

Elizabeth Rich

Subject:

FW: SACRE briefing 10

From: NASACRE Membership Secretary [<mailto:memsec=nasacre.org.uk@mail183.wdc02.mcdlv.net>] **On Behalf Of** NASACRE Membership Secretary
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National Association of
Standing Advisory Councils
on Religious Education

SACRE BRIEFING

Issue: 10

Resent due to slight error

This issue includes:

- **Proposals for the future of SACREs, ASCs, RE and collective worship**
- **NASACRE Conference and AGM 2016**
- **The first Patron of NASACRE**
- **Humanism and Agreed Syllabuses – the High Court Ruling**

- Westhill/NASACRE awards
- SACRE member survey
- SACRE advice about Ramadan
- NASACRE/AREIAC joint conference
- DfE audit of SACRE annual reports
- A request from NASACRE MemSec
- Federation of RE Centres
- The RE-searchers: a new approach to RE in primary schools

Proposals for the future of SACREs, ASCs, RE and collective worship

2015 saw the publication of a number of significant reports for religious education, collective worship, SACREs and ASCs.

This detailed paper written by Chair of NASACRE, David Hampshire, brings together proposals from three reports and the judgement of Mr Justice Warby in relation to the Secretary of State's position regarding non-religious worldviews as part of GCSE Religious Studies.

The reports do not cover the same themes, but there is significant overlap between them.

The table below sets out the areas covered by the reports and the High Court judgement.

Report 1: Religious Education in Schools	Report 2: Collective Worship in Schools	Report 3: SACREs and ASCs	Report 4: Non-religious Worldviews in GCSE Religious Studies	High Court Judgement
Religious Education	Collective Worship	SACREs and ASCs	Non-religious Worldviews	Non-religious Worldviews

A New Settlement: Religion and Belief in Schools

This report was the subject of **SACRE Briefing 8** and that briefing should be consulted for a fuller treatment. Since that briefing, the RE Council has decided to put in motion a process of consultation by setting up an independent commission to discuss the

proposals with a view to putting the recommendations to government. It is clear that the RE Council believes that there is a clear political window of opportunity to move things forward in terms of the Clarke-Woodhead proposals. SACREs are represented on the RE Council by NASACRE and, therefore, it is important that NASACREs representatives on the RE Council know and understand the 'mind' of SACREs as this process unfolds.

LIVING WITH DIFFERENCE: community, diversity and the common good

The REPORT OF THE COMMISSION ON RELIGION AND BELIEF IN BRITISH PUBLIC LIFE, chaired by The Rt. Hon. Baroness Elizabeth Butler-Sloss GBE covers much ground, not simply religious education and collective worship. The commission was first convened by The Woolf Institute in September 2013 and **the report** comes after two years of research and reflection, although it's not without challenge (see The Tablet 12th December, 2015 ***Keep the faith in schools*** by Mike Craven). The relevant sections of the full report are reproduced below.

Religious Education

Syllabuses, teaching and worship

4.13 A range of problems and challenges were put to us in relation to schools beyond the question of segregation in admissions policies and four of these are considered below. Some of them are pressing in all four of the UK's nations, whereas others are primarily an issue in just one nation. Not all the matters referred to below are equally serious everywhere. With particular regard to issues in England, most of the problems mentioned have been highlighted and documented by Ofsted and a range of major reviews.

4.14 First, the relevant curricula throughout the UK are extremely diverse. There are in theory 174 different agreed syllabuses in local authorities in England and Wales, a range of different syllabuses in different Anglican and Roman Catholic dioceses and several thousand different syllabuses in academy schools, which are now a majority of

secondary schools in England. The diversity arguably reflects remarkable trust in, and respect for, local decision making. But also it implies a lack of diligence and concern, for it seems anomalous to have so many different syllabuses in different localities across the country. No other curriculum subject is treated in this way. On the contrary, the approach to religion and belief education in England is in distinct contrast to the way other subjects are regulated. In these, only one programme of study is set for each subject, and although academies are free not to teach it, most do because of pressures applied by Ofsted inspections.

