



Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE)

Annual Report 2023-24

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Section One: Introduction and the Work of SACRE

Words from the Chair

I am pleased to introduce our Annual Report.

It has been a successful year as you will see from all the information in the report.

We have met in person and on-line.

I am fortunate to have the support of a number of people and panel members who willing work on initiatives.

As we look forward to another year of work, I hope we can fill the vacancies on the panel.

Especially we need to elect a new Chair and hope we get some nominations

Susan Marsh, MBE

Chair of Thameside SACRE 2023 - 24

Overview

This annual report is prepared by Tameside SACRE. SACRE is required to advise the Local Authority on matters relating to Religious Education and Collective Worship. This report provides a picture of the support given for Religious Education and Collective Worship during 2023-24. It is a public document which is also sent to the National Association of SACREs (NASACRE) and the Department for Education.

For further information on the report or on RE and Collective Worship within Tameside contact Liam Spencer at liam@penninelearning.com For information on SACRE please contact the clerk, Kate Sanderson at kate.sanderson@tameside.gov.uk.

Dates and content of meetings

There were four meetings of Tameside SACRE during the year 2023-24. These meetings were held on 3rd October 2023 (AGM), 28th November 2023, 5th March 2024 and 13th June 2024. Meetings are open to the public and minutes are also available online.

Susan Marsh (Diocese of Manchester) was re-elected as chair. Michael Lowe (Jewish representative) continued as vice-chair. Susan declared her desire for this to be her last year as chair.

As well as considering the general position of RE and collective worship in the borough, SACRE discussed the following issues at its meetings during the year:

- The Local Agreed Syllabus – updates from schools following the implementation of the new syllabus
- Engagement with faith communities – Faiths United
- Pupil voice activities – how we can best hear the voices of young people at SACRE
- Local Ofsted reports and the key priorities for RE curriculum
- Feedback from Primary and Secondary networks
- Annual Report
- RE Provision at secondary schools and academies: responses to enquiry sent to secondary schools and research by members of SACRE into websites
- Our Self-evaluation and development plan
- News and background information from schools (teachers)
- News and information from National Association of SACREs (NASACRE)

- Guidance on sensitivity to faith in schools

SACRE Priorities for 2022-23

In the two-year development plan for 2022-24, the priorities for SACRE are outlined below:

1. Strengthen and equip SACRE to fulfil an effective role
 - Facilitate training for SACRE members including new chair
 - Fill gaps in membership and encourage reliable attendance particularly from the local authority
 - Produce statutory annual report
 - Join up SACREs work with Council's priorities and perspectives through LA representation at SACRE
2. Offer professional development for schools and teachers
 - Provide/advertise CPD for teachers and schools
 - Deliver a joint Tameside, Trafford, Stockport, Salford, Manchester SACRE day conference for teachers with support from Ofsted
 - Explore what other support and consultancy can be offered
 - Explore ways of sharing good practice across the borough
3. Support the implementation of the revised RE syllabus
 - Provide online training on subject knowledge
 - Support the Primary Network for teachers
 - Ensure resources supporting the syllabus is available to schools and online
4. Grow the 'Schools Welcome' project to enhance RE and tolerance
 - Additional training to be provided to deliverers
 - Link with the local RE Hub
 - Provide further Schools Welcome training and accreditation for places of worship
 - Publicise and share information with schools
5. Provide guidance and support for schools and the local authority
 - Offer advice/support on curriculum design
 - Produce half termly newsletter and update on RE resources and local enrichment opportunities

Self-evaluation

In 2022-23, SACRE completed a process of self-evaluation based on the NASACRE template. Arising from this the following areas future development were identified and were built into the development plan for the next two years.

