

LA SACRE Report 2024-2025

Welcome from Advisors

Rebekah and Shell have been busy completing the newly Agreed Syllabus for Somerset and providing training to locality unit writers. They have also held three consultation days with a total of 150 Somerset teachers. Both have supported various schools in understanding the new Somerset Syllabus and in using the Syllabus to plan their curricula.

The remainder of this year will focus on gathering feedback from our trial schools, working closely with them in their settings and finalising the Agreed syllabus for launch in September 2026.

Overview – SACRE

A Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) is legally constituted by a Local Authority with the responsibility for overseeing Religious Education and Collective Worship in community, Voluntary Controlled foundation schools without a religious character and trust schools.

SACRE has met four times in the last academic year. Three meetings were held at Broughton House as well as there being the option for people to join online and one was only online. All meetings were quorate.

In meetings the following aspects were discussed:

- Agreed Syllabus Conference
- National Content Standard
- WIRE award
- Local, Regional and National updates

The particular focus for this period has been on the Agreed Syllabus.

Termly newsletters have continued, with all schools receiving a SACRE newsletter three times per year. The newsletter contains contact details for various communities and resources, as well as ideas for the classroom and information on upcoming events and CPD.

Locally Agreed Syllabus

The Agreed Syllabus is now in consultation mode and completed in August 2025. The REC handbook was used to help create the syllabus. The advisors used the concepts and 'ways of Knowing' to create a syllabus which outlines the concepts that must run through curricula from EYFS to KS5. It also includes statutory guidance, assessment planning, curriculum building and exemplars. These exemplars include mapping using different RE resources. For example, NATRE, Oak Academy and Understanding Christianity. There are also fully planned locality units which are being added to as they are completed. The syllabus and all resources are available on the RE and SACRE website.

[Religious Education and SACRE | Support Services for Education](#)

Agreed Syllabus Consultation Launch Days

Three Agreed Syllabus consultation launch days have happened. They have all been well-attended and fully booked with over 150 teachers and RE leads in attendance overall. The day has provided training on using a Religion and Worldview Approach to RE, a multi-disciplinary approach and has explained the new agreed syllabus. There have also been presentations from ASC members and teachers who have been involved in planning and writing the locality units. As well as this, Adam Robertson, Oak Academy, and Ed Pawson, RE Hubs Southwest lead, explained how their resources might be useful to support and complement the agreed syllabus. This has given teachers high-quality CPD, access to resources and time in which to begin planning their curriculum. Feedback from these events and about the agreed syllabus in general has been positive, particular in relation to the local element (Journeys of the Somer People). Some schools, particular primary have asked for more resources and support for mixed age classes.

Thoughts on the 'Journeys of the Somer People'...



SACRE Resource Boxes

The School Library Service continue to receive requests from schools for loans of SACRE resource boxes. Loan figures can be seen below.

	Religion	Number of boxes available	Number of boxes loaned
Autumn 2024	Buddhism	4	0
	Christianity	10	10
	Hinduism	6	6
	Islam	6	2
	Judaism	6	1
	Sikhism	3	0
Spring 2025	Buddhism	4	0
	Christianity	10	9
	Hinduism	7	2
	Islam	7	7
	Judaism	10	10

	Sikhism	3	0
Summer 2025	Buddhism	4	2
	Christianity	10	2
	Hinduism	7	1
	Islam	7	5
	Judaism	10	6
	Sikhism	3	2

Schools often comment how valuable the SACRE boxes are to enhance the pupils' learning and to support their understanding.

Ofsted Inspection Reports

	Outstanding	Good	Requires improvement	Inadequate
Primary		53	5	
Secondary		13	5	1
Special schools	3	1		
PRU		4		
Independent	4	6		1

Some comments of particular interest to SACRE

Primary

Wookey Primary School "Pupils develop a sense of moral purpose through charitable initiatives. They are knowledgeable about other religions and cultures."

St Michael's Church of England First School "The school teaches pupils to understand and celebrate differences. However, pupils' knowledge of fundamental British values and a range of world religions is limited."

