

DRAFT SACRE ANNUAL REPORT for 2024

The role of SACRE is to provide advice and support, and to monitor the provision and quality of Religious Education and Collective Worship in schools in West Sussex.

Welcome to the Annual Report for West Sussex County Council SACRE, covering the year 2024. The report sets out the matters that have been covered by SACRE during the academic year plus the advice and support given to schools. It has been my privilege to continue serving as the Chairman during this time.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those involved in education across West Sussex, be they head-teachers, teachers, governors, administrators, classroom assistants or parents, for the dedication and determination they have shown to continue to provide an excellent educational experience for all our children and young people.

Thanks to the excellent administrative and technical support from West Sussex County Council's Democratic Services, SACRE was able to meet in hybrid form for each of the three agreed meetings throughout the year. Our attendance face to face has improved during the year and members are encouraged to attend meetings in person.

We have had a few changes of personnel in SACRE during the year. We would like to particularly thank Katherine Delamora (Senior Advisor) , Jack Bacon (Clerk) and Ann Little (Clerk) for their hard work and commitment to ensuring SACRE runs smoothly. I would like to express a huge thanks to Claire Hayes (LEA) for her interest and support. Claire Hayes was appointed Assistant Director of Education and Skills and attended her first meeting on 18 November 2024.

Karen Hammond continues as External Consultant for SACRE, and we are all very grateful for her continued support, knowledge, experience and guidance in all that we do.



Two working groups have been established - one to write the SACRE Development Plan and lead on actions from the SEF review and the other to take the lead on evaluating the current Agreed Syllabus. The next Agreed Syllabus needs to be launched in April 2026. During the year, several members have accessed the online training available through the National Association of SACREs (NASACRE). We have been working through our Development Plan and have been successful in the areas of creating active links between the Local Education Authority and SACRE and in beginning to increase member participation. However, we still have considerable work to do to operate effectively in our relationship with schools and in increasing and utilising our members' skills.

My sincere thanks go to all our members and officers for the work that has been accomplished during the year.

I commend this Annual Report to all its readers.

Richard Burrett

Chairman of West Sussex County Council SACRE

Introduction

SACRE Statutory Duties

The Education Reform Act 1988 required Local Education Authorities to convene a SACRE consisting of members appointed by the Authority to represent:

- **Group A:** Christian denominations and other religions and religious denomination
- **Group B:** The Church of England
- **Group C:** Teachers' Associations
- **Group D:** The Local Education Authority

The main functions of SACRE include

- addressing issues relating to RE and Collective Worship in local schools and other educational establishments
- developing ways of supporting schools with the delivery of the Local Agreed Syllabus and RE curriculum as well as monitoring this delivery
- developing and maintaining links with local and national faith communities
- considering applications for determinations from Head teachers. This is an application that the school be released from the requirements for Collective Worship to be of a mainly Christian character
- producing an annual report of its work

Purpose of the Report

The Education Act 1996, Section 391 (6) and (7) requires that each year the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) of each Local Education Authority will 'publish a report as to the exercise of its functions and any action taken by representative groups on the Council during the last preceding year'.

West Sussex County Council SACRE

SACRE met three times during 2024

The attendance by Committee, is set out below:

Committee	26 March 2024	10 June 2024	18 November 2024	Possible maximum attendances at each meeting
Committee A	6	7	7	13
Committee B	2	4	4	4
Committee C	3	3	3	3 (6 if all vacancies filled)
Committee D	2	5	5	7 (8 if no vacancy)
Co-optees	2	0	0	1 (1 vacancy)
Total Members	15	19	19	

External Consultant for SACRE	1	1	1	1
Local Authority Officers			1	

We have a broad membership that represents the religious diversity within the local community. This is regularly reviewed, and communities are contacted to increase their representation when necessary. SACRE members of faith communities visit schools and are involved in individual projects. It was agreed that all new members of SACRE should receive an induction outlining their roles and responsibilities. Current members of SACRE received training on the individual and collective responsibilities of SACRE.

Each meeting contains updates from the Local Authority Officers and the External Consultant for SACRE. Through the latter's reports the Council has been appraised of various national updates.

The Council has also reviewed or discussed:

1. The Development Plan (attached)
2. Local draft GCSE results
3. Support and training for schools
4. Updates on the Agreed Syllabus
5. Teachers interviewed face to face about what the next Agreed Syllabus should contain
6. Discussions with students in relation to content of the next Agreed Syllabus
7. WSCC website and text updated
8. The External Consultant attendance at the NASACRE Annual Conference and AGM on 20 May. Following feedback from the Conference it was agreed that SACRE need to be more pro-active in engagement with schools
9. The following documents have been shared and discussed
 - Deep and Meaningful? The religious education subject report
 - Delivering a Religion and Worldviews approach in Religious Education in England
 - National Content Standard for RE for England

This academic year a SACRE Agreed Syllabus Working Group was established which has met six times.

