

The WESTHILL/NASACRE Awards 2024-25: BRIEFING NOTES

INTRODUCTION

The first Westhill/NASACRE Awards were made in 2005. Since then, there have been further annual rounds of Awards to SACREs, for local projects that involve schools. The Awards are funded by generous grants from the Westhill Foundation and are managed and coordinated by NASACRE.

Over the years the response to the Awards programme has been gratifyingly enthusiastic and fruitful. Many imaginative and stimulating proposals have been submitted for an Award. SACREs may find it helpful to look at the accompanying summary of earlier successful bids, and to read some of the final project reports posted on www.nasacre.org.uk. In addition, two exemplar project descriptions are attached as an Appendix. These are successful anonymised applications. While not perfect, they show the kind of project description the Awards Panel is seeking.

Another significant initiative has been the development of a link with Westhill's own website www.westhillendowment.org/projects-that-spark. As well as the building up of a Westhill/NASACRE Awards page as part of this website, potential applicants will find on the site accounts of a wide range of stimulating and imaginative projects - some are avowedly confessional in character, but their creativity and methodology may nevertheless be of broader and general interest.

Young people are growing up and receiving their education in a plural and diverse context that embraces both a wide range of religious traditions and communities and also covers a spectrum of stances of belief and non-belief. Young people therefore need to develop skills that will enable them to live constructively in and with this diversity: skills of listening to each other without prejudice, of discovering the common ground, of accepting the differences, of building confidence in their own identities, of working harmoniously on some co-operative enterprise.

They need to be able to encounter and talk with those who have beliefs and views different from their own, to break down barriers constructed through ignorance or fear of the unknown, and to challenge negative stereotypes which emerge in popular culture. Personal development of this kind is an essential tool in promoting a healthy, cohesive and harmonious society and in enabling individuals to flourish in the context of a rich but challenging diversity.

Through the Awards programme, NASACRE wishes to see SACREs take the initiative in encouraging the schools within their remit to engage with diversity in ways which are appropriate to them. Our aim is to develop creative engagement among young people and to build up a bank of ideas and good practice for others to use in their own ventures, to the benefit of their locality and to society more generally.

SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION

NASACRE invites SACREs to submit applications for an Award for 2024-25 under the general theme of **"education into diversity"**. Proposals need not focus specifically and directly on promoting interfaith encounter and dialogue as such, although any such proposals will be welcomed. In selecting proposals for an Award, NASACRE's main criterion will be to consider how far each proposed project will generate **compelling learning experiences in Religious Education for young people relevant to today's context**. This could include appropriately-framed projects relating to Collective Worship.

A project may take one of any number of forms involving young people, for example: conferences, performing arts, media projects, exhibitions, local research, student exchange visits – or other ways to engage pupils and set something going which has the potential to develop into long-term engagement. Applications for an Award may include provision for fees to buy in a Project Manager, should the necessary leadership be unavailable within existing staff resources. Projects should be timed to begin after the start of the new academic year 2024-25.

While NASACRE particularly wishes to encourage applications from SACREs which have not previously received an Award, SACREs already being in receipt of an Award can be assured that a further application will be favourably received, provided the proposed new project is entirely separate from the previous Award-winning project, or is a major new initiative in its own right.

NASACRE is also particularly keen to encourage SACREs to develop collaborative relations with academies and free schools in their area. The Awards are seen as offering an opportunity to progress this aim. NASACRE will accordingly look favourably on projects which are devised to include such schools. Many schools are now federated, and might have the resources to coordinate a project under the aegis of the SACRE.

NASACRE will receive copies of any resulting materials, reports and other outcomes of the successful projects, so that it can disseminate good practice across other SACREs, and continue to encourage effective education into diversity among young people.

WHEN APPLYING, you must show **clearly** how your project:

- promotes education into diversity among young people
- might achieve community benefit in your area (be specific)
- might be sustained in some way beyond the initial impact of this funding
- relates to Religious Education/Collective Worship

and how:

- your SACRE would be involved
- the Award money would be allocated (in some detail).

Some description of your locality would be helpful, and an indication of why you have chosen the methodology you propose.

In the light of recent experience, please note that priority will be given to projects which directly involve pupils, rather than projects aimed at teacher development. Also, in the context of these Awards, 'diversity' should be interpreted specifically as embracing the diversity of faiths and worldviews, rather than broader issues of inclusivity and equal rights.