Huish Episcopi Primary School "Pupils are knowledgeable about different religions and cultures. They are keen to give their own thoughts and opinions, while remaining highly respectful of others. The school is inclusive and celebrates difference."

Our Lady of Mount Carmel Catholic Primary "They (pupils) talk with confidence and knowledge about the many religions practised in Britain."

Mark First and Pre-School CE Academy "Pupils consolidate their learning about different cultures and faiths by visiting a church and synagogue."

St Joseph and St Teresa Catholic Primary School "Pupils learn about other faiths, including what unites those who have different beliefs to their own."

Cheddar First School "They learn about different faiths and beliefs. Pupils learn about cultures and communities different to their own."

St James Church School "The school's multicultural diversity is celebrated by all at every turn. Pupils are respectful of the views and beliefs of others."

Upton Noble CofE VC Primary School “Pupils know that tolerance and respect are important. They unanimously agree that ‘everyone is welcome’ at their school. Pupils learn about world faiths and cultures. They speak enthusiastically about visitors from different countries. Pupils learn about festivals from different religions and explore how countries around the world celebrate harvest. Links with the local church provide opportunities to forge connections with the wider community.”

Sampford Arundel Community Primary School “Pupils are knowledgeable about a wide range of religions and cultures from around the world.”

Nunney First School “The curriculum teaches pupils the importance of right and wrong and valuing diversity. Pupils learn firsthand from visitors about how different faiths and cultures celebrate important events, such as Ramadan.”

St Gildas Catholic Primary School “Pupils enjoy learning about other religions and cultures alongside the school’s own religious character.”

Secondary

There are no specific judgement comments made about RE in the secondary reports since July 2023. There are statements such as ‘students learn about other religions/cultures’.

SIAMS

In addition to Ofsted inspections, all Church of England schools are inspected as a designated church school through the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS). The schools inspected during the timescale of the annual report are detailed below:

