
SOUTHEND-ON-SEA

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education

2024 - 2025



DRAFT July 2025

Approved by the Southend-on-Sea SACRE at its meeting on 6th October 2025

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Introduction

- Contents
- Foreword
- Religion and Belief in Southend-on-Sea
- Overview of the work of SACRE 2024-25

2. Religious Education (RE)

- RE in schools
- The locally agreed syllabus
- Standards and monitoring of RE
- Teacher training materials and advice for schools
- Other information
- Advice given to the Local Authority

3. Collective worship

- Standards and monitoring of Collective Worship
- Determinations
- Teacher training provided
- Other information
- Advice to the Local Authority

4. Links with other bodies

- National Bodies
- Local bodies

5. SACRE involvement in the Local Area

- Governor and headteacher links
- Advice on community issues

6. Managing the SACRE and partnership with the Local Authority (LA)

- Professional and administrative support
- Membership
- Training
- Finance

7. Managing the SACRE and partnership with the Local Authority (LA) and other key stakeholders

- SACRE meetings
- Membership and training
- SACRE development
- Financial support
- Information and advice
- Professional development opportunities

Appendices

A: Unvalidated Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5 Exam Data, Summer 2025

B: Circulation details of the Annual report

Foreword by the Chair of SACRE

As Chair of Southend City's Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) , I am delighted to introduce this Report as we reflect on another year. I would like to express my gratitude to the teachers, educators and key stakeholders, as well as My fellow Members of SACRE, who have worked so hard to support Religious Education (RE) across the City of Southend over the last year.

Having launched our new Agreed Syllabus last year, I am pleased to see how it is being used in our schools to provide a robust framework for supporting staff in the teaching of RE, and engaging students and pupils in high quality RE. By schools incorporating RE into the basic curriculum, this reaffirms its essential role in shaping a well-rounded education for all learners. The RE Syllabus is vitally important to prepare children and young people of Southend for life in a twenty-first century world, and it is clear that understanding religious and non-religious worldviews plays a central role in local, national and indeed global Affairs. The social, moral spiritual and cultural aspects of studying RE promote understanding and respect of differences of traditions, opinions, customs and practice, and of respecting each other's beliefs and non-beliefs, enhances the School Ethos in each and every learning community.

Religious Education supports our pupils in exploring matters of faith and belief but also provides an ethical and philosophical understanding of how things are. The study of RE allows the learner to use and develop analytical skills, criticism and summation of texts, critical thinking skills, moral evaluation of contemporary issues, and the application of philosophical thinking. It also develops broader reading, writing and oral debating skills, leading to improved literacy levels. Therefore, for a full and rounded academic education the tools provided, as ways of learning within RE, provide supportive and transferable skills into other areas of the school curriculum.

Against our positive background for RE, it is disappointing to note that entries into public examinations in some settings are lower than the national average. Also of concern is the reduced number of RE specialists entering the teaching profession and the reduction in school RE staffing. The amount of curriculum time within school timetables devoted to RE is not, in some cases, providing pupils with the depth and breadth of knowledge they need to live in a complex world. These are the challenges that SACRE, schools and key stakeholders will continue to address.

I look forward, on behalf of SACRE, to working with our advisor from RE Today during the forthcoming academic year as they continue the role of professional adviser for Religious Education to SACRE and to the Local Authority's lead officer for RE. They will be guiding us through the continued work of SACRE and in supporting high quality RE, as we take on the challenge of ensuring all pupils across Southend on Sea continue to have access to a rigorous and challenging RE curriculum.

