



# **Rochdale Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education**

## **Annual Report to NASACRE 2022-2023**



**Rochdale Standing Advisory  
Council for Religious Education**



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## **Annual Report to NASACRE 2022-2023**

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## 1 Introduction and context

Rochdale SACRE (Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education) serves a borough with a mixed faith community, with high percentages of Christian and Muslim followers, and smaller groups of Hindu, Humanist, Jewish and Mormon followers. Non-conformist Christian denominations are also well-represented (Methodist, Baptist, URC and Unitarian). Two of the Local Authority's thirteen secondary schools are Roman Catholic Voluntary-Aided schools and one is a joint Anglican/Roman Catholic Voluntary-Aided school. Eighteen of the Local Authority's sixty-eight primary schools are Church of England Voluntary-Aided schools (one is a joint Church of England/Methodist school) and eleven are Roman Catholic Voluntary-Aided schools.

Rochdale's history of the last few years makes it particularly important for local faith communities to be integrated and co-operative, and this is one of Rochdale SACRE's highest priorities. Rochdale SACRE has good representation from all four groups (Church of England, other faiths and denominations, teaching associations and the Local Authority) and enjoys strong links with the local Anglican community and with Rochdale Council of Mosques. There is good representation from Primary and Secondary sectors and Rochdale SACRE works collaboratively with neighbouring Local Authorities and other SACREs in the North-North-West SACRE Hub.

The current Chair of SACRE is Rev Margaret Smith, Rochdale's Town Centre Chaplain, who was elected Chair in December 2015. New appointments in 2022-2023 included Otten (Humanist representative), and one of SACRE's longest-serving members, Jan McCabe, retired in December 2022. The current Local Authority representative to SACRE is Peter Owen (Early Help and Schools) and the current Clerk to SACRE is Amanda Francis (LA Business Support).

## 2 Membership of SACRE

It is required by law that each Local Authority has its own Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE). SACRE is a statutory body, made up of people from a wide range of faith groups who volunteer, and LA officers who advise SACRE to advise and clerk its meetings. The structure of Rochdale's SACRE is defined by law, and is made up of four groups or committees.

### (a) Committee membership

Committee A: Christian denominations and other religions reflecting the principal religious traditions of the area

Committee B: The Church of England

Committee C: Professional Teaching Associations and RE networks

Committee D: The Local Authority

#### Committee A

Rev Margaret Smith (Town Centre Chaplain and Chair of SACRE)

Guy Otten (Humanist representative)

Graham Gordon (Jewish Representative Council)

Ghulam Rasul Shahzad (Rochdale Council of Mosques)

Mohammed Shahid (Muslim representative)

#### Committee B

Father Darren Quinlan (St Chad's and St Mary in the Baum)

Rev Ian Bullock (vicar of Littleborough)

#### Committee C

Ruth Merrick (RE Co-ordinator St Andrews CE Primary School)

Stacey Searle (Head of RE Falinge Park High School)

Fay Lowe (Head of RE Middleton Technology School)

Clair Kitching (Regional Schools Worker for The Young Leaders Award)

#### Committee D

Muhammed Abdulaleem (LA Equality and Community Cohesion Officer)

Councillor Rachel Massey (Lead Portfolio for Children's Services and Education)

Councillor Angela Smith (Rochdale Borough Council)

Membership of SACRE and its committees has undergone considerable flux in 2022-2023 due to people changing their roles, moving out of Rochdale and so on.

## **(b) Local authority officers, clerk and professional advice**

Rochdale SACRE is supported by Peter Owen (School Improvement Officer and LA representative to SACRE) and by Amanda Francis (Clerk to SACRE).

