

# HSACRE



## HILLINGDON STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

**Date:** Tuesday 18 June 2013

### Members

**Time:** 7.30 pm

**Venue:** Committee Room 5 - Civic Centre,  
High Street, Uxbridge UB8 1UW

**Meeting:** Members of the Public and Press  
are welcome to attend this  
meeting

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reports can be made  
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information.**

Daniel Norris (Chairman)  
Carol Jones (Vice-Chairman)  
Councillor Michael Bull  
Councillor Keith Burrows  
Councillor Carol Melvin  
Councillor David Routledge  
Councillor Avtar Singh Sandhu  
Amir Ahmed (Syed Amir Ahmed)  
Carolyn Appleby  
Mary Coulthurst  
Connie Dusek  
Mike Gettleson  
Kevin Guest  
Jay Lakhani  
Angela Lount  
Lil Osborn  
Jamal Pasha  
Elenor Paul  
Kamal Persaud  
Jasvir Singh Rayat  
Heather Steady  
Hilary Stone  
Richard Thomas

Published: Monday, 10 June 2013

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# Agenda

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## Chairman's Announcements

- 1 Apologies for Absence
- 2 Minutes of the Meeting held on 20 March 2013
- 3 'Walk Through The Bible' course - 4 June 2013 - Update
- 4 Hosting of a 2013 SACRE Meeting at an External Venue
- 5 Questionnaire on CPD for RE and Collective Worship - Update
- 6 Information item: NASARE Summer Newsletter 2013
- 7 Any Other Business

## Dates of 2013/2014 Meetings:

Wednesday 6 November 2013

Tuesday 11 March **2014**



**Minutes**

**HILLINGDON STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL  
ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

**20 March 2013**

**Meeting held at Committee Room 4 - Civic Centre,  
High Street, Uxbridge UB8 1UW**

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|     | <p><b>SACRE Members Present:</b><br/>Daniel Norris (Chairman)<br/>Carol Jones (Vice-Chairman)<br/>Councillor Mike Bull<br/>Councillor Carol Melvin<br/>Councillor David Routledge<br/>Councillor Avtar Sandhu<br/>Carolyn Appleby<br/>Amir Ahmed<br/>Mary Coulthurst<br/>Mike Gettleson<br/>Elenor Paul<br/>Kamal Persaud<br/>Jasvir Singh Rayat<br/>Heather Steady</p> <p><b>Other</b><br/>Duncan Struthers, SACRE Advisor</p> <p><b>LBH Officers Present:</b><br/>Nadia Williams, Democratic Services</p>  |
| 24. | <p><b>APOLOGIES</b> (<i>Agenda Item 1</i>)</p> <p>Apologies had been received from Lil Osborn, Jamal Pasha, Kamal Persaud and Richard Thomas.</p>  |
| 25. | <p><b>MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 7 NOVEMBER 2012 AND MATTERS ARISING</b> (<i>Agenda Item 2</i>)</p> <p>The minutes of meeting held on 7 November 2012 were agreed as a correct record, subject to it being amended to note that Mary Coulthurst had been in attendance; and there were the following matters arising:</p> <p><b>Item 13 – Talk from the Interim Chief Education Officer</b></p> <p>Apologies had been received from Julien Kramer, Chief Education Officer and it was anticipated that he would be able to attend the next meeting.</p> <p><b>Item 16 – Future of Hillingdon SACRE</b></p> <p>On behalf of HSACRE, the Chairman congratulated Duncan Struthers</p> |

