

Feedback from NASACRE Annual Conference 2025

SACRE Report from Debbie Yeomans following attendance of the Annual NASACRE conference 19th May 2025 at Stratford Town Hall.

At this year's event there were a record- breaking number of SACREs in attendance, 64 SACREs were represented by 115 people.

There are 151 SACREs across England, 133 of which are members of NASACRE.

Below is a summary of the key points that were discussed.

The successful transition of NASACRE into a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO), was both explained and celebrated, and the new trustees of the CIO board were introduced and answered questions.

A video from Lord Khan (House of Lords) was also shared. Lord Khan, an advocate for RE, spoke about its importance and the fact that 'RE is more than just a subject', he also added that SACREs were champions for unity. NASACRE will be meeting with Lord Khan in June to further encourage his support for the subject. The video is available for you to watch on the NASACRE website.

Both were encouraging signs of and for the work towards social cohesion through all SACREs, as was the announcement of the Westhill/NASACRE grant winners- congratulations to Barnet, Haringey, Sunderland and Camden SACREs.

Claire Clinton, Lead Director of RE Hubs talked about how the Hubs supports SACREs and teachers; she shared that over 800 school speakers and representatives of places of interest have now been trained and a reaccreditation process has begun for speakers who trained over two years ago.

Kathryn Wright, Chief Executive for Culham St Gabriel's shared information about a 'Primary Focus Week', the details and resources from which can be found here: <https://www.reonline.org.uk/focus-week-primary-re-can-it-provide-a-window-on-the-world-for-pupils/>

A thank you was given to long standing members of the NASACRE Exec, and all SACREs were then invited to share a farewell to some and a welcome to some new Executive members from across the UK.

Following a live survey, suggestions were made for how NASACRE can now continue to support all 151 SACREs across the UK, including as a national voice for RE with the DfE and beyond.

Dr Joyce Miller gave a keynote speech - *Identity, community and commonality: what can Religion and Worldviews offer schools and society?* - sharing the importance

with relevant examples of how RE in schools can and should build on some of the recommendations from the CoRE Report. Whilst it was recognised that lots of work had been done to consider what is understood by "religion" and "worldview" there was also acknowledgement that RE learning could be further enhanced.

This included consideration of why more is needed than just teaching about Islam on its own to combat Islamophobia, and with the suggestion that by including an exploration of spirituality as part of the curriculum, we would enable pupils to more effectively "interculturally navigate" their own identity more inclusively to support appreciation of commonality and therefore more effective social cohesion.

Questions were invited by the trustee's panel which included,

- Why a CIO?
- Can you use CIO to attract wider funding?
- AGM – how have you chosen yourselves before AGM?
- Do central government care about SACREs?
- If RE is included on the National Curriculum – what will be the roles of SACRE?

All the slides from the conference will soon be made available to all 123 member SACREs via the NASACRE website.

With the continued focus on social cohesion, it was suggested this may be an area of work which may be of interest to local SACREs.

A report about the impact on **Interfaith Week for schools**, with which many of us have been involved has been published. This can be found here:

<https://faithbeliefforum.org/report/report-inter-faith-week-consultation/>

And just in case you haven't booked yet, there are still some places available for the upcoming Sea of Faith conference happening at the end of July: <https://sofn.uk/>