

Stockton on Tees SACRE

Annual Report 2024-2025

Introduction and Context

Welcome to the Annual Report of the Stockton-on-Tees Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE), covering the academic year 2024–2025. This report reflects the statutory duty placed upon SACREs under the Education Act 1996 to advise the Local Authority on matters relating to Religious Education (RE) and Collective Worship in schools for which the Authority is responsible. It also serves as an important mechanism for accountability and transparency, informing the Secretary of State for Education, local stakeholders, and the wider community of the work undertaken during the year and the impact of that work on educational provision within Stockton-on-Tees.

We begin by expressing our sincere gratitude to all members of Stockton SACRE for their commitment, expertise, and time throughout the year. SACRE is fortunate to have a diverse and representative membership, encompassing a wide range of religious and non-religious worldviews, educational professionals from different phases, and elected members of the Local Authority. This diversity ensures that discussions are balanced, inclusive, and reflective of the community we serve. Members have worked diligently to ensure that the right issues are addressed, the appropriate perspectives are considered, and that actions taken are both effective and meaningful.

We also wish to acknowledge those members who have stepped down during the year: Miss G McCleave and Councillor Susan Scott and extend a warm welcome to our new members: Councillor Clare Besford and Miss Emma Milburn.

As a statutory body, SACRE remains committed to promoting high-quality Religious Education and supporting schools in meeting their legal obligations regarding Collective Worship. We look forward to building on the progress made this year and to continuing our work in partnership with schools, faith communities, and the Local Authority to ensure that all children and young people in Stockton-on-Tees have access to an inclusive, rigorous, and enriching RE curriculum. In doing so, we aim to contribute positively to community cohesion and the development of pupils' understanding of diverse beliefs and values, in line with national guidance and best practice

Overview of SACRE meetings and Attendance

Committee	Meeting 1 7/11/24	Meeting 2 30/1/25	Meeting 3 23/10/25
Attendees	10	6	7
Apologies accepted	5	9	7
No Apologies given	3	0	1
LA officer in attendance?	√	x	√
Possible Maximum attendees at meeting	18	15	15

Stockton-on-Tees Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) comprises representatives from a broad spectrum of religious and non-religious worldviews, ensuring that its membership reflects the diversity of the local community. This inclusive composition enables SACRE to fulfil its statutory responsibilities effectively and to provide balanced advice on matters relating to Religious Education (RE) and Collective Worship.

Currently, the Council are yet to agree on a Chair to lead its work with the current Chair currently continuing to take on the role until a replacement is found. Clerking services are provided by the Stockton School and Governor Support Service, ensuring that meetings are well-organised and compliant with statutory requirements. In addition, the Local Authority is represented by an appointed Advisor who liaises and coordinates on behalf of the Authority, facilitating communication and partnership working.

We are privileged to have the RE Advisor for the Durham Diocese as a member of SACRE. While she formally represents the Church of England, her extensive expertise in Religious Education across all faiths and worldviews is an invaluable asset to the Council's deliberations and development work.

Several members of Stockton SACRE also serve on other local SACREs, enabling the sharing of good practice and fostering collaboration across neighbouring authorities. As part of our ongoing development, we aim to strengthen these links further and work more closely with adjoining SACREs to promote consistency, innovation, and mutual support in the delivery of high-quality Religious Education.

Stockton School Types and Phases

	Primary	Secondary	Special	Pupil Referral Unit	Post 16	TOTAL
Maintained	15	1	0	0	0	16
Academy	45	12	5	1	1	64
Voluntary Controlled	1	0	0	0	0	1
Voluntary Aided	2	0	0	0	0	2
Independent	2	3	0	0	0	4
Free school	1	1	0	0	0	2
TOTAL	60	13	5	1	1	

Standards and monitoring of RE

RE forms part of the basic curriculum under the Education Act 1996 and the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. Parents (or pupils aged 16+) retain the right to withdraw from RE without providing a reason.

Maintained schools without a religious character must deliver RE in accordance with the locally agreed syllabus. Schools with a religious designation follow the requirements of their trust deed or faith-based syllabus, unless parents request the locally agreed syllabus. Academies and free schools are bound by their funding agreements, which typically require RE provision consistent with the locally agreed syllabus unless otherwise specified.