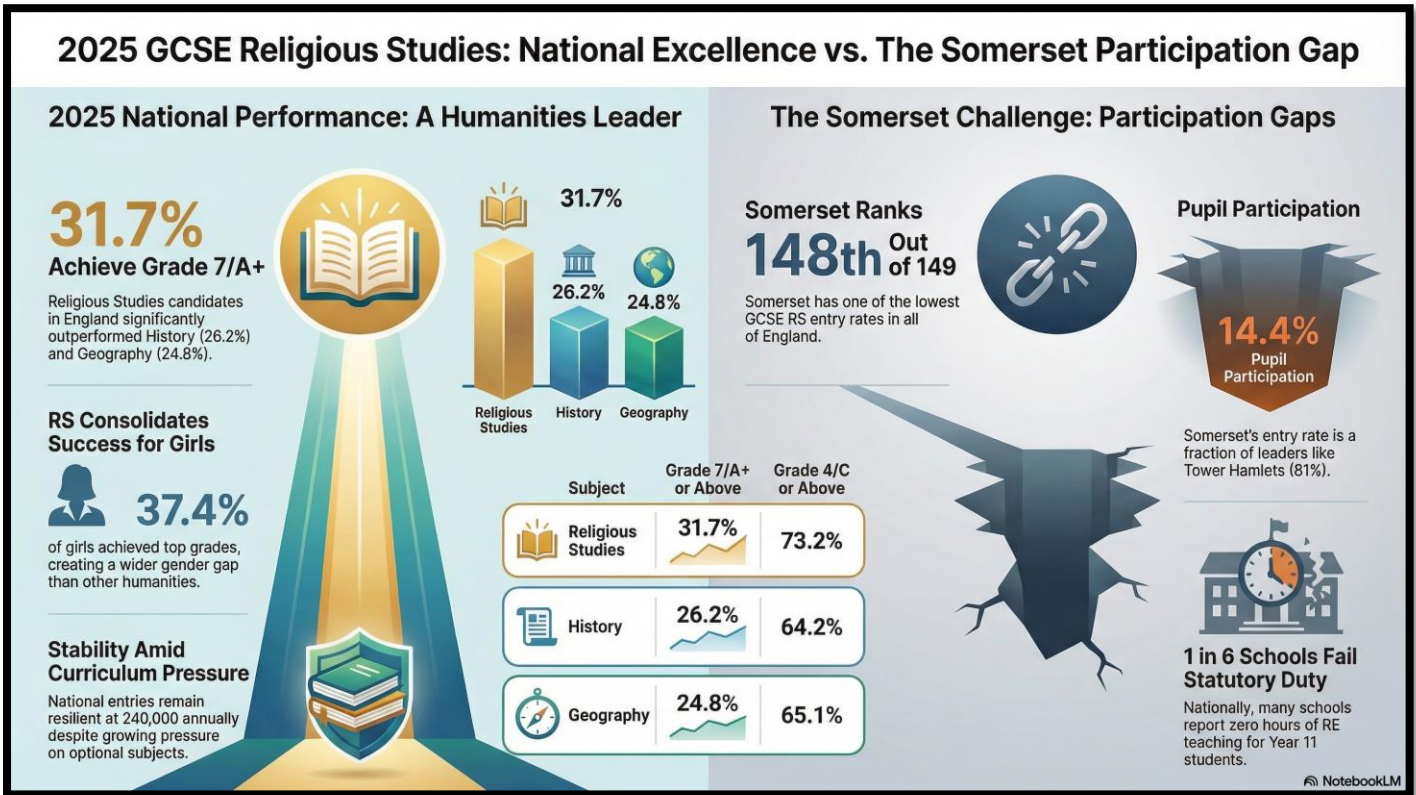
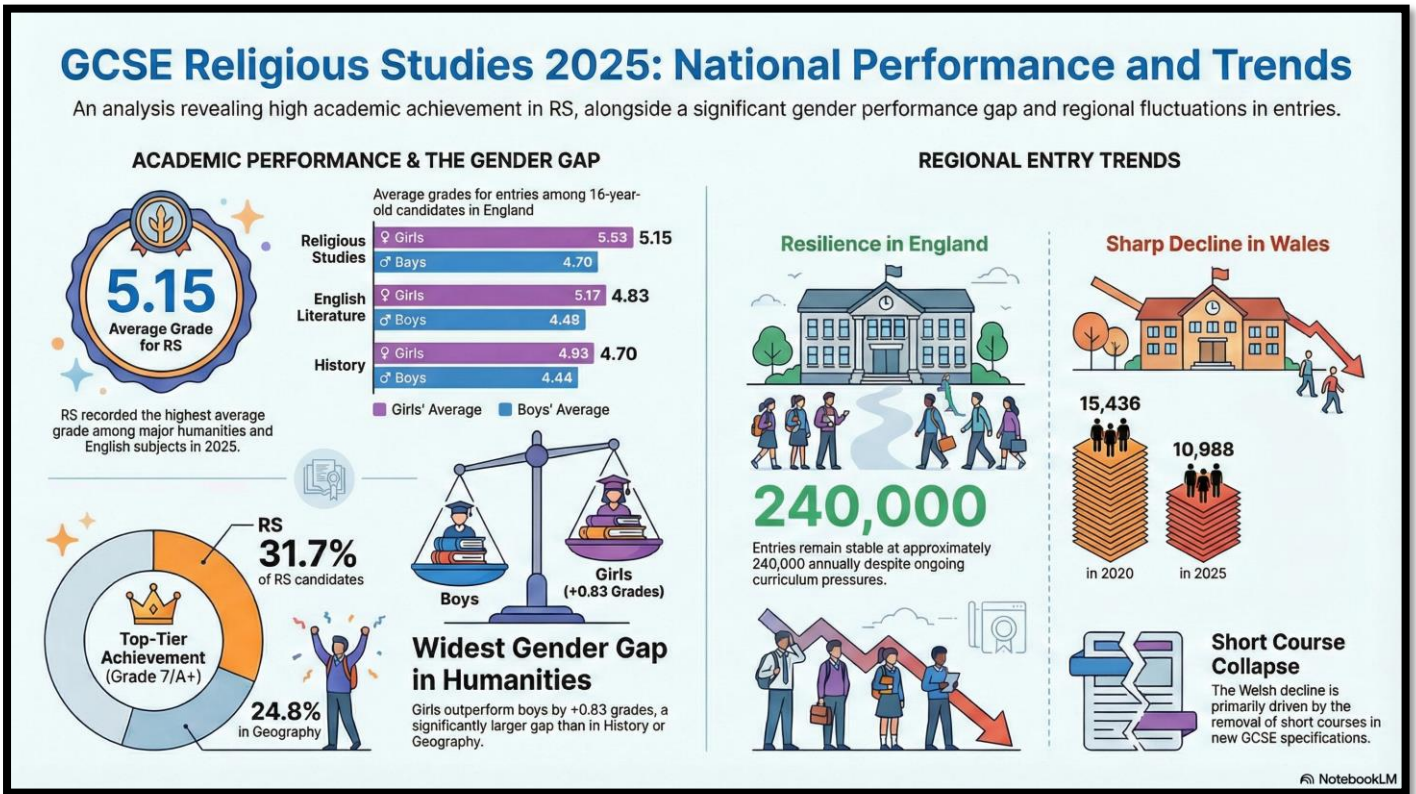
Date	School	LA & Trust	Previous outcome	Outcome
15/07/25	Upton Noble CofE Primary	Somerset	Good	J1
01/07/25	Baltonsborough CofE VC Primary School	ACE Somerset	Good	J1
01/07/25	Ashlands Church of England Primary School	QET Somerset	RI	J1
25/06/25	Charlton Horethorne Primary School	SAST Somerset	Good	J1
25/06/25	Winsham Primary School	ACE Somerset	N/A	J1
12/06/25	Lovington Church of England Primary School	PPAT Somerset	Good	J1
08/05/25	Bishop Henderson Taunton	Somerset	Outstanding	J1
01/05/25	St Paul’s Primary Shepton	Somerset	Outstanding	J1
26/03/25	Ash CofE Primary	PPAT Somerset	Good	J1
17/03/25	St Vigor and St Johns	BWMAT Somerset	Outstanding	J1
11/03/25	East Brent Church of England School	Wessex Somerset	Good	J1
06/12/24	Buckland St Mary Church School	Ace Somerset	Satisfactory	J1

