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NASACRE NEWS

Essential reading for SACREs

Issue: 5



This issue includes:

- [Chair's Welcome](#)
- [Reflections on the RE Task and Finishing Group process](#)
- [Religious Education - why does it matter?](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(KCSiE\) 2026](#)
- [SACRE Annual Report 2025-26](#)
- [Next Webinar Programme 26-27 including In conversations](#)
- [Upcoming Conferences](#)
- [Westhill Award Bids](#)
- [Inter Faith Week](#)
- [Visits to Places of Worship](#)
- [Recent Emails to SACRE Contacts](#)
- [Can your SACRE recommend Hindu RE teachers?](#)
- [AI and RE](#)
- [Items for your next Agenda](#)

Chair's Welcome

Welcome to the 5th edition of NASACRE News and to another academic year.

As I write this, we are anticipating the launch of the consultation on the National Curriculum including the Programme of Study for RE. Recent changes at governmental level will result in some delay to the original plan. SACREs would do well to consider how they will respond when it appears. NASACRE will inform you and speak further as soon as we know what the consultation will look like.

SACRE Chairs and Clerks have received letters about the RE consultation from some organisations and NASACRE has responded to those who sent them. The link to the NASACRE response is found below. We have also sent out advice on a recent FOI request from the Secular Society.

Paul, our Executive Officer, was involved in a recent radio broadcast on the place and importance of RE in schools. It might be a good idea, as we move to the possibility of the National Curriculum, for SACREs to consider these issues themselves. Paul has written about this in an article below.

We are delighted and hugely fortunate to have our new Patron, Janet Daby MP. She joined us at our most recent Executive in-person meeting and is most knowledgeable, experienced and supportive. As a former SACRE member, representing the Council, she is fully aware of our work and purpose.



Encourage your schools to participate in [The National Conversation: Next Generation](#) (5th-23rd Oct)

Thank you for all your commitment and hard work!

Bill Moore
Chair

Reflections on the RE Task and Finishing Group process

NASACRE was pleased to play an active part in the work that followed the Curriculum and Assessment Review's recommendations for Religious Education and after extensive discussion, the Executive voted to recommend the programme of study for consultation. Throughout the process, we worked to ensure that the

voices and experience of SACREs were listened to.

NASACRE members contributed in different ways to the work of the National Curriculum for Religious Education Task and Finish Group. This included participation in reference groups, several opportunities for the NASACRE Executive to discuss and respond to the developing work, and ongoing engagement as proposals have evolved. Claire Clinton (NASACRE vice-chair) supported the Religion and Belief Reference Group, which brought together representatives of a wide range of religious and non-religious traditions, including SACRE reps and myself as the Chair of NASACRE, to scrutinise and comment on the developing proposals.

The NASACRE Executive has particularly welcomed the opportunity to ensure that the experience of SACREs and local authorities has been heard. This has included consideration of the future role of SACREs as well as the implications of a national entitlement for RE in a school system in which around 88% of secondary schools and 49% of primary schools are now not generally required to follow a locally agreed syllabus.

The process involved extensive discussion, challenge, and revision. As would be expected in work of this significance, those involved have not necessarily agreed on every detail. Reference groups were established to scrutinise and advise on developing proposals, while identified lead drafters undertook the drafting and responded to feedback through successive stages of the process.

We look forward to the publication of the Task and Finish Group's work alongside the Government's National Curriculum formal consultation. We encourage SACRE members to see the proposals as a whole and to consider the rationale and evidence that accompany them. NASACRE will provide members with further information and support when the documents are published and will encourage all SACREs to engage fully with the consultation.

Religious Education - why does it matter?

Our Executive Officer, Paul Smalley was recently invited onto the Voice of Islam radio station to join a panel discussing RE. He was joined by Waqar Ahmedi, a teacher, Ruth Marx from AREIAC and Charlotte Newman of NATRE. In the interview, Paul outlined the role of NASACRE as supporting local SACREs which bring together teachers, faith representatives and LA representatives to advise and support schools with their Religious Education and Collective Worship.