Meetings continue to be hybrid although members are encouraged to attend in person.

The number of schools within West Sussex are as follows

	Primary	Secondary	All Through Schools	Special	Alternative Provision College
Community	83	12		9	2
Foundation	1	1		1	0
Voluntary Aided (CofE)	21	2			
Voluntary Aided (RC)	9	2			
Voluntary Controlled (CofE)	45	1			0
Academy	68	19		2	0
Free Schools	1	1	2		0
Total	228	38	2	12	2

Total number of schools in West Sussex: 286

The Local Agreed Syllabus

The Local Agreed Syllabus was reviewed and updated in 2020 but publication was delayed until 22 April 2021 because of the COVID pandemic. The syllabus is available online for all schools in West Sussex.

Standards and monitoring of RE

West Sussex SACRE has continued to review the current Agreed Syllabus and gather information to assist in the writing of the next Agreed Syllabus, due to be published in April 2026. The Agreed Syllabus Working Group meets regularly. During the year, members of the group have held discussions with teachers and students to gather further information. A questionnaire was developed and sent to schools. It was hoped that the results would provide SACRE with a deeper understanding of the delivery of Religious Education and Collective Worship.

However, the returns were disappointing and in fact provided us with little information.

- Primary: 54 out of a possible 228
- Secondary: 12 out of a possible 38

SACRE also produced guidance to advise and support Governors about their role in relation to Religious Education and Collective Worship

West Sussex SACRE continues to try to support schools, especially where there are concerns about compliance, time allocation or low take up in Secondary schools of Religious Studies GCSE and A level.

SACRE has received no formal complaints regarding RE provision or quality this year.

Collective Worship

SACRE encourages all schools to comply with their legal duty to provide a daily act of collective worship for their pupils. This may take place at any time of day in class, year group, or whole school settings. West Sussex SACRE believes that acts of collective worship or spiritual reflection should be meaningful and relevant to all those present.

Schools may apply to SACRE for a determination to provide collective worship of a non-Christian or other form. No schools have done so during this academic year.

Links with other bodies

West Sussex SACRE is a member of the National Association of SACREs (NASACRE). Through the year SACRE members were informed of developments in RE from NASACRE, several members of SACRE have attended training sessions. Two members of SACRE attended the NASACRE conference and reported back to members.

West Sussex County Council arrangements for SACRE

During the academic year 2023-2024 the Local Education Authority has financially supported SACRE through the allocation of officers and other resources.

Staffing costs have been covered to provide officers from Democratic Services to fulfil the administrative preparation and clerking of SACRE meetings. Additional officer and technology resources have also been allocated to ensure that SACRE meetings could be held via video conference and live streamed.

The costs of the SACRE, External Consultant, are met through Local Authority funds.

An officer in the Local Education Authority's Democratic Services Section acts as Clerk to SACRE; advising on governance matters and acting as a link between the Local Education Authority and SACRE.

In addition, the Democratic Services Senior Advisor provides professional support and advice to SACRE, principally on matters of governance and matters relating to the work of the Council and its Committees.

Membership

Committee A

Vacancy- Baptist Union
Vacancy – Methodist
Vacant – United Reformed Church
Mrs Ghundale – Sikh
Ms Hock - Quaker
Mrs Jones – Baha’i
Rev Pitkeathly – Free Churches
Mr Soni - Hindu
Mr Syed - Muslim
Mr Ward – Roman Catholic
Major Warner – Salvation Army
Mr Wilsher – Humanists UK
Rabbi Zanardo – Jewish

Committee B

Mrs Black – Church of England
Father Scott – Church of England
Mr Simpson – Church of England
Mrs Smith (Vice-Chairman) – Church of England

Committee C

Ms Barker – Teacher Representative

Vacancy - Teacher Representative (Primary)
Vacancy – NASUWT, the Teacher’s Union
Ms Elphick – Teacher Representative (Special)
Rev Millwood – Teacher Representative (Secondary)

Committee D

Cllr Ali – Local Education Authority
Cllr Burgess – Local Education Authority
Cllr Burrett (Chairman) – Local Education Authority
Cllr Dabell – Local Education Authority
Cllr Jupp – Local Education Authority
Cllr Lord – Local Education Authority
Cllr Nagel – Local Education Authority
Vacancy – Local Education Authority

Co-optees

Ms Tulloch

SACRE support to schools

Members of SACRE hosted 2 special events for teachers, headteachers and governors. This year we decided to also invite students from primary and secondary schools

These were entitled "Religions and World faiths Roadshow". These were hosted by 2 local Secondary schools

- Tanbridge House High School, Horsham
- Bishop Luffa CofE School, Chichester

Representatives of World faith groups were present to share information and discuss resources available to schools. The faith groups prepared displays and literature. Attendees at the events found it extremely beneficial.

