

Appendix 1

Report from 24 May NASACRE Conference by SACRE Attendees, Jane Kelly & Sam Duddles

Keynote Speaker 1 : Ed Pawson: Working Together for High Quality RE in Religion and Worldviews

The REC [Draft Handbook on Religion & Worldviews](#) was published May 2022, and is intended for syllabus writers and curriculum developers, including SACREs. It translates the REC vision for Religion and Worldviews into practical teaching resources. He argued that Religion & Worldviews is not so much a change of name as a change of approach, reflecting a more inclusive emphasis. The REC will be campaigning for a name change that reflects Britain in the twenty first century.

According to Ed, World Religions paradigm implies that religions are static, with borders, while a R&WV paradigm reflects religion in the real world. A significant number of SACRES have adopted a R&WV approach to their new agreed syllabi and the REC has received bids to write exemplar curricula.

The Handbook promotes the idea of a National Statement of Entitlement (NSE) setting out the purpose of RE, especially in light of academisation. There will be a need for clear accountability for RE, regulating standards and expectations in academies and free schools.

The REC is also campaigning for significant investment in training high quality RE teachers, and pressing the government to reinstate the ITT bursary.

Keynote Speaker 2: Richard Kueh HMI for RE: 'The substance of the curriculum'.

Richard Kueh noted the publication of 12 May 2021 produced by OFSTED which was a research review. To see this document visit this link:

[Research review series: religious education - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

He mentioned that there is to be a *subject report* published but gave no information about what would be in it or when it would be published. He went on to describe the challenges of RE in a multi-religious and multi-secular society and acknowledged that poses difficulties for schools where many faith groups are represented by the school communities and the fact that it is impossible for schools to cover every faith group in a way that would be scholarly.

He described the forms of knowledge which support good practice in RE:

1) **Substantive** – content and concepts – the raw material and aspects relating to a faith group

2) **Ways of knowing** - How to know about religious and non-religious views – this is at a scholarly level.

3) **Personal knowledge** – Pupils own awareness of their own spirituality and religious/non-religious practice.

He spoke in more depth about the way schools select the curriculum and the ways that RE needs to be scholarly.

Richard Kueh elaborated further about **Substantive knowledge** and was clear that *'being inclusive is not a guarantee of high quality teaching'* and that the danger is that an overloaded curriculum can contribute to reinforcing stereotypes which is so unhelpful. His encouragement to those who teach RE is that they give themselves permission to work on the principle of *'collectively enough'* and encouraged us all think about focussing on depth of knowledge where there could be a move away from teaching "all people of this faith group believe...." To acknowledging the potential variety of ways of being e.g. *'non practising Catholics, 'secular Jews', 'cultural Muslims' and 'holding Christian values but not going to church'*. Through this approach the *'bigger picture can only be gained by depth of knowledge of RE and world views'*

He acknowledged that there is always going to be limitations to any approach. In relation to **Scholarly knowledge** this is knowledge based on research from authentic sources; he expressed the need for educators to encourage learners to take time to look more deeply into *'subject matter that is cognate and connected'* this is also something he feels is extremely important to the high quality teaching of RE. This will then mean that teachers will not make the mistake of making *'vivid claims'*. There is the danger that non specialist RE teachers have not had the opportunity to ensure their knowledge base is appropriate for the scholarly teaching of RE. He told us of a brilliant metaphor that he learned from a colleague. The danger is that *'ignorance and fear in the teaching of RE obstructs a way forward for really high quality teaching'*. His colleague gave this metaphor: Scholarship and value are found if the environment at University level is like *'percolating coffee'*. That is *'fresh coffee grounds immersed in hot water and we know it fresh coffee because it produces a distinctive identifiable aroma'* so therefore *'High quality teaching of RE needs to be like percolated fresh coffee is wonderfully percolated at University level and its rich aroma makes it way into the classroom'*. Through this connected scholarly learning the knowledge base is accurate, precise and the subject matter that is taught is authentic.

In the breakout room after his speech, the group I was with found it very difficult to answer the question we were given about approaching RE in a scholarly way and I took the opportunity to highlight Pondering time that is inserted into the Living Difference iv agreed syllabus for Hampshire schools!

Panel Questions

Paul Smalley answered a question about the White Paper, emphasising that these were his own views, not those of NASACRE. He is currently writing a paper about the impact of academisation and is concerned about the implications for RE and SACREs. He suggested that individual MATs will set their own curriculum and argued that local syllabi are already irrelevant, as some LAs share their syllabus with LAs in other areas, and many use a common syllabus. The white paper recommends regional hubs for Maths and English and this might work for RE. Wales has effectively introduced a national curriculum for RE, but he thinks that the government will be reluctant to change existing legislation. He spoke of the danger that SACREs will still be meeting in 30 years' time, but with no real purpose or responsibility.

Other: The [NASACRE website](#) has been updated.