

**Salford Standing Advisory Council On  
Religious Education.**

**Annual Report.**

**2023.**

## Contact Names and Addresses.

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Clerk to SACRE	Viv Bentley		Salford Civic Centre Chorley Road Swinton M27 5AW Viv.Bentley@salford.gov.uk
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## **SALFORD SACRE – 2022.**

### **Table of Contents.**

- 1. Forward from the Chair.**
- 2. Religious Education.**
- 3. Collective Worship**
- 4. SACRE Arrangements**
- 5. Links with other bodies**

## Section 1 – Forward from the Chair of SACRE

### Forward From The Chair On Salford SACRE.

Welcome to the Annual Report of the Salford Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education.

Firstly, may I thank all our SACRE Members including co-opted partners, stakeholders and supporters for your ongoing service, commitment and dedication throughout this year. As I reflect on everything that has transpired on our SACRE journey through this period, I'm indebted, gratified and so thankful for all the excellent advice encouragement and support received from our incredibly committed and hard working membership and wider co-opted team. I'm amazed at the high degree of expertise and quality skill set demonstrated by our membership in the service of our SACRE. Your hard work and efforts significantly benefit our network of community schools right across the city.

May I also take this opportunity on behalf of our membership and myself in acknowledging grateful thanks to Salford LA for the way in which they have constantly offered advice, encouragement and support to the work of SACRE this year. In particular may I thank Neil Fazackerley, Head of the Secondary Service, Provider Arm together with Vicky Ross, Head of the Primary Service Provider Arm, both at Salford LA for their wise counsel and guidance. A huge thank you as well to our SACRE Clerk, Vivienne Bentley who keeps a great super-efficient handle on the management protocols and procedures at our meetings and associated paperwork which goes with this territory.

Our SACRE is rapidly transforming into a proactive 'Beacon of Hope' body. We aim to be advocates of ambitious best practice RE, collective worship as well as ensuring these objectives also contributes to school community social cohesion initiatives. I'm particularly proud in the way we are in joint collaboration with the LA addressing and progressing all the identified issues from our action/development plan. We are also now observing a growing membership across the 4, A-D committees making up our SACRE. Significantly, SACRE is now guided by a 'Steering Sub-Group' made up of one Primary Headteacher, a RE Teacher Advisor as well as other teachers together with the Senior Advisor for Salford LA contributing valuable advice and guidance to our team. Our Steering Group offers over-arching advice, suggestions and support to 3 panels made up of members from across our 4 SACRE committees. These panels are focused on our core business of standards and quality of religious education, collective worship and community cohesion.

I am delighted to report that our Religious Education Advisor for Salford, Deborah Crane has been making significant strides in promoting and developing our Primary and Secondary RE Teacher Networks over the last 12 months or so. These networks are growing from strength to strength and positively impacting the planning and delivery of Religious Education across all Salford LA Community Schools.

Additionally, I am extremely happy to report that additional work is currently ongoing in respect to the rewriting of a fit for purpose Salford SACRE Collective Worship policy. This exercise is being driven by a small 'Writing Group' made up of professional educators from

across Salford schools in collaboration with Salford SACRE and LA.. In particular may I publicly thank all participating schools and especially Jo McGarry, Headteacher at St Mary's CofE Primary School, Cadishead, Salford for her superb contributions to the work of this writing group in her role as a co-opted member of SACRE, driving its Collective Worship SACRE Panel. I also wish to thank Elaine Darwin, Headteacher at Irlam Primary School, Salford as well as Alison Edwards, Headteacher at Monton Green, Eccles, Salford both of whom, allowed their respective RE coordinators Hannah Boardman (Irlam Primary) and Ruby OHare (Monton Green Primary) serve on our 'Salford SACRE Collective Worship Writing Group' to assist us in constructing and producing the collective worship guidance documentation.

I am also delighted to report that our SACRE continues to be an advocate for the student/pupil voice here in Salford. We continue to work with young people through Salford Youth Council aimed at broadening and deepening student voice across all of our network of community schools. Can I acknowledge and thank Martyn Shaw – Salford Youth Lead and his team for all their tremendous efforts in assisting, guiding and supporting our work here. We as a SACRE passionately believe that young people engagement in RE is vitally important. This to be an important aspect of our work. To our mind the wider world that our young people inhabit is rapidly evolving into a global village through the wonders of ever advancing, innovative interconnected systems and platforms of technological marvels. Securing and fine tuning this aspect of education in ways accessible to children helps to equip them with a skill set enabling them to navigate, understand, respect and value a world of faiths, cultures, humanistic perspectives and viewpoints. We believe that when we get this right, young people do come to appreciate and value this aspect of their school journey. As an added bonus we would argue that students in these circumstances become this subject's best ambassadors - and further suggest that this has to be good for them, the schools they come from, their families, local communities and wider city.

