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National Association of
Standing Advisory Councils
on Religious Education

SACRE BRIEFING

Issue: 29

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Welcome and Update from the Chair

Welcome to the new academic year and welcome back to NASACRE Briefings – thank you all for your hard work and support provided to RE and to schools during the challenging year of 2020-21. For a reflection on the past year, I can recommend a look through the series of blogs from RE subject associations: <https://www.reonline.org.uk/>

As you'll see from this Briefing, there are some exciting times ahead for us all – as I am writing this over the summer break, I hope these new times are not too worrying in terms of the global pandemic and its development by September.

The **NASACRE report** on SACRE funding was a highlight of last year. Although the main findings were not a surprise (many SACREs are underfunded...) there were unexpected outcomes in terms of the impact of the report. We are continuing discussions with the DfE about funding issues and how to address them, and you'll see news of Parliamentary and other political activity related to RE reported on our Twitter account by Paul Smalley – do follow us if you can on #NASACRE. The outcomes of the Freedom of Information request, and the subsequent report, included activity at local SACRE meetings during the summer term. Please let us know on chair@nasacre.org.uk if you have anything to raise as a result of the FOI response.

Other team activities which will have additional impact next year include the reworking of the SACRE self-evaluation toolkit, a new website (pending), and new advice on how to write annual reports for the DfE and NASACRE. These developments have encouraged our Executive to design an online professional development programme for SACRE members to see us all through the next year – details are in the Briefing and on the website. We are also planning a 'real' conference for May 2022 – and I'm really looking forward to a proper reunion with colleagues and friends.

In my recent blog for <https://www.reonline.org.uk/>, I explained that NASACRE's hopes for next year are encapsulated in our **mission statement**.

As usual, we will be listening to members, reacting to national and local initiatives and advising statutory and non-statutory bodies on RE and collective worship. We will especially continue our campaigning for adequate levels of resourcing for SACREs, and for professional development, and continue to play a key role in any future debates about the place of RE and collective worship in schools.

These hopes are based on cementing existing partnerships with other subject

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Councils are so much more than the vehicle for recommending an agreed syllabus. It is a privilege to work with them, and their individual members, and to take a lead role on the Executive committee. Thank you to the whole team for a successful year in such difficult times."

I would just like to pass the same message on to readers of our Briefing, and to wish you all a peaceful and productive year ahead.

Linda Rudge

NASACRE Annual AGM and Conference 2021

2021 was NASACRE's first online conference with multiple speakers and 10 breakout rooms hosting over 200 delegates. The conference report can be found [here](#).

Delegate evaluation forms were very positive in the main, although there were one or two technical hitches during the day. Anyone wanting to find out more about those (and avoid the same unexpected Zoom training pitfalls!) may contact admin@nasacre.org.uk.

All workshop materials, PowerPoints and recordings from the day are still live on the NASACRE website for you and your SACRE members.

One new Exec member was elected at the AGM, as reported in the next item.

Thank you to all the team who made the conference possible and a success, including all the workshop leaders and our keynote speakers.

Executive elections - meet Anne Andrews, our newest Exec member

My name is Anne Andrews, and I am the newest member of the NASACRE Exec; one of my key roles will be in helping to produce these Briefings.

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I currently work as the RE Adviser to the Oxford Diocesan Board of Education, supporting 282 schools with RE and preparations for SIAMS, as I also recently trained as a SIAMS inspector. I have been in role at the diocese for just over seven years and as part of that, advise three SACREs and sit as a member of Group B on a fourth. Prior to that, I was working as PPA cover teacher with responsibility for RE and Modern Foreign Languages at the school where I am now a brand new governor. It was in this school that I first encountered the world of RE, as I had previously taught MFL in a Secondary school.

That encounter for me was life changing, as I discovered that RE was a most fascinating and challenging subject to teach. So, when given the option of leading on music or RE, I opted for the latter. And that began a journey of discovery and challenge, as the more I found out, the more I realised I did not know. It is undoubtedly that passion to find out, and the desire to ensure that others can encounter this wonderful subject, that has led me to the place I am now.

I hope to be able to serve NASACRE members well, ensuring that they have timely and useful information, so that in turn they can equip and inspire the teachers with whom they work.

Conference 2022

The 2022 AGM and Conference will be held at the **Macdonald Burlington Hotel, Birmingham, on Monday 23 May 2022**. Please put this in your diaries!

The theme is **Ambitious SACREs** and the NASACRE conference team is now beginning to pull the programme together. Thanks for all your suggestions about what you need from our training days to support your local work.

