



SACRE ANNUAL REPORT for 2025

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 2025. 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) 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.

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 will 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 2025

The attendance by Committee, is set out below:

Committee	26 March 2025	9 June 2025	17 November 2024	Possible maximum attendances at each meeting
Committee A	7	4	10	13
Committee B	3	3	3	4
Committee C	3	3	3	4 (6 if all vacancies filled)
Committee D	5	4	5	6 (8 if no vacancies)
Co-optees	1	3	3	3
Total Members	19	17	24	40

External Consultant for SACRE	1	1	1	1
Local Authority Officers	2	2	2	2

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
2. Local draft GCSE results
3. Support and training for schools
4. Updates on the Agreed Syllabus
5. Terms of Reference and Code of Conduct for SACRE members was updated
6. WSCC website and text updated
7. The External Consultant attendance at the NASACRE Annual Conference and AGM on 19th May. The theme had been "SACRE's taking a stand"
8. The following documents have been shared and discussed:
 - Curriculum and Assessment review
 - School Workforce Census for secondary schools in West Sussex from the National Association of Teachers of Religious Education (NATRE).

During the year young people from the Muslim, Sikh and Jewish community have been invited to speak during the SACRE meeting about their faith and practice. These discussions have been well received by SACRE members. It has highlighted the importance of social cohesion, living and sharing views and values within West Sussex



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

The number of schools within West Sussex in 2025 are as follows

There is one less primary school as Littlehaven & Northolmes amalgamated to become an all through primary school

There are now 3 all through schools as Bohunt Horsham opened their primary phase for 2025 hence why there is no longer 1 in the secondary provision.

	Primary	Secondary	All Through Schools	Special	Alternative Provision College
Community	80	10		9	2
Foundation	0	1		1	0
Voluntary Aided (CofE)	16	2			
Voluntary Aided (RC)	7	2			
Voluntary Controlled (CofE)	39	1			0
Academy	84	21		2	0
Free Schools	1		3		0
Total	227	37	3	12	2



Total number of schools in West Sussex: 281

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.

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. SACRE received one request for advice from a Primary School regarding granting leave for religious observance

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 2024-2025 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

Mr Morgan - Baptist Union
Revd Scrivens – Methodist
Revd Lewitt – 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

Mr Jervis – 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



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

Committee D

Cllr Burrett (Chairman) – Local Authority
Cllr Dabell – Local Authority
Cllr Jupp – Local Authority
Cllr Kenyon – Local Authority
Cllr McKnight – Local Authority
Cllr Sparkes – Local Authority
2 Vacancies – Local Education Authority

Co-optees

Ms Beer
Mrs Black
Mr Panayiotou

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

- **The Holy Trinity CofE Secondary School, Crawley** where there were 14 exhibitors. 80 students from the school added the event asking poignant questions and Approximately 80 students and 30 teachers attended and asked many interesting questions. Some students stayed after the school day
- **Georgian Gardens Community Primary School, Rustington**, there were 15 exhibitors, 120 pupils from years 5 and 6 and 20 teachers from local schools. There was a great "buzz" in the hall.

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.

- Teachers who had been to the Roadshows in 2025 felt this year's was much improved and had been pleased to see real artifacts which could be used in a classroom. The stall layout was good as it allowed attendees to move around with ease as well as see every stall at a glance

Issues raised by teachers had been around

- One member of SACRE reported that he had heard from teachers they had not had a way of engaging with Humanists and that he would be arranging visits to schools
- The allocated hours for teaching RE in schools, with one school reported as having no allocation at all.
- Teachers demonstrated a clear hunger and desire for RE CPD, they were grateful for the resources and wider support on offer.

• **Religious Studies 2025 Analysis GCSE**

Below is GCSE grades by school from results day 2025:

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)	624180	104480	7370	10160	13010	17460	14910	11320	13640	8600	4960	2330	730	62900	74220	101420	5.0
-	LA (State Funded)	9015	2184	99	160	240	397	370	251	312	201	103	37	14	1266	1517	2133	4.8
4604	Bishop Luffa School, Chichester	234	223	10	17	20	49	38	30	30	18	7	4	-	134	164	219	4.9
4028	Bourne Community College	147	25	-	2	2	5	5	2	6	-	2	1	-	14	16	24	4.5
4006	Chichester Free School	117	8	-	2	1	1	1	2	-	1	-	-	-	5	7	8	5.5
4502	Davison Church of England High School for Girls, Worthing	258	176	12	22	28	42	19	23	11	12	6	1	-	123	146	175	5.6
4105	Downlands Community School	231	27	2	2	6	8	6	3	-	-	-	-	-	24	27	27	6.1
4059	Felpham Community College	264	16	-	1	3	5	2	1	2	2	-	-	-	11	12	16	5.2
4106	Imberhorne School	243	73	2	2	5	8	18	12	12	11	2	1	-	35	47	72	4.3

