



Swindon SACRE Annual Report
2024-2025



Swindon SACRE Annual Report 2024-25

Table of Contents

1	Introduction	Words from the Chair Overview – SACRE Overview – Agreed Syllabus Conference
2	Religious Education	Locally Agreed Syllabus/RE provision Monitoring KS4 exam outcomes 2024 WIRE award Learn Teach Lead RE (LTLRE) Hub Annual Conference
3	Collective Worship	Policy, guidance & support Determinations
4	Links with other organisations	NASACRE LTLRE Church of England Diocese of Bristol Other local involvement
5	SACRE arrangements	Organisation Membership

1. Introduction

Words from the Chair

Welcome to the 2024 - 2025 annual report of the Swindon Sacre. We are a multicultural, diverse and committed group of representatives from a broad range of faith and worldview communities who meet with the shared aim of enhancing the work and scope of Religious Education teaching in Swindon schools. We aim to support schools by fulfilling the role of critical friend in evaluating and monitoring RE provision and outcomes in Swindon. We regularly receive reports from those working in the field of RE in Swindon schools and colleges and offer support, advice, training information and resources to support the provision and development of RE locally. This year we have been pleased to welcome a few new members to our committee who have helped to broaden further the range of faith traditions and beliefs represented in our meetings.

We encourage all members to attend local RE training and conferencing opportunities and report back on these to our wider body. We also regularly invite local teachers to report to us about the development of RE in their context. It has been our privilege as a SACRE to celebrate the excellent RE being taught in Swindon Schools and to present several local schools with the WIRE and Gold WIRE award for diversity and inclusion in RE.

We are well represented by members of the local council, in addition to teachers from a variety of schools, representatives from a range of major world faiths and by members of the Swindon Interfaith and Humanist groups. We actively seek to recruit new representatives as vacancies arise and this year have been pleased to welcome four new members to our committee. We were very pleased to see local councillor, Faye Howard, become our Swindon Mayor and as such vacating the Swindon SACRE this year to focus on such a monumental role in our town. Faye served our committee as chair so effectively in the past and was voted as our chair for the 24-25 academic year, due to the current chair's relocation to Wales. We wish her all the best.

We meet in person as a committee three times each academic year. This is either in the council offices, local schools or by invitation to the premises of local faith groups. This often affords us the opportunity to learn about the work of different groups in the community and to experience their kind hospitality first hand.

We continue to encourage schools to establish visits to local places of worship. This has been an excellent provision in the past, and we are seeking to re-establish links and contacts to support schools in providing these first-hand opportunities to visit faith communities and learn from their lived experiences of faith. Sadly, budget constraints have limited some schools in arranging these educational visits. We encourage sponsorship of visits to enable these vital experiences for children. Virtual visits and guest visitors to RE lessons have also enhanced provision in RE.

We are pleased to be able to serve on the Swindon SACRE and to celebrate the many good things that are happening locally in the RE world. It is our hope going forward that we will continue to provide a vital role and to further raise the profile of RE locally, as we maintain and develop a vibrant partnership with Swindon schools, sixth forms and colleges.

Rahima Khatun-Malik

Chair of Swindon SACRE

Overview - SACRE

SACRE met three times in the academic year 2024-25. In November, SACRE met at Milbrook Primary School, Swindon and in March at the Civic Offices, Swindon and a final meeting in June also at the Nova Hreod Academy. Eighteen members were present in November, nine in March and seventeen in June. All of the three meetings were quorate.

In meetings these topics were discussed: Agreed Syllabus Conference, NASACRE training, Annual RE Conference, GCSE data, SACRE membership, working party for collective worship, SACRE website, LTLRE Hub meetings, WIRE award, support for individual schools and National Content Standard.

Swindon SACRE have a web page for their work and guidance:

<https://hubforeducation.swindon.gov.uk/Page/34073>

Overview – Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC)

In line with decisions made by the Agreed Syllabus working party, the revised RE Today Syllabus was launched for schools in September 2022.

