



Agenda

To all Members of the

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE)

Notice is given that a Virtual Meeting of the above Committee is to be held as follows:

Venue: Virtual Meeting Via Microsoft Teams

Date: Thursday, 12th November, 2020

Time: 4.30 pm

The meeting will be held remotely via Microsoft Teams. Members and Officers will be advised on the process to follow to attend the SACRE Committee. Any members of the public or Press wishing to attend the meeting by teleconference should contact Governance Services on 01302 736723/737462/736712 for further details.

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**Damian Allen
Chief Executive**

Issued on: Friday, 6th November, 2020

Governance Services Officer for this meeting

Sarah Maxfield
Tel: 01302 726723

Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council
www.doncaster.gov.uk

Items for Discussion:

	Page No.
1. Apologies for absence.	
2. Declarations of Interest, if any.	
3. Minutes of the meeting held on 27th February, 2020.	1 - 14
A. A. Reports where the public and press may not be excluded.	
4. SACRE National Update: Autumn 2020	15 - 20
5. Key priorities for SACRE in supporting educational settings during Covid-19 and how. (For Discussion)	
6. Date and time of next meeting	
Thursday 25th February, 2021 – 4.30pm	

Members of the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE)

Chair – Councillor John Gilliver

Vice-Chair – Father Dan Parkinson, Assistant Curate Doncaster Minster

Councillors Lani-Mae Ball, Derek Smith and Jonathan Wood.

Rev Tom McCready, Doncaster Interfaith

Mr R Iball, Methodist

Mrs P Kaur, Sikh

Ms S Norburn, Humanist

Mr S Syed, Muslim

Mr B Teimoori, Baha’i

Lucy Saxton, Roman Catholic

Mary Sivaanbu, Hindu

Ms J Crowther, Church of England

Mr A Depledge, Church of England

Ms A Nicolson, National Union of Teachers

Mr T Griffiths, National Association of Head teachers

Ms Sally Faulkner, National Association of School Masters/Union of Women Teachers

Ms Tara Moxon, National Education Union

Ms Danielle Heath - National Education Union

Public Document Pack Agenda Item 3

DONCASTER METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE)

THURSDAY, 27TH FEBRUARY, 2020

A MEETING of the STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE) was held in Room 007A AND B - CIVIC OFFICE, on THURSDAY, 27TH FEBRUARY, 2020, at 4.30 pm.

PRESENT:

Chair – Councillor John Gilliver
Vice-Chair – Father Dan Parkinson

Councillors John Gilliver and Derek Smith. Sameena Choudry, Danielle Heath, Richard Iball, Pahani Kaur, Reverend Tom McCready, Tara Moxon, Sandra Norburn and Sally Faulkner.

APOLOGIES.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Lani-Mae Ball, Mr. A Depledge, Mrs. M Sivaanbu, Mr. S Syed, Mr. B Teimoori and Carole Cahm and Paul Ruane.

1 ELECTION OF CHAIR

Nominations were sought for the position of Chair of SACRE for 2019/20. Councillor John Gilliver was nominated by Councillor Derek Smith and seconded by Reverend Tom McCready.

AGREED that Councillor John Gilliver be elected as Chair of SACRE for 2019/2020.

2 ACCEPTANCE OF LATE ITEM OF BUSINESS - DONCASTER COUNCIL CONSULTATION ON THE 2021-2022 SCHOOL HOLIDAY PATTERN

The Chair agreed to accept a late item of business on the agenda relating to 'Doncaster Council Consultation on the 2021-2022 School Holiday Pattern', which was not included on the published Agenda for this meeting, and would be considered after Agenda Item 6. Details of which had been circulated to Members prior to the meeting.

3 MEMBERSHIP - RESIGNATION OF MR. GRIFFITHS - GROUP C TEACHER ASSOCIATIONS

The Chair, Councillor Gilliver announced that notification had been received from Mr. Griffiths (National Union of Teachers - Teacher representative) that unfortunately he was no longer able to commit his time to Doncaster SACRE due to work commitments. The Committee extended thanks to Mr Griffiths for his work and contribution made to Doncaster SACRE and asked that a letter of thanks be sent to Mr. Griffiths.

Action: a letter of thanks be sent to Mr. Griffiths.

AGREED to note the resignation of Mr Griffiths and a letter of thanks be sent to Mr. Griffiths.

4 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 21ST NOVEMBER, 2019

AGREED that the minutes of the meeting held on 21st November, 2020 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair, subject to Carole Cahm's religious denomination being amended to read as 'Jewish' representative.

5 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

The public and press be excluded during consideration of Agenda item 5, 'Religious Education GCSE Entries and Local Authority Results'.

6 REPORT FROM LAT BLAYLOCK, RE TODAY COVERING CURRENT TRAINING, WRITING CURRICULUM PLANS FOR OUR RE SYLLABUS AND THE PRIMARY 1000 PROJECT TO SUPPORT SCHOOLS

Lat Blaylock, Consultant RE Today, provided feedback on the Primary and Secondary training held earlier that day. It was noted that evaluation forms received for primary schools who had attended the training event had been forwarded to Sameena Choudry. It was noted that further work was required to secure greater attendance by secondary schools.

Action:

- 1. Sameena Choudry, Learning Standards and Effectiveness Officer to contact secondary schools to explore their individual training needs.**
- 2. Sameena Choudry to provide evaluation feedback from those schools that had attended the primary school training to SACRE.**

Mr. Blaylock tabled a document, as attached at Appendix A that provided an overview of key national developments from RE Today: Spring 2020 Update. In particular, the following issues were highlighted:-

Guidance on RE and Collective Worship in Academies

It was noted that Wigan and Luton had developed guidance in respect of Collective Worship in Academies. Mr. Blaylock indicated that he would contact them to seek their permission to share such information with Doncaster SACRE. It was agreed that a paper on this issue be presented to the next meeting.

