

Lancashire Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE)

Annual Report 2023-2024



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Words from the Chair of Lancashire SACRE

I commend this Annual Report on the work of Lancashire's SACRE. The support of the Local Authority - especially in the active involvement of its Elected Members in the work of the SACRE - helps to keep our work relevant and forward-thinking. The first steps have been made towards a more radical revision of the Agreed Syllabus for the coming years, and we have been pleased to continue our engagement with leading teachers from our schools. As ever, the leadership shown by our professional officer, and the clerking team, has been invaluable.



Peter Martin Chair, Lancashire SACRE

Meetings of the Lancashire SACRE

Lancashire SACRE met five times during the reporting period. All meetings were in-person meetings. The following table gives a brief overview of the agenda items for each meeting:

Date	Contents
2 October 2023	-Evaluation of the SACRE Development Plan
	-SACRE attendance
	-Report of the LA Officer
	-Building Bridge's report
	-Observers' contributions and members' news.
	-Correspondence
20 November 2023	-Election of chair and vice chair
	-Discussion with governor services
	-Draft annual report and approval of new development plan 2023-2025
	-Building Bridge's report
	- Observers' contributions and members' news.
	-Correspondence
5 February 2024	-Report of the LA Officer and SACRE newsletter
	-Discussion relating to the National Content Standard (RE Council 2023)
	-Presentation about the new RE Hub website
	- Observers' contributions and members' news.
	-Correspondence
22 April 2024	-Induction pack for new members
	-Gathering information for the places of worship directory
	-Arrangements for the annual school survey
	-Feedback from the North West RE SACRE Hub
	-Attendance at the NASACRE annual conference

	-Observers' contributions and member's news.
	-Correspondence
8 July 2024	-Legal duties around convening an Agreed Syllabus Conference -SACRE Newsletter -NASACRE annual conference feedback -Feedback from the Faith and Wellbeing conference -Discussion relating to the release of the Ofsted RE Subject review – Deep and Meaningful? April 2024 -Building Bridges update -Observers' contributions and members' newsCorrespondence

Minutes of the meetings can be accessed on the Lancashire SACRE web site:

http://council.lancashire.gov.uk/mgOutsideBodyDetails.aspx?ID=385

An attendance overview can be found in the **Appendix**.

Quality and Standards Committee

The QSS is a working party that meets between meetings of the full SACRE to drive forward the SACRE's business. Meetings of this smaller committee are open to all members and were held three times during the reporting period as follows. All meetings were held virtually.

Date	Contents
18 October 2023	-Finalising the new SACRE Development Plan 2023-25
17 January 2024	-Final edit and approval of the SACRE Annual Report -Reviewing the Monitoring Report and agreeing next steps -The National Content Standard for RE- detailed discussion.
5 June 2024	Gathering data for the new SACRE Directory of Visitors and Places of Worship Agreeing content for the new members Induction Pack.

Ethnicity Across Lancashire Schools

Number and Percentage of Pupils 2024

	Lancashire no	Lancashire %	National no	National %
Any other ethnic group	1699	0.95	203561	2.40
Asian - Any other Asian background	2760	1.54	188037	2.21
Asian - Bangladeshi	1378	0.77	151875	1.79
Asian - Chinese	602	0.34	63774	0.75
Asian - Indian	4435	2.48	337382	3.97
Asian - Pakistani	14625	8.16	388315	4.57
Black - Any other Black background	416	0.23	66036	0.78
Black - Black African	1684	0.94	406246	4.78
Black - Black Caribbean	99	0.06	78817	0.93
Mixed - Any other Mixed background	2729	1.52	236814	2.79
Mixed - White and Asian	2511	1.40	143206	1.69
Mixed - White and Black African	839	0.47	79940	0.94
Mixed - White and Black Caribbean	1190	0.66	134384	1.58
Unclassified	1961	1.09	141908	1.67
White - Any other White background	6628	3.70	609047	7.17
White - Gypsy/Roma	362	0.20	28594	0.34
White - Irish	236	0.13	20677	0.24
White - Traveller of Irish heritage	210	0.12	6798	0.08
White - White British	134768	75.23	5212524	61.34

2021 Lancashire- 12 area Census Data

Christian	54.7%
No religion	31.5%
Muslim	6.9%
Hindu	< 1%
Buddhist	< 1%
Sikh	< 1%
Jewish	< 1%
Other religion	< 1%

More detailed information can be found here:

Religion - Lancashire County Council

Agreed Syllabus Conference

In October 2024 Lancashire County Council agreed to convene an Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC) for the purpose of reviewing the Lancashire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education. The syllabus must be legally reviewed and re-launched by 2026. The first meeting of the ASC took place in October 2024.

