

Rotherham Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) Annual Report



Academic Year 2024-2025

Rotherham SACRE Annual Report

1. Chair's Introduction and Context

This report outlines the work of the Rotherham Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) from September 2024 to July 2025. It reflects on the advice given to statutory bodies, the support provided to schools, and the collaborative efforts to improve the quality of Religious Education (RE) and Collective Worship across the borough.

On behalf of Rotherham SACRE, I would like to extend my sincere thanks to all schools, teachers, RE subject leaders, support staff, and volunteers from our diverse faith communities. Your dedication and hard work over the past year have played a vital role in raising the standard of Religious Education across Rotherham.

Rotherham SACRE continues to benefit from a committed and expanding membership. We remain focused on supporting schools, educators, and subject leaders in delivering high-quality and inclusive RE. Our meetings, typically held four times a year, provide a valuable forum for collaboration and strategic planning. While one meeting this year was not quorate and therefore cancelled, the remaining meetings were fully quorate and productive.

We are particularly pleased to have strengthened Group 3 membership, welcoming a number of highly skilled secondary RE specialists. This has significantly enhanced our collective expertise and capacity to support schools.

Our hybrid meetings, held at Rotherham Town Hall, have improved accessibility and participation, enabling broader engagement from members. Our development plan remains a dynamic and evolving document, regularly reviewed to ensure it aligns with the needs of our schools and the wider local authority.

Looking ahead, our priorities include enhanced training and support for subject leaders, the continuation of our annual RE conference, the introduction of an RE awards ceremony, and the development of a recommended list of educational visits and visitors.

Thank you once again for your continued commitment to Religious Education in Rotherham.

Hannah Lambert

Chair of Rotherham Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education

July 2025

2. Advice to Statutory Bodies

a) Local Authority

SACRE advised the Local Authority on the importance of supporting RE through CPD, interfaith engagement, and curriculum development. The LA responded positively by facilitating CPD events and supporting the Agreed Syllabus Conference.

b) Schools

Advice was given to schools on enhancing RE through interfaith Q&A sessions, resource sharing, and curriculum alignment. Schools responded with positive feedback and increased participation in SACRE-led initiatives.

c) Government or Other Statutory Bodies

SACRE contributed to national discussions through NASACRE and advocated for ring-fenced funding and curriculum standards.

d) Response to the Advice Given

The advice was acted upon by the LA and schools, leading to improved engagement and resource development. No advice was ignored.

3. Standards and Quality of Provision of RE

a) Public Examinations

No data available for this reporting period.

b) Attainment in RE Not Covered by Public Examination

Anecdotal evidence from CPD sessions suggests improved teacher confidence and student engagement.

c) The Quality of RE Provision in Schools

Schools are actively engaging with SACRE resources and interfaith initiatives.

d) Withdrawal from RE

No formal data collected.

e) Complaints about RE

No complaints were received during this period.

4. Agreed Syllabus

a) Review of the Syllabus

An Agreed Syllabus Conference was convened and progress was made toward a revised syllabus.

b) Next Review

The next review is scheduled for the 2025–2026 academic year.

5. Collective Worship

a) Compliance with the Statutory Requirement

Schools are reminded of their statutory duties through SACRE communications.

b) Quality of Collective Worship

No formal monitoring conducted; anecdotal reports suggest varied practice.

c) Determinations

A determination was granted to Thornhill Primary School.

d) Complaints about Collective Worship

No complaints were received.

6. Management of SACRE

a) Attendance at SACRE, by Committee

Attendance records are maintained and available upon request. Rotherham SACRE met on four occasions during the 2024/2025 academic year. Details of venues and attendance are provided in the table below:

Date	Venue	Numbers in attendance from each group					Other Attendees
		Group A	Group B	Group C	Group D	Co-opted Members	
19 September 2024	Rotherham Town Hall	2	1	3	4	0	1 (Specialist SACRE RE Advisor)
5 December 2024	Rotherham Town Hall	3	1	2	2	0	1 (Specialist SACRE RE Advisor)

27 March 2025	Rotherham Town Hall	2	1	1	3	0	0
5 June 2025	Rotherham Town Hall	3	1	3	4	0	0

b) Membership and Training

The table below highlights the current membership levels for each group in Rotherham SACRE. There has been 1 new member representation Hinduism was added to Group A during the 2024-2025 academic year.