Action:

- 1. Lat Blaylock to contact Wigan and Luton to seek their permission if guidance produced by both Councils in respect of Collective Worship could be shared with Doncaster SACRE.**
- 2. Sameena Choudry, in consultation with Lat Blaylock to prepare a report in relation to the above issue for the next meeting.**

NASACRE National Conference and AGM 2020: Monday, 18th May 'Authority in RE'

Further to the last meeting, Lat Blaylock requested representation from SACRE to attend the event. Both Sandra Norburn and Tara Moxon expressed an interest to attend the event. Members agreed that it would be beneficial to send 2 representatives to the event.

Action:

- 1. Sameena Choudry to liaise with Paul Ruane, Head of Learning Provision to determine if funding was available to send 2 SACRE Members (Sandra Norburn, Humanist and Tara Moxon, Teacher representative) to the NASACRE National Conference on 18th May (subject to the necessary approvals).**
- 2. Sameena Choudry to liaise with Lat Blaylock to ensure wider circulation of details of the NASACRE Conference and AGM 2020 'Authority for RE' event on 18th May, 2020 to schools and to be included on the Council's Portal system.**

Collective Worship in Academies and Free Schools

In connection with this item, Sameena Choudry referred to the possibility of SACRE undertaking a survey of schools to determine among other things, the continuous professional development needs for teachers, those schools that are withdrawing from Collective Worship responsibility, the time being spent on the teaching of RE and for secondary schools those that were delivering RE GCSE studies.

Action: Sameena Choudry to liaise with Lat Blaylock in connection with the above and a report on this issue be included on the agenda for the next meeting.

Timing of SATs Tests in 2021: Applications available for Muslim pupils'

Sameena Choudry reported that Eid-ul-Fitr was likely to be held on the evening of 12th May, 2020 and that this had wider implications as Ramadan would cover the period 8th to 12th May, 2020, during which pupils would also be taking their GCSE exams. It was agreed that this issue to be communicated to schools from SACRE.

Action:

- 1. Sameena Choudry to advise schools of the implications of Ramadan on the schools exam timetable.**
- 2. Details in relation to the Timing of SATs tests in 2021, be communicated to schools.**

Themes for the NATRE Spirited Arts 'Arts in Heaven' and 'Spirited Poetry' competitions, 2020

Action:

- 1. the extract as set out above be circulated to all schools for information.**
- 2. Sameena Choudry to liaise with Lat Blaylock to determine the best way to circulate this information to schools.**

During discussion, Members requested that an electronic copy of the 'RE Today National Updates for Spring: 2020', be circulated to Members of SACRE.

Action: Andrea Hedges to send an electronic copy of the RE Today: National Updates Spring 2020 to Members of SACRE.

AGREED that

- (1) the verbal update from RE Today, be received and noted;
- (2) Sameena Choudry, Learning Standards and Effectiveness Officer to contact secondary schools to explore their individual training needs;
- (3) Sameena Choudry to provide evaluation feedback from those schools that had attended the primary school training to SACRE;
- (4) Lat Blaylock to contact Wigan and Luton to seek their permission as to whether guidance produced by both Wigan and Luton Councils in respect of Collective Worship can be shared with Doncaster SACRE;
- (5) Sameena Choudry, in consultation with Lat Blaylock to prepare a report in relation to guidance for schools on Collective Worship, to be included on the agenda for the next meeting;
- (6) Sameena Choudry to liaise with Paul Ruane, Head of Learning Provision to determine if funding is available to send 2 SACRE Members (Sandra Norburn, Humanist and Tara Moxon, Teacher representative) to the NASACRE National Conference on 18th May (subject to the necessary approvals);
- (7) Sameena Choudry to liaise with Lat Blaylock to ensure wider circulation of details of the NASACRE Conference and AGM 2020 'Authority for RE' event on 18th May, 2020 to schools and to be included on the Council's Portal system;
- (8) Sameena Choudry to liaise with Lat Blaylock for SACRE to undertake a survey of schools to determine among other things, the level of continuous professional development for teachers, those schools that are withdrawing from Collective Worship responsibility; were delivering RE GCSE studies and schools that had applied for dispensations and a report on this issue be included on the agenda for the next meeting;
- (9) Sameena Choudry to advise schools of the implications of Ramadan on the schools exam timetable and the Timing of SATs tests in 2021, be communicated to schools;
- (10) the extract from the RE Today national update Spring:2020, in relation to 'Themes for the NARTE Spirited Arts 'Art in Heaven' an 'Spirited Poetry' competitions, 2020', as attached at Appendix A, be circulated to all schools for information ;
- (11) Sameena Choudry to liaise with Lat Blaylock to determine the best way to circulate the information to schools (as set out above); and
- (12) Governance Services to send an electronic copy of the RE Today: National Updates Spring 2020 to Members of SACRE.

7 RELIGIOUS EDUCATION GCSE ENTRIES AND LOCAL AUTHORITY RESULTS

Further to the last meeting, Sameena Choudry presented a verbal report on Doncaster schools 2019 Religious Education GCSE Entries and Local Authority results. In presenting the information, comparisons were made with the previous two years RE GCSE results, noting that in 2017, the way that exams were marked had changed from grading candidates from 'A' to 'U', with 'C' being a pass to scoring candidates from '1' to 'U', with '9' being the highest and 'U' being the lowest grade. In assessing the results, Sameena Choudry focussed on candidates scoring '4' or above (4 being a standard pass and '5' being a strong pass).

