

Sefton Council



**Sefton Standing Advisory Council on
Religious Education
(SACRE)**

Annual Report 2022 - 2023

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Section One: Introduction and the Work of SACRE

Words from the Chair

I have great pleasure in presenting the Annual Report of the Sefton SACRE for 2022/23. We have continued in our efforts to support schools and RE teachers throughout our borough to ensure that Sefton children receive a quality religious education. We have welcomed new members to our SACRE to increase our diversity and representation and hope to grow our SACRE further in 2024.

Our SACRE is committed to highlighting the positive outcomes that can be achieved by a quality RE syllabus, delivered by well trained and supported RE teachers. These include:

- Developing critical thinking skill by getting students to think for themselves,
- Understanding of and empathy for others and the ability to see other points of view,
- Helping children think about big questions such as the meaning of life,
- Teaching pupils to articulate their personal beliefs and values while respecting the right of others to differ,
- Giving pupils an understanding of a range of religions and other world views, enabling them to develop their ideas, values and identities.

We live in difficult and turbulent times. Empathy, understanding, tolerance and the skills to articulate ideas and make sense of the world are necessary to navigate and thrive.

I would like to thank all the Council Members, our dedicated staff and our adviser Ian Ross. With their help, I am confident that Sefton SACRE will continue to provide excellent support and advice to all Sefton Schools.

Diane Roscoe Chair of Sefton SACRE 2022 - 23

Overview

This annual report is prepared by Sefton SACRE. SACRE as a body is required to advise the Local Authority on matters relating to Religious Education and Collective Worship. This report provides a picture of the support given for Religious Education and Collective Worship during 2022-23. The report is a public document which is also sent to the National Association of SACREs (NASACRE) and the Department for Education.

For further information on the report or on RE and Collective Worship in Sefton, contact Ian Ross at ian@penninelearning.com

For information on SACRE please contact the clerk, Jane McNeice at Jane.McNeice@sefton.gov.uk

Dates and content of meetings

There were four meetings of Sefton SACRE during the year 2022-23 held at the Professional Development Centre, Formby on 29th September 2022, 29th November 2022, 7th March 2023 and 22nd June 2023. Themes for these meetings have been agreed as part of the SACRE Work Plan. Meetings are open to the public and minutes are also available on-line.

Diane Roscoe was appointed chair of SACRE in June 2022 and was ably supported by Natalie Ford as Vice Chair. As SACRE has been reconstituted, we have looked carefully at membership of different groups, and we are conscious that diversity in representation is needed including the range of faiths and beliefs in the area as well as working with Multi Academy Trusts.

As well as considering the general position of RE and collective worship in the borough, SACRE discussed the following issues at its meeting during the year:

- The Local Agreed syllabus and CPD implications for subject leaders and non-specialist teachers.
- Clarification of funding for Sefton SACRE responsibilities and activities.
- Review of provision for RE, including time allocation in all schools in the borough.
- Improving representation on SACRE from those groups currently under-represented.
- Completion of SACRE self-evaluation.
- Reviewing collective worship guidance for all schools in the borough.

- National Association of SACREs (NASACRE) – items of interest or action, including information from NASACRE conference and training for SACRE members.

SACRE Priorities and actions for 2022-23

Produce regular information for schools through the updated SACRE website.

The SACRE website is now up to date including contact information and guidance. This has also been shared with the national RE Hubs website.

Provide updated guidance on key areas

- RE
- Collective Worship
- Celebrating diversity
- SMSC/Fundamental values
- Withdrawal procedure advice
- Tolerance of faith toolkit and sensitivity to faith document.

Template policies for RE and Collective Worship have been shared with schools. Guidance documents are now available on the SACRE website for all schools including withdrawal advice, collective worship guidance and a new document to support schools in understanding sensitivity to faith called 'Sharing the Journey'. Although this guidance has been produced and shared with schools we cannot yet judge the impact of how these are being used in settings until the results of provision surveys are analysed.

CPD support

Termly subject networks

Offer new coordinator training

During the year we have set up a teacher network supported by Meols Cop High School. This network for coordinators and subject leaders is yet to be developed fully to share good practice in RE.

A one-day course for coordinators in primary schools was successfully delivered in February 2023. This enabled coordinators who attended the course to design their RE curriculum and consider mapping of subject knowledge and concepts across year groups.

