

NASACRE NEWS

Essential reading for SACREs

Issue: 4



This issue includes:

- [Chair's Welcome](#)
- [NASACRE Conference 2026 Summary](#)
- [New Exec](#)
- [New patron](#)
- [Webinar Programme 26-27](#)
- [NASACRE/Westhill Awards](#)
- [Membership invoices for 26-27](#)
- [Interfaith Week 2026](#)
- [Items for your Autumn Agenda](#)

Chair's Welcome

Welcome to our final newsletter of this academic year.

We are delighted to hear that the DfE is opening a consultation in September on the content of a National Curriculum Programme of Study for RE, as submitted by the Task and Finishing Group under Dr Vanessa Ogden in March. This is a key moment for RE and the start of phase two, in the process. SACREs will have a significant role to play still supporting schools – see below.

When I think back to a year ago and we had just become a CIO, much has happened in the world of RE in the intervening months. Many of these developments were covered in our conference in Liverpool on 18th May. It was great to see so many of you there and the positive atmosphere of engagement and enthusiasm that you brought to the day. A summary of the day can be read [below](#). Please do save the date for next year's conference, which will take place on **Monday, 24th May**.

For those of you who are in the process of, or about to start, reviewing your agreed syllabus in line with your statutory duty, we have given the following advice on the website:

“As you are aware, SACREs have a statutory duty to review their Agreed Syllabus every five years and this remains the case until and if there is any change in legislation. Given the moves towards including RE in a new National Curriculum, and the upcoming Local Government Reorganisation affecting many areas, LAs still have a statutory duty to convene and support an Agreed Syllabus Conference in a timely manner.

If you are in this situation, it may be prudent at this point to conduct a light touch review of the syllabus, or even to renew a syllabus without changes, until the new statutory settlement is more fully understood.

In areas where a school finds itself in a new Local Authority, with a new Agreed Syllabus for RE, it may continue to use the Agreed Syllabus of the old SACRE/ Authority for a transitional period.”

In other words, where you feel change is needed, keep it to the minimum!

Given the mention of our website, I do hope that you have had the opportunity to visit the [newly formatted version](#). I would like to thank the executive, and particularly Denise, Anne and Paul, for working throughout the year to improve both the content and the accessibility. We welcome feedback on the new website, so please do get in touch if you have any comments or suggestions.

We are all aware of the social tensions in our communities. SACREs can play a role in supporting schools to navigate these and NASACRE is liaising with both the DfE and the MHCLG (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government) to strengthen this role. The significant role that SACREs play has been emphasised throughout the work on the inclusion of RE in the national curriculum. The ‘Protecting What Matters’ report from the Government stressed the importance of RE and SACREs in promoting mutual understanding. We have secured funding from the MHCLG to review and update our self-evaluation toolkit and Annual Report format, adapting them more overtly to reflect the work we do to promote social cohesion alongside our work in RE and collective worship. There is a training webinar (see below) to support you with this.

[RE will be on national curriculum after 'consensus' reached](#)

As I mentioned earlier and I am sure you will by now have heard that the Government has accepted the proposal submitted by Dr Vanessa Ogden for RE to be included in the new National Curriculum. Unlike other subjects, RE’s journey into the NC might take longer than other subjects as it must pass specific changes of legislation relating to the status of RE itself. A consultation on the content will now be launched in September, and I would encourage all SACREs to respond. We anticipate that there will be an enhanced role for SACREs in supporting schools to develop their specific curriculum, providing advice and support materials for them to do this, providing and signposting to CPD and advising on aspects of social

cohesion in relation to faith and belief.

This is a significant move forward for RE, but there is still much to do in its implementation and in safeguarding the integrity of the subject. Above all, the Government needs to ensure that adequate resourcing is in place to ensure recruitment, training and retention for knowledgeable, skilled and confident teaching of the subject in all key stages. It is encouraging to read the Secretary of State's comments:

"Learning about the world's great faiths and traditions teaches children not just about the world, but how to live alongside and tolerate one another within it..... In such fractured times, it should be a source of hope that those representing the full spectrum of religion in this country have reached consensus on the most fundamental of points: what our children should learn about the world's faiths, communities and traditions."