Westhill Awards 2021-22 - the Winners

Over the last fifteen years, the Westhill/NASACRE Awards have successfully given SACREs opportunities to enhance their capacity to generate high quality experiences in RE (and collective worship) for their schools.

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partnership) to apply for an award of up to £4,000.

Here are brief outlines of the winning bids:

Bromley SACRE - Pupils being made ready to pose 'big questions' to SACRE members relating to their faith, at an interfaith dialogue event promoting the aims of the new RE Agreed Syllabus.

Leeds SACRE in association with Calderdale and Kirklees SACREs - Creating a high quality film of a local synagogue, to enable pupils to visit it virtually, with supporting materials and options for live online sessions with representatives from the community.

Nottinghamshire SACRE - Pupils in Years 5/6 discovering the impact faith can have through exploring adherents' involvement in social projects, and then creating resources for use across the county.

Tameside SACRE - Training and accrediting educators from faith communities, allied with support to schools and resource materials, thus promoting more effective visits to faith centres.

Wolverhampton SACRE - Mounting two day-conferences for Secondary pupils, to develop teaching resources for exploring faith perspectives on diversity and racial equality.

Please note the free online session in our training programme on 6 December 2021, 7-8pm:

How to apply for a WESTHILL/NASACRE Award

The session will enable SACREs to consider how to make a high quality application for the annual Westhill grants. There will be a chance to hear from others who have won awards about their keys to success.

NASACRE website refresh

We have been working with Matt, our webmaster, to overhaul the NASACRE website, bringing a fresh design and a more contemporary feel, making the content easier to navigate and more succinct. The content is being streamlined to make it easier to use and we are combining areas such as the Directory and Reports sections to reduce the number of searches a user needs to do.

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shared resources and links.

The new site will go live shortly – SACRE Clerks and Chairs will be notified as soon as we have a date!

Any feedback will be appreciated so that we can continue to evolve the site together.

Online SACRE meetings and Agreed Syllabus Conferences

It is not possible for the DfE to give a definitive ruling or even an informal 'steer' on this issue, but NASACRE offers the following points for individual SACREs and their LAs to consider.

Establishment of SACREs and ASCs in (1994) legislation which was not covered by the **2020 Regulations** (as amended by **The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2020 (legislation.gov.uk)**) that gave flexibility to LA committees to meet remotely.

Many LAs have either assumed SACREs and ASCs were encompassed by the Flexibility Regulations or have taken a pragmatic view and applied the same rationale when considering whether they should meet remotely. In the explanatory memorandum of the Flexibility Regulations, one of the main aims of implementing the statute was to allow LAs to manage their resources whilst having regard to the health and safety of their members, officers and the public during the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, it is reasonable to suggest that whilst these regulations did not apply specifically to SACREs and ASCs, the same principles of postponing public meetings and meeting remotely during a public health emergency would still apply.

If the **1994 Regulations** are considered and applied to SACRE and ASC meetings:

- Remote meetings were not an option when the Regulations were made in 1994, so they were drafted with 'in person' meetings being the only option available.
- But an argument could (perhaps) be made that the legal requirement is to 'meet', but the form of the meeting is not stated, so that might enable continuing with remote meetings if there is good reason to do so.

As SACREs have been meeting remotely (some erroneously thinking the Flexibility Regs applied to them) then, when restrictions apply or there is a large number of COVID cases in their area, in the view of many LAs, this would continue to be a

Beyond restrictions being lifted, it comes down to individual LAs and whether they think there is a risk of legal challenge of the validity of meetings being held remotely (and consequently, of decisions made in these meetings).

Some might be inclined to say that, regardless of the Regulations being old, a meeting is a meeting whether it is held remotely or otherwise, particularly if it can meet the requirements for accessibility to the public, access to agendas etc. SACREs and ASCs are not LA committees, so they are not bound by the same regulations, which perhaps gives some flexibility to determine their format – even if it is to regularly take a 'blended' approach, including an annual 'in person' meeting.

SACRE Annual Reports

All SACREs have a statutory duty to produce an annual report on their business. Currently these are sent to the DfE (and NASACRE) and there is no analysis of them. NASACRE has produced a new **SACRE Annual Report Template** and the DfE has been fully involved in this. Part of the rationale is to enable easier analysis of the reports. The DfE is also going to encourage MATs (Multi-Academy Trusts) to complete an annual report using the same template, which is available **here** on the website.

Thank you to those SACREs whose representatives joined the AGM workshops sharing the work in progress – their comments were extremely helpful.

