



Shropshire Council
Legal and Democratic Services
Shirehall
Abbey Foregate
Shrewsbury
SY2 6ND

Date:

Committee:
SACRE

Date: Tuesday, 14 November 2023

Time: 6.15 pm

Venue: The Lantern Centre, Meadow Farm Drive, Harlescott, Shrewsbury

You are requested to attend the above meeting.
The Agenda is attached

Tim Collard
Assistant Director - Legal and Governance

Members of SACRE

Teacher Association

Adrian Black
Steph Shirra
Amanda Skidmore
Rachel Parsonage

C of E

Fiona Iddon
Vacancy
Mark Harrington
Garry Ward
Ruth Gittins

Christian and other

Denise Samari
Bill Morris
Sohayb Peerbhai
David Bowgett
Jacqui Osmund-
Smith
Mark Michaels

Sue Michaels

LA

Mike Isherwood

Roger Evans

Simon Nightingale

Support and advice

Sue Round

Helen Woodbridge

Fiona Moss

Stephen Pett

John Rowe

Your Committee Officer is:

Admin Manager, Learning & Skills

Tel: 01743 254556

Email:

AGENDA

1 Welcome from chair

A welcome from the chair.

2 Apologies

To receive and record apologies from members who are unable to attend.

3 Declaration of interest

The opportunity for SACRE members to declare any interest in items on the agenda.

4 Minutes of meeting held on 15 February 2023 (Pages 1 - 6)

To receive, amend and approve minutes of the last meeting.

5 Matters arising from the minutes above

To consider matters arising from the minutes not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

6 Membership

To discuss changes and updates on new members.

7 Shropshire SACRE Online

Discuss new SLG website and any additions. Videos and links. Visits and visitors.

8 NASACRE Conference (Pages 7 - 8)

Feedback from the conference and workshops/talks attended.

9 'Human Library'

To discuss support for Lacon Childe School in its 'Human Library' project.

10 Annual report

To discuss any points of note that should be included in the draft before it is written.

11 Advisor's Update (Pages 9 - 26)

- National Content Standard for RE
- RE Hubs
- Shropshire School workforce data
- Shropshire Ofsted reports
- National Updates
- Feedback from Network meetings

12 To confirm date, time and venue of the next meetings:

Provisional dates

Thursday 14th March 2024 – 7:30pm

Thursday 4th July 2024 – 6:15pm

13 Any Other Urgent Business

(To be notified to chair or clerk in advance please)

**SHROPSHIRE STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL
ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
15 March 2023, 18.15
The Lantern, Shrewsbury**

Present

Adrian Black (Chair) (1)	Mark Michaels (3)
David Bowgett (3)	Sue Michaels (3)
Mark Harrington (2)	Rachel Parsonage (1)
Fi Iddon (2) from 7.15	Steph Shirra (1)
Kate Linnell (1)	

(Numbers in brackets are Committee numbers)

In Attendance

Beth Blizzard (Observer), Fiona Moss, John Rowe, Helen Woodbridge (Clerk)

1. Welcome from chair

The chair welcomed all to the meeting. He acknowledged that the meeting would not be quorate as no members of committee 4 were in attendance. Therefore, any decisions would need to be deferred until the next meeting.

2. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from:

Name	Reason
Akasharaja Bruton (potentially 3)	Work commitment
Roger Evans (4)	Other commitment
Inderjit Singh Gill (potentially 3)	Other commitment
Simerpreet Kaur Gill (potentially 3)	Other commitment
Ruth Gittins (2)	Illness
Mike Isherwood (4)	Family commitment
Simon Nightingale (4)	Other commitment
Jacquie Osmund-Smith (3)	Other commitment
Suna Pandya (potentially 3)	Illness
Sohayb Peerbhai (3)	Work commitment
Denise Samari (3)	Other commitment
Amanda Skidmore (1)	Work commitment
Garry Ward (2)	Illness
Sue Round	Family commitment

Fi Iddon had advised of her late arrival.

3. Declaration of interest

Fiona Moss advised that she works for RE Today and is CEO of the National Association of RE Teachers.

Secondary school representatives may have an interest in the Compliance item.

4. Minutes of meeting held on 10 November 2022

The minutes of the meeting were agreed as a true record.

5. Matters arising from the minutes above (not covered elsewhere on the agenda)

6	The chair will remind Fi Iddon to make contact with Emma Elliott. The letter of thanks had been sent to Jane Crouch. No-one had yet been able to establish a contact for Bill Morris. John Rowe agreed to raise the issue of a representative from Catholicism with the Diocese representative at his next meeting.
7	The Google feedback form had been created and shared. The chair had received the new Shropshire Council logo.
10	The Annual Report had been completed and submitted.
11	The clerk had asked the RE lead from Bomere about presenting to SACRE but had not heard back. Findings from the workforce data had been sent to David Shaw, Steve Compton, John Rowe and Sue Round. These had subsequently been shared with headteachers and were well received.

6. Membership

Membership was considered and colleagues were pleased that some vacancies had been potentially filled.

Committee No	Proposed new member	Existing member Extended TOR	Action
1		Steph Shirra	To be extended to Summer 2023 (Steph will then be leaving teaching and SACRE)
1	Beth Blizzard has been a teacher for 12 years and has just moved to Lacon Childe School from a school in Walsall		To be considered for appointment from Summer 2023
3		Sohayb Peerbhai	To be extended for a further four year team if agreeable.
3	Simerpreet Kaur Gill, Sikhism		To be considered for appointment from Summer 2023
3	Inderjit Singh Gill, Sikhism		To be considered for appointment from Summer 2023
3	Suna Pandya, Hinduism		To be considered for appointment from Summer 2023
3	Akasharaja Bruton Buddhist		To be considered for appointment from Summer 2023
4		Roger Evans	Shropshire Council to consider for appointment of councillor

SACRE expressed approval of the new members and the extended TOR for representatives whose term of office was due to expire. This would all need to be recommended for approval at the next meeting.