SACRE members found it particularly useful to meet in an informal environment and speak to other members, given SACRE only meets three times a year.

Further comments/observations

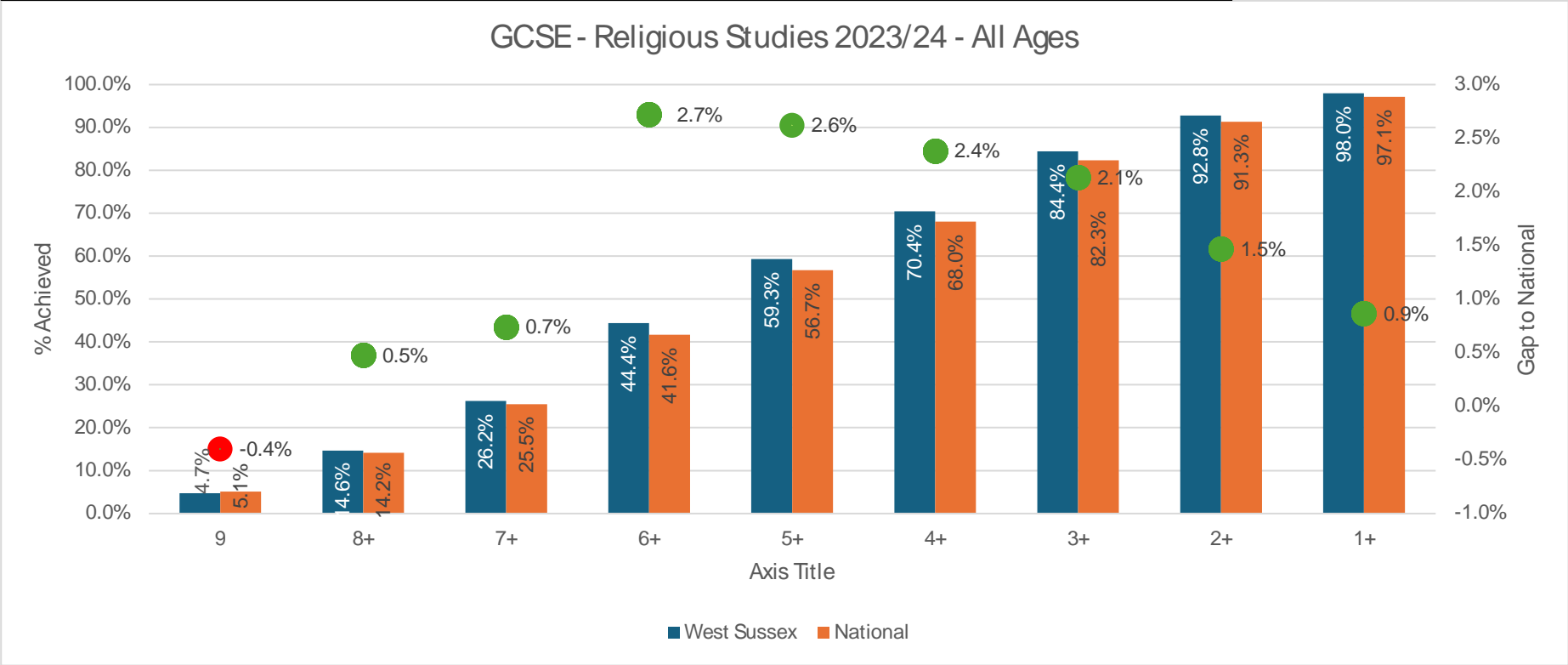
- Teachers demonstrated a clear hunger and desire for RE and gratefulness for the resources and wider support on offer.
- An infant school teacher highlighted the need for more age appropriate resources.
- Members were asked to consider what SACRE can provide in terms of RE learning, provision and support.
- Members were asked to support Collective Worship and give presentations.
- Teachers requested an annual event
- The stall layout was good as it allowed attendees to move around with ease as well as see every stall at a glance

Religious Studies 2023 Analysis

GCSE

The overall comparison by grade is shown in the table below:

GCSE - Religious Studies 2023/24 - All Ages									
Grade	9	8+	7+	6+	5+	4+	3+	2+	1+
West Sussex	4.7%	14.6%	26.2%	44.4%	59.3%	70.4%	84.4%	92.8%	98.0%
National	5.1%	14.2%	25.5%	41.6%	56.7%	68.0%	82.3%	91.3%	97.1%
Gap to National	-0.4%	0.5%	0.7%	2.7%	2.6%	2.4%	2.1%	1.5%	0.9%



Source: www.ncer.org

In West Sussex the achievement at a Grade 4 “standard” pass was 70.4%, 2.4% better than the national figure. Similarly, the result at Grade 5, a “strong” pass was 2.6% better, at 59.3%, than compared to nationally, 56.7%. However, the highest grade 9 saw that the national figure was higher than the West Sussex figure by 0.4%.