1. SACRE

- Although the consultant meets regularly with a senior officer of the LA, wider communication between SACRE and the LA could be developed further, for example by reports being considered by a scrutiny panel
- It is important for all local authority places on SACRE to be taken up and attendance by elected representatives improved
- There is not sufficient 'joining up' of SACRE and wider LA objectives. Further developing ongoing communication between SACRE and the LA would enable priorities to be more 'joined up'
- The LA should facilitate regular SACRE access to school leader networks. This will enable SACRE to highlight priorities and opportunities to school leaders directly
- Arrangements should continue for GCSE and other data to be shared with SACRE for advice and planning
- Membership should be widened, in particular to include attendance from more representatives from more faith communities. Attendance and participation should be improved and care taken to include more interesting items
- Although NASACRE courses are available to all members, a more organised induction and welcome process could be developed to enable new members to integrate into SACRE
- An annual questionnaire should also be sent to all schools to elicit relevant information and to enquire about what support might be needed
- More opportunities should be found to hear from pupils and teachers. This should mean expanding the representation on SACRE. Contacts with partners, such as HE providers, should be developed
- It is worth exploring whether a more structured link with MATs is feasible and beneficial

2. RE

- The annual questionnaire should continue and members undertook a primary website trawl following the secondary trawl completed
 - Arrangements should be made to receive GCSE and other data and to use this for advice and planning.
 - SACRE would benefit from more active teacher members as a high priority
3. Collective worship
- SACRE needs to develop its offer to schools around CW, perhaps first using an annual questionnaire to gauge the situation and needs
 - Consideration should be given to offering training and support through a course or networks
4. Syllabus
- To maintain the quality of the syllabus review process, these standards must be built into the next review for the revised syllabus due in 2027
5. Community cohesion
- Membership, diversity and active attendance need to be widened
 - SACRE will be interested to see 2021 census data and to use this strategically
 - Relationships with Faiths United and other partners should continue to develop as a strong partnership but we should consider how to integrate this into an upcoming meeting
 - Producing advice should be explored to support schools in dealing with sensitive issues connected to faith and beliefs
 - SACRE is aware of some issues and initiatives around community cohesion but better communication between the LA and SACRE would enable this to develop more coherently

Further details of the self-evaluation or the development plan can be obtained via the clerk to SACRE.

Meetings for 2024-25

SACRE members agreed to reduce the number of annual meetings from 4 to 3 for 2024-2025. These provisional dates have been agreed:

10th October 2024 (AGM in person), 27th February 2025 (in person), 10th June 2025 (virtual). For more information contact the clerk, Kate Sanderson at

Kate.sanderson@tameside.gov.uk.

Section Two: Statutory Responsibilities: Religious Education

The Local Agreed Syllabus

The Locally Agreed syllabus is now fully operational and is being implemented across the borough. The curriculum is based on the previous syllabus but has been enhanced with revised and updated sections, including on EYFS, SEND, cultural capital, sequencing and progression. The medium-term planning has been aligned to intent, implementation and impact and there are some new and revised units of work. The syllabus was written by RE Today Services and is shared with four other SACREs in Greater Manchester: Manchester, Salford, Stockport and Trafford. The local authority has funded the syllabus so it is available free of charge to all schools and academies in Tameside. Schools have been provided the opportunity to purchase fully resourced schemes of work that include lessons plans, slides and electronic worksheets.

The SACRE for the five boroughs of Greater Manchester which share the syllabus are working together to consider how to support schools in the implementation of the syllabus and support leaders with their knowledge and CPD surrounding curriculum design. A training session, led by RE Today will utilise the leftover funding from the syllabus launch. The Tameside primary school network (which is facilitated by Pennine Learning) provides CPD opportunities for primary teachers and shares best practice around the use of the syllabus.

In November 23 SACRE undertook a website review of primary schools. Of the 27 schools surveyed 88% of schools had a clear curriculum review available for RE and 78% provide a clear breakdown of the curriculum offer. This demonstrates high levels of engagement with RE consistent with the findings last year that 71% of survey respondents provide at least 1 hour of RE provision per week. Schools also have access to free materials online through the Tameside school portal and, as discussed previously, can subscribe to more detailed planning from RE Today.

The syllabus is the statutory curriculum for all maintained schools in Tameside. Academies and free schools must teach RE according to the requirements of their trust deed or funding agreement. Although SACREs and local authorities do not have any responsibility or authority for their curriculum, it encourages the use of these resources by all local schools and believes the local authority should emphasise this.



Standards and Monitoring

SACRE enquiry

In November 2023, Tameside SACRE asked all schools to complete a brief survey about the provision of RE within Tameside. Most schools replied (35/111). This was focused on supporting curriculum delivery.

53% of school respondents have good attendance at subject networks provided by Tameside and appreciate the support available. 60% access resources available through the Tameside website for schools and 60% offer at least one extracurricular visit with a religious focus.