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| 26. | <p>in his new role as SACRE Advisor.</p> <p><b>WHAT DO WE WANT TO ACHIEVE AS HILLINGDON SACRE? TOWARDS A STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR THE USE OF FUNDS/ RESOURCES. (Agenda Item 3)</b></p> <p>The Chairman announced that it was timely for HSACRE to examine the nature of SACRE and to ascertain what its aims were. It was suggested that HSACRE members would need to make decisions regarding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What the value of SACRE was and what its purpose was</li> <li>• Consider the key things that SACRE hoped to value and establish what the priorities were</li> <li>• Establish what SACRE was not</li> </ul> <p>A ten minute group discussions took place and feedback was given raising the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognised that SACRE was a statutory body and any actions/recommendations provided to schools were binding. Therefore, there were concerns about schools that were gaining academy status and how SACRE could ensure that RE was being provided at these schools. Highlighted that it was only through RE that ignorance could be reduced.</li> <li>• That the Interim Director of Education had some influence in schools and given that the number of school places were increasing, raised concerns about how SACRE would influence in order to ensure that needs were being met.</li> <li>• Highlighted that SACRE had a duty to ensure that all faiths within schools were acknowledged and respected and therefore, children should understand how each other's faith worked. Strongly advocated that knowing about other people's faiths served to reduce intolerance and therefore, believed that SACRE would have that influence, particularly in primary schools through the syllabus, inclusion, promotion of diversity and impacting on the community.</li> <li>• That there was a growing number of atheists families and SACRE needed to take note of those families also and in ensuring that all groups were inclusive.</li> <li>• That in order to have that understanding, there needed to be an understanding of other people's religion and SACRE would need to ensure that, that was respected and retained. Therefore SACRE would need to put structures in place to attain this.</li> <li>• Knowing about other religion was a positive thing.</li> <li>• Whilst schools reflected diversity, children would need to be educated to know what was common to all, how to coexist and to consider other people.</li> <li>• Highlighted that one of the aim of SACRE in Hillingdon was that it attended conferences and that the Agreed Syllabus was actually drafted and developed by SACRE member themselves, Which was noted as a great strength.</li> <li>• That SACRE had a very strong moral purpose with a great deal</li> </ul> | <p><b>Action by</b></p> <p>Daniel Norris<br/>Carol Jones<br/>Duncan<br/>Struthers</p> |
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|     | <p>of expertise within its membership.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agreed that HSACRE should not be dictatorial and should take a diplomatic approach when addressing issues.</li> </ul> <p><b>RESOLVED</b></p> <p><b>That a draft action plan would be developed and reported to a SACRE meeting for discussion in due course.</b></p>  |  |
| 27. | <p><b>GUIDELINES FOR FOOD AND FAITH UPDATE</b> (<i>Agenda Item 4</i>)</p> <p>Carole Jones reported that she had met with the Council's nutritionist, Thomas Dunn, Health Promotions Officer and Fiona Gibbs, Stronger Communities Manager to progress, develop and discuss a draft of the Guidelines for Food on Faith.</p> <p>Ms Jones advised that a meeting had been arranged to take place on 24 April 2013 at Yeading Junior School starting at 9.30am, for further discussions of the draft guidelines. SACRE members were encouraged to attend, so that the views of as many faiths as possible could be sought to help produce the final document that would be more accessible for schools. Input from as many faith communities as possible was encouraged, to ensure that the information provided were true and correct.</p> <p>With regard to concerns raised about the issue of traces of horse meat being served in school meals, it was noted that decision regarding the contract of provision of food in schools were taken by school governing bodies at each school, and that it was up to such bodies to take up the issue with providers of their school meals.</p> <p>Duncan Struthers advised that the Interim Education Officer had confirmed that the Council was not aware of any evidence that traces of horse meat had been found in food served in Hillingdon schools.</p> <p>SACRE members were asked to send any comments they may have by email to <a href="mailto:nadiawilliams@hillingdon.gov.uk">nadiawilliams@hillingdon.gov.uk</a>, if they were not able to attend the meeting on 24 April 2013.</p> <p>With regard to an issue raised regarding the clarity of the description of ingredients in foods, the Chairman added that this issue would be difficult to deal with, but that SACRE could raise awareness of the issue. In terms of the increase in diversity in the Borough, it was noted that producing the guideline was about making schools aware of what they served in schools.</p> | <p><b>Action by</b></p> <p>Carol Jones</p>                         |
| 28. | <p><b>DATE FOR RAMADAN AND INFORMATION FOR SCHOOLS</b> (<i>Agenda Item 5</i>)</p> <p>Duncan Struthers advised that 2013 Ramadan will start on Tuesday 9 July and will continue until 7 August 2013.</p> <p>However, it was stressed that SACRE would still be required to notify schools accordingly.</p>   | <p><b>Action by</b></p> <p>Duncan Struthers<br/>Nadia Williams</p> |

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| 29. | <p><b>UPDATE ON THE ' WALKING THROUGH THE BIBLE' COURSE FOR TEACHERS</b> (<i>Agenda Item 6</i>)</p> <p>It was confirmed that the 'Walking through the Bible' course for teachers was being held on Tuesday 4 June 2013 from 9am to 3.30pm in the Middlesex Suite at the Civic Centre, Uxbridge.</p>  | <p><b>Action by</b></p> <p>Duncan Struthers<br/>Alison Fothergill</p> |
| 30. | <p><b>BEST ADDED VALUE AT KS4 - DECISION ON CONTINUING</b> (<i>Agenda Item 7</i>)</p> <p>SACRE members unanimously agreed to continue with the 'Best Value Added' award scheme for the value added programme modelled on the Agreed Syllabus to schools that had entered pupils for RE at KS4 GCSE.</p> <p>The selection criteria was said to be based on the school highlighted to have achieved the best result and made major strides in RE. The schools results lists were handed out at the meeting and following discussions, it was proposed, seconded and agreed that for 2013, the 'Best Value Added' award should be awarded to Ruislip High school.</p> <p><b>Resolved</b></p> <p><b>That Ruislip High School be awarded the 'Best Value Added' award.</b></p>  | <p><b>Action by</b></p> <p>Daniel Norris<br/>Duncan Struthers</p>     |
| 31. | <p><b>QUESTIONNAIRE ON CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (CPD) FOR RE AND COLLECTIVE WORSHIP TO BE SENT TO SCHOOLS</b> (<i>Agenda Item 8</i>)</p> <p>The Chairman announced that a questionnaire on continuing professional development (CPD) for RE and Collective Worship was being developed to send to schools in order to check whether RE teachers were being adequately trained in schools. The questionnaire coincided with the recent news release (copies were handed out at the meeting) following an all party parliamentary inquiry report entitled "RE: the truth unmasked" which highlighted the lack of support for and provision of qualified RE teachers.</p> <p>It was noted that the questionnaire would be anonymous and would ask about training provisions for Newly Qualified Teachers (NQT) and subject leader provisions, to gauge the current provisions of RE in schools.</p> <p>It was explained that prior to the questionnaire being circulated, a draft would be sent to school groups for their input in finalising the questionnaire. It would be sent to all Headteachers and RE Leaders electronically and would be collated at Holy Trinity using survey monkey.</p> <p>Analysis of the responses would be reported to a SACRE meeting in due course.</p> | <p><b>Action by</b></p> <p>Daniel Norris</p>                          |