Below is GCSE grades by school from results day 2024:

Est. No.	Centre	NOR	NOE	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	U	X	9-5	9-4	9-1	Avg Pts
-	National (State Funded)	60570	15610	800	1410	1770	2520	2350	1770	2230	1400	910	340	120	8850	10620	15150	4.8
-	LA (State Funded incl. PRU)	8482	2180	103	216	253	395	326	242	306	181	114	32	12	1293	1535	2136	4.9
4604	BISHOP LUFFA SCHOOL CHICHESTER	246	229	6	17	22	52	40	21	30	21	13	7	-	137	158	222	4.7
4006	CHICHESTER FREE SCHOOL	106	21	-	2	3	3	2	1	8	1	1	-	-	10	11	21	4.6
4001	CHICHESTER HIGH SCHOOL	255	22	2	1	1	2	4	3	2	2	4	1	-	10	13	21	4.1
4502	DAVISON C.E. HIGH SCHOOL	262	171	11	22	21	34	16	23	22	9	10	2	1	104	127	168	5.2
4105	DOWNLANDS COMMUNITY SCHOOL	239	66	11	9	11	10	10	-	6	6	2	-	1	51	51	65	5.9
4059	FELPHAM COMMUNITY COLLEGE	275	19	2	3	1	3	3	2	2	1	1	1	-	12	14	18	5.2

4106	IMBERHORNE SCHOOL	267	43	-	4	9	7	7	2	8	4	2	-	-	27	29	43	5.0
6913	MIDHURST ROTHER COLLEGE	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	1.0
4010	MILLAIS SCHOOL	299	45	3	8	6	10	5	5	2	6	-	-	-	32	37	45	5.7
4102	OATHALL COMMUNITY COLLEGE	235	12	2	2	1	2	3	-	2	-	-	-	-	10	10	12	6.2
4007	ORMISTON SIX VILLAGES ACADEMY	133	19	-	1	1	6	4	2	2	1	2	-	-	12	14	19	4.7
4107	SACKVILLE SCHOOL	269	255	7	14	17	36	40	40	48	30	15	6	2	114	154	247	4.3
4601	ST ANDREWS C OF E HIGH SCHOOL	122	108	2	7	10	15	20	10	20	13	8	1	2	54	64	105	4.3
4603	ST OSCAR ROMERO CATHOLIC SCHOOL	185	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	2.0
4610	ST PAUL'S CATHOLIC COLLEGE	178	175	5	34	31	37	23	20	19	2	3	-	1	130	150	174	5.8
4800	ST.PHILIP HOWARD CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL	181	168	12	23	25	32	27	10	29	4	5	1	-	119	129	167	5.6
4501	STEYNING GRAMMAR SCHOOL	367	85	3	7	12	27	11	12	8	3	1	-	1	60	72	84	5.4
4002	TANBRIDGE HOUSE SCHOOL	299	25	6	3	7	3	5	-	1	-	-	-	-	24	24	25	6.9
4028	THE BOURNE COMMUNITY COLLEGE	135	10	-	-	1	3	-	4	2	-	-	-	-	4	8	10	4.7

6912	THE LITTLEHAMPTON ACADEMY	229	5	-	-	2	1	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	3	3	5	4.8
4005	THE REGIS SCHOOL	269	17	2	2	1	8	2	-	1	-	1	-	-	15	15	17	6.1
4025	THE WEALD SCHOOL	295	271	8	17	27	39	36	34	42	37	21	7	3	127	161	261	4.3
1110	WEST SUSSEX ALTERNATIVE PROVISION COLLEGE (WSAPC)	55	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	0.0
4110	WORTHING HIGH SCHOOL	214	41	1	8	2	8	9	8	3	2	-	-	-	28	36	41	5.5
4030	IFIELD COMMUNITY COLLEGE	202	29	1	1	3	6	8	2	5	3	-	-	-	19	21	29	4.9
4606	THE HOLY TRINITY CHURCH OF ENGLAND SECONDARY SCHOOL	211	194	14	17	23	27	31	22	23	18	15	3	1	112	134	190	4.9
4602	ST. WILFRID'S CATHOLIC SCHOOL	155	147	5	14	16	24	20	21	21	15	9	2	-	79	100	145	4.8

