

# Agenda Item 11

## SACRE MEETING ON 11 JULY 2017

### REPORT FROM NASACRE CONFERENCE BY

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The NASACRE conference this year took place at the Hilton Hotel in York on Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> May 2017.

The morning session began with the Keynote Speaker Joyce Miller. Joyce was speaking at the conference in her role as one of the commissioners recently appointed to review the legal, education and policy frameworks for RE. The main part of her talk was to talk about the Commission on RE (CORE) and its remit, although she was able to tell us nothing of the findings of the Commission so far as these are confidential.

The remit of the commission is:-

To consider the nature, purposes, and scope of religious education.

To identify the enabling factors that currently promote high quality RE and the barriers that currently limit it.

To identify what changes are needed to ensure the highest quality provision of RE.

To ensure that recommendations focus on realistic and specific proposals aimed at both immediate and long-term implementation in the context of continuing educational reform.

The key issues it is considering are:-

The quality of teaching and learning.

The legal and structural arrangements.

The public and professional profile.

Recruitment, ITE and CPD

The age range and school settings

The right to withdraw

A common entitlement in RE

The commission has already held several evidence gathering sessions and has received over 2000 pieces of online evidence. There are due to be four more meetings of the commission to review this evidence and to draw up the recommendations.

There will be an interim report produced in September 2017 with a final report due in the summer, 2018.

The second part of her presentation was made up of her personal thoughts about the nature of RE currently and its future role in which she stated that when teaching RE we should:-

Avoid generalisations and stereotypes

Avoid seeing religions and belief as silos.

Address conflict between and within religions

Examine perceptions and mis-perceptions

Focus on commonalities and collaborations as well as differences.

Her presentation was followed by some discussion around tables about two main issues: –

How SACRES contribute to Academic RE and how SACRES help in preparation for life in modern Britain. A summary of these discussions is attached. We are also asked at this point to give our views on the right to withdraw which met with a mixed reaction.

After lunch Prof Aaqil Ahmed spoke on his topic of 'Why religious literacy is important for community cohesion'. He has previously been the head of religious broadcasting at both the BBC and Channel 4 and much of what he said drew on his experiences in this role. Given his experiences, this talk was interesting and thought provoking. He began his talk by noting that it was likely that by 2050, 40% of the British population could be made up of people from a migrant background and that it was therefore crucial that we had at least some knowledge of religious traditions to help avoid conflict. He also made the case that our media needs to have a properly regulated strategy towards religion.

Following this talk the Westhill awards were announced and as there was no other business the meeting closed early.