4.15 Second, the content of many syllabuses is inadequate. They fail to reflect the reality of religion and belief, having a rather sanitised or idealised form of religion as their content. They tend to portray religions only in a good light, focusing for example on the role of religions in encouraging peace, harmony and caring for the poor or the environment and tend to omit the role of religions in reinforcing stereotypes and prejudice around issues such as gender, sexuality, ethnicity and race, and the attempts to use religion as a justification for terrorism. Further, a great many fail to include non-religious worldviews, for example humanism, and do not deal with competing truth claims. They do not deal with the full spectrum of religion and belief issues covered in this report. Experienced and knowledgeable teachers of education about religion and belief can usually overcome such weaknesses in written documents and achieve better teaching than the syllabus might suggest. Good teaching, where it exists, undoubtedly helps children and young people to learn both about religion and from it, and makes a powerful contribution to mutual understanding and cohesion.

4.16 Third, the shortage of well-trained teachers of education about religion and belief in England and Wales (in contrast to Scotland) means that shortcomings in official syllabuses are compounded in practice. Many primary school teachers are so poorly trained in relation to teaching about religion and belief that, whatever the curricula provided, the handling of the issues contained in them is extremely variable. Of the teachers who were questioned in a survey of over 300 primary schools, only 19 per cent reported receiving more than 11 hours of initial training devoted to religious education. In secondary schools, there are fewer specialist teachers of religion and belief education than for any other academic subject. A massive recruitment and retraining for teachers of education about religion and belief is required if these matters are to be treated

seriously and deeply in these unprecedented times of religious confusion and tension.

Collective worship

4.17 Fourth, there are still requirements on most schools across the UK to provide religious worship and for this to be Christian. The arguments in favour of retaining compulsory Christian worship in UK schools are however, no longer convincing. There are arguments for total repeal but there is also widespread support for an alternative provision, as distinct from abolition. In this connection we applaud the joint initiative in Scotland between the Humanist Society Scotland and the Church of Scotland to work together for an inclusive 'time for reflection'. The commission endorses this approach as an example for the rest of the UK and notes that it would build on the good practice of holding inclusive assemblies that already exists in many schools but remains technically unlawful.

The commission makes a number of recommendations on the basis of the report's findings:

6. Statutory entitlement

Governments across the UK should introduce a statutory entitlement for all schools within the state system for a subject dealing with religious and non-religious worldviews. They should establish content and learning objectives that can be flexibly applied by teachers, allowing the minimum requirements to be built on differently by different schools. The content should be broad and inclusive in a way that reflects the diversity of religion and belief in the UK, and the subject should have the same status as other humanities subjects. (Paragraphs 4.22–4.24 and 4.27)

7. Collective worship

Governments should repeal requirements for schools to hold acts of collective worship or religious observance and issue new guidelines building on current best practice for inclusive assemblies and times for reflection that draw upon a range of sources, that are appropriate for pupils and staff of all religions and beliefs, and that will contribute to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. (Paragraphs 4.17 and 4.28)

The claim in 4.15 that the content of many syllabuses is inadequate may be a useful

starting point for Agreed Syllabuses Conferences, although it is not clear how the commission came to this judgement. Similarly, the claim that there are potentially 174 different agreed syllabuses does read as rather absurd, and it is indeed misleading (see the Letter of the Chair of NASACRE to the Church Times, 11th December, 2015 in response to Lord Harries).

The RE Council's commission may look at the recommendations from the Butler-Sloss report but may confine itself to the Clarke-Woodhead report. When this becomes clear NASACRE will inform SACREs of the consultation process.

RE for REal

The **REforREal project** has been developing at Goldsmith's, University of London, under the supervision of Professor Adam Dinham and Martha Shaw. It surveyed students, teachers, parents and employers in light of current literature. SACREs may find it useful to discuss the findings from these four groups as a way of reflecting on the impact that RE is having within their local authority area and as a way of informing ASC discussions. The ten recommendations from this report are:

1. A statutory National Framework for Religion and Belief Learning should be developed, and be applicable to all schools, balancing shared national approaches with school level determination.
2. Since SACREs currently play a leading part in religion and belief learning, there is an urgent need for review of their role, and the role of others, such as professional bodies, local education authorities, schools themselves, and other experts, in the forming of learning. This should inform and result in the appointment of a national panel to develop the framework.
3. The National Framework panel should be mandated to consider and make recommendations about i) the purpose, ii) content and iii) the structures of teaching and learning. It should also consider and make recommendations about the relationship between learning inside RE, outside in other subjects, and in the wider life of schools, especially in relation to the Act of Worship, and the right to

withdraw.