14/11/24	Hugh Sexey Middle School	Wessex Somerset	Outstanding	J1
13/11/24	Montecute All Saints Primary	BWMAT Somerset	Outstanding	J1
08/10/24	Preston Church of England Primary	PPAT Somerset	Outstanding	J1
29/09/24	High Ham Church of England Primary	Somerset	Outstanding	J1
25/09/24	St John's C of E Primary School, Wellington	Somerset	Outstanding	J1
18/09/24	Martock Church of England Primary	Somerset	Outstanding	J1

All schools inspected received Judgement 1 (J1): *'Through its vision and practice, the school is living up to its foundation as a Church school and is enabling pupils and adults to flourish'*.

GCSE Religious Studies

RE GCSE entries in England have increased but Somerset was 147 out of 148 in GCSE entries. This continues the trend from the previous years.



A REVIEW OF THE PERFORMANCE OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION



VALUE OF THE QUALIFICATION

SINCE 2010 THE NUMBER OF PUPILS IN ENGLAND ENTERING A FULL GCSE RS COURSE INCREASED BY **28%**



INCREASE IN A-LEVEL ENTRIES FOR RS

SINCE 2003
TWICE THE AVERAGE AND MORE THAN GEOGRAPHY, LAW AND HISTORY²



The scope of religious education (RE) is vast. Through RE, pupils encounter ancient and living traditions that have shaped the world.



