

# SACRE Servicing Officers Report: Friday 29<sup>th</sup> June 2018

## Suffolk SACRE

### 1.SACRE Suffolk June 2018: UN Website (E4J) Hosts the Suffolk SACRE Teaching Controversial Issues Toolkit

A request was received from Education for Justice (E4J), an initiative launched by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to host the Teaching Controversial Issues Toolkit materials on their website.

Some of you may remember that this toolkit was developed a few years ago when SCC had some Prevent grant funding. Jan McGuire was the lead author on this commissioned project and worked with members of SACRE and teachers from across the county to develop the toolkit that can be used across different difficult topics, different ages and numbers of pupils. The materials are hosted here: <http://www.suffolklearning.co.uk/11-19-learning-teaching/religious-education/sacre/prevent>

At the primary level, E4J focuses on promoting and teaching values such as acceptance, fairness, integrity, respect, civic responsibility. At the secondary and tertiary levels, E4J's emphasis is on producing high-quality educational materials, lesson plans and learning modules in the UNODC mandated areas of crime prevention, criminal justice, organized crime, corruption, terrorism prevention, human trafficking and migrant smuggling, firearms trafficking, and cybercrime.

The purpose of the online library is strictly non-commercial. Since E4J is a global initiative, it will be promoting the platform to the relevant academic communities, teacher training institutes, curriculum developers and teachers throughout the world.

The inclusion and recognition of the resources on this wider platform is an honour, and Suffolk SACRE should be congratulated for this achievement. Suffolk County Council leaders were copied into the UN request email. Suffolk SACRE have not received any communications or acknowledgement of this major success at this time.

### 2.NASACRE Westhill Funded project:

#### Suffolk SACRE Bridging Diversity Events: June 20<sup>th</sup> & 21<sup>st</sup> 2018

The commissioned project is due to be completed ahead of the October 2018 deadline, with all aspects of the project criteria having been fulfilled (by Jan McGuire): website, project profiles, event sessions and written report (to be completed and submitted July 2018). Payment for my project management of the commissioned work will need to be honoured, as the commissioned funding may not be released until after July 31<sup>st</sup> 2018.

The 'Bridging Diversity' schools were selected by SACRE members; using a list of criteria that focused on need in the community. 40 children from year 5 and 6 attended on day 1, and 49 children on day 2. Jan McGuire planned and led the event supported by a team of SACRE and community volunteers.

The focus of the day was the 'Teaching Controversial Issues Toolkit' Big Question: Why do some people respond with hate, when others respond with love and forgiveness? The real story of Manwar Ali and the fire that ravaged St Michael's Church in Ipswich was central to the event, and the evaluation letters received from the pupils reinforced that holding the event at the site had an impact on them. Key words and themes such as hate-crime, community, forgiveness, diversity, and faith were explored through-out the activities. The day was interactive, and activities had been

designed to allow the pupils to mix, discuss different opinions and beliefs, and to allow them to have an enjoyable learning experience. The shared lunch was an opportunity to try foods, eat and socialise together.

Pupils explored what it means to live in a diverse society, using techniques that have been designed



to help teachers and pupils explore the teaching of controversial issues in a safe and inclusive manner. The project aimed to 'promote respect and celebrate cultural diversity'. SACRE were able to use their award winning 'Teaching Controversial Issues Toolkit', modelling the techniques to teachers and evaluating the impact of the day by asking questions throughout the event. I would like to personally thank all volunteers that helped to make the two events successful and worthwhile for all those attending.

Link to the 'Teaching Controversial Issues' Toolkit:

<http://www.suffolklearning.co.uk/11-19-learning-teaching/religious-education/sacre/prevent>

Link to the Westhill NASACRE Suffolk Bridging Diversity website pages:

<http://www.westhillendowment.org/suffolk-sacre-bridging-diversity/Home>

### 3. Request from Suffolk County Council from SACRE members (April 4<sup>th</sup> 2018)

Suffolk SACRE members have been asked to provide the contact details for people from different faiths who take a lead role for their faith across either the whole of Suffolk or a significant area thereof. This piece of work is to provide the Lord Lieutenant with a list of people who are the current 'civic leads' for the different faiths represented in Suffolk who would be appropriate to invite to major county events; such as a multi-denominational service to commemorate the life of a national figure.

### 4. SACRE 2018-2019 National Funding Update:

Local Authorities will continue to receive funding for SACREs and Agreed Syllabus Conferences. In response to a parliamentary question, Nick Gibb MP; Minister for School Standards, made a commitment that SACREs and Agreed Syllabus Conferences, will continue to be funded by central government once the Education Services Grant is abolished at the end of the financial year of 2016-17. The Department for Education can now confirm that SACREs will be funded through the central school services block (CSSB) from 2018-19, which is one of the blocks in the national funding formula. NATRE remains concerned that there appear to be very large variations between local authorities in the proportion of this government grant that is spent on the work of SACREs. It might be interesting to those of you involved with SACREs to note that SACREs are listed under the column headed 'Responsibilities held for all schools' as opposed to that headed, 'responsibilities held for maintained schools only'.