SACREs are encouraged to seek extra/matched funding from other sources, but this is not a pre-condition of the grant. We should also be pleased to consider bids from SACREs who propose to act jointly in an enterprise. If there will be administrative costs associated with your project, these must be declared at the outset and written into the bid. Any such costs cannot be met from the Award later.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

The maximum amount of Award is £4,000 per SACRE or joint SACRE group. The payment of an Award will normally be carried out in two main tranches, with a smaller final payment possibly held back until the project has fulfilled its commitments under the terms of the Award. Payment will proceed by a series of “triggers”, as set out below.

First tranche - payable on completion of:

- Letter of Arrangement, Website Contract, and Schedule signed and returned
- Name of project thumbnail and description entered on [Our Children's Children](#)

Second tranche - payable on completion of:

- Interim report submitted to NASACRE

Final payment (if held back) - payable on completion of:

- Final report posted on website.

Payment of the Award will not be made to a SACRE until the money is needed, and in any case not before 1 October, 2023.

SCHEDULE

Bids should be submitted on the accompanying application form (which may also be downloaded from NASACRE's website), and returned to The Awards Panel Convenor, NASACRE, to arrive **not later than 31 March 2024**. As a safeguard against the application form being accidentally deleted or lost, a duplicate should be sent also to the Westhill Endowment office, as indicated on the form. As a further safeguard, the receipt of each application will be formally acknowledged. Should such an acknowledgement fail to arrive, the Awards Panel Convenor should be contacted urgently.

NASACRE's Awards Panel will give every bid careful consideration and will aim to be in touch with successful SACREs immediately after their names have been announced at NASACRE's AGM on 22 May 2023.

SACRE Briefing and our website will have coverage of the awards and projects and we will keep in touch with these projects as they proceed. The website also contains information and reports from previous projects; these could be helpful for SACREs preparing their own application for an Award.

NASACRE continues to be deeply grateful to the Trustees of the Westhill Endowment, whose generosity has made the Awards Programme possible.

Appendix A: an exemplar project description - *Legacy of life*

Summary: Student SACRE project exploring legacy through the medium of art.

Students will explore different religious beliefs about life and death, ancient and modern. They will have first-hand experience of historical objects associated with death and legacy through a conference, as well as time to consider what they would want their own legacy to be. These ideas will then be worked on and expressed through the medium of art, using a number of processes with a professional artist over a 4-month period. The students (64 at the moment) are drawn from 8 different schools (Academies & Local Authority), will work collaboratively over 6 afternoons and one day. The end of product will be pieces of art that can be displayed in schools, and a set of postcards with images from the paintings chosen with questions to help other students at KS3 or 4 explore ideas around legacy and life in RE lessons. We hope to produce some lesson resources to support teachers' use of this theme. These postcards will be printed as sets, as well as electronically being available to all schools around the country to download and print. The project has been devised by the Student SACRE executive group and we would like them to write an article about their learning for NASACRE and maybe RE Today to share their work and ideas further.

"What is exciting about this project is that we students are taking charge of our own learning. By having students' ideas around death and life after death we are getting to think about the topic more deeply and our thoughts and feelings would be expressed through a different media. The fact that that the postcards will be available to download nationally would be fantastic. The project allows students to learn in different ways rather to be given work and told what to do; they are getting involved with their own education. Education Minister Nicky Morgan has said that students need to be involved with their learning and should be taught with some practical element, rather than looking at presentations or reading notes. This is exactly what the aims of our project are." **Student SACRE chair**

Background

Ours is one of the most dynamic parts of the country. It is at the heart of one the largest areas of urban redevelopment in Europe. In the 2011 Census, 40% of the population said they were Christian, 32% Muslim and 9% Hindu, with the rest of the population members of other faith groups or with no religious affiliation. There were .. different languages spoken in ... schools, according to the January 2015 school census. Understanding and appreciating difference and diversity is an important value to support in schools.

We set up a Student SACRE in February 2005. The aim of this was to provide a place where students from different religious faiths and none could come together across all the secondary schools in to discuss issues that are important to them in the area of faith and religion. Over the last ten years the number of schools taking part has gradually grown. Having the Student SACRE gives all schools a structured input, as their executive has places on adult SACRE, ensuring that the voice of the young person is given place in planning future policy and provision.