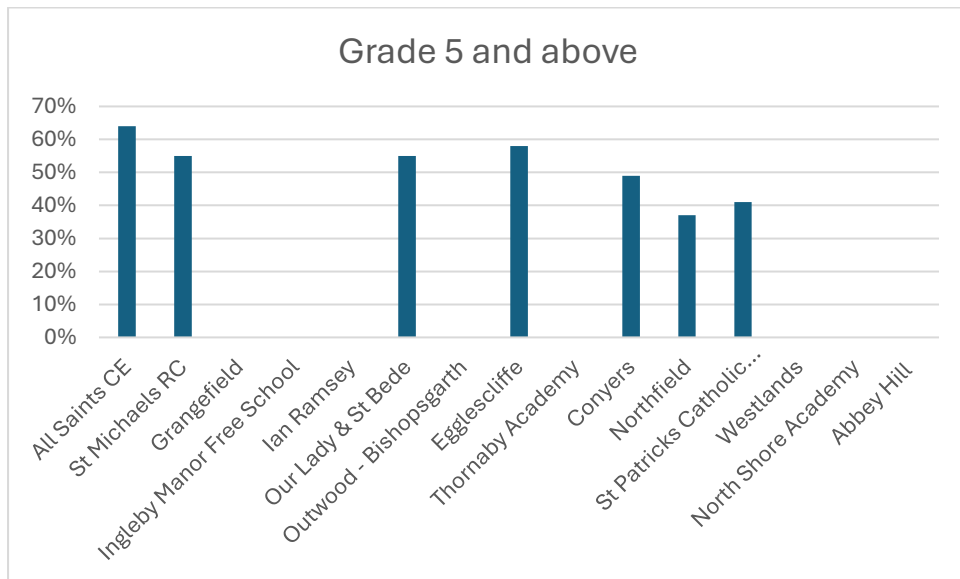
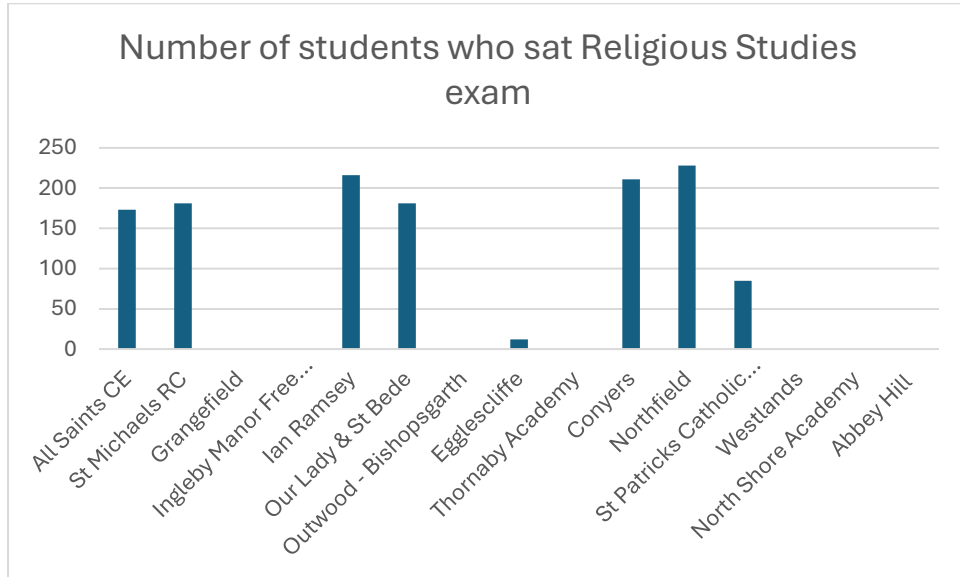
Schools do not have to legally teach RE in nursery. In Reception, RE should be integrated into play-based learning and linked to the EYFS educational programmes. Provision should enable children to encounter a range of religious and worldviews through stories, artefacts, and experiences, fostering respect, curiosity, and vocabulary development.