The Agreed Syllabus Conference reconvened to consider the options for the next syllabus review which will be due in 2027. An Agreed Syllabus Conference was formed in this academic year (2024-25) and work began on reviewing and updating the Agreed Syllabus, ready for schools to use in September 2027. During this year, teacher and pupil surveys were carried out in order to gain an understanding of how the current agreed syllabus is working in schools and to gather opinions about what teachers and pupils would like from a future Agreed Syllabus. Three meetings were also held regionally with other local SACREs to begin looking at options that could be used moving forwards. This decision making process will now continue into the academic year 2025-26.

2. Religious Education

Locally Agreed Syllabus and RE provision – it continues to be the case that the majority of schools, including academies and Church of England schools, are using the Locally Agreed Syllabus for all or part of their RE curriculum. Many schools also use the resource Understanding Christianity to supplement teaching about Christianity.

National Updates - SACRE considered the Curriculum and Assessment review 's call for evidence and the SACRE Adviser, Rebekah Guy, submitted opinions on SACRE's behalf.

Monitoring – SACRE has continued to monitor Ofsted reports as they are published. SACRE have observed a growing trend of Ofsted looking at British Values as well as curriculum and assessment in foundation subjects.

Exam outcomes KS4 Summer 2025

School name	KS4FCent riesPerc	KS4SCEntries	Percentage9-4FC	Percentage9-4SC
Greendown Community School	7.8	0	75	
St Joseph's Catholic College	98.2	0	74.4	
Swindon Academy	0	0		
Lydiard Park Academy	7.8	0	75	
The Dorcan Academy	0	91.6		36.6
Nova Hreod Academy	0	0		
Lawn Manor Academy	23.2	0	71.8	
Kingsdown School	14.5	0	60	
UTC Swindon	0	0		
Abbey Park School	9.7	0	73.9	
Great Western Academy	13.9	0	95.2	
The Deanery CE Academy	72.3	11.5	58.5	6.7
Highworth Warneford School	12.3	0	100	

Observations

- No schools are following the locally agreed syllabus recommendation of all students taking an accredited course in RS at KS4
- Most students are entered at The Dorcan Academy (short course), St Joseph's Catholic College (full course) and The Dorcan Academy (full course)
- Five schools have approximately 10% or less population taking GCSE RS
- Six schools have over 70% 9 - 4 but only low percentages of pupils entered.

Our thanks to NATRE for providing the information above.

The Wire Award - the Widening Diversity in Religious Education (WIRE) award is an opportunity available to all schools in the Swindon SACRE area. To achieve the Wire award a school must:

- Send a teacher to at least one continuing professional development (CPD) opportunity for RE. This could be the conference, or a local RE hub.

- Put on a 'faith day' or a celebration of RE to which a local SACRE member can be invited. Or a school might enter a national RE competition.
- Take pupils on a visit to a place of worship that is not the majority religion of their school. For most schools in Swindon, this will be from a faith other than Christianity.

The Award has been created to further SACRE's priority to encourage mutual understanding of different faiths, and to break down stereotypes and barriers. In the year 24-25, one school met the criteria for the award.

For those schools having already received the WIRE award, the WIRE award 'Gold' has now been created. To achieve the gold award schools will extend their already good practice in RE to complete tasks to do with extending their impact, working with parents, communities and other schools and teachers.

Swindon Learn, Teach, Lead RE Hub (LTLRE) - This project has been running for many years now and aims to develop leaders of RE in both primary and secondary schools, as well as providing networking and CPD for all local teachers of RE. Hub leaders get access to high quality training and facilitate three hubs per year aimed at both primary and secondary teachers, and teaching assistants.

Swindon SACRE as uses some of its budget through the Adviser to support the development of the hubs. Emma Ainslie-King, RE teacher at Commonweal School, is the Secondary Hub leader and Emma Batcup, RE Lead at Brookfield Primary School is the Primary Hub leader. Three meetings took place this year. The group explored practical ideas to explore diversity in Islam, visited the Hindu Centre in Swindon and shared good practice for raising the profile of RE. All of the meetings were well attended and feedback from teachers was positive.

Annual conference – the annual RE conference, titled 'Inspiring Curiosity' was held at Engineers' House in January 2025. Delegates from Swindon attended alongside colleagues from surrounding regional areas, which is a positive number and reflects the value of this event. The keynote speaker was Gillian Georgiou. Teachers attended workshops on subjects including Oak National Academy, Assessment, Supporting primary ITT colleagues and practical ideas for the classroom. Feedback from the day was extremely positive with teachers feeling inspired to implement ideas in their settings.

