

South Gloucestershire SACRE Annual Report 2024/5



Words from the Chair

I am delighted to introduce this year's SACRE Annual Report. SACRE continues to build strong and purposeful relationships—both within the committee itself and with a range of local bodies—ensuring our shared commitment to high-quality Religious Education and inclusive collective worship remains central to our efforts.

This year we welcomed several new members whose perspectives and experiences have helped to widen representation across our community. Their contributions have strengthened the breadth and depth of SACRE's discussions and decision-making, ensuring that our work remains reflective of the diverse local context we serve.

One of our key achievements has been the successful review of our collective worship guidance. The resulting document provides schools with clear, practical support and reflects our commitment to respecting the lives and values of all pupils.

We also made an excellent start to the Agreed Syllabus review process, drawing on the experience and expertise of a wide range of contributors, including colleagues from other SACREs and partner organisations. This collaborative approach has laid strong foundations for the next phase of the review and will ensure the new syllabus is relevant and ambitious for all learners.

Our annual SACRE conference was once again a great success, providing a valuable professional learning opportunity for teachers and leaders. It was particularly inspiring to see the commitment of schools to developing high-quality RE provision and engaging with national and local developments.

Finally, we were delighted to see another outstanding primary school Interfaith Week event take place. This continues to be a highlight of the year, celebrating diversity, fostering understanding, and providing pupils with rich opportunities to learn from and with one another.

I extend my thanks to all SACRE members, schools, partners, and contributors for their hard work, professionalism, and dedication throughout the year. SACRE is ably supported by advisor Ed Pawson

It is with great pleasure that I present this Annual Report, celebrating our achievements and outlining our continuing commitment to supporting high-quality RE and collective worship across our schools.

Mike Riches – Chair of SACRE

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1 Introduction

Membership

During the year 2024/5 SACRE was pleased to welcome new members:

Noura Momtazian - Bahá'í Community

Liam Suter – Quaker Community

Deborah Williams – Christian Community

Suzanne Baker – Pagan Community

Tracy Moorhouse- teacher rep/ LTLRE lead

Caroline Smith – teacher rep/ LTLRE lead

Ian Boulton – LA councillor

Many thanks to Rob English who has stepped down.

Details of South Glos SACRE meetings

Thurs 14th November 2024: 11 members plus adviser and clerk; online

Thurs 20th March 2025: 12 members plus adviser and clerk; venue: Iron Acton CofE Primary school

Thurs 12th June 2025: 11 members plus adviser; Venue: Bristol Buddhist Centre

All meetings were quorate.

2 SACRE's statutory responsibilities

2.1 The Local Agreed Syllabus

The current local Agreed Syllabus (AS) for RE runs for 5 years from 2022 to 2027. Therefore, SACRE has begun its consideration for renewing this syllabus provision. A timeline setting out work involved and costings has been submitted to the LA and volunteers have stepped forward to join the Agreed Syllabus Council (ASC).

It was agreed that SACRE should take the REC's [National Content Standard](#) (NCS) and the [RW Handbook](#) into account as guiding features while considering our Agreed Syllabus review.

A group of 5 SACREs in the Bristol/West of England area are at a similar place in the AS cycle, all updating their syllabus at the same time, for first teaching in September 2027. Consequently, we have been collaborating with other ASCs to explore the possible routes forward.

This is a log of the joint Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC) meetings that were held between January and July 2025:

- Claire Clinton (adviser to Newham SACRE) talked through some of the decision-making required to develop a new syllabus. She recommended that we should look at the high-quality resources being produced by Oak Academy. While these resources don't constitute a syllabus, they are highly regarded teaching materials, which have been carefully sequenced and planned, and are free to access for all schools.
- Stephen Pett (RE Today) gave a presentation on the new RE Today Religion and Worldviews syllabus (C) which has been launched by Gloucestershire SACRE. This is a really well-constructed and resourced syllabus, incorporating a developed approach drawn from the REC's RWs Handbook (2024)
- Alastair Ross (Pennine Learning) helped us explore the option of using a modified Pennine Learning syllabus, and incorporating the Oak materials, which are based on this approach. However, the conclusion we came to was that, for various reasons, this would

not work. It is clear that the Oak approach has moved a long way from this starting point. Alastair recommended we explore the creation of a syllabus to incorporate the Oak materials.

