’ (P12)

Other Updates to Share with SACRE & Schools

The Toolkit includes:

- A Handbook
- 3 Exemplar Frameworks
- Additional Reading

Welcome to a Religion and Worldviews Approach

Page 15

National Content Standard for RE for England – 1st Edition – 2023

The RE Council's National Content Standard for RE for England provides a non-statutory benchmark for syllabus providers and other bodies to evaluate their work. It is not a curriculum, and it does not determine precisely what content schools should teach. Rather it is a standard by which different RE curricula, content, pedagogy, and provision can be benchmarked.

Activist SACREs in 2024

35+ things a good SACRE can do!

Any SACRE could be passive and reactive -some are - but this is a plea for activism from SACREs. I hold the view that any SACRE, large or small, expert or developing, should consider how to take action in pursuit of its mission to guard and develop standards in RE. NATRE has a very strong interest in SACRE effectiveness and is pleased to support our many teacher members who serve on SACREs.

We think that SACREs are more powerful than we have yet seen – statutory bodies, in all local authorities, with representation from religion, professionalism and democratic structure are powerful, but often don't notice their powers. Both dependent upon the LA, and independent of it, the SACREs that do most for RE are powerful indeed.

I like the idea of activism, because it represents the capacity of the SACRE to make a difference, rather than merely maintain itself. Perhaps a rule of thumb for activism might be 'does this SACRE innovate at least one project every year?' Is yours an activist SACRE?



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35+ things a good SACRE can do: teacher representatives can initiate any or all of these.

Flexing the activists' muscles.

- 1. Ask the LA for money – or offer to raise money for your work by being entrepreneurial.** Tackle the question of the SACRE's own funding needs. I think NASACRE has an important role here, to disseminate best practice in funding SACREs. Some SACREs manage without anyone to pay the cost of stamps or web updates, and others can find tens of thousands of pounds of local authority money from a core services budget for working parties and agreed syllabus work. Connecting the work of SACRE with citizenship and community cohesion is a route some have taken here. This is, for some SACREs, the essential first step to becoming activist.
- 2. Monitor and praise.** Monitoring schools' performance through reading OFSTED reports (this data not as good as it was, so needs supplementing by GCSE and provision data from Secondary schools and any possible sources from Primary schools, especially with regard to self evaluation in schools (the 'Watchsted' website is searchable for RE comments.). Will MATs be able to give us some data as their work unfolds? ASK them!! Celebrate success, and seek to find at least three schools in each key stage that are 'beacons' for quality RE ~ then spread the word about them.
- 3. Information on provision.** Send out questionnaires to schools, or to pupils, (named or even anonymous?) to support teachers in the endless 'status skirmishing' required of RE subject leaders in their battle for more of the buns, rather than just the crumbs. Information is power here – can your schools say 'we know we need to improve, because of what SACRE say'? Can they say that they know how to improve because of their SACRE's advice? If schools ask SACRE for help do they get it? *If not, what's the point?*
- 4. Offer professional development.** Providing or organising CPD and INSET for teachers, with faith communities to the fore (using the expertise of SACRE members?), running conferences for a day, to bring SACRE members, teachers and governors together, or doing courses on new syllabuses, guidance, schemes of work or planning. Staffordshire, Leicestershire, Gloucestershire and Plymouth are just a few examples who do this, along with many others. The training offer should be on every SACRE's agenda, and every SACRE's events

on 'RE Hubs'. Work collaboratively with other local SACREs – good practice in South Yorkshire could be a model.

5. **Inspect the inspectors.**

Monitoring OFSTED inspection performance and complaining to the office of HMCI. (Could we do that 21st century Biblical contextualisation activity, where students write up 'the parable of the good OFSTED inspector'?) Why don't they mention RE even if its non-compliant, or if its excellent? This needs challenging locally and nationally. Join in with NATRE's program here, thanks to the indomitable Deborah Weston. SACREs might take this up with inspection contractors or regional commissioners.

6. **Try a resource project.** Activist SACREs offer local religions chances to resource RE in local, authentic and contemporary ways. Make a booklet, website or video of photos, contacts, teaching and learning activities related to a dozen places of worship in the Local Authority area, as Leicestershire, Somerset, Blackburn and Coventry have done. This makes schools grateful to SACREs – and can even attract a grant or produce some revenue!

7. **Give authentic faith community voices an audience among teachers.** Write from faith to school: Redbridge's excellent briefing papers on Sikh dress,

observing Ramadan, Jehovah's Witnesses and RE, and other topics are all good models. And it doesn't have to be written: Video, web, photopack or visiting speaker work even better. Tackle the issues

8. **Tell parents.** Publishing a parents' leaflet, to highlight the value of community involvement in RE. Show off some pupils work! (Barnsley once did this with their SACRE annual report) This could significantly shift one of RE's perennial problems, that parental attitudes always seem at least a generation out of date. DFE's contribution here was nice, but could be bettered! Can NASACRE make your work national?