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|     | <p>The Chairman advised that it was important that the remit of SACRE considered the determination of collective worship, as this area was dealt with at schools. SACRE would be the vehicle for faith communities and anticipated that Brunel University would be involved in the training and may potentially provide funding support.</p> <p>Noting the main findings of the Parliamentary inquiry and the recommendations, it was agreed that SACRE would wish to raise awareness of the concerns identified with new entrants going into schools, where fewer and fewer teachers were having experience in RE. Such concerns were said to be identified in the proposed questionnaire where primary schools would be asked who taught RE in their schools.</p> <p>It was stressed that schools with academy status were not required to teach RE.</p>   |  |
| 32. | <p><b>RELIGIOUS EDUCATION QUALITY MARK</b> (<i>Agenda Item 9</i>)</p> <p>Daniel Norris reported that he had attended a conference on 17 December 2012 on the new RE Quality Mark (REQM), an accreditation system which recognised good practice in religious education. It allowed schools to register to be accredited at any of the three levels of Bronze, Silver and Gold awards. Schools were required to provide evidence to show that they met the requirements for any of these awards, which were assessed by a trained assessor who would visit the school to validate the Quality Mark.</p> <p>It was acknowledged that was worth promoting the REQM in schools as it was very well supported nationally in primary and secondary schools, and that training could be linked to this accreditation, whilst promoting RE at the same time.</p> <p>Details about the REQM accreditation would be circulated to all schools and could be accessed at <a href="http://www.reqm.org">www.reqm.org</a>.</p> | <p><b>Action by</b></p> <p>Daniel Norris</p> |
| 33. | <p><b>OFSTED RECENT GUIDANCE ON PROMOTING SPIRITUAL MORAL SOCIAL AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT OF PUPILS</b> (<i>Agenda Item 10</i>)</p> <p>Attention was drawn to the Ofsted Subsidiary guidance - Supporting the inspection of maintained schools and academies report. It was highlighted that inspection of the Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development (SMSC), which was advised may be seen through lesson observation in subjects such as RE, art, and music were said to be taken into account. In addition, it was stressed that caution should be exercised, as SMSC in some schools may not look at RE.</p> <p>In reviewing the censor report that was handed out at the meeting, attention was drawn to the changes in the nature of faiths shown across the Borough and highlighted that some faiths were shown to be growing at a faster rate than others.</p> <p>The Ofsted report also revealed the fact that teaching on Christianity</p>  | <p><b>Action by</b></p>                      |

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|     | was diminishing.   |   |
| 34. | <p><b>2013/2014 MEETING DATES:</b> (<i>Agenda Item 11</i>)</p> <p>The dates for 2013/2014 meetings were noted as Tuesday 18 June, Wednesday 6 November 2013 and Tuesday 11 March 2014.</p>   | <b>Action by</b>  |
| 35. | <p><b>INFORMATION ITEMS:</b> (<i>Agenda Item 12</i>)</p> <p>Information items relating to the Culham St. Gabriel's RE Leadership Weekend -28-29 September 2013 and the Brunel University - A Question of Religion: Young People and Identity in Contemporary Multi-Faith Britain were noted.</p>   | <b>Action by</b>  |
| 36. | <p><b>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</b> (<i>Agenda Item 13</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It was noted that Carolyn Appleby will be attending the 'A Question of Religion: Young People and Identity in contemporary Multi-Faith Britain' conference. The conference was organised by the Centre for Child and Youth Research, At Brunel University and had been postponed from a previous date in June 2012. It had now been rescheduled to take place on Friday, 12 April 2013 from 10.30am – 4.00pm at The Mead Room, Hamilton Centre, Brunel University.</li> <li>• SACRE members were invited to attend the Inter-faith event for secondary schools being held on Thursday 21 March 2013 in the Middlesex Suite, Civic Centre, Uxbridge, from 12pm – 3.30pm.</li> <li>• Following an issue that had occurred during the Christmas period, Amir Ahmed advised that he had attended meetings, places of worship and school assemblies to raise awareness of pupils, as well as parents about the importance of children taking part in festivities at schools. As it was through such activities that children learnt about other people's religions and nurtured tolerance.</li> </ul> | <p><b>Action by</b></p> <p>Carolyn Appleby</p> <p>All</p> |
|     | The meeting, which commenced at 7.30 pm, closed at 8.40 pm.  |   |

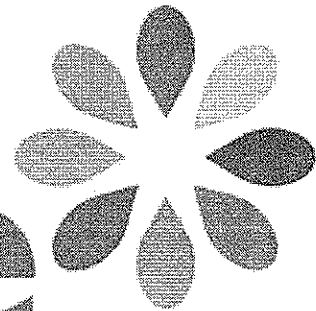
These are the minutes of the above meeting. For more information on any of the resolutions please contact Nadia Williams on 01895 277655. Circulation of these minutes is to Councillors, Officers, the Press and Members of the Public.



