

<b>3 November 2021</b>		<b>ITEM: 7</b>
<b>Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education</b>		
<b>Update on National Developments and Opportunities</b>		
<b>Wards and communities affected:</b> All	<b>Key Decision:</b> Non-Key	
<b>Report of:</b> Deborah Weston, Associate Adviser for Religious Education		
<b>Accountable Assistant Director:</b> Michele Lucas, Assistant Director Learning Inclusion and Skills		
<b>Accountable Director:</b> Shelia Murphy, Corporate Director of Children's Services		
<b>This report is</b> Public		

## **Executive Summary**

This report details the key national developments that impact on Religious Education with suggestions for actions by SACRE

### **1. Recommendation(s) that SACRE:**

**1.1 Review the information collected (see Appendix 1)**

**1.2 Evaluate the relevance of each section for RE in Thurrock**

**1.3 Share the attached update with schools and their governing boards**

### **2. Introduction and Background**

2.1 In the period since the last SACRE meeting, a number of developments have taken place. These are presented to SACRE for consideration in support of the duties of SACRE and in accordance with the work plan.

### **3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options**

3.1 Schools need to be informed about national developments and opportunities available to them but it is important not to overload them with information.

3.2 Likewise, SACRE needs to be aware of the national context for information they receive that applies just to Thurrock.

3.3 SACRE needs therefore to decide on which information to share with schools and which reports and national data is most relevant to the situation in Thurrock

#### **4. Reasons for Recommendation**

4.1 According to the non-statutory guidance – RE in English Schools (2010), SACRE should provide advice and support on the effective teaching of RE. This advice and support includes keeping stakeholders include SACRE members and schools informed about current developments that impact on the subject.

#### **5. Consultation (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)**

5.1 Not applicable

#### **6. Impact on corporate policies, priorities, performance and community impact**

6.1 The Local Authority reviews its Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education on a regular basis;

- Publishes an Annual Report of its work;
- Offers guidance on resources and methods of teaching and in consultation with Thurrock Schools;
- Monitors the quality of provision for RE and Collective Acts of Worship in Thurrock.

This exercise falls under the first element of this programme.

#### **7. Implications**

##### **7.1 Financial**

Implications verified by: **David May**  
**Strategic Lead Finance, Corporate Finance**

There are no financial implications to this report since the actions recommended in this report, if approved will be conducted by the Associate RE Adviser as part of her work

##### **7.2 Legal**

Implications verified by: **Lucinda Bell**  
**Education Lawyer**

The legal duties on the advisory council are set out in s391 of the Education Act 1996. The main one is to advise the local authority on such matters connected with (1) the religious worship in community schools or in foundation schools without a religious character and (2) the religious education to be given in accordance with an agreed or other syllabus, as the authority may refer to the advisory council, or as the council may see fit.

This report is for review and consideration. No decision is required.

### 7.3 **Diversity and Equality**

Implications verified by: **Becky Lee**  
**Community Development and Equalities Team**  
**Manager**

The aim of this report is to provide information about issues that support the provision for RE in Thurrock, to address concerns and to celebrate success. Higher standards in the teaching of RE will help schools to fulfil their statutory duty to promote community cohesion and to encourage better respect and tolerance for those with different religions and beliefs.

### 7.4 **Other implications** (where significant) – i.e. Staff, Health, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder, Health Inequalities and Impact on Looked After Children

- Not applicable

### 8. **Appendices to the Report**

- Appendix One - National RE Updates for SACREs - Summer 2021

#### **Report Author:**

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Associate Adviser for RE

# National RE Updates for SACREs

## Summer 2021

### Research into public perception of an education in religion and worldviews

In summer 2021, Culham St Gabriel's Trust commissioned a survey to understand more about public perception of an education in religion and worldviews. The language used in the questions was chosen to try to avoid these misconceptions and to collect a more accurate set of data about what people thought about modern RE.

Some key findings:

Nearly two thirds (64%) of the UK adult population think that an education in religion and worldviews (or RE) is an important part of the school curriculum today, new research has revealed, with a further 65% agreeing that the subject has an impact on people's ability to understand each other in wider society.