Group A	Group B	Group C	Group D
5	1	6	6

c) Complaints about RE and Collective Worship

No complaints were received.

7. Contribution of SACRE to the Wider Local Authority Agenda

a) Contribution to Other Agendas

SACRE contributed to interfaith dialogue and curriculum development.

b) Public Sector Equality Duty

SACRE promoted inclusivity through its interfaith initiatives.

c) Support to Schools

Provided CPD, resource lists, and interfaith engagement opportunities.

d) Community Initiatives

Collaborated with Rotherham Faith Leaders Group and other SACREs.

8. Finance - Annual Budget

The SACRE budget for the financial year 2024/25 was fully balanced. Total expenditure amounted to £6,000, which was entirely funded through DSG income. This resulted in no net overspend or underspend at year-end.

Rotherham - SACRE Budget

2024/25 Income & Expenditure Statement

SACRE	Actuals 24-25
	(£)
NASACRE Annual Subscription	115
Travel to Rotherham & Return	67
Accommodation	89
CPD Training	1,000
SACRE Management Time - H Lambert	850
SACRE Support - V Gregory	1,750
RE awards	0
Subject Leader Facilitation and coordination time – H Lambert	2,200
Council contribution to SACRE	-71
Total Expenditure	6,000
Total Income (DSG funding)	-6,000
Net Expenditure	0

9. Summary

SACRE has made significant contributions to RE and Collective Worship in Rotherham. While formal monitoring and attendance data could be improved, the engagement with schools and the LA has been positive. SACRE continues to advocate for adequate funding and support.

The following items were discussed at the meetings held during the academic year of 2024-2025:

- **Artefacts Update**

The Specialist RE Advisor to SACRE provided regular updates to SACRE on the artefact resource boxes that were purchased via the SACRE budget, for schools to outsource via a borrowing system. Discussions included how to further promote the artefacts to ensure maximum engagement and usage of them.

- **Continuous Professional Development Update**

Regular updates were provided to each SACRE meeting on the opportunities for CPD, via the SACRE Specialist RE Advisor. Regular Subject Leader meetings were held, including one in the form of a question-and-answer panel arranged by SACRE and the SACRE Specialist RE Advisor.

The question-and-answer panel included a Buddhist representative, a Bahai representative, a Muslim representative and a Jewish representative.

Participation in the meeting was smaller than expected, however all who attended were enthusiastic and open and transparent of the struggles they were facing relating to the required knowledge and resources relating to each faith. SACRE members present offered attendees the option to approach Rotherham SACRE for SACRE's resource list. Teachers provided positive feedback from the meeting and advised that it was helpful for them to be able to think about personal world views

- **Development Plan update**

At every SACRE meeting, members received a progress update for each action on the development plan and the proposed next steps by the Chair of SACRE.

- **South Yorkshire RE Conference Update**

A South Yorkshire RE Conference was held on 29 January 2024. The Conference was added as an action on the SACRE Development Plan and was funded by local authority funding. The Conference was attended by thirty people and the feedback from the Conference was very positive. The Conference was hosted by Lat Blaylock, who was a primary and secondary Religious Education (RE) Specialist and Consultant. Lat was also the Editor of RE Today. Lat had been paid via the SACRE budget to deliver the conference. The conference provided the context to the Ofsted Research Review and how Rotherham SACRE could promote aspects raised within the report that related to areas that Ofsted found were not strong enough. Lat provided SACRE members who attended the course with good practical ideas for the classroom.