We have agreed to set aside funds to engage somebody to carry out an analysis of the reports. In order to have as full a data set as we can, we're asking two things of SACREs:

- Firstly, please ensure you use the **new template** for all your annual reports from now on.
- Secondly, please send your annual report to NASACRE (and the DfE) promptly, ideally before the end of the calendar year, or as soon as possible thereafter.

We plan to present the findings of our analysis at our 2022 Conference in Birmingham.

SACRE Self-Evaluation Tool

As mentioned at the AGM, NASACRE has updated the SACRE Self-Evaluation Tool, making it more relevant to the work and context of SACREs today. This will be available on our new website and will be featured in our 2021-22 training programme in March.

NASACRE Training programme 2021-22

A new programme of virtual webinars has been planned for SACRE members. This started on 22 June with **How can national data help SACREs speak with authority?** which was a re-run of a conference workshop.

If you weren't able to be there, here is the **link** to the recorded event. Access Passcode: %9ff2uHJ

Our next two training sessions are:

23 September 2021, 7-8pm

So, you've joined your local SACRE...

Led by Denise Chaplin. This session will help new SACRE members to understand their role, how SACRE works, its statutory responsibilities and how members can make their contribution to this work.

Free online session

7 October 2021, 7-8pm

New SACRE Annual Report Template

Led by Claire Clinton. This session is essential for all those who are - or will be - writing SACRE annual reports. NASACRE, in collaboration with the DfE, has refreshed the SACRE annual report template and those who have worked with the DfE will explain the new contents and why writing to this template is important for a national analysis of SACRE annual reports from 2022 onwards.

Free online session

Click here for our training programme for 2021-22 and to find out how to make a booking.

SACRE funding report

We are very pleased with the momentum of the **NASACRE funding report** and following publication, we had some media attention. We would like to thank the RE Policy Unit for this. Through them Luke Pollard, MP for Plymouth, Sutton and Davenport was able to ask some Parliamentary questions about it.

In response, Schools Minister, Nick Gibb stated:

"The Department has received a copy of a report produced by the National Association of Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education (NASACRE). The report presents a summary of responses received from local authorities to Freedom of Information requests relating to funding of Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education (SACREs).

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and academies, such as establishing and maintaining a SACRE. In the financial year 2021/22, the total funding for ongoing responsibilities in the CSSB is £257 million, a 3.8% increase compared to 2020/21, to keep up with inflation and pupil numbers. The Department does not specify what proportion of this money should be attributed to different services or duties. It is up to each local authority to decide this for itself. We expect that a SACRE should be sufficiently resourced to meet its statutory duties. If a SACRE is unable to do this, it should first raise a complaint locally about the issue. If it has done this unsuccessfully, the issue can be escalated to the Department's School Complaints Unit."

We have heard back from many SACREs how this report is giving them an opportunity to talk about the statutory work of their SACRE and how it is, and can be, resourced. We encourage SACREs to share the report with their LAs and Mr Gibb's answer, particularly where he states there has been a 3.8% increase in the CSSB. We also note that he stresses a SACRE must be sufficiently funded, and endorses the text in Religious Education in English schools (2010) in relation to the role and responsibilities of LAs in relation to SACREs and indeed the responsibilities of SACREs themselves. Given this answer, SACREs might like to consider how much of what is set out in the guidance they are able to do given the resources they have available. If they find themselves falling short, they should perhaps advise their LA accordingly and send them this [link](#) to the answer in Hansard. Ultimately a SACRE might need to complain to the DfE. If this is the case we would be happy to help you.

In the meantime, the DfE has launched a **consultation on reforming the National Funding Formula** (of which the CSSB is part). The relevant section of the proposal document is 4.2 on page 35. The major thrust of the proposals is to reduce the amount given to LAs by giving that funding directly to schools. We understand that there is no intention to give SACRE funding to schools – but it may be that SACREs are funded directly by government, or (more likely) become part of the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's (MHCLG), Local Government Finance Settlement (LGFS) rather than a reduced CSSB block. The deadline for this consultation is 30 September – so there is not much time! SACRE members may wish to simply answer the introductory questions and then skip to question 11 of the **Online Survey**. You might wish to point out the findings of our report – that SACREs are generally underfunded, and that there is gross variation in funding nationally (one of the aims is "to bring more consistency across the country"). You might want to suggest that SACREs should be funded directly by Government – giving local people real decision-making power, or you might want to suggest a ring-fenced part of the LGFS dedicated to SACREs (although we think that is unlikely). We estimate that if funding for SACREs was commensurate with funding for other subject 'hubs' each SACRE might receive £60K pa. However, whatever you choose to write, we do feel that this is a great opportunity for all SACRE members – and all who care about Local RE – to make our voices heard. Please do respond to question 11!