During the reporting period, the Lancashire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education (RE) was adopted by at least five Lancashire academies and 17 non-Lancashire academies. Four Local Authorities use the Lancashire Syllabus. Namely Wigan, Warrington, Halton and St Helens. Some Blackpool schools also buy into Lancashire's website resources.

Religious Education (RE)

Five associate consultants support the work of the LA Officer who is attached to the SACRE. Four are primary specialists. They enable the authority to provide a continuous programme of teacher training to improve subject knowledge in the teaching of RE. The following support was provided during 2023-2024:

- Termly newsletters which signpost schools to new resources, national developments and advice.
- Free support to those schools where provision for RE is evaluated to require some improvement. This is informed by Ofsted reports and information from the annual school survey.
- Training for those in school-based initial teacher training (SCITT)
- Training to clusters of schools across Lancashire.
- Free termly network meetings.
- Training for secondary teachers on how to raise standards across KS4.
- Training on assessment and moderation in religious education
- Training for other authorities who buy into the syllabus.
- 1: 1 consultancies to individual schools.

Lancashire SACRE has continued to improve methods of communication with schools. This includes the website, a termly newsletter and a twitter page in addition to use of the county portal and emails. A new electronic click form is now available for schools who want to request support for RE. This is located on the RE Website.

Monitoring of Religious Education (RE)

SACRE uses several methods to monitor standards and the quality of provision in RE.

For example:

- Scrutinising Ofsted and SIAMs inspection reports.
- Collecting end of key stage attainment data.
- Analysing published data for GCSE/ A level.
- Requesting the completion of an annual school self- evaluation to check statutory duties and request feedback from schools.

- Analysing the Lancashire pupil attitude questionnaire.
- Undertaking school visits to celebrate and share good practice or inviting schools to attend SACRE meetings.
- Monitoring school websites
- Monitoring requests for withdrawal
- Analysing feedback from teachers who attend training.

Each year all schools are asked to complete a school self-evaluation survey. Outcomes from the 2024 survey are as follows:

Primary

85% of primary schools responded to SACRE's annual 2024 survey. This is a very positive increase in the number of responding schools and Lancashire SACRE are very grateful for their participation.

End of Key Stage 1 & 2 Attainment

78% of Y2 pupils from the schools who responded were judged to have met the expected standard in religious education (RE) in 2024.

84% of Y6 pupils from the schools who responded were judged to have met the expected standard in RE in 2024. This is a teacher assessment judgement and compares to 74% of pupils who were judged to meet the expected standard nationally in reading.

The effectiveness of curriculum Implementation

All community schools were using the Lancashire Agreed Syllabus other than two schools who were using a published scheme. 50% of VC schools were following the Blackburn Diocesan Syllabus, 'Questful RE'.

97% of schools judged the quality of teaching to be at least good in their schools. 7% judged it to be outstanding

Schools shared the following strengths in practice:

- Visiting places of worship and welcoming representatives from different faiths into school. This aims to build pupils' understanding of the living religious traditions in their communities.
- •Building links between schools in different contexts so that pupils engage with peers who are predominately of another faith or cultural heritage.
- •Actively involving pupils in interactive experiences to celebrate festivals across a range of faiths. For example Helmshore Primary School delivered a 'light up' religion day which explored the symbolism of light across a range of different religions.
- Hosting regular interfaith days.
- Developing scrap books to evidence philosophical thinking and the development of personal knowledge.
- •Systems to evaluate collective worship so it remains relevant to everyone's needs.
- Providing enriching, creative approaches to teaching RE e.g. using music, art and poetry.
- Hosting regular parental faith based workshops to develop a shared understanding of the lived faiths in the community.
- Developing pedagogy by embedding vocabulary, introducing retrieval starters and low stakes quizzes and creating knowledge organisers.
- Adapting effectively for pupils assessed to have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

- Developing a knowledge of justice issues in collective worship to inspire pupil's to act as global citizens.
- Providing a range of pupil leadership opportunities including to use of RE ambassadors/ champions, ethos leaders and worship warriors.
- Providing dedicated time for staff training, monitoring, moderation and evaluation.