SACRE agreed to consider moving some of the meetings to a later time in order for Sohayb Peerbhai to be able to attend.

John Rowe agreed to pursue the nomination of a Lichfield diocese member.

7. Feedback from visits - standing item

Simon Nightingale had submitted a report confirming that he had visited several schools in Telford & Wrekin.

David Bowgett had not made any school visits but is keen to do so.

Mark and Sue Michaels had made 12 visits (2 in Wales). There had been positive feedback about a visit to a school in Shrewsbury made to other colleagues on SACRE.

Mark and Sue Michaels are both being accredited through the Board of Deputies.

John Rowe suggested someone from SACRE attending the small school heads meeting to talk about visits/visitors. He will email the chair with dates.

8. Update on Primary Videos

The chair apologised for any confusing messages,
A short video (3/4 mins) was requested (appropriate for KS1/EYFS about Unit 1.9). The intention is to put the videos on the YouTube channel.

Denise Samari has completed one but needs support in sending it.

Simon Nightingale had produced one but it is more suitable for KS2 so he is working on a KS1 version.

Steph Shirra has provided some sentence starters.

Mark Harrington had provided a video which he will redo for KS1 and add images to the KS2 version.

Sue and Mark Michaels are to work on this and David Bowgett is considering.

The chair would like any videos in time for the summer meeting.

Steph Shirra undertook to circulate some questions.

9. Web Links for New SLG

John Rowe advised of the switch to the new SLG on 6 April

He demonstrated the generic Sacre LOGIN and provided the password.

All agreed to let John Rowe know of any links that could be added (via the chair)

Fiona Moss suggested using links from the national update.

John Rowe is to arrange for the chair to have editing rights for RE/SACRE Networks/CPD are to be added.

The cross religions calendar link (SHAP calendar) was also suggested.

10. Compliance

Fiona Moss shared the school workforce data from secondary schools. again. This data had been presented and explained to secondary leaders. Mark Harrington had spoken about it to MAT leaders.

SACRE agreed to triangulation with GCSE data and websites where necessary. The acknowledged that Ofsted would flag that action was needed as the handbook states that SMSC has to be considered before the final judgement.

Fiona Moss reported that analysis of inspection reports had shown that those graded requires improvement or inadequate had a higher percentage of RE mentions.

John Rowe agreed to ask Steve Compton for the data, so that checks to websites can be made. He also agreed to flag this up to secondary school leaders again.

11.Census

The Census data was considered.

Less than half of the population in England and Wales is Christian - 46.2%

There has been a fall in Shropshire where 55.5% are Christian.

There has been a national increase in those with no religion - 13m to 21m, and in Shropshire 22.7% to 36.92%.

The ONS site provides maps so that populations in school areas can be seen. Appendix to be added with link to SLG.

There is no requirement for a major change to the makeup of Shropshire SACRE.

Simon Nightingale had raised several issues.

Members were asked to think about the appropriateness of making group/committee 3 available to Humanists.

12.Advisor's Update

Face to face training had been held today and everyone was positive about this. Schools acknowledged that the agreed syllabus had made a difference.

Ofsted reports

Belvidere Primary and Greenacres Primary – limited knowledge of faiths

But there were more positives which means a mixed picture in Shropshire schools.

Kate Linnell added that there is an issue when children are not confident speakers - pupil voice and testing what they know is important .

RE Hubs Training

SACRE members were encouraged to share this.

National update

A comprehensive national update was provided.

The difficulties in recruitment of specialist RE teachers are a continuing concern.

SACRE members undertook to spread the word about promotion of RE following the Westminster debate in November 2022.

NASACRE Conference 22 May 2023 in London

Colleagues were to advise the chair if they wished to attend.

13.To confirm dates, times and venues of the meetings for 2023/24

Wednesday 5 July 2023 – 6.15 – 8.15 at The Lantern, Shrewsbury.

14.Any other business

There was no other business.

Mark and Sue Michaels recognised the fantastic response from the Council in removing some antisemitic graffiti in Bridgnorth.

The meeting closed at 8.20 pm

Summary of Actions from the meeting

5, 6	Remind Fi Iddon to make contact with Emma Elliott. Raise the issue of a representative from Catholicism with the Diocese representative at his next meeting.	Chair John Rowe
6	Add approval of membership to the next agenda. Purse the nomination of a Lichfield diocese member.	Chair John Rowe
7	Email the chair with dates of small school heads meeting.	John Rowe
8	Send any videos to the chair in time for the summer meeting. Circulate some questions.	SACRE members Steph Shirra
9	Let John Rowe know of any links that could be added to the SLG (via the chair)	SACRE members
11	Consider the appropriateness of making group/committee 3 available to Humanists.	SACRE members
12	Share RE Hubs Training. Advise the chair if wish to attend the NASACRE Conference.	SACRE members

Date Chair

NASACRE 2023 conference report – Mark Harrington

NASACRE met for the first time in person since the COVID-19 pandemic on Wednesday 24th May 2023 at Fishmongers Hall, London. This was their 30th Pearl celebration hence the unusual choice of venue.

Unfortunately, the chair had caught Covid so was unable to host the conference.

There were three keynote speakers during the day, a short celebration of 30 years and then the business meeting. Between each keynote, each table had a discussion and the opportunity to record their discussions on paper. These are to be collated by NASACRE and shared later in the year. It was a shame that these discussions were not then shared around the room to see if there were common themes during the day emerging.

Keynote 1: Dr Kathryn Wright Culham St Gabriels CEO

Kathryn expounded upon the four aims of NASACRE.

- Strengthening the voices represented and their ability to be heard
- Supporting those working in schools
- Representing the entire community
- Celebrating an education in RE and Worldviews.

There is a stronger sense of RE developing in the public space and the need for it to be at the fore more in national discussions.

The next 30 years will be challenging but those same four aims will enable SACRES to embrace the challenges and opportunities as they occur.