NASACRE looks forward to working with the government and other groups in the RE community to bring this source of hope to fruition and high quality RE into all classrooms.

I would like to thank the executive who have worked so hard on your behalf. All their work is voluminous and voluntary, as well as rewarding, and it is a real pleasure to work with them all. We say farewell to Anne Andrews (though she has been co-opted for a further year to work with us on the newsletter) and Catherine Hughes, and we welcome Hifsa Haroon-Iqbal ([see below](#)).

Finally, thanks to you all who likewise work voluminously and voluntarily in your areas! I hope you continue in your enthusiasm for RE and collective worship as we move through this transformative time. Please take advantage of the training and networking we offer and let us know what further support would help. Please share the excellent work going on around the country so that we can all learn and grow together. RE and educational Collective Worship have incredible potential to transform lives and communities. SACREs lie at the heart of this.

Have a good summer's break!

Bill Moore
Chair

NASACRE Conference 2026 Summary

The 2026 NASACRE Conference in Liverpool brought together SACRE representatives from across the country for a day of reflection, challenge and connection. Delegates were welcomed by Bill Moore, NASACRE Chair, before taking part in an interactive activity exploring national perspectives on RE and SACRE work.

Keynote: Dr Vanessa Ogden – *Rejoicing in Difference*

Dr Vanessa Ogden reflected on her 32 years in education and the transformative impact strong RE departments can have when supported by active SACREs. She emphasised the “*nation building role that schools have*” and the urgent need to respond to social fault lines exposed by antisemitism and anti Muslim hostility. Her message centred on SACREs as anchors for social harmony, modelling how communities can “*live well together*”. She outlined the three pillars of high quality RE—**substantive, disciplinary and personal knowledge**—and shared her vision of a society that “*rejoices in pluralism and diversity*”, united like “*one song, with many different voices in harmony*”.

Policy Update: Deborah Weston (OBE) – CaAR Proposals & RE in the National Curriculum

Deborah Weston, Chair of the REC Policy Unit, provided an important update on national RE policy. She highlighted ongoing concerns including falling GCSE entries and diminishing RE provision in some schools. Deborah outlined the collaborative work behind the CaAR proposals and confirmed that draft RE programmes of study have been submitted to the Secretary of State. If accepted, RE would join other subjects in a full public consultation as part of the 2027 National Curriculum update. A public consultation has now been confirmed in the last few days for September 2026. She noted that the inclusion of RE may eventually influence GCSE and A level reform, and that the DfE is reviewing Collective Worship alongside RE.

Workshops, AGM & Website Launch

Paul Smalley introduced NASACRE’s newly redesigned website, and delegates welcomed three new or re-elected Executive members: Saquat Ali, Jo Backus and Hifsa Haroon Iqbal. The AGM highlighted the upcoming 2026–27 webinar programme and celebrated outgoing Executive members.

What is the most important impact for you on SACRE?

- > 1 Support RE teachers and school leaders
- > 2 Improve the quality of RE
- > 3 Strengthen community relationships
- > 4 Encourage inclusive and representative curricula
- > 5 Improve meaningful CW in schools, where pupils and staff can reflect on things of worth

The above questions were part of the interactive activity that delegates participated. These questions could form the basis of a discussion in your own SACRE and see what answers you come up with. Or consider your SACREs greatest strength and compare with what delegates said at the conference (shown below).

 In one word, describe the greatest strength of your SACRE

Most popular

diversity

11

collaboration

8

Also prominent

commitment

7

relationships

5

diverse

4

Keynote: Amy Ark – Connection Over Division

Amy Ark from the Faith & Belief Forum explored how RE can strengthen social cohesion in a climate of polarisation. Drawing on Allport's social contact theory, she emphasised the importance of safe and brave spaces, inclusive language, and storytelling: *"stories matter and many stories matter, not just a single story."* She showcased interfaith workshops, parental engagement projects and opportunities such as the Interfaith Week poetry competition—encouraging SACREs to amplify pupil voice. Her central message: the answer to division is **connection**, built through empathy, critical thinking and meaningful encounter.