Salford SACRE continues to work in partnership with others on a variety of initiatives and activities. Salford SACRE remains a Member of a 5 SACRE Greater Manchester Agreed Syllabus partnership which includes Manchester, Stockport, Tameside and Trafford. We are also members of the Greater Manchester 10 SACRE Belief and Faith Forum which provides opportunities for SACRE Chairs/Vice Chairs and Advisors to share and discuss Religious Education matters relevant to us all across this region. We also are members of the wider Lancashire North West Hub which meets three times a year and is held at Lancashire County Hall, in Preston. This involvement offers opportunity to discuss larger picture national Religious Education issues.

I'm pleased to note that a few of our members including myself serve on our City Equalities and Community Cohesion 'Annual Holocaust Memorial Day' planning team and again (as has been the case in the past years) provided guidance and support in the organisation and delivery of a highly successful civic event held in Salford as well as online. This year's theme was the 'Fragility of Freedom', an extremely relevant topic given contemporary world challenges. It was delightful to observe the participation of a significant number of young people at that event including Salford Youth Council representatives. A grateful thanks to

Alex Klein, our Jewish Representative on Committee A, for his continued hard work again this year in advising, guiding and supporting the arrangement of music and other related matters. Likewise, I also thank Counsellor Arnie Saunders serving on our Committee D, for his advice, guidance and service sitting as a member on this planning committee, thus also making valuable contributions and ensuring success of this important civic activity. Further, a huge thanks to many of our members that attended this activity in person all through the online portal as well this year.

As we move into another year of uncertain times, I'm nevertheless confident Salford SACRE will continue to serve our community well in respect of its networks of schools, stakeholders and partners to the benefit of children, students and young people.

David B Levien.

Salford SACRE Chair.

June 2024.

## Section 2- Religious Education

As outlined in more detail in last year's report, our Local Agreed Syllabus was launched in 2022 and was managed collaboratively with Salford and four other SACREs in Greater Manchester; Manchester, Stockport, Tameside, and Trafford. The aim of this syllabus is to enable students to gain and understanding of different faiths and beliefs and the significance of religious belief and other beliefs in shaping worldviews, the minds of humans and communities. It seeks to enable an understanding of religious education as an academic discipline and as such aims to develop students 'understanding of concepts, skills, and attitudes so that pupils can explore wider issues of religion and belief in a religiously literate way. Within the 5 boroughs we have an increasingly diverse community with members belonging to several different religions as well as young people who come from families who hold no religious beliefs. Our syllabus aims to help them gain a broader understanding of these different beliefs, improve their knowledge of global affairs, and contribute to a more cohesive community. In a world of rapid change and in many respects a time of conflict, it is increasingly more important that our young people to share experiences with one another and learn from each other and about the different religious beliefs in our community. It is only by doing this that they will reflect on their own beliefs, values, and traditions as well as those of others and in doing so develop an open mind and tolerance towards one another. Lessons take as a starting point the experiences of young people and involve a consideration of everyday concerns such as our relationship with our planet, the importance of equality and justice.

Our syllabus is available to schools digitally and shortened summaries are also digitally available to parents and carers and other stakeholders. Schools are also expected to provide details of their curriculum on their school website.

This year we have continued to offer termly network meetings for Subject Leaders of RE in both primary and secondary schools. These have been planned and led by our teacher subject advisor, Deborah Crane, with support from Pennine Learning, a team of trained RE consultants with considerable expertise in the teaching of RE in schools. The organisation works at national and regional level and we have been fortunate to have had the benefit of their expertise this year in helping us shape our CPD offer for teachers. This year networks have been focusing on integrating art into RE and exploring the ethical use of AI technology in the classroom. This initiative has been instrumental in driving and leading standards within the network. It has enabled both primary and secondary schools to engage in essential professional development, get timely updates on the new Ofsted report and collaborate with colleagues on the new research 'Religion and World views'

projects. More and more members are getting involved in leading projects across the borough and this is testament to the commitment and hard work of the RE teachers across Salford

In 2024 we aim to develop this further with some additional courses for teachers as well as further opportunities to learn about assessment in RE and to gain some further subject knowledge about the different religions that are taught within our syllabus.

