

# NASACRE Conference 2017

## Summary of SACRE Table discussions

### **How SACREs contribute to 1) Academic RE and 2) preparation for life in Modern Britain**

SACREs were invited to contribute to two discussion groups on each table. Discussion Group 1 shared the ways that SACREs resource the academic rigour and quality of the subject. Meanwhile Group 2 recorded examples where SACREs directly contribute support and guidance with local faith and community links within and beyond the classroom, enhancing school's capacity to prepare students for life in modern Britain.

### **Summary from Discussion Group 1 – Resourcing rigour**

#### ***1.1 Contributing to training or development of Teachers***

SACREs organise many conferences, for teachers, both independently and in partnership with other bodies such as local teaching school alliances and professionals such as RE advisors and external consultants. SACRE members also host and participate as invited faith experts at teacher network meetings and INSET days. SACREs organise and lead regular visits for teachers to local places of worship. These are often accompanied by relevant SACRE representatives, enabling teachers to gain deeper first hand subject knowledge directly from faith practitioners.

#### ***1.2 Contributing to student subject knowledge/school resources***

A statutory way of resourcing school RE, is in supporting the ASC in producing the Agreed Syllabus. SACREs ensure it exemplifies a diversity of local beliefs and knowledge. Many SACREs have assigned working parties and writing panels of specialist teachers dedicated to producing resources for schools, including writing exemplar units of work. SACREs also run a variety of interfaith student activities and young people's conferences across schools enabling students to learn about faiths through facilitated, direct encounter with fellow students from other faiths. SACREs maintain and regularly revise lists of places of worship where teachers can take students. Some have created an interfaith calendar of local RE-linked events.

### **Summary from Discussion Group 1 – Supporting Quality**

#### ***1.3 Monitoring quality of Teaching and/or Learning***

SACREs report on GCSE/A level data annually. Some collate any RE comments made by Ofsted as well as have a systematic rolling program of visiting schools. Many reported on the reduction in funding having curtailed this activity. Most send out a regular survey and if funding allows follow up with targeted visits.

#### ***1.4 Help raise profile/improve understanding of RE in schools***

SACRE Chairs & Advisors keep RE on the agenda at LA Council/Governors'/Head Teachers' meetings. Many publish newsletters to schools, briefings to governors and guidance for parents. SACREs also offer support in liaising with parents who may be raising issues and concerns about RE. Some SACREs are lobbying local councils for funding for CPD and through them to raise the profile of RE in schools. An initiative to encourage more Farmington fellowships is also raising the profile of RE.

### ***1.5 Other Examples of suggestions for impacting quality and rigour of Academic RE***

Teacher workshops on working with, and developing schemes from the Agreed Syllabus. Support schools with how syllabus transfers into classroom practice. Encourage independent schools and academies to follow the Agreed Syllabus. Have more teacher members on SACRE. Fund some REQM awards. Run mini-conferences on RE for feeder schools.

### **Summary from Discussion Group 2 – Linking School/RE with contemporary world of faiths/beliefs**

#### ***2.1 Faith speakers or places of worship***

A vast majority of SACREs recommend and often facilitate for schools seeking a recommended local speaker, visit, faith trail or local faith resources and organisations. Many organise faith exhibitions and faith tours, such as the 'Dealing with Diversity' conference, incorporating SACRE members leading 'meet a local faith leader' workshops. Another example I found in the evidence was provision of guidance on protocols, clothing etc., for learning how to be 'a good visitor' for example, to a mosque or church.

#### ***2.2 Building awareness/improving understanding of RE amongst parents/wider community***

Create competitions and awards for schools which raises profile of RE and SACREs. SACREs make a point of regularly featuring RE events in the local paper, not to mention promoting inclusion of community members in schools, interfaith meetings, etc. Participate in joint projects with school support service colleagues (e.g. music) to showcase for parents and the community, Celebrating RE Day in the Town Centre. Ensure a High profile launching of Agreed Syllabus inviting parents/councillors/MPs etc.

### **Summary from Discussion Group 2 – Faith-linked advice in school on Pastoral support.**

#### ***2.3 for specific students from a faith background***

Provide CPD, on-call and on-going support & guidance documents on matters such as absence due to religious reasons, fasting & FAQs, prayer rooms & determinations

#### ***2.4 for teachers dealing with faith-linked challenges in school***

Deal with complaints/queries that are linked to safeguarding/prevent agenda/right to withdraw. Partnership between professionals and faith communities enhancing quality of advice around RE in schools, liaising/collaborating with teachers/heads/RE Co-ordinators.

#### ***2.5 Other Examples of evidence of preparing young people for life in Modern Britain***

Ensure the Agreed Syllabus reflects life in Modern Britain. Build up skills and dispositions appropriate to living in a plural, open society. Foster Police and other visitors (e.g. Tell MAMA) links advising how schools can raise students' awareness of hate-crime. SACRE facilitates running of Young SACREs led by young people exploring their concerns and questions around religiosity, with depth and skill.