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# nasacre



National Association of  
Standing Advisory Councils  
on Religious Education

## SUMMER NEWSLETTER 2013

As part of the progress to launching the new NASACRE website at the AGM in May (see details below) we are pleased to be showcasing this new format of our newsletter.

In this issue:

- [From the Chair](#)
- [Michael Gove and religious education – the good, the bad and the ugly](#)
- [Are SACREs fit for purpose?](#)
- [RE Quality Mark](#)
- [NASACRE AGM](#)
- [Membership matters](#)
- [RE Council Sponsored Walks](#)
- [In the beginning](#)
- [Twenty years on](#)
- [Personal reflections on being a member of SACRE](#)

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[From the Chair](#)

As I write my last newsletter message to you as NASACRE Chair, I am, perhaps understandably, in reflective mode. February 2013 marked 20 years since NASACRE was formed and the last three years alone have seen unprecedented challenges for religious education to which we have been responding vigorously.

The AGM in May will see Lesley Prior assume the role of chair and there will be elections for the role of Vice-Chair as well as two Executive members as terms of office for Graham Langtree and Sharon Artley come to end. I would like to express my sincerest thanks to NASACRE officers and Executive members for their faithful support, dedication and hard work during my own term of office.



Michael Gove's statement in the House of Commons in early February on new arrangements for the national curriculum, GCSEs and school accountability gave hope of some respite from relentless changes that have been so damaging for RE. However, John Keast, RE Council Chair, pointed to aspects of that announcement which were good, bad and ugly and concluded that stormy times still faced RE. I agree, and as we move into the 2013 Summer Term NASACRE is only too well aware that yet more wintry blasts are in prospect for RE.

The APPG report on RE teacher supply and support published in March gave parliamentary prominence to important issues of concern to the RE community. A similar tone is expected from the Ofsted Long Report and the Ofqual report on GCSE both due to be published this term. Their messages are not expected to be comfortable for RE and, of course, for SACREs. As we rightly focus on what for us might be challenging analyses (see *Are SACREs Fit for Purpose?*) it is important that we remember our collective achievements, both past and present and appreciate the profound significance of the way that different parts of the RE community are working ever more closely.

The start of 2013 saw the launch of the RE Quality Mark after a pilot involving 40 schools. This pilot included schools from all phases, special school, faith and community schools. A flier for the REQM is included in this newsletter. The REQM is just one of the achievements of the RE community and has been designed to celebrate high quality religious education, promote SMSC (spiritual, moral, social and cultural education) and whole school improvement.

Another achievement must be the way the RE community has galvanised itself to work together under the leadership of the REC in taking forward the RE Subject Review with no government support. The Review has of necessity proceeded at a breathtaking speed with the Expert Panel starting its Phase 1 work in July 2012 and producing its draft work in October. The sheer pace has been a real challenge for SACREs many of which needed to schedule additional meetings to engage with the consultation on the Phase 1 report as well as to respond to the APPG call for

evidence on teacher supply and support. Phase 2 of the Review sees a series of working papers published during this term with a final document scheduled for launch in September. This phase of the Review involves two Task Groups producing a curriculum review document which is aimed to be as inclusive as possible, taking into account the diversity of provision for RE in community and aided schools, as well as the changing pattern in the light of the academisation programme. Task Group 1 will produce papers on the aims for RE, the core knowledge and understanding in RE for pupils and new instruments for describing achievement in RE. It is led by Graham Falgate with Kate Christopher, Dilwyn Hunt, and our own Lesley Prior. Task Group 2 will work on structuring and sustaining the future of RE and its members are Hazel Henson, James Holt, Jennifer Uzzell and Sue Wilson. It is very encouraging to note that people with long experience in and good understanding of SACREs are involved so prominently in this work.

This context, therefore, sets the theme for our ~~AGM~~ which will be as much about SACREs challenging as being challenged.

My thanks to you all for your faithful commitment to RE and the encouragement and support you have given me as Chair, over the last two years.

I look forward to seeing you in Birmingham on 23rd May.