Subject Leader support

1:1 professional discussions with all secondary schools on their RE provision

1:1 support for school leaders on RE time/ long term planning

Develop the RE Award scheme as a step towards REQM

Through provision surveys of both primary and secondary schools we have identified key questions to ask at school improvement partner visits to schools including how schools are fulfilling their statutory duties of teaching RE. The consultant/ professional advisor has been available for support to schools requesting help through virtual and face to face meetings. The RE Award scheme has been developed in line with the national REQM. This is an evidence based self-evaluation which schools can use to evaluate their own practice. This can then be used as a stepping stone towards the national REQM.

Enhancing RE Provision

Produce an up-to-date faith visits list of places of worship or visitors to support quality RE

Work is yet to begin on this list, but schools can access some information on visits and visitors through the RE Hubs Website. <https://www.re-hubs.uk>

Self-evaluation

During the year, Sefton SACRE completed a process of self-evaluation based on the NASACRE template. Arising from this the following areas future development were identified and will be built into the development plan for the next two years.

Section 1: Management of the SACRE and partnership with the LA and other key stakeholders

- Understanding the wider LA perspective to focus meetings and direction.
- Continue to widen membership to ensure full representation of faiths and worldviews.
- Ensure that the process of induction is well organised with new members receiving a training/ discussion session.
- Continue developing linkage with national and local priorities. Refine targets as more data and information is available – questionnaire and GCSE analysis.
- Set up a data analysis group which can then inform questions for visits to schools with a focus on non examined KS4
- Professional partner visit will inform schools doing well to gain better understanding. Need to develop links with local interfaith and neighbouring LAs through NNW SACRE Hub
- Good secondary and MAT representation on SACRE and now need to develop primary membership of SACRE

Section 2. Standards and quality of provision of Religious Education

- Continue collecting data from questionnaires, professional conversations to inform CPD and further support for RE.
- Need to collect data from GCSE and questionnaire to present in annual report.
- Continue analysing data from questionnaires and GCSE results to target support for schools.
- Continue developing the SACRE website including regular newsletters and support for schools through CPD and networks.

Section 3: The effectiveness of the locally agreed syllabus (continuation of targets from previous year)

- Professional discussions will include gathering information about impact of AS
- Develop CPD networks to share good practice in the Agreed Syllabus

Section 4. Collective Worship

- Collect information about Collective Worship in the LA and identify support through monitoring and collective worship reviews.

Section 5: Contribution of SACRE to promoting cohesion across the community

- Include a standing item on agenda to ensure community representation on SACRE. Use the census 2022 material and ward make up information to ensure effective membership.
- Once a year discussion with community cohesion lead in Sefton to discuss how SACRE can support Community Cohesion.

Further details of the self-evaluation or the development plan can be obtained via the clerk to SACRE.

Meetings for 2023-24

Meetings for the 2023 – 2024 academic year have been provisionally set for 28th September 2023, 30th November 2023, 13th March 2024 and 27th June 2024. Themes for these meetings

have been agreed as part of the SACRE Work Plan. For more information contact the clerk, Jane McNeice at Jane.McNeice@sefton.gov.uk

Priorities for 2023 - 24

Monitor the provision of RE and Collective Worship in all schools and identify priorities for support. Provide effective support for coordinators and subject leaders through primary and secondary RE networks. Identification of training needs will take place through the annual survey and discussions at networks/ CPD events.

Provide CPD for schools through middle leaders training (New Coordinator Course) and for teachers to develop subject knowledge and consistent planning of units of work.

Develop a database of quality assured places to visit and visitors to enable schools to enhance the understanding of the lived experience of people of faith and no faith.

Continue collaborating with the national RE Hub and local NNWHub of SACREs.

Section Two: Statutory Responsibilities: Religious Education

The Local Agreed Syllabus

The Local Agreed syllabus, is the statutory curriculum for all maintained schools in the borough. This syllabus has been produced by RE Today Services and follows RE Council guidance laid out in 2013 as well as the Commission on RE Report 2018, the Ofsted Inspection Handbook 2019 and Ofsted Research Review. Other academies and free schools must teach RE according to the requirements of their trust deed or funding agreement. Although SACREs and local authorities do not have any responsibility or authority for their curriculum, it welcomes use of these resources by all local schools. A recent survey of the schools demonstrates that most schools and academies without a faith background have adopted the Sefton Agreed Syllabus.

Standards and Monitoring

SACRE enquiry

In June 2022, Sefton SACRE asked all schools to complete a brief survey about the provision of RE.

The main general findings and issues from the survey were:

50% of secondary schools completed the survey and 30% of primary schools provided a return. Of all schools that took the time to complete the survey all had adopted and appropriate syllabus. Most schools give appropriate time to the teaching of RE and that it is mostly taught as a discreet subject. Where areas of concern have been noted SACRE will write to schools and arrange for a professional discussion regarding the time allocated or the provision in place. School Improvement partners will meet with secondary schools to discuss questions that have arisen from the SWF Census return or from the provision survey.