Find out more here: [Research into public perception of an education in religion and worldviews \(natre.org.uk\)](https://www.natre.org.uk/research-into-public-perception-of-an-education-in-religion-and-worldviews)

*How can SACRE capitalise on these findings to further improve RE provision in the LA?*

### Religious Studies: Public Examinations

#### Call for National Plan as Religious Studies GCSE entries

The number of pupils taking GCSE Religious Studies in England and Wales has fallen slightly in 2021, despite previously remaining stable since 2017. To safeguard the subject, the Religious Education Council of England and Wales and the National Association of Teachers of RE are calling for a National Plan, as recommended by the Commission on RE in 2018, to be funded by Government.

In England, RS GCSE entries for the full course fell by 2.4 percent to 221,419 compared with 226,767 in 2020. In Wales, entries rose by 3.6 percent from 9,997 in 2020 to 10,358 in 2021. Overall entries in England, including both full and short courses, fell by 3.4 percent to 237,091, compared with

245,544 in 2020. In Wales, combined entries fell by 5.4 percent from 15,436 in 2020 to 14,583 in 2021.

By comparison, GCSE entries to other humanities increased this year, with Geography entries up 4.1 percent to 274,715 and History up 0.8 percent to 286,706.

## Hundreds more opt for Religious Studies at A-level in 2021

The number of Religious Studies A-level exam entries has increased 6.1 percent year on year. The subject outperformed other A-level subjects as a whole, which increased by 5.1 percent, with a greater increase than most other humanities subjects. Read NATRE's full press release here: [A Level results media release FINAL v2 10-08-21.pdf \(natre.org.uk\)](#)

*How do these figures compare with the picture in our LA?  
What action (if any) should SACRE be taking?*

## Inter Faith Week 2021

Inter Faith Week 2021 takes place from **14-21 November 2021, led by The** Inter Faith Network for the UK (IFN). Inter Faith Week is important for promoting mutual understanding and respect between those of different faiths and beliefs.

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

SACREs are asked to register any Interfaith Week events here:

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

For event ideas or further information, please contact Dr David Hampshire, Assistant Director of the Inter Faith Network, at [david.hampshire@interfaith.org.uk](mailto:david.hampshire@interfaith.org.uk).

## Holocaust Memorial Day 2022

Holocaust Memorial Day is 27 January. SACREs, LAs and schools can find a wide variety of resources on [Holocaust Memorial Day Trust \(HMDT\)](#) website. The Trust is keen to encourage schools to mark HMD, especially at a time when hate crime, intolerant/extremist views, anti-Semitism and anti-Muslim hate are increasing.

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

To consider how G2G can support SACRE or your schools and to book a speaker, visit

<https://www.generation2generation.org.uk> or book onto a free introductory event for educators:  
<https://www.generation2generation.org.uk/news/events/>

*How does SACRE support events such as Interfaith Week and Holocaust Memorial Day?  
Could we be doing more?*

## Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS)

The Church of England Education Office (CEEO) has announced that SIAMS inspections will resume in the Autumn term 2021 (from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2021). SIAMS inspections were paused in March 2020. A new national team has been appointed to manage the restart and schedule inspections in the future. More information, including a list of schools likely to be inspected in the academic year 2021-2022, can be found here: [SIAMS Inspections | The Church of England](#) .

## NASACRE News

### NASACRE Annual AGM and Conference 2021 and 2022

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

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

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

The next two NASACRE Online training sessions are:

#### **10<sup>th</sup> Nov 2021, 7-8pm: *What do SACREs need to know and understand about worldviews?***

Description: This session will share an overview of what the term 'worldviews' means in a number of different disciplines and reflect on how it provides useful concept from which teachers feel more equipped to teach RE.

£20 for a subscribed SACRE and £30 for a non-subscribed SACRE

#### **6 December 2021, 7-8pm: *How to apply for a WESTHILL/NASACRE award***

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

Free online session

## Westhill Awards 2021-22 - the Winners

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

This year, NASACRE again encouraged and invited individual SACREs (or SACREs in partnership) to apply for an award of up to £4,000.

Here are brief outlines of the winning bids:

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

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

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

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

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

**NASACRE is running a free online session as part of their training programme on 6 December 2021, 7-8pm:** How to apply for a WESTHILL/NASACRE Award

*How can SACRE engage with NASACRE in the coming academic year?*

## CPD and networking opportunities

### Strictly RE - save the date! 29 & 30 January 2022

Strictly RE is back! NATRE will be hosting its national annual conference online for your convenience and peace of mind while still giving you everything you love about Strictly RE without having to leave your home.