Bruce Gill

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## Michael Gove and religious education: the good, the bad and the ugly

*Comments on Michael Gove's statement in the House of Commons and DfE publication of new arrangements for the national curriculum, GCSEs and school accountability on 7 February 2013 from the Chair of the RE Council*

### GOOD

- No EBacc certificates but one qualification (reformed GCSE) for all subjects, so no first and second class qualifications
- A new broader performance measure for schools (Performance8) that allows GCSE RS to count towards school performance alongside EBacc subjects; this is good news for schools with successful GCSE provision
- RE was reaffirmed in the new National Curriculum documentation – "all state schools ... must teach RE to pupils at every key stage"
- Not mentioned on 7 February but RE now included in Specialist Leader in Education programme by National College of School Leadership

### BAD

- The EBacc still exists and still excludes GCSE RS as a humanity option, despite the recent addition of Computer Science to the science suite
- The EBacc headline measure for school performance remains in place, implying second class academic status to GCSE RS (and other subjects)
- Position of GCSE RS is still precarious and depends on how Performance8 subjects will be determined; RS may lie only in an overcrowded option position, competing with provision for both EBacc and non-EBacc subjects
- The GCSE Short Course RS will not count towards school performance and its future is very uncertain – no indication of how statutory RE in Key Stage 4 can be accredited
- Not mentioned on 7 February but teacher training for RE remains in a dire state with the removal of bursaries for RE PGCE trainees (unlike nearly every other subject) being inequitable and unjustifiable

### UGLY

- Some probably irreversible damage to RE has already happened, with reduced time, staffing and fewer exam entries
- ‘Bridge too far’ metaphor obscures the minimal change in Gove’s plans; sleight of hand is evident and he will not lose political credibility over any of this

Whilst mentioning nearly every other subject, he did not mention RE at all

### CONCLUSION

- RE is not out of the woods yet; or to put it another way, there are stormy times still to come for the good ship RE

John Keast  
Chair, RE Council  
8 February 2013

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### Are SACREs fit for purpose?

In their thought provoking book, *Does Religious Education have a Future?: Pedagogical and Policy Prospects* (2013), Mark Chater and Clive Erricker examine various factors currently affecting RE today. In chapter six, entitled ‘The politics of English RE: A portrait of disfunctionality’, Mark Chater points to a number of shortcomings in relation to SACREs. His portrayal deserves serious consideration even if many of us who work closely with SACREs might take issue with all or some of the analysis.

He argues that the SACRE structure of four groups reflects an era in which England was less diverse, has a retrograde influence on the character of representation and contains an imbalance between the religious and the educational forces acting on RE. Mark Chater points to the voluntary nature of SACRE membership, for which there is no test, which makes it virtually impossible to exercise quality assurance on religious input and advice. Significantly, he also contends that such structural weaknesses carry through to agreed syllabuses and therefore to classroom learning and that the different vested interests of the SACRE groups/ASC committees conspire to lead to minimal changes being made to syllabuses when they are reviewed. He observes that SACREs have no equivalent in any other subject, that SACREs' responsibility for collective worship

*"...contuses and embarrasses the educational profile of RE"* and that the public is most often unaware that SACREs exist.

### *Caricatures or accurate descriptions?*

His analysis can be summarised as seeing SACREs as

*"... small dedicated bodies, battling against local authority apathy, proud of their local achievements for RE and hyper vigilant against the incursions of local government"* and again, as entities that have tended *"...to resist any form of accountability to the centre, preferring to be accountable locally to bodies that do not understand how to use them."*

### *What is local?*

He notes that global factors are now affecting many educational systems in different jurisdictions and wonders how helpful the expectation of compliance with a local document (the Agreed Syllabus) can be in the context of globalisation and IT. Mark Chater goes on to argue that the notion of marked variances between local authorities in the main enquiries of RE (or of progress in understanding of religion and belief) are now outdated.

The increased diversity in types of school (eight at the time of the 2010 guidance) each with differing RE requirements leads him to conclude

*'in this new context SACRES are an inadequate vehicle, not because they are local but because they are not local enough.'*

I am sure that it will not be lost on many SACRE members that in current government educational policy 'local' increasingly tends to mean 'the school' and 'school' is tending to mean 'academy'. Mark Chater concedes that some SACREs have succeeded in establishing new and productive relationships with the academies in their areas but points out that these SACREs have no constitutional duty to do so. For me, his most telling point is about the 'statutoriness' of RE which in his view seems almost worthless in a time of deregulation.

## Questions and Challenges

- To what extent do you recognise your own SACRE in this analysis?
- To what extent do you think the analysis might apply to other SACREs?
- What elements of the analysis, if any, do you think SACREs generally should prioritise for action and what form might that action best take?
- What should government do?

NASACRE would welcome responses from SACREs to these questions and invite you to share with us your thoughts on these matters as we shape our new two-year plan for support to SACREs.

Bruce Gill

*Mark Chater is the afternoon speaker at this year's AGM.*

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## Religious Education Quality Mark

The Religious Education Quality Mark (REQM) has now been achieved by over 55 schools. Training for assessors has taken place in Exeter and Norwich. The Diocese of Norwich has arranged for 15 schools to work together on the criteria for the REQM. Chester West and Chester SACRE has offered supported funding for 8 schools to apply. The REQM is currently being piloted in schools in Wales. Schools are finding the process helpful as they map their existing practice and see the next steps for improvement. The REQM is showing just how much pupils and staff appreciate high quality RE:

*'I like acting things out. it makes it more interactive. I get to do it. I like talking and seeing other points of view. (Primary pupil)*

*'I want to help the subject leader to move forward in RE and the REQM was a way of doing that. (Headteacher)*

*'RE is everywhere in our school, well more than that really.... in RE there are no walls.... (Secondary Student)*

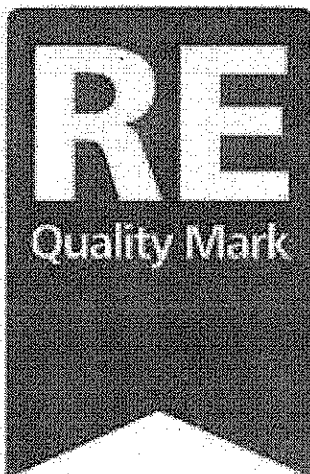
All the schools which have achieved the award are listed on the website [www.reqm.org](http://www.reqm.org). If schools are interested in self evaluation and do not wish to apply for the RE Quality Mark, they can download the criteria as an improvement tool.