Kevin Ryan

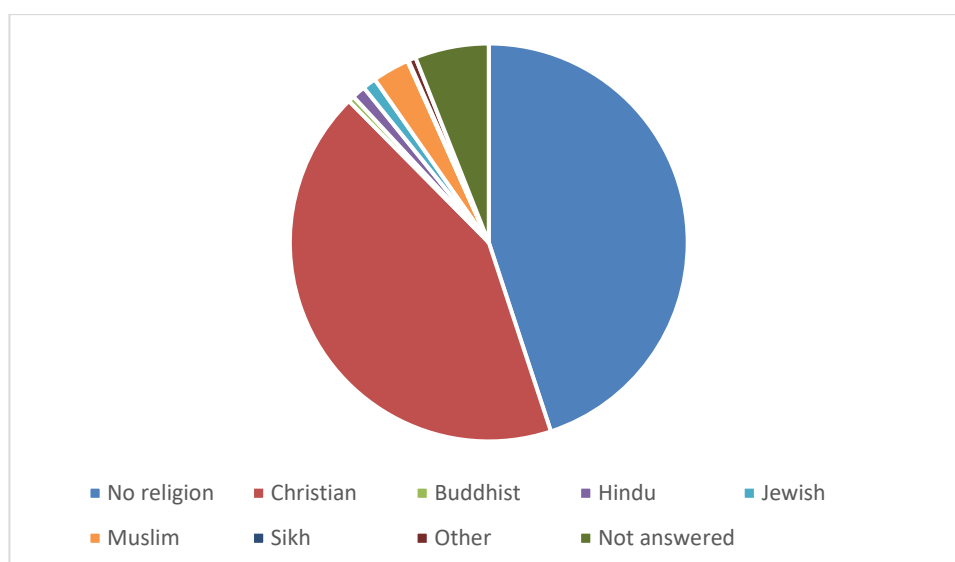
Chair, SACRE , Southend on Sea

7th August 2025

RELIGION AND BELIEF IN SOUTHEND ON SEA

Religion by Region and Year

Classification	2011 Southend-on-Sea %	2021 Southend-on-Sea %	2011 East of England %	2021 East of England %	2011 England %	2021 England %
No religion	31.6	44.9	27.9	40.2	24.8	36.7
Christian	55.7	42.6	59.7	46.6	59.4	46.3
Buddhist	0.5	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.5
Hindu	0.7	1.1	0.9	1.4	1.5	1.8
Jewish	1.2	1.1	0.6	0.7	0.5	0.5
Muslim	1.9	3	2.5	3.7	5	6.7
Sikh	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.4	0.8	0.9
Other	0.5	0.6	0.4	0.6	0.4	0.6
Not answered	7.8	6	7.3	6.1	7.1	6



Religion of usual residents: Southend-on-Sea - East of England - England (2011 to 2021)

Source: Office for National Statistics - 2011 Census and Census 2021

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/visualisations/censusareachanges/E06000033/>

Overview of the work of SACRE

Since 1988, each Local Authority (LA) has been required by law to have a Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE).

The remit of a SACRE is principally to oversee the Religious Education (RE) and collective worship within the authority principally to:

- advise Southend-on-Sea Council upon matters connected with Religious Education and Collective Worship in community schools and in foundation schools which do not have a religious character. Religious Education in these schools is to be given in accordance with the Agreed Syllabus;
- advise Southend-on-Sea Council on teaching methods, choice of materials and teacher training in Religious Education and Collective Worship;
- require Southend-on-Sea Council to review the locally agreed syllabus for religious education at least every five years.

The reporting period of the 2024-2025 report starts from September 1st 2024 and runs to August 31st 2025.

SACRE met on three occasions during the academic year:

21st January 2025 (postponed from the Autumn term)

24th March 2025

30th June 2025.

The January and March meetings were quorate. The June meeting was not quorate due to no attendees from Group A: Representatives of the Church of England.

Minutes for these meetings are available on the Southend-on-Sea website. These can be found at <https://democracy.southend.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?CId=319&Year=0>

Standing items in meetings:

Apologies for absence

Declarations of interest

Minutes of previous meeting and matters arising

SACRE constitution and membership

RE advisor updates

Additional items in meetings:

Section 2: Religious Education

The Locally Agreed Syllabus and RE in schools

RE is not part of the national curriculum. Each LA is required to produce an Agreed Syllabus for RE. Each LA is required to begin reviewing the current Agreed Syllabus within five years of its production. The Locally Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education adopted by Southend-on-Sea Local Authority was launched 1 February 2024. It runs from 2024 to 2029. All schools irrespective of designation requested a licence and a copy of the new syllabus from RE today on behalf of SACRE. This included: 36 academy schools, 1 Free School, 9 LA maintained schools.

Standards and monitoring of RE

- Review of website compliance in all (9) LA maintained schools around policy review & feedback to schools with recommendations
- New RE portal on the SLN launched: [Religious Education \(RE\) | Southend Learning Network](#): raise profile of RE and support to schools
- Termly RE newsletter to key stakeholders (spring and summer): raise profile of RE and support to schools
- Discussion of workforce data
- RE School survey (June 2025) to gather key themes & inform discussions with schools around any good practice or gaps
- Review of training offers made available by the LA to address any gaps, e.g. for the governance service, governors are now invited to all training opportunities. Governors are now also all sent the key comms as above (in addition to other school leaders)

Survey Participation

In Southend on Sea there are:

4 infants' schools

4 junior schools

25 primary schools,

1 primary/secondary school,

12 secondary schools

8 independent schools

A total of **15 schools** responded:

- **5 secondary schools**
- **9 primary schools**
- **1 independent school**

14 responses were submitted by either the Headteacher or the RE Lead, ensuring a high level of insight into school-level RE provision.

