

## Barnet SACRE Spring Newsletter for Schools

A briefing paper was sent out to all schools & on the recent Ofsted inspections & implications for schools. This was titled Briefing paper 'Trojan Horse'. The key messages were:

- It is important for all schools to articulate what they are doing to prepare their students for life in modern Britain
- The diversity of religious belief in the UK
- Provide opportunities for **encounter & dialogue** with other faith communities

A DfE document **British Values** has also been circulated to all schools.

### The next primary coordinators meeting is on:

**Date:** Thursday 5 March

**Time:** 9am -12pm

**Subject:** Good assessment in Religious Education

**Venue:** North London Business Park

Please bring any example of pupils work (with no identifying name or school information) either to the session or beforehand email to [annasallnow@gmail.com](mailto:annasallnow@gmail.com)

There will also be a **Teach Meet** open to all teachers in Barnet & Enfield to share ideas & good practice.

**Date** Thursday 12 March

**Time** from 4.15pm

**Venue** Firs Farm Primary School Rayleigh Road, Palmers Green, London N13 5QP

Please email Sabah Raza if you plan to attend by Monday 9<sup>th</sup> March 2015  
[slraza@hotmail.com](mailto:slraza@hotmail.com)

### The 2014 Hockerill/NATRE prize

The 2014 Hockerill/NATRE prize recognises the work and dedication of those who teach RE. It is awarded for innovation in RE – where approaches to the subject are original and fresh. Last term, presentations were made to the prize winners and their schools. In the primary category, first prize went to Gill Tewkesbury for Pilton Bluecoat CE Academy who brought together 3 parts of the RE curriculum by focusing on Jim, an 18 year old student who has just finished his A- levels and is planning to work as a Gap year student for a charity in Africa. Each week Jim sends a letter, e-mail or text to the class telling the children what he is doing as well as asking for help and advice. The children follow Jim on his journey as he learns more about the Christian faith. The secondary winner was Erica Melton and Helen Smith of Pate's Grammar School whose scheme of 8 lessons exploring ethics and sport was particularly aimed at engaging Year 8 boys. The use of sport in this innovative and transferrable scheme was not just to grab students' attention, but a way of exploring some genuinely thoughtful RE, balancing learning about and learning from religion.

Entering this year's Hockerill/Natre prize

Both primary and secondary schools are invited to apply for the 2015 prize. Hockerill and NATRE recognize that the needs and requirements of the primary and secondary sectors are different and therefore will give separate prizes to each sector. Prizes come in 2 parts:

- 1) £600 for the school to enable it to purchase new RE materials
- 2) £600 educational bursary for the teacher to part fund attendance at a specialist educational course for RE

The closing date for applications is 31<sup>st</sup> May 2015, with winners being notified in July and presentations being made in the Autumn term. To download the application form and guidance go to [www.hockerillfoundation.org.uk](http://www.hockerillfoundation.org.uk) or contact Mr Derek Humphrey at [info@hockerillfoundation.org.uk](mailto:info@hockerillfoundation.org.uk)

### Spirited Arts Competition

Spirited Arts 2014 (the 11<sup>th</sup> annual 'Art in Heaven' competition) had a record number of entries. It has now attracted over 300 000 participants with children and young people taking part from as far away as Indonesia and South Africa. Judges were kept busy for a mammoth 3 days choosing the winners. Teachers reported that the competition had an impact on standards, depth, creativity and enjoyment in RE for pupils aged 5- 18. Winning entrant Isabel Howden (12) based her entry on the golden rule Winners in all 5 categories and other commended entries can be found in the 2014 Art in Heaven gallery at:

<http://www.natre.org.uk/about-natre/projects/spirited-arts/art-in-heaven/2014/>

If you are considering entering this year's competition, it can be worth looking through the gallery with your class for inspiration. Spirited Arts is a great way for all teachers to get their classes thinking and creative in RE and new participants last year remarked on what a positive experience the competition was.