Some schools requested support with the following:

- Training for newly appointed RE leaders.
- Becoming more skilled in adapting learning to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Accessing links to quality assured learning resources and artefacts
- Arranging trips to places of worship across a wider range of faiths.
- Developing methods of accurate assessment.
- Improving the quality of collective worship
- Promoting spiritual development across the breadth of the curriculum in line with an agreed approach.
- Building teachers' subject knowledge across a range of faiths.

86% of schools reported that their school had a nominated governor for religious education. This shows a positive improvement compared to data collected in 2022-2023.

As a result of the primary survey, Lancashire SACRE plan to:

- Provide free support for schools who evaluated their practice to be less than good overall for both RE and CW.
- Celebrate and share the practice of schools with outstanding provision.
- Investigate the rise in requests for withdrawal from collective worship.
- Ask the LA to create a programme of CPD in response to survey findings.
- •Work with governor services to raise the profile of RE across governing boards.

Secondary

34 secondary schools responded to the annual RE survey. This is an excellent response for which Lancashire SACRE is extremely grateful. The range of schools that responded comprised all 9 community schools, 18 academies (6 of which taught denominational RE), 1 voluntary controlled school and 6 special schools. Data collected indicated that:

- Most schools were providing a distinct religious education curriculum at all key stages.
 4 were not. Those that did, reported that their curriculum had a clear and coherent structure that allowed students to deepen knowledge over time. Some schools identified that it was an ongoing challenge to ensure that sufficient time was allocated for RE at KS4 (for non- examined students) and KS5.
- Other than 3 schools, all schools were teaching both Abrahamic and Dharmic religions
 plus non-religious worldviews. Three schools felt that their teaching of non-religious
 worldviews needed to be more explicit. All schools felt that they were preparing
 students to live and engage in a diverse, complex, multi-secular society.
- Most (27/34) schools felt their teaching enabled pupils to build disciplinary and personal knowledge through the lenses of theology, human science and philosophy.
- 5 schools reported that the RE curriculum for each year group was not yet clearly uploaded to their website.

- 27/34 schools reported that at least one teacher was an RE specialist. Despite this, all schools evaluated that their non-specialist teachers could implement their curriculum effectively.
- The range of professional development opportunities provided for secondary RE varied greatly from school to school. Some schools reported regularly attending training hosted by RE today, Humanist UK, Edge Hill University, Dioceses and had undertaken courses on GCSE exam preparation. Some teachers had attended the RE Today 'Strictly RE' event and another school was driving forward an initiative to link RE and ITT through the SKE initiative. However too many teachers (especially the non specialists) were only accessing internal professional development and for some teachers no training was provided at all. Internal support included receiving updates at faculty/ departmental meetings, receiving 1: 1 support from the head of department and being encouraged to undertake personal research. In one school the head of department had videoed samples of lessons to model expectations for the non specialist. Where access to CPD was limited, schools reported that regular monitoring and moderation was timetabled to check on the quality of provision.
- 30/34 schools reported being familiar with the Ofsted Subject Report 'Deep and Meaningful?' released in April 2024. However 5 schools reported that this had not yet been shared with the senior leadership team.
- 30/34 schools felt that they had established an effective assessment system which enabled teachers to check students' understanding and recall of the curriculum.
- 91% of schools evaluated the quality of RE teaching to be at least good in their school. 18% judged it to be outstanding. This judgement had been formed as the result of a range of monitoring strategies such as: book scrutiny, lesson visits, student voice, discussions with staff and quality assurance and analysis of assessment judgements. In some schools the quality of education in RE had been further evaluated by SLT and external advisers. Findings had led to adaptions to improvement plans and informed programmes of coaching and training.
- 10 schools reported that none of their Y11 students were entered for a full RE GCSE in 2024. Provision for non- examined RE was patchy. Some schools had designed their own bespoke RE curriculum or offered courses from external providers such as AQA, Ed Excel Pearson and WJEC. Others were offering little in the way of discrete RE teaching. When it was provided it tended to be part of a PSHE/ life skills/ Citizenship programme.
- Only 4 schools reported entering students for the short RS course.

