

NASACRE AGM 2014,
Central Hall, Westminster.
22.05.2014

Attended by :
Steve Manion,
Nicky Younosi.

Rising to the Challenge

Keynote Speaker: Stephen Lloyd, MP,
Chair of All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Religious Education.

Main points of talk:

- APPG, why started? In today's "global" world there is a strong need to teach children the facts of world religions by trained teachers.
- SL (Stephen Lloyd) stressed that all concerned with the teaching of RE strongly believe in the above.
- Need to recognise that teaching world religions in schools is stronger now than ever before.
- RE teachers are "profoundly" professional and committed to teaching this subject but feel, unfortunately, under valued even though RE is a most important subject.
- Now is the right time, before a General Election, to focus on RE teaching and its place in the curriculum, now is the time to lobby.
- SACREs need to appreciate the commitment and determination of RE teachers; APPG fully supports RE teaching and training.
- Need to ensure children understand world religions. RE teaching is around truth, freedom, understanding, history and living in harmony.
- History shows that inaccurate understanding of religion/s leads to trouble and strife,.

Questions/ Answers

1. How to deal with media negativity and inaccuracy? APPG and NASACRE need to work together to deal with this.
2. What about schools (e.g. free schools) not teaching RE? APPG looking into this issue. All schools are funded to teach RE. If this is not happening raise awareness of this with local MP..All political parties need to put teaching RE on their manifestos and SACREs need to help APPG do this. Use the General Election for this.
3. Religious literacy is needed not just to teach facts but to teach how to handle facts. It is learning about and learning from. APPG agrees RE is more than just teaching facts.
4. LA support. Budgets are being slashed and some SACREs are without admin support. Will add this to the APPG agenda.
5. The future of SACREs? Confident APPG is winning the battle in Westminster. It is going to be difficult for SACREs for the next couple of years, but change is coming.

6. There is a concern regarding properly train RE teachers and RE teacher CPD and professional progression; a concern that RE teachers are leaving the profession or are moving away from RE as a subject. APPG and SACREs need to help the DfE to draw up a criteria and protocol to support RE teachers. Pay related performance management is here to stay for a few more years. A protocol is needed to help head teachers to evaluate RE.
7. Area of concern: voice of the child needs to be part of the planning and process, how do we measure success? An important issue. Success? How peoples' attitudes have changed over the last 30 years. There is a need to keep communication outlets open.
8. How can we work together to continue the good work? Keep up the pressure on DfE, Westminster and lobby different parties. Need to create a scheme to publicly reward outstanding teachers and students. Work together with REC, APPG and local SACRE.
9. What if the LEA becomes a commissioning only LEA? Get LA Councils to recognise value of SACREs and preserve SACREs, involve local MPs , encourage local MP to talk to SL. Need to raise this issue with Education Secretary and arrange a debate regarding RE and academies and free schools.

Business Meeting:

- invite local MP to talk on why RE is important
- performance related pay is a new issue and not a welcome addition. If a teacher teaches just one RE lesson a week DfE counts it as a teacher in post and the result is that it shows no RE teacher shortage.- the problem of RE teachers' CPD has not gone away. NASACRE aware of this and is working at national level to find a solution.
- NASACRE has put in a bid to fund the analysing of SACRE annual reports. Annual reports are very welcome.
- All academies and free schools also have funding to teach RE, if not doing so then SACRE should inform DfE.
- Chairman should attend head teachers meetings to discuss concerns and issues.

Treasurer's report

Budget in the black thanks to SACREs for membership payments.