



# Shaping the future

Last week I went to the NASACRE conference, entitled 'Shaping the Future'. "NASACRE?" I hear you say. Every Local Authority has one: a Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education. They are tasked with devising a local syllabus for RE and oversight of RE and Collective Worship in the Borough's schools. I am the Chair of Enfield's SACRE.

## *What is the point of RE?*

A good question, and one on which there is a lot of debate. Because unlike most subjects, RE can be both academic and affective; it deals with things that matter a great deal to some people and on which many of us disagree. But what most do agree about is that it is important that everyone—not just school children—becomes more 'religiously literate'. Khan berated Trump for being ignorant—and even the most intelligent people can be religiously illiterate.



## *Is this a Christian country?*

Alan Dinham, who wrote a report, "RE for Real: The Future of Teaching & Learning about Religion & Belief", says 'Yes—but it is also plural, secular and

non-religious'. He highlighted the changes in our religious culture, and made a plea for RE to reflect it. I'm not convinced: I think our religious culture is 50% apathy and ignorance, and I have no wish to propagate that in our schools!

## *British Values*

One of the pillars of 'British Values' - another buzz-word of today's educational world—is respect for those of other beliefs. I was heartened to hear one delegate at the conference who explained that respecting people did not mean you had to agree with them. In fact, one definition of Religious literacy—the goal of RE—is 'Robust disagreement about truth claims'.

## *Considering truth claims*

So, how religiously literate are you? Do you know what truth claims are made by those with other beliefs? You may think you know what Christianity is, but what are its truth claims?

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