

BBC COMMISSIONED COMRES SURVEY INTO COLLECTIVE WORSHIP IN SCHOOLS

Report By: Democratic Services Officer

Purpose

1. To bring to SACREs attention a BBC commissioned ComRes survey into Collective Worship in schools reported on websites in September 2011.

Report

2. The National Association of SACRE occasionally provide through their website links to articles or publications of possible interest to SACREs. Their website¹ currently contains a link to an article published in The Guardian on Sunday 11 September 2011 'Its time to scrap the law to provide daily worship in schools'². The article was written by Andrew Copson who is the Chief Executive of the British Humanist Association.
3. Prior to Mr Copson's article a report appeared on the BBC website on 6 September 2011³ into the result of the ComRes survey for BBC local radio's Faiths programmes.
4. The result of the survey is also reported on the ComRes website⁴ and the main details have been extracted from the site and set out below:

'Almost two thirds of parents (64% in England) say that their children don't attend a daily act of collective worship at their schools.'

'The survey also reveals that 60% of the general public are not in favour of enforcing the law which prescribes a daily act of worship in schools.'

'Those without children in the household (39%) feel more strongly than those with children (30%) that the requirement should be enforced.'

'Older members of the public are more likely to agree that this should be enforced than younger people. A majority (51%) of those aged 65 and older believe it should be enforced, compared to less than three in ten (29%) of 18-24 year olds.'

ComRes interviewed 1743 adults in England by telephone, between 15th and 24th July 2011. Data were weighted to be demographically representative of all adults in England.

Out of this sample, 500 respondents are parents of children of school age.

5. Various opinions arising from the survey are voiced via the website articles and ComRes reported that the BBC anticipated that a special series looking more deeply into the issues arising from this research would be broadcast from Sunday 11 September on religious affairs programmes across BBC Local Radio.
6. As little seems to be reported about Collective Worship in schools the above is brought to SACREs attention for information only. SACRE Members may wish to read the websites in full so I have provided the website addresses below.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the report be noted.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Further Information can be found on the following Web addresses:

1. NASACRE – www.nasacre.org.uk/
2. Article in The Guardian – <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/belief/2011/sep/11/daily-worship-schools-law>
3. The BBC – <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-14794472>
4. ComRes - <http://www.comres.co.uk/poll/523/bbc-collective-worship-poll.htm#>