2019 RE GCSE Entries

It was noted that in 2019, 533 pupils that were entered for the full GCSE course and as a result of this, 6 secondary schools had entered pupils for 4 different examination boards as follows:-

1st Exam Board had 139 entries from 3 schools, with the first school having 39 entries, the second school, 31 entries and the third school with 16 entries.
2nd Exam Board had 258 entries from 1 school
3rd Exam Board had 14 entries from 1 school
4th Exam Board had 125 entries from 1 school

2018 RE GCSE Entries

In 2019, the total number of entries for GCSE full course was 530 pupils, with 8 secondary schools entering pupils for GCSE RE for 5 different exam boards as follows:-

1st Exam Board had 121 entries from 3 schools, with the first school having 14 entries, the second school, 65 entries and the third school with 42 entries.
2nd Exam Board had 242 entries from 1 school
3rd Exam Board had 14 entries from 1 school
4th Exam Board had 31 entries from 1 school
5th Exam Board had 122 entries from 1 school

2017 RE GCSE Entries

The overall entries in 2017 for GCSE full course was 530, 3 different exam boards, with 12 secondary schools entering pupils for GCSE RE as follows:-

1st Exam Board had 468 entries from 10 schools, with the first school having 27 entries, the second school 13 entries, the third school with 17 entries, the fourth school had 40 entries, the fifth school 17 entries, the sixth school 8 entries, the seventh school 56 entries, the ninth school 256 entries and the tenth school with 1 entry.
2nd Exam Board had 100 entries from 1 school
3rd Exam Board had 15S entries from 1 school

The entry and pass rates for each of these years were shown in the table below:-

	National		Doncaster	
	Entry Rate	Pass Rate	Entry Rate	Pass Rate
2017	47%	70%	16%	72%
2018	37%	70%	18%	68%
2019	35%	71%	18%	70%

In noting that some schools RE entries numbers have declined since 2017 and recognising the Ofsted requirement for the 'three Is' and RE, Members supported the suggestion that as part of the survey to seek information from schools on a variety of issues, SACRE could help to support schools in promoting RE.

Action:

- 1. Sameena Choudry to liaise with Lat Blaylock to draft a series of questions for inclusion in the survey for circulation to schools.**
- 2. Sameena Choudry to draft a cover letter in relation to the survey in the name of the Chair.**
- 3. The draft survey and cover letter be approved by the Chair, prior to circulation to schools.**
- 4. A report to include responses to the survey be submitted to the June meeting in respect of which schools have replied.**

AGREED that

- (1) the verbal presentation on the RE GCSE Entries and Local Authority Results for 2019, be received and noted;
- (2) Sameena Choudry to liaise with Lat Blaylock to draft a series of questions for inclusion in the survey for circulation to schools;
- (3) the draft survey and cover letter be approved by the Chair, prior to circulation to schools; and
- (4) a report to include the responses to the survey be submitted to the June meeting in respect of which schools have replied.

8 DONCASTER STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE) ANNUAL REPORT 2018-2019 AND SACRE ACTION PLAN FOR 2019-2020

Sameena Choudry presented SACREs Annual Report for 2018-19 which had been updated following changes proposed at the last meeting, a copy of which had been circulated to Members, prior to the meeting.

Members confirmed that they were happy to approve the Annual Report, subject to the typographical errors being corrected; in relation to the second paragraph of the Chairs introduction (on page 2), in that the word 'prove' being replaced with the word 'approve' and the capital letter 'I' be replaced with the lower case 'i' on the fifth line of the second paragraph (on page 5) of the Annual Report. Sameena Choudry undertook to amend accordingly.

In referring to the front cover of the Locally Agreed Syllabus for RE 2019-2024, (page 5 of the Annual Report), Sandra Norburn drew attention to the fact that whilst the Humanist Symbol was displayed on the front cover, the Annual Report made no reference to this in the report narrative. Sameena Choudry agreed to include this.

Action: Sameena Choudry to amend the typographical errors in the Annual Report 2018-2019, as detailed above include reference to Humanism in the narrative of the Annual Report.

The Committee also received SACREs Action Plan for 2019-2020, which had been updated following the last meeting, a copy of which had been circulated to Members prior to the meeting.

In reviewing the Action Plan, attention was drawn to typographical errors in relation to the dates identified under sections 2.5 (page 12) and 2.6 (page 13) of Priority Areas 2 and 3, 'Actions to Achieve This', to be corrected to read as '2020-2021' and '2021-2022', respectively. Sameena Choudry undertook to amend accordingly.

It was noted that the Doncaster SACRE working in partnership with the South Yorkshire RE Hub (Doncaster, Rotherham and Sheffield) to deliver a Conference in Doncaster was to be held on 25th June 2020, the same day as the SACRE meeting. Lat Blaylock, RE Consultant suggested that Members of SACRE attend this event. Details of the Conference when confirmed would be uploaded on 'BuyDoncaster' website.

Action:

- 1. Sameena Choudry to amend the Action Plan to reflect the typographical errors as set out above.**
- 2. Sameena Choudry to include details of the 'South Yorkshire RE Hub Conference' on 25th June, 2020 on the 'BuyDoncaster' website when finalised.**
- 3. Sameena Choudry to rag rate the Action Plan for 2019-20 and for this to be included on the agenda for the Summer Term meeting and used as a basis for developing the 2019-2021 Academic Year Action Plan.**
- 4. SACREs Annual Report 2018-2019 be approved for publication.**

AGREED that

- (1) SACREs Annual Report 2018-2019, be approved for publication on the Council's website, subject to the typographical errors being corrected as set out above and to include reference to Humanism in the narrative of the Annual Report.
- (2) the Action Plan for 2019-2020 be approved, subject to the typographical errors being corrected as set out above;
- (3) Sameena Choudry to include details of the 'South Yorkshire RE Hub Conference' on 25th June, 2020 on the 'BuyDoncaster' website when finalised;

- (4) the Action Plan for 2019-20 be rag rated and included on the agenda for the Summer Term meeting and used as a basis for developing the 2019-21 Academic Year Action Plan; and
- (5) SACREs Annual Report 2018-2019 be approved for publication.