Keep your eyes peeled for Strictly RE updates on the NATRE website!

## BSA Socrel Chair's Response Day: Teaching Religion

This event will gather new ideas, experiences and critiques of the state of the teaching of religion in the UK today. It will take place on 12 November 2021 (10am–5:30pm) at University of Nottingham (on campus)

Bookings are now open. Find out more here: [BSA SocRel Study Group Response Day - November 2021 \(britsoc.co.uk\)](https://britsoc.co.uk/bsa-socrel-study-group-response-day-november-2021)

## #REChatUK twitter forum

**Occurs the first Monday of every month in term time.**

The next one is Monday, 6<sup>th</sup> December 2021: Please save the date in your diary. You can view the timetable here: [#REchatUK \(natre.org.uk\)](https://natre.org.uk/#REchatUK)

## Buddhist Resources: A request for help

Culham St Gabriels is asking for assistance from members of the Buddhist community with project to produce resources

Dr Kate Christopher writes:

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

*We are a group of teachers and Buddhists who wish to translate our knowledge and experience in teaching Buddhism to children and teenagers into useful resources for others. This [short survey](#) aims to find out what would be the most helpful. We are seeking to build a picture of the needs regarding Buddhism, of those working in the area of teaching religion and ethics in schools.*

*We are grateful for your input and ideas.*

*All the best,*

*Amalee Rycroft and colleagues*

## NEW2RE - A great opportunity for NEW Secondary RE teachers

Will you be a secondary Early Career Teacher in September 2021? If so NATRE's New2RE is the best support RE teachers can get.

For further information on the benefits of joining the programme as well as how to join click on this link: [NEW2RE - A great opportunity for NEW Secondary RE teachers \(natre.org.uk\)](https://natre.org.uk/new2re)

*How can SACRE raise awareness and support teachers with access to CPD and networking opportunities?*

## Resources

### What's Your Worldview?



Here is a video clip to help teachers and leaders of RE understand the concept of 'worldview':  
[WHAT'S YOUR WORLDVIEW? \(QUIZ\) - YouTube](#)

## Check out the REtoday Library website

This fantastic resource lets you explore all our REtoday magazine content on a searchable, indexed website.

There is no quicker way for you to find inspiring, practical RE lesson ideas and more.

NATRE members get **FREE** access to Professional REflection articles and can **SAVE £10** off the annual subscription.

[Home » REtoday Online Library \(retodaylibrary.org.uk\)](#)

## Gender and Religion Today: School Resources

Woolf Institute has developed an online course Gender and Religion Today and related age-appropriate materials for teachers searching for new, accessible materials to support classroom teaching across UK national curriculum.

They centre on a new series of short videos, offering a fresh way to teach and consider religion through the lens of gender.

Find more details here: [https://www.woolf.cam.ac.uk/outreach/education/gender-and-religion-today-school-resources?utm\\_source=emailmarketing&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=professional\\_natre\\_members\\_newsletter\\_with\\_download\\_september\\_2021&utm\\_content=2021-09-22](https://www.woolf.cam.ac.uk/outreach/education/gender-and-religion-today-school-resources?utm_source=emailmarketing&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=professional_natre_members_newsletter_with_download_september_2021&utm_content=2021-09-22)

## Research for RE

RE:Online has had a bit of a refresh - check it out and access some of the latest research online. Don't miss 'Research of the Month' featuring a different piece of research each month.

Visit the website: [Research of the Month - RE:ONLINE \(reonline.org.uk\)](#)

## Visiting a Mosque: a free resource for teachers

Teachers can now access the free online resource pack, *Visiting a Mosque*, by following this link:  
[www.visitmymosque.org/for-re-teachers](http://www.visitmymosque.org/for-re-teachers)

The pack is intended to support and empower RE teachers in organising and delivering school visits to places of worship, such as mosques. There are also signposts to "virtual" mosque tours included in this pack as an additional resource and to increase familiarity and confidence when organising in-person visits.

*How can SACRE ensure that teachers are aware of and have access to access to good quality teaching and learning resources to support RE in its schools?*