### **3 Advice to statutory bodies**

#### **(a) Local Authority**

- i) Rochdale SACRE advises Rochdale Local Authority on quality and standards of Religious Education in the schools of the borough as follows.
- ii) Ofsted inspection reports on any Rochdale schools who have been inspected are read and scrutinised by the Local Authority School Improvement Team for comments on SMSC, Religious Education, Collective Worship, British Values, PSHCE or any comments in the Personal Development section which may have include comments or judgments relevant to Religious Education.
- iii) SIAMS (Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools) reports and Roman Catholic Diocesan reports from inspections carried out on Ofsted's behalf are read and scrutinised by the Local Authority School Improvement Team.
- iv) Pupil Outcomes in Religious Education are monitored by the Local Authority School Improvement team by considering the outcomes for GCSE Religious Education, via the Secondary ASP (Analyse School Performance) and the FFT Aspire reports on each school. The Local Authority representative on SACRE, who is also a member of the School Improvement Team, advises the Local Authority on SACRE's behalf (as well as reporting to SACRE on the Local Authority's behalf regarding GCSE results in Religious Education in Rochdale's Secondary Schools).
- v) Any issues reported to the Local Authority regarding the Teaching, Learning and Assessment of Religious Education in Rochdale schools, whether via an Ofsted inspection or via an independent complaint, will be followed-up by a discussion between the School Improvement Team and the LA SACRE representative, who will then report to SACRE regarding any appropriate action to be taken.
- vi) In his role as School Improvement Officer, the Local Authority SACRE representative regularly conducts reviews and monitoring visits at Rochdale Primary and Secondary schools where Safeguarding, SMSC, British Values and PSHCE are a focus. During these reviews or monitoring visits there may be a focus on the provision or teaching of Religious Education, and if there are comments on this in the written report, these will be shared with the School Improvement Team and with SACRE.
- vii) Requests from parents regarding withdrawal from Religious Education (or from schools who have received such requests) are passed to the Local Authority SACRE representative. Any such inquiries are referred to SACRE (time permitting and depending on whether there is a SACRE meeting in the period immediately following the inquiry). In dealing with any such requests, SACRE and the LA representative to SACRE provide advice and guidance to Local Authority officers as well as to the school or parents.
- viii) In April 2022 SACRE collaborated with Rochdale Council of Mosques to create a guidance document for the Local Authority on the observance of Ramadan and how it can best be accommodated in schools. This was the first time SACRE had sent out guidance jointly with Rochdale Council of Mosques (see Appendix B).

#### **(b) Schools**

Rochdale SACRE advises Rochdale schools on quality and standards of Religious Education in the borough as follows.

- i) Rochdale SACRE advises Rochdale schools through the provision of a Locally Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education which was last revised in spring term 2018-2019 and launched on 26<sup>th</sup> April 2019 to be implemented from September 2019.
- ii) Rochdale SACRE advises schools on the procedure whereby they should apply for a determination (which lifts the requirement for the school's worship to be 'wholly or mainly of a Christian nature'). Rochdale SACRE provides advice and guidance about the circumstances under which a school may apply for a determination and a pro-forma for

that application. The pro-forma is submitted to SACRE as that school's application for a determination and SACRE makes a decision accordingly.

- iii) Where a parent makes a request to the school to withdraw their child from Religious Education in whole or in part, or from any aspect of the school's spiritual or religious activities, schools contact Rochdale SACRE via the Local Authority representative to SACRE (who is also a School Improvement Officer). Until 2020 advice and guidance was given to schools on a case-by-case basis, incorporating advice from the Local Authority, the Community Cohesion team, the Diocese and Section 71 of the *School Standards and Framework Act* (1988). From 2021-2022 onwards SACRE is preparing a package of advice and guidance that can be provided for all schools to support them with parental requests to withdraw (see Appendix A).
- iv) Rochdale SACRE advises Rochdale schools on the provision of Religious Education via regular teacher networks and hubs and by invitation to shared events with other SACREs and Local Authorities. The network and hub meetings are co-ordinated by serving members of SACRE (who are also teachers in Rochdale schools) and provide bespoke training, guidance and support on the preparation, delivery and assessment of Religious Education in Primary and Secondary schools.
- v) Rochdale's Chair of SACRE, Rev Margaret Smith, undertakes an annual programme of visits to Primary and Secondary schools in Rochdale, providing bespoke advice and guidance, and taking assemblies, acts of worship and Religious Education lessons to support schools in their delivery of Religious Education.
- vi) In April 2022 SACRE collaborated with Rochdale Council of Mosques to create a guidance document for Rochdale Primary and Secondary schools on the observance of Ramadan and how it can best be accommodated in schools. This was the first time SACRE had sent out guidance to schools jointly with Rochdale Council of Mosques.

#### **(c) Government or other statutory bodies**

Rochdale SACRE has not provided advice to the government or to any other statutory bodies in the year to date 2022-2023.

#### **(d) Response to advice given**

Rochdale Local Authority (School Improvement Team and Community Cohesion Officers) have responded to Rochdale SACRE's advice as follows.

- i) Rochdale Local Authority refers all requests for determination and all school inquiries (or parental inquiries) regarding the withdrawal of children from Religious Education to Rochdale SACRE via the LA representative to SACRE and supports any advice and guidance given to schools or parents by SACRE and its representatives.
- ii) Rochdale Local Authority refers any specific inquiries from schools regarding the teaching of Religious Education, collective worship or the celebration of festivals to SACRE and accepts SACRE's advice and guidance on all such matters.
- iii) Rochdale Local Authority refers any FOI (Freedom of Information) requests regarding Religious Education or collective worship to SACRE via the LA representative to SACRE and accepts and implements SACRE's advice on a case-by-case basis.
- iv) Rochdale LA's Community and Cohesion Officer collaborates with SACRE representatives on reviews and monitoring visits of schools, and the LA Community Cohesion Officer has served as a member of SACRE from 2018 to increase and strengthen the arrangements which exist between the LA (Early Help and Schools) and SACRE.

Rochdale Primary and Secondary Schools have responded to SACRE's advice as follows.