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School Workforce Data

Deborah Weston has sent the latest school workforce data to every SACRE in England.

If your SACRE has not received this, it is because your contact details are out of date on our **database**. Please email deborah@retoday.org.uk and she will send you the data, and email admin@nasacre.org.uk to update your contact details in our database.

Membership of AREIAC (Association of RE Inspectors, Advisers and Consultants)

The RE advisers' association has changed the designations and fees for membership. Associate membership of AREIAC will be open to those who have part-time responsibilities for leading RE beyond their own school/organisation, paying 50% of the annual subscription rate. There may be members of your SACRE or teachers in your LA who could be eligible to join.

More information can be found on <https://www.areiic.org.uk/>

Do check it out and forward the information on to anyone who may be interested.

LAN Project

Claire Clinton and her team are very grateful to the four SACREs who carried out action research into the CoRE recommendations around Local Area Networks (LANs).

Claire is writing up the project and we will share the report and its findings later this term.

Buddhist Resources

We have a request for input from Buddhist representatives and teachers at Culham St Gabriels –

Dr Kate Christopher writes:

"A former Teach:RE student who is a Buddhist is working on a website for teachers to access resources on Buddhism. She has given us this text and link to a survey.

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experience in teaching Buddhism to children and teenagers into useful resources for others. This **short survey** aims to find out what would be the most helpful. We are seeking to build a picture of the needs regarding Buddhism, of those working in the area of teaching religion and ethics in schools.

We are grateful for your input and ideas.

All the best,

Amalee Rycroft and colleagues

Inter Faith Week 2021

As SACRE Clerks may be aware, Inter Faith Week 2021 takes place from **14-21 November**. The Inter Faith Network for the UK (IFN) which leads the week, is grateful to Clerks for bringing this to the attention of SACRE members. SACREs play an important role in making schools and local authorities aware of Inter Faith Week and its importance for promoting mutual understanding and respect between those of different faiths and beliefs. Of more than 600 events in 2020, one of the most challenging years in living memory, around a sixth were school-based.

This year Inter Faith Week starts on Remembrance Sunday and ends the following Sunday. For details about the week, the best place to look is the **Inter Faith Week website** which contains a rich bank of resources for those wishing to hold events. A **new section** has been created for schools. It contains bespoke materials for both **Primary** and **Secondary** schools that are designed to support the delivery of a locally agreed syllabus. There is also a **Golden Rule** poster on eleven different faith traditions, to download for display in a classroom or meeting room.

As a member body of IFN, NASACRE encourages SACREs to host events for Inter Faith Week each year.

If your SACRE holds an event, please remember to register:

<https://www.interfaithweek.org/events/submit>.

And if your SACRE wants ideas for what you might do, please feel free to contact Dr David Hampshire, Assistant Director of the Inter Faith Network, at **david.hampshire@interfaith.org.uk**.

Holocaust Memorial Day

Holocaust Memorial Day is 27 January. SACREs, LAs and schools can find a wide variety of resources on the **Holocaust Memorial Day Trust (HMDT)** website.

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through an exploration of the new resources and hear from two guest speakers, Vera Schaufeld and Lord Alf Dubs, who both came on the Kindertransport. For more information and to sign up to the event, click here for the **Eventbrite link**.

The Trust is aware that some SACREs are heavily involved in themselves holding an event, or encouraging schools to mark HMD, but others may not have done this regularly, so please consider increasing your local involvement, especially at a time when hate crime, intolerant/extremist views, anti-Semitism and anti-Muslim hate is increasing.

The Trust also commends **Generation to Generation (G2G)**, a charity that provides speakers to tell their family Holocaust stories online or face-to-face to a variety of audiences. Through these engaging and historically accurate presentations, integrating first-hand survivor testimony, **G2G** works to ensure the lessons of the Holocaust are learned, promoting tolerance of all groups in society.

To consider how **G2G** can support SACRE or your schools and to book a speaker, visit <https://www.generation2generation.org.uk> or book onto a free introductory event for educators: <https://www.generation2generation.org.uk/news/events/>

Items for your next agenda

- Set a timeline for your SACRE to pilot the new Annual Report format
- Put the date of the NASACRE AGM 2022 in your SACRE calendar
- Consider applying for a 2022 Westhill Award
- Book places for your SACRE members on relevant training events
- Inter Faith Week 2021
- Holocaust Memorial Day 2022
- Review SACRE's funding and compare with the NASACRE funding report; plan action points such as discussions with the LA.



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