For further information, see the NFF Policy Document and the 2018-19 Operational Guidance (specifically paragraph 133 see extract in appendix A).

NATRE suggests SACRE members may wish to:

- ask that SACRE funding is placed on the agenda for the next meeting
- ask questions about funding at meetings. In particular: what percentage of the grant is spent on SACRE in the authority?

[http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2017/44/pdfs/ukxi\\_20170044\\_en.pdf](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2017/44/pdfs/ukxi_20170044_en.pdf) Appendix A

### 5. REC: Focus on chronic shortage of RE Teachers in Schools:

'Pupils will fail to filter out the stereotypes that contribute to religious discrimination while a shortage of RE teacher's remains', says the Religious Education Council of England and Wales (REC). The charity, which believes that high quality specialist teaching about all faiths, beliefs and worldviews is essential for all school children, is leading a consortium to re-launch the Beyond the Ordinary campaign, designed to attract career changers and graduates to train as RE teachers.

For entry into initial teacher training in 2017, 405 places were filled, falling well below the Government target of 643. The REC is pressing the Department for Education for higher bursaries for RE teachers. Currently a first-class degree holder will receive £9,000 and an upper second-class degree holder will receive just £4,000 towards their training costs. By contrast training for similar specialist subjects such as Geography and Classics offers a grant of £26,000.

School statistics show a generation keen to learn about the differences between faiths, beliefs and cultures in society. Over 60% of all 16-year olds take RE at GCSE and A level entries have more than doubled in the last 15 years. A lack of subject expertise in schools – according to OFSTED around half (46%) of specialist RE teachers have no post-A Level qualification in the subject – shows that there are opportunities for fast career progression.

## 6. NASACRE National Update:

Consider whether your SACRE has any training needs that might be met by using the NASACRE [resources](#) on the website.

In January 2018 each SACRE was asked by NASACRE to take action on non-compliant Secondaries in our area. This was partly in response to:

- a. The work by Deborah Weston. JMCG made a formal request for the School Workforce data from Deborah Weston, this has still not been received.
- b. Deborah Weston's encouragement for SACRE's to write to schools and academies which are not meeting their statutory duties.

NASACRE has also asked us to encourage our schools to complete the newly updated survey on [withdrawal](#) and, for Primary colleagues, the [NATRE Survey](#).

NASACRE has asked us to keep them informed about how Suffolk SACRE is holding schools to account for poor (or non-) provision of RE, and any cuts to your SACRE funding, as highlighted in previous Briefings. This will need to be commented on in the next annual report.

## 7. The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) NASACRE

On 25th May the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) came into force. The GDPR gives you more control of your data and puts the onus on companies and organisations to ensure they only collect and store data that's necessary for their operations.

NASACRE uses data from member SACREs in two ways:

- We have a mailchimp list of member SACRE Clerks to whom significant notifications are sent. This list does not enable anyone to see anyone else's information.
- We also maintain the SACRE Directory, which is forward-facing and shows the data you give us to the public, including other RE organisations. This data should not include personal information that you or your SACRE officers do not want in the public domain. It is recommended for example that email addresses are Local Authority or educational establishment addresses where possible.

All SACREs are 'affiliated' to NASACRE in some sense; they receive SACRE Briefing and we work to promote and support their interests at a national level. We provide a higher level of support to paid-up SACREs in full current membership of NASACRE, including reduced rates for events and downloadable resources.

When SACREs renew their membership annually they will be asked in future to confirm the data they wish us to hold on the Directory. This is an opportunity for members to check that the information on the Directory is up to date. This will also be giving us permission to place the confirmed data on the public-facing Directory.

In relation to your own use of data, SACREs must ensure they work within the protocols of their Local Authority as the appointing body.

## 8. How are Ofsted reports referring to Religious Education? (NATRE report June 2018)

There has been a marked increase in the number of references to Religious Education in both secondary and secondary Ofsted reports. RE was mentioned in approximately 15% of long reports in 2015/16 and 16% in 2016/17. There are wide variations between regions however, with RE mentioned least frequently in London and most frequently in the North West, the North East and

the West Midlands. There were almost 650 comments in total of which 80% were positive and 20% negative. Ofsted has not inspected subjects for many years, so it is not possible to draw many conclusions about the health or otherwise of the subject from these reports. The increase in the number of references to RE in Section 5 reports probably tells us as much about changes in the focus of Ofsted inspection as it does about RE itself. Ofsted is now paying much more attention to the wider curriculum and inspectors are drawing their evidence from a wider range of subjects when making their overall judgements. Recent comments from the Amanda Spielman (HM Chief Inspector of Education) here would suggest that this trend will continue into the new framework for inspection due to be launched in 2019.