The RE Quality Mark is open to all schools and the cost of applying is £475. Schools' school improvement budgets should pay for the application. However, if a school cannot afford to apply and needs financial support, then there is some funding available. Please contact the administrator at [admin@reqm.org](mailto:admin@reqm.org) and give details of why the school needs fund

If you would like to become an assessor please contact the project managers Jane Brooke ([jane.brooke@reqm.org](mailto:jane.brooke@reqm.org)) and Mary Myatt ([mary.myatt@reqm.org](mailto:mary.myatt@reqm.org)).



Jane Brooke  
Mary Myatt



## Recognising outstanding learning in religious education

### What is the RE Quality Mark?

#### The RE Quality Mark:

- ★ has been developed to celebrate high quality religious education
- ★ provides community schools, faith schools and academies with a framework to capture good practice
- ★ encourages the development and celebration of school wide commitment to excellent teaching and learning in religious education



### How does the RE Quality Mark work?

#### The REQM has five strands:

- ★ Learners and Learning
- ★ Teachers and Teaching
- ★ Curriculum
- ★ Subject Leadership
- ★ Continuing Professional Development

There are three award levels: bronze, silver and gold.

Schools applying for the REQM highlight where they think they meet the criteria. After applying for the REQM an assessor will visit the school, interview learners and meet the subject leader and a member of the senior leadership team.

### What do I do next?

- ★ Visit the website and explore the criteria: [www.reqm.org](http://www.reqm.org)
- ★ If you think your school could achieve the award, email [admin@reqm.org](mailto:admin@reqm.org) to find out more.
- ★ The cost of REQM is £475 per school.
- ★ There is funding for small schools (100 pupils or fewer) to meet the cost of the award.



[www.reqm.org](http://www.reqm.org)



## NASACRE AGM 2013

A reminder about our 2013 AGM which will take place at The Council House in Birmingham on Thursday May 23rd (Registration 10:00am – 3:30pm).



- Download the AGM flyer.
- Download a delegate nomination form.

*PLEASE NOTE:* only electronic forms can be processed. Please do not send forms by post.

Further details regarding nominations and elections for the NASACRE Executive committee will be sent shortly, with other papers to follow nearer to the date of the AGM.

**DEADLINE FOR AGM BOOKINGS: TUESDAY 30th APRIL BOOKINGS RECEIVED AFTER THIS CANNOT BE PROCESSED**



## **Annual General Meeting**

Council House, Birmingham

23rd May 2013

10:00am (registration) - 3:30pm

# **CHALLENGING SACREs**

*Marking 20 years of NASACRE*

In the 20 years since NASACRE was established, SACREs have had to face many challenges. Perhaps none have been as acute as those facing RE and SACREs now.

We invite you to join us in Birmingham to be inspired and challenged by our key-note speakers: HMI **Alan Brine** and Director of Culham St Gabriel's **Dr. Mark Chater** who will lay out:

- ✿ the very real problems facing RE today;
- ✿ the role of SACREs in the past and looking to the future

In the afternoon, discussions will explore:

- ✿ Fundamental principles for NASACRE and SACREs moving into the next 20 years
- ✿ Ideas and actions to address the issues raised
- ✿ Current examples of good practice within your SACREs and how these can be spread
- ✿ Identifying some key 'next steps' for NASACRE

The outcomes will inform the NASACRE action plan to support SACREs so that we rise to the challenge and also raise challenges of our own!

In addition, do not forget the AGM itself, and the announcement of the Westhill/NASACRE Awards for 2013-14.

We look forward to seeing you!

Fee £85



## Membership matters

- Updating our records: Thank you to all who have provided updated details for your SACRE. Over the next few months, this information will be uploaded to the new website. In order to be able to communicate

with every SACRE efficiently and effectively, it is vital that we have up to date details. Unfortunately, there are still 61 SACREs from which no update has been received. It would be helpful if this information were received as soon as possible.

- **Subscription invoices:** Invoices for NASACRE membership subscription will be sent soon after the AGM.

**Please note:** As from mid-September, access to newsletters and most of the new website, will be on a **subscription basis only**. A user name and password will be sent to subscribers at the beginning of September.



Sharon Artley

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## RE Council Sponsored Walks

To celebrate the 40th anniversary of the REC, raise its profile and generate funds to support RE in schools at this critical juncture, the REC is organising a series of sponsored walks which will be held in cities, towns and villages across England and Wales during May and June 2013. Each walk will take in a number of places of religious significance and could nurture contacts which would be of value from an RE perspective.