9 LATE AGENDA ITEM - 'DONCASTER COUNCIL CONSULTATION ON THE 2020-2022 SCHOOL HOLIDAY PATTERN

The Chair welcomed Neil McAllister, Learning Provision Organisation Services Manager, who was in attendance to inform SACRE on new proposals for changes to the 2021-22 School Holiday Pattern that had been circulated to schools for comment. A copy of the consultation documents had been circulated to Members prior to the meeting.

It was noted that the Local Authority (LA) has a responsibility to set the holiday pattern for Doncaster maintained community schools each year (33 of 128 schools). It was noted that the dates did not apply to faith schools or academies. Consultation was currently being undertaken to have a rolling programme of holidays for 2020/22.

The LA had consulted all schools in Doncaster and had received a lot of feedback with over 7,000 responses received on Monkey Survey. Following meetings with representatives from primary and secondary schools and Multi Academy Trusts, a range of options were discussed. A further meeting took place on 15th January, at which 23 schools in the Borough were represented and subsequently 4 options were agreed for wider consultation:-

- Traditional Holiday pattern
- Fixed Easter
- 2 week October Half Term with Fixed Easter
- 2 week October Half Term with Early Start and Fixed Easter

Neil McAllister answered a range of questions from Members on the various options put forward for consideration. SACRE noted the strong support from those schools who had responded during the pre-consultation process for having a Fixed Easter break in the first 2 weeks of April, irrespective of where the Bank Holiday fell. Whilst there was not a unanimous view from SACRE regarding having a Fixed Easter, it was felt that it might be more appropriate to refer to this break as the 'Spring' break rather than the 'Easter' break. The Committee thanked Mr McAllister for raising awareness of this consultation. It was noted that it was not within the remit of SACRE to specifically recommend an option for adoption, as it was for each individual school affected by these proposals to comment. However, the Committee thanked Mr McAllister for raising awareness of this consultation.

To conclude, the Chair on behalf of SACRE, thanked Neil McAllister for the presentation of the report and his attendance at the meeting.

AGREED that the verbal report on Doncaster Council's Consultation on the 2020-2022 School Holiday, be noted.

10 DATES AND TIMES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The Committee was presented with proposed dates of future SACRE meetings for 2020-2022 Municipal Years.

It was noted that future dates of SACRE had been included in the Council's Annual Schedule of Meetings that were to be formally approved by full Council at its AGM in May. The proposed meeting dates have been scheduled to take place on a Thursday to accommodate the attendance of Lat Blaylock, RE Consultant.

AGREED that the proposed dates and times of future meetings of SACRE for 2020-2022, be supported:-

- Thursday, 25th June, 2020, at 4.30 pm
- Thursday, 12th November 2020, at 4.30 pm
- Thursday, 25th February, 2021, at 4.30 pm
- Thursday, 1st July, 2021, at 4.30 pm
- Thursday, 11th November, 2021, at 4.30 pm
- Thursday, 17th February 2022, at 4.30 pm

CHAIR: _____

DATE: _____

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SACRE National Updates from RE today: Spring 2020

Ofsted reports – the ‘three Is’ and RE

In late November 2019 NATRE published a document showing all the Ofsted reports (published by the end of November) that mentioned RE. There are 101 of them! Teachers including middle and senior leaders might find it interesting to discuss some of the points that have emerged so far.

The document also picks out some of the key themes from the reports.

Read the **Ofsted primary and secondary Autumn 2019 NATRE report** here.

How will SACRE communicate with schools who get particularly positive reports or reports that show areas for improvement?

CBP 7167: House of Commons Library paper on RE in England – Autumn 2019

This new paper (Autumn 2019) outlines over 30 pages of guidance which has great authority because it comes from the HoC Library. In one sense it represents current law, practice and thinking in the most up to date possible way. It includes a wide range of valuable hyperlinks to the key policy documents. We should consider drawing the attention of HTs to this document, which can be found at:

<https://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/CBP-7167>

Guidance on RE and collective worship in academies

In 2012, NATRE supported the Department for Education in the production of some ‘Questions and Answers’ about Religious Education and Collective Worship in Academies and Free Schools. This document has now been updated to a new format and should be helpful to teachers and others looking for guidance on Government Policy with references to legislation.

Collective Worship in Academies and Free Schools

This document is also linked to and from: **Religious Education guidance in English schools non-statutory guidance 2010**

Collective Worship

Some of you may have noticed some coverage in the **press** last term regarding two children who had been withdrawn from Collective Worship in a primary school in Oxfordshire. The school concerned is a community primary. Although it has joined the Oxford Diocesan MAT, Oxford Diocesan Schools Trust (ODST), this didn’t change the status of the school. It must still provide daily collective worship of a ‘wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character’ in line with current legislation. One family, supported by Humanists UK, chose to withdraw their children from this Collective Worship, as is their right. The parents were seeking a judicial review because they felt that during CW, the school should provide an alternative of equal educational worth for their children to attend.

Before the Judicial Review took place the family and the school **agreed** an **out of court settlement**. The DfE have clearly stated that this case has no immediate implications for SACREs or schools.

‘The complaint was settled by the two parties outside of court and as such has no bearing on current legislation or the current national policy on collective worship’

Legislation and guidance have not been altered and community schools should still continue to provide a daily act of Collective Worship of a broadly Christian nature, unless a determination is in place, or parents withdraw their children. There is no requirement for the school to provide alternatives for children withdrawn from CW, although as a result of the case, schools and SACREs may receive enquiries and requests.