The survey has informed SACRE of the needs of schools and enabled targeted support and action Responses from school includes:

- Materials and training to support multi-faith teaching.
- Contact details of quality assured visitors who could come and talk about their faith.

- Subject knowledge training and guidance on adapting the local syllabus to suit the needs of the school.
- Adapting planning for special needs children.
- Developing resources to support the teaching of the syllabus.

SACRE will provide support and training through termly networks set up by the Group C (Teachers) from across the borough.

A new provision survey and needs questionnaire has been sent to all schools in September 2023 and the analysis of this will be included in the report for 2023 – 24.

Examination results

GCSE and A Level results for 2023 were not available at a local level when this report was published. SACRE has analysed the SWF Census return to generate questions for secondary schools as it appears that some schools have limited hours of teaching of RE at KS4.

A report produced by NATRE (National Association of the Teachers of RE) reveals that the removal of the short course from performance tables has had a devastating impact on the number of children leaving school with a qualification in Religious Studies. In many cases, the loss of the short course has coincided with an increase in the number of schools reporting zero hours of timetable time for RE in year 11 in the school workforce data. At A level, entries have remained fairly stable over recent years in England but in Wales, there is a step decline, of around 33% since 2020. The reasons for this need further investigation.

Key points:

1. In both England and Wales, GCSE entries for Religious Studies Full Course have risen substantially.

Since 2010, GCSE entries for RS full course in England, have risen by just over 30% (51,645) from 170,767 to 222,412

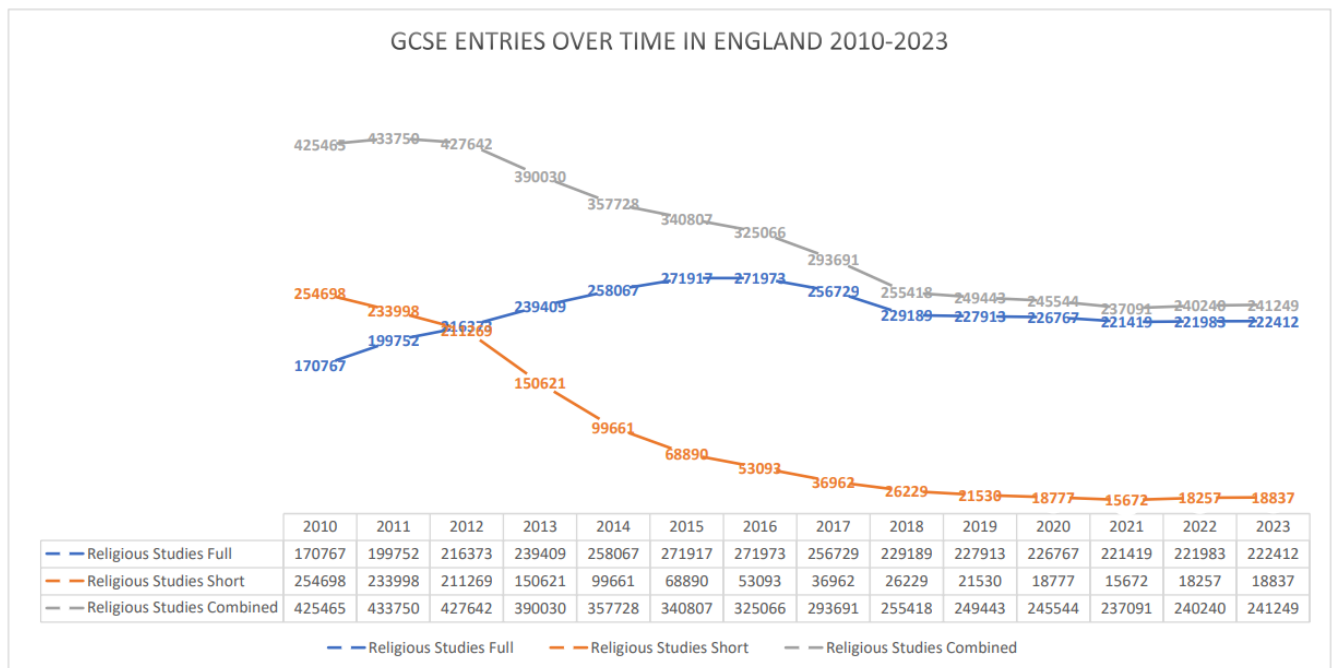
2. Short course entries in both nations in the same period, have fallen dramatically, but in England more rapidly than in Wales, almost certainly due to the removal of the short course in all subjects being removed from performance measures in England.