- The Bloom Review – [Does Government Do God?](#) has highlighted the challenges although with some controversy.
- How we work with MATS is key to the future – does your SACRE have a MAT link person?
- Community relations are still central to our role.
- Collaboration with others is even more essential to keep our voices heard.
- The Religions and Worldviews approach is gaining momentum with some of the syllabus working groups producing materials.
- We need to hold being intellectually humble and understand our positionality as individual SACRE members.
- Exploring personal lived experiences are key to the new approach, and taking them seriously.
- Teacher recruitment is in crisis and this is seen acutely in RE. This is mainly due to RE training not being fit for purpose and places being unfilled despite recent campaigns.
- How do we advocate for freedom of religion or belief for all?

Keynote 2: Rt Hon. Charles Clarke (Patron NASACRE)

Charles shared a SWOT analysis of SACRES.

Strengths:

- Building a force of community cohesion – SACRES hold a unique place
- Valuing children's and young people's voices are the priority
- A physical manifestation of diverse Britain.
- Moral high ground – compared to much of what is happening around us.

Weaknesses:

- Finances

- Marginalised role in LA
- Variable capacity to take actions

SACREs need to maximise their strength and minimise their weaknesses.

What is the manifesto for your SACRE? Seize the opportunity to make your voice heard as general elections approach.

Voting for Vice Chair took place.

The **Westhill Award Winners** were announced as Doncaster diversity days and Bexley storytelling projects.

RE-Hubs.UK is now live for regional hubs.

Keynote 3: David Hampshire – analysis of SACRE reports (audio recording available - his slides were badly designed and couldn't be read anyway!)

https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/e64EJFwD8r4puc-rdPj-qE3fBSUj7YiHOUsitSdniAYdh_c1OEhY-WFxAlf0cGg.D41T4PT-bxosGJn Passcode: iD3#8A#C

- 69 reports out of 151 were received in time.
- Hybrid meetings have increased attendance at SACRES
- LA relationship varies enormously
- LA is responsible for recruiting members – do they take this role seriously?
- What role is there for Group D members to actively support RE and SACRE across the LA?
- **Are we reporting to or advising the LA?**
- What do we advise as an advisory body?
- What difference does that advice make? (Evaluate your impact)
- Hold the LA to account for RE and CW
- No real monitoring of CW and RE withdrawal across schools (could add to the questionnaire)
- Workforce monitoring doesn't check standards – a lot poorly delivered is worse than a little well delivered.
- Only 27% of respondents monitor CW (Yet this was the only keynote to mention CW)
- How is your training monitored and evaluated?

30-year celebration

There was a quiz and a short presentation by one of the founding members about how NASACRE had formed and the work it has been involved in for the past thirty years.

There will be a SACRE funding report webinar from NASACRE later in June.

AGM

- Announced that David Levian was voted as Vice Chair.
- Adoption of new constitution
- Aim to recruit an Exec Officer to deal with more of the day-to-day running under the Exec committee.
- Nothing added to the meeting other than adoption of minutes.

A series of webinars are planned to showcase recent Westhill Award winners in early June for all who attended the conference.

School workforce data Shropshire Released September 2023

NATRE are committed to supporting SACREs, schools, local authorities and Academy Trusts in monitoring provision for RE. This data has been provided by schools to the DfE. The DfE have confirmed that you are free to publish the data for your LA in your annual report if you choose to do so. As you know from previous discussions about this data, errors are sometimes made by the school inputting the data, especially if the subject is called something else such as PRE or Worldviews. For this reason we have included the philosophy data again this year and schools need to be encouraged to report their RE data accurately under the name Religious education. Also please note that schools where the data is recorded as a z have reported their teaching hours for other subjects, but have not reported RE. It should not be assumed that these schools teach or do not teach RE, but a conversation with them would be useful.

School name	Religious character	School type	% year 7 hours - RE	% year 7 hours - philosophy	% year 8 hours - RE	% year 8 hours - philosophy	% year 9 hours - RE	% year 9 hours - philosophy	% year 10 hours - RE	% year 10 hours - philosophy	% year 11 hours - RE	% year 11 hours - philosophy	% year 12 hours - RE	% year 12 hours - philosophy	% year 13 hours - RE
The Community College, Bishop's Castle	Does not apply	Local authority maintained sch	z	z	z	z	z	z	z	z	z	z	z	z	z
Church Stretton School	Does not apply	Academies	z	z	z	z	z	z	z	z	z	z	z	z	z
Oldbury Wells School	Does not apply	Academies	3.9	z	3.8	z	2.0	z	5.2	z	1.5	z	0.0	z	0.0
Bridgnorth Endowed School	None	Academies	0.0	z	5.5	z	2.0	z	0.0	z	0.0	z	z	z	z
Ludlow Church of England School	Church of England	Academies	0.0	z	0.0	z	4.2	z	2.3	z	0.0	z	z	z	z
St Martins School (3-16 Learning Community)	Does not apply	Academies	0.0	z	3.1	z	4.1	z	0.0	z	0.0	z	z	z	z
Lakelands Academy	Does not apply	Academies	4.8	z	4.4	z	4.3	z	2.5	z	2.5	z	z	z	z
The Thomas Adams School	None	Academies	1.9	z	4.6	z	4.7	z	2.2	z	3.3	z	3.0	z	z
The Corbet School	None	Academies	4.1	z	3.9	z	4.0	z	3.4	z	3.2	z	z	z	z
The Priory School	Does not apply	Academies	3.8	z	3.6	z	3.6	z	2.1	z	2.1	z	z	z	z
Belvidere School	Does not apply	Academies	z	z	z	z	z	z	z	z	z	z	z	z	z
Meole Brace School	Does not apply	Academies	4.3	z	4.0	z	3.9	z	0.0	z	0.0	z	z	z	z
Mary Webb School and Science College	Does not apply	Academies	4.6	z	2.0	z	1.8	z	1.9	z	2.0	z	z	z	z

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Review of OFSTED reports of Shropshire Schools

The following inspection reports have been published between **28th February 2023 and 3rd November 2023**

Baschurch CofE Primary School 17 to 18 May 2023 Good

As a result, pupils know about cultures that are different to their own.

