



STOCKPORT
METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

Stockport Standing Advisory Council on
Religious Education
(SACRE)

Annual Report 2024-2025

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Chair and Vice Chair's Foreword

It is our pleasure to present the Stockport SACRE Annual Report for the academic year 2024–2025.

This has been a year of renewed focus and development for SACRE. We have worked collaboratively across our membership to strengthen our role in supporting high-quality Religious Education and Collective Worship in Stockport schools. We are grateful to all members for their commitment, professionalism, and willingness to contribute to the work of SACRE.

Following analysis of local data, which highlighted variation in the quality, provision and prioritisation of Religious Education across schools, one of our key achievements this year has been the reintroduction of a structured programme of school visits. This has enabled us to engage directly with schools and gain first-hand insight into the delivery of Religious Education. These visits have demonstrated strong practice across the borough and helped identify areas for further development.

We have also made important progress in strengthening governance, including adopting a Code of Conduct and securing additional support for SACRE operations.

There remains work to do, particularly in ensuring that SACRE membership reflects the diversity of the communities we serve and in addressing variability in access to Religious Education qualifications.

We would like to thank Tracy Higgins, Local Authority Adviser, and all SACRE members for their contributions during the year.

Chris Gordon

Chair, Stockport SACRE

Cllr Shan Alexander

Vice Chair, Stockport SACRE

Section One: Local Authority and SACRE Details

Local Authority: Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council

Academic Year: 2024–2025

Stockport SACRE is a statutory body established under the Education Act 1996 to advise the Local Authority on Religious Education (RE) and Collective Worship.

Section Two: SACRE Membership

SACRE comprises four statutory groups:

- Committee A: Faith representatives
- Committee B: Church of England
- Committee C: Teaching profession
- Committee D: Local Authority representatives

Leadership

- Chair: Chris Gordon
- Vice Chair: Cllr Shan Alexander

SACRE continues to reflect a broad range of perspectives across faith communities, education professionals, and Local Authority representatives. This diversity supports informed discussion and ensures that decision-making is responsive to the needs of the wider community. During 2024-2025, SACRE identified the importance of strengthening representation to better reflect the borough's changing demographic profile. In particular:

- The absence of an active Muslim representative was noted
- Consideration was given to further representation of a range of religious and non-religious worldviews.

Actions were taken to engage potential new members through local networks and elected representatives. This work will continue into 2025-2026.

Attendance across meetings remained strong, with representation from each of the statutory committees contributing to informed discussion and decision-making.

Section Three: SACRE Meetings

Stockport SACRE met three times:

- 18 November 2024
- 25 February 2025
- 26 June 2025

Meetings were held in person and online, with representation across all committees.

Key focus areas across the year included:

- Monitoring RE provision, including the design and implementation of a school visit programme
- Analysis of KS4 data, with discussion around variability in access to GCSE Religious Studies
- Governance improvements, including the introduction of a Code of Conduct and a review of the Constitution
- Professional development and syllabus implementation, ensuring schools are supported to deliver high-quality RE

SACRE meetings provided an effective forum for discussion, challenge, and collaborative planning, enabling members to contribute their expertise to improving RE across the borough.

Section Four: Advice to the Local Authority

- SACRE advised the Local Authority on:
- Implementation of the Greater Manchester Agreed Syllabus
- Development of monitoring processes
- Teacher professional development
- Curriculum inclusivity and representation

Through this work, SACRE has supported the Local Authority in ensuring that Religious Education remains relevant, inclusive, and high quality across Stockport schools.

Section Five: Agreed Syllabus

Stockport follows the **Greater Manchester Agreed Syllabus (2022)**.

Implementation support

- Faith expert training (Buddhism, Humanism)
- Regional collaboration
- RE Network engagement

Curriculum Focus

- Inclusive and multicultural RE
- Representation of diverse faiths and worldviews

Section Six: Monitoring of Standards and Quality of Provision

School Visits

A key priority for SACRE during 2024-2025 was the re-establishment of direct monitoring through school visits. This marked a significant step forward in enabling SACRE to gain first-hand evidence of RE provision across different phases and contexts.

Visits were undertaken to:

- Harrytown Catholic High School
- St Paul's CE Primary School

Key Findings

Across visits, SACRE identified several strengths:

- High-quality curriculum design, clearly sequenced and aligned to school ethos
- Strong evidence of student engagement and depth of learning
- Inclusive practice, with pupils from a range of faith and non-faith backgrounds fully involved
- Opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

At Harrytown Catholic High School, for example, the RE curriculum was found to be firmly rooted in Catholic values while remaining inclusive for all pupils. The school's chapel provided a valuable space for reflection and contributed significantly to the spiritual life of the school.

Impact

The visit programme has:

- Strengthened SACREs understanding of RE in practice
- Enabled constructive dialogue with schools
- Provided a foundation for more systematic monitoring going forward

Written feedback was provided to schools, with outcomes shared with the relevant diocesan bodies where appropriate.

Section Seven: Standards of Public Examination

Key Findings

- Inconsistency in curriculum entitlement, particularly in relation to access to GCSE Religious Studies.
- A potential imbalance between depth of study and breadth of access.
- The need for SACRE to better understand how RE is positioned within the curriculum in different school contexts.

Next Steps

- Undertake a borough-wide audit of KS4 RE provision
- Engage with schools to understand curriculum decision-making
- Use findings to inform future support and recommendations

Section Eight: Collective Worship

SACRE recognises its statutory responsibility to monitor Collective Worship.

- To be included in school visits where appropriate
- No determinations were requested or reviewed during the academic year

Section Nine: Complaints

- No complaints regarding RE or Collective Worship were received.

Section Ten: Professional Development

SACRE supported schools through a range of professional development opportunities, including:

- Faith expert-led training sessions (e.g. Buddhism and Humanism)
- Collaboration with the Stockport RE Network
- Promotion of regional CPD opportunities across Greater Manchester

Feedback from schools indicated that:

- Training was valued for improving subject knowledge
- There is demand for practical, classroom ready resources and continued collaboration

This work has supported teachers in developing subject knowledge and confidence in delivering the Agreed Syllabus.

Section Eleven: Links with Other Bodies

- NASACRE
- AREIAC
- Greater Manchester SACRE Network
- RE Today

Section Twelve: SACRE Budget and Resources

The Local Authority provides:

- Administrative and clerking support
- Support for CPD

Section Thirteen: Key Achievements

- Re-established a systematic school visit programme, providing first-hand evidence of RE provision

- Strengthening governance and accountability through adoption of a Code of Conduct and improved administrative support
- Developed a clearer understanding of variation in RE provision, particularly at Key Stage 4
- Increased access to professional development opportunities for teachers
- Strengthened partnerships with regional and national organisations

Section Fourteen: Development Plan Priorities

- Extend and embed the school visits programme, ensuring coverage across a broader range of schools
- Improve diversity of SACRE membership, particularly of underrepresented faith groups
- Strengthen the monitoring of Collective Worship as part of school visits
- Continue to support schools through high-quality CPD and resource development

Section Fifteen: Conclusion

Stockport SACRE has strengthened its effectiveness during 2024–2025 through improved governance, monitoring, and partnership working. It is well placed to continue to build on this progress in 2025-2026, to support schools and promote high-quality inclusive Religious Education across the borough.