The Student SACRE meets half-termly; the students themselves set the agenda through their executive, and the SACRE consultant is there as facilitator. Over the years, the group has helped with the production of a SACRE advice paper to schools on Prayer Rooms, the production of a DVD on faith-sensitive relationships education, worked with the BBC on gun and knife crime to produce a short film, written and produced two films on stereotypes in religion and how they can be overcome, created sculptures expressing their sense of belonging and identity, and most recently they have delivered lessons in local primary

schools about religion and philosophy. Student SACRE gives young people a place to share, challenge, and put forward policy and practice on matters that are important to them; it seeks to give them a qualitative experience to enable them to have a quantitative impact.

The chair, vice-chair and secretary of the Student SACRE attend the adult SACRE meetings, and report back to the SACRE the issue/s the students are discussing or working on at present. They also sit on Young Mayor's Council as representatives from Student SACRE ensuring that the voice of faith and values has a place strategically within the local authority.

We are applying for this Westhill NASACRE award as we would like to:

- ◆ Organise two inter-faith events (3 hours for each) for local faith leaders to meet and discuss with the membership of Student SACRE their beliefs about life and death in the summer term to get us ready for the project start in October
- ◆ These two inter-faith events would lead the students onto some reflective thinking about the diversity of faiths around them and impact this has on their 'worldview', as well as start them thinking about religious legacy
- ◆ Organise a one day conference with the education team at in the autumn term, so that students can learn about ancient and modern traditions around legacy, life and death. This will also give them a chance to see some of the different art methods we want to use in their pieces of art (eg, embossing, glazing, layering, colour mixing, using icons)
- ◆ Work with a local artist, each student having 2 days to work on their art piece
- ◆ Give opportunities for students to write about their work and the ideas they are trying to express within it, and for the best of this work to be created into postcards that could be shared in classrooms, opening up thinking about life and death in RE lessons at KS3/4
- ◆ Produce the postcards so that these images and ideas can be shared nationally with teachers, along with lesson ideas for their use.

We believe that this project will:

- ✓ Promote dialogue between young people of different faiths (and those of none) as the members of the Student SACRE represent young people from different Muslim, Christian, Hindu, Sikh, Atheist, Buddhist, Agnostic and Humanist backgrounds. As we work through the ideas with faith leaders at the events, the young people will naturally listen and respond to one another. As we think through what different faith representatives say about legacy and the purpose of life, the young people will have opportunity to discuss and reflect on what they believe and why. In some cases, the discussion will focus on why people from the same religion have different views on this topic
- ✓ Achieve community benefit, as the project flows from the interests of this particular group of young people and seeks to address their questions and deepen their thinking. It also gives faith representatives from SACRE the opportunity to work with young people and understand more of their questions and beliefs. It will bring young people together from different postcodes and help them integrate and break down wrong assumptions
- ✓ Promote dialogue between young people who are different in terms of religion, culture and nationality, and help them to acquire tools in order to understand difference and

diversity more clearly. The project will give them many opportunities to practice their listening skills, discovering common ground and build confidence in their own identities through the use of art

Give our adult SACRE three benefits:

- Faith representatives will be part of the mini conferences, to lead workshops or to be part of panel discussions, giving them an experience of working alongside Student SACRE
- Monitoring the project through its process as well as having a regular termly presentation made to them from the students at adult SACRE meetings
- Strengthening of the voice of the Student SACRE within Adult SACRE

How money would be allocated

Schools will match fund a successful grant from NASACRE for this project for £2500 (to cover the SACRE consultant time to organise the project and administrate it)

Day conference, venue and refreshments	£500
Canvases and painting materials	£400
Work with artist for 6 days (each school to work with 3 others for 2 days with the artist) @ £350	£2100
Printing postcards and photography of final art pieces 16-32 postcard pack	£1000
	Total = £4,000

Artist's quote

I have worked in education for the last 23 years and have been specialising in Arts Education for the last 12 years. As well as working alongside teachers in schools, I have also been employed by the local authority to work as an advisory teacher for Art, Craft and Design. Within that context, most of the projects and training I develop and deliver have cross-curricular links and promote the visual expression of a range of ideas as well as an understanding of thought processes and techniques. I organise and lead an art showcase annually, working alongside the University and I look forward to the potential of this imaginative project with the Student SACRE pupils.