As a result of the secondary survey, Lancashire SACRE plan to create a programme of CPD in response to survey findings.

GCSE Outcomes (KS4)

In 2024 the number of pupils entered for GCSE Religious studies in Lancashire was 7,039, which is a reduction from 7,112 in 2023. This represents 8.2% of all KS4 pupils in the North West region (85,792).

Attainment remains below the national average, with **attainment at Grade 4+ at 67%** (national average 71%). Progress at Grade 4+ is **-3%** (national average 0%)

The data is reported for all state-funded schools which include local authority maintained mainstream schools, academies, free schools, city technology colleges, further education

colleges with provision for 14 to 16 year-olds and state-funded special schools. They exclude independent schools, independent special schools, non-maintained special schools, hospital schools, pupil referral units and alternative provision. Alternative provision includes academy and free school alternative provision.

Pupil group reports show that pupils of **Indian heritage** made the most progress from their starting points. However, pupils who qualified for **FSM6** and those with **special educational needs and/or disabilities** made the least progress

KS5 Outcomes 2024 (A level)

In 2024, A-level Religious Studies results in Lancashire showed a positive trend. The overall pass rate was **97%**, grades A*-E with *45%* of students achieving grades A-B.

Several schools and colleges in Lancashire reported notable successes.

Ofsted Reports and SIAMS reports

199 inspection reports were published for primary schools and 59 for secondary schools between September 2023 and July 2024.

129 maintained primary schools were inspected as well as 25 academies and 25 special schools. 94 schools had a faith foundation (either voluntary aided or voluntary controlled). Voluntary aided schools teach denominational religious education.

Inspection reports for maintained and voluntary controlled schools are scrutinised by the LA officer. There are few specific references to the quality of education in religious education. Only two community primary schools had a deep dive into RE across the reporting period. In neither school was the quality of education in RE referenced in the published Ofsted report. However, sometimes there are references to a school's duty to build knowledge about the diversity of modern Britain and an overall ethos of inclusion. For example:

Helmshore Primary School: Pupils show a deep respect for people with different backgrounds, beliefs or faiths.

Walton-le- Dale Community Primary: The school is determined to broaden pupils' horizons. Pupils learn about different religious and cultural festivals, as well as celebrating British cultural traditions.

Penwortham Girls High School: Diversity is celebrated well. Pupils relish the opportunities to learn about cultural traditions and different faiths. As such, pupils have a mature understanding of fundamental British values. They are prepared very well for life in modern Britain.

In seven primary schools pupils' knowledge of equality and diversity was judged to be underdeveloped. These schools will be provided with free support from Lancashire SACRE,

The LA Officer also monitors SIAMs inspection reports for voluntary controlled schools that use the Lancashire Agreed Syllabus for RE. Feedback was positive across the reporting period. For example:

Newchurch St Nicholas VC Church of England Primary: RE is purposeful and aligned with the school's Christian vision and values. It is designed to help pupils explore worldviews and world religions.

Higham St John's VC Church of England Primary: The RE curriculum at the school is highly effective. The commitment to treating it as a core subject by all staff, underscores the

importance placed on this subject...... The school participates in the 'LCC Building Bridges' project. Visits from faith leaders representing the Muslim, Jewish, and Hindu communities contribute to a rich and diverse learning experience. As a result of all this, pupils are engaged and enjoy their learning in RE

Withdrawal from Religious Education

There were 65 requests for withdrawal from religious education lessons over the academic year 2023-2024. This has more than doubled compared to the year previously and is a matter for investigation by the SACRE.

The religious backgrounds of the withdrawn pupils were as follows: Jehovah Witness/Plymouth Brethren (46 pupils compared to 16 in 2022-23), Atheist (5 pupils compared to 1 in the previous year), Christian (2) and Muslim (12 pupils compared to 8 in the previous year).