In the same period, short course entries in England have fallen by just over 92% from 254,698 to 18,837.

3. Far fewer pupils in England and Wales leave school with a qualification in RS in 2023, than did in 2010

Whereas around 425,465 pupils in England entered a GCSE qualification in 2010, in 2023 only 241,249 pupils did so in 2023 – a fall of 184,216 pupils (43%).

4. The trend in Religious Studies Full course entries over the last 5-6 years has been stable at around 22,000 students in England.



*A report on GCSE Religious Studies examination entries in 2023, Deborah Weston OBE:
Research Officer NATRE (September 2023)*

When the school level data for the Local Authority is available, SACRE requests that the Local Authority investigates the provision of RE for non-examined students at KS4 and to remind schools of the statutory nature of RE for all students.

RE Quality Mark

Sefton SACRE encourages all schools to apply for the REQM mark. We will do this through courses, networks and newsletters. Additionally, Sefton schools are offered the opportunity for a review of their religious education with criteria based on the bronze REQM. It is hoped this can be a gateway to entry to the national quality mark.

Professional development and support for schools

General support

During the year the professional support services of Pennine Learning were commissioned. Pennine Learning is a small company specialising in RE and community cohesion. The team at Pennine Learning will provide 15 days support per year in total, though this is arranged as flexibly as possible to facilitate effective working with schools and others. They also support SACREs and RE in West Yorkshire and Greater Manchester, enabling appropriate collaboration and partnership.

Through the RE consultants, support will be available to schools, and used by teachers, in a number of ways, including:

- Maintenance of the syllabus and its schemes of work, including prompt response to queries or difficulties;
- Consultancy over specific or general RE issues, including advice about withdrawal from RE;
- Availability by phone, email or virtual meetings;
- Support for schools wishing to develop and improve RE following Ofsted inspections.

Training

The teachers group on SACRE have set up network meeting for teachers of RE to meet and share good practice. These networks are affiliated to NATRE and will be posted on the RE Hubs website. This will ensure that RE leaders are kept up to date with developments in RE nationally. The RE Consultant will also support these networks in advising what might be included e.g. work on subject knowledge provision mapping.

SACRE will in their work plan decide on other training and support for schools and this will be planned for and costed accordingly.



RE Reviews and SACRE RE Award

The review and award will be made available on line and face to face to as many schools as possible in the time available. A 'Deep Dive' in Religious Education is also offered to schools. This half-day session focuses on a review of curriculum provision, looking at its scope, rigour and sequencing. These opportunities will be promoted via RE networks and newsletters.

Other information

A range of guidance is available for all schools on a wide range of related areas, including:

- RE Policy
- Withdrawal from RE
- Collective Worship
- Celebrating Diversity
- Engaging with faith communities
- Sensitivity to Faith in Schools (Sharing the Journey)

Section Three: Statutory Responsibilities: Collective Worship

Standards and Monitoring of Collective Worship

Guidance is offered to schools and Ofsted reports are scrutinised in order to keep up to date with current issues and concerns. It has been difficult for schools to maintain an effective programme of collective worship during the pandemic and one of SACRE's key priorities in the coming year will be to remind, facilitate and support schools. This will include offering light-touch review conversations with practical suggestions.

Complaints and determinations

There were no complaints made during the year to SACRE about Collective Worship. There is no determination to vary statutory requirements in a maintained school in Sefton. The process for applying for a determination has been agreed in the period of this report. Responsibility for determinations in English academies and free schools rest with the Schools Funding Agency.

Professional development and support for schools

Through the consultant, SACRE is always ready to advise or support schools on request. It has been noted that some SACRE members are well-placed to support collective worship in schools and opportunities for discussion about this will be included on the agenda in 2023-24. A half-day course on planning for collective worship/ inclusive assemblies may be offered in summer 2024 to aid schools in developing an effective and inspiring programme. It is hoped that SACRE members will become more involved in practical support and monitoring. These questions may be helpful to SACRE members in reflecting on the value and effectiveness of collective worship in school:

1. Collective: How does the assembly celebrate and promote a sense of community within the whole school (or group)?
2. Educational: Is there a clear aim and focus, with appropriate learning? Does it engage and interest pupils and staff?