- i) Schools have responded well to the provision of the Locally Agreed Syllabus and to the provision of network and hub support for Religious Education. From 2019, SACRE have had to make a charge to schools for the provision of a Locally Agreed Syllabus. Despite this, every LA-maintained Primary School, every LA-maintained Secondary School, and every Voluntarily-Controlled Church School use the 2019-2023 Agreed Syllabus.
- ii) Schools have contacted Rochdale SACRE (via the Local Authority) on several occasions in 2017-2018 regarding advice around parental withdrawal from Religious Education. This

is covered under item 3d (standards and quality of provision of Religious Education: withdrawal from Religious Education) below.

#### 4 Standards and quality of provision in RE

##### (a) Public examinations

Eleven of Rochdale's thirteen secondary schools (all except Wardle Academy and Redwood Special School) entered a total of 1131 students for GCSE Religious Education in 2022, representing 44% of the Rochdale Year 11. Nationally, 36% of the Year 11 cohort entered GCSE Religious Education in 2022, so Rochdale's percentage of Year 11 students entering GCSE Religious Education is up 8% on the national average.

In 2021, 43% of the Rochdale cohort entered GCSE Religious Education so the number of Rochdale students who were entered for GCSE RE has increased (by 1%) from 2021 to 2022 (as a total and as a percentage of the cohort).

In Rochdale, only Wardle Academy and Redwood Special School did not enter any students for GCSE Religious Education in 2022 (see below). Four secondary schools entered more than 80% of their Year 11 cohort for GCSE Religious Education (three of which are church schools) and the other seven secondary schools entered fewer than 45% of their Year 11 cohort for GCSE Religious Education.

School	Entry	Of cohort	APS	% Grade 4	Progress
Cardinal Langley RC	202	96.7%	4.5	63%	-2%
Falinge Park	256	94.4%	3.9	54%	-12%
Hollingworth Academy	103	40.1%	5.5	81%	+7%
Holy Family RC and CE	142	94.6%	5.4	80%	+8%
Kingsway Park	108	40.7%	4.6	68%	+6%
Matthew Moss	45	20.1%	6.0	84%	+11%
Middleton Technology	8	3.0%	4.9	75%	+13%
Newhouse Academy	42	20.4%	4.4	62%	-11%
Oulder Hill	29	9.9%	5.4	83%	+6%
St Anne's CE Academy	7	4.8%	5.4	86%	+4%
St Cuthbert's RC	189	81.8%	5.0	71%	-3%
Rochdale LA	1131	44.0%	4.8	68%	-2%
National average	NA	36.0%	5.3	76%	NA

##### Schools entering more than 80% of the Year 11 cohort for GCSE Religious Education

- Cardinal Langley RC entered 202 students for GCSE Religious Education in 2022 (representing 96.7% of their cohort and compared to an entry of 200 in 2021). At Cardinal Langley RC 63% of students entered gained grade 4 or better in GCSE Religious Education in 2022 (9% lower than in 2021 and 13% lower than the national average).
- Falinge Park High School entered 256 students for GCSE Religious Education in 2022 (representing 94.4% of their cohort and compared to an entry of 244 in 2021). At Falinge Park High School 54% of students entered gained grade 4 or better in GCSE Religious Education in 2022 (26% lower than in 2021 and 22% lower than the national average).
- Holy Family RC and CE College entered 142 students for GCSE Religious Education in 2022 (representing 94.6% of their cohort and compared to an entry of 132 in 2021). At Holy Family RC and CE College 80% of students entered gained grade 4 or better in GCSE Religious Education in 2022 (identical to 2021 and 4% higher than the national average).
- St Cuthbert's RC entered 189 students for GCSE Religious Education in 2022 (representing 81.8% of their cohort and compared to an entry of 206 in 2021). At St Cuthbert's RC 71% of students entered gained grade 4 or better in GCSE Religious Education in 2022 (8% higher than in 2021 and 5% lower than the national average).

##### Schools entering a cohort smaller than 50% of Year 11 cohort for GCSE Religious Education

- Hollingworth Academy entered 103 students for GCSE Religious Education in 2022 (representing 40.1% of their cohort and compared to an entry of 72 in 2021). At Hollingworth Academy 81% of students entered gained grade 4 or better in GCSE Religious Education in 2021 (13% lower than in 2021 and 5% higher than the national average).