LTLRE conference – This year's regional 'Area 2' conference for LTLRE was titled 'More than just retrieval? Developing deeper knowledge and engagement in Religion and Worldviews' and was held in June 2025. Keynote speakers were Trevor Cooling and Revd Anjali Kanagaratnam. Workshops included: ways of knowing in RE - using disciplinary characters, assessment in RE - a practical guide and Religion and Worldviews - engaging with diversity. Although a couple of teachers from Swindon were present, the event in general was not well attended. As a result, this conference will be combined with the annual RE conference in February 2026.

Communication - termly newsletters have continued, with all schools receiving a SACRE newsletter three times per year. The newsletter contains contact details for various communities and resources, as well as ideas for the classroom and information on upcoming events and CPD.

3. Collective worship

Policies, guidance and support - SACRE reviewed their guidance on Collective Worship during this academic year. In particular, useful resources and links for schools to use were updated. This was then shared with schools.

Determinations - During this reporting period there were no determinations applied for.

4. Links with other organisations

NASACRE – Swindon SACRE continues to maintain its membership to the National Association of SACREs. This provides access to important updates on national issues and the use of recommended templates for policies and guidance documents.

In this period, SACRE members attended training on:

SW SACRE Annual Conference

NASACRE Annual Conference

Working on an Agreed Syllabus Conference

LTLRE – as outlined above, Swindon SACRE continues to have significant commitment and practical involvement with the Learn, Teach, Lead RE programme. The adviser to SACRE assists in the planning and running of meetings, and communicates with hub members regularly with RE updates and information via email. She is also on the steering committee for the project across the wider region.

Diocese – SACRE maintains strong working relationships with the Church of England Bristol Diocese. One of the schools' advisers is also an active member of SACRE.

Other local involvement

SWARE (South West Advisers of RE) – the Adviser continues to be an active member of this cross-authority group. Meeting three times a year, advisers across the South West are able to share resources, policies and processes for effective and impactful advisory work.

5. SACRE arrangements

Organisation -

Chair – from September 2023 – Fay Howard

Clerk – from April 2024 until April 2025 – Annie Vickers

Local Authority link officer - from March 2025 - James Stuart

Adviser – from October 2024 - Rebekah Guy

- The revision of the SACRE constitution was finalised in July 2024.
- Useful information such as the constitution, handbook and the agreed syllabus can be found on the SACRE website. [SACRE \(External\) | Swindon Hub for Education](#)

Membership – as reported in the introduction, all meetings were quorate.

Members of SACRE 2024 - 2025:

<p>Group A: Christian Denominations and Other Religions or Religious Denominations (12)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Malkit Babbra, Sikh Community 2. Jo Backus, Buddhist Community 3. Saira Banu, Muslim Community 4. David Burbidge, Baptist Church 5. Rahima Malik, Muslim Community 6. Dinesh Patel, Hindu Community 7. Pradeep Bhardwaj, Hindu Community 8. Gemma Parkinson, Swindon Humanists 9. Brian Whitaker, Swindon Evangelical Alliance 10. 11. 12. <p>3x vacancies</p>	<p>Group C: Teacher Associations (8)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Helen Redhead, Primary 2. Alana Walch, Primary 3. Ray Williams, Primary 4. Lottie O'Brien, Secondary 5. 6. 7. 8. <p>4x vacancies</p>
<p>Group B: The Church of England (3)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Julia Watts 2. Tracy Mason 3. 	<p>Group D: The Local Authority (5)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Councillor Repi Begum 2. Councillor Leon Grother 3. Councillor Fay Howard

<p>1x vacancy</p>	<p>4. Councillor Anabelle Pegado</p> <p>5. Councillor Adam Poole</p>
<p>Co-Opted: Fidelma Meehan, Baha'i Community</p>	<p>Support Officers: Rebekah Guy (October 24 onwards), SACRE Advisor James Stuart (from March 2025), Commissioner for Education Annie Vickers (Until April 2025), Clerk</p>