We have also undertaken a session with school governors about the role of SACRE and the importance that they play in monitoring the curriculum in their roles as part of the leadership of the school. We plan to undertake more governor training in 2024, particularly in collective worship .

One of our SACRE members has undertaken a trawl of all the school’s Ofsted reports for evidence of practice in RE and SMSC. This has provided a wealth of knowledge about what is going on in our schools, both in the subject and more widely.

### GCSE Results

This year 8 secondary schools entered pupils for GCSE in RE. All three Catholic High Schools entered over 90% of their cohorts for the exam. Other schools entered cohorts of between 15 and 42 students. Overall 10.7% of the 2023 cohort took RE as a GCSE subject. This is an decrease on last year when 23% took the exam. There are many reasons why numbers might fall, however RE not being counted in the Ebacc measures is often cited by headteachers as a concern. It is not given the same parity as other humanities subjects such as history or geography. Catholic schools feel that their efforts to teach RE to large numbers are not recognised in the Ebacc measure.

This year we have had no complaints about the teaching of RE

The table below shows further details of the schools and their results.

School	No on roll	No entered	Cohort %	% achieving grades 9-4 2023	School to nat gap	% achieving grades 9-5 2023	School to nat gap	% achieving grades 9-7 2023	School to nat gap	Average Points Score
St. Patrick’s RC High	183	181	99%	74%	2	66%	5	39%	8	5.4



Salford City Academy	173	17	10%	65%	-7	53%	-8	47%	16	5.2
The Lowry Academy	178	42	24%	67%	-5	62%	1	36%	5	5.0
Oasis Academy	167	20	12%	70%	-2	60%	-1	35%	4	5.1
Swinton Academy	187	14	7%	57%	-15	50%	-11	36%	5	4.6
All Hallows RC High	121	107	88%	64%	-9	51%	-10	20%	-11	4.5
St Ambrose Barlow RC High	210	191	91%	66%	-6	58%	-4	23%	-8	4.7
Walkden Academy	296	15	5%	87%	15	73%	12	40%	9	5.8

It is difficult to make year on year comparisons due to the lack of data for 2020 and 2021 as examinations were internally assessed in these years due to the pandemic. Also due to relatively small cohorts in a lot of schools a year-on-year comparison of attainment grades is also not a useful benchmark of improvement or otherwise. However, when we compare the schools with 2019 ( the year when GCSEs ran as normal before the pandemic) with 2023, we see that in Salford there has been an overall improvement in GCSE grades at Grades 9-4 (passing grades) of 7% from 62% achieving Grades 9-4 in 2019 to 69% in 2023. For information the national average for attainment at Grades 9-4 in both 2019 and 2023 was 72% therefore there was no improvement nationally. The overall average grade in Salford was 5.0, an improvement of half a grade since 2019 and the national overall average grade was 5.1. It was also 5.1 in 2019.

### **Support for SACRE**

Salford SACRE continues to be supported by an administrator and a senior school improvement professional. The LA budget allows members to represent Salford at national training and conferences as well as contributing to the annual Holocaust Memorial Events. In addition to this the budget enables termly networks to be provided to schools at no cost to teachers as well as enabling members to attend regional RE focused networks.

## Section 3 – Collective Worship

### **Determinations**

There have been no applications for determinations in 2023

### **Complaints about Collective Worship**

There have been no complaints about collective worship in 2023.

### **Developments in Collective Worship in 2023 and looking forward to 2024-5**

As part of our SACRE action plan, we have formed a small working group of teachers and SACRE members to discuss the development of collective worship policy for Salford. Members of this group have also attended training on this subject to ensure they have the right knowledge to enable them to progress with this task. They have also been reading and digesting the contents of other Collective Worship policies and have been preparing the ground and gathering suitable materials to take this forward in 2024.

In 2024 we aim to have a draft policy out to schools and SACRE members for consultation and to respond to this in time to launch a policy in 2024-2025. Relevant training for senior leaders and governors will be provided.

## Section 4 – SACRE Arrangements

### Membership of Salford SACRE in 2023

#### Committee A

Christian Denominations , other World Religions and Non-Religious Views

#### Committee B

Church of England

#### Committee C

Teacher Associations

#### Committee D

Local Authority

#### Co-opted Members

Neil Fazackerley Salford LA

Jo McGarry Salford LA

Jessica Pathak Salford LA

Chris Rice Salford LA

Martyn Shaw Salford LA

Natalie Stables Salford LA

Andrew Sims Co-op Academy Walkden

## **Officers**

Deborah Crane RE Advisor to Salford SACRE

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Viv Bentley – Clerk to Salford SACRE

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## **Membership Overview and Issues**

The SACRE have met in person 3 times on the following dates in 2023-4

In 2023 our meetings were planned by a smaller strategic group of members who acted as a steering group to set agendas and help with organisational aspects of the group. Actions planning was completed using the NASACRE Toolkit.