- Kingsway Park High School entered 108 students for GCSE Religious Education in 2022 (representing 40.7% of their cohort and compared to an entry of 71 in 2021). At Kingsway Park High School 68% of students entered gained grade 4 or better in GCSE Religious Education in 2022 (1% higher than in 2021 and 8% lower than the national average).
- Matthew Moss High School entered 44 students for GCSE Religious Education in 2022 (representing 20.1% of their cohort and compared to an entry of 48 in 2021). At Matthew Moss 84% of students entered gained grade 4 or better in GCSE Religious Education in 2022 (5% higher than in 2021 and 8% higher than the national average).
- Middleton Technology School entered 8 students for GCSE Religious Education in 2022 (representing 3% of their cohort). Middleton Technology did not enter any students for GCSE RE in 2021. At Middleton Technology School 75% of students entered gained grade 4 or better in GCSE Religious Education in 2022 (1% lower than the national average).
- Newhouse Academy entered 42 students for GCSE Religious Education in 2022 (representing 20.4% of their cohort). Newhouse Academy did not enter any students for GCSE RE in 2021. At Newhouse Academy 62% of students entered gained grade 4 or better in GCSE Religious Education in 2022 (12% lower than the national average).
- Oulder Hill Leadership Academy entered 29 students for GCSE Religious Education in 2022 (representing 9.9% of their cohort and compared to an entry of 18 in 2021). At Oulder Hill Leadership Academy 83% of students entered gained grade 4 or better in GCSE Religious Education in 2022 (11% lower than in 2021 and 7% higher than the national average).
- St Anne's Church of England Academy entered 7 students for GCSE Religious Education in 2022 (representing 4.8% of their cohort). St Anne's Academy did not enter any students for GCSE RE in 2021. At St Anne's CE Academy 86% of students entered gained grade 4 or better in GCSE Religious Education in 2022 (10% higher than the national average).

#### **(b) Attainment in Religious Education not covered by public examination**

In Rochdale, only Wardle Academy and Redwood Special School did not enter any students for GCSE Religious Education in 2022. Redwood has no GCSE Religious Education provision as only a very small percentage of their students take GCSE. Redwood has been visited by the Chair of SACRE, Rev Margaret Smith, to discuss its Religious Education provision and SACRE's support for RE in Rochdale schools. SACRE will discuss RE provision at Key Stage 4 with Wardle Academy in 2023.

#### **(c) The quality of Religious Education provision in schools**

Thirty-three schools responded to Rochdale SACRE's annual return for Religious Education in 2022. Of those, thirty were Primary schools and three were Secondary schools. Five respondents were Roman Catholic schools, six were Church of England schools and twenty-two were LA-maintained schools.

SACRE believes this is a reasonable data-set from which to draw conclusions about: the teaching and assessment of RE; the delivery of, and provision for, collective worship; and the relationship of RE to whole-school policy, a broad and balanced curriculum, SMSC and British Values in Rochdale schools. The responses to the return are summarised below.

- Does the school have a policy on the teaching of Religious Education?  
Twenty-nine schools (88% of respondents) do have a policy on the teaching of Religious Education and four schools (12% of respondents) do not have a policy on the teaching of Religious Education (although one of those four is the Pupil Referral Unit).
- Does the school have a policy on collective worship?  
Thirty-two schools (97% of respondents) do have a policy on collective worship and one school (the Pupil Referral Unit) does not have a policy on collective worship.
- Does the school have a policy on SMSC (Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Education)?  
Thirty schools (91% of respondents) do have a policy on SMSC and three schools (9% of respondents) do not have a policy on SMSC.

- Which Religious Education syllabus do you use?  
Twenty-three schools (70% of respondents) use the Rochdale Agreed Syllabus, five schools (15% of respondents) use a Roman Catholic Diocesan Syllabus and five schools (15% of respondents) use an Anglican Diocesan Syllabus.
- Does the school meet the minimum requirements for time (for Religious Education lessons) as stipulated in the Rochdale Agreed Syllabus?  
Thirty schools (91% of respondents) do meet the minimum requirements for time for Religious Education lessons (as stipulated in the Rochdale Agreed Syllabus) and three schools (9% of respondents) do not (including the Pupil Referral Unit).
- Is there a systematic approach to recording assessment of pupil progress in RE in relation to the Agreed Syllabus?  
In twenty-eight schools (85% of respondents) there is a systematic approach to recording assessment of pupil progress in RE in relation to the Agreed Syllabus and in five schools (15% of respondents, including the Pupil Referral Unit) there is not such a system.
- Is provision made for a daily act of collective worship in line with statutory requirements?  
Provision for a daily act of collective worship is made in thirty-one schools (94% of respondents) but is not made in two school (6% of respondents).
- Do you have regular monitoring, review and evaluation of collective worship provision in your school?  
Regular monitoring, review and evaluation of collective worship provision is conducted in twenty-seven schools (82% of respondents) but is not conducted in six schools (18% of respondents, including the Pupil Referral Unit).