He argued that Religious Education is particularly important in today's rapidly changing and increasingly diverse society. Young people are more likely than ever before to

encounter people from different religious and non-religious backgrounds and therefore need the knowledge and skills to understand a complex, multi-faith and multi-secular world. He emphasised that religion and belief continue to shape the lives, values and actions of millions of people and that an understanding of religion and worldviews is essential for making sense of both global events and local communities. Religious Education, he suggested, contributes to social cohesion, interfaith understanding and informed citizenship while enabling pupils to engage thoughtfully with life's big questions.

In discussing effective practice, Paul proposed that high-quality Religious Education should be academic, authentic and applicable. It should be academic in its use of rigorous disciplinary approaches such as theology, history, sociology and textual analysis. It should be authentic by engaging pupils with the lived experiences and diverse realities of people of faith and belief. Finally, it should be applicable, equipping young people with the knowledge, understanding and communication skills needed to interpret religion and worldviews, reflect on their own perspectives and navigate adult life in a diverse society.

You can listen to the broadcast [here](#) with Paul's part beginning at 1h27.

Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE) 2026

The changes for KCSiE 2026 include new and updated guidance around:

- regulations and safeguarding requirements on school premises
- **prejudice-based harm, including racism, faith-based prejudice and other forms of discrimination**
- children requiring mental health support
- young carers
- children who are questioning their gender
- safer recruitment and regulated activity.

It is important for SACREs to note that the **2026 KCSiE** introduces much stronger expectations around **faith related safeguarding**:

- It strengthens guidance on prejudice-based harm, including prejudice against faith, racism and other forms of discrimination
- It outlines expectations around recognising and responding to prejudice-based harm.
- It highlights that racism and faith targeted abuse can significantly affect a child's welfare and wellbeing
- Schools and colleges should promote an inclusive, anti-discriminatory culture where racism, and other forms of discriminatory behaviour are recognised

Further information can be read here: [Keeping children safe in education 2026: September 2026](#)

Manjit Kaur, from the NASACRE executive, has written a detailed summary of the main KCSiE changes for faith and this can be accessed [here](#).

SACRE Annual Report 2025-26

Since establishing our partnership with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), we have been working closely to adapt the Annual Report Template. It is intended that this slightly updated [framework](#), will enable SACREs to promote what they have done to ensure high quality RE and Collective Worship locally as well as identifying areas for development. It also allows Government to better understand the role SACREs play in their communities, particularly with regard to social cohesion, as set out in Protecting What Matters published by the Government earlier this year.

NASACRE will be analysing the Annual Reports using this framework in spring 2027. The deadline for submission of this report to DfE is 30th December (as set out in Circular 1/94).

To clarify how the framework should be used, NASACRE will be delivering a free webinar on 20th October 2026, 7-8pm for those who are responsible for completing the Annual Report.

The project's ultimate outcome will be the publication of the national analysis report that provides government, NASACRE and SACREs with evidence of how SACREs are supporting RE, collective worship and wider social cohesion across England. The findings will also be shared with the SACRE community through NASACRE's conference and communications channels.

Next Webinar Programme 26-27 including in conversations

Develop your SACRE's potential with NASACRE's online training offer for 2026-2027. NASACRE's online training brings people together to enable SACRE's to be more effective and share good practice. The link to the training programme for this year can be found [here](#).

Look out for SACRE annual report training and in conversation events in November, as well as the Westhill webinar coming up soon.

To book a place on any of these sessions please email admin@nasacre.org.uk

Upcoming Conferences

Booking is now open for the 'RExChange' online conference, taking place on **9th and 10th of October**, with a range of speakers covering a multitude of topics, including AI in RE and several focusing on **Interfaith Learning in Schools**.

Westhill Award Bids

If you haven't started planning your bid for the next round of NASACRE/Westhill Awards there is still time. A **webinar** to help you is scheduled for 4th November and all the information you need is on the **Westhill Awards page** of the NASACRE website. This is a perfect opportunity to bid for up to £12,000 to enable your SACRE to complete a two-year project that promotes good quality RE or Collective worship, with a focus on Unity, Community and Diversity.

Applications must be received by 28th February 2027.

Inter Faith Week

The theme for this year's Inter Faith Week for Schools, **9th to 15th November**, is "**Lighting the Way to a Shared Future**" in celebration of the belief that, even in challenging times, communities can come together to build understanding, trust and friendship. It draws on the symbolism of light across faiths and traditions, including Diwali, which takes place on the opening day of Inter Faith Week.