Appendix B: an exemplar project description - Pathways to God

Our Local Authority would like to organise our first RE conference with a focus on how different religions seek Pathways to God and what these journeys can hold. The conference would allow for at least twelve primary schools to work together with their RE co-ordinators so would also be providing Inset opportunities especially when looking at Sikhism which has only just been introduced to Primary Schools since the launch of our new syllabus. The conference would happen over two days which would allow for more children from each school to become experts for their particular day.

SACRE would like the opportunity to host our first ever Primary Pupil Conference which would enable RE Quality Mark Gold schools to work alongside other primary schools to develop a range of pedagogies to raise engagement in RE. The conference would involve a week of activity in schools as well as two days of representatives from these schools working together with faith representatives in a conference suite in a hotel. Due to the number of pupils we would like to be involved, it would not be viable to host this in a school. The conference would be held in as this is one of the least diverse areas in the LA. Many schools in this area are also small rural schools who do not have sufficient funds or even hall space to allow for workshops with visiting faith practitioners. 7 primary schools have committed to the project and if the funding bid is successful, we will then look for a further 3 schools to join us.

Our focus would be 'Pathways to God' through art-based pedagogy and introducing some schools to P4C enquiry-based methods.

We have spoken to the following who will commit to the project:

Hotel has arranged a greatly reduced room and conference rate and will include lunch. We will use this as our base for two days.

Day One: a Sikh story teller will be leading the workshops, alongside the project manager who is a recently appointed SLE for RE. We will be looking at an introduction to Sikhism and unpacking two beliefs on equality and all paths leading to God. During the day we will demonstrate a range of pedagogy which could be used in class, including 'mantle of the expert', P4C, drama and storytelling techniques. On other days of the week, K..... will be visiting participating primary schools to lead assemblies on equality and living in diverse Britain. (Participating schools will be asked to contribute to costs.) Day One will be for children who are showing confidence and ability in RE lessons at school, as we will be developing critical thinking skills.

Day Two: This is for any children selected for dance or music ability, to engage children in RE kinaesthetically. For this day children will be working with from exploring how pathways and personal journeys can be explored through traditional Hindu dance. Their second workshop will be with from working with musical composition and drumming, and Jesus' entrance into Jerusalem.

Prior to the conference there will be a Gifted and Talented song-writing day about finding an equal path led by the Artistic Director of Theatre in M..... The backing tracks will be cut to CD and given to the singing leaders so that they can perform it in their own schools to teach others about the project. This will also be recorded to YouTube and played at the start of each conference day as the theme of the conference. This will be hosted by A..... Primary School and will be for 30 pupils from the schools involved.

As part of the project, schools will commit to delivering three RE lessons with their classes before the conference. These lessons will be focused on diverse Britain and prepared by the project co-ordinator, enabling children to prepare their own views ready for sharing work on Day One of the conference. There will also be a follow-up lesson in schools for children to share what they did at the conference.

The costings for this bid are as follows:

<i>Venue (£300 plus £360 food per day)</i>	<i>£1320</i>
<i>..... workshops and contribution towards assemblies in schools</i>	<i>£1000</i>
<i>..... workshop</i>	<i>£325</i>
<i>..... workshop</i>	<i>£325</i>
<i>..... workshop and composition time</i>	<i>£500</i>
<i>..... release time (2 days for conference, 2 days management)</i>	<i>£900</i>
<i>RE Adviser to SACRE support</i>	<i>£300</i>

We are requesting the full £4000 and will ask the participating schools to pay a registration fee of £100 which includes a contribution towards food, assemblies and making up the shortfall, unless another source of funding becomes available in the meantime.

All members of SACRE will be invited to the conference or the songwriting day and will be supported to assist with the workshops. A report will be written from the conference which will be published for M..... Schools and Equality panel. We will also invite the local press and County Councillors. We will submit photos of work and a summary of the project to REQM website and RE Today, as examples of good practice. It is hoped that through the conference we will be able to promote the work of the RE Hubs and to allow future opportunities for children to work together in RE within M..... and beyond.

Many thanks for considering this application and providing the opportunities for schools to be able to apply for funding for RE-based projects. We hope that our application will be considered as strong, as our SACRE has not previously applied for funding or organised a pupil conference.