The strengths of Religious Education in Rochdale schools include the following

- i) Lesson observations and 'deep dives' have shown that the RE curriculum is fully embedded and that independent work is well matched to the outcomes of the lesson.
- ii) Adaptive teaching methods ensure that all children access the RE curriculum including those with SEND.
- iii) All teaching staff are booked on the Subject Knowledge Webinars presented by RE Today Services taking place 2022-2023. They will feedback to all staff about key knowledge and what they found useful/inspirational.
- iv) Although we are a community school we have visiting Methodist and Anglican ministers to speak in our assemblies each half term. We use the Anglican values to direct the content of the school assemblies and our pupils have a good understanding of Humility, Tolerance, Friendship, Service, Creation and Koinonia as a result.
- v) Strengths in school would be the links we have with local places of worship so the children can go on educational visits to learn more about some religions. The children are also given time and support to discuss RE during lessons, and explore their own and others thoughts and feelings.
- vi) Our school has a strong philosophical approach to thinking about moral issues and the content of prayer. Not only do we discuss these issues regularly in the classroom during RE Lessons and PSHE lessons but they form part of our collective worship.
- vii) Our celebration of religious events is all encompassing; all genders, ethnicities and backgrounds are included. Festivals and special events from a range of cultures and religions are discussed in line with the Rochdale agreed syllabus and are taught through the 'Discovery RE' scheme.
- viii) We support lots of charities and we have strong links with our local church and our minister often comes into school to deliver lessons, or we visit church.
- ix) Children can nominate their peers for demonstrating that term's Christian value and winners are chosen by Junior Church Council, RE advocates and our priest.



- x) Fluency at the start of RE lessons helps pupils recall past facts, RE Scrapbooks display discussions that happen during the lessons and quizzes at the end of the units aid assessment and inform future planning.
- xi) Our Collective Worship allows our pupils the chance to explore and understand the Christian values and our strapline – Fide et Laboure – ensures we offer a broad and balanced curriculum supported by our religious beliefs.
- xii) The children are really good at reflective worship based on parables and religious texts, as well as daily collective worship they also gather collectively in the hall once a week with a themed focus and the children share their reflections based on the assembly delivered, developing more reflective children whom can not only reflect on morals but also incorporate their own identities and beliefs within their reflections.

#### Pupil Voice responses

- i) Pupil interviews have shown that children understand that the RE curriculum helps to develop tolerance of others, linked to British values and our school values.
- ii) Children can talk about religious content (traditions, beliefs etc) but also can relate what they have learned to their own lives.
- iii) 'RE helps us to learn about and respect other people's religions' (Year 3)
- iv) 'I enjoy whole class discussions and the chance to share our opinions' (Year 6)
- v) 'RE is interesting – it helps us understand why people do things' (Year 5)
- vi) 'It's important so we know about all religions – so we don't be rude or offend other people' (Year 5)
- vii) During pupil voice, some KS2 children have said how RE teaches them about other people and that it is important as we can understand each other better.
- viii) In KS1 children have expressed how they have enjoyed RE and the religious stories they have been learning about.
- ix) One boy said he liked Jonah and the Whale, because the whale ate him and he then knew to be good for God.
- x) Children say they enjoy RE lessons especially the philosophical element. They also enjoy learning about other cultures and religions.
- xi) Pupils thoroughly enjoy lessons where there are visitors from other religions and feel they learn a lot during question and answer sessions with these visitors.
- xii) When we celebrated the Epiphany we reflected on how it is celebrated in different parts of the world.
- xiii) We like sequencing pictures from Bible stories and writing about them (children knew the word Gospel, could name the Gospel writers and that Scripture is writing in the Bible).
- xiv) Pupils like to write their own prayers and songs, to reflect on what is going on in the world and link that to Jesus praying for his friends.
- xv) Children use scripture, learnt about Christianity, there was more writing and drawing than in other books.
- xvi) The books were colourful, they got to know more about God, there were shorter pieces of writing.
- xvii) We have a Junior Church Council (JCC) that meet every half term to choose the terms Christian Value winners/champions. They can also suggest ways to improve/develop RE and collective worship within the school.

#### **(d) Withdrawal from RE**

Rochdale SACRE guides and advises Rochdale Primary and Secondary schools regarding parental applications to withdraw their children from Religious Education lessons or Collective Worship as follows.

i) Rochdale context

Several schools have contacted SACRE regarding parents' intention to remove their children (partly or wholly) from RE, from collective worship or from religious activities which form part of the school's curricular and extra-curricular provision (carol services, faith celebration days).

In several instances this has centred on proposed visits with pupils to Mosques or Churches, and there have been instances of Christian parents wishing to remove their children from Mosque visits, and Muslim parents wishing to remove their children from Church visits.

These instances are all unique in their own way. SACRE has consistently offered advice and guidance to schools drawn from statutory documentation (principally Section 71 of the *School Standards and Framework Act (1988)*). SACRE has also collaborated with the Church of England, the Roman Catholic Diocese and the Local Authority Community and Cohesion Team in terms of their advice and guidance in these situations.

ii) Planning for the future

Until 2020, SACRE advised schools on a case-by-case basis as shown above, but as a result of the increasing number of such queries and the likelihood that their frequency will increase, SACRE is preparing a set of documentation which (a) clarifies the legal position, (b) reinforces statutory advice, (c) explores links with Manchester Diocese's policy statement and guidelines and (d) provides guidance on handling such situations and on raising the profile of Religious Education and visits to religious centres.