What does SACRE know about Collective worship in schools? What support might be given to schools?

Increase in Secondary RE ITE trainees

Recruitment for secondary trainees of RE has seen a dramatic boost this year after the DfE accepted our argument that it needed to do more to encourage and support applicants. Bursaries were increased from £4,000 to £9,000 and subject knowledge enhancement (SKE) courses were funded such as the **TeachRE 200 hours course** which is endorsed and certified by NATRE.

The end result is we have a bumper crop of trainees for 2019-20 and we reached 93% of our target. This will make it easier for schools ensure more pupils in all schools to have access to high quality teaching. In 2018-19, we reached only 58% of the target, so this is a significant step forward.

Wales

In October 2019, the Welsh Government issued a consultation on Ensuring Access to the Full Curriculum for all pupils. The Welsh Government have decided that there will no longer be a right to withdraw from RE and RSE as part of the new curriculum. The Welsh government have also decided to rename the subject as Religion, Values and Ethics.

<https://gov.wales/written-statement-ensuring-access-full-curriculum>

Timing of SATs tests in 2021: Adaptations available for Muslim pupils

In 2021, Eid-ul-Fitr is likely to begin on the evening of Wednesday 12th May. Given the significance of the festivities the DfE are aware that pupils are likely to be absent from school and so have given advice to schools on how to rearrange tests for some or all pupils if deemed necessary.

How will the LA make sure schools understands the guidance?

NASACRE National Conference and AGM 2020: Monday 18th May "Authority in RE"

The **2020 NASACRE Conference and AGM** will be held on Monday 18 May at: Crowne Plaza London - The City, 19 New Bridge St, London EC4V 6DB

The hotel is across the road from Blackfriars underground (Circle and District line)) and mainline station. It is less than a 10 minute walk from the excellent, modern and very fast Thameslink service.

Coffee and tea and pastries will be available from 10,30 and we will start at 11 AM. Our keynote speaker is Matthew Purves, Ofsted's Deputy Director, Schools.

A number of excellent workshops will be offered (see **conference programme**); you will need to indicate your preference of workshops when you book. Also, please make certain you indicate any dietary requirements.

At the conference, there will be some filming for an informational video about SACREs and NASACRE at the conference. If you don't wish to be filmed, there is a place on the booking form to indicate this. Please make sure you complete this; you will then be issued with a special badge to indicate that you should not be filmed.

This promises to be an outstanding conference and all SACREs are encouraged to send representatives. Bookings can be made **[here](#)**.

Who could represent our SACRE at the NASACRE conference?

Themes for the NATRE Spirited Arts ‘Art in Heaven’ and ‘Spirited Poetry’ competitions, 2020

There will be 40 prizes for each competition plus certificates for all schools entering to give to their pupils. 10 art and 10 poetry entries are welcome from each school. How can we encourage our schools to enter?

<p>Picturing Faith (Photo section!)</p>	<p>This is an innovation for our Art in Heaven competition. Pupils are invited to select up to 4 photographs from a visit to a place of worship (or another trip connected to RE) – preferably those taken by themselves, and give a brief commentary on the pictures to say what was great and what they learned from their visits. Comments about the emotions and the purpose of the place, not just ‘labels and captions’ are best. We suggest they are sent in a PPT presentation (or similar). If you have another way of responding to the theme ‘Picturing Faith’ then that is fine, please do send it in!</p>
<p>God’s good earth? (“Beautiful World, wonderful God?”)</p>	<p>Are we spoiling God’s good earth? Should we be thankful for it? Can we save it in time from the threats of climate change? The beauty of the earth is celebrated in many religions, but the human spoiling of the earth is a danger and a coming crisis. In this theme, learners are invited to explore ideas and beliefs about the natural world, human responsibility for the earth and ways of praying about climate justice. Great work will show some originality: the globe in God’s hands won’t win!</p>
<p>Inspiring!</p>	<p>What inspired you? A song? A quote? Another person’s life? A place? Religion offers people inspiration to live. Sometimes an inspirational life, a person’s example, a text or a piece of music crystallizes our inspiration. In this theme, you are invited to identify what inspired you from a religion – it doesn’t have to be your own faith, as inspiration tends to spill over the edges of religions. Explain through your art and text what connects your inspiration to spiritual or religious life.</p>
<p>Holy Words!</p>	<p>What words are holy for you? Select a saying or story you really love about peace, faith, unity, prayer or some other religious theme. Incorporate your holy words into your design or art and express the value and meaning of the words you have chosen in the images and art that you make. This theme has a close connection to the study of holy books and teaching from 2 or more different scriptures can be used, so get reading from the Torah and the Gospel, the Qur’an and the Gita, the Dhammapada or the Guru Granth Sahib. And add some words from a non-religious source of wisdom too if you like.</p>
<p>Where is God?</p>	<p>Atheists, agnostics and believers in God might all respond to this by expressing their sense of the search for God or finding God. Where’s God? In your heart, in prayer, in the temple or the universe? Or is she hiding? Is he not there at all? Looking for God, searching for him or her, matters: but how are we doing in finding God? Would you search with google or a ‘god-detector? Is God on Instagram or whatsapp? Can God be found by prayer or by looking among the world’s suffering people? This popular ‘Art in Heaven’ theme produces great work where pupils use ideas from religions clearly: The Jewish Psalms 42 and 43 are where it starts.</p>

All themes are suited to both primary and secondary pupils: teachers are advised to share them with RE classes in age appropriate ways.

Prizes: £25 prizes will be awarded to about 40 winners. Exceptional work from 14-19 students may win a prize of up to £100.