They explore foundational texts and the way that individuals and groups live in the world, as well as the values, beliefs and ideas that bind people together³



OFSTED RE subject report 2024



HIGHER ATTAINMENT 8 SCORES ON AVERAGE IN SCHOOLS WITH HIGHER RATES OF ENTRY FOR GCSE RS

Disadvantaged pupils score 9 points on average than their peers when they are entered for GCSE RS. Non-disadvantaged, 5 points higher⁶



95% of teachers say that the subject is more or equally relevant than ten years ago

ACADEMICALLY RIGOROUS AND CHALLENGING, RE STUDENTS GO ON TO STUDY AT THE UK'S TOP UNIVERSITIES AND ENTER CAREERS IN LAW, MEDICINE, POLITICS AND JOURNALISM¹



¹ <https://analytics.ofqual.gov.uk/apps/GCSE/Outcomes/session/4dd5fc8f04b00b773c17e5616589bdc6/download/universalDownload?w=>

² [Growing interest in life's big questions driving interest in A level Religious Studies – REC](#)

³ [Deep and meaningful? The religious education subject report - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

⁴ <https://www.natre.org.uk/news/latest-news/how-satisfied-are-re-teachers/>

⁵ <https://blogs.bmj.com/bmj/2021/08/04/encourage-students-with-a-humanities-background-to-become-doctors/>

⁶ Written Answer to a question from Tan Dhesi MP - Department for Education: Religion: GCSE

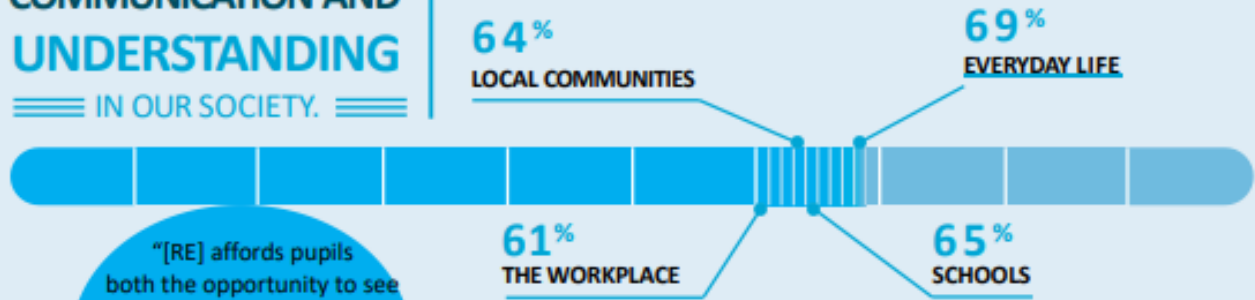
RE IN SOCIETY

64% of the UK adult population think an education in religion and worldviews (or RE) is an important part of the school curriculum.⁶

HIGH-QUALITY RE IS THE BACKBONE OF COMMUNICATION AND UNDERSTANDING

IN OUR SOCIETY.

AROUND TWO-THIRDS OF UK ADULTS SAY IT'S IMPORTANT TO UNDERSTAND THE BELIEFS OF OTHERS IN:



"[RE] affords pupils both the opportunity to see the religion and non-religion in the world, and the opportunity to make sense of their own place in that world."⁷



DRAW INSPIRATION FROM DISCUSSING TOPICS IN THE NEWS

The public also recognises RE's positive impact on society. In a 2021 survey a majority believed RE can:

- 69%** Help young people gain a better understanding of their own beliefs
- 71%** Foster mutual understanding of different beliefs among young people
- 65%** Provide young people with the opportunity to learn more about other people

GOOD RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CREATES INDEPENDENT AND CRITICAL THINKERS, PREPARED FOR THE DIVERSITY OF BELIEF IN MODERN BRITAIN AND THE WIDER WORLD.