From a RE perspective there are a few key messages:

1. Ofsted is looking more seriously at whether schools are offering a broad and balanced curriculum – senior leaders need to ensure they are making good provision for RE alongside other subjects.
2. Where there is good quality provision for RE, there is now a greater chance that it will contribute positively to the evidence Ofsted are using to make their overall judgements about a school.
3. Similarly, where there is limited or poor-quality provision, it is possible that RE will be used as an example to illustrate a broader concern or where there is a contrast between practice in some subject areas and others.

Please see the document shared at the SACRE meeting June 29<sup>th</sup> 2018.

## 9. Greater clarity for Academies in relation to RE? (NATRE June 2018)

At the end of March 2018, minister for schools; Nick Gibb MP responded to a parliamentary question about RE. In the response he said the following: “Where academies are subject to the same statutory duties as maintained schools, the Secretary of State has powers to enforce compliance via the terms of the funding agreement.” NATRE subsequently wrote to the DfE in an attempt to clarify what sort of matter might result in a Secretary of State using these powers in relation to RE. We asked: 'Can you please provide us with some guidance about how you might judge a complaint about the failure of an academy to meet its funding agreement in relation to RE?'

The letter we received in response this week included the following six points:

1. In most non-religiously designated academy funding agreements, the requirement to provide religious education is in line with S.375(3) of the Education Act 1996 – religious education that reflects the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are Christian, whilst taking into account the practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain;
2. Academies may choose to use an agreed syllabus in full or part to meet their requirements to provide RE. They may also choose to develop their own syllabus that meets the requirements in their funding agreement (including S.375 above);
3. We would expect that all schools provide pupils with a curriculum that is high quality and promotes progression through the key stages, including in RE;
4. ... head teachers should ensure that “the subject is well led and effectively managed, and that standards and achievement in RE, and the quality of the provision, are subject to regular and effective self-evaluation;
5. If inspectors become aware that a school is not delivering the curriculum that it is expected to be offering, this will be reflected in the assessment of the leadership and management of the school, which in turn will inform the overall effectiveness of the school;

6. ...if the department is made aware of an academy that is not meeting the requirements for providing RE as outlined above, the complaint would be passed onto the operational team where the academy was located. The operational team would work with the policy team to understand the arrangements and specific situation in that school, and work with the school to resolve the matter.

The implication of these points is that when academies publish details of their curriculum for RE for each year group (as they are required to do following statutory guidance) the curriculum must be clear about:

a) how it reflects the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian whilst taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain (S.375(3) of the Education Act 1996)

b) which specific syllabus is followed e.g. A local Agreed Syllabus or other Syllabus that includes sufficient clear information to allow teachers, parents and others to be clear about what content is to be taught in each year of each key stage? (Note: a previous complaint about a syllabus for RE has secured this working definition of a syllabus with support from DfE lawyers)

c) how progression in knowledge, understanding and skills is secured in Religious Education as pupils move from one-year group to another

## 10.GCSEs: When are they changing?

From August 2017, the new qualifications began being awarded with number grades, rather than letters. The new grading scale runs from 9 to 1 instead of A\* to G, with 9 the highest grade.

- The bottom of grade 7 is aligned with the bottom of grade A;
- The bottom of grade 4 is aligned with the bottom of grade C; and
- The bottom of grade 1 is aligned with the bottom of grade G.

**Please be aware of the change of examinations in the October 2018 SACRE Report, as noted by Jan McGuire in the 2017 Report document. It should be easier to gather data this year as the data should be reflecting one grading system only.**

**First teaching in 2016, first exams 2018:**

English language, English Literature and Maths plus **Religious Studies (including short-course).**

## 11.REC: Commission on RE Report Publication Date

The final report from the **Commission on RE (CoRE)** is due to be published on **Wednesday 12th September 2018**. The NASACRE executive will be meeting shortly afterwards to discuss the findings and disseminate discussion pointers to SACREs for their Autumn Term meetings.

## 12.Note from Jan McGuire

Thank you all for your support during my time at Suffolk SACRE. I have enjoyed my work with the teachers, pupils and the members of SACRE immensely.

Highlights from 2015 to date:

Judaism County Exhibition: Commissioned Project

Prevent County wide project with schools: Commissioned Project

Teaching Controversial Issues Toolkit: Commissioned Funding

National Accord Award for the 'Teaching Controversial Issues' Toolkit

UN hosting the 'Teaching Controversial Issues' Toolkit on the website: June 2018

Suffolk SACRE Schools Choice Conference

Farmington Fellowships: for 4 SACRE teacher members: Funded work

Westhill NASACRE Bridging Diversity June 2018: Commissioned Project