A PPT illustrating the themes with pupils’ work will be available in both primary and secondary versions and make a great way of introducing the competition – in a lesson, or to the whole school in assembly.

www.natre.org.uk/spiritedarts

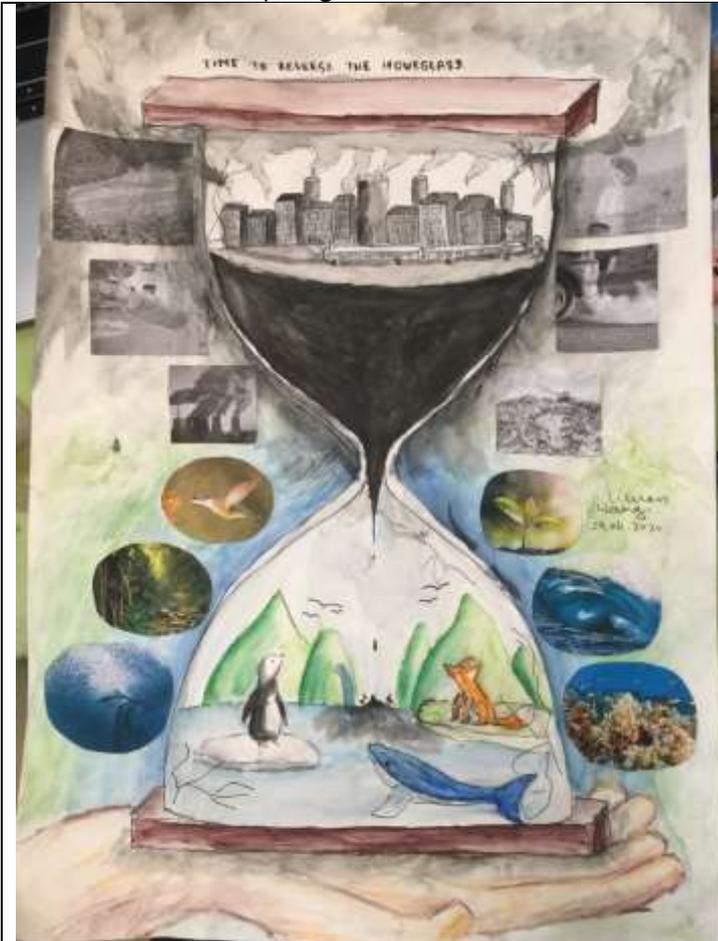
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SACRE National Update: Autumn 2020

NATRE's Spirited Arts competition: results and next year's competition

The competition has attracted record entries this year – it was a popular lockdown activity set by hundreds of teachers, and the YouTube lesson to accompany it was viewed about 14 000 times. Many of our schools have taken an interest in this competition. There are over 30 000 entrants.

Here is one of the inspiring entries, the best of which can be viewed at www.natre.org.uk/spiritedarts



This piece is called **The Hourglass**. I wanted to show a contrast between what the earth was like, and what it was now without a too obvious division of the page. I did not base it on a particular religion, but on the overall belief that God is watching over us, holding our hourglass with his hand. I got my inspiration from a picture of an hourglass with the mountains, the forests, all flowing down into the other side of the hourglass, where it is all rubbish and pollution. I've switched the concept subtly. Instead of the wonderful nature flowing and rotting into trash, I decided that it would be the other way round: the black tar that shows our pollution is flowing and dark drops are contaminating the Bright nature on the other side of the hourglass, and the animals are watching in vain. The whole hourglass is cracking. I wanted to show that if one system breaks, then, like the Buddhists say, the whole interconnected and interdependent community will fall. I have put pictures of the opposing sides on either end of the hourglass, they are examples of the wonderfulness of nature, and the heart wrenching truth of what we have done with our planet; on the bottom, corals, birds, forests, and on the top toxic fumes, fossil fuels, plastic, pollution, landfills, and deforestation. I hope that when people see this piece, they will see God's good Earth, and realise what we are doing to it, and strive to reverse the damage before the hourglass breaks.

Lixuan is 12

The competition for the next year is being launched and 5 themes are available to schools for them to engage and respond creatively. Can we, as a SACRE, promote the competition to all our schools? Could we run a webinar for them? Could we run a local round to the competition, to see what creative RE is going on here? Next year's closing date is 31st July 2021.

Themes for the coming year:

- "We have far more in common with each other than that which divides us."
- God's good earth?
- Where is God?
- Healing
- Inspiring!

Interfaith week

Inter Faith Week starts on Sunday 8 November and concludes on Sunday 15 November. The Week is a great opportunity for pupils to explore inter faith issues and for schools to build relationships with faith, belief and inter faith groups in their community. Here are some suggestions for schools for things you might want to consider doing this year:

- Work with your local inter faith group and SACRE to host a special virtual 'Question Time' via a social media platform
- Organise an exhibition in your school featuring information and objects about a range of religions and beliefs reflecting your local population (this could be virtually available to others)
- Celebrate the Week on your website, perhaps have a series of short videos where pupils share what they have learned in RE
- Organise a virtual tour of local places of worship to investigate the importance of faith in the lives of believers in your community
- Create an Inter Faith Week poster, artwork or multifaith calendar
- Host a dialogue about a topic such as 'shared values' or how people of different faiths and beliefs can live well together at a lunchtime event
- Make a video of events at your school held for Inter Faith Week For more about Inter Faith Week

Visit <https://www.interfaithweek.org/> and if you have specific questions or ideas you'd like to discuss email IFN's Assistant Director at david.hampshire@interfaith.org.uk.

Can those of you that represent religion and belief communities to offer your services?

Can schools be informed about this week- together with the suggestions above?

Is this an opportunity to liaise with our interfaith groups to see if they have plans for this week that could link into RE lessons?