As this is a Voluntary aided school no detailed comments can be made in RE as this is covered in the Section 48 inspection by the Church of England.

Bishop Hooper Church of England Primary School 7 March 2023 Good

They show a mature appreciation and knowledge of other faiths and religions. They have a secure understanding of fundamental British values and how these link with the school's values. All in all, pupils are well prepared for the next steps in their education and life in modern Britain.

As this is a Voluntary aided school no detailed comments can be made in RE as this is covered in the Section 48 inspection by the Church of England.

Bridgnorth Endowed School 13 and 14 September 2023 Good

No comment on RE

Broseley C of E Primary School 25 and 26 April 2023 Good

They compare the similarities and differences between different religions. Pupils can talk about key people in the civil rights movement. They accept and respect people who are different to them.

Bryn Offa CofE Primary School 2 February 2023 Good

They are thoughtful in reflecting on their own faith and that of others. Pupils visit places of worship and talk about the importance of pilgrimage and prayer in different faiths.

Christ Church CofE Primary School 3 and 4 July 2023 Good

Pupils have a strong understanding about inclusion and diversity.

Cleobury Mortimer Primary School 20 and 21 June 2023 Good

No comment on RE

Cockshutt CofE Primary School and Nursery 2 and 3 March 2023 Good

Social, moral, cultural and spiritual development threads through the life of the school. It promotes British values such as tolerance and respect very well. Collective worship, community events, and literature and art from different cultures give pupils a strong sense of self and of the identity of others.

Crowmoor Primary School and Nursery 24 and 25 January 2023 Inadequate

Leaders ensure pupils understand and appreciate diversity. They provide pupils with opportunities to experience communities beyond the one they live in. Pupils know that everyone is different. They show care and respect to people from different religions and cultures, and those with disabilities.

Farlow CofE Primary School 8 March 2023 Good

No comment on RE

Harlescott Junior School 4 and 5 May 2023 Good

Pupils understand cultures that are different to their own.

Hinstock Primary School 28 and 29 March 2023 Good

Leaders have not planned enough opportunities for pupils to engage with other cultures, faiths and lifestyles. Pupils do not have deep enough understanding of the breadth of different cultures in modern Britain. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum contains effective opportunities to broaden pupils' experiences and develop their knowledge of diversity and difference in British society.

Kinlet C of E Primary School 4 May 2023 Good

No comment on RE

Longlands Primary School 11 and 12 July 2023 Good

Leaders support pupils' personal development well. Pupils learn about tolerance and diversity. For example, they learn about the similarities and differences between world religions.

Lydbury North CofE (A) Primary School 8 March 2023 Good

As this is a Voluntary aided school no detailed comments can be made in RE as this is covered in the Section 48 inspection by the Church of England.

Mary Webb School and Science College 7 and 8 June 2023 Good

No comment on RE

Meole Brace School 10 and 11 May 2023 Inadequate

No comment on RE

Morda CofE Primary School 21 and 22 March 2023 Good

Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. They learn about different faiths and visit places of worship.

Moreton Say CofE Primary School 6 and 7 June 2023

Pupils learn about different cultures and believe in equality.

Morville CofE (Controlled) Primary School 16 and 17 May 2023

Visits from people of different faiths and trips to places of interest extend pupils' understanding of life in Britain.

Newcastle CofE Primary School 4 May 2023 Good

The design of the curriculum does not help pupils acquire a secure and deep enough understanding of the diversity of modern Britain. This means that pupils are unclear and sometimes anxious about life and experiences that are different to those familiar to them. Leaders should ensure that pupils' learning in PSHE and the enrichment opportunities on offer carefully address any gaps, so pupils are fully prepared for life in modern British society.

Oldbury Wells School 25 and 26 April 2023 Good

No comment on RE

Oxon CofE Primary School 6 and 7 June 2023 Outstanding

No comment on RE

Sheriffhales Primary School 3 and 6 March 2023 Requires Improvement

Pupils' understanding of terms such as 'British values' and 'democracy' is limited. There are few opportunities for pupils to take part in decision-making, such as voting. However, they demonstrate positive values in respecting people with different kinds of relationships and backgrounds. They understand about the rule of law

Shifnal Primary School 2 and 3 March 2023 Good

The curriculum is well planned to help pupils gain new knowledge and learn about the world in which they live. Leaders have ensured that the curriculum makes effective use of the local area through planned trips. They have also carefully selected themes that take into account a range of cultures and celebrate diversity.

St Andrew's CofE Primary School 2 February 2023 Good

Pupils enjoy learning about different faiths and cultures, which helps them to respect each other.

Some pupils are elected to be spiritualism (sic) ambassadors for the school. This term, to celebrate different cultures, these ambassadors have helped to arrange music and dance workshops in school.

St Andrew's CofE Primary School (Shifnal) 7 and 8 June 2023 Good

Pupils learn about fundamental British values. They understand and respect that others may have different views and opinions to their own.

St George's Junior School 8 and 9 February 2023 Good

No comment on RE

St John's Catholic Primary School 7 and 8 March 2023 Good

Leaders are keen to ensure that children and pupils have every opportunity to develop their understanding of the wider world around them. Pupils learn about difference and about respect and tolerance.

As this is a Voluntary aided school no detailed comments can be made in RE as this is covered in the Section 48 inspection.

St Martins School (3–16 Learning Community) 24 and 25 January 2023 Good

Leaders have carefully planned the curriculum to cover relationships and sex education, health education, different faiths and traditions, citizenship and character development. In addition, leaders also provide effective careers support and guidance. This careful planning means that pupils get helpful information when they need it. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

St Thomas and St Anne CofE Primary School 8 March 2023 Good

Leaders and staff work hard to create high-quality opportunities for pupils' wider development. These include sessions on bringing Bible stories to life, links with a local church and electing pupil house captains. Clubs, trips and visits create memorable experiences for pupils. They enhance learning and give pupils an insight into the lives of others. These include trips to a Roman museum, an outdoor adventure centre and a local theatre. Assemblies, celebration events and regular praise are hallmarks of school life. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is sound.

