

NASACRE AGM 23rd May 2012

Keynote Address: **Professor Robert Jackson:**
Professor of Religious Education, Warwick University

RU 4 EC RE?

'Research and European Policy Making on Religious Education: Taking account of young people's views in developing the subject'

Hard times, but been here before. In the EU there are different aims of RE, RI, Beliefs.

Why RE? Because education should cover all areas of experience, culture, tolerance, citizenship, personal development.

Research among 14-16 yos. – safe space for dialogue, often cross-curricular, peaceful co-operation based on knowledge about each others' religions and world-views., want to be engaged in citizenship process rather than being taught top-down Civics.

Warwick research materials that help positive attitudes to others, self-reflection. Young people appreciate direct contact with difference, where rural – internet.

Christian pupils supportive of Muslim minority, non-religious pupils recognising discomfort of their religious friends would feel if asked to represent their religion. Stereotyping of religious traditions – there is diversity WITHIN religious traditions.

Council of Europe 2008 recommended Intercultural Education plus religious diversity and dialogue.

2009 Human Rights and Citizenship, including religion, addressing sensitive/controversial issues, engaging, not just didactic, impartial (not 'neutral'), integrate non-religious worldviews, freedom of expression, including the wearing of religious symbols, need to teach about civility in the classroom. SACREs are unique and envied by other EU educationalists.

Chair's Report The Executive and your officers have continued to work diligently on your behalf, supporting local SACREs and regional meetings,, developing guidance materials, exploring ways to work more effectively with academies and free schools, producing effective editions of a contemporary newsletter and reviewing the NASACRE brand and image in light of the new circumstances and challenges that we must face.

The EBacc Campaign, Battle and War The RE community campaigned vigorously in opposing the government proposals but was unable to change the mind of the Secretary of State. His announcement of the final decision to exclude RE from the humanities subjects in the EBacc was 'buried' in the media frenzy that followed the phone hacking scandal and demise of the *News of the World*. However, a powerful legacy of the campaign was the raised awareness amongst MPs and others about the importance of RE in the curriculum culminating in the All Party Parliamentary Group that was established toward the end of 2011. The Archbishop of Canterbury chose in his last public address to speak about it. The RE community might have lost the battle but the war is still there to be won!

I have worked closely with colleagues in NATRE and AREIAC within the structure of the RE Council to pursue amongst other things, government withdrawal of Circular 1/94 on collective worship, closer working between SACREs and the academies in their local area as well as leading and contributing to different aspects of the EBacc campaign.

Agreed Syllabus Conferences As Agreed Syllabuses came up for review NASACRE advised during 2011 that ASCs should adopt a minimalist approach to their reviews including the possibility of deciding to make no change. This position continues to hold while Government clarifies the wider curriculum context within which any new RE syllabus might sit and the RE Council takes forward and concludes the work on developing a framework for RE provision.

GCSE RS Short Courses published performance table indicators list excludes qualifications with under 120 guided learning hours, such as short course GCSEs. Although Religious Studies GCSE short courses will still be available from September 2012, their examination scores will feature only in wider data about the schools that will be published by the DfE in due course and not in the performance Tables

Collective Worship and Circular 1/94 AREIAC and NASACRE have jointly pressed Government on the need to withdraw circular 1/94 on collective worship. Ministers reiterated that they did not wish to review the guidance at the present time. However, we continue to seek its complete withdrawal. In the absence of coherent Government advice on the issue NASACRE has led development of guidance to enable SACREs and schools to promote high quality collective worship consistent with the existing legal requirements. Our initiative has received strong support from AREIAC and we expect the guidance to be ready for circulation by the start of the new academic year.

Academies leaflet NASACRE has produced a leaflet for leaders in academies informing them of the benefits and opportunities afforded to them by working closely with their local SACREs.

SACRE Annual Reports By the middle of February 2012 over 40 of the registered 143 SACREs (45%) had sent in their Annual Reports which are now posted on the NASACRE website. A number of SACREs have also sent copies direct to the Secretary of State for Education. The reports seen by NASACRE are offering initial insights on the impact that local government spending cuts have had on the work of SACREs during 2010/11.

Treasurer's Report In spite of some delay in invoicing at the start of the Autumn Term, receipts of the current Annual Subscriptions have been encouragingly buoyant.

factors contributing to the substantial Income/Expenditure deficit = delays in invoicing, escalating office costs, the one-off Birmingham event, higher travel and meetings costs.

should more and more SACREs find themselves without the resources to pay annual subscriptions, or fees for attendance at NASACRE events, this scenario would be seriously threatened.

Secretary's Report Much energy has been expended in supporting the fight for RE's survival in an increasingly hostile world where threats from such as the Ebacc, new breeds of school and curriculum reviews have become reality. Officers were vigilant, even to the extent of holding the DfE to account for its omission of RE from the lists of curriculum subjects on its website...and getting satisfaction eventually as it was reinstated!

It has been a privilege to serve NASACRE since 1996 In those sixteen years there have been times of relative bounty for RE and for SACREs...and times of famine; at the moment, sadly, it is the latter. There has never been a greater need for SACREs to protect the local determination of RE, or for SACRE members to be well informed and active or, indeed, for an organisation to keep them all galvanised and supported.

Lat Blaylock RE Today Services 'SACRE + Teachers of RE = Good Learning'
SACREs have set up Gifted & Talented pupil-teacher conferences where 5 pupils accompanied by a teacher – hard to reach teachers.
SACREs under pressure, absorbed with maintenance, need ACTIVISM. Need head teachers on SACREs.

Sarah Smalley, Vice- Chair REC - The State of RE

Half of secondaries now academies – Agreed syllabuses for shrinking numbers/ Continuity and progression of national curriculum lost.

Use of specialists has improved

NATRE – 1/3 schools offering full course as a result of EBac; less impact on short courses though increase in schools not offering any GCSE

AREAIC loss of advisors – not only 36t – and only 19 pulled out of RE

RE Quality Mark trialled in NE

All party Parliamentary Group on RE – more clout than RE organisations

115 MPs signed EDM – 4 times the usual

Know little about primaries

Alan Brine, HMI

New ofsted framework pointed towards RE for SMSC and compliance

Not wholesale meltdown

OFSTED doesn't consider EBac a benchmark and many schools don't think it relevant

As short course can't be half, more schools are doing full course, starting in year 9

But overall it is likely that in total less pupils will be entered for public examination at KS4 and questions about entitlement might need to be raised.

Thanks to Derek Jay from South Glos. SACRE for attending this meeting and sharing his feedback with Bristol SACRE