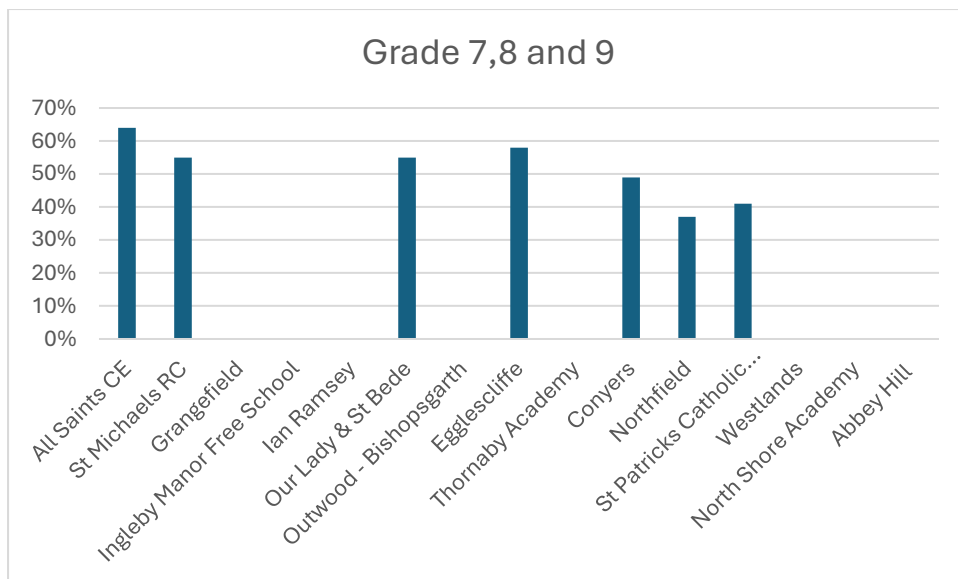
RE is compulsory for all pupils throughout Key Stages 1–4, including in Years 10 and 11, but there is no statutory requirement to provide a GCSE qualification. In Key Stage 1 pupils should receive approximately 36 hours per year (around 50–60 minutes per week) and Key Stage 2 about 45 hours per year (approximately one hour per week). At secondary level, Key Stage 3 students should similarly be allocated 45 hours per year (around one lesson each week), and Key Stage 4 around 40–70 hours over the key stage, equating to roughly one lesson per week across five terms. This equates to a minimum of 5% of curriculum time dedicated to RE in each key stage, ensuring a coherent and progressive entitlement for all pupils.

At present, there is limited clarity regarding the provision of RE across schools within the authority. To address this, a comprehensive questionnaire will be distributed to all schools in January to gather accurate information on the content and structure of RE teaching. In addition, targeted visits are planned for secondary settings where GCSE Religious Studies is not currently offered, to review alternative provision and ensure statutory requirements are being met. These actions will enable SACRE to gain a clearer picture of RE delivery and inform future support and guidance for schools.

Public examinations and attainment in RE

GCSE data





Entries by number

	Grade 5 and above	Grade7/ 8/9	Total entries
All Saints CE	110	57	173
St Michaels RC	100	37	181
Grangefield	0	0	0
Ingleby Manor Free School	0	0	0
Ian Ramsey	137	59	216
Our Lady & St Bede	100	56	181
Outwood - Bishopsgarth	0	0	0
Eggescliffe	7	5	12
Thornaby Academy	0	0	0
Conyers	104	32	211
Northfield	84	28	228
St Patricks Catholic College	35	16	85
Westlands	0	0	0
North Shore Academy	0	0	0
Abbey Hill	0	0	0
			1287

The quality of provision in schools

Five Stockton schools are listed as expecting their SIAMS inspection in 2025/26 with one of these schools having already been inspected.

Over recent years, Stockton-on-Tees SACRE has worked diligently to foster positive and constructive relationships with schools across the Local Authority. Our approach has been to celebrate good practice while offering support and guidance where needed. This collaborative ethos has resulted in schools becoming increasingly confident in engaging directly with the Chair of SACRE, leading to enhanced communication and a greater awareness of the support and advice SACRE can provide.

A key element of this engagement has been our termly Religious Education (RE) Network meetings. These sessions have encouraged colleagues to bring and share examples of pupils' work, including assessment materials. This practice has provided SACRE with the opportunity to monitor the quality of RE provision and the standard of work being produced within schools. Feedback from teachers has been positive, highlighting the benefits of sharing good practice and engaging in professional dialogue within a supportive environment. Many colleagues have reported that these opportunities have prompted meaningful reflection and led to appropriate changes and adaptations within their own settings.