Much ground was covered in meetings and this year we also increased the opportunity for young people to be involved in the meetings via our links with the Youth Service in Salford. At one meeting for example a group of young people from Salford schools talked to us about what RE meant to them and their experiences of RE in the various schools they attended and what they had been learning about in these lessons.

One Member of our Youth Council states:

As someone who has studied RE for many years (KS1-4) despite not being religious, I feel RE is a crucial subject as it encourages curiosity towards the traditions and beliefs of different people. It is a window into other cultures and can be used to enlighten people on the roots of certain beliefs and practices followed by others. Learning about other cultures is also a gateway to acceptance and therefore RE can be used to create a diverse community within schools. My experiences with RE have always been positive as I have always had a particular interest in religion and therefore RE was a subject where I found comfort as it felt familiar. As a queer student I have always felt as though my RE lessons handled conversations around LGBTQ+ issues well and explained the roots of religious beliefs around them.

H. Thorpe SACRE Representative for Salford Youth Council

One member of SACRE undertook a useful trawl of Ofsted inspection reports as part of our monitoring strategy and this will be built upon on 2024. Our teacher networks met regularly to share good practice and learn about the latest developments in RE in schools.

As in the previous year a newsletter was sent on a termly basis to schools. This highlighted many of the great work that was being done to promote the subject in schools.

The Committee also sent a survey out to schools which revealed that of the schools that replied, 65% of schools allocated an hour to RE per week in the primary sector rising to 92% in KS3 and 54% in KS4.

During the year we were very saddened to learn of the passing of our Baptist member Mr Andrew Gallimore and our Chair of SACRE attended the funeral on behalf of the committee. Condolences were sent to his family from the group.

We have developed a constructive relationship with the Local Authority, who continue to support our work and provide advisory support to enable us to have productive meetings. We have committed to continuing our focus in teacher CPD going forwards with commissioning of CPD across the partnership of Local Authorities that share the same Local Agreed Syllabus. We have also committed to finalising our revised Collective Worship Policy and related training on this in 2024. There is also going to be a small group of members who will undertake some light touch monitoring of the curriculum in 2024.

## Section 5- Links with Other Bodies

Salford SACRE remains a member of NASACRE. Our Chair was the Vice Chair of this organisation for a period in 2023. Some members attended the annual SACRE conference in 2023 and reported back to the full SACRE following this event. Other members have attended NASACRE CPD including one on monitoring schools RE provision. Resources from the NASACRE website have also been utilised.

There are strong links with the Jewish Board of Deputies and SACRE gets regular updates from this group via members who have attended conferences.

At a local level, SACRE has links with the Salford Schools Forum and the Salford Council Equalities and Community Cohesion Team. This cohesive approach has been particularly evident in the collaboration around the annual Holocaust Memorial events. The group also has links with Salford Governor Services and has been able to be part of the annual training and updates programme.

Salford SACRE is also linked with the Greater Manchester Faith and Belief Forum. This is a relatively new initiative allowing opportunity for the 10 Chairs/Vice Chairs/Advisors of SACRES across Greater Manchester to meet and discuss matters of mutual interest and concern. These meetings are held twice a year.

Our SACRE Chair also attends a North West Group for SACRE Chairs and Advisors that meets in Preston on a termly basis. (Ask David to write about this).

## Section 6 – Wider Areas of SACRE Involvement

As in previous years, individual members have been involved in the planning and delivery of Salford City's Holocaust Memorial Day. These members worked as part of a wider group co-ordinated by the Community Cohesion Team within the council. Student participation was encouraged in this memorial event.

(Ask David Levien for more detail here of pupil involvement in the HMD)

Individual members have been active in visiting schools and speaking to staff and to students as well as organising events. Examples of some of these are listed below to give a flavour of the work they have been doing.

- The Humanist representative has visited 12 schools, both primary and secondary and delivered assemblies on humanism.
- The Jewish Faith representative has visited schools and assemblies and has been to the RE teacher meetings. He has also talked to students about Judaism at Edge Hill University for the last 2 years.
- One of our SACRE members who represents the United Reform Church has been very active in organising a Culture Day in one of our secondary academies. This was an excellent celebration of all the different cultures that are represented by staff and students of the school.