- **GCSE Results Update**

SACRE members requested an update on GCSE and A-Level results for the academic year, the GCSE and A-Level results were anonymised and shared

with the Committee members. SACRE members requested the data with specific school's names, local authority officers within the Childrens and Young People's Services sought advice and advised members that the Council's school ISA was not explicit enough to share the school's names with the associated data.

- **Secondary Networking Session Update**

An update was provided to members of SACRE on the Secondary Networking Session that was held.

- **The Together for Tomorrow Project**

The Local Authority was successful in a funding bid to support the delivery of projects and education within the borough, following on from the unrest and disorder in Rotherham, during the summer of 2024. The funding was used to develop the Together for Tomorrow Project, which focused on bringing together PHSE and the RE Curriculum. The funding was used to raise awareness of different cultures and beliefs and bring the communities of Rotherham together through schools and the curriculum. It was also a good project to raise the profile of religious education. The project was available to all schools in Rotherham and content would be recorded and hosted on www.forgecpd.com. The Chair of SACRE and the SACRE CYPs officer in attendance at the meeting were part of the Steering Group which progressed the project. At the end of the project there would be a celebration of the work completed throughout the project and an art exhibition would be held. It was suggested that the art exhibition could be linked to the Children's Capital of Culture which Rotherham was hosting for 2025.

Once the funding would be over, it was anticipated that the project would be sustainable and would be progressed through the curriculum.

- **Rotherham SACRE Terms of Reference and Constitution Updates**

Regular updates were provided to SACRE, via the Governance Advisor on the planned revision of the SACRE Terms of Reference and Constitution. SACRE were involved in drafting the document and then considered and approved the draft document. A briefing note was provided to SACRE members which highlighted the main changes to the Terms of Reference.

- **SACRE Membership Updates**

Regular updates relating to SACRE membership levels were provided to SACRE, this included any new membership for consideration and any current vacancies.

- **Feedback from Interfaith Week**

An update on Inter Faith Week 2024 was provided to the Committee. Three Primary Schools and one Secondary School requested attendance from faith members for Inter Faith Week. The groups were led in pairs of two, representing two different faiths. The attendees used the Inter Faith website

poster which covered a lot of different faiths. A general introduction was completed and both attendees read out their own individual faith quotation from the poster and asked each other questions on how they applied it to their everyday lives. The feedback from the participating schools was very positive, although there wasn't much interaction from pupils during the session, on-going discussions took place in classes after the session. A parent had approached one attendee to provide positive feedback and advise that their child enjoyed the session at school. It was agreed that this would be repeated on an annual basis, the event would be planned earlier next year to ensure wider involvement.

- **Local RE Agreed Syllabus Updates**

The local authority was due to review the Local RE Agreed Syllabus in conjunction with SACRE. SACRE members were reminded of the requirement to convene an Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC). An ASC may also be known as a sub-group or working group, which would lead on the review of the Agreed Syllabus. The ASC was a statutory body and would entail between 3-6 meetings, which would include separate published agendas and minutes. SACRE was asked to agree to convene the ASC and to volunteer members to partake in the ASC. ASC meetings to review the Local RE Agreed Syllabus will begin in September 2025, with the intention of the new Local RE Agreed Syllabus being launched by September 2026.

- **SACRE Determinations**

SACRE completed one determination in the academic year of 2024-2025. A determination was a legal process that RSACRE 8 allowed a school to deviate from the statutory requirement that collective worship be "wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character". Thornhill Primary School requested that a member of SACRE complete a determination, and a SACRE member had completed that determination and brought the findings to SACRE at a meeting. The overall findings of the determination were very positive. The RE leads were knowledgeable and enthusiastic and all class teachers demonstrated subject knowledge. There were multiple examples of good practice across the school. The outcome of the determination recommended that the determination for Thornhill Primary School be renewed.

- **Membership of SACRE and Support**

SACRE is supported by a clerk and an RE adviser. Membership includes representatives from faith groups, teachers, and the local authority

10. Rotherham Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education Constitution

The current Rotherham SACRE Constitution and Terms of Reference 2025, are attached as Appendix 1.