The purpose of the guidance package is to advise schools of their statutory obligations if a parent does request the withdrawal of their child from RE or collective worship, but also to offer a range of actions, drawn from our experience and from the advice of the Local Authority Community Cohesion Team, which would reduce the likelihood of such a situation arising in the first place.

This package of resources and guidance was made available to all Rochdale schools from September 2020 onwards. The key contents and recommendations of the guidance package are as follows.

- Prompt contact with Local Authority and SACRE as soon as a request for withdrawal from Religious Education is received by the school.
- Comprehensive package of advice and guidance sent to the school by SACRE.
- Telephone conversation between Headteacher and Local Authority representative to SACRE and/or Local Authority Community Cohesion Officer as soon as possible.
- Visit to school by Local Authority representative to SACRE and/or Local Authority Community Cohesion Officer if required as follow-up to telephone conversation.
- Model letter (based on the letter written in the case study above) shared with Headteacher as guidance and as an example.

**(e) Complaints about Religious Education**

No complaints have been received about Religious Education provision in Rochdale schools and no complaints have been received about Rochdale SACRE by Rochdale Local Authority or by Ofsted in 2022-2023.

**5 Agreed Syllabus**

**(a) If there was a review of the syllabus in 2022**

There was no syllabus review in 2022. The Locally Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education was last revised in spring term 2018-2019 and launched on 26<sup>th</sup> April 2019 to be implemented from September 2019.

**(b) When the next review will take place**

To allow time for schools to stabilise post-Covid, the next review of Rochdale's Locally Agreed Syllabus will begin in early 2024 with a view to publishing the syllabus in mid-2025.

## 6 Collective Worship

### (a) Collective Worship survey 2021-2022

Rochdale SACRE conducted a Collective Worship Survey was conducted from June and July 2021 and its principal aim was to ascertain the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on Collective Worship in Rochdale schools. The survey was carried out by Chair of SACRE (Rev Margaret Smith), the Clerk to SACRE, and by the LA Representative on SACRE (Peter Owen). Thirteen Rochdale schools took part in the survey.

### (b) Quality of Collective Worship

#### What are the specific benefits of Collective Worship for your school?

- The opportunity to share and discuss values: the gathering of school community as a whole school family is very important.
- A sense of connectedness, a shared moral message, driving the ethos of the school, building a sense of community and embracing differences.
- Collective Worship helps children to reflect on the school's core values and Christian values and why these are important.
- Collective Worship supports all children in being calm and reflective, and ready for their day of learning.
- Gospel values are linked to everyday life for pupils; time for reflection for pupils and staff; praying helps us recognise the presence of God in the school and its community.
- Bringing the whole school together, time for reflection and prayer, focus on Christian values and opportunity for children and staff to take part.
- Christian Values run through our school and informs what we teach: Collective Worship reinforces these values and how we lead our lives to become closer to God.
- This reflects how children relate to each other and adults: they are accepting of all children no matter what colour, creed, disability or religion. Everybody is welcome and equal.

#### Use of visitors or guests to help or take your Collective Worship

- 11 of the 13 schools who responded regularly use their vicar or local clergy to lead Collective Worship, and most of those use other visitors or guests alongside clergy.
- Some schools use local charities and members of the local community alongside clergy to build links and to make those links clearer for children.
- Some schools use representatives of other faiths (local Imams and other Muslim representatives, a Jewish Rabbi, Barnabas in Schools).
- The advantages of using visitors/guests are that they create more interest and curiosity from children, plus an understanding of living world faiths.
- Children identify with people from the community, which brings learning to life and helps pupils to see lived examples of Gospel values in the local community.
- It is also beneficial for children to hear the same message from other adults who can share their experiences, which enhances diversity and inclusion.
- The only challenges schools reported around using visitors/guests were the difficulties of even doing that during Covid.
- One school referred to the occasional difficulty of visitors/guests not always having the same presentational skills that you might take for granted in teachers or clergy.

#### Do you have any comments you would like to make about how you see Collective Worship in your school?

- Collective Worship is highly valued throughout our school and is respected by all adults and children alike.
- The values embodied in our Collective Worship run through our school and inform what we teach, and also matches with the PSHE work that we do.
- I think we are doing well with Collective Worship – it has been a consistent feature even during lockdown, with children joining from home, and has held together our school family.

### How can SACRE help you or facilitate you in providing Collective Worship?

- We would like help with finding contacts for faith leaders who would be appropriate and happy to talk to children about their faith at school in the upcoming year.
- We would like some further suggestions for the best places to source hymns and songs – we use Out of the Ark and YouTube.