4. Religion and belief learning should be a compulsory part of the curriculum to age 16, and consideration should be given to what, if anything, happens in post-16 learning. The panel should consider the related question of appropriate progression pathways and connections between education in primary, secondary, FE, HE and in to CPD.
5. Content should reflect the real religious landscape, as revealed by cutting edge theory and data in the study of contemporary religion and belief.
6. The process of producing a National Framework for Religion and Belief Learning should determine the mix, content and location of religion and belief learning specific to RE, and that which takes place in a distributed way in learning outside of RE.
7. GCSE Religious Studies should remain as an optional subject for schools, and consideration should be given to clearly demarcating the boundary between academic study of the real religious landscape, and other religion and belief learning associated with citizenship and SMSC (spiritual, moral, social and cultural development) outside of the GCSE.
8. There should be continued investment in Initial Teacher Training for subject-specialist RE teachers.
9. There should be increased investment in continuing professional development for non-specialist teachers of religion and belief.
10. The process of producing a National Framework should include a review and decision on the name or names of religion and belief learning in schools.

Common themes: Uncommon solutions

There are a number of themes that SACREs may wish to discuss.

- **Nationally determined RE.** Clarke-Woodhead writes about a National Syllabus for RE, Butler-Sloss appears to indicate a National Curriculum Order (aligned with Humanities subjects) and Dinham-Shaw, a National Framework (aligned with Citizenship and SMSC). What is not clear is whether they are talking about the

same thing or not. It is not clear where RE would be in relation to the National Curriculum. Dinham-Shaw however, does consider learning about religion and belief outside of RE and its contribution to pupils' religious education.

- All agree that RE does not currently cover the **diversity** that it should, or that it reflects the nature of religion and belief as it exists in current British society. What is not clear is what this means in practice. There seems to be little attention given to the amount of time that RE has within the curriculum, the need for depth as well as breadth or to how teachers might make sense of the diversity on the ground whilst teaching about traditions as a whole. There has been much support for these proposals from across a wide variety of groups but it is not clear which groups, beliefs and practices would or would not be included. The reality is there is not enough time within the curriculum for every group to have 'its fair share of attention'. None of reports actually have any clear indication of how these proposals would be worked out in practice.
- All three reports focus on the need for more **high quality training**. This is both at initial teacher training and as part of teachers' continuing professional development. Given the government's current policy on ITE and CPD, these proposals would seem difficult to achieve. SACREs may wish to look seriously at the training that is being provided by ITE providers and those providing CPD to the schools and academies in their local authority's area. The key question would have to be about the quality of training. How would an ITE or CPD provider, or school/academy know whether the training provided was of quality? What would the impact of effective training be in contrast to mediocre or poor training?
- **Withdrawal from RE.** Clarke-Woodhead takes this challenge up in a way that Butler-Sloss and Dinham-Shaw do not. Clarke-Woodhead proposes that parents would lose the right to withdraw from RE if the school/academy adopted the National Syllabus for RE, but would retain the right in schools/academies that didn't. If the Butler-Sloss proposals went forward and there was a National Curriculum Order for RE then the right to withdraw would be taken away in schools that had to follow it, but not Academies and Free Schools as they do not have to follow the National Curriculum at all – although they do currently have to provide religious education.
- **Collective worship.** Clarke-Woodhead proposes national guidance on assemblies but leaves the detail up to the governors of the school in question.

Butler-Sloss proposes national guidance but does not indicate who would make decisions about what this would mean in specific schools. It would appear that Butler-Sloss would like to see a *national* settlement for this and Clarke-Woodhead a *local* settlement. The report *Collective Worship and Religious Observance in Schools: An Evaluation of Law and Policy in the UK* (2015) by Cumper and Mawhinney calls on the government to undertake a thorough review of the current legislation and guidance for England produced by the DfE. What Cumper-Mawhinney does not allude to is the guidance on collective worship given by local SACREs, this is also true for Clarke-Woodhead and Butler-Sloss. Indeed, all of the debates appear to neglect the local in terms of collective worship.

The way forward

SACREs are encouraged to discuss the reports.

At present the only proposal for a consultation is from the RE Council and the timetable for that takes us to mid-2018.