Responses indicated that schools respond to withdrawal in several ways. For example, providing alternative work (sometimes provided by the parents and sometimes related to PSHCE), moving the pupil to a parallel class or providing supervision outside of the class area. Schools report positively on avoiding requests for withdrawal by building positive relationships with parents.

Advice provided to the Local Authority

During 2023/2024 the SACRE has provided advice to the Local Authority on a range of matters relating to policy and provision for Religious Education. For example:

- Recommendations on the variety of professional development and breadth of support provided to schools. This ensured that the LA targeted support to those areas of need identified in the self-evaluation survey as well as those school who are struggling to provide quality RE.
- Advice on how to engage with academies. The LA has ensured that academies can access all of Lancashire's RE resources, are included in all circulation lists and invited to participate in surveys.
- Advice on aspects of monitoring that the SACRE wish to engage with.
- Advice on how to develop pupil voice.

SACRE has not referred any issues to the Department for Education during the past academic year.

Complaints and FOI requests

SACRE has a role in investigating complaints against schools in relation to RE and Collective Worship. No such complaints were received in the past year.

During the reporting period, the Local Authority received two formal requests for information under the FOI act.

Academies

Lancashire SACRE ensure that all Lancashire academies are provided with free access to resources to support delivery of the Lancashire Agreed Syllabus. The SACRE are currently discussing ways to strengthen relationships with academies as identified in the development plan.

REQM, Religious Education Council

Lancashire SACRE encourages schools to apply for the RE Quality Mark and regularly signposts schools to the audit tool. Schools can apply for three levels of the REQM award. See http://www.reqm.org

Collective Worship

A comprehensive suite of documents are available on the RE website to support schools in meeting their legal obligations with regards to the delivery of collective worship. This resource is entitled 'Mirrors and Doors 2' and was updated in 2021. The documents available are as follows:

- A. Example of a collective worship Policy
- B. Resources
- C. List of themes for primary RE
- D. Suggested programme of themes in action for primary RE
- E. Suggested programme of themes in action for secondary RE
- F. Long Term Planning Grid
- G. A Planning, Recording and Evaluation Pro-forma for a Week
- H. An Act of collective worship Pro-forma
- I. Monitoring Pro-forma
- J. 32 ideas about collective worship from RE Today (2011)
- K. Where is God? A visual resource to demonstrate an assembly idea (2011)

94% of the schools who responded to the annual survey confirmed that they are meeting legal requirements and providing a daily act of collective worship. This is an improving picture. In fact, 11% of schools felt that their provision for collective worship was outstanding. Training will be offered to a small group of schools who require improvement in this area.

Determinations

Determinations are made where a school, on behalf of a number of parents, requests Collective Worship other than that set down by statute. No such requests have been received by SACRE during the past year. A Determination Request Proforma was designed and created by SACRE for use if needed.

Requests for Withdrawal from Collective Worship

There were 41 requests for withdrawal from collective worship over the academic year 2023-2024. The religious backgrounds of the withdrawn pupils were as follows: Jehovah Witness/Plymouth Brethren (31 pupils in total), Muslim (6 pupils), Atheist (5), Christian (2).

Links with other Agencies

The Lancashire SACRE continue to maintain positive links with several agencies namely:

The Lancashire Governance Association (LGA)

The Lancashire Association of School Governing Bodies is an independent Governors' organisation, run by Governors for Governors. Nearly 500 Governing Bodies subscribe to the Association. The LGA speaks on behalf of, and represents, Governors in Lancashire.

The National Association of SACRES (NASACRE)

NASACRE works to support, strengthen and promote the work done by local SACREs and represents the interests of members at a national level.

The LA Officer and another SACRE member, representing one of the teacher unions, represented Lancashire at the NASACRE Annual Conference which was held in York on 20th May 2024. Feedback was provided to all SACRE members.

Diocesan Groups

Lancashire SACRE maintains positive links with the following Diocesan groups e.g.

Anglican – Blackburn, Liverpool, Leeds and Manchester

Roman Catholic - Liverpool, Lancaster and Salford.

Methodist - Lancashire District

NATRE and RE Today

NATRE is a subject association for religious education professionals in primary and secondary schools. It provides a focal point for their concerns, a representative voice at national level, and publications and courses to promote professional development.