Westhill / NASACRE Awards

Four SACREs shared inspiring updates on their funded projects. Delegates were encouraged to apply for the next round of awards opening December 2026.

Delegate Feedback

Feedback from the conference was overwhelmingly positive, praising the relevance of the theme, quality of presentations, networking opportunities and hospitality. Comments ranged from *"Really great day"* and *"inspiring"* to reflections on the challenges and ideas sparked by workshops.

New Exec

Hifsa Haroon-Iqbal OBE DL is a retired civil servant whose career focused on counter-terrorism, safeguarding and community cohesion. She now runs RE-Engage HHI, supporting schools, colleges and organisations with training on Religion and Worldviews, safeguarding, community cohesion and inclusive practice. As Chair of Staffordshire SACRE, Hifsa is passionate about ensuring every young person has access to high-quality Religion and Worldviews education that inspires curiosity, critical thinking and respectful dialogue. Awarded an OBE for services to social cohesion, she believes education has the power to build understanding, challenge prejudice and help young people thrive in an increasingly diverse and complex world. Hifsa is also a Deputy Lieutenant in Staffordshire.



New patron



NASACRE Trustees are delighted to announce that **The Rt Honourable Janet Daby MP** has agreed to act as our patron. Janet is Labour MP for Lewisham East and has served as Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Children and Families from July 2024 until September 2025. In addition to her political experience, Janet also served on Lewisham SACRE as an elected member, so is ideally placed to represent the interests of SACREs, Religious Education and Collective Worship within Parliament and beyond. We are grateful to Janet for agreeing to support us in this vital role and look forward to working with her in the future.

Next Webinar Programme 26-27 including 'In Conversations'

We are delighted to announce that NASACRE is running another year of webinars to support SACREs in their practice. For subscribing SACREs there is free access to all training sessions. Non-subscribing SACREs may book for individual sessions – prices below.

The Autumn term sessions are listed below. The rest of the training sessions can be found on the [website](#) and the [flyer](#).

1. Thursday 17th September 2026, 6:30-8pm:

So, you've joined your local SACRE...

Description: This session will help new SACRE members understand their role, how SACRE works, its statutory responsibilities and how members may make their contribution.

Free session for all SACREs

Aims for the session:

- *What is a SACRE?*

- *How is it composed?*
- *What is its role?*
- *What are the Local Authority's responsibilities?*
- *Your relationship to your sponsoring group as their SACRE representative*

2. Tuesday 20th October 2026, 7-8pm:

SACRE annual reports: Updates to content and opportunities

Description: This session will help SACREs to understand updates to the SACRE self-assessment toolkit and our NASACRE annual report plan, from which all SACREs are asked to create their annual report.

Free to all SACREs

Aims for the session:

- *Understanding the DfE & NASACRE revised content for annual reports*
- *Opportunities to investigate our new SACRE self-evaluation toolkit*
- *How your annual report will be used by government – how we can help to raise awareness of SACREs and community cohesion*
- *Investigating 'Protecting what Matters report' and what signals this is giving SACREs and LAs*

3. Wednesday 4th November 2026, 7-8pm:

Applying as a SACRE for a NASACRE/Westhill Award

Description: This session will help SACREs to consider the opportunity afforded by applying for and gaining an award. Hear from successful SACREs sharing what the award has enabled their SACRE to do to inspire you in writing a potential application in 2027 (application close at the end of Feb 27')

Free to all SACREs

Aims for the session:

- *Providing knowledge of the criteria for the award*
- *Understanding the timeline of the application process*
- *Opportunities to hear from a range of different but successful grant winners*
- *Including time to ask any questions you might have about the award*

4. Various dates in November 2026, 6:30-8pm:

Regional meetings for SACRE Chairs/Vice Chairs, LA leads and professional support officers, working with RE Hubs Leads and NASACRE

NASACRE in Conversation

Led by a member of the NASACRE Executive

Description: Regional sessions will allow SACREs to come together to continue NASACRE's conversation with our membership. The session will share good practice and give time for SACRE leadership teams to raise questions, discuss them and support each other.