2 December 2015 to 25 January 2016	Steering group works on draft terms of reference for the Commission.
26 January 2016	RE Council Board meeting. Board discusses first draft of the terms of reference.
27 January to 11 April 2016	Member organisations and other stakeholders consulted over the draft terms of reference. Consultation via an online survey and by follow-up meetings. Steering group edit and change the draft terms of reference in the light of member and stakeholder input.
12 April 2016	RE Council Board meeting. Board discusses and signs off final version of terms of reference.
13 April to 15 June 2016	Steering group works on the appointment of commissioners and a Chair.

12 May 2016	RE Council AGM. Update on progress and discussion with authorised representatives.
16 June 2016	RE Council Board meeting. Board discusses and signs off the appointment of commissioners and Chair.
17 June 2016 onwards	Commission begins its work, overseen by the Commission Chair. RE Council to act as secretariat to the Commission.
Mid 2017	Interim report
Mid 2018	Final report

NASACRE's concern is that the window for consultation about the terms of reference might exclude some SACREs and this will be taken up by NASACRE's representatives at the next full meeting of the RE Council. What is also unclear is how this commission is going to be funded and how that will limit its scope and impact.

Will GCSE Religious Studies as proposed by the government, meet the requirements to religiously educate pupils at KS4? The judicial review of Mr Justice Warby

The Claimants' case is that the state has a duty to ensure that any educational provision it makes for religious education ("RE") treats religious and non-religious views on an equal footing, and in a non-partisan way; and that it has failed to discharge that obligation. (Paragraph 5)

Furthermore... the Claimants contend that delivery of that content (as set out by the DfE) will not exhaust the state's obligation to provide RE (Paragraph 6).

This was made in relation to the DfE's statement that:

"By setting out the range of subject content and areas of study for GCSE specifications in religious studies, the subject content is consistent with the requirements for the statutory provision of religious education in current legislation as it applies to different types of school."

This appears to be at odds with the definition of RE given in the 1996 Education Act 375 (3) that:

Every agreed syllabus shall reflect the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian whilst taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain.

Given that the judgement from Mr Justice Warby applies to the State, it may have an impact on the current definition of RE contained within the 1996 Education Act but it does not apply to Agreed Syllabus Conferences. The DfE has responded to the judgement on its [website](#) in light of claims made for the judgement by the British Humanist Association. The judgement does not say that RE must include non-religious worldviews rather the judgement states:

It is undoubtedly true that the ultimate decisions about syllabus content are made at the local level, by the ASCs and individual schools. (Paragraph 56).

There is no need for a SACRE to request the Authority to appoint an Agreed Syllabus Conference on the basis of this judicial review but may wish to consider the place of non-religious world view in its next review of the Agreed Syllabus.

Conclusion

As can be seen these are exciting times for RE, collective worship, SACREs and ASCs. There is no indication, at the moment, that the government is interested in legislative change and all of the proposals put forward may come to nothing. Nevertheless, NASACRE will continue to update member SACREs on the RE Council consultation and inform them how they might become involved.

NASACRE Conference and AGM 2016

Shaping the future

May 17th 2016 | Central Hall Westminster | London.

Conference programme

- 11:00 Arrival, registration and coffee
- 11:30 Welcome and introductions
- 11:40 Keynote address: **The Rt Hon Baroness Elizabeth Butler-Sloss GBE**
- 12:10 Question time
- 12:45 Business meeting
- 13:30 Lunch
- 14:15 Keynote address: **Professor Adam Dinham**
- 15:00 Discussions and questions
- 15:35 Table discussions/panel discussion
- 16:15 Closing remarks from Chair
- 16:30 Close

The **Rt Hon Baroness Elizabeth Butler-Sloss GBE**, formerly President of the Family Division of the High Court was the first female Lord Justice of Appeal and until 2004, was the highest-ranking female judge in the United Kingdom. She has chaired many high profile enquiries and inquests. Baroness Butler-Sloss served as Chair for the recently published Commission on Religion and Belief in British Public Life: **Living with Difference**.

Professor Adam Dinham is Professor of Faith and Public Policy at Goldsmiths, University of London. He is also Chair of the British Sociological Association Sociology of Religion Study Group (Socrel), Professor of Religious Literacy, Diakonhjemmet University College, Oslo, Norway and Honorary Stephenson Professor of Leadership, Religion & Society, Sheffield Institute for Interdisciplinary Biblical Studies, Sheffield University, UK. With Martha Shaw, Professor Dinham is the co-author of **RE for REal: The future of teaching and learning about belief**.