RE Today Services works to support multi-faith RE in schools by providing consultancy, teaching and learning resources and a subscription service.

Several SACRE members have strong links with NATRE and RE Today. This ensures that all members are continually updated with new national developments in the teaching and assessment of RE.

Universities (University of Cumbria and Edge Hill University)

During the last academic year Lancashire SACRE forged positive links with local universities. Regular contact is made with Edge Hill University through the Senior lecturer in RE and former NASACRE chair.

Northwest Hub (NWHub)

For several years, Lancashire SACRE has hosted the 'Northwest Hub' SACRE network. Representatives from several SACREs across the Northwest are invited to come together to raise issues of common concern and share good practice. The Northwest Hub met in November 2023 and March and June 2024. The November meeting was led by members from NASACRE and general national updates were provided.

The following issues were discussed:

- -The use of annual surveys to support SACRE's monitoring role
- -The Identity Unboxed Project which is run by the Faith and Belief Forum.
- -The balance between Dharmic and Abrahamic religions within syllabi.
- -Ideas for a shared online student voice event for Y10 students.

- -Updates from the RE Hubs website by Jane Yates
- -The Ofsted Subject Report 'Deep and Meaningful?' April 2024
- -Progression in disciplinary knowledge.
- -Induction programmes for new SACRE members.
- -The Religions and Worldviews Toolkit released by the RE Council in May 2023.
- -Feedback from the NASACRE National Conference
- -The Young Ambassadors Project.

Representatives from Halton, Blackpool, Bolton, Bury, Cumbria, Lancashire, Rochdale, Warrington, St Helens and Wigan are usually represented.

The SACRE supports the work of other local authority teams within Lancashire. Such as the equality and diversity team and PSHCE department.

Local SACRE Involvement

Lancashire SACRE works with Building Bridges Burnley to offer schools a unique chance to enrich Religious Education (RE) through visits from faith representatives and trips to places of worship. By signing up for a Service Level Agreement (SLA), schools can bring faith and religion to life through lived experiences. These workshops are customised to meet the specific needs of each school and are an excellent way to promote and celebrate Lancashire's diversity through positive role models.

In addition, to the work of Building Bridges Burnley, SACRE members ensure that schools are signposted to a range of faith events across the county for example linked to Interfaith Week and the UN sponsored World Interfaith Harmony Week. Lancashire SACRE has connections with the Lancashire Improvement Equality and Diversity Team, Faith in Lancaster Interfaith Group, Building Bridges Pendle and Building Bridges Preston.

SACRE Management and Operation

During the reporting period, Lancashire SACRE was supported by the following officers of the County Council:

Mrs A Lloyd, LA Officer Special Support School Adviser

Dave Gorman Senior Democratic Services Officer

SACRE continues to be well supported by the Local Authority. Funding has been used to pay for

- The services of RE consultants e.g., for writing resources, providing consultancy support and leading INSET
- The time of the LA Officer (15 days/ year)
- Administrative support (0.5/ week)
- Supply cover for teachers supporting the work of the SACRE
- Attendance at NASACRE conferences and travel expenses

- Room letting rates for meetings, e.g., hosting the NWHub.
- Subsidising courses and offering free network meetings.

National Reports

The following national reports/guidance/ events were considered by Lancashire SACRE over the year:

- The National Content Standard- Religious Education Council 2023
- The Ofsted Subject Report -' Deep and Meaningful' April 2024
- The Religions and Worldviews Toolkit Religious Education Council May 2024.

This report will be circulated to all Lancashire schools, the DFE and NASACRE

SACRE Attendance 2023/2024

Representative Group	02.10.23	20.11.23	05.02.24	22.04.24	08.07.24
Group 1 -					
Christian and other religious denominations which appropriately reflect the principal religious traditions in the area	2	0	1	2	3
Group 2 -					
Representing the Church of England	2	2	2	2	2
Group 3 -					
Representing the Teaching Association	3	2	1	3	3
Group 4 -					
Representing Lancashire County Council	1	2	2	4	3
Co-opted					
Members	2	1	1	2	2
Observers					
	1	2	2	2	2
Officers					
	3	3	2	3	2
Total					
	14	12	11	18	17