9. **Gather information.** Monitoring standards and examination results, time for RE, subject leadership and other aspects of provision. Information is power in this context, and local authorities can reasonably be asked to provide information to the SACRE. Northamptonshire's approach is exemplary, among many others. Leicestershire and North Yorkshire did surveys that led to improved budgets for syllabus revision. Easy to use survey software and thus gather all important email addresses for your data sheets and contact listings (*you do have these, don't you?*)

10. **Exemplification.** Get together some pupils' work that exemplifies standards in RE with reference to the local syllabus, at levels 1-8. The exemplification is important to establish standards, and such projects have a powerful impact, specially for those new to an area or new to a syllabus. As for example Warwickshire, Worcestershire, Leicester and Hertfordshire local authorities have all done this, to the great benefit of their teachers.
11. **Run a local parliament of religions** for 14-18 year olds. Can we think of a better way of helping young citizens see the place of faith in the 21st century? Inter faith projects model the best of RE and are always exciting. Prince-now-king Charles did one – make him your role model! Dozens of SACREs including Thurrock, Islington, Stoke, Bradford and Lancashire have done these events with some grant funds available and some support from LA budgets for diversity and inclusion.
12. **Organise an arts competition:** RE improves where it gets more creative, and the linked curriculum models increasingly popular in primary schools can make this very useful. Design the cover for the new syllabus ~ as children in Gloucestershire, Lincoln and Hereford have done. Why not relate faith and spirituality to poetry, drama or creative writing too? NATRE's 'Art in Heaven' competition is a model and can be run with a local SACRE round, as Sandwell and Wakefield – who published a booklet of brilliant work and ran an art show in the Minster - have done recently (see www.NATRE.org.uk/spiritedarts)
13. **Help the SEND schools and teachers.** Some SACREs have used the LA's good offices to give particular support to SEND+ schools and practitioners for RE, and others have made a section of their Agreed Syllabus that addresses this clearly and helpfully. Training and CPD can go with this. Well done Wolverhampton, Doncaster and Lancashire for organising here.
14. **Facilitate some exhibitions.** In Croyden, Wakefield, Newham and Coventry, hundreds of children from dozens of schools attended and learned from exhibitions at the faith community buildings of several religions over a period of years. Copy that. Inter Faith Centres in, for example, Leicester, Kirklees, Lancashire, Derby City, co-ordinate visits and visitors to contribute to this purpose. Or invite the national faith community bodies to mount a 'Jewish Way of life' for your schools to visit. Or similar.

15. **Do an essay competition.** RE today and partners promoted an essay competition on the spiritual principles for life in conjunction with the Templeton Foundation. Thousands entered. A SACRE would be an ideal local partner for this. We may even be able to put you in touch with a grant to provide the money for prizes and administration.
16. **Book the stage.** Arrange a pupil performance, like those hundreds inspired by the long-ago RE Festival of 1997, or the JC 2000 millennium arts festival or the RE Council's more recent promotion. NATRE has a display which we hire out! Linking this to a syllabus launch, or an annual lecture is powerful, and involves the interaction of pupils and teachers with SACRE members.
17. **Get lecturers.** Set up an annual lecture series for all those interested in RE, as happens in Hounslow, Redbridge, Westminster or Kent for example. Link it to the publication of the annual SACRE report, and invite the director to preside: directors need to know about RE at its best. Hounslow get about 60 to theirs. *I can't imagine any reason why a SACRE wouldn't at least run an annual lecture.*
18. **Be the voice of religion in the Local Authority.** Contribute to civic inter faith work, e.g. in inter-faith forums with the local Catholic or Anglican Diocese or other faith and belief groups. Send and ask for representatives. Ask Leicester City about this. Wandsworth SACRE give multicultural and community cohesion guidance to the schools too. Some SACREs have even widened the net to advise the police or social workers about local religion and worldviews.
19. **Celebrate the grassroots.** Make a presentation to the Education Cabinet or Committee about the SACRE's grass roots work with pupils, teachers and schools. Make them proud of the religious and belief communities involved, and the sense of inclusion SACRE can create. Most LAs aspire to be more religiously inclusive than they are. *Be the solution to their perceived needs.*
20. **Smoke out the key voices.** Invite key people to speak to the SACRE's annual conference: would this invitation to speak help the Chair of the Education Committee or the new Education / Children's Services director to clarify his / her own thinking on RE? What about locally prominent religious leaders? Politicians? Nothing concentrates the mind like having to speak thoughtfully to a plural audience. Norfolk SACRE had a significant influence on Rt Hon Charles Clarke (a local MP in Norwich) when he was Secretary of State. Plymouth had a hotline to

the RE-committed Luke Pollard MP. The APPG for RE in Parliament has over 100 interested MPs – yours?