During the 2024-2025 academic year, Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council in conjunction with the Chair of SACRE, SACRE members, the Monitoring Officer and the Governance Advisor, reviewed and updated the Rotherham SACRE Constitution and Terms of Reference.

The revised document has been drafted in conjunction with the guidance published by National SACRE and the relevant legislation such as the Education Act 1944 and the Education Act 1988, to ensure the revised Constitution and Terms of Reference will be compliant with all relevant statutory requirements.



Rotherham
Standing Advisory Council
on Religious Education
(SACRE)

Constitution and Terms of Reference

2025

1. Introduction to SACRE

- 1.1 SACRE stands for Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education.
- 1.2 Every Local Authority is required by law to have a SACRE. The Education Act 1944 created the origins for SACREs, following the 1988 Education Act, when religious education was confirmed as a compulsory part of the curriculum, it became a statutory requirement for every Local Education Authority (LEA) to appoint a SACRE.
- 1.3 SACRE's advises and supports the local authority in relation to the effective provision of religious education and Collective Worship in schools. These are two distinct and separate matters for which SACRE has responsibility.
- 1.4 Changes to the provision of education, for example through the establishment of Academies and Free Schools and the reducing size of the Local Authority itself means there is considerably less local authority influence on the religious education in schools.

2. Statutory Responsibilities

- 2.1 The broad role of the SACRE is to support the effective provision of Religious Education and Collective Worship in schools.
- 2.2 **Rotherham SACRE must:**
 - (a) Advise the LA and its schools on such matters connected with the agreed syllabus, religious education and collective worship either in response to a referral from the LA or as it sees fit.
 - (b) Publish an annual report on its work and on actions taken by its representative groups, specifying any matters on which it has advised the LA, broadly describing the nature of that advise, and set out reasons for offering advice on matters not referred to it by the LA.
 - (c) Send a copy of the annual report to the Department of Education and National SACRE.
 - (d) Consider applications from a head teacher that the school be released from the requirement for collective worship to be "wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character", for some or all of their pupils (this is known as a determination).
 - (e) Meet in public unless confidential information is to be disclosed; and
 - (f) Produce and publish minutes of its meetings available on the Council's Website, so far as the minutes relate to the parts of the meetings that were open to the public.

2.3 Rotherham SACRE should:

- (a) Monitor the provision and quality of the agreed syllabus RE and of collective worship.
- (b) In partnership with the LA, consider whether any changes need to be made to the agreed syllabus or in the support offered to schools in the implementation of the agreed syllabus, to improve the quality, teaching and learning in RE.
- (c) Offer advice to the LA, and through the LA to schools, concerning how an existing agreed syllabus can be interpreted so as to fit in with a broad, balanced and coherent curriculum.
- (d) Require the LA to set up an occasional body called an agreed syllabus conference (ACS) to review the agreed syllabus at least every five years. If, at some other time, and after discussion and a vote (the LA group on SACRE is not entitled to cast a vote in this context) the majority of the committees of the SACRE asks the LA in writing to reconsider its agreed syllabus, it must convene a conference for that purpose.
- (e) Maintain a Development Plan with SMART targets to measure effectiveness and review and/or refresh the Development Plan on an annual basis.

3. Membership of SACRE

- 3.1 Rotherham SACRE's members represent various religious and non-religious communities from Rotherham and local representatives who are teachers, school governors, councillors, and others.
- 3.2 A SACRE committee must have appointed representatives to each of four groups, representing respectively:

Group A: Such Christian denominations and other religions and denominations of such religions as, in the opinion of the LA, will appropriately reflect the principal religious traditions in the area other than the Church of England.

Group B: Representatives of the Church of England.

Group C: Such associations representing teachers as, in the opinion of the LA, ought to be represented, having regard to the circumstances of the area, representing as far as is practicable, infant, junior, primary, secondary and specialist schools.

Group D: The Local Authority: those appointed should represent Rotherham

Borough Council. Members of Group D shall be appointed annually by the full Council.