The five themes for 2015 are: Front Page: **The RE Book**□**Faith (or Doubt?)**□**Questions: Big, Bigger, Biggest Stories That Change Lives Where Is God?**

There are special categories for digital video and group entries. The closing date is 31<sup>st</sup> July 2015 with judging taking place in August and winners notified during the Autumn term. To find how you, your pupils and others in your local group can get involved, go to the Spirited Arts section of NATRE's website:  
<http://www.natre.org.uk/about-natre/projects/spirited-arts/introduction/>

## SMSC (spiritual, moral, social & cultural) education

An RSA report ***Schools with Soul*** offers a very powerful and original analysis of school-based provision for SMSC. The project was an RSA-led investigation carried out with an inter-disciplinary group of 40 experts in research, school leadership, teacher training, school inspection and social media. The investigation used a pioneering method of evidence-gathering supported by two intensive meetings of the expert group. Culham St Gabriel's supported the investigation financially and participated in the group and writing process. NASACRE welcomes and agrees with the report's analysis that SMSC is in danger of being marginalised, and its recognition of the need to strengthen a distributed understanding of SMSC amongst school leaders. The nine recommendations certainly give SACREs material for further reflection about how they might continue their commitment to SMSC, in collaboration with others and in ways that draw a clear, though related distinction between SMSC and RE. *'Schools with Soul': Our investigation found that the requirement of schools to develop the broader human qualities of their pupils has become side-lined due to the overwhelming pressure placed on them to deliver better exam results.'* It concludes that despite schools' legal commitment towards providing spiritual, moral, social and cultural education (SMSC), too many schools took a 'scattergun approach' that risked provision being 'everywhere and nowhere'. The report argues that despite an increase in school autonomy, deeper thinking about how to equip young people with the skills, attitudes, values and capabilities necessary to succeed in the modern world has been rendered far more difficult by the constantly changing terrain of policy initiatives.

NASACRE Executive member Bill Moore offers an approach and tools that is educationally coherent to help promote SMSC, especially spiritual development. NASACRE believes that SMSC is fundamentally about the nature and purpose of education. The documents offer tools that will help with Ofsted, but more importantly the PowerPoint offers a view that goes beyond Ofsted. It is vital, as the RSA report suggests, that schools work collectively to define and understand what SMSC means in their context and how this improves learning for the pupils/students. We hope that it will help SACREs support schools. Please let us know your thoughts on this and also work you do to support your schools in their provision of SMSC. All these materials can be accessed on the NASACRE website to sign in: **members2015** password: **gr8RE4all** (case sensitive).



### **REC Expert Advisory Group**

REC Expert Advisory Group has been set up & all details can be found on the REC website.

### **Christian Muslim Guidelines created in 2009**

The 10 commandments of Mission!

The guide, which contains 10 points of advice, has been produced by the Christian Muslim Forum, a national body set up in 2006 to improve relationships between the 2 faiths.

“Islam and Christianity are two world religions that are missionary- and therefore are ever vying with each other for converts. But we should be able to speak of our faith honestly and with conviction, without demeaning or ridiculing others. There is no place for coercion or manipulation and when a person does convert from either faith that decision should be respected. It is our hope that these ethical guidelines will be adopted by many Christian and Muslim organisations.”

## **Ethical Guidelines for Christian and Muslim Witness in Britain**

As members of the Christian Muslim Forum we are deeply committed to our own faiths (Christianity and Islam) and wish to bear faithful witness to them. As Christians and Muslims we are committed to working together for the common good. We recognise that both communities actively invite others to share their faith and acknowledge that all faiths have the same right to share their faith with others.

There are diverse attitudes and approaches amongst us which can be controversial and raise questions. This paper is not a theology of Christian evangelism or mission or Da'wah (invitation to Islam), rather it offers guidelines for good practice.

The Christian Muslim Forum offers the following suggestions that, we hope, will equip Christians and Muslims (and others) to share their faith with integrity and compassion for those they meet.

- 1) We bear witness to, and proclaim our faith not only through words but through our attitudes, actions and lifestyles.
- 2) We cannot convert people, only God can do that. In our language and methods we should recognise that people's choice of faith is primarily a matter between themselves and God.
- 3) Sharing our faith should never be coercive; this is especially important when working with children, young people and vulnerable adults. Everyone should have the choice to accept or reject the message we proclaim and we will accept people's choices without resentment.
- 4) Whilst we might care for people in need or who are facing personal crises, we should never manipulate these situations in order to gain a convert.
- 5) An invitation to convert should never be linked with financial, material or other inducements. It should be a decision of the heart and mind alone.
- 6) We will speak of our faith without demeaning or ridiculing the faiths of others.
- 7) We will speak clearly and honestly about our faith, even when that is uncomfortable or controversial.
- 8) We will be honest about our motivations for activities and we will inform people when events will include the sharing of faith.
- 9) Whilst recognising that either community will naturally rejoice with and support those who have chosen to join them, we will be sensitive to the loss that others may feel.
- 10) Whilst we may feel hurt when someone we know and love chooses to leave our faith, we will respect their decision and will not force them to stay or harass them afterwards

## Lord Nash

Lord Nash, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Schools wrote a letter to all those responsible for faith schools: Sanctuary Buildings Great Smith Street Westminster London SW1P 3BT tel: 0370 000 2288 [www.education.gov.uk/help/contactus](http://www.education.gov.uk/help/contactus)

Dear Colleagues 7 January, 2015

I am writing to you as Minister responsible for faith schools. I have recently had many conversations about the important role SACREs and local authorities have in supporting this area, which have encouraged me to write.

