



Rochdale Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education

Annual Report to NASACRE 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. The current Local Authority representative to SACRE is Peter Owen (Early Help and Schools) and the current Clerk to SACRE is Amanda Francis (Local Authority 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)

Sandy Northey (RE Co-ordinator Sandbrook Primary School)

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

Sally Cowburn (Head of RE Newhouse Academy)

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 Local Authority 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) Rochdale SACRE, in collaboration with Rochdale Council of Mosques has created a guidance document for the Local Authority on the observance of Ramadan and how it can best be accommodated in schools. This is 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 26th 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 2021 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 2022 onwards SACRE has prepared 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 specific advice to the government or to any other statutory bodies in the year 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 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

Twelve of Rochdale's fourteen secondary schools (all except Edgar Wood Academy (who do not yet have Year 11 students) and Redwood Special School) entered a total of 1302 students for GCSE Religious Education in 2023, representing 47% of the Rochdale Year 11 cohort. Nationally, 38% of the Rochdale Year 11 cohort entered GCSE Religious Education in 2023, so Rochdale's percentage of Year 11 students entering GCSE Religious Education is up 9% on the national average for 2023.

In 2022, 44% of the Rochdale cohort entered GCSE Religious Education so the number of Rochdale students who were entered for GCSE RE has increased (by 3%) from 2022 to 2023 (as a total and as a percentage of the cohort).

In Rochdale, only Edgar Wood Academy (who do not yet have Year 11 students) and Redwood Special School did not enter any students for GCSE Religious Education in 2023. Five secondary schools entered more than 70% 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
Cardinal Langley RC	201	96.1%	4.9	68%
Falinge Park	246	91.4%	4.1	54%
Hollingworth Academy	78	28.9%	5.2	76%
Holy Family RC and CE	146	96.6%	4.2	57%
Kingsway Park	111	40.8%	4.7	64%
Matthew Moss	47	19.9%	5.1	74%
Middleton Technology	5	1.8%	5.0	80%
Newhouse Academy	52	25.6%	3.7	48%
Oulder Hill	205	70.9%	4.0	53%
St Anne's CE Academy	1	4.8%	0.0	00%
St Cuthbert's RC	198	85.7%	4.5	63%
Wardle Academy	12	5.2%	4.1	67%
Rochdale LA	1302	46.60%	4.4	61%
National average	NA	37.8%	5.1	71%

Schools entering more than 70% of the Year 11 cohort for GCSE Religious Education

- Cardinal Langley RC entered 201 students for GCSE Religious Education in 2023 (representing 96.1% of their cohort and compared to an entry of 202 in 2022). At Cardinal Langley RC 68% of students entered gained grade 4 or better in GCSE Religious Education in 2023 (5% higher than in 2022 and 3% lower than the national average).
- Falinge Park High School entered 246 students for GCSE Religious Education in 2023 (representing 91.4% of their cohort and compared to an entry of 256 in 2022). At Falinge Park High School 54% of students entered gained grade 4 or better in GCSE Religious Education in 2023 (2% lower than in 2022 and 17% lower than the national average).
- Holy Family RC and CE College entered 146 students for GCSE Religious Education in 2023 (representing 96.6% of their cohort and compared to an entry of 142 in 2022). At Holy Family RC and CE College 57% of students entered gained grade 4 or better in GCSE Religious Education in 2023 (23% lower than in 2022 and 14% lower than the national average).
- Oulder Hill Leadership Academy entered 205 students for GCSE Religious Education in 2023 (representing 70.9% of their cohort and compared to an entry of 29 in 2022). At Oulder Hill Leadership Academy 53% of students entered gained grade 4 or better in GCSE Religious Education in 2023 (30% lower than in 2022 and 18% lower than the national average).

- St Cuthbert's RC entered 198 students for GCSE Religious Education in 2023 (representing 85.7% of their cohort and compared to an entry of 189 in 2022). At St Cuthbert's RC 63% of students entered gained grade 4 or better in GCSE Religious Education in 2023 (8% lower than in 2022 and 8% lower than the national average).