3.3 **Composition of Membership**

3.4 The composition of the groups shall be a non- exhaustive list of the kinds of groups that are represented on SACRE Committees around the country and will represent a range of religions, denominations and non-religious philosophical convictions groups, which could include but is not restricted to:

Group A: Christian and other religious denominations as follows:

- The Afro-Caribbean Council of Churches
- The Bahai Faith
- The Baptist Church
- The Buddhist Faith
- The Hindu Faith
- Humanism
- The Methodist Church
- The Pentecostal Church
- The Religious Society of Friends
- The Roman Catholic Church
- The Salvation Army
- The Orthodox Church
- The United Reformed Church
- The Jewish Faith
- The Islamic Faith
- The Sikh Faith.

Group B: Four representatives.

Group C: Five representatives.

Group D: Four representatives plus the Governance Advisor to SACRE (non-voting).

3.5 When appointing a new member of a group on SACRE, the local authority will take all reasonable steps to ensure that the nominee is representative of the religion, denomination, or associations in question.

3.6 **Co-opted Members**

3.7 Other persons may be co-opted by the representative groups on the SACRE for such purposes and such length of time as representative groups on the SACRE might decide. Co-opted members do not belong to any of the groups and do not have voting rights. Co-opted members may resign at any time and may be removed by the representative groups or the LA at any time.

3.8 Any member of SACRE unable to attend a meeting should appoint a named substitute to attend in his/her place. Notice of this substitution should be notified to the Governance Advisor of SACRE at least 6 hours in advance of

the meeting. Substitute members may speak but not vote.

3.9 Terms of Office for Representative Members

Members shall remain members until such time as they have resigned or have been absent for 3 or more consecutive meetings for any reason not acceptable or apologies are not passed on to the Governance Advisor, then they shall be deemed to be a vacated place to be filled by the governing body for that class of Members.

The SACRE shall review the composition of each group and the attendance annually (at the Autumn Term meeting).

3.10 Chair and Vice-Chair Positions

3.11 The Chair and Vice-Chair of the Council shall be elected by the representative members of the SACRE and shall be elected at the last meeting in each academic year. Voting for the Chair and Vice-Chair will be by a simple majority. The Chair and Vice-Chair where possible, will represent different committees of SACRE.

3.12 Persons continuing to be members of the SACRE are eligible for re-appointment to the position of Chair and Vice-Chair.

In the absence of the Chair or Vice-Chair at any meeting the local authority can elect one of its members to act as the Chair for that meeting.

The main specific role of the Chair is to manage the work of SACRE in accordance with statutory requirements and local circumstances.

3.13 The Chair will be responsible for:

- (a) The management of meetings.
- (b) Representing the SACRE to other bodies.
- (c) Leading the SACRE in its own self- evaluation and development and/or training programmes.
- (d) Any other duties as the SACRE considers appropriate.

3.14 The Vice-Chair will be responsible for:

- (a) Deputising for the Chair as required.
- (b) Representing the SACRE to other bodies in the absence of the Chair or in agreement with the Chair.
- (c) Any other duties as the SACRE considers appropriate.

3.15 Professional SACRE Advisor

The specific responsibilities of the RE Advisor to SACRE is to:

- (a) Attend each meeting of the SACRE and support the SACRE to fulfil its legislative duties in Rotherham.
- (b) Work with the Chair and Governance Advisor to prepare the SACRE agenda, SACRE Annual Report, any other relevant reports, papers or advice requested.
- (c) Provide advice to the SACRE on professional issues. Professional Advisors are not members of the SACRE and cannot vote.
- (d) Advise and update SACRE members on any new government guidance or policy documents.
- (e) Regularly report back to SACRE on work completed on behalf of SACRE.
- (f) Provide expertise and advice in the areas of RE and collective worship.

3.16 Childrens and Young People's Services Representation

The Assistant Director of Education and Inclusion is the responsible officer and representative for the local authority Children's and Young People's Services. The responsible officer is required to be present throughout the proceedings of the SACRE and to give advice on behalf of the LA as he/she thinks appropriate.