21. **Listen to teachers.** Ensure that serving RE teachers are heard every time SACRE meets: do the LA and Union seats get filled by people with RE expertise, or without? Can the SACRE arrange to have more in-touch voices present? Could half day cover be paid, or could it be a standard item on the agenda to hear a report of good practice from the classroom? *Some SACREs have a representative from NATRE on the Teachers' Committee. Yours? Why not?*
22. **Serve 16-19s.** Run an active learning day conference for post sixteen students, to model for schools great ways of providing RE for all in the sixth forms. Link it to tertiary college students as well, to show them what they're missing. Ask in Lancashire, Cumbria, Hertfordshire or Gloucester for experience. The 'dare2engage' initiative, hosted by Youthscape, a Christian agency, is a way to get started with this.
23. **Every year, innovate.** Make sure there's an annual working party of teachers and faith representatives on a key topic: current favourites might include special needs and RE, RE and adaptive learning, assessment, RE three to sevens, RE and PSHE /
- RSE, British Values, GCSEs and A levels or citizenship.
24. **Go visiting.** Arrange your meetings around the faith communities: Three meetings a year could enable six religions to host your SACRE over two years. Hospitality always develops community, as Westminster's SACRE might testify. Lancashire SACRE have met at a Hindu Temple and then at a Mosque.
25. **Get well advised.** Use the RE adviser, and if no adviser is available, explore the use of an RE consultant for briefing and supporting the SACRE and pursuing its business. Many SACREs from Tower Hamlets to Newcastle have done this and been pleased with the increased professionalism resulting. 15 days of real professional time is worth more than the cash it costs to the activist SACRE.
26. **Draw attention to yourself ~ be noisy!** If the local authority is being inspected, aim to get a paragraph in the report, praising the best of your work. Ask for an appointment with the inspectorate, and supply your SEF, development plan annual report and syllabus as required. Expect to be noticed in any other ways too: in any local government re-organisation SACREs must be recognised as a core service. Blowing the trumpet will help RE. If they ignore you, play a noisy attention seeking game.

27. **Be publicists.** Let schools and teachers know about prizes and awards for RE, e.g. fellowships from Farmington, science and religion awards from the Faraday Institute or the Templeton Foundation, the Church College Trusts or the Sandford St Martin Trust Award for media excellence in religion and belief. Or set one up of your own, and *ask some local firms, or the library service, to sponsor the prizes and exhibit the winners.*
28. **Tackle the GCSE / KS4 illegality in some schools, praise the provision in others.** Use Freedom of Information requests to get information about excellent and non-compliant schools (NATRE holds this from its FOI requests program). I'm interested currently to provide a planned course of 10 6 hour non-examined RE units for 14-16s. Quality costs – I am looking for SACREs who will invest a couple of thousand pounds in this together.
lat@retoday.org.uk
29. **Check RE on school websites.** Write to heads about the provision of RE described on their websites. Praise the good ones, and ask for more from the weaker examples. *Every school is required by law to specify its curriculum – obviously including RE – on its website.*
30. **Advice on withdrawal.** Draw attention to advice from e.g. NAHT and NATRE on withdrawal from RE, published in 2018 and supported by the DfE
31. **Support local groups.** NATRE has a link network of over 370 groups for teachers of RE. But many SACREs could really help these often small and struggling but professionally friendly groups. Can you grow one or more in your area? Can the Clerk to SACRE help just a little with publicity or administration? Have a joint SACRE / teachers' group meeting?
32. **Lobby nationally.** Every meeting of a SACRE could (should?) result in a letter to DFE! Or some other nationally powerful institutions (Unions? Faith community bodies?) which need (honestly) the benefit of your experience and grass roots local knowledge. *Activists propose such letters at SACRE meetings, and follow up the replies.*
33. **Tackle the teaching shortage.** Don't give up on teacher supply. If the SACRE asks the local authority who is teaching RE, or uses inspection reports to identify shortfalls in specialist teaching, then it can take action to improve the most intractable problem RE faces. Does the local ITT course or training school provider speak to the SACRE? Contact the University, and see if joint training is a good idea.

34. **Education Sunday:** this annual opportunity for faith to remember education could be taken up at the civic level and among inter faith groups much more than it is. Details are published annually by the Churches' Joint Education Policy Committee. Your chance to get involved? Other national marker days, such as for holocaust remembrance or inter faith week are suitable foci too.

35. **Check your own pulse.** Use the evaluation toolkit to work on yourselves as an effective SACRE. Audit the effectiveness of your own work, and seek to develop the role and influence of the SACRE every year. If this feels out of date, ask NASACRE to update...

Most of these ideas, in one form or another, are culled from my years of SACRE engagement and from RE Today's wide experience of working with SACREs. Therefore they are all already happening somewhere. Making more happen in more places is a definite possibility. It may suggest some new directions for some SACREs. Get active, all you SACRE members.

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From the NATRE Spirited Arts competition:



RE Today
Services

Isabelle, Charlotte and Astrid (all age 12) entered a group piece of artwork titled 'Mother Earth'.

The religions that inspired our work were Hinduism and Paganism. Hinduism inspired us because of the Hindu belief that Brahman, the Hindu God, is in everything and is. But the original idea of Mother Earth came from the Pagan religion, based on the worshipping of nature and that God is like a mother because she has given us life and continues to sustain us.

This work is spiritual because it may remind people that the earth is a gift to us, we belong it and should look after it. This, therefore, is very relevant at the moment because humans are at a stage in their existence in which they really need to start caring and putting the earth and others before their own desires.