Key Findings

Leadership and Delivery

- **100%** of schools have a designated RE Lead.
- **9 schools** reported that RE is delivered by the class teacher (60%) – this is as expected given numbers of primary school response
- **5 schools** reported delivery by RE specialists - all secondary
- **14 schools** confirmed that RE is taught as a discrete subject (1 infant school has RE embedded in wider curriculum activities for Early Years)

Curriculum Time Allocation

- **13 schools** deliver RE on a **weekly basis**.
- **1 school** follows a termly rotation model.
- **Primary phase:** RE is typically delivered for **45 minutes to 1 hour per week**.
- **Secondary phase:** RE time allocation is approximately:
 - **4% at Key Stage 3**
 - **10% at Key Stage 4**
 - **20% at Key Stage 5**
- **Early Years:** RE is embedded within broader curriculum activities.

Monitoring and Evaluation

- **100%** of schools reported that RE is monitored by the leadership team through activities such as book scrutiny and lesson observations

School Development Priorities in RE

Common themes identified:

- Ensuring full **curriculum compliance** and embedding the RE curriculum effectively.
- **Upskilling staff** to improve subject knowledge and pedagogy.
- Enhancing **pupil engagement** in RE lessons.

Barriers to Effective RE Delivery

- The most frequently cited challenge was **staff capacity and release time**.
- A minority of schools noted that RE is **not a top priority** within their broader school improvement plans.

At present, the results from 2025 are unvalidated. Please see appendix A for the unvalidated results from 2025.

Southend-on-Sea validated GCSE RS data (2023-2024)

Subject: Religious Studies (4610) / Exam: GCSE (9-1) Full Course (391)

QAN: 60184000

Est. No.	Centre	NOR	NOE	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	U	X	9-5	9-4	9-1	Avg Pts
5434	Belfairs Academy	276	25	8.0	8.0	16.0	40.0	4.0	12.0	8.0	-	-	4.0	-	76.0	88.0	96.0	5.8
4000	Chase High School	175	16	-	-	-	6.3	12.5	12.5	12.5	12.5	18.8	18.8	6.3	18.8	31.3	75.0	2.3
4034	Shoeburyness High School	300	39	5.1	12.8	23.1	10.3	15.4	7.7	17.9	2.6	2.6	-	2.6	66.7	74.4	97.4	5.4
5428	Southend High School for Girls	178	67	37.3	31.3	17.9	11.9	-	1.5	-	-	-	-	-	98.5	100.0	100.0	7.9
5423	Westcliff High School for Girls	172	172	36.6	27.9	16.9	11.0	4.1	2.9	0.6	-	-	-	-	96.5	99.4	100.0	7.7
5465	St Bernard's High School	169	168	4.2	14.9	14.9	28.0	13.1	11.3	9.5	1.2	2.4	-	0.6	75.0	86.3	99.4	5.7
5447	St Thomas More High School	178	176	1.7	7.4	5.7	19.9	17.6	17.0	14.8	8.0	5.7	2.3	-	52.3	69.3	97.7	4.6
5446	Southend High School for Boys	180	178	16.9	24.2	27.5	18.5	7.3	3.4	1.7	-	0.6	-	-	94.4	97.8	100.0	7.0
5401	Westcliff High School for Boys Academy	181	93	20.4	23.7	24.7	25.8	3.2	1.1	-	-	1.1	-	-	97.8	98.9	100.0	7.2
4004	Cecil Jones Academy	135	126	0.8	0.8	0.8	4.8	8.7	9.5	21.4	19.8	19.8	11.9	1.6	15.9	25.4	86.5	2.5

Southend-on-Sea validated A level RS data

Subject: Religious Studies (4610) / Exam: GCE A level (111)