Schools entering a cohort smaller than 40% of Year 11 cohort for GCSE Religious Education

- Hollingworth Academy entered 78 students for GCSE Religious Education in 2023 (representing 28.9% of their cohort and compared to an entry of 103 in 2022). At Hollingworth Academy 76% of students entered gained grade 4 or better in GCSE Religious Education in 2023 (5% lower than in 2022 and 5% higher than the national average).
- Kingsway Park High School entered 111 students for GCSE Religious Education in 2023 (representing 40.8% of their cohort and compared to an entry of 108 in 2022). At Kingsway Park High School 64% of students entered gained grade 4 or better in GCSE Religious Education in 2023 (4% lower than in 2021 and 7% lower than the national average).
- Matthew Moss High School entered 47 students for GCSE Religious Education in 2023 (representing 19.9% of their cohort and compared to an entry of 44 in 2022). At Matthew Moss 74% of students entered gained grade 4 or better in GCSE Religious Education in 2023 (10% lower than in 2022 and 3% higher than the national average).
- Middleton Technology School entered 5 students for GCSE Religious Education in 2023 (representing 1.8% of their cohort and compared to an entry of 8 in 2022). At Middleton Technology School 80% of students entered gained grade 4 or better in GCSE Religious Education in 2023 (5% higher than in 2022 and 9% higher than the national average).
- Newhouse Academy entered 52 students for GCSE Religious Education in 2023 (representing 25.6% of their cohort and compared to an entry of 42 in 2022). At Newhouse Academy 48% of students entered gained grade 4 or better in GCSE Religious Education in 2023 (14% lower than in 2022 and 23% lower than the national average).
- St Anne's Church of England Academy entered one student for GCSE Religious Education in 2023 (representing 4.8% of their cohort and compared to an entry of 7 in 2022). At St Anne's CE Academy 0% of students entered gained grade 4 or better in GCSE Religious Education in 2023 (only one student took GCSE RE).
- Wardle Academy entered 12 students for GCSE Religious Education in 2023 (representing 5.2% of their cohort). Wardle Academy did not enter any students for GCSE Religious Education in 2022. At Wardle Academy 67% of students entered gained grade 4 or better in GCSE Religious Education in 2023 (4% lower than the national average). Wardle did not enter any students for GCSE in 2022.

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

In Rochdale, only Edgar Wood Academy (no Year 11 cohort) and Redwood Special School did not enter any students for GCSE Religious Education in 2023. Redwood has no GCSE Religious Education provision as only a very small percentage of their students take GCSE.

Redwood was visited in 2022 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 Edgar Wood Academy from September 2025 onwards (when they will have a Year 11 cohort for the first time).

(c) The quality of Religious Education provision in schools

Thirty-one schools responded to Rochdale SACRE's annual return for Religious Education in 2023. Of those, twenty-seven were Primary schools and four were Secondary schools. Five respondents were Roman Catholic schools, seven were Church of England schools and nineteen 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?
29 schools (94% of respondents) do have a policy on the teaching of Religious Education and two schools (6% of respondents) do not have a policy on the teaching of Religious Education.
- Does the school have a policy on collective worship?
All 31 schools (100% of respondents) do have a policy on collective worship.
- Does the school have a policy on SMSC (Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Education)?
30 schools (97% of respondents) do have a policy on SMSC and one school (3% of respondents) does not have a policy on SMSC.
- Which Religious Education syllabus do you use?
Nineteen schools (61% of respondents) use the Rochdale Agreed Syllabus, five schools (16% of respondents) use a Roman Catholic Diocesan Syllabus and seven schools (22% 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?
29 schools (94% of respondents) do meet the minimum requirements for time for Religious Education lessons (as stipulated in the Rochdale Agreed Syllabus) and two schools (6% of respondents) do not.
- Is there a systematic approach to recording assessment of pupil progress in RE in relation to the Agreed Syllabus?
In 28 schools (90% of respondents) there is a systematic approach to recording assessment of pupil progress in RE in relation to the Agreed Syllabus and in three schools (10% of respondents) 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 all 31 schools (100% of the 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 28 schools (90% of respondents) but is not conducted in three schools (10% of respondents)

The strengths of Religious Education in Rochdale schools include the following

- i) Pupils and adults flourish academically, spiritually and personally.
- ii) Excellent relationships throughout the school and the community.
- iii) Well-planned regular worship related to school values and/or festivals.
- iv) A theologically rooted vision that is understood by all in school.
- v) Collective Worship and RE are supported by our clergy and RAF (Rochdale Anglican Federation) Headteacher projects.
- vi) All teaching staff and pupils are involved in planning and delivering worship.
- vii) Reflection areas throughout the school.
- viii) A well- resourced curriculum including worship materials, RE artefacts and visits e.g. church/mosque/ synagogue.
- ix) Staff benefit from high-quality CPD (eg Wiggle Worship, Diocese Zooms, Understanding Christianity).
- x) A pupil Ethos Committee who meet to support the planning and delivery of worship (pupils also help to gather Pupil Voice to evaluate outcomes).
- xi) RE co-ordinator has attended RE meetings that have been held at the mosque.
- xii) We are going to include a visit to the mosque in our RE curriculum and as part of our enrichment curriculum.
- xiii) RE Co-ordinator has attended a course on Ensuring Strong Curriculum Subject Knowledge for Subject Leaders in each Curriculum Area – RE.