He/she will ensure that the LA provides sufficient funds and support for SACRE to perform its duties and take note of and respond to advice from SACRE. He/she will contribute to the SACRE Annual Report from the perspective of Children's and Young People's Services.

The attendance of a LA officer at a SACRE meeting may be specifically requested by the SACRE when it requires advice or guidance on a particular issue.

4. SACRE Meetings

4 SACRE should meet at least 3 times annually, once during each of the summer, autumn and spring terms.

4.3 Additional meetings may be called by the Chair and local authority acting jointly. In addition, each group may convene its own group meetings at any time. All of SACRE are expected to attend and contribute to meetings.

4.4 **Quoracy**

4.5 A meeting shall be quorate if the following numbers of representative/s of the respective groups are present:

4.6 Group A – minimum of 1
Group B – minimum of 1
Group C – minimum of 1
Group D – minimum of 1.

4.7 If the meeting is not quorate either business shall not be transacted, or the meeting could continue but decisions would have to be ratified at the next SACRE meeting.

5. **Voting procedures in SACRE**

5.1 All members are entitled to speak and vote on any issue. However, substitute or co-opted member may speak but not vote at any meeting.

5.2 SACRE is committed to reaching decisions on a consensus basis but on the rare occasions when voting is necessary the following guidelines will apply:

- (a) On any issue to be decided by the SACRE, except as provided in statement 3.7 above, only the four representative groups shall be entitled to vote. They have equal voting rights: one vote from each group A, B, C or D.
- (b) Issues shall be decided by a simple majority vote.
- (c) A proposal shall not be deemed to be carried unless it has been approved by at least three of the four groups, unless otherwise required by law or guidance.
- (d) In the event of a tied vote the groups shall revisit the issue in question to see if consensus can be reached.
- (e) If the vote is still tied, the Chair may exercise a casting vote.

6. **Administrative Arrangements**

6.1 The LA shall provide a person to act as Clerk to the SACRE, the Clerk will be a Governance Advisor from Democratic Services.

6.2 The Governance Advisor will:

- (a) Attend the full meetings of SACRE, an agenda setting meeting with the Chair and agreed syllabus conference meetings.
- (b) Distribute agendas, take appropriate minutes and notes at the meetings.

- (c) Maintain and update the records of SACRE and its meetings.
- (d) Perform any other necessary administrative duties.
- (e) Provide a copy of the draft minutes and papers of meetings to the members of SACRE and LA, 5 clear working days before the next meeting takes place.
- (f) Provide information for the development of the Annual Report, such as membership and attendance details.

6.3 SACRE members can propose agenda items by contacting the Chair or the Governance Advisor to SACRE. Matters for the agenda of any meeting shall be sent to the Governance Advisor at least 28 days in advance of the meeting.

6.4 The Chair should meet with the Educational Representative from the local authority and the Governance Advisor to SACRE 21 days in advance of the meeting, to agree the content and business to be added on the agenda for each meeting.

6.5 The draft minutes of meetings shall be published within one month of the meeting.

7. Disputes and Complaints

7.1 The SACRE is intended to be a collective, co-operative body and needs to ensure that no particular sector or member is unduly favoured. Problems and issues should normally be debated and resolved at the SACRE meetings. However, if parties feel that these have not been resolved, the following process should be followed, and minutes taken:

- (a) Stage 1: The parties who are in dispute meet with the Chair if the SACRE and the Professional SACRE Advisor who will assist in finding or recommending a solution.
- (b) Stage 2: A special meeting of the SACRE is convened, with papers prepared by the parties representing different views. The Chair and the Professional SACRE Advisor also prepare a paper offering possible options for resolution. If the problem is not resolved, the dispute is referred to Stage 3.
- (c) Stage 3: If the issue is not resolved then guidance or clarification will be sought from the relevant Government Department.
- (d) Complaints from members of the public will be handled by the Council's Complaints procedure.