Free session

Aims:

- *To showcase excellent work done by SACREs regionally to each other*
- *Provide a place where SACREs can support one another to problem-solve issues—and if that is not possible, a place where they can raise issues with Exec that can maybe be raised with government*
- *NASACRE Exec can communicate important information to SACREs directly*

5. Thursday 3rd December 2026, 4-5.30pm:

Supporting your SACRE as a LA officer

Description: Bringing together LA officers who support SACREs from around the country. They will give their top tips and advice from their many years of doing this role effectively.
£35 for a non-subscribed SACRE

Aims:

- *To showcase examples of successful practice when working with a SACRE as a LA officer*
- *SACRE budgets and understanding funding from government*
- *Understanding of national opportunities and professional groups to link with or be a member of as a LA officer*
- *How to build strong partnerships with SACRE members and the LA*

NASACRE/Westhill Unity, Community and Diversity Awards

Those of you who attended the conference in Liverpool will have heard from the four SACREs that are currently holding the awards and working on their projects. Their reports demonstrated the excitement that they feel in seeing the bids come to life.

If you have ideas about an exciting project that your SACRE could do that would inspire great RE or Collective Worship and you'd like up to £12,000 to fund it, why not put your ideas together and submit a bid?

The next round of bids is open now, and the final date for applications is the 28th February 2027 and all the information is on the [NASACRE website](#).

If that doesn't answer all your questions there is also a webinar on the NASACRE/Westhill awards on the 4th November 2026, from 7 – 8pm. Details can be found on the [training page](#) of the NASACRE website.

Membership invoices for 2026-27

The new invoices have been sent out to SACREs. Please check with clerks and LA officers that the subscription is paid. The webinar programme is now part of the standard subscription, so there is only one invoice to settle. If you have any queries, please contact admin@nasacre.org.uk for assistance.

Interfaith Week 2026: Lighting the Way for a Shared Future

This year's Inter Faith Week will take place from **8–15 November 2026**, with the inspiring theme "**Lighting the Way for a Shared Future.**"

You'll notice that Inter Faith Week is taking place a week earlier than usual this year. Following consultation with our working groups, we made the decision to move the dates to avoid a clash with Anti-Bullying Week, making it easier for schools to engage fully with both important initiatives.

Our Schools Working Group is already busy gathering a fantastic range of resources from partners across the interfaith sector, all centred around this year's theme. These resources will support meaningful learning and discussion across Key Stages 1–4, helping pupils explore how people of different faiths and beliefs can work together to build a more inclusive and hopeful future.

We're also delighted to announce that our Inter Faith Week Poetry Competition is returning for its second year. Following the success of last year's competition, we're planning some exciting new developments to make this year's event even bigger and better. More details will be announced soon, so watch this space!

In the meantime, make sure you save the date and start thinking about how your school might get involved. Visit the Inter Faith Week website www.ifw4schools.co.uk and sign up to our newsletter to receive the latest news, resources and competition updates as they're released.

We look forward to celebrating Inter Faith Week with schools across the country and seeing how your pupils bring this year's theme, "Lighting the Way for a Shared Future," to life.

If you want to get a richer flavour of what Inter-faith week could be like, follow this link to an article written by Manjit Kaur, NASACRE co-opted exec member: [Interfaith week 2026 - NASACRE](#)

Items for your Autumn Agenda

- Check that your SACRE has subscribed and paid to the correct bank account (Account Number: 67410361 Sort Code: 08-92-99).
- Check that all the details for your SACRE are correct on the NASACRE [contacts page](#) and inform admin@nasacre.org.uk of any changes needed.
- Look at the [training programme](#) and book your places.
- Discuss whether to apply for a [NASACRE/Westhill award](#).
- Check out the new [NASACRE website](#) for all the latest news and information.
- Your SACRE's discussion of and response to the government's consultation on RE in the National Curriculum.
- Follow NASACRE on [LinkedIn](#)



Copyright © 2026 NASACRE, All rights reserved.

[unsubscribe from this list](#) [update subscription preferences](#)