### **(e) Complaints about Religious Education**

No complaints have been received about the provision of Collective Worship in Rochdale schools and no complaints have been received about SACRE by Rochdale Local Authority or by Ofsted in 2022-2023.

## **7 Management of SACRE**

### **(a) Attendance at SACRE by Committee 2021-2022**

Rochdale SACRE met four times between autumn term 2021 and autumn term 2022 (September 2021, February 2022, April 2022 and October 2022). Three of these meetings were online/Microsoft Teams meetings in the aftermath of the pandemic, and our first face-to-face meeting of 2022 was Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> October at Little Heaton Primary School. SACRE's first meeting of 2023 is an online/Microsoft Teams meeting on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> February.

#### Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> September 2021

##### Online/Microsoft Teams (quorate)

- Committee A: 3 (0 apologies)
- Committee B: 1 (1 apology)
- Committee C: 4 (2 apologies)
- Committee D: 4 (1 apology)

#### Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> February 2022

##### Online/Microsoft Teams (quorate)

- Committee A: 2 (2 apologies)
- Committee B: 1 (2 apologies)
- Committee C: 3 (1 apology)
- Committee D: 3 (2 apologies)

#### Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> April 2022

##### Online/Microsoft Teams (quorate)

- Committee A: 3 (0 apologies)
- Committee B: 1 (2 apologies)
- Committee C: 2 (1 apology)
- Committee D: 3 (2 apologies)

#### Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> October 2022

##### Little Heaton CE Primary School (not quorate because no representation of Committee B)

- Committee A: 2 (2 apologies)
- Committee B: 0 (2 apologies)
- Committee C: 2 (5 apologies)
- Committee D: 2 (3 apologies)

### **(b) Funding and status of SACRE**

#### NASACRE FOI Request January 2023

In January 2023 Rochdale LA received a Freedom of Information request from NASACRE concerning the funding of Rochdale SACRE. The response to that FOI request is reproduced here (in part) as a summary for the financial and budgetary status of Rochdale SACRE.

- 1 Can you confirm that funding allocated to your Local Authority in the 2021-2022 ongoing commitments category of the CSSB (Central Schools Services Block) was £1,264,981?

Response: This figure matches Rochdale's CSSB allocation.

- 2 How much of the funding specified in (1) above (as a raw figure) was allocated to SACRE related spending and, if relevant, to ASC (Agreed Syllabus Conference) related spending?

Response: Rochdale SACRE does not receive any CSSB funding.

- 3 How much money from the CSSB funding for 2021-2022 did you spend on the following:
- (a) Democratic services to support SACRE meetings in 2021-2022 (for example a clerk)?
  - (b) Professional support for SACRE (for example a Religious Education specialist advisor or consultant to support the work of SACRE)?

Response: Rochdale SACRE does not receive any CSSB funding.

- (c) Who provides the specialist RE support to SACRE (no-one, an RE specialist, a LA officer with an interest in RE)

Response: A Local Authority Officer with an interest in RE.

- (d) Support for schools, including CPD and training specifically for Religious Education and/or Collective Worship?
- (e) Other costs?
- (f) Please explain what the amount in (e) was spent on.

Response: Rochdale SACRE does not receive any CSSB funding.

- 4 How much money from other funds outside the CSSB fund was used to support RE in schools in your local authority, and what was the source of the funding?

Response: The LA allocated a budget of £2,603 to SACRE in 2021-2022, and also allocated £3,570 for the time of a Local Authority Officer to support SACRE, making a grand total of £6,173. All of this funding derives from the central Council Budget.

- 5 In which academic year was your last agreed syllabus for RE published, and how much did it cost to complete the revision (to write it, develop it, publish it and launch it including training for your schools)?

Response: Our most recent Agreed Syllabus was published on Friday 26<sup>th</sup> April 2019 for first use in schools from September 2019, and is cover-dated 2020-2024 (so it will cover the academic years 2020-2021 to 2023-2024). Our 2020-2024 Agreed Syllabus was commissioned from *RE Today*, and the cost was partly met by schools' subscription to the syllabus. For around £200 schools received (a) a hard copy of the syllabus; (b) attendance at a launch event which was also a one-day CPD/training event; and (c) continued access to online support from *RE Today*. The total cost of providing the Agreed Syllabus (including purchase, collaboration with *RE Today* to edit it, publication and associated events and training was £7,530. The time of the LA Officer who supports SACRE that was spent on developing and publishing the Agreed Syllabus was at a cost of £3,374 so the grand total spent on the Agreed Syllabus was £10,904.

- 6 Where would a member of the public access your Agreed Syllabus for RE, and what is the weblink (URL) for your syllabus or summary document?

Response: The Rochdale Agreed Syllabus copyright RE Today (who created it for us). 'No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means electronic, mechanical, recorded or otherwise'. A member of the public would access the Agreed Syllabus by request to SACRE.