Stoke-on-Tern Primary School 8 and 9 February 2023 Requires Improvement

No comment on RE

The Community College, Bishop's Castle 7 and 8 June 2023 Good

This good-quality provision for pupils' wider development enhances pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, regular celebrations in school, fundraising and pupil visits cement well-established links with Africa. These activities build awareness and understanding of different places, cultures and beliefs.

The Grove School 25 and 26 April 2023 Requires Improvement

No comment on RE

The Lacon Childe School 7 and 8 March 2023 Good

No comment on RE

The Martin Wilson School 11 and 12 January 2023 Requires Improvement

No comment on RE

Weston Lullingfields Church of England School 17 and 18 January 2023 Requires Improvement

Pupils' personal development is a high priority at the school. Leaders make sure that pupils have opportunities to engage in enrichment activities, such as community events around the church calendar at the local church. Pupils understand how they can make a positive contribution to their school and the wider community.

Whitchurch CofE Infant and Nursery Academy 7 and 8 June 2023 Good

They learn about different religions and know it is important to listen to each other

Whitchurch CofE Junior Academy 11 and 12 July 2023 Good

Pupils also enjoy having time to discuss and debate issues. They understand other cultures and the importance of respecting one another.

William Brookes School 14 and 15 February 2023 Good

No comment on RE

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National SACRE Updates for Shropshire SACRE from RE Today Autumn 2023

Open letter from over 30 Parliamentarians

An Open Letter was published on the 18th September by the Daily Telegraph. More than 30 MPs and peers have written to the Education Secretary, highlighting that school pupils receive tokenistic religious education or none. The MPs are blaming this on a lack of trained teachers and funding for the poor quality of religious education. They argue that this lack of education leaves children ill-prepared to understand their own and others' worldviews, hindering their ability to participate in society. Link to the [letter](#)

NATRE provide evidence at Education Select committee enquiry session

NATRE, along with 3 other subject associations, were invited to speak to a session of the Education Select Committee to support their enquiry into Recruitment and retention of teachers. Deborah Weston, NATRE Research Officer and Chair of the RE policy unit (Joint group made up of NATRE, REC, RE Today), gave evidence in the two hour session.

The session can be viewed [here](#)

The TES wrote about the session in which [D&T teachers 'rummage in skips' for materials, MPs told | Tes](#)
Deborah Weston is quoted:

‘Deborah Weston, research officer at the National Association of Teachers of Religious Education, told MPs that “schools are very inflexible places”. She said that the “pressures on headteachers are so significant in terms of accountability...that there’s a nervousness about taking people on part time”. Ms Weston also argued for an increase in the provision of part-time training to become a teacher, arguing that this could boost recruitment and retention.’

Guidance from the DFE on the place of Humanists on SACRE

[Guidance for local authorities about membership of Standing Advisory Councils for Religious Education \(SACREs\) \(natre.org.uk\)](#)

Following a request from NATRE, the DFE have produced the guidance below which has now been sent to local authorities. It makes clear that, in relation to committee A, it is the Local Authority who select which groups can be represented on the local SACRE and on the Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC) and that this selection may include representatives from non-religious belief systems.

See DFE guidance below.

Guidance for local authorities about membership of Standing Advisory Councils for Religious Education (SACREs)

This note provides information on a recent court ruling and shares the Department for Education’s (the Department) view that representatives from non-religious belief systems may be appointed to Group A of a SACRE and/or to an Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC).

Background

SACREs are established by local authorities, as required by legislation^[1], and their membership must consist of the following groups:

- Group A: members that represent Christian denominations and other religions and their denominations who will appropriately reflect the principal religious traditions in the area;

- Group B: members that represent the Church of England;
- Group C: members that represent the teaching profession or other relevant associations that, in the opinion of the authority, ought to be represented; and
- Group D: members that represent the [local] authority.

The recent legal case of *Bowen v Kent County Council*^[2] (more details in the Annex) clarified that applications for Group A membership from persons who represent holders of non-religious beliefs should be considered in the same way as applications from those who represent holders of religious beliefs. In the Department's view, the non-religious beliefs adhered to by the person to be appointed must be analogous to a religious belief. To be "analogous", the non-religious beliefs must, in accordance with case law under the European Convention of Human Rights and the Human Rights Act 1998, attain the necessary level of cogency, seriousness, cohesion, and importance to attract protection under the Convention Rights. ^[3]

The final decision on appointment of persons to a SACRE or ASC is a matter for local authorities. This may include consideration of whether such a representative would help ensure that the relevant traditions and beliefs in the local authority's area are appropriately reflected in Group A.

[1] Section 390(4)(a) of the Education Act 1996

2 www.bailii.org/ew/cases/EWHC/Admin/2023/1261.html

3 This aligns with the policy in Wales, where a non-religious belief for the purposes of education is aligned with those philosophical beliefs that are protected following European Convention of Human Rights caselaw.

As you know we already have a Humanist representative on Stoke-on Trent SACRE and have reviewed our constitution. As part of this we had already decided that it is suitable to have a Humanist as a full member of committee A.

Recruitment crisis in teaching and especially in secondary RE

STOP PRESS: BURSARY FOR RE AWARDED FOR 2024

Good news for Religious Education bursaries, but challenges remain in the recruitment of secondary RE specialists.

This morning, Tuesday, 10 October, the Department for Education in England published its plans for bursaries for trainees in the 2024-25 recruitment cycle as follows:

For 2024 to 2025 we are offering bursaries of:

- £28,000 in chemistry, computing, mathematics and physics
- £25,000 in biology, design and technology, geography and languages (including ancient languages)
- £10,000 in art and design, English, music and RE

Funding: initial teacher training (ITT), academic year 2024 to 2025 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Whilst this is good news, we must not be under any illusion about the extent to which these bursaries will improve the impact of the recruitment crisis facing the profession. The big issues such as workload, the cost of living, and pay, have not gone away. Furthermore, given that RE recruitment for 2023-24 is likely to fall short by around 60% of the target and

this has placed many University and School led courses to become unviable, we face challenges in the year ahead.