Est. No.	School/College	NOE	*	A	B	C	D	E	Q	U	X	A*-A	A*-B	A*-E	Avg Pts
-	National (all entries)	14530	6.2	19.8	28.4	23.2	13.9	5.8	0.0	1.9	0.7	26.0	54.5	97.4	35.3
5434	Belfairs Academy	7	-	28.6	42.9	-	28.6	-	-	-	-	28.6	71.4	100.0	37.1
4034	Shoeburyness High School	7	-	-	28.6	71.4	-	-	-	-	-	-	28.6	100.0	32.9
5446	Southend High School for Boys	14	14.3	50.0	14.3	21.4	-	-	-	-	-	64.3	78.6	100.0	45.7
5428	Southend High School for Girls	8	-	37.5	50.0	12.5	-	-	-	-	-	37.5	87.5	100.0	42.5
5465	St Bernard's High School	x*	-	x*	x*	x*	-	-	-	-	-	x*	x*	100.0	38.0
5447	St Thomas More High School	8	-	37.5	25.0	25.0	-	-	-	-	12.5	37.5	62.5	87.5	36.3
5401	Westcliff High School for Boys Academy	13	15.4	30.8	46.2	7.7	-	-	-	-	-	46.2	92.3	100.0	45.4
5423	Westcliff High School for Girls	28	10.7	42.9	32.1	10.7	3.6	-	-	-	-	53.6	85.7	100.0	44.6

* suppressed due to low numbers

Teacher training materials and advice for schools

Training was undertaken with colleagues in schools through Julie Childs, RE Today National Adviser. Training was undertaken on 5 occasions; all of these were virtual in order that as many teachers could attend as possible.

Personal knowledge (primary and secondary 17th October 2024

Oracy in primary RE 5th March 2025

Oracy in secondary RE 6th March 2025

Global Christianity (primary) 5th June 2025

Global Christianity (secondary) 25th June 2025

One day teacher conference (virtual) on RE subject leadership and ways of knowing has been rescheduled from June 2025 to November 2025

Other information

There have been no complaints to SACRE in 2024-25 in relation to Religious Education.

SACRE has received no reports of pupils being withdrawn from Religious Education in 2025-2025.

Advice given to the Local Authority

Advice was given to the local authority about the following points:

- Workforce data was discussed, and it was advised that SACRE may wish to request that the Local Authority seek to gather further data and the workforce data is unverified and incomplete. A survey was sent to all schools by Julie Hollingsworth from the LA. Responses were analysed (see standards and monitoring in RE section for analysis and conclusions).
- The issue of RE in KS3 and 4 was discussed considering workforce data and GCSE results from 2024. Julie Childs, as RE advisor, is due to deliver a session to secondary Headteachers on the importance of RE in KS3 and 4 in September 2025 (rescheduled from June 2025).
- Information was shared with SACRE members about the [RE Hubs kitemark training](#) and members expressed an interest in signing up to the training.
- Advice was given on national sponsoring bodies for different religion and non-religious that the LA may wish to contact in order to seek representative to serve on SACRE. It was also advised that local teaching union representatives could be contacted to ask for nominations for teacher representatives from different unions.
- Support has been given to create a criteria for any visits to schools that SACRE members of the LA wish to make (by agreement with the schools).
- Support has been given creation termly newsletters to go out to all schools regarding available RE CPD and updates.

Section 3: Collective worship

Standards and monitoring of Collective Worship

SACRE have discussed how they can best support and monitor Collective Worship in schools. Work will continue in this in the next academic year. [Church Hub Support](#) has been shared with school leaders.

Determinations

No requests for determination have been submitted to SACRE and there are no current determinations for review. SACRE is planning to research and adopt a policy for determinations in the coming academic year.

SACRE has not received any reports of pupils being withdrawn from Collective Worship.

Teacher training provided

During 2024-25 SACRE did not receive any requests for advice and support on Collective Worship.

Other information

There were no formal complaints to SACRE about collective worship during the year.

Advice to the Local Authority

Advice was given to the Local Authority that it could look on the NASACRE website and at examples for other SACRE's to help create a policy for when a school applies for a determination.

Section 4: Links with other bodies

National Bodies

Southend-on-Sea SACRE are pleased to be linked with national bodies and receive national updates from Julie Childs, our RE adviser and will be subscribing to NASACRE in the next academic year to support its work.

Information from NATRE and the REC has been used in meetings and shared with schools where appropriate.

Local bodies

Many local places of worship and religious communities are represented on SACRE.

Section 5: SACRE involvement in the Local Area

Governor and head teacher links

Governors and head teachers have been invited to attend the annual 1 day RE conference (rescheduled from June to November). Julie Childs, RE advisor, will be leading a CPD session for secondary teachers in September on RE at KS3 and 4 and the positive impact it can have to encourage it to be more prominent on their school timetables.