Delegate cost: £100 member SACREs; £125 non-member SACREs

For booking details, visit the [Conference and AGM 2016 page](#) of the website.

The first Patron of NASACRE

During the summer the Officers and the Executive met to discuss the Conference and Annual General Meeting. As a result of those discussions, the idea arose that we might benefit by having a patron or a number of patrons. During the autumn the Executive carried on thinking about the nature of such patronage and who might be invited. As a result, it was decided that the role of the patron would be twofold: first, to promote NASACRE to a wider audience; and second, to act as a critical friend to the organisation. Patrons would not be tied to the policies of the NASACRE Council or Executive, retaining their own intellectual freedom, and NASACRE would not be beholden to the opinions of any patron. The Executive was also quite clear that no patron would financially benefit from their role as patron.

In light of these discussions and particularly as a result of the responses to his contribution at NASACRE's 2015 conference in Birmingham, the Executive asked the Chair to approach the **Rt. Hon Charles Clarke** to become the first patron of NASACRE.

The Executive is pleased to announce that Charles has agreed to become NASACRE's first patron. Quite what this means will develop over time but we are confident that this is the beginning of a relationship that can bear much fruit.

If any member SACRE has a suggestion as to who else might be a patron of NASACRE please do not hesitate to [e-mail the Chair](#) and the Executive will consider all suggestions.

Humanism and Agreed Syllabuses – the High Court Ruling

David Hampshire writes:

On 25th November 2015, Mr Justice Warby issued a judgement about a statement made by the Secretary of State for Education in relation to the new criteria and content for GCSE Religious Studies. The Secretary of State claimed that a school would automatically fulfil its duty to provide religious education at key stage 4 for all of its pupils if they followed the new GCSE syllabuses. Mr Justice Warby disagreed with that statement, holding that religious education is wider than that defined by a religious studies qualification.

Since then, there has been much speculation as to what the judgement means for Agreed Syllabus Conferences, Agreed Syllabuses and RE in maintained non-aided schools. Similarly, there is a question about how Academies and Free Schools should fulfil their funding agreements with regard to RE, where those institutions have no specific religious designation.

In light of this uncertainty on 28th December 2015 the government issued updated guidance entitled: **Guidance for schools and awarding organisations about the Religious Studies GCSE.**

SACREs and Agreed Syllabus Conferences are advised to consult the latest guidance produced by the DfE when considering whether they need to review the locally agreed syllabus or if asked to provide guidance to the local authority and its schools.

Westhill/NASACRE Awards 2016-17

Michael Metcalf, Convenor of the Awards Panel writes:

The application form and briefing notes for 2016 -17, together with summaries of previous projects have now been posted on our [website](#).

NASACRE strongly encourages SACREs to take advantage of the opportunities offered by the Westhill/NASACRE Awards to enhance a SACRE's capacity to generate high quality experiences in RE (or collective worship) for their schools.

The closing date for applications is **31st March 2016**.

Please note that bids for an Award may include the cost of "buying in" consultancy time for a project leader or other key person. As the Convenor of the Awards Panel, I look forward to receiving a good range of applications. I will be happy to answer any queries, or to give general advice on request. Send Michael an [email](#).

SACRE member survey

What is RE for? A SACRE member survey is now closed.

Mark Plater writes:

"I wish to thank all SACRE members who completed the online survey and those who sent me completed paper copies. A summary of key findings will be made available on the NASACRE website before the end of February."

SACRE advice about Ramadan 2016

Denise Chaplin writes:

Many SACREs provide advice to schools annually on catering for the needs of their Muslim pupils during Ramadan. For this academic year, it would be timely to issue advice earlier than usual.

It is very important for many Muslim families that their children should begin participating in the practice of fasting at an early age. Most children of secondary school age, as they are considered adult members of their communities, will be expected to fast and many primary school children will be fasting as well with younger pupils fasting possibly for part of Ramadan, or only on certain days of each week.

Teachers therefore need to bear in mind that the routine of Muslim families is entirely different during Ramadan. The whole household will be awake much earlier in the morning and will stay up later at night, particularly when, as in 2016, **Ramadan falls in the summer months with long daylight hours**. Young children may well become more tired or excitable in school during this time even if they are not fasting themselves. Those students who are fasting may become very tired and thirsty during the school day.

