

NASACRE Updates for SACRE **Spring 2021**

- NASACRE is currently preparing to upgrade its website. New features will include an opportunity for each SACRE to share links to its locally agreed syllabus and associated materials as well as other documents and/or guidance it has produced.
- NASACRE is working with the DfE to draw up an agreed template for SACRE Annual Reports. The purpose of this is to make it easier to carry out an annual analysis of these reports. This would be for two main reasons:
 - to identify and share exemplars of good practice more readily
 - to identify where SACREs may be struggling to fulfil their legal obligations and the reasons for this, so that these might be addressed more effectively.
- A document on Collective Worship is being produced by NASACRE with another RE professional organisation (AREIAC: www.arei.ac.org) which it is hoped will be of help to NASACRE and AREIAC members and perhaps also inform and help others who may be interested in CW. After initial discussion three basic principles have been agreed which are that CW should be educational, inclusive and that flexibility in this area is desirable to accommodate the needs of different schools. It is thought that if possible, the document should contain some examples which reflect these three ideas. Initially the plan is to review past and existing literature about CW with the intention that this may well identify good practice.

In order for the project to build on that existing good practice around the country, SACREs are invited to send links to their own current materials on CW to NASACRE at: lesley.prior@london.anglican.org

- The NASACRE AGM will be held online this year on Monday, 24th May.

Booking information and details of the programme will be sent in due course but it may be helpful at this stage to determine if this SACRE will be participating and if so, who will represent it on that day.

- Some members of the NASACRE Executive are currently working on a small scale project focusing on membership of SACREs. This will result in the production of some guidance materials for SACREs. These will enable them to offer more effective advice to their respective LAs about how membership might be determined and managed, which groups should be represented and how the current legal obligations might be fulfilled. It is the LA, not the SACRE itself which decides on membership of the SACRE:

Each SACRE must have four groups, no more and no less. The Education Act 1996 Section 390 (4) states:

The representative groups required by this subsection are—

- (a) a group of persons to represent 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;
- (b) except in the case of an area in Wales, a group of persons to represent the Church of England;
- (c) a group of persons to represent such associations representing teachers as, in the opinion of the authority, ought to be represented, having regard to the circumstances of the area; and
- (d) a group of persons to represent the authority.

Members of SACRE represent particular 'groups' within the local authority. Therefore the local authority will need to approach these groups to ask for a representative. Members of SACRE act as channels through which information passes between their nominating groups and SACRE.

In order to identify nominating groups, local authorities will periodically need to do some research to ensure that these are appropriate. It is important to note that members are not simply interested individuals but people who can act as representatives and be responsible to their nominating group.

Group D is usually made up of elected members as they represent the electorate as a whole on SACRE. Some authorities also appoint officers

to this Group. Where they do it is important that the local authority examines the issue of conflict of interest. It would be difficult if the officer voted for something that the local authority would not carry through.

It is not the role of SACRE to find members but it can make recommendations if members feel that the local authority is overlooking an important group that should be represented in one of its groups.

Many SACREs are awaiting the forthcoming National Census of March 2021 – the results of which are likely to follow a year or so later – as this will include information about the demographics relating to religion and belief in their area. Some SACREs may wish to consider this data before making recommendations to their respective LAs about membership of Group A.

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