In addition, our termly newsletters have showcased examples of pupils' work, further reinforcing SACRE's commitment to promoting high-quality RE. This initiative not only enables SACRE to monitor provision but also serves to celebrate achievement and foster a wider appreciation of the importance of Religious Education in supporting pupils' holistic development and preparing them for life in a diverse society.

The quality of RE provision across Stockton is a priority in the action plan which is included in Appendix 2.

Withdrawal and complaints

SACRE have not received any information about withdrawal from RE or complaints about RE.

Collective Worship

Stockton-on-Tees SACRE continues to emphasise the statutory requirement, as set out in the Education Act 1996, for all maintained schools to provide a daily act of collective worship for registered pupils. This provision should be "wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character" unless a determination has been granted by SACRE to allow alternative arrangements. Schools have flexibility in how this requirement is met; collective worship may take place in a variety of formats, including class-based sessions, year-group gatherings, or whole-school assemblies, and may occur at any point during the school day.

SACRE remains committed to supporting schools in fulfilling this legal duty in a way that is inclusive and meaningful. To this end, SACRE actively assists schools in sourcing speakers and representatives from local faith and belief communities, ensuring that collective worship reflects both statutory guidance and the diverse character of the Stockton-on-Tees community.

No determinations or complaints have been received by SACRE during this year.

Management of SACRE and contribution to the Local Authority

The Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) operates in accordance with statutory requirements, ensuring effective governance and strategic oversight of RE across the authority. SACRE meetings are scheduled regularly, with clear agendas, accurate minutes, and timely dissemination of decisions to relevant stakeholders. Membership reflects a balanced representation of faith communities, teachers, and elected members, supporting informed discussion and collaborative decision-making.

SACRE contributes significantly to the local authority by advising on RE provision in maintained schools, monitoring compliance with the locally agreed syllabus, and promoting high standards of teaching and learning. It provides guidance on collective worship, supports schools in meeting statutory obligations, and responds to national developments in RE policy. SACRE also plays a key role in community cohesion by fostering dialogue between faith groups and educational settings, ensuring that RE provision reflects diversity and promotes mutual respect.

Through its annual report, SACRE offers transparency and accountability, highlighting strengths, identifying areas for development, and recommending actions to improve RE across the authority. This partnership ensures that the local authority meets its legal responsibilities while enhancing the quality and inclusivity of RE provision for all pupils.

Finance

The Local Authority has demonstrated a strong commitment to Religious Education by funding the implementation of the new locally agreed syllabus (2024) and providing NATRE membership for all primary schools, representing a total investment of £12,488.00. This funding also encompasses a three-year Continuing Professional Development (CPD) programme delivered by RE Today, ensuring sustained professional learning opportunities for teachers.

However, it is noted that for the academic year 2024–25, no dedicated or identifiable budget has been allocated specifically for SACRE. This issue has been highlighted as a priority within the current action plan. Clerking support continues to be provided by the Stockton School and Governor Support Service, ensuring effective governance and administration.

The Local Authority currently allocates officer time to SACRE and has indicated a willingness to extend this provision to include advisory work on Religious Education. In addition, the Local Authority provides venues for all SACRE meetings and has committed to hosting future RE network events centrally, enabling these sessions to be prioritised and accessible to all schools.

Appendix 1 - Membership

SACRE — Governing Body Membership and Vacancies

Governing Body	Type	Start Date	End Date
Mrs Helen Bennison	Church of England	23/10/2025	22/10/2029
Mrs Louise Proberts	Church of England	05/06/2018	
Miss Caroline Weir	Church of England	29/09/2023	28/09/2027
Mrs Kate Craven	Free Church	09/11/2012	
Mr Craig Marshall	Free Church	20/01/2022	
Mrs Emma Milburn	LA Officer	30/09/2025	29/09/2029
Cllr Clare Besford	LA Representative	24/07/2025	23/07/2029
Mrs Elsi Hampton	LA Representative	05/05/2023	04/05/2027
Cllr Barbara Inman	LA Representative	05/05/2023	04/05/2027
Cllr Sufi Mubeen	LA Representative	04/12/2023	03/12/2027
Mrs Sajeda Basharat	Muslim Representative	20/01/2022	19/01/2026
Mrs Nicola Docherty	Teacher's Association NASUWT	11/10/2023	10/10/2027
Mrs Laura Beth Hastings	Teacher's Association NEU	11/10/2023	10/10/2027
Mrs Kimberley Storey	Teacher's Association NEU	05/10/2023	04/10/2027