Ramadan will fall this summer at the hottest time, when the days are at their longest and pupils in local schools are doing public and internal exams and tests, so it is important to get the advice out as soon as possible. It is to everyone's benefit if education providers aim to reduce any disadvantages by considering how best to support staff and students during periods of fasting that clash with the exam season.

Schools will be aware that pupils observing the fast will have consumed their last food and drink before dawn, which could mean as early as 3am. Given the importance of hydration for maintaining concentration, it would not be surprising if exam performance was to suffer. Clearly, exam candidates who are fasting will be at an unfair disadvantage going into their exams having consumed no food or water for some hours, this could mean not only lower grades for individual pupils but also poorer performance for their schools in league tables.

It is highly unlikely that exam boards will consider it practicable to rearrange exam timetables to avoid daylight hours during Ramadan. However, it is understood that talks

are taking place between teaching unions, the Joint Council for Qualifications and leading Muslim groups to see if anything can be done to reduce the impact on affected students.

For other year groups, it may be that internal school exam schedules could be retimed to ensure that students do not have too many exams on the same day, or that special arrangements are made to allow some students to sit certain exams at different times. School plans for other exam arrangements, such as revision sessions and the location of rooms could be reviewed to minimise the impact on those who are fasting.

If pupils are normally allowed to take food and drink into an exam room, it would be considerate where possible to allocate a separate exam room for fasting pupils so they are not distracted by others who might have water bottles or snacks on their desks.

Muslim SACRE representatives in partnership with local mosques may be able to provide further local advice to parents about deferring some days of the fast to after exams, so that students are able to achieve the best possible outcomes.

The Islamic calendar is lunar and has 354 or 355 days. Therefore precise dates cannot be forecast as they depend on the sighting of the moon. In 2016, Ramadan begins on June 6th or 7th. Prayer times for June and July will be found on many mosque websites. Id-ul-Fitr (the festival marking the end of Ramadan) will fall on July 7th (plus or minus 1 day).

RE Curriculum Design – a joint conference by NASACRE and AREIAC

Sushma Sahajpal gives a perspective on the joint NASACRE/AREIAC conference held in November.

This conference brought together three highly respected RE professionals, **Derek Holloway, Dilwyn Hunt** and **Pat Hannam** to share respective approaches to building an RE Curriculum 'fit for purpose' in 2015/6. Whilst their work was presented in far greater depth, this article offers a very brief flavour of some key points. The three approaches may be broadly summarised as the pragmatist, the idealist and the philosopher.

1. **Derek (pragmatic approach)** suggested 5 years on, a drastic reframe was needed due to:

- reduction in funding
- other subject curricula (e.g History has only 10 pages)
- society becoming less religiously literate
- pressure of Government 'Prevent' and 'British Values' initiatives
- increased GCSE focus on belief and practice

and presented a '**minimalist' NSFRE-based model**, comprising:

- **A core purpose** - 2 suggested aims: Knowledge/Understanding of a range of religions AND ability to express ideas on the impact of religions/worldviews
- **Focus on knowledge mastery** - pared down to essential *connected* knowledge units
- **Simple definitions of attainment, progress and process of learning** - 3 suggested end of KS outcomes per concept: Developing, Secure & Excelling, and 1 suggested strategy: enquiry method using EAG (Expert Advisory Group) sample questions.

2. **Dilwyn (idealist approach)** aimed for **purity of the academic subject** where:

- **Curriculum supplied the 'heavy lifting' for the Primary/non-specialist teacher** – by delivering a progressive model of key concepts per

faith with precise specifications of knowledge (**which** concepts, through **which stories/festivals/etc.** to **what level of meaning**) to be *secured* at each key stage

- **Assessment** is used to identify whether knowledge 'installed' is right or wrong as a simple yes/no.

3. **Pat (philosophical approach)** stated that RE must meet the same 3 needs as Education itself: **Academic, Social and Self developmental** and suggests:

- The Objective for students is to **enquire into concepts with increasing skill and depth**
- Defining a **minimum vocabulary and concepts coverage** for each faith
- Progression is defined by mastery of skills and processes necessary to enquire into what it means to live a human (religious or non-religious) life.
- A **single attainment target**: Interpreting religion in relation to human experience

Conclusions

Each model offered stimulating insights that SACREs might consider useful in their own discussions:

- From Derek the need to stay grounded in the real world, to be practical, clear and succinct in whatever is published.
- From Dilwyn the need to take the burden of choice and level of content off non-specialists by having detailed, coherent, well-resourced specifications available.
- From Pat the importance of balancing theological knowledge with philosophical enquiry; to plan and assess for an educated appreciation of what it means to be both religious and human, educated in the wider sense.

