

REPORT FROM NASACRE MEETING 4TH MAY 2006

Report By: **Bridget Knight, Lead Primary Inspector**

Purpose

1. To report on the NASACRE meeting held 4th May 2006.

Background

2. Following my attendance on behalf of SACRE at the National Association of Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (NASACRE) meeting held on 4th May 2006, I briefly set out below some items of interest:

- Mrs Robin Kanarek was recommended as a speaker for SACRE Conferences. Contact details: 22 Mount Pleasant Avenue, Exmouth, Devon, EX8 4QG
- NASACRE website now available: www.nasacre.org.uk
- Statement made to effect: ' A good SACRE knows how its schools are performing in RE'. Brent SACRE has produced a booklet for schools explaining what SACRE is and outlining its code of conduct to "subdue suspicion" by schools.

Request that this and other development ideas are shared nationally via the NASACRE website.

- Young People's Faith Forum Project: Tristram Jenkins, [Shropshire SACRE] Introduced an example of a young people's inter-faith day through art and music workshops was felt to be a positive experience for those involved.

Five further SACRE's have been successful in the 2006 bid for this.

- Consultation to take place in due course concerning 14-19 curriculum work to re-evaluate the criteria for A-level and the place of RE in vocational courses.
- HMI subject Inspections – please see separate briefing paper. (Appendix 1).
- Plan for a national strategy for RE which covers improvement to teacher training and building capacity of SACREs. Plan to develop business plan and take to Andrew Adonis.
- Request for the annual SACRE report to be sent to QCA.
- Proposal from Culham Institute/Re online to support SACRE Self Evaluation – please see separate briefing paper. (Appendix 1)

Discussion groups of above proposal reflected a mixed response: Some SACREs felt the system being offered was too onerous and so had introduced their own systems, but had had a poor return. The issue of insecure foundations for the quality of data that can be gleaned from Ofsted reports was also raised. It was felt that the RE adviser was critical in terms of organising and leading this,

and that some form of school self evaluation of RE was crucial. This issue will be further reported at the meeting and SACRE may wish to consider a formal response which should be sent to: secretary@nasacre.org.uk.

- Proposal for NASACRE to offer a number of regional conferences/workshops to meet regional need.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the report be noted and consideration be given to making a formal response to the school self-evaluation of RE issue.

Appendix 1

NASACRE keynote address: Mick Waters, Director Curriculum Division at QCA: “changes to the curriculum and the place of RE”.

BRIEFING PAPER

- MW hopes to meet and listen to SACREs, and invited us to have continued dialogue with QCA.
- MS’s own doctoral thesis covered the distinctive nature of learning in a multi-faith school.
- MW very concerned that RE should not be a marginal subject. He has advocated that the national framework should be kept the same and used to inform the local syllabus. There is the important addition, however, of the notion of ‘big ideas in RE. This has involved national consultation about ‘what is the essence of a subject?’
- MW’s role is to ‘Develop a word-class, modern curriculum that will inspire and challenge all learners and prepare them for the future’. He felt many children, especially at secondary school, are not challenged. Many comply but do not engage. He suggested that we need to work together as ‘community of educators’ to address this aim.
- MW felt very strongly that RE should be seen in the context of the wider whole curriculum. He defined the Curriculum for the Future as containing the following elements:
 - The universal element
 - Based on the Every Child Matters (ECM) 5 outcomes
 - Unique elements (local authority issues, school cluster potential and individual school characteristics)
 - The school as ‘broker’ of flexibility, in terms of time, space and people, to the best advantage for the children.
 - The entire planned learning experience: the National Curriculum and the place of RE.
 - The community ‘signs up’ to this.
 - The Curriculum means the entire planned learning experience, including out of hours activities, school performances and so on.
 - The events in a school are as important as the lessons
 - Routines of the school are phenomenally important
 - The quality of the assembly is profoundly important (add up the number of hours children spend in assembly – what is that experience like for them?)

What are we trying to achieve?

- What do we want children to be like? Design your curriculum from this starting point so that you end up with successful learners, responsible and confident citizens.
- NW advocated that all children should experience: the dawn of the day, the opening of a flower, the power of the weather.

Dance, drama, music, sport, arts, maths, English are the basics: all children need something to write, dance singe, draw about.

