

**Sefton Council**



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

**Annual Report 2021-22**

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# Section One: Introduction and the Work of SACRE

## Words from the Chair

I have great pleasure in presenting the Annual Report of the Sefton SACRE for 2022/23. This year has been very exciting and productive in that we have reconstituted our SACRE and its committees and achieved a very good RE syllabus that can be shared with RE teachers in schools throughout our borough to ensure that Sefton children receive a quality religious education.

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

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

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

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

Diane Roscoe Chair of Sefton SACRE 2021 - 22

## Overview

This annual report is prepared by Sefton SACRE. SACRE as a body is required to advise the Local Authority on matters relating to Religious Education and Collective Worship. This report provides a picture of the support given for Religious Education and Collective Worship during 2021-22. The report is a public document which is also sent to the National Association of SACREs (NASACRE) and the Department for Education.

For further information on the report or on RE and Collective Worship in Sefton, contact Ian Ross at [ian@penninelearning.com](mailto:ian@penninelearning.com)

For information on SACRE please contact the clerk, Jane McNeice at [Jane.McNeice@sefton.gov.uk](mailto:Jane.McNeice@sefton.gov.uk)

## Dates and content of meetings

There was one meeting of Sefton SACRE during the year 2021-22 held at the Professional Development Centre, Formby on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2022. This meeting was to re constitute SACRE and agree our priorities for the next year. Meetings are open to the public and minutes are also available on-line.

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

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

- The Local Agreed syllabus – although this is already being used in schools since 2021 the decision to approve the local agreed syllabus needing ratification;
- Clarification of funding for Sefton SACRE responsibilities and activities;
- Review of provision for RE, including time allocation in all schools in the borough;
- Improving representation on SACRE from those groups currently under-represented;
- Completion of SACRE self-evaluation;
- Agreeing and ratifying the Sefton SACRE constitution;

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

## **SACRE Priorities for 2021-22**

1. To ratify the decision on the local agreed syllabus
2. To reconstitute the SACRE body for Sefton and to ensure that membership is representative of the faiths and beliefs in Sefton.
3. To review provision of RE and Collective Worship in the borough through questionnaire and Ofsted report analysis.
4. To evaluate next steps in SACRE development through completion of the self evaluation toolkit.

## **Self-evaluation**

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

### **SACRE**

1. To widen the membership of SACRE to ensure full representation from faith groups in the borough
2. To increase the representation in Group C to include more headteachers and also engage with Multi Academy Trusts.
3. To plan the work of SACRE effectively through the use of working parties.

### **Religious Education**

1. To offer advice to schools on writing an RE Policy
2. Produce guidance for schools on managing withdrawals from RE
3. Offer support through subject leader networks on teaching learning and assessment using the syllabus.

### Local Agreed Syllabus

1. Maintain the local agreed syllabus and ensure compliance through supported professional discussions with secondary school headteachers.
2. Offer support through teacher networks and other CPD on middle leader development.

### Collective Worship

1. The pandemic has narrowed the scope of CoWo and SACRE now needs to raise its profile and offer some review or professional development to schools.

### Community Cohesion

1. Review and reflect on census information on faith, due in autumn 2022, and discuss how this might affect SACRE's work.
2. Develop further links with the Communities team and Sefton Interfaith groups to ensure SACRE is fully engaged with wider borough issues.
3. To offer guidance to schools on sensitivity to faith.

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

### **Meetings for 2022-23**

29<sup>th</sup> September 2022, 29<sup>th</sup> November 2022, 7<sup>th</sup> March 2023 and 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2023. Themes for these meetings have been agreed as part of the SACRE Work Plan. For more information contact the clerk, Jane McNeice at [Jane.McNeice@sefton.gov.uk](mailto:Jane.McNeice@sefton.gov.uk)

### **Priorities for 2022 - 23**

Produce regular information for schools through the updated SACRE website

Provide updated guidance on key areas

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

**CPD support**

Termly subject networks

Offer new coordinator training

**Subject Leader support**

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

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

Develop the RE Award scheme as a step towards REQM

**Enhancing RE Provision**

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

## **Section Two: Statutory Responsibilities: Religious Education**

### **The Local Agreed Syllabus**

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

### **Standards and Monitoring**

#### **SACRE enquiry**

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

The main general findings and issues from the survey were:

50% of secondary schools completed the survey and 30% of primary schools provided a return. Of all schools that took the time to complete the survey all had adopted and appropriate syllabus. Most schools give appropriate time to the teaching of RE and that it is mostly taught as a discreet subject. Where areas of concern have been noted SACRE will write to schools and arrange for a professional discussion regarding the time allocated or the provision in place. SACRE members will visit each secondary school in the borough in Spring 2023 to have a meeting regarding questions that have arisen from the SWF Census return or from the provision survey.



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

- Materials and training to support multi-faith teaching.
- Contact details of quality assured visitors who could come and talk about their faith.
- Subject knowledge training and guidance on adapting the local syllabus to suit the needs of the school.
- Adapting planning for special needs children.
- Developing resources to support the teaching of the syllabus.