DfE audit of SACRE Annual Reports

As members will know it is a **statutory requirement for SACREs to publish an annual report and to send this to the Secretary of State, ideally by the 31st December each calendar year**. Since the abolition of the Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency in 2011 there has been no analysis of SACRE annual reports.

In light of this, the DfE has approached the RE Council to work with us to produce an analysis of reports. In order to do this, a template is to be produced which will allow easier analysis, although this is not compulsory. Currently, the **template for Annual Reports** on the NASACRE website is recommended and any new template for use will not be in place for this year due to time-scales.

As part of this process **SACREs will be asked by the DfE to send copies of their Annual Report to NASACRE** electronically, which many do already. It is important though that SACREs continue to send a copy of their report to the Secretary of State as required, as a result of the changes brought in by the Education Act 2011.

Thank you to those SACREs who have already submitted **reports** for the year 2014-15.

Please email your SACRE report as **one** document in **PDF format** with a **maximum size** of approx **3Mb** to: **memsec@nasacre.org.uk**

NASACRE membership 2015-16

To view all the resources on the website, **your SACRE needs to be a member of NASACRE**. Locked areas are indicated with a white padlock and require you to log in.

Log-in details for the website were changed in September and this information was sent to the clerks from SACREs from which we have received payment of the annual membership subscription.

Clerks have been invited to share the new login with members. If you have not yet received this information, **please contact your SACRE clerk.**

If you are a **SACRE clerk** and have not received the log-in information email but think your invoice (first sent 5th June) has been paid, please email the **Treasurer providing full details regarding payment.**

A request from NASACRE MemSec

When SACRE Officers change or move on, it is sometimes difficult to remember to let me know of those changes. However, it is vital if your SACRE is not to miss out on important mailings that you provide up to date information.

Please note: the SACRE database has been amended. An email address will now only be listed once. If for example, the clerk's email address is also the one used for contact with other SACRE Officers, then that email address will only be listed once and under the name of the clerk.

Click [here](#) to check details.

Click [here](#) to email new details.

Federation of RE Centres

As a chair, clerk or SACRE member, have you heard about the Federation of RE Centres?

The Federation of RE Centres is a forum and support network for those involved in the provision of resources for multi-faith religious education in UK schools, colleges, churches and community groups. Currently the Federation is trying to establish the whereabouts of centres which assist schools and others in developing good RE. As members we have a newsletter and meet for conference to discover what we are doing to assist the development of RE in its widest sense.

At our last conference in Durham, we wished to try to make contact with centres which work hard in supporting the education of young people in some way or another. Centres may be part of the local faith community, education authority, diocesan office or inter-faith community. We did get some feedback from a FaceBook entry, but would like to ask SACREs for assistance.

Do you have a centre in your locality?

If you have, would you please send contact details to **Ken Johnson** (clerk to Nottinghamshire SACRE) or ask your centres to get in touch.

The RE-searchers: a new approach to RE in primary schools

Although too late for the study of Christmas just gone, *RE-searchers: A critical dialogic approach to RE in primary schools* with some downloadable resources has been developed as part of a project sponsored by the Culham St Gabriel's Trust. It is authored by Giles Freathy, Rob Freathy, Jonathan Doney, Karen Walshe and Geoff Teece.

Rob Freathy comments:

It is called 'the RE-searchers approach' and encourages pupils to think about the significance and effectiveness of different methodologies and methods of enquiry in RE. To make these accessible to young children, we have personified some of them as cartoon characters. Individually these characters are called Debate-it-all Derek, Ask-it-all Ava, Have-a-go Hugo, and See-the-story Suzie, but collectively they're known as the 'RE-searchers'. Each character holds different assumptions about religion(s) and advocates different research methods. Once acquainted with our characters and their respective characteristics as researchers, pupils can undertake learning activities associated with each of them in pursuit of different understandings of religion(s).

Click [here](#) for further information and to download the resources.



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