GCSE Results

The number of pupils taking GCSE Religious Studies in England and Wales has remained stable in 2020 despite ongoing challenges, reflecting the relevance of the subject and its popularity among young people.

In England, RS GCSE entries for the full course fell by less than 1% to 225,719 compared to 227,913 in 2019. In Wales, entries fell by a similar amount from 10,129 in 2019 to 10,037 in 2020. Overall entries in England, including both full and short courses, fell by 2.3% to 243,786, compared with 249,443 in 2019. Full course entries in 2020 were still almost one third higher than in 2010. In Wales, combined entries fell by just under 2% from 16,327 in 2019 to 16,003 in 2020.

Until this year, there has been a gradual decline in full course RS GCSE entries since a peak in 2016, when 269,839 entries were recorded in England. Full and short course entries reached a high of 461,795 in 2011 but declined rapidly as schools in England opted not to enter pupils into the short course following Government policy changes, despite a requirement among all schools, including Academies, to provide Religious Education to all pupils at all key stages. In Wales however, the short course entries have not declined at the same rate and fell by just 3.74% (from 6,198 to 5,966). In England, short course entries fell by more than 16%. In general, these figures should be interpreted in the light of government policy – they don't say much about the popularity of the subject with students.

Today's figures, however, provide some optimism that the decline may be levelling off. The key outcomes for Religious Education in England and Wales at Key Stage 4 in 2020 are as follows:

There were 225,719 entries in England and 10,037 in Wales for the full course in GCSE RS, a fall of less than 1% from 2019 (227,913 England and 10,129 Wales).

There were 18,067 entries in England and 5,966 in Wales for the short course in GCSE RS, a decline of 16.1% in England and 3.74% in Wales from 2019 (21,530 and 6198 respectively).

There were 243,786 entries for GCSE RS (combined short and full courses) in England, a decline of 2.3% from 2019 (249,443).

Despite a decline since the peak in entries, the number of pupils receiving a full course GCSE in Religious Studies in England in 2020 (225,719) is still 32% greater than in 2010 (170,767).

How is this reflected in our area? How should we be engaging with schools about these figures?

Anti-racist RE

NATRE and RE Today, working with the Free Churches Group and Methodist Schools are launching a project to help teachers tackle racism in RE lessons. The project aims to:

- Enable a team of 60+ black, Asian and minority ethnic teachers of RE and members of different communities to articulate perspectives on the contributions of RE to anti-racist education, accessible for all teachers of RE
- Provide challenging and well planned resources, case studies, plans and lessons for teachers of RE in both primary and secondary schools to use in RE that challenge and confront racism and are also good RE, mounted and free from web platforms hosted both by RE Today and by the Free Churches Group and the Methodist Schools.
- Create a forum for teacher education and development in relation to anti-racist RE, recognising that practice in RE in this area is patchy and inconsistent (also online)
- Disseminate better practice in anti-racist RE widely, using the wide range of contacts and networks available to RE today

Wide partnerships to maximise the impact of the project have been used, including for example with NATRE and the Jo Cox Foundation. Teachers can access a planned unit of six topics for primary and of 8 topics for secondary RE, including ready to use resources and a wide range of support materials.

www.natre.org.uk/anti-racist-RE

Can our SACRE publicise this to schools? Would we like to invest some of our budget this year in primary and secondary CPD for schools in this area?

Changes in RS examinations for 2021

Ofqual released their decisions on 3rd August regarding the cohort of students who will be taking their GCSE's, AS or A levels in 2021. There are a few headlines to report. *Obviously these decisions could change as the response to the pandemic develops but this reflects the current information that schools are working with.*

1. No change to the assessment arrangements for Religious Studies.

The report stated that there will be no change to the assessments in Religious Studies for the GCSE (short and full course) AS or A level. Thus, students will be assessed in the same manner as previous years.

Ofqual did recognise that:

“Many respondents were concerned about covering all the content, given the lost time and difficulty of covering it in a normal year. This was raised for most subjects at GCSE, AS and at A level.”

“Respondents often suggested this could be addressed through question optionality, which was discussed further below. In some subjects, for example, GCSE Religious Studies and GCSE English Literature, parallels were drawn with GCSE history and respondents urged that similar arrangements were made to enable content sampling in their subject.”

However, Ofqual decided against making changes to Religious Studies.

2. No decisions have been made about the dates for the examinations.

No decisions have yet been made with regards to the dates for the examinations for 2021. It is possible that July will be included in the timetable to allow for more teaching time. The reason for the delay is because Ofqual need to consult with other affected parties before making a decision.

As of 28.9.20 we are still waiting for an announcement – it is expected imminently. It is proving difficult for those undertaking course planning as they don't know how many teaching weeks to plan for for students in Year 11 and Year 13.

As they reported:

“While there was support for delaying the exams, to allow more time for teaching, a number of risks and issues were highlighted in the responses, including concerns about the likely impact on the dates by which the results could then be published. The key decision for Ofqual on the timetable is whether to change our rules to allow the exams boards to offer exams in July 2021 as well as in May and June. However, changes to the exam timetable are not for Ofqual alone. We will work with DfE, the exam boards, colleagues in Wales and Northern Ireland, and higher education to undertake a further analysis of the options the risks and the mitigations before taking a decision.”

3. There will be further information on how student outcomes (i.e. grades) are to be protected.

Ofqual are currently considering how the grades or outcomes of students taking the examinations in 2021 can be protected. They have said:

“The Secretary of State has asked us to advise him in the coming months how we might ensure students’ outcomes are protected through our approach to grading next year, as we did to protect the interests of students who took the reformed qualifications for the first time. Our approach- using statistical predictions to guide the first awards of reformed qualifications- worked well to protect the interests of students taking the reformed qualifications and we will consider its use next year. We did not consult on proposal for grading in summer 2021, but we will provide further information in due course.”