The aim is to have 20 different walks taking place across the country, each with fifty participants and with each participant raising at least £100 in sponsorship; in general the walkers would usually be adult 'friends of RE' rather than school students. The target is to raise £100,000. Funds raised will be split equally between the REC and locally chosen charities. Since 2010, the REC receives no government funding to make possible its work of supporting RE in schools and does not wish to engage in revenue raising activities which would put it in direct competition with some of its member bodies.

THE REC is looking for help and support from individuals and groups from within its member bodies, of which NASACRE is one. Could your SACRE lead a local organising team? This would involve getting together a group of around half a dozen people to plan a route, persuade people to sign up as walkers, liaise with places to be visited on the route and generate publicity. Could some of your SACRE members take this on? SACREs are well placed to play a valuable role here as they have the local knowledge and contacts to be able to organise a walk effectively. The REC will provide a local organiser pack to help you get started. Perhaps if you are unable to organise a walk, you could join one which has already been organised or sponsor someone already participating?. [Click here to see the RE Council walks.](#)

The REC needs you! Please contact [sarah@religiouseducationcouncil.org](mailto:sarah@religiouseducationcouncil.org) if you can offer your help for this special 40th anniversary event. We will be very grateful for your contribution whatever form it takes – the first need is for local organising teams but walkers and sponsors will also play an important part.

Sarah Smalley,  
Executive Officer, RE Council of England and Wales

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### In the beginning - some personal reflections

*Colin James, NASACRE's first secretary, writes :*

You might say that my involvement with NASACRE started by accident! A number of people came up with the idea of setting up a national body to support and co-ordinate the work of SACREs. They began with a working party and invited my colleague, Cherry Gould to join it. It was a natural choice as she was a superb RE adviser with a well deserved national reputation. Sadly, however, Cherry's MS was by this time so far advanced that she felt unable to accept. Instead she suggested I went in her place. (Although my responsibility in the Berkshire LEA was for further and higher education, I had also set up our SACRE and was its clerk.) There followed a series of meetings at the St Peter's Saltley Trust in Birmingham. Its Director Maggie Pickup provided the administrative support. Other members included Michael Metcalfe (still NASACRE Treasurer today) and the incomparable John Hull, whose vision, amazing grasp of the issues and sheer common sense inspired us all.

Having agreed on the principle of creating the new body, we then spent a lot of time working on a draft constitution and possible financial arrangements. I wish I could say we got it right, but as time passed we were to discover that we had gained approval for a constitution so difficult to amend that we were unable to improve it as we learned from our early experience.

Anyway NASACRE was duly launched, and most LEAs readily agreed to join. We needed of course a committee and officers. The first Chair was Angela Wood, an inspired choice, full of drive and professional experience. She it was who decided once and for all how to pronounce the Association's name: "It's NASACRE – massacre" she ruled, and no-one ventured to challenge her! Michael valiantly accepted the often thankless role of Treasurer. That left a vacancy for Secretary. I suppose I should have seen it coming. As it was I found myself "ambushed" but with the promise that the Saltley office would do the copying, posting etc for me.

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Naturally things began slowly as we established our identity on the national scene

among the various bodies who share an interest in RE and collective worship. One of my early tasks was to twist the arms of the chief education officers of the authorities which had not initially signed up. They did in the end, if only to get me off their backs. I quickly started receiving requests for advice on issues which were worrying those who ran the SACREs. The most common was "Can we appoint a representative humanist member?" Answer "Not to any of the four groups, but if your local constitution allows for co-option, you could co-opt one." As NASACRE began to organise events, and in particular launched its awards scheme, one of the LEAs in Wales put it to us that all our literature must be issued in Welsh as well as English and threatened us with legal action. Luckily the Committee included a Welsh archdeacon, and between us we managed to get them to drop the demand.

Of course NASACRE, like the requirement for SACREs themselves, came into being following the passing of the Education Reform Act and had therefore nothing to do with its framing, its merits or shortcomings. (We should not forget, however, John Hull's excellent booklet *The Act Unpacked* which I suppose was one of the spurs to filling the gap for an informed body able to monitor the operation of the Act and to provide ministers with advice on how things should develop thereafter.) Over the years we offered a good deal of advice, but I should not like to suggest that it was often heeded. We went to a lot of trouble to gather our members' views on what eventually became Circular 1/94. I personally spent many hours putting together these views to produce NASACRE's submission. But then nearly thirty years as an LEA officer had made me used to preparing long and detailed reports which never seemed to have quite the desired impact on the eventual outcome!

I could of course ramble on interminably about things now perhaps better forgotten, but that will do for now. As one of those who were in at the start, I applaud the devotion of all still committed to a task we all felt was worthwhile and important. And whatever the uncertain times ahead may bring, I do wish NASACRE well as long as it is able to continue to make its special contribution.

Colin James

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## Twenty years on

Michael Metcalf - (*Editor. Still NASACRE Treasurer - he deserves a long service medal.*) reflects on the changing times.

