

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education
6th July 2016
Report of the Deputy Chief Executive and Director for Families and
Communities

An update on NASACRE

1 Purpose of Report

1.1 To present members of SACRE with a brief update on key issues that have developed or arisen since the last meeting of SACRE.

2 Summary

2.1 Members of SACRE will receive a brief report on a number of key issues, including the annual conference that was held in London on May 17th 2016. These are matters on which it is appropriate to brief members of SACRE.

3 Recommendation

3.1 That members of SACRE receive the report and note the contents

4 Background

4.1 NASACRE is the national body of SACRE's. National meetings are held to which members of SACRE are invited and encouraged to attend. Issues are discussed which have local or national importance for RE.

4.2 Members will be briefed on any key developments.

5 Equal Opportunities

5.1 This report has been prepared in accordance with the County Council's policies on equal opportunities.

6 Financial implications

6.1 Financial implications may be raised by individual items. These have been dealt with elsewhere, or will be raised at future meetings of SACRE.

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Conference report

This conference was held at Westminster Central Hall in an atmosphere of convivial discourse and debate. Michael Metcalf and Mary Gale attended on behalf of Staffordshire SACRE. The key note speakers were as follows:-

The **Rt Hon Baroness Elizabeth Butler-Sloss GBE**, formerly President of the Family Division of the High Court was the first female Lord Justice of Appeal and until 2004, was the highest-ranking female judge in the United Kingdom. She has chaired many high profile enquiries and inquests. Baroness Butler-Sloss served as Chair for the recently published Commission on Religion and Belief in British Public Life: **Living with Difference**. (December 2015)

This publication looks at religion in a wider context than just educational,- covering areas such as the media and law but also has strong messages for the teaching community. It states that "*education about religion and belief is essential because it is in schools and colleges that we have the best and earliest chance of breaking down ignorance and developing individuals who will be receptive of the other and ask difficult questions without fear of offending*" Page 38.

Professor Adam Dinham is Professor of Faith and Public Policy at Goldsmiths, University of London. He is also Chair of the British Sociological Association Sociology of Religion Study Group (Socrel), Professor of Religious Literacy, Diakonhemmet University College, Oslo, Norway and Honorary Stephenson Professor of Leadership, Religion & Society, Sheffield Institute for Interdisciplinary Biblical Studies, Sheffield University, UK. With Martha Shaw, Professor Dinham is the co-author of **RE for REal: The future of teaching and learning about belief**. This report looks at the future of teaching and learning about religion and belief, focusing on knowledge and skills that school leavers must have to engage effectively with religion and belief in schools, communities future work places and other contexts.

Both of the above speakers were accomplished in their delivery of their messages to the audience at the conference. Both reports make a number of recommendations for education and there are a number of similarities. Question time after each of the key note speeches generated debate about the future of RE in general.

SCARE members were asked during discussion time to reflect on the recommendations and comment on whether they agreed with them.