Here is a copy of their [statement](#) and [decisions](#) document on the changes that will be made.

Other related issues:

At the end of July, the Department for Education announced that from September all pupils should return to school. The guidance sets an expectation that *“the curriculum should remain broad and ambitious: all pupils continue to be taught a wide range of subjects, maintaining their choices for further study and employment.”*

The DfE have advised that when planning for pupils’ return to school in September, subjects should not be removed from the curriculum. In relation to Key Stage 3 the guidance states, *“the curriculum should also remain broad from year 7 to year 9 so that the majority of pupils are taught a full range of subjects over the year, including..[.] Religious Education.”* Indeed, the suspension of subjects should only occur in *“exceptional circumstances”* and if this occurs, a school must be able to demonstrate that this is *“in the best interests of these pupils and should be subject to discussion with parents during the Autumn term.”*

For key stage 4 and 5 the guidance states that, *“the vast majority of pupils in year 10 and 11 are expected to continue to study their examination subjects.”* A year 11 pupil should only be advised to discontinue a subject in *“exceptional circumstances”*.

The DfE documentation can be consulted [here](#).

The NATRE summary of the implications of this guidance can be found [here](#).

Nick Gibb's written answer to a Parliamentary question on this subject can be found [here](#).

Can this information be shared with all our secondary schools?

Schools minister reiterates: All Schools have a duty to teach RE to all pupils aged 5-18 even in current times

NATRE was pleased to see that Nick Gibb MP, Minister for schools, has given a clear and fulsome answer to a question from Luke Pollard MP regarding schools and RE.

We note from his answer below that he restates that;

- State-funded schools in England have a duty to teach religious education to all pupils aged 5 to 18 years
- where pupils do not choose Religious Studies as an examination subject, the requirement to teach religious education still applies.
- An agreed syllabus can stipulate that pupils follow an accredited qualification such as GCSE

He also clearly says that in the reopening of schools;

- Religious education is explicitly stated as one of the subjects that should be taught

The Department's guidance on full opening of schools sets the expectation that schools teach an ambitious and broad curriculum in all subjects from the start of the autumn, but that they use their existing curriculum flexibilities within subjects to create time to cover the most important missed content.

- Religious education is explicitly stated as one of the subjects that should be taught. The guidance was published on 2 July and can be found [here](#).
- The Department's guidance on religious education is already available for both maintained schools and for academies and free schools. The guidance for maintained schools is [here](#).
- The guidance for academies and free schools [here](#).
- No additional guidance on this subject is therefore needed.
- Nick Gibb's answer to Luke Pollard's Parliamentary question on this subject can be found [here](#).

Can this information be shared with our headteachers and chairs of governors?

Do school improvement partners or similar know whether this guidance is being followed? Could they find out?

A reminder re Timing of SATs tests in 2021: Adaptations available for Muslim pupils

In 2021, Eid-ul-Fitr is likely to begin on the evening of Wednesday 12th May. Given the significance of RE the DFE are aware that pupils are likely to be absent from school and so have given advice to schools on how to rearrange tests for some or all pupils if deemed necessary.

How can our SACRE and LA make sure schools understands the guidance?

Increase in the number of secondary trainees

The number of **trainee teachers for RE is increasing**, with the provision for Subject Knowledge Enhancement courses proving to be a real help to those entering the profession with degrees in other Humanities subjects. While it is good to see this increase, these trainee teachers will need to spend time in schools with good RE teachers in order to develop their own practice and become good RE teachers themselves. This year we have recruited almost 100 extra trainees.

Can we let secondary headteachers know that there will be an increase in the pool of RS qualified teachers to recruit?

Can we encourage secondary schools to take a trainee? Several Universities in our region have recruited a large cohort.

Materials available for self isolating pupils, socially distanced RE and any future lockdowns

To help teachers during this difficult time, RE Today is working hard to support NATRE by producing resources that ALL teachers can use and share with pupils and parents in order to support with home learning and also socially distanced RE in schools.

If teachers wish to sign up for the updates to inform you of new resources, then please sign up to the mailing list on the NATRE website. We have also made further resources available for NATRE members.

Access resources

Strictly RE: Online training for teachers

Date: 30 & 31 January 2021 (PLUS additional seminars leading up to Strictly!)

Location: Online

Full price: £100* (Price includes downloadable handouts and presentations from all sessions).

EARLY BIRD DISCOUNT! Book before 31 October - only £85!

Prices start as low as £45 for NATRE members*

*NATRE members discounts available on top of early bird (Bronze: £20 off, Silver: £30, Gold & Platinum: £40).

Strictly RE is back, this time NATRE will be hosting its national annual conference online to keep you all safe, whilst still giving you everything you love about Strictly RE without having to leave your home.

With 24 seminars, 4 Keynotes, networking and discussion opportunities, Saturday night entertainment, we have something for everyone. There's lots to choose from, and we hope that you will **pick and mix** from across the month and weekend to create a programme that works for you. You do not have to attend a seminar at every time slot.

Keynote speakers include Richard Kueh, OFSTED RE subject specialist, Christine Counsell on curriculum construction and progression in RE, a panel on worldviews in RE and a panel on Anti-racist RE.

NATRE will be running twilight sessions throughout January, culminating in a weekend of keynotes, seminars and networking. These will be announced soon! Delegates who have already booked a place will be the first to hear about them and book their sessions.

Book soon to avoid missing out on our or early bird discount which ends 31 October 2020.

Find out full details and book here.

How can we encourage teachers from our area to attend? Should we offer some financial support?

Some SACREs subsidise a number of teachers to attend and then share what they have learnt with other local teachers. Is this something that our SACRE would be able to do?