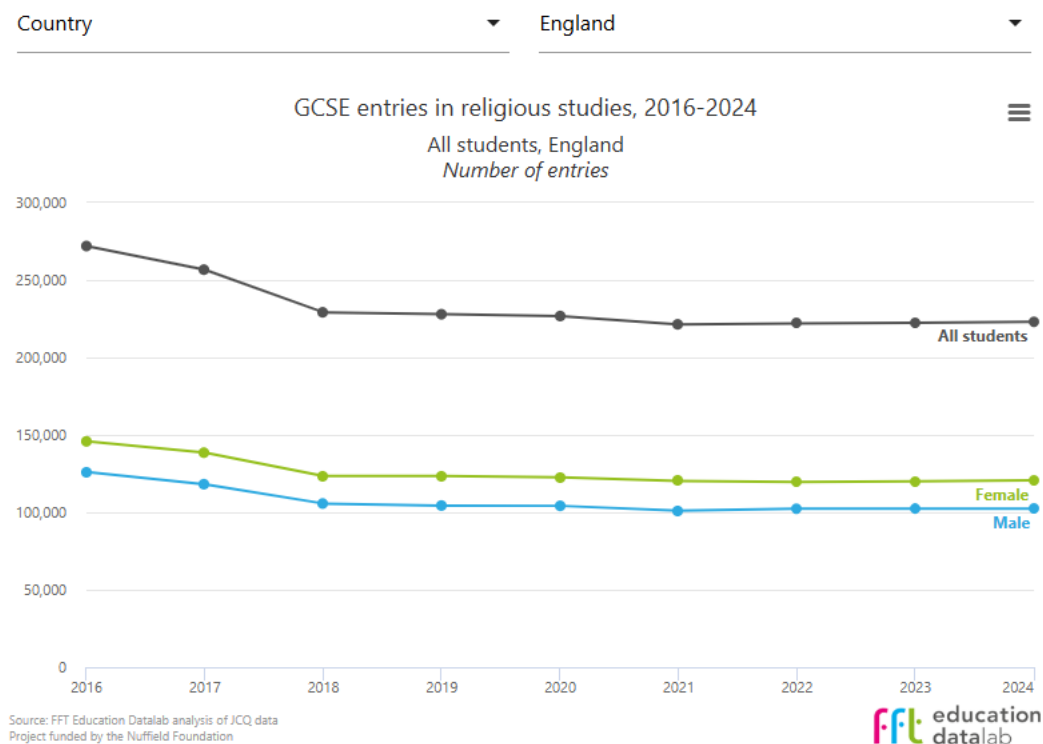
Religious Studies 2024 Analysis

GCSE

Grades were awarded following different processes in 2020 and 2021 after public exams were cancelled in all constituent countries of the UK. This led to a large increase in the share of top grades awarded.

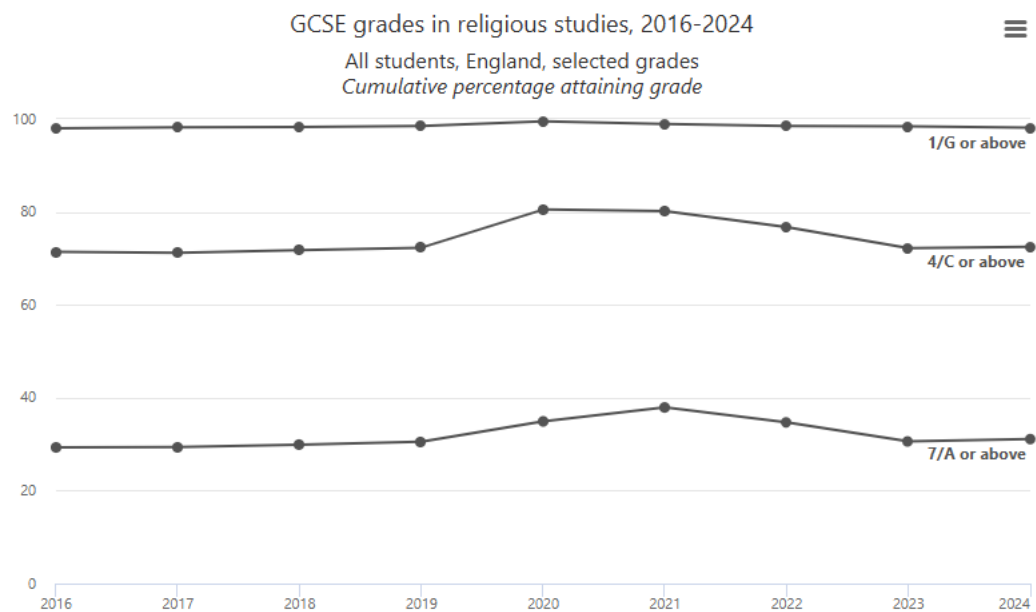
Source: [GCSE and A-Level results analysis - FFT Education Datalab](#)

Entries in religious studies have decreased a little across the UK over the last six years. The -1.6% change compared to a change of +11.5% in all GCSE entries over the last six years. Over the same period, the 16-year-old population has changed by approximately 12.9%. For West Sussex, compared to the national figures, there was an uptake of 22.1% compared to 25.7% nationally.