We already have the situation where 51% of teachers who teach RE, spend most of their time teaching another subject and this raises serious questions about how we ensure all children receive the quality of RE to which they are entitled. Senior leaders are already telling the government that they cannot deliver the sort of rigorous RE programme when they cannot recruit teachers with the appropriate expertise.

Nonetheless, we must celebrate this announcement, it is a step in the right direction, and you can be assured that NATRE will continue to work alongside its partners to push for a better settlement for all teachers of RE. www.natre.org.uk/news/latest-news/good-news-for-religious-education-bursaries/

London, 6th March, 2023: A campaign to attract a new generation of RE teachers has kicked off with teaching groups, religious organisations and parliamentarians stressing the importance of the subject for preparing students for life in modern Britain.

As of January, UCAS data show that teacher recruitment for all subjects is down 22% from last year. However RE stands out, being down a third of applicants from the last recruitment cycle.

Government inaction over recruiting teachers to RE has been blamed. The Department for Education (DfE) has so far missed its target for the recruitment of RE teachers in nine of the last ten years.

Despite this year's fall in applicants, the subject continues to grow in popularity. Over the last five years entries to the GCSE have stood around an average of 250,000 with entries to the full course GCSE rising by 30% over the last decade.

The recruitment campaign – entitled 'Beyond the Ordinary' - draws attention to the academic and knowledge rich approach of the subject to life's big questions, and will seek to attract a set of talented graduates up to the task of getting young people to grips with the complex nature of modern belief.

Kathryn Wright, Chief Executive Officer of Culham St Gabriel's Trust, which is supporting the campaign, said: "Religious education is an important curriculum subject enabling children and young people to navigate our complex multi religious, multi secular society. Everyone has a worldview, and it's important we prepare young people to become free thinking, critical participants in public discourse, who can make informed judgements about matters of religion or belief and reflect meaningfully on the big questions in life."

We are looking for ambitious graduates from a range of humanities and social science subjects who can deliver an academic and rigorous curriculum aimed at getting young people to think critically about their own beliefs and those of others."

Last March, the Father of the House, Sir Peter Bottomley MP hosted a roundtable on the future of the subject. In October, a Westminster Hall Debate saw MPs and Peers from across the House agree on its importance for life in modern Britain as well as express concern around a lack of government support for the subject.

Lord Karan Bilimoria said: "The latest teacher recruitment figures are deeply worrying. Parents are concerned, schools are concerned and so too the young people are missing out.

"As a Champion for RE, I've heard numerous times from students that this is one of the few times in the classroom where they get to say what they think about the world around them. At present we face doing a

diservice to a generation of young people ill-equipped to deal with the complexities of belief in Britain and the world beyond. This campaign is about getting the best humanities graduates into the classroom to help them deliver a modern RE curriculum reflective of belief in our society.”

Teacher training courses are open to graduates from a range of academic disciplines and from all sorts of diverse backgrounds, with Subject Knowledge Enhancement courses available from schools, universities or other providers.

Anyone looking for more information about training to be a RE teacher should visit <https://www.cstg.org.uk/campaigns/teacher-recruitment/becoming-a-teacher>

Do we know what this problem is like in Shropshire Secondary schools?

NATRE analysis of GCSE and A level Religious Studies data: National and regional variations

The reports linked to below cover GCSE and A level RS in both England and Wales and reveal many similarities and some differences between the two nations in relation to trends over time. It is clear that the removal of the short course from performance tables has had a devastating impact on the number of children leaving school with a qualification in Religious Studies. In many cases, the loss of the short course has coincided with an increase in the number of schools reporting zero hours of timetable time for RE in year 11 in the school workforce data. At A level, entries have remained fairly stable over recent years in England but in Wales, there is a step decline, of around 33% since 2020. The reasons for this need further investigation.

A level West Midlands % A*-C 2023 76.7 % (Nat 79%)
 Uptake in West Midlands 2.4% (Nat 1.88%)
 GCSE West Midlands % Grade 9-4 2023 69.9% (Nat 72.2%)
 GCSE Uptake West Midlands 27.2% (National Average 25.7%)

[NATRE analysis of GCSE and A level examination data for Religious Studies reveals interesting variations between nations and regions](#)

How can we encourage more pupil entries for GCSE RS, especially as we know disadvantaged pupils often do well in the subject?

Shortage of RE Teachers ‘Dangerous cycle’ within Religious Education

The shortage of religious education (RE) teachers has been highlighted in a Religion Media Centre briefing. Only six people have come forward to train as RE teachers in Wales, and in England, no RE teacher training courses have reached their target of entries.

Hundreds have their applications pending because their degrees have not been finalised due to the university lecturers' strike action. Dr Tim Hutchings, from the University of Nottingham, told the briefing that there was a dangerous cycle emerging in the study of Religious Education, where GCSE entries are stable with RE remaining as the 7th most popular subject, A-level results show a slight dip in entries, fewer students choose to study Theology or Religious Studies at university and fewer have chosen to train to teach RE.

Teachers, academics and advisers told the briefing that Headteachers want to include RE in the curriculum as the understanding of religion is vital in a global society, but the lack of specialist teachers is an issue. The RE council is campaigning for the government to create a national plan to support high standards in RE provision and bursaries to encourage new teachers.

Link to webinar below

[Shortage of RE teachers “dangerous cycle” within religious education \(natre.org.uk\)](https://natre.org.uk)

RE at the Party Political conferences

In late September and Early October, teams of teachers from NATRE joined representatives from the Religious Education Council of England and Wales (REC), Culham St Gabriel's and RE Today to attend the Labour, Conservative and Liberal Democrat party conferences.