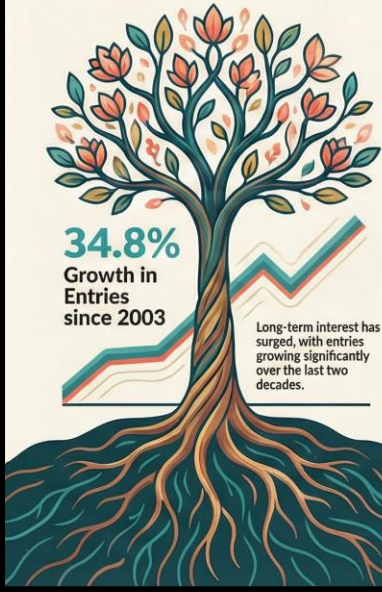


⁶ Religion & Worldview survey by Savanta on behalf of Cuiham St Gabriel's Trust, June 2021

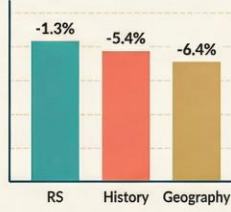
⁷ Research review series: religious education - GOV.UK Ofsted 2021

2025 A-Level Religious Studies: Trends and Performance

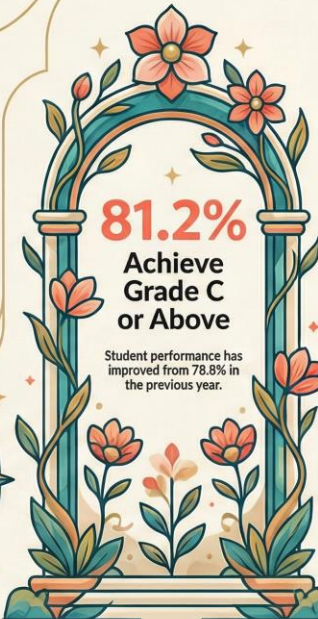
GROWTH AND SUBJECT RESILIENCE



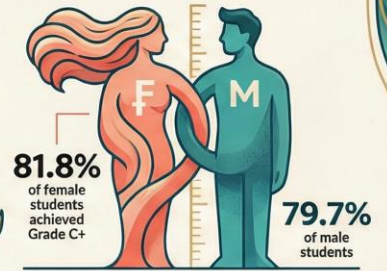
Higher Resilience than Other Humanities



2025 PERFORMANCE AND DEMOGRAPHICS



Persistent Gender Attainment Gap



25.5% Awarded A* or A Grades

RS top marks remain slightly below the all-subject national average of 28.3%.

Comparing 2025 A-level RS performance by gender

Student Group	Total Sat
All Students	16,439
Female Students	11,736
Male Students	4,703

National Curriculum progress



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17th December, 2025.

Dear Valued Colleagues and Members of NATRE,

Thank you for your support of my work to fulfil the National Curriculum and Assessment Review's recommendations in their report, published on 5th November 2025.

As we approach the end of this calendar year, I'd like to update you briefly on progress. The Expert Advisory Group is now in place, with membership based on curriculum expertise and school leadership from across the sector. I am now in the process of establishing two of the key reference groups:

- The Religion and Belief Reference Group, led by the Chair of the RE Council, Sarah Lane Cawte, supported by Claire Clinton.
- The RE Teacher Reference Group, led by NATRE's Chair, Katie Freeman, supported by the Vice Chair Joanne Harris.

Katie will be in touch about the RE teacher reference group with further information in the new year, but we welcome your engagement with us as we complete this work.

I am grateful that a number of funders have come forward to pay for travel expenses, administration and consumables – none of the colleagues involved in the EAG or reference groups are being paid for their time. I'd like to thank all those involved for your commitment on behalf of the sector.

In the meantime, please find attached a card from me and every good wish for the new year – remembering particularly our Jewish community at this time, and the terrible attack in Australia. My hope is for better times, supporting each other, and rejoicing in our difference and unity.

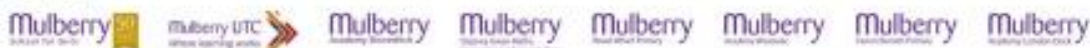
Kind regards,

Vanessa.

Dr VJ Ogden CBE.

Chief Executive Officer.

Our schools



Professional Development
and Training



Mulberry Changemaker Programmes



Community



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Collective Worship

Training and Support

No training on Collective Worship was organised by SACRE during the year but information from other local providers, such as the Diocese of Bath & Wells was circulated to all schools through the newsletter.

