



**STOCKPORT**  
METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

Stockport Standing Advisory Council on  
Religious Education  
(SACRE)

Annual Report 2023-2024

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## **SECTION ONE: Introduction and the Work of SACRE**

### **Words from the Chair of Stockport SACRE**

I am pleased to present the Stockport SACRE Annual Report for 2023–2024. Throughout the year, we have continued to support schools, RE subject leaders and teachers across Stockport to ensure that all children and young people receive a high-quality religious education.

We have welcomed new SACRE members and remain committed to further strengthening the diversity and representation of our group. Links with schools have continued to grow through professional development, guidance and the ongoing collaboration established at the RE Agreed Syllabus launch events led by RE Today, as well as through the Subject Leader Networks facilitated by Jo Gill.

The Locally Agreed Syllabus 2022-2027 is now fully operational and being implemented across the borough. It is being implemented effectively and is supporting our children and young people to:

- Develop secure knowledge of religions and worldviews and form their own ideas, values and identities.
- Express personal beliefs while respecting the rights and perspectives of others.
- Deepen understanding of different communities and build empathy.
- Engage with big questions and communicate their thinking with confidence.

I would like to thank all SACRE members for their dedication and contribution throughout the year, as well as Stockport LA for their continued support. Religious Education remains a vital part of preparing young people to thrive in a diverse and rapidly changing society. We look forward to building on our progress and continuing to strengthen the quality and impact of RE across Stockport in the year ahead. This includes improving teacher confidence, strengthening curriculum quality, and increasing pupil engagement in Religious Education across the borough.

Chris Gordon

Chair of Stockport SACRE

### **Overview**

Stockport SACRE prepares this annual report and is responsible for advising the Local Authority on matters relating to Religious Education (RE) and Collective Worship. This includes maintained schools, academies and free schools, which are required to provide Religious Education in line with their funding agreements. This report provides an overview of the support and activity undertaken in Stockport during **2023–2024** in relation to both areas.

The report is a public document and is also shared with the National Association of SACREs (NASACRE) and the Department for Education (DfE). For further information regarding this report, or about RE and Collective Worship in Stockport, please contact the Stockport LA Officer to SACRE, **Tracy Higgins**, at [tracy.higgins@stockport.gov.uk](mailto:tracy.higgins@stockport.gov.uk).

### **Dates and Content of Meetings**

Stockport SACRE met once each term to review progress and monitor its work against agreed priorities. All meetings were held in a hybrid format, with venues equipped to support both in-person attendance and remote participation via Microsoft Teams.

The standard agenda items for Stockport SACRE meetings included:

- Welcome and apologies
- Approval of minutes from the previous meeting
- Matters arising
- Updates from Stockport schools on the implementation of the RE Agreed Syllabus 2022–2027
- National updates relating to education and Religious Education
- Training opportunities
- SACRE projects, including recruitment of new members and consideration of SACRE's role within Stockport's Anti-Racism Strategy
- Any other business and confirmation of future meeting dates

*SACRE Meetings took place on:*

- 7 November 2023
- 27 February 2024
- 17 June 2024

### **Priorities for 2023-2024**

In addition to considering Religious Education and Collective Worship across Stockport, SACRE focused on the following priorities during the year:

- Implementing the new RE Locally Agreed Syllabus
- Identifying professional development needs and opportunities for subject leaders and teachers
- Increasing representation on SACRE from under-represented groups.
- Monitoring and evaluating the quality of Religious Education and Worldviews provision in Stockport schools.
- Reviewing SACRE's role and updating the Stockport SACRE Constitution

### **Dates for 2024-2025**

- 18 November 2024

- 25 February 2025
- 26 June 2025

## **SECTION TWO: Statutory Responsibilities: Religious Education**

### **The Locally Agreed Syllabus**

The Locally Agreed Syllabus is now fully operational and is being implemented across the borough. While it is based on the previous syllabus, it has been strengthened through revised and updated sections, including EYFS, SEND, cultural capital, sequencing and progression. Medium-term planning has been aligned with the principles of intent, implementation and impact, and a number of units of work have been newly developed or updated.

The syllabus, written by RE Today Services, is shared with four other Greater Manchester SACREs: Manchester, Salford, Stockport and Trafford. The local authority has funded the syllabus, available free of charge to all schools and academies in Stockport. Schools also have the option to purchase fully resourced schemes of work, including lesson plans, slide decks and electronic worksheets.

The five Greater Manchester SACREs that share the syllabus continue to work collaboratively to support schools with implementation and to strengthen curriculum design through leadership development and CPD. A further training session, led by RE Today and funded through remaining launch-event allocations, will provide additional support for school leaders. Within Stockport, the primary RE network facilitated by Jo Gill continues to offer CPD opportunities for teachers and to promote the sharing of effective practice in using the syllabus.

In Spring 2024, SACRE undertook a review of secondary school websites. The review identified that RE provision was not always clearly articulated, and many sites lacked reference to an RE Lead. In response, SACRE agreed to conduct school visits to gain a more accurate picture of RE and Worldviews provision across the borough. These visits are planned for 2024–2025.

### **Standards and Monitoring**

This year the focus of the SACRE has been supporting schools to implement the new RE Agreed Syllabus 2022-2027. SACRE has begun to monitor the impact of the syllabus during 2023-2024.

### **Examination Results**

A recent NATRE report highlights that the removal of the short-course GCSE from performance tables has significantly reduced the number of pupils leaving school with a qualification in Religious Studies. This change has also coincided with an increase in schools reporting, through workforce data, that RE is not taught in Year 11. Despite this national picture, entries for the full-course GCSE in Religious Studies have risen by more than 30% since 2012, increasing from 170,767 to 223,034.