3. Spiritual: How does the assembly nurture pupils' awareness of their beliefs and values - and those of others (including non-religious beliefs)? How does it develop a sense of the meaning, purpose and value in their lives?
4. Reflective: Is there space and opportunity for thoughtful reflection, in the assembly or as a follow up? If prayers are used do these allow for different approaches and responses?
5. Inclusive: How does the assembly programme develop understanding of different perspectives and cultures? How does it promote values of tolerance, diversity and equality?
6. Responsive: How did pupils respond and participate?

Other information

Parents have a statutory right to withdraw their children from collective worship. Guidance on good practice and protocols for withdrawal is available to schools; consultants are available if further support is needed. SACRE recognises parents' legal rights but hopes all children will be enabled to receive stimulating and balanced RE as part of their entitlement to a broad curriculum. Guidance is also provided to schools in fulfilling statutory obligations over collective worship and promoting good SMSC development.

Section Four: Links with other organisations

SACRE has developed active links with the following organisations:

- National Association of SACREs (NASACRE)
- The Association of RE Inspectors, Advisers and Consultants (AREIAC)
- Local faith organisations and interfaith groups
- Sefton School Improvement Service
- RE Today Services and NATRE
- The North West Hub of SACREs
- National RE Hubs

Section Five: Other areas of involvement

In October 2023 SACRE working with the Board of Deputies will host the Jewish Living Experience exhibition. This is an educational experience on understanding Judaism, featuring interactive exhibits and meeting people from the Jewish community. School groups can book to visit the exhibition and we are also offering a teacher training session on Tuesday 10th October 2023 at 4pm. The Jewish Living Experience will be available from Wednesday 11th October until Friday 20th October and will be hosted at Sefton PDC, 225 Park Road, Formby, L37 6EW.

Section Six: Sefton SACRE arrangements

Sefton MBC funds the operation of SACRE by contracting its consultants, providing a clerk and supporting its work through links with senior education officers.

SACRE membership includes representatives from all four constituent committees.

Group A	Faith and belief communities except for the Church of England
Group B	Anglican representatives
Group C	Teachers and schools
Group D	Sefton MBC

Membership and attendance for 2022-23 was as follows:

		Attendance
Buddhist	Vacancy	0
Hindu	Vacancy	0
Jewish	Gillian Moonman	4
Muslim	Vacancy	0
<i>Muslim</i>	Vacancy	0
Sikh	Vacancy	0
Humanist	Nick Senior	3
<i>Bah'ai</i>	Vacancy	0
Christian denominations (Methodist)	Vacancy	0
Christian denominations (Orthodox)	Vacancy	0
Christian denominations (RC)	Vacancy	0
Christian denominations (Pentecostal)	Vacancy	0
Christian denominations (Quaker)	Vacancy	0
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints	Vacancy	0
Christian denominations (Baptist)	Daniel Parkes	2
Christian denominations	Vacancy	0
Church of England	Sue Sullivan	2
Church of England	Andrew Norcross	3
Church of England	Vacancy	0
Church of England	Vacancy	0
Church of England	Vacancy	0
Teachers associations	Lauren Wood	1

Teachers associations	Natalie Ford (Vice Chair)	4
Headteacher Primary	Ruth Baldwin	4
Headteacher Primary	Paul Swift	2
Headteacher Primary Academy	Sarah Knipe	1
Headteacher Secondary Academy CEO	Ian Raikes	0
Headteacher Secondary Academy	Kate Campbell	4
Lydiate Learning Trust	Wendy Jack	1
Edge Hill University	Rebecca Johnson	3
Local authority	Diane Roscoe (Chair)	3
Local authority	Janet Grace	2
Local authority	Jacqui Patterson	4
Local authority	Veronica Webster	0
Local Authority	Carla Thomas	0
Local Authority	James Hansen	0
Local Authority	Carol Richards	0
Local Authority	Gareth Lloyd-Johnson	0

SACRE needs to ensure there continues to be consistent attendance and needs more teacher representatives. Contacts with partners, such as HE providers and the Diocese of Liverpool should be developed.

Training is provided by NASACRE and offered to SACRE members both locally and through the NASACRE webinars.

Section Seven: Advice to the Local authority

The following advice is given by SACRE to the local authority:

1. To review the funding of SACRE to ensure it is in line with national recommendations and good practice;
2. To review the membership of SACRE to ensure it reflects the breadth and diversity of the borough in terms of faiths and beliefs and schools structures.
3. To investigate the provision of quality teaching of RE at Key Stage Four for the non-examined students.
4. To provide opportunities for SACRE to work with other key areas of the Local Authority including the Communities team in order to support community cohesion.

No appendices are attached to this report; all the relevant information is contained within the main body. However, any further information can be requested via the clerk, Jane McNeice at Jane.McNeice@sefton.gov.uk