This lobbying work that NATRE do on your behalf is really important because it enables us to take the voices of teachers and pupils to policy makers. At the party conferences, we will be sharing the importance of high-quality RE for all pupils in all schools, talking about the need for a national standard in the subject, sharing constituency data related to RE with MPs, SACRE members, local councillors and party members and talking about what high-quality RE looks like in Primary and Secondary classrooms.

As an election comes round. Please talk to your candidates when they come to your door and write to them about supporting RE.

Fiona will update you on this at the meeting.

[Your Voice Matters: NATRE's Call to Action to ask your MP to meet us now!](#)

Training, networking, and other support

Anti-racist RE: continuing debates and widening resources

Jonathan Marshall, MBE, ran a brilliant RE and interfaith centre in Plymouth before he retired. Thanks to Jonathan for drawing attention to resources which might compliment the NATRE anti-racist RE materials (<https://www.natre.org.uk/about-natre/projects/anti-racist-re/>)

"I think teachers might find the work of the Equiano Project on anti-racist education helpful. In the true spirit of quality RE, some diversity of views might be welcome."

This black-led project may help teachers of RE who want to understand the complexity of an anti-racist RE approach: they should be encouraged to explore a range of different voices, one of which is to be found on the excellent website of "The Equiano project" <https://www.theequianoproject.com/>

See for example the video "Understanding the new politics of race" by Prof. John McWhorter. At just under twenty minutes, this perspective is an extremely helpful and profound insight into the background and current situation of anti-racism.

Global Neighbours: school awards from Christian Aid

The Global Neighbours accreditation scheme is an award scheme for schools run by the charity Christian Aid, in partnership with the Church of England Education Office. It is open to all primary schools and has recently expanded into secondary schools too. The scheme has been running for five years and celebrates the development of global citizenship and courageous advocacy in schools. Its aim is to encourage a deeper understanding of the world and for young people to be empowered to engage with and respond to global issues.

Schools can apply for a bronze, silver or gold award. To achieve accreditation, schools must demonstrate how they are fulfilling criteria relating to:

- Leadership, vision and values
- Teaching and learning
- Collective worship and spiritual development
- Pupil participation in active global citizenship
- Community engagement

For more information please contact Alison Brown (Global Neighbours Schools Programme Officer):
abrown@christian-aid.org

NATRE Membership- direct support for teaching

NATRE is the largest membership organisation which promotes, defends and supports RE teachers and RE teaching. It does this through producing high-quality resources and CPD, lobbying government, being involved in conversations with the DfE and Ofsted, LAs and SACREs, telling teachers' stories and experiences and being a voice for all teachers.



Membership packages for students, ECTs, teachers, schools, RE professionals and RE enthusiasts!

Details: www.natre.org.uk/membership

RE Connect Teacher Fellowship Programme

This programme is designed to help deepen teachers' understanding and confidence for exploring the environmental crisis through the lens of religions and worldviews in RE. The programme is not just about getting ideas, but also enhancing your teaching practice and professional network around this theme.

After a successful pilot of the programme in 2021-22, RE:Connect will be running again from September 2023, thanks to a grant from the Culham St Gabriel's Trust. There are places for **up to 10 teachers** of RE (primary and secondary) on the 6 month teacher fellowship programme.

The initiative is run by Dr Jeremy Kidwell, Associate Professor in Theological Ethics at the University of Birmingham and Dr Ian Jones of St Peter's Saltley Trust, with input from experienced primary and secondary specialists, environmental scientists, climate activists and academic researchers in religion and environment.

The programme offers opportunities to:

- Deepen subject knowledge on the intersection of religion and ecology
- Work with cutting-edge subject specialists on religious ethics/practice, ecology, and climate change policy
- Work as part of a supportive and dynamic team to create and trial new approaches and resources for teaching on this theme
- Become a champion for teaching and learning on religion and environmental crisis

The Teacher Fellowship Programme involves monthly workshops from Autumn 2023 to Spring 2024, with tasks to undertake between workshops. Programme sessions will include one fully-funded weekend residential and 6-8 online evening sessions (roughly one per month). There is no cost of participation to the teacher or their school and Fellows receive a bursary of £500 to cover costs of participation plus travel expenses to enable attendance at in-person sessions.

Interested? Please contact Ian Jones (director@saltleytrust.org.uk) to register your interest. Selection for the programme is by a formal application process.

Philosophy of Religion courses from the FT

Jack Robertson, RE teacher in north London, is working with the Financial Times to offer free access to FT.com for all schools and colleges teaching sixteen to nineteen year old students. An FT subscription can support students in developing the broad knowledge that will help them stand out to examiners, universities

and employers. A Philosophy Class page, [ft.com/philosophyclass](https://www.ft.com/philosophyclass), is available for teachers and students of philosophy and ethics. It brings together relevant articles from across the FT and provides accompanying questions that prompt students to reflect critically and make connections to areas of the A-level specification. There is also an IB Theory of Knowledge page for IB students.

Recent Philosophy Class articles cover topics from the ethics of climate protests and abortion to developments in AI and quantum physics, as well as interviews with philosophers such as MacAskill, Chalmers and Srinivasan.

Participating schools receive the same level of access to FT.com as regular subscriber. Check if your school is registered or register your interest via the Philosophy Class page or at [ft.com/schoolsarefree](https://www.ft.com/schoolsarefree)

Jack Robertson JRobertson@gebarnet.co.uk

RE Hubs – Website now live!



RE Hubs website is now live at www.re-hubs.uk. RE Hubs aim to connect those who can provide resources with those who need them and create a neutral platform being RE professionals together.

Many organizations serve RE/RVE/R&W education in the UK, from places of worship and school speakers to CPD partnerships and resource providers. However, until now, there hasn't been a single place to equip, enable, and signpost everyone within the community.

The Hub area for Walsall is West Midlands, led by Chris Giles.

How can we encourage speakers and places of worship to sign up to the training and appear on the site? What links do you have where you can share this?