- Adam Robertson (Oak Academy) explained how the Oak resources work and how the structure draws on the central elements of the REC's RWs Handbook (2024). We discussed how it would be possible to write a syllabus which could utilise the Oak units, but, alternatively, could be fulfilled through a variety of other resources and materials.

2.2 Standards and monitoring in RE

2.2.1 Primary schools

Monitoring of RE in primary schools continues through sampling of websites and analysing Ofsted reports. Where SACRE has concerns, schools have been contacted to raise issues about standards or profile of the subject. Resources have been shared and advice has been given to a number of schools with regard to parental requests for withdrawal from RE (and/or collective worship).

2.2.2 Secondary schools

Data from the DfE annual workforce survey indicates that a number of secondary schools may not be teaching adequate RE at KS4. The national expectation is for schools to provide the equivalent of one hour per week to all KS4 students. Schools have been contacted and conversations with headteachers and senior leaders have taken place to explore further and offer input to encourage them to develop the place of RE in the curriculum.

SACRE would like to thank Alex Howard for the hard work he put into the analysis document of South Glos secondary school websites.

2.2.3 GCSE Religious Studies exam results 2025

GCSE data for 2025 suggests that schools in South Gloucestershire are, in general, giving opportunities for students to study RS as a GCSE subject. All schools appear to offer GCSE RS as either an option or as a core curriculum subject. Three schools enter 90% or more of their cohort for the exam, while 3 more enter between 20-40% of their students. One school enters over 90% for the RE short course GCSE. Where schools are entering below 10% of the cohort, they have been contacted to encourage them to ensure that students have a good opportunity to take RS at GCSE as one of their option choices. There is a hope that the Curriculum and Assessment Review may recommend that the EBacc is removed, which will allow more flexibility for GCSE option choices.

3 Collective Worship

Following extensive input from a dedicated working group, the guidance on collective worship and school assemblies for South Glos SACRE has been extensively reviewed and updated. This document has now been made available on the [South Glos SACRE website](#). There have been no formal complaints about collective worship in schools and no applications for determinations.

4 Links with other bodies

4.1 Strong partnerships

Strong partnerships are a hallmark of the way South Glos SACRE operates. We have good links with a number of organisations, working closely with South Glos Council, the Diocese of Bristol, the University of Bristol.

SACRE continues to be a member of NASACRE (National Association of SACREs) and the Adviser leads the SW AREIAC network of advisers (SWARE). SACRE members have attended the annual SW SACRE conference and participated in training run by NASACRE. SACRE members have also taken part in an 'In Conversation' forum hosted by RE Hubs for regional SACRE officers to receive updates and give feedback with NASACRE.

4.2 Bristol Multifaith Forum

SACRE works with Bristol Multifaith Forum and Bristol Diverse Doors to establish strong links to local faith and belief organisations. This enables schools to draw on visitors to school classrooms and to inform who will be the most suitable faith and belief representatives when member vacancies occur.

4.3 Learn, Teach, Lead RE

South Glos SACRE is pleased to continue to partner the Learn, Teach, Lead RE programme (LTLRE). South Glos LTLRE hub is working well to support teachers of RE, offering termly twilight meetings and networking opportunities.

The 2025 LTLRE conference was not particularly well attended, drawing around 40 teachers from across the region. LTLRE is reconsidering whether its offer of a summer conference is the best use of its limited funds. Both conference and hub meeting evaluations show how valuable teachers are finding these networking and CPD offers.

Hub leaders continue to be a valuable resource to teachers of RE in their locality, and termly training days enable hub leaders to keep up to date with current RE issues and initiatives.