- xiv) Using 'floor learning books' to record RE learning and discussions (this highlights knowledge and progression through the school and year groups.
- xv) Knowledge organisers are in place and we are looking at these in terms of content and assessment to see how they can be a more effective tool.
- xvi) New resources are now available to support in the teaching of RE especially around artefacts.
- xvii) There is clear progression document for RE that links topics together across the school.
- xviii) Excellent links with the local church: all our children experience the Harvest or Easter experience each year.
- xix) There is a clear assembly programme where pupils learn about different religious festivals, practices across the year.
- xx) School held a very successful Eid celebration day in April.
- xxi) A curriculum overview which identifies 4-5 key areas that need to be taught within each unit of work and assessment grids are completed at the end of each unit.
- xxii) Learning is targeted towards the most able (mastery learning) with scaffolds in place to support vulnerable cohorts.

Pupil responses

- i) Pupils like singing hymns, enjoy acting out parts of stories, and like to take part in (and/or watch) class assembly.
- ii) Pupils know and remember Bible stories, have some awareness of major world religions and are informed about local and global issues.
- iii) Children clearly understand the schools values and apply these values when learning about new religions.
- iv) Children enjoy RE: in particular they enjoy being able to discuss their ideas and views as well as learning about what other people think.
- v) In pupil interviews, they agree that learning about Religion is important to gain an understanding of a range of views so they can get along with others.
- vi) Children like RE more than in previous years: they like the discussions, sharing their experiences and being the experts.
- vii) The use of floor books has been positively met by the pupils and they enjoy contributing to the pages and the more in-depth discussions they can have.
- viii) Pupils enjoy that learning is conveyed through a collective page, rather than individual books.
- ix) I love the way our school educates us about the main religions, lessons are interesting and you learn a lot.
- x) School has taught me a lot about my own religion and I understand my values and beliefs a lot more now
- xi) We celebrate a lot of different religions and I really enjoy our themed days such as Diwali, Harvest or Advent.
- xii) Children like to learn about the different religions within school and community; they find it interesting to learn about their friends' different beliefs and religions.
- xiii) Trips provide additional learning experiences that pupils can remember and can talk about afterwards.
- xiv) The prodigal son reminds me no matter what we do God will forgive us and you should never give up on someone.
- xv) What I enjoy about collective worship is that I get to be with God and I get my own time with God, I like the quiet.
- xvi) I have learnt about Buddhism and Hinduism: we believe in the Holy Trinity and they believe in something similar in Hinduism.
- xvii) Pupils enjoy collective worship (survey), they feel the value of togetherness and spirituality.

- xviii) Pupils take the evaluation of worship seriously and look forward to their class taking the lead.
- xix) Ethos Team and Prayer Group are well attended with links with our local vicar who leads the sessions and takes part in RE and CW monitoring.
- xx) The link governor meets with the RE/CW Leader and takes part on the annual subject review.
- xxi) The whole school ethos is supported through adult monitoring (starting governors' meetings with a prayer and joining together to celebrate key events).
- xxii) Pupils are able to use a number of prayer spaces around school, and attend the annual Children's Conference at Bishop Bridgeman 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 would increase, SACRE prepared a revised 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 has been 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 2023

There was no syllabus review in 2023. The Locally Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education was last revised in spring term 2019 and launched on 26th 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 Management of SACRE

(a) Attendance at SACRE by Committee 2022-2023

Rochdale SACRE met four times between autumn term 2022 and autumn term 2023 (13th October 2022, 13th February 2023, 18th April 2023 and 20th September 2023). Two of these meetings were online meetings and two were face-to-face meetings at Little Heaton CE Primary School and St James' Church Calderbrook respectively.