The Wire Award - the Widening Diversity in Religious Education (WIRE) award is an opportunity available to all schools in the Somerset SACRE area. This is a new award for Somerset this year. To achieve the Wire award a school must:

- Send a teacher to at least one continuing professional development (CPD) opportunity for RE. This could be the conference, or a local RE hub.
- Put on a 'faith day' or a celebration of RE to which a local SACRE member can be invited. Or a school might enter a national RE competition.
- Take pupils on a visit to a place of worship that is not the majority religion of their school. For most schools in Somerset, this will be from a faith other than Christianity.

The Award has been created to further SACRE's priority to encourage mutual understanding of different faiths, and to break down stereotypes and barriers. In the year 24-25, one school (Weare Primary School) has met the criteria for the award.

Determinations

The Local Authority/SACRE received no formal complaints about the provision of RE, and there were no requests from schools to vary the legal requirement for Collective Worship.

Links with Other Organisations

National Association of Standing Advisory Councils on RE (NASACRE)

The SACRE retains an annual membership of this organisation which provides access to important updates on national issues, training opportunities for SACRE members, and the use of recommended templates for policies and guidance documents.

The annual NASACRE Conference in May 2025 was attended by the primary Advisor to SACRE who then gave feedback to members at the next SACRE meeting.

Regional

One SACRE member attended the online South-West Conference for SACREs in February, which featured a keynote address by Bill Moore on the future of SACREs.

Somerset SACRE continued to take part in the regional Learn Teach Lead RE (LTLRE) project, aiming to provide training in religious education, especially through the building of communities of RE teachers across the region. The LTLRE conference ran in June 2025.

Two members of SACRE represent the C of E Diocese of Bath and Wells ensuring we are updated on current training available from this source, as well as any updates and news of the SIAMS inspections of local Church of England schools.

The SACRE Adviser has worked closely with both the Diocese of Bath and Wells and other local MATs to ensure high-quality RE is being taught and that up to date CPD is available. The diocesan schools' advisers have also been actively involved in the ASC process and we are grateful for their expertise and support.

Local: Learn, Teach, Lead RE

The Somerset Hub is led jointly by Abby Needs (Primary) and Louise Brooke (Secondary) supported by Rebekah Guy and Shell Sullivan (RE advisors). Hub leaders get access to high quality training and facilitate three Hubs per year aimed at both primary and secondary teachers.

Two out of three meetings have happened online and have been mostly well attended. Feedback has been incredibly positive, particular in response to the Agreed Syllabus and support for implementing this.

SACRE Membership

Group A: Christian and other religious representation

Rhona Burfield
Eleanor Delaney (Vice-chair)
Mark Caney
Pat Ebdon
Mike Keogh
Leonard Daniels
Penny Billington

Group B: Church of England

Louise Jenkins
Megan Daffern
Penny Jerrard
Jude Clements
Paul Marvin

Group C: Education representation

Rachelle Billington
Mary Lockwood
Niel Apps (Chair)

Group D: Local authority representation

Cllr Sarah Wakefield
Cllr Frances Nicholson
Cllr Tim Kerley
Amelia Walker
Alison Jeffrey (Vice-Chair and LA Officer)
Kate Daunton

Co-opted member:

Bernardo Kerr

Clerk:
Rebecca Dunstan

Finance Report

<u>SACRE AY 2024/25</u>	<u>1st September 2024 - 31st August 2025</u>					
	CSSB DSG	Other Grant	Internal	External	Total Income	Actual Expenditure
SACRE G001647	-22,500.00				-22,500.00	
Salaries						17,119.35
Apprenticeship Levy						58.91
Operating Costs						
Travel Costs						571.70
Training						120.00
Equipment						273.58
Subscriptions						115.00
Fees & Hired						9,507.21
Internal - Cross Directorate Recharges						2,500.00
TPP Voluntary Associations - Grants - Voluntary Orgs						5,000.00
Sub Totals					-22,500.00	35,265.75
Balance AY 2024/25						12,765.75

Rebekah Guy, Primary RE Advisor (rebekah.guy@somerset.gov.uk)

Shell Sullivan, Secondary RE Advisor (MSullivan@holyrood.bep.ac)

January 2026