There are a host of resources for schools including pre planned assemblies and lessons, ranging from KS1 all the way to KS4, and are all available on the **Inter Faith website**. Posters are also available for your SACRE to use on the NASACRE website here: **Inter Faith Week Posters - NASACRE**

Visits to Places of Worship

Visits to places of worship and interest are integral to RE and to the quality of learning. Visits enhance what children and young people are learning about and make their learning directly relevant to their own lives. Schools may be worried about taking children on visits, especially when there are tensions in the community or nationally. Anna Silver,

from the Board of Deputies, has noticed a decline in the number of schools visiting synagogues including some last-minute cancellations. Reasons given are “parental pushback and concerns regarding physical safety due to synagogues being attacked. Guidance from the CST (Community Security Trust) is that there is no greater risk for Jewish visitors than there ever has been. This pattern (is) a huge shame as it is destroying community cohesion and dialogue”.

It is important that SACREs emphasise the importance of such visits to their own schools and the following statement from Newham SACRE may be helpful to consider here:

“We encourage schools to take pupils on these visits so they have the experience of meeting people from a variety of religions and belief systems. We believe this is important so that they don't stereotype people from different religions and beliefs because of what they might see or hear on social media and in the news.

We know that Islamophobia and antisemitism are both on the rise at present, so for us in education, pupils being given the opportunity of a positive first-hand experience with people from these faiths and all religions and belief systems continues to be very important.”

Hifsa Haroon-Iqbal, a member of the NASACRE Executive, has written an [interesting think piece](#) to reflect on the consequences for a child when the class goes without them, which your SACRE might want to share with schools.

Recent Emails to SACRE Contacts

NASACRE were recently made aware that there have been some organisations who appeared to have used the NASACRE contacts Database to mail all SACREs with their views about the potential inclusion of RE in the National Curriculum. [Recent Emails to SACRE contacts - NASACRE](#) We believed that this may have been in contravention of our privacy policy and, if they are holding your data without your permission, a breach of GDPR laws. NASACRE have contacted those organisations to ensure that they are aware of our privacy policy around the contacts database and that they may not hold your data without your permission.

Christian Concern have replied to assure us that they did not use the NASACRE database to obtain contact details. We also received an email which stated that neither Academy Ltd, Academy Conferences, Academy Learning nor ISRSA has obtained contact details from the NASACRE Contacts database. They stated that the contact details used for their communications were sourced independently from information available in the public domain, principally through SACRE and local authority websites and other publicly accessible sources. If any individuals still have concerns about their data being held by these organisations, they should contact them.

Can your SACRE recommend Hindu RE teachers?

Invitation to Hindu RE Teachers:

Are you an RE teacher who identifies as Hindu?

A PhD study at the University of Cumbria is exploring the experiences and perspectives of Hindu educators in Religious Education. Participants are invited to take part in two focus groups and an individual interview.

To find out more detailed information and express your interest, please contact

jane.yates3@uni.cumbria.ac.uk

For more information: <https://www.cstg.org.uk/scholarship-programmes/doctoral-scholarship/jane-yates/>

AI and RE

Paul Hopkins has been teaching and working in education for about 30 years. He currently works independently (nationally and internationally) and welcomes involvement in projects around RE and technology - he recently worked with Culham St Gabriel's Trust on a project on RE and Emergent Technologies. His most recent work focuses on Generative Artificial Intelligence and Religious Education. In the summer Paul recorded a short film on RE and AI with Claire Clinton, that you could play in your next SACRE meeting.

The link is [here](#). Passcode: &Z0?2Rbg (it lasts for 12 mins)

You can also read his [article](#) that he has written for SACREs consideration.

Items for your next Agenda

- **Membership invoices for 26-27 have been sent out. Check that they have been 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.**
- **Check out the new [NASACRE website](#) for all the [latest news](#) and information.**
- **Save the date: NASACRE conference at Stratford Town Hall on 24th May 2027 – put your date in your SACRE's diary and begin to consider who will attend**
- **Encourage your schools to participate in [The National Conversation: Next Generation](#)**



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