Position	Type
Mrs Kate Craven	Chair

Establishment	Term	Required	Governors	Vacancies
Church of England	4 Years	3	3	0
Evangelical Alliance	4 Years	1	0	1
Free Church	4 Years	3	2	1
Hindu	4 Years	1	0	1
Jewish	4 Years	1	0	1
LA Representative	4 Years	5	4	1
Muslim Representative	4 Years	1	1	0
Other World Views	4 Years	2	0	2
Roman Catholic	4 Years	1	0	1
Sikh Representative	4 Years	1	0	1
Teacher's Association	4 Years	3	0	3
Teacher's Association NASUWT	4 Years	1	1	0
Teacher's Association NEU	4 Years	2	2	0
TOTAL		25	13	12

Appendix 2 – Development planning

Objective 1: To increase member engagement				
Links to NASACRE Self-evaluation toolkit: Priority One To improve the management of SACRE and build the partnership between SACRE and other Key Stakeholders Priority Five Contributing to cohesion across the community and the promotion of social and racial harmony				
Ref	Action	Cost	Timescale	Progress
1.1	SACRE to enhance Faith Group representation by working with Faith Groups to enhance Group A Membership.		Ongoing	
1.2	SACRE to enhance Teacher Representation, ensuring a balance of primary and secondary backgrounds, headteachers and RE leads, maintained schools and academies.		Ongoing	
1.3	Implement a programme of Member presentations at each SACRE meeting, with a specific focus on a named SACRE aim.		Ongoing	
1.4	Implement a visits framework, allowing SACRE to combine a visit with holding one meeting per year in a school setting.	Visit cost	Ongoing	

Objective 2: To monitor the effective teaching of RE throughout the Local Authority and explore ways to model best practice in RE				
Links to NASACRE Self-evaluation toolkit: Priority Two Promoting improvement in the standards, quality of teaching and provision in RE				
Ref	Action	Cost	Timescale	Progress
2.1	Arrange one meeting a year to take place in school so RE practice and ethos can be shared.			
2.2	Arrange a programme of visits to a range of primary and secondary schools to see RE in action, and develop a SACRE Visits Policy and Visits Form.	Travel expenses, school time		
2.3	Implement a system for receiving pupil feedback on RE that can be fed back to improve further actions.			
2.4	Pay into NASACRE membership to encourage further CPD of all members particularly LA officer and clerk	£50	Ongoing	

Objective 3: To monitor the uptake the locally Agreed Syllabus and increase participation in RE initiatives across the authority.				
Links to NASACRE Self-evaluation toolkit: Priority Three To evaluate the effectiveness of the Locally Agreed Syllabus				
Ref	Action	Cost	Timescale	Progress
3.1	SACRE to consult with the Local Authority, SACRE Members, and Schools on the effectiveness of the current Agreed Syllabus.		Questionnaire to go out January 2026	
3.2	SACRE to work in partnership with the Local Authority to put in place ongoing training and support to ensure full implementation of the Agreed Syllabus across all schools.	Costs to be discussed for each session	Training to be organised for summer term 2026	
3.3	To understand and work alongside schools to increase the uptake of Religious Studies GCSE		Ongoing	
3.4	To improve communication with academies to understand their vision and priorities		Work to start following questionnaire – February 2026	
3.5	Improve communication across all schools to raise the profile of RE		Ongoing	

Objective 4: Understand local policies and procedures regarding collective worship				
Links to NASACRE Self-evaluation toolkit:				
4. Promoting improvement in the provision and quality of collective worship				
Ref	Action	Cost	Timescale	Progress
4.1	Liaise with schools to gather information across the sector of collective worship and feed back to Committee.		Ongoing	
4.2	Promote in-service support for teachers with responsibility for collective worship.			