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

### **Examination results**

GCSE and A Level results for 2022 were not available at a local level when this report was published. SACRE has analysed the SWF Census return to generate questions for secondary schools as it appears that some schools enter for GCSE in Y10. Our individual professional discussions with each secondary school will point out the findings from the Ofsted Research Review that this is not a helpful option especially for students from a disadvantaged background. This also brings into question what provision is in place for Y11 students in RE and also the provision of RE to students in KS4 that do not take the RS GCSE option.

*“Research from the DfE found that religious studies was one of the most popular subjects (alongside statistics and English literature) for early entry, such as in the summer of Year 10. However, the analysis revealed that those pupils taking religious studies early performed worse than their non-early-entrant peers. In 2019, 17,309 pupils were entered early for religious studies (the second-highest subject after English literature). This accounted for over 7.5% of the 2019 entries for GCSE religious studies. Those pupils with lower prior attainment who were early entrants, which may include many disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND, performed considerably worse than their peers with low prior attainment who were not early entrants. Early entry to GCSE religious studies therefore appears to be bad for pupils’ attainment, especially for those who can least afford it (pupils with low prior attainment).”*Source: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/research-review-series-religious-education/research-review-series-religious-education>

SACRE would urge all schools to review their results in line with the national data below.

subject		grade	Numbers achieving	Percentage achieving
Religious Studies	GCSE	9 to 1	185522	89
Religious Studies	GCSE	9 to 4	142558	69
Religious Studies	GCSE	9 to 5	121647	59

Source: Provisional GCSE (Full Course) Results (9-1 Only) - June 2022 (England Only) (DFE)

### **RE Quality Mark**

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

### **Professional development and support for schools**

#### **General support**

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

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

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

## Training

The teachers group on SACRE have begun to set up network meeting for teachers of RE to meet and share good practice. These networks will be affiliated to NATRE. This will ensure that RE leaders are kept up to date with developments in RE nationally. The RE Consultant will also support these networks.

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



### RE Reviews and SACRE RE Award

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

## Other information

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

- RE Policy
- Withdrawal from RE
- Collective Worship
- Celebrating Diversity
- Engaging with faith communities

## **Section Three: Statutory Responsibilities: Collective Worship**

### **Standards and Monitoring of Collective Worship**

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

### **Complaints and determinations**

There were no complaints made during the year to SACRE about Collective Worship. There is no determination to vary statutory requirements in a maintained school in Sefton though the process for applying for a determination will be agreed in 2022 – 23. Responsibility for determinations in English academies and free schools rest with the Schools Funding Agency.

### **Professional development and support for schools**

Through the consultant, SACRE is always ready to advise or support schools on request. It has been noted that some SACRE members are well-placed to support collective worship in schools and opportunities for discussion about this will be included on the agenda in 2022-23. A half-day course on planning for collective worship/ inclusive assemblies may be offered in summer 2023 to aid schools in developing an effective and inspiring programme. It is hoped that SACRE members will become more involved in practical support and monitoring. These questions may be helpful to SACRE members in reflecting on the value and effectiveness of collective worship in school:

1. Collective: How does the assembly celebrate and promote a sense of community within the whole school (or group)?
2. Educational: Is there a clear aim and focus, with appropriate learning? Does it engage and interest pupils and staff?
3. Spiritual: How does the assembly nurture pupils' awareness of their beliefs and values - and those of others (including non-religious beliefs)? How does it develop a sense of the meaning, purpose and value in their lives?

4. Reflective: Is there space and opportunity for thoughtful reflection, in the assembly or as a follow up? If prayers are used do these allow for different approaches and responses?
5. Inclusive: How does the assembly programme develop understanding of different perspectives and cultures? How does it promote values of tolerance, diversity and equality?
6. Responsive: How did pupils respond and participate?

## **Other information**

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

## Section Four: Links with other organisations

SACRE has developed active links with the following organisations:

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

## **Section Five: Other areas of involvement**



## Section Six: Sefton SACRE arrangements

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

SACRE membership includes representatives from all four constituent committees.

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

Membership and attendance for 2021-2 was as follows:

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



Teachers associations	Natalie Ford (Vice Chair)	1
Headteacher Primary	Ruth Baldwin	1
Headteacher Primary	Paul Swift	1
Headteacher Secondary	Vacancy	0
Local authority	Diane Roscoe (Chair)	1
Local authority	Janet Grace	1
Local authority	Tony Brough	0
Local authority	Jacqui Patterson	1
Local authority	Vacancy	0
Coopted	Vacancy	0
Coopted	Vacancy	0
Coopted	Vacancy	0

SACRE needs to ensure there continues to be consistent attendance and needs more teacher representatives. Contacts with partners, such as HE providers, should be developed. It is worth exploring whether a more structured link with MATs is feasible and beneficial

Training is provided by NASACRE and offered to SACRE members, though better induction is needed locally.

## Section Seven: Advice to the Local authority

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

1. To review the funding of SACRE to ensure it is in line with national recommendations and good practice;
2. To review the membership of SACRE to ensure it reflects the breadth and diversity of the borough in terms of faiths and beliefs and schools structures.
3. To ensure SACRE's annual report is considered carefully by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee of the Council and any of its content noted.

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