RE updates are shared widely and regularly to all governors and headteachers on the RE CPD available provided by Julie Childs on behalf of Southend-on-Sea SACRE.

Advice on community issues

The RE adviser regularly gives advice on speakers coming into schools and visits to places of worship locally. She has shared with SACRE and schools in the local area, information about the RE Hubs website and its section on places of interest and school speakers.

Section 6: Managing the SACRE and partnership with the Local Authority (LA)

Professional and administrative support

During the reporting period, clerking of SACRE was undertaken by Robert Harris of Principal Democratic Services Officer, Legal & Democratic Services, Southend City Council

The Local Authority provided funding to support SACRE activity 2024-2025 by contracting with RE Today Services of an RE Consultant for:

- 3 on-line SACRE meetings, attendance, pre-meeting if needed, verbal and written national updates for members
- A one-day primary conference
- 3 on-line twilight training sessions - -2 hours each -Primary-
- 3 on-line twilight training sessions -2 hours each -Secondary
- Termly 1 hour ask the adviser session- primary and secondary-on line
- The writing of the Annual report

Julie Childs from RE Today continued in the role of RE consultant.

Julie Hollingsworth:, who is Senior Advisor, Performance, Partnerships & Safeguarding, Children and Public Health, Southend-on-Sea City Council holds responsibility for SACRE support and liaises with the RE consultant.

Membership

The table provided below demonstrates the composition of Southend-on-Sea SACRE.

SACRE Membership and Vacancies

Member		Attendance details		
		21/01/25 (postponed from Autumn term)	24/03/25	30/06/25
Group A: Representatives of the Church of England (3) 1 vacancy				
Ms R Everett		Apologies	√	Apologies
Gillian Holmes		√	Apologies	Apologies
Group B: Other Faith Group Representatives: Vacancies: Free Churches (2 vacancies) Roman Catholic (2 vacancies)				

Salvation Army (1 vacancy) Humanist Community (1 vacancy) Buddhist Community (1 vacancy)				
Rabbi G Hyman	Jewish Community	✓	✓	✓
Krishna Chakkirala	Hindu community	✓	✓	✓
Krishna Kumar	Muslim community	No apologies sent	No apologies sent	Apologies
Tej Bharj	Sikh community	Apologies	Apologies	No apologies sent
Group C: Representatives of the Teachers' Associations: 5 Vacancies for representatives of: VOICE (formerly referred to as PAT) NAHT NEU/ATL NEU/NUT				
NASUWT - Mr K Ryan - (Chair)	NASUWT	✓	✓	✓
Ms A Lewis	NASUWT	No apologies sent	Apologies	Apologies
Ms J Scott	NASUWT	✓	Apologies	✓
Mr T Morgan	NASUWT	No apologies sent	No apologies sent	Apologies
Group D: Representatives of the LEA: Appointed annually at Appointments Council. The following Councillors were appointed in May 2025 for the Municipal Year 2025/26.				
Councillor Meg Davidson		✓	✓	✓
Councillor Anne Jones		✓	Apologies	✓
Councillor Shahid Nadeem		✓	✓	✓
Councillor Judith McMahan		No apologies sent	Apologies	NO longer a member of SACRE
Councillor Maxine Sadza		✓	Apologies	NO longer a member of SACRE
Councillor Faye Evans		Not yet a SACRE member	Not yet a SACRE member	No apologies sent
Councillor Stephen Wakefield		Not yet a SACRE member	Not yet a SACRE member	Apologies
Councillor Carole Mulroney		✓	Apologies	✓

Training

SACRE members have received regular updates and information regarding national RE updates including the CAAR report.

Finance

The LA allocated £5,100 for support to SACRE from the RE Consultant. The Clerk's role is covered by the Principal Democratic Services Officer at the Council.

It should be noted that the Local Authority spent more widely on Religious Education during the reporting period with money being allocated to the implementation of the Southend Learning Network Portal.

Appendix A:

Unvalidated Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5 Exam Data, Summer 2025

GCSE

INSERT TABLE (USUALLY OBTAINED FROM LA'S DATA TEAM)

A level

INSERT TABLE (USUALLY OBTAINED FROM LA'S DATA TEAM)

Appendix B:

Circulation of the Annual Report

The Southend-on-Sea Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education Annual Report will be:

- Provided, via e-mail, to all SACRE Members
- Provided, via e-mail, to the Department for Education
- Provided, via e-mail, to NASACRE
- Published on the Local Authority democratic services website