Across the UK, a greater proportion of students achieved good passes in religious studies in 2024 compared to all GCSE subjects. A total of 72.7% of pupils achieved grade 4/C or higher in religious studies compared to 67.6% for all subjects.

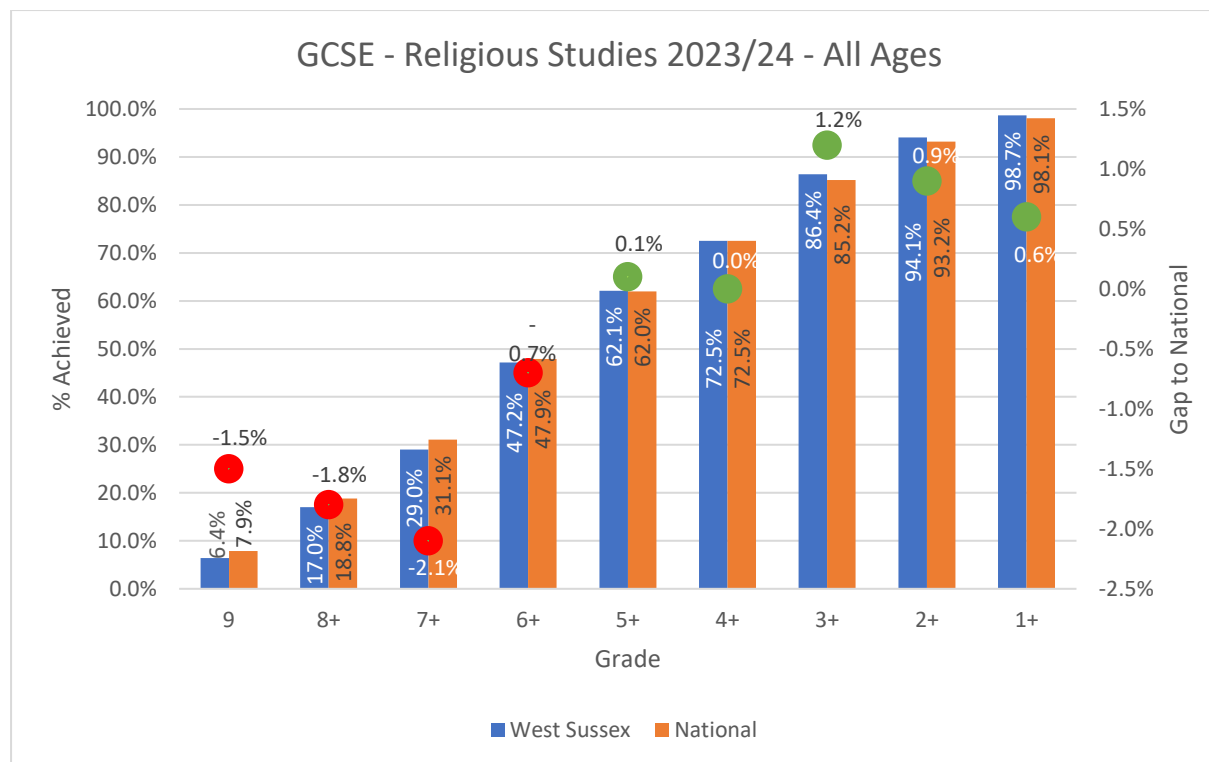
All students ▼



Source: FFT Education Datalab analysis of JCQ data
Project funded by the Nuffield Foundation

The overall comparison by grade is shown in the table below:

GCSE - Religious Studies 2023/24 - All Ages									
Grade	9	8+	7+	6+	5+	4+	3+	2+	1+
West Sussex	6.4%	17.0%	29.0%	47.2%	62.1%	72.5%	86.4%	94.1%	98.7%
National	7.9%	18.8%	31.1%	47.9%	62.0%	72.5%	85.2%	93.2%	98.1%
Gap to National	-1.5%	-1.8%	-2.1%	-0.7%	0.1%	0.0%	1.2%	0.9%	0.6%