How to organise learning

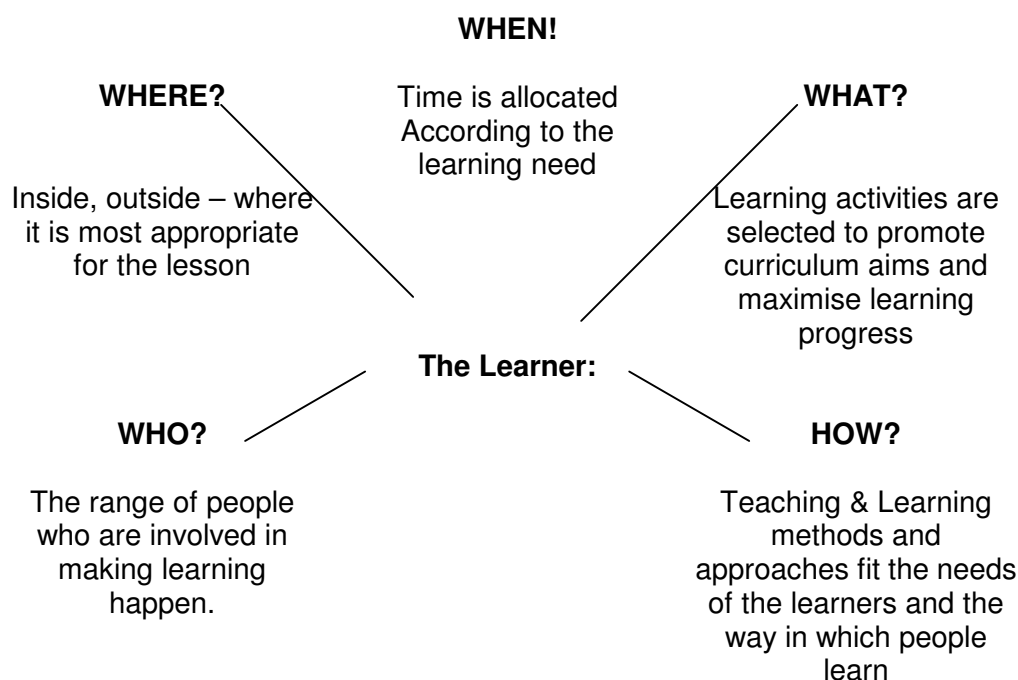
“Children want to know what to do with their lives”

- MW advocated that the following model is used to design a non-linear curriculum:

Outcomes – implications – experience – subject/theme – out of hours learning

e.g. ‘Participation’ – contribution to – charity – RE – team – the common good – tending plants – citizenship – Sports at English.

We also need to think about:



We need “Contagious professionalism” to create organisations that are about continuous improvement

RE

- Still growing as an option at GCSE + A Level.
- Assessment and differentiation is a weaker element of teaching overall, and there is over – reliance on knowledge as opposed to understanding.
- Resourcing (RE teachers time as well as concrete aids also an issue.
- QCA wants to build strengthen at KS2.
- Widespread national consultation and has been accepted by all participating faith groups, local Authorities, stakeholders and partners.

RE Schemes of Work

- Early Years – 19.
- Wide Consultation.
- Non-statutory.

- Underpin and illustrate the national framework with examples of how RE can be implemented.
- Available online from June 2006.

Some Challenges:

- Danger of superficial interpretation.
- Learning about RE as a subject.
- Learning from RE as a subject.
- Young peoples' changing allegiance with faith traditions – many refuse to practice.
- Collective worship ("is there a correlation between the quality of collective worship and overall standards?")

Ways forward for SACRES:

- The place of content and knowledge.
- Monitoring and improvising standards.
- The effectiveness of the local syllabus.
- Partnership with Local Authority and others.

What are the Local Authority issues within the quality of collective worship, and the contribution of RE to social and racial harmony for your SACRE?

Is your SACRE:

- A 'sleeping partner'?
- An 'uncritical lover'?
- A 'hostile witness'?
- A 'critical friend'?

What should SACRE do now?

- Talk, talk, talk!
- As for time at headteacher meeting and subject conferences.
- Talk at Governors Conferences.
- Talk with local communities.
- Have a presence at Parent Conferences.
- Talk to employer organisations.
- Encourage RE involvement in together subject conferences.
- Send the Annual SACRE Report to QCA.
- Grapple with 'big issues'.
- Get children to see the world picture more.