Continued support is requested for curriculum planning, knowledge organisers, online stories and resources, subject knowledge on discrete or nuanced aspects of the curriculum, and assessment. This will remain the focus of the network meetings over the next academic year.

We found last year that in less than 50% of primary schools, RE is delivered by a classroom teacher and in the majority of cases, it is a mix of teacher/HLTA or solely delivered by HLTAs. A focus on subject knowledge support was offered through the online subject knowledge boosters provided by the council through Pennine Learning to Tameside Schools.

It is clear the numbers for GCSE entry of Religious Studies are following the national picture of decline. Only 1/7 schools provide full cohort entry of 200+ pupils, whilst 5/7 provide option groups of approximately 20-55 pupils. By linking local schools together and helping them share resources SACRE could build additional capacity through a network of peer support.

Following the survey, a letter was written to schools, providing a summary of the feedback that we received and outlining the available support for schools in their key areas.

Examination results

The table below outlines the trend for GCSE results across Tameside and a comparison with the national results for Religious Education. Results from 2020 and 2021 are omitted as during the pandemic grades were assigned on the basis of teacher assessment. Comparisons with 2022 should be made hesitantly as grade boundaries were higher due to the impact of the pandemic. 2019 provides the most appropriate comparison as the government set grade boundaries for 2023 to bring results in line with 2023. 2024 results are thought to be back to pre-pandemic levels.

In 2022 the impact of the pandemic was clear. There was a noticeable difference on the regional results of Religious Studies with students performing significantly below their national counterparts. However, the gap between Tameside pupils and the national results is reducing.

It is disappointing to see the number of pupils entered for GCSE Religious Studies continues to decline.

Year	Entries	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	U
2019	38.3%	49	91	143	129	142	146	117	82	39	15
2022	39.5%	46	112	138	134	162	207	132	83	50	22
2023	35.5%	72	121	136	126	157	138	105	91	56	15
2024	33.3%	56	102	123	115	144	154	113	93	44	23

Year	Entries	Tameside						National		
		%4+	diff	%5+	diff	%7+	diff	%4+	%5+	%7+
2019	38.3	68.7	-3.9	55.2	-5.9	25.0	-5.5	72.6	61.1	30.5
2022	39.5	70.7	-9.8	58.4	-8.2	24.4	-10.9	80.5	66.6	35.0
2023	35.5	66.1	-6.7	53.7	-8.5	24.7	-6.9	72.8	62.2	31.6
2024	33.3	68.6	-3.1	56.7	-4.5	25.8	-4.5	71.7	61.2	30.3

A levels

Year	Entries	A*	A	B	C	D	E	A*-A	A*-B	A*-E
2024	70	0.0%	15.7%	38.8%	24.3%	17.1%	1.43%	15.7%	54.3%	97.1

RE Quality Mark

Tameside schools are offered the opportunity for a review of their religious education with criteria based on the bronze REQM. It is hoped this can be a gateway to entry to the national quality mark.

Professional development and support for schools

General support

During the year this professional support continued through the RE consultant, Liam Spencer, who is contracted through Pennine Learning, a small regional company specialising in RE and community cohesion. The team also includes four other experienced consultants in primary and secondary RE. This support is utilised to support the provision across the borough. Tameside Council contracted twenty days during the year. This time is arranged as flexibly as possible to facilitate effective working with schools and others. Pennine Learning also supports SACREs and RE in neighbouring Oldham, Calderdale and Kirklees, enabling appropriate collaboration and partnership.

Support is available to schools in a number of ways, including:

- Advice on the local agreed syllabus;
- Consultancy over specific or general RE issues, including advice about withdrawal from RE;
- Support for schools wishing to develop and improve RE following Ofsted inspections;
- Reviews of RE through half day visits, conversations or email and phone contact.

Training

A primary network has been provided each term, free of charge to Tameside schools.

A secondary network has been established for Oldham and Tameside and is run by the Cranmer Education Trust based at The Blue Coat School and led by Shabnam Khaliq.

An online primary RE coordinators in Tameside was held during the winter.

A successful series of twilight webinars on subject knowledge of world faiths are place throughout the academic year and included guests from faith communities. These were held in cooperation with partner local authorities.