Thursday 13th October 2022

Little Heaton CE Primary School (not quorate)

- Committee A: two (three apologies)
- Committee B: none (two apologies)
- Committee C: two (four apologies)
- Committee D: none (three apologies)

Monday 13th February 2023

Online/Zoom meeting (not quorate)

- Committee A: three (two apologies)
- Committee B: none (two apologies)
- Committee C: three (two apologies)
- Committee D: one (two apologies)

Tuesday 18th April 2023

Online/Zoom meeting (not quorate)

- Committee A: three (two apologies)
- Committee B: none (two apologies)
- Committee C: three (three apologies)
- Committee D: one (two apologies)

Wednesday 20th September 2023

St James' Church Calderbrook (quorate)

- Committee A: two (three apologies)
- Committee B: one (one apology)
- Committee C: two (two apologies)
- Committee D: two (one apology)

(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:
- Democratic services to support SACRE meetings in 2021-2022 (for example a clerk)?
 - 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.
 - 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.
 - Support for schools, including CPD and training specifically for Religious Education and/or Collective Worship?
 - Other costs?
 - 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 26th 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
- 8 How many meetings of SACRE were held in the academic year 2022-2023 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 2022-2023, two online meetings, one at Little Heaton CE Primary School and one at St James' CE church Calderbrook.

Thursday 13th October 2022: not quorate (six attendees [including LA representatives] with 12 apologies but no representation from Committees B or D)

Monday 13th February 2023: not quorate (nine attendees [including LA representatives] with eight apologies but no representation from Committee B)

Tuesday 18th April 2023: not quorate (nine attendees [including LA representatives] with nine apologies but no representation from Committee B)

Wednesday 20th September 2023: quorate (nine attendees [including LA representatives] with seven apologies)

- 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

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.

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 2022-2023 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 2023
- Rochdale SACRE Chair 2023
- Rochdale SACRE Invitation Letter 2023
- Rochdale SACRE Letter to Member Missing Meetings 2023
- Rochdale SACRE Support 2023
- Rochdale SACRE Managing Acceptable Behaviours 2023

7 Exchange Visit from Bonn University

(a) Logistics

On Thursday 23rd November 2023 Rochdale SACRE were pleased to receive a visit from four representatives of Bonn University in Germany on an exchange visit to UK schools. This was part of a visit to the UK by Bonn University to share and exchange ideas around the delivery and teaching of Religious Education. Our visitors attended Hollingworth Academy in the morning, to observe lessons and to meet with senior leaders and teachers of RE. Visitors were then taken back to number 1 Riverside for a lunchtime session with SACRE members.

Representatives of Bonn University

Stefan Gerstenberger
Folke Keden-Obrikat
Andreas Obermann
Petra Wassill

(b) Hollingworth Academy

Lesson observation with Sarah Walmsley (Year 10)
Meeting RE department (Georgina Hawkesworth/Sarah Walmsley)
Meeting RE Ambassadors (Year 10)

(c) Number 1 Riverside

Stefan Gerstenberger
Folke Keden-Obrikat
Andreas Obermann
Petra Wassill
Rev Margaret Smith (chair of Rochdale SACRE)
Peter Owen (LA representative Rochdale SACRE)
Amanda Francis (clerk to Rochdale SACRE)
Ghulam Rasul Shahzad (Rochdale Council of Mosques)
Guy Otten (Humanist representative on SACRE)
Terry Hart (Diocesan Advisor to SACRE)
Councillor Rachel Massey (SACRE)

Agenda

1. The organisation of RE and World Views.

- Based on the national plan for the subject is there a nationally standardised subject RE and WV with regard to the religious communities and worldviews involved and the curriculum?
- What is the significance of the Local Advisory Networks on Religion and Worldviews? How are the religious communities integrated into these networks?
- Do the Local Advisory Networks on Religion and Worldviews enable a regional specialisation of the subject with regard to participation of religious communities and the curricular design?
- What role does SACRE play and what role do religious communities still play in SACRE? How are they involved?

2. Teachers and Trainers

- How is teacher training structured in England - are they solely through state universities or also private institutions (eg Culham's St Gabriel Fund)?
- What does a degree programme in RE and WV look like and what is the training/study programme for teachers in case of length and intensity?
- In addition to the state examination, are teachers for RE and WV authorised separately by the churches or religious communities?
- What support do teachers receive, are there any special training programmes, and who provides and finances the training?
- Supply of teachers: how is it possible to recruit new teachers or is this not a problem?

- Teaching materials: are there textbooks and special teaching materials and how are the teaching materials financed?
- Who approves the teaching materials and are the religious communities involved in the approval process?

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 Thursday 15th February 2024.

(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 15th February meeting.

(c) Revision of Agreed Syllabus

There was no syllabus review in 2023. The Locally Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education was last revised in spring term 2019 and launched on 26th April 2019 to be implemented from September 2019. 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

9 Appendices

- Appendix A: Rochdale SACRE Guidance on Parental Withdrawal from RE 2023
- Appendix B: Rochdale SACRE Guidance on Ramadan 2023
- Appendix C: Rochdale SACRE Constitution 2023

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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Early Help and Schools
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