- 7 Who is the contact (name) for SACRE business in your LA and what is the contact's email address for SACRE business in your LA?

Response: The Rochdale clerk to SACRE is Amanda Francis who is the first contact, and her email address is [amanda.francis@rochdale.gov.uk](mailto:amanda.francis@rochdale.gov.uk)

- 8 How many meetings of SACRE were held in the academic year 2021-2022 and how many of those meetings were quorate (representation from all four statutory groups)?

Response: Four full meetings of SACRE were held in the academic year 2021-2022, one per term, all virtual/online meetings via Microsoft Teams except for the 13<sup>th</sup> October 2022 meeting (Little Heaton CE Primary School).

Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> September 2021: quorate (12 members with all four groups represented and four apologies)

Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> February 2022: quorate (11 members with all four groups represented and seven apologies)

Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> April 2022: quorate (9 members with all four groups represented and five apologies)

13<sup>th</sup> October 2022: not quorate (6 members with 12 apologies but no representation from Committee B)

- 8 Does your SACRE partner with any other SACRE, and if yes, which SACREs do you partner with, and what partnership activities have you undertaken?

Response: Currently Rochdale does not pair with any other SACRE.

- 9 Are there any barriers to providing funding to fulfil your statutory duties in relation to SACRE and/or the Agreed Syllabus Conference that you want to tell us about?

Response: Rochdale SACRE currently has no financial barriers in terms of fulfilling our statutory duties.

### Status of Rochdale SACRE

NASACRE's guidance for completion of a SACRE's Annual Report can be found at [https://nasacre.org.uk/file/nasacre/SACRE\\_Annual\\_Reports\\_necessary\\_desir.pdf](https://nasacre.org.uk/file/nasacre/SACRE_Annual_Reports_necessary_desir.pdf)

Part of the guidance asks SACREs, in their Annual Report, to consider three questions in terms of the capacity of SACRE to fulfil its statutory duties.

#### 1. Is SACRE taken seriously enough?

Rochdale SACRE is taken very seriously, both at council/LA level and at school level. Responses to surveys and annual returns are good, all schools have bought into the Locally Agreed Syllabus, networks and hubs are well-supported, and schools value the support they receive from SACRE.

#### 2. Is SACRE adequately supported by professional staff, such as a clerk and advisor?

Rochdale SACRE is adequately supported in terms of having a dedicated clerk and a Local Authority representative, both of whom are funded by the Local Authority. Rochdale SACRE does not currently have a specialist RE advisor (Rev Jane Brooke having relinquished that role in 2014).

#### 3. Is SACRE adequately funded to perform its duties?

Rochdale SACRE is adequately funded to fulfil its statutory duties, its funding coming directly from Rochdale Borough Council. Rochdale SACRE would like to access further council funding in order to undertake additional activities to support schools.

### **(c) Constitution 2022-2023**

In 2022 Rochdale SACRE revised its constitution in line with NASACRE's guidance:

#### NASACRE Guidance

Every SACRE needs a constitution to ensure it operates efficiently and fulfils its statutory duties. It is the responsibility of the legal services of the Local Authority to write the constitution in accordance with the Education Act 1996 or to approve a constitution proposed by the SACRE itself having been devised in accordance with the Act.

Rochdale SACRE has written its constitution in line with the 1996 Education Act and the constitution has been submitted to the legal services of the Local Authority for approval. The constitution consists of the constitution itself and the following appendices.

- Rochdale SACRE Code of Conduct 2022
- Rochdale SACRE Chair 2022
- Rochdale SACRE Invitation Letter 2022
- Rochdale SACRE Letter to Member Missing Meetings 2022
- Rochdale SACRE Support 2022
- Rochdale SACRE Managing Acceptable Behaviours 2022

## **8 Moving Ahead 2023-2024**

Rochdale SACRE will respond to this Annual Report and actions to move SACRE forward will be discussed at the next meeting of SACRE on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> February 2023.

### **(a) Constitution**

SACRE will complete the legal processes required to ratify the constitution as quickly as possible and the constitution will then be reviewed annually.

### **(b) Website**

Rochdale SACRE does not currently have a dedicated website/page, so this will be addressed via Rochdale Council's website.

### **(c) Audit of SACRE**

SACRE intends to complete an audit of its capacity, skillset and membership to plan for 2023 and beyond, and this process will also begin at the 13<sup>th</sup> February meeting.

## **9 Appendices**

- Appendix A: Rochdale SACRE Guidance on Parental Withdrawal from RE 2021
- Appendix B: Rochdale SACRE Guidance on Ramadan 2022
- Appendix C: Rochdale SACRE Survey of Collective Worship 2021
- Appendix D: Rochdale SACRE Constitution 2022

Peter Owen  
LA Representative to Rochdale SACRE

Rev Margaret Smith  
Chair of Rochdale SACRE

Amanda Francis  
LA Clerk to Rochdale SACRE

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