

## Appendix 2 (Agenda Item 11)

### AREIAC Executive response to Religion and Worldviews: the way forward. A national plan for RE.



The AREIAC Executive has considered the final report of the Commission on RE and offers the following in response.

First and foremost is our gratitude to the commissioners for the hard work and thorough research they have individually and collectively contributed to this over the last two years. We recognise both the enormity of the task and the challenge it must have been given the wide range of views and interests of RE.

The report has much to commend it. It offers a structure and process for the way forward, which if adequately supported and resourced, will build on the existing strengths of RE in schools and in many areas across the country and so promote quality RE for all.

The change in name might be significant for some, but AREIAC feels that what matters most is that we provide quality RE for all pupils in all schools across the country. Whatever we call the subject, there needs to be clarity about what it is and above all what it is not.

The recommendation for a national entitlement strikes a balance between a set of national principles for developing coherent programmes of study and local involvement. There is still work to be done on the national entitlement and AREIAC is looking forward to sharing our wealth of experience and expertise, working with partners and teachers in this critical next stage.

Our members also have extensive experience and expertise in ITE, CPD and leadership development and we fully support the well thought through recommendations in this area. We are, however, concerned the role of SACREs and their wealth of local experience should not be lost or overlooked in these exciting developments.

One concern expressed universally in our discussions relates to the right of withdrawal from RE. We recognise that this is legally complex but have some reservations about the wording of recommendation 11 iii, which weakens the principle that RE is an important entitlement of all pupils. We recognise that this is not the intention, but would encourage all involved to emphasise to government that by clarifying the situation it must strengthen rather than weaken school's provision for a coherent RE curriculum.

Our over-all view is that this report, properly resourced and collaboratively developed, provides a good way forward for RE. The crucial work remains to be done and we are confident that AREIAC members will be at the centre of this in partnership with other RE bodies, schools and teachers. The commissioners should be thanked and commended for laying the foundations for future developments.

#### Note

AREIAC is the organisation Association of Religious Education Inspectors Advisers and Consultants and as such its members have diverse and wide-ranging views on the nature of RE. This response reflects the professional dialogue of experts and not necessarily the views of all members.