5 SACRE: local involvement

5.1 RE Newsletter

The regular RE newsletter gives schools in depth support, information and networking links. It signposts current CPD, hub groups and conferences. Through the newsletter, SACRE signposts guidance to schools about significant events, eg religious festivals such as Easter, Ramadan and Diwali, Interfaith Week etc

5.2 WIRE awards

Schools continue to value the way the WIRE awards give recognition to excellent RE in South Glos schools. During the 2024-2025 academic year, 5 schools completed the requirements for the WIRE or WIRE GOLD award during the year.

SACRE is keen to attract a greater number of community and secondary schools to apply for these awards.

5.3 Interfaith Week 2024: inter-schools event

SACRE wants to thank Kath English (Longwell Green) and Katherine Legg (St Chad's), working alongside the SACRE and Diocesan Advisers, to prepare for and run this online Interfaith Week event for schools across South Glos (and more widely). Using as a starting point the children's storybook 'Little Glow' pupils were able to discuss and raise questions around how we use light in celebrations with family, at home or in meeting places.

As part of the day pupils watched a short video from people from a number of diverse religion and worldview perspectives. They could then ask their own questions in a plenary session. Well over 50 schools took part, across a whole range of ages and settings, which was very pleasing.

5.4 RE Conference 2025

The Annual South Glos RE conference in February 2025 'Religion and Worldviews: inspiring curiosity' was well attended. The keynote presentation was given by Gillian Georgiou. She spoke about the way humans have developed religious and non-religious worldview

communities to enable us to better understand ourselves and the world around us. Feedback from the conference was very positive.

6 SACRE: regional and national involvement

6.1 RE Hubs

SACRE continues to be supportive of the [RE Hubs](#) initiative, which is providing teachers with a 'one-stop-shop' website, offering links to [school speakers](#), places of interest, CPD events, local network groups, RE job adverts, blogs and resources etc.

6.2 National Content Standard

SACRE has continued to support the REC's [National Content Standard](#). SACRE was pleased to note that the NCS was recognised as an important benchmark for excellence in religion and worldviews by the Curriculum and Assessment Review's [Interim Report](#) (March 2025).

7 SACRE organisation

7.1 SACRE leadership and organisation

South Glos Council is responsive to SACRE's needs and supportive in its administration and organisation. It is well supported financially. South Glos SACRE is well served through its clerk (Hannah Wood) and LA lead (Debbie Gibbs).

The Local Authority is pleased to have contracted Ed Pawson as the new Adviser to SACRE, and SACRE has welcomed Mike Riches as the new SACRE Chair, and Rebekah Guy as Vice-Chair for 2024/5. Thanks to Chris Selway for the way he has Chaired SACRE over recent years.

A number of SACRE members have taken advantage of useful training opportunities over the last year, both through attendance at the SW SACRE conference and national online NASACRE training events. Hannah Wood attended part 3 of the SACRE clerk training series, hosted by NASACRE.

7.2 SACRE website

The SACRE website has been fully updated, with accurate links to the WIRE awards and local contact information. Newsletters and SACRE documents can now be accessed through the site.

8 Appendices

Appendix 1

Membership of South Glos SACRE August 2025

Committee A: Christian and other religious denominations Up to 15 Members	Ramila Patel - Hindu April Begley – Roman Catholic Mohammed-Nassir Miah - Muslim Iris Segall - Jewish Alex Howard - Humanist Balbir Kaur – Sikh Bhadra – Buddhist Rebekah Guy – Baptist Noura Momtazian - Baha'i Liam Suter - Quaker Deborah Williams - Christian Suzanne Baker - Pagan
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Committee B: Church of England Up to 3 members	Julia Watts Malcolm Strange Debbie Helme
Committee C: Teachers Up to 8 members:	Mike Riches (Chair) Kath English Chris Selway Tracy Moorhouse Caroline Smith
Committee D: Local Authority representatives Up to 3 members	Cllr Ben Stokes Raj Sood Ian Boulton

SACRE Officers

Clerk: Hannah Wood

Adviser: Ed Pawson

LA lead: Debbie Gibbs

December 2025