A half termly newsletter and CPD digest is sent to all schools and this includes information about professional development opportunities in RE regionally and nationally.

A 'Deep Dive' in Religious Education is also offered to schools. These half-day sessions focuses on a review of curriculum provision, looking at its scope, rigour and sequencing.

During the year Tameside SACRE has worked with partners in Calderdale, Kirklees, Leeds and Oldham to produce advice on sensitivity to issues relating to faith in schools. This was signed off and reshared with schools in Autumn 2023. It is available to schools as practical information and support to school leaders and will be shared yearly.

Other information

A range of guidance continues to be available to Tameside schools on a wide range of related areas, including:

- RE Policy
- Withdrawal from RE
- Collective Worship
- Celebrating Diversity
- Engaging with faith communities

Section Three: Statutory Responsibilities: Collective Worship

Standards and Monitoring of Collective Worship

Guidance is offered to schools and Ofsted reports are scrutinised in order to keep up to date with current issues and concerns. It has been difficult for schools to maintain an effective programme of collective worship during the pandemic and one of SACRE's key priorities in the coming year will be to remind, facilitate and support schools in the reestablishment of their collective worship provision. This will include offering light-touch review conversations with practical suggestions.

Complaints and determinations

There were no complaints made during the year to SACRE about Collective Worship. There are no determinations to vary statutory requirements in any maintained school in Tameside. Responsibility for determinations in English academies and free schools rest with the Schools Funding Agency. The Determination Process is to be reviewed by SACRE in the coming year.

Standards and Monitoring of Collective Worship

Guidance is offered to schools and Ofsted reports are scrutinised in order to keep up to date with current issues and concerns. Compliant collective worship in schools continues to decline and discussions have been held at SACRE about the effectiveness of this government policy and whether the current model is suitable for the diversity of modern British society. SACRE has offered support for schools in this area and schools requested through the annual questionnaire support on; resources, examples of collective worship in secular schools, links to world faiths and ways to pursue collective worship without daily assemblies. Light touch conversations are available for schools to provide practical suggestions.

Complaints and determinations

There were no complaints made during the year to SACRE about Collective Worship. There were no new or reviewed determinations to vary statutory requirements in any maintained school in Tameside. Responsibility for determinations in English academies and free schools rest with the Schools Funding Agency.

Professional development and support for schools

SACRE is always ready to advise or support schools on request. Online subject knowledge boosters were available to Tameside schools throughout the academic year focusing on all major world faiths and humanism. This has integrated current best practice on a worldviews approach to religion and faith.

These questions may be helpful in reflecting on the value and effectiveness of collective worship in school:

1. Collective: How does the assembly celebrate and promote a sense of community within the whole school (or group)?
2. Educational: Is there a clear aim and focus, with appropriate learning? Does it engage and interest pupils and staff?
3. Spiritual: How does the assembly nurture pupils' awareness of their beliefs and values - and those of others (including non-religious beliefs)? How does it develop a sense of the meaning, purpose and value in their lives?
4. Reflective: Is there space and opportunity for thoughtful reflection, in the assembly or as a follow up? If prayers are used do these allow for different approaches and responses?
5. Inclusive: How does the assembly programme develop understanding of different perspectives and cultures? How does it promote values of tolerance, diversity and equality?
6. Responsive: How did pupils respond and participate?

Other information

Parents have a statutory right to withdraw their children from collective worship. Guidance on good practice and protocols for withdrawal is available to schools; consultants are available if further support is needed. SACRE recognises parents' legal rights but hopes all children will be enabled to receive stimulating and balanced RE as part of their entitlement to a broad curriculum.

Section Four: Links with other organisations

SACRE has active links with the following organisations:

- National Association of SACREs (NASACRE)
- The North-north-west SACRE Hub
- RE Today
- The Association of RE Inspectors, Advisers and Consultants (AREIAC)
- Faith communities and organisations
- Tameside School Improvement Team
- Faiths United Tameside
- Greater Manchester Faith Network

Section Five: Other areas of involvement

Welcoming Schools

Engagement with people of different faiths is a critical element of diversity and community cohesion. This can take the form of a visit to a faith community or receiving a visitor in an assembly, class or special event.