I would like to emphasise the importance of good teaching of religious education and the central role of SACREs and local authorities. All pupils benefit from good quality religious education teaching. RE makes a significant contribution to pupils' academic and personal development. It also plays a key role in promoting social cohesion and the virtues of respect and empathy, which are vitally important in our diverse society. The recent events in some schools in Birmingham have highlighted the importance of promoting the crucial values of respect and tolerance in our schools.

The role of a SACRE is to support the religious education curriculum and collective worship within schools. Local authorities have a duty to enable SACREs to fulfil their statutory responsibilities in these areas. They should assure themselves that the SACRE is functioning well and holding regular meetings. It may also be appropriate for the local authority to support the SACRE's work to provide teacher training in RE and collective worship training.

It is vital to continue to improve the academic rigour of RE in schools so that pupils develop their knowledge and understanding of this subject. The last Ofsted review of the subject found that the potential of RE was not being realised in many schools. The introduction of the new and more demanding national curriculum makes the importance of improving religious education even clearer.

The recent events in Birmingham schools have also highlighted the importance of all schools promoting the fundamental British values of the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. In some schools in Birmingham, inappropriate religious education teaching and a distorted school ethos served to undermine those fundamental British values. We have recently publishing guidance for all schools to make clear their responsibilities in this area, and have introduced new legislation for independent schools, academies and free schools to actively promote fundamental British values. The guidance is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/improving-the-sm-sc-development-of-pupils-in-independent-schools>.

Good progress has been made recently to improve religious education. All students studying a GCSE in religious studies will now be expected to study two religions along with textual analysis, or philosophy and ethics, which will broaden their knowledge and understanding. We have also taken measures to ensure we have sufficient high-quality religious education teachers, who have detailed subject knowledge and expertise. We have introduced a new bursary scheme for the recruitment of high-quality RE teachers in 2015/16. Trainees who hold a 1st class degree qualify for a £9,000 bursary, and those with a 2:1 £4,000.



SACREs are well placed to contribute to this important work through their development of appropriate and demanding RE syllabuses, and their support to schools on the effective teaching of RE, including continuing professional development for RE teachers.

It is inappropriate for any school, whether they are a faith school or not, to offer their pupils a narrow interpretation of religious education. All schools should ensure their pupils are aware of the tenets of all the major faiths represented in Great Britain. SACREs can support this through their development of locally agreed RE syllabuses, and their advice to schools on collective worship and on effective RE teaching. I would encourage SACREs to consider the ways in which their locally agreed syllabus helps pupils to develop an understanding of Christianity, whilst also learning about the teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain.

As part of their responsibilities, SACREs must provide an agreed syllabus to support the religious education curriculum in schools, which must be reviewed every five years. A report must also be produced annually outlining the activities of the SACRE. All SACREs are encouraged to submit their annual reports to NASACRE for inclusion on their website to enable members to showcase the important work that is going on around the country, share knowledge and learn from best practice. The Department intends to commission a review of SACRE annual reports to identify good practice, and ensure that all SACREs are fulfilling their statutory duties.

SACREs would not be able to exist without the advice, help and support of the many dedicated individuals and communities, who work together to fulfil their many and varied roles. I understand that many members offer their time and expertise voluntarily, and they continue to offer professional and personal support to schools and communities in an increasingly complex and demanding environment. I would like to offer my sincere thanks to everyone who serves the pupils in their area in such a way.

Yours sincerely

JOHN NASH

### **Living Faiths Resource**

Oxford University Press has published 'Living Faiths'. This well-received, unique course for KS3 is designed to engage students by using case studies and films of real people and families practicing their faith in the UK today. To see a video clip of the resource, please go to OUP's website: <https://global.oup.com/education/content/secondary/series/living-faiths> or take a look at the course guide.

All good wishes

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