BBC Expands early years RE resources

There are new resources for 4 and 5 year olds for RE / RME and RVE from BBC Bitesize Reception. These include some simple craft activities and some recipes for festive food with clear and simple ideas to bring the world of religion alive for small children. The subject is connected to work in the fields of expressive arts and design, helping pupils with their understanding of the world particularly in the field of religion and belief. These new materials cover Christmas, Easter, Eid ul Adha, Vaisakhi, Diwali and more and have now gone live. They include video clips made for the age group, activity sheets and information for teacher-use. Lat Blaylock, who contributed to the work says: 'I'm really pleased to see that BBC have made such a diverse and well thought out contribution to Early Years learning about religion and belief. Teachers will find this is a little treasure trove.'

Here is a link:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/z24kqyc>

Against Islamophobia: new resources free for schools

Educate Against Islamophobia (EAI) has recently published a plethora of educational materials for the Early Years, primary schools, high schools and educational practitioners across the U.K. The teaching and learning materials are reflective of the respective curriculums and national frame works, and offer learners with learning opportunities that are applicable to their respective nations.

Early Years resources:

- Amna & Amy Storybook
- 2 lesson plans.

The storybook and accompanying lesson plans aim to support children in the Early Years to develop an awareness of equality, diversity and respectful behaviour and introduce learners to aspects of the Islamic identity.

Primary school resources:

- Unit of work

The unit of work which comprises 6 lesson plans supports KS1-KS2/P2-P7 learners in developing positive attitudes towards diversity. This unit of work also aims to introduce learners to the Islamic identity and will enable them to explore some of the similarities and differences between Islam and other faiths/culture.

High school resources:

- Unit of work

The unit of work which comprises 6 lesson plans supports KS3-KS4/S1-S4 learners in developing an awareness of Islamophobia, including its manifestations and dangers. Learners will explore the issue of Islamophobia through a range of themes and lenses including human rights, anti-bullying and media literacy.

Educator resources:

- Islamophobia awareness training session
- Equality, diversity and inclusion audit

The Islamophobia awareness training and EDI audit aims to promote an awareness of Islamophobia and equip practitioners with the understanding of how to address it in the school community. These materials will also assist educational practitioners to meet their Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act (2010).

To download your free copy of EAI's materials, visit: <https://eai.org.uk/>

If you would like to learn more about Educate Against Islamophobia's work and services contact info@eai.org.uk

Fischy Music: 25 years nurturing emotional and spiritual well being

Lots of schools use Fischy Music in RE as well as assemblies. 2023 is an exciting year for Fischy Music, this year celebrating its 25th Anniversary! Free online concerts streaming live every month throughout this year, so whole classrooms and assembly halls of children can join in with 30 minutes of uplifting songs!

Founded in 1998 by Stephen Fischbacher, Fischy Music (www.fischy.com) is a children's charity, writing songs for and with children to nurture positive mental health and help them express and manage a range of emotions.

Songs are at the heart of Fischy's work, with Health & Wellbeing and RE & Collective Worship songs and teaching resources made available to children, families, schools and churches. In addition to live events the innovative song-streaming platform, Fischy Music Online has made it easy for teachers everywhere to access over 140 songs and teaching resources, with new songs regularly added.

"Fischy Music songs open an emotional door allowing children to have the confidence to discuss issues and problems that we might otherwise not pick up on."

Teacher, St Philomena's Primary School, Glasgow

Schools can subscribe to Fischy Music Online to access over 140 songs. The RE Package includes resources created in conjunction with Lat Blaylock, RE Today, to help staff use music well in RE and connecting to significant Christian concepts (eg from Understanding Christianity). The resources can be used by all staff and are useful in all primary schools wherever you want to enable spiritual reflection and can also be used in assemblies and services for collective worship. To find out more, email: info@fischy.com

Faith inspired Art to encourage conversation, reflection and action

Cheryl Homer, Westhill Endowment, writes: RE Today and NATRE have always been great supporters of the arts and if you are wondering if using faith inspired arts in your school might be beneficial the answer is most likely 'yes'. But where do you start?

Westhill Endowment are here to help, with years of experience working with faith inspired arts. The charity has 10 art collections which are available FREE* to schools and community venues around the UK.

Many communities have already benefited from these resources which aim to encourage conversation, enable reflections, and inspire action.

A Year 10 textiles student recently reflected on her experience with the Gethsemane Garments: "I liked the green garment [representing Hope] showing the rips and tears of the fabric, but with the sides being restitched to show signs of healing and positivity."

A Primary School Teacher reflected on a creative lockdown session provided by their local vicar using the exhibition Bald Statements: "The creative artwork [the children produced in response] has been thought provoking and the children were able to speak honestly on their feelings and experiences of lockdown."

The art collections come with a variety of themes and mediums, including free standing and wall mounted works of art. Additional materials such as booklets, education packs, and films are available. Westhill will also consider funding applications for events around your exhibition.

Westhill Endowment work one to one with all exhibition hosts helping you tailor your exhibition to suit your space and your audiences. If you'd like to know more, please contact Westhill's Arts Coordinator, Cheryl Homer, on cheryl@westhillendowment.org or check the website or social media.

www.westhillendowment.org

www.facebook.com/WesthillEndowment

www.youtube.com/channel/UCHKjKpunQ0C4XSXD4j88XZA

**You may incur transport and insurance costs, please ask if this is applicable.*

Information and resources on Gaza-Israel conflict

Headteacher letter from DFE, Letter from Board of Deputies of British Jews and Muslim Council of Britain leaflet www.dropbox.com/sh/i3pxljxrm4eaeg/AABCLYuWcqO3u4Sf_BSDIbGCa?dl=0

Clip of an Imam, a Rabbi and the Archbishop of Canterbury making a statement

[Israel-Gaza Conflict – UK faith leaders condemn antisemitism and call for solidarity between faith communities | The Archbishop of Canterbury](#)

Resources for use in the classroom (mainly Secondary)

[Resources - The Faith & Belief Forum \(faithbeliefforum.org\)](https://faithbeliefforum.org)

[SNS Resources on Israel-Palestine for Students & Teachers | SNS \(solutionsnotsides.co.uk\)](https://solutionsnotsides.co.uk)

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