Twenty years ago, NASACRE was launched with a reception in the House of Lords. In 2003, as we marked the Tenth Anniversary of that launch, there was a feeling that NASACRE had "come of age". It had negotiated the hazards of childhood, had survived adolescence and teenage angst, and



had become a healthy adult ready to play its full part in the wider RE World.

In the ten years since then, NASACRE has continued to thrive and to be an active agency in support of its member SACREs and in its advocacy of good religious education. For most of this period, RE has been in a buoyant mode, SACREs in general have been busy and purposeful, and NASACRE has taken part in several significant projects and initiatives, some of which are recalled below.

However, in the most recent years, the picture has changed dramatically with the impact of the new Government's initiatives, and NASACRE and its member SACREs now find themselves facing an uncertain future. To explore the growth metaphor somewhat fancifully, we might suggest NASACRE is having a mid-life crisis – or is perhaps even contemplating enforced premature retirement! Certainly NASACRE's life is more problematic at present, and there are a few health concerns.

More positively, let us note and celebrate some of the high points of the last ten years. In no particular order... our receiving substantial government funding to recruit and train potential SACRE members from minority faith communities. One outcome of this two-year programme was the development of a high quality training package for SACREs as a whole. Another outcome was the budget overspend, which severely eroded our finances!

...the inauguration and annual follow-on of the Westhill NASACRE Awards for SACRE interfaith projects with young people. The Awards have been enormously successful in stimulating creative initiatives from local SACREs and in raising the profile of NASACRE itself, while the partnership with the Westhill Foundation has been mutually enriching and beneficial.

... the support we were able to give to the "*Celebrating RE*" month, including our own Conference in Birmingham "Whose RE is it anyway?" (A question worth pondering again.)

... the growing prominence of inter-faith issues and the enhancing of NASACRE's role within the InterFaith Network (UK), which has resulted in major programmes looking at young people in interfaith situations, and exploring relations between SACREs and local interfaith groups.

... the presence of NASACRE in key situations and developments within the RE world, not least the current REC strategic review of Religious Education.

... the final achieving of a 100% affiliation of all SACREs in England and the Channel Islands to NASACRE.

No doubt this is a rather personal set of reminiscences, and others might have chosen a slightly different set, and my memory may have overlooked some major

feature or other. However, it is clear that NASACRE has worthily and energetically lived up to its "adult" role over the last ten years, and this should be a cause of congratulation and acclaim.

NASACRE's future lies with the future of SACREs themselves. As long as SACREs exist and are able to continue in membership of NASACRE, NASACRE will also exist and seek enthusiastically to support and work with them. I just wonder what we will be able to write a decade on from now, at the next ten-year anniversary.

Michael Metcalf

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### Personal reflections on being a member of a SACRE

My involvement with SACRE began in late 1998 following the formation of the unitary authorities in Berkshire, as a result of which the newly formed Bracknell Forest Borough Council had a statutory obligation to convene a SACRE. There was a need to find four CE representatives, so I was considered to be an obvious candidate, as I already represented the Oxford Diocese on the Bracknell Forest transitional education committee. This was a role that I had accepted with some reservations. Although familiar with school governorship over some twenty years I had had no teaching or education background. However, early retirement from a career in banking (it was held in much greater respect in those days) had given me more time and thus I had agreed to help out.

At the inaugural meeting of Bracknell Forest SACRE in the autumn of 1998 the first agenda item was the appointment of a chairman. To my surprise and consternation the then chairman of the education committee nominated me. My somewhat weak protestations and the absence of a second nomination resulted in my election; it was a position I somehow retained until last year, when I decided to retire: thirteen full years was enough.

Looking back over those years I realise the work of SACRE and the experiences gained from meeting people from all of the major faiths and others has broadened and enriched my understanding of my own faith, which has gone through some troubled times. It was SACRE that made me much more aware of how different and yet how similar all faiths are.

Bracknell Forest is a unitary that was, and to an extent still is, an area of modest ethnic and faith diversity. There is no purpose-built Hindu temple, synagogue or gurdwara, so it was pleasing to me as chairman to be able to welcome representatives from all the major faiths, as well as a Bahá'í and a Quaker. Even more pleasing was the fact that attendance at our regular meetings was very good with open and constructive comments being made on many aspects of SACRE's work. At an early stage we agreed to create a directory of contacts for all the religions and places of worship, the work of which taught me much about other

faiths and prompted visits to several places of worship that otherwise I would not have thought of doing.

Little did I realise at the time how valuable personally this would prove to be, as in 2002 my younger son, living in Toronto, announced he was to be married to a Canadian Sikh girl. The full Sikh wedding ceremony in a Vancouver gurdwara was a wonderful experience, made all the easier by my earlier better understanding and appreciation of that faith.

My work for SACRE made me realise even more the importance of children of all ages learning about religion and from religion. Sadly, recent developments in UK government education policy and the school curriculum continue to indicate a reduced focus on religious education. This, combined with SACREs having only an advisory role, means it can be occasionally frustrating to serve on a SACRE, but my own experience has been one of enrichment and better understanding of my own faith and that of others.

Gordon S Anderson  
Church of England representative on Bracknell Forest SACRE 1998 - 2012



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