The *Schools Welcome* project aims to support and facilitate this engagement through:

- encouraging and supporting **educational visits** to and from faith communities as part of religious education and SMSC development;
- producing a **directory of contacts** in Tameside and beyond;
- providing **training and support** for faith communities which offer this service.

Although the project supports visits, individual arrangements must be made directly between a school and a faith community or organisation.



Faith Communities which have participated in training and which meet other basic criteria can display the *Schools Welcome* badge to indicate that visits support delivery of the local RE syllabus. Further details are outlined below.

The Schools Welcome project has been developed with financial help from the Westhill Trust and support from Pennine Learning Associates and Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council.

Volunteers at places of worship have been offered training and ongoing CPD to ensure visits are relevant and engaging. The Faith Visits Directory (Tameside) and student resources for selected places of worship is available to schools and can be [downloaded here](#). There is also a [short film](#) introducing the project and highlighting the opportunities it offers to schools.

The six partner places of worship are:

Buddhist	Manchester Buddhist Centre
Christian	St Michael and all Angels Church, Ashton
Hindu	Ambaji Hindu Mandir (Temple), Ashton

Jewish	Whitefield Hebrew Congregation (Orthodox)
Muslim	Ashton Central Mosque
Sikh	Guru Gobind Singh Ji Gurdwara and Educational Centre, Chorlton

Faith sensitivities

During the year Tameside SACRE has worked with partners in Calderdale, Kirklees, Leeds and Oldham to produce advice on sensitivity to issues relating to faith in schools. This was signed off in Autumn 2022 and is reshared with schools and leaders yearly.

Section Six: Tameside SACRE arrangements

Tameside Council funds the operation of SACRE by contracting its consultant, providing a clerk and supporting its work through links with senior education officers.

SACRE membership includes representatives from all four constituent committees.

Committee A	Faith communities except for the Church of England
Committee B	Anglican representatives from the dioceses of Manchester & Chester
Committee C	Teachers and schools
Committee D	Tameside Council

Membership for 2023-24 was as follows:

TAMESIDE SACRE 2023	Cttee**	
Vacancy	A	Hinduism
Nabeela Akram (alt to Imam Ghulam)	A	Islam; Ashton Central Mosque
Prof Kevin Malone	A	Humanist
Michael Lowe (V Chair)	A	Judaism
Dinesh Chauhan (now resigned)	A	Hinduism
Patricia (Cia) Vinten	A	Buddhism
Bhagwant Singh	A	Sikhism
Vacancy	A	Free Church/URC
The Rev Robert Balfour	A	Methodist Church
Vacancy	A	Baptist Church
Vacancy	A	Quakers
Vacancy	A	Roman Catholic
The Rev Jean Hurlston	B	CE Dio Manchester
Vacancy	B	CE Dio Manchester
Beth Lindemann (now resigned)	B	CE Dio Chester
Susan Marsh (Chair)	B	CE Dio Manchester
Vacancy	B	CE Dio Chester
Kimberley Heavey	C	Teachers associations
Simon Linnegar	C	Teachers associations
Erin Lewis	C	Teachers associations
Celia Gibbs	C	Teachers associations
Jenny Tong	C	Teachers associations
Vacancy Elected member	D	Local authority
Vacancy Elected member	D	Local authority
Jo Pearson	D	Local authority
Available	Z	Co-opted

Section Seven: Advice to the Local authority

The following advice is given by SACRE to the local authority:

1. To appoint a chair who is able to drive the development of SACRE to its full potential.
2. To review the membership of SACRE to ensure it reflects the breadth and diversity of the city in terms of faiths and beliefs.
3. To ensure SACRE's annual report is considered carefully by the Scrutiny Panel of the Council and any of its content noted.
4. To improve attendance of local authority representatives and improve liaison and understanding of the Council's strategic objectives.
5. To continue to fund the primary teachers network and provide sufficient financial backing to SACRE so that targeted CPD support for schools is available.

No appendices are attached to this report; all the relevant information is contained within the main body. However, any further information can be requested via the clerk, Kate Sanderson at kate.sanderson@tameside.gov.uk.



This annual report is prepared by Tameside Standing Advisory Council on RE (SACRE) as part of its statutory responsibility. For further information on the report or on RE and Collective Worship, please contact Alastair Ross alastair@penninelearning.com or Liam Spencer liam@penninelearning.com.