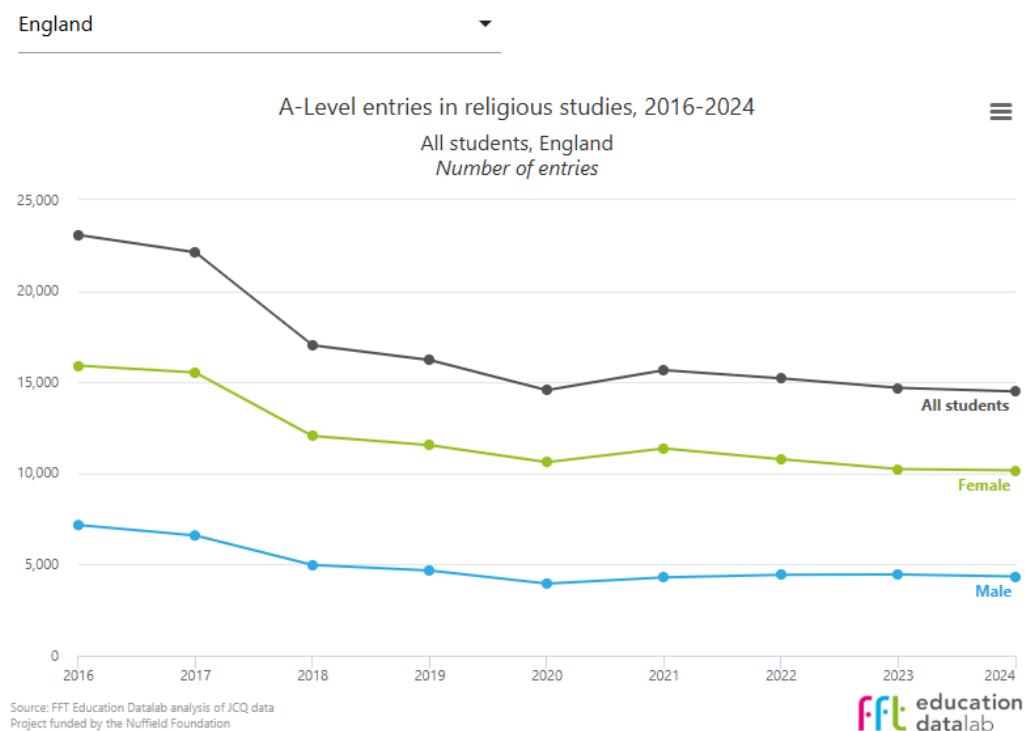
Source: [Map of GCSE \(9 to 1\) grade outcomes by county in England](#)

In West Sussex the achievement at a Grade 4 “standard” pass was 72.5%, the same as the national figure. The result at Grade 5, a “good” pass was 0.1% better, at 62.1%, than compared to nationally, 62.0%. However, the highest grades, at 7, 8 and 9 all saw that the national figure was higher than the West Sussex figure of between 1.5% and 2.1%.

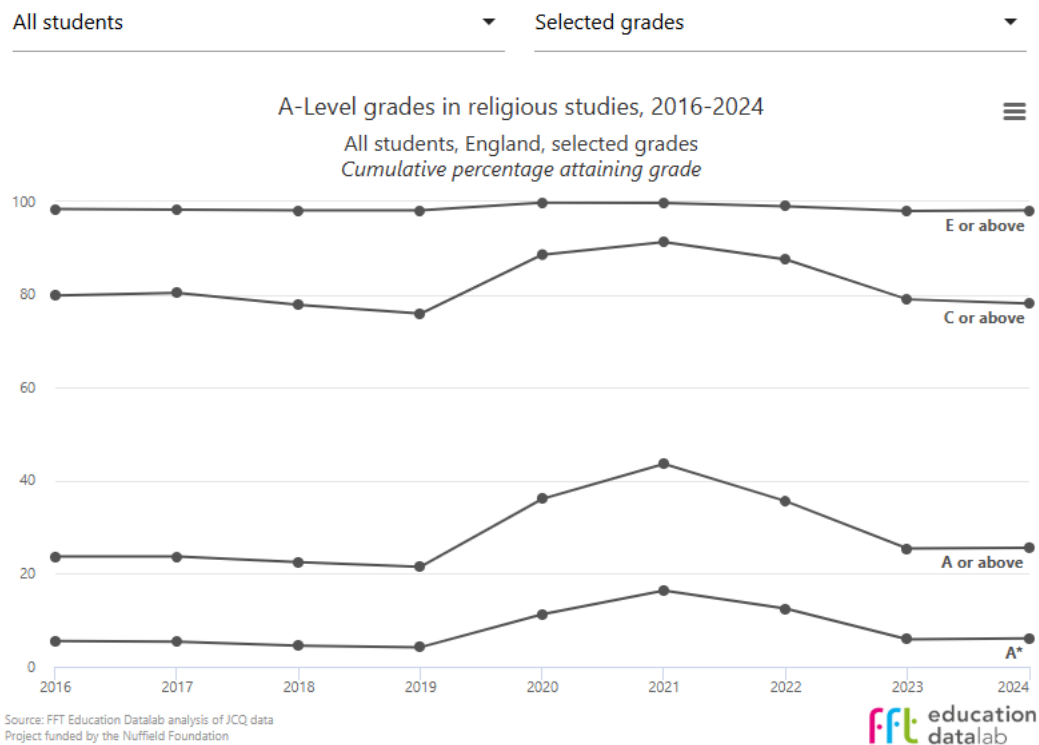
A-Level

Source: [GCSE and A-Level results analysis - FFT Education Datalab](#)

Entries in religious studies have decreased across the UK over the last six years. The -14.3% change compared to a change of +10.7% in all A-Level entries over the last six years. Over the same period, the 18-year-old population has changed by approximately 6.1%.