In Stockport in 2024, **20.4%** of Year 11 pupils took GCSE RE, a slight decrease from **21.05%** in 2023. Entry patterns across the borough vary considerably, ranging from **0% to 98%**. All three Catholic high schools entered more than **90%** of pupils for GCSE RE. Overall, the **average GCSE RE grade** in Stockport is **4.9**, compared with **4.8** nationally.

School Name	No. of KS4 Pupils	No. of KS4 Pupils who took GCSE RE	Average GCSE RE Grade Achieved	% of KS4 Pupils who took GCSE RE
St. James Catholic High	158	156	5.0	98.7%
Harrytown Catholic High	149	144	4.4	96.6%
St Anne's Catholic High	123	117	4.5	95.1%
Stockport Academy	193	51	4.8	26.4%
The Kingsway	250	52	4.5	20.8%
Bramhall High	242	30	4.2	12.4%
Marple Hall	311	24	6.2	7.7%
Priestnall School	250	18	6.2	7.2%
Reddish Vale High	203	13	4.8	6.4%
Laurus Cheadle Hulme	204	11	6.7	5.4%
Cheadle Hulme High	264	12	6.2	4.5%
Stockport School	247	10	4.1	4.0%
Werneth School	235	9	7.1	3.8%
Hazel Grove High	265	0	-	0%
Castle Hill School	50	0	-	0%
Heaton School	11	0	-	0%
Windlehurst School	10	0	-	0%
Stockport LA Total	3165	647	4.9	20.4%
Catholic School Total	430	417	4.7	97%
Non Catholic School Total	2735	230	5.5	8.4%
Non Catholic School Total excluding special schools	2644	230	5.5	8.6%

### ***Professional Development and Support***

Throughout the year, Stockport primary schools have continued to receive professional support through the RE and Worldviews Primary Network. The Network offers flexible support to meet the needs of schools and strengthen the quality of Religious Education and Worldviews.

Support for schools is available through guidance on the Locally Agreed Syllabus, consultancy on specific or general RE issues, including advice on withdrawal from RE and reviews of RE provision through school visits, professional conversations, or remote support.

Stockport also engages in collaborative professional development with neighbouring authorities. A series of online twilight sessions focusing on world faiths has been delivered across Greater Manchester, featuring contributions from members of local faith communities. These sessions support teachers' subject knowledge and promote confidence in curriculum planning and delivery. In addition, some Stockport primary schools have completed half day 'Deep Dives' in Religious Education and Worldviews, focusing on reviewing curriculum provision, including its scope, sequencing and progression.

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

### **Standards and Monitoring**

It is the responsibility of SACRE to monitor schools' statutory responsibility to hold Collective Worship. Monitoring the quality of Collective Worship was not a central focus during 2023-2024; this remains an area for future development.

### **Complaints and Determinations**

Parents have a statutory right to withdraw their children from Collective Worship. Guidance on good practice and protocols for withdrawal are made available to schools. SACRE recognises parents' legal right to withdraw but would like to see all children and young people have access to rich and stimulating Collective Worship.

No complaints were made to SACRE during the year about Collective Worship. There were no requests for a determination to vary statutory requirements. The Stockport SACRE Determinations Policy is to be updated in line with NASACRE guidance and approved in 2025.

## **Section Four: Links with Other Organisations**

### **NASACRE and AREIAC**

Stockport SACRE has links with NASACRE, which supports all local SACREs to conduct their function effectively, by providing training and events through the year. The LA Officer is a member of The Association of RE Inspectors, Advisers and Consultants (AREIAC) which is an organisation for specialist educationalists, including all qualified teachers, who provide advice, leadership, training, and support for multi-faith religious education in schools and colleges. AREIAC regional groups meet termly to discuss national issues regarding religious education and share and develop resources. The LA Officer disseminates relevant information to the SACRE.

### **Other Stockport SACRE Links**

Stockport SACRE works closely with the four Greater Manchester SACREs that share the same RE Agreed Syllabus, Tameside, Trafford, Manchester, and Salford. The Chair of SACRE sits on the Chester Diocese Board of Education, and members have links with Stockport Disability Forum and Stockport's Ethnic Diversity Service.

## **Section Five: Stockport SACRE Arrangements**

### **Professional and Administrative Support**

Stockport SACRE meets every term through the academic year to discuss the work taking place in Stockport schools and how the SACRE can support the Religious Education across the borough. The Local Authority Officer, Chair and Vice Chairs and Stockport's Business Support work together to ensure the members of SACRE are provided with the appropriate updates and reports for those meetings. This includes updates from NASACRE, AREIAC and other faith education associations, as well as Religious Education networking sessions for teachers. A member of Stockport SACRE organises and facilitates the RE Network for RE Subject Leads across Stockport and

provides the SACRE with National updates in meetings. In addition, members have attended the RE Networks to gain a deeper understanding of the implementation and impact of the RE Agreed Syllabus. Feedback from participants indicates increased confidence in subject knowledge and curriculum planning.

### **Membership, Representation & Recruitment**

Stockport SACRE has worked hard to recruit members to represent the diversity across Stockport, and ensure membership aligns with the SACRE constitution. There is representation from Islam, Judaism, Quakers, Church of England, Baha'i Faith, and Humanists. There is a full complement of Council Officers and education representatives. There are vacancies and during 2023-2024, Stockport SACRE continued to proactively recruit members from faith groups not currently represented. The SACRE received no independent funding but Stockport Local Authority fund business support for meetings, the LA Officer's support, and the membership fees for NASACRE and AREIAC.

Increasing membership and improving its diversity remains a key priority for SACRE.