Across the UK, a broadly similar proportion of students achieved the top grades in religious studies in 2024 as did so across all A-Level subjects. A total of 25.7% of pupils achieved A*-A grades in religious studies compared to 27.8% for all subjects.



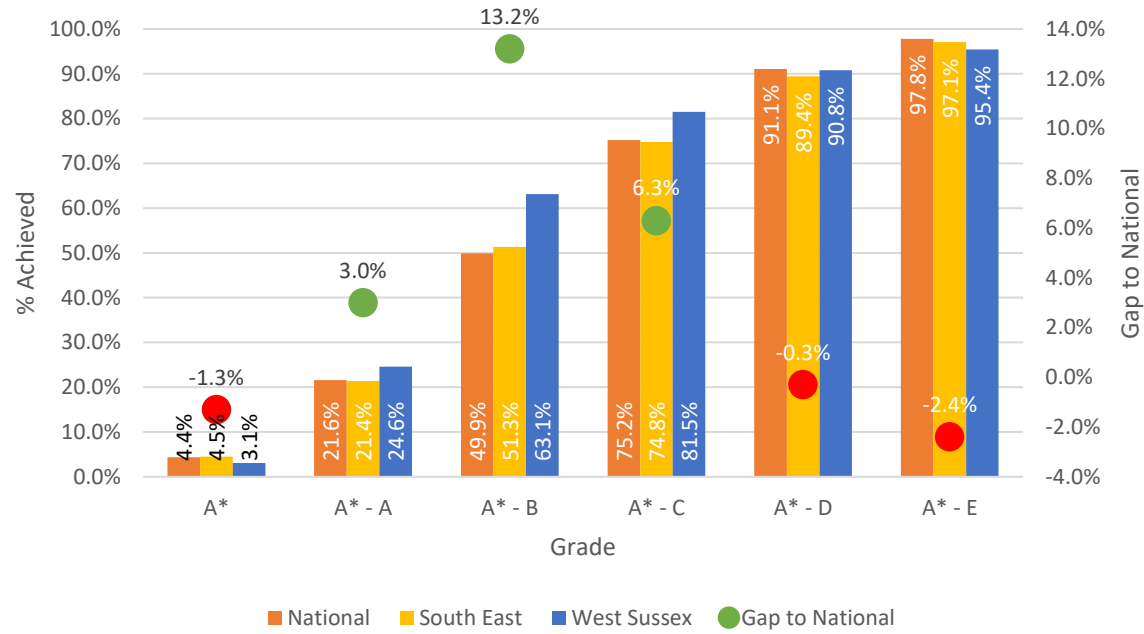
'Student counts and Results - A level by region and subject (end of 16-18 study)' for All state-funded schools, All state-funded schools and colleges and Total Religious Studies in West Sussex for 2023/24.

A-Level - Religious Studies 2023/24 - State Funded Students						
Area/Grade	A*	A* - A	A* - B	A* - C	A* - D	A* - E
National	4.4%	21.6%	49.9%	75.2%	91.1%	97.8%
South East	4.5%	21.4%	51.3%	74.8%	89.4%	97.1%
West Sussex	3.1%	24.6%	63.1%	81.5%	90.8%	95.4%
Gap to National	- 1.3%	3.0%	13.2%	6.3%	-0.3%	-2.4%

In West Sussex the achievement at lower grades was less than those of the national figures. A* results were 1.3% lower than the national equivalents and 1.4% to those in the South East. However, A*-B and A* - C, the national figures were lower than the West Sussex figure by 13.2% and 6.3% respectively. For the South East the gaps were 11.8% and 6.7% respectively.

Source: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/data-tables/a-level-and-other-16-to-18-results/2023-24?subjectId=ce915a58-0dda-436e-c9d7-08dd3156b4dc> (SE and West Sussex) [Step 6: Explore data - Create your own tables](#) (National)

A-Level - Religious Studies 2023/24 - State Funded Students



Number of RS GCSE entries in England	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
All students	271,973	256,729	229,189	227,913	226,767	221,419	221,983	222,412	223,034
Female	145,834	138,550	123,478	123,535	122,565	120,300	119,634	119,965	120,755
Male	126,139	118,179	105,711	104,378	104,202	101,119	102,349	102,447	102,279

Number of RS A Level entries in England	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
All students	23,074	22,121	17,024	16,214	14,564	15,659	15,216	14,690	14,499
Female	15,910	15,530	12,044	11,542	10,616	11,374	10,778	10,233	10,158
Male	7,164	6,591	4,980	4,672	3,948	4,285	4,438	4,457	4,341