6913	Midhurst Rother College	210	45	4	5	5	5	11	3	9	3	-	-	-	30	33	45	5.4
4010	Millais School	290	45	5	6	6	11	9	1	3	1	2	-	1	37	38	44	5.8
4102	Oathall Community College	231	13	1	1	-	2	3	1	4	-	1	-	-	7	8	13	4.7
4007	Ormiston Six Villages Academy	111	12	-	-	-	3	4	2	1	-	1	1	-	7	9	11	4.2
4107	Sackville School	271	251	15	8	15	35	29	34	48	39	19	7	2	102	136	242	4.1
4601	St Andrew's CofE High School	107	91	3	6	10	17	14	8	12	12	7	1	1	50	58	89	4.6
4610	St Paul's Catholic College	181	176	12	19	19	43	34	21	13	8	6	-	1	127	148	175	5.5
4800	St Philip Howard Catholic School	212	190	8	17	35	40	33	18	28	7	2	-	2	133	151	188	5.4
4501	Steyning Grammar School	359	129	5	18	16	28	33	15	11	3	-	-	-	100	115	129	5.7
4002	Tanbridge House School	298	32	4	3	7	4	6	1	4	3	-	-	-	24	25	32	5.8
4012	The Burgess Hill Academy	209	14	2	1	3	2	1	2	1	2	-	-	-	9	11	14	5.6
4011	The Gatwick School	111	101	2	3	6	8	16	7	21	19	11	6	2	35	42	93	3.5

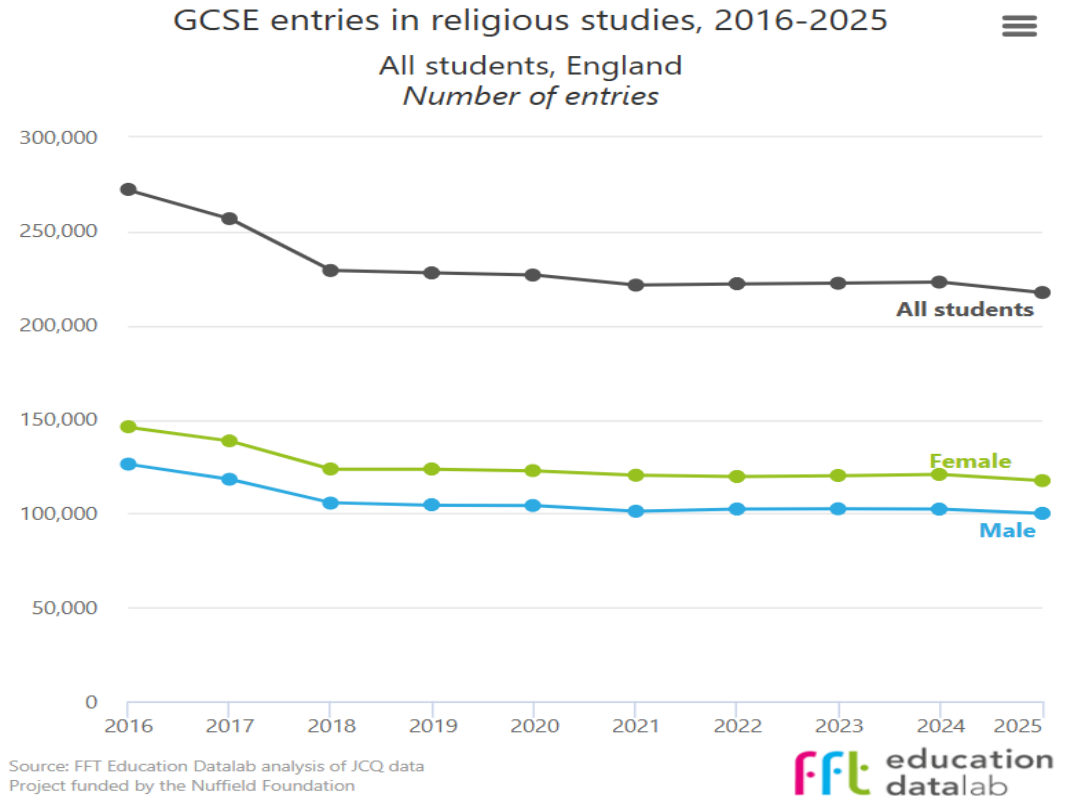
6912	The Littlehampton Academy	236	9	-	-	1	1	2	-	1	3	-	-	1	4	4	8	3.6
4025	Weald School, The	296	269	1	6	23	40	47	33	53	33	19	11	3	117	150	255	4.0
4110	Worthing High School	209	39	4	2	7	7	6	4	8	-	1	-	-	26	30	39	5.5
4008	Bohunt School Worthing	178	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	0	1	1	4.0
4001	Chichester High School	230	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	0	0	1	1.0
4606	Holy Trinity CofE Secondary School, Crawley	206	193	7	15	21	28	31	21	31	19	15	4	1	102	123	188	4.6
4030	Ifield Community College	208	25	-	2	1	5	2	6	3	5	1	-	-	10	16	25	4.3
4603	St Oscar Romero Catholic School	195	161	26	30	28	20	25	16	12	2	2	-	-	129	145	161	6.3
4602	St Wilfrid's Catholic Comprehensive School, Crawley	188	177	8	10	30	22	29	25	17	17	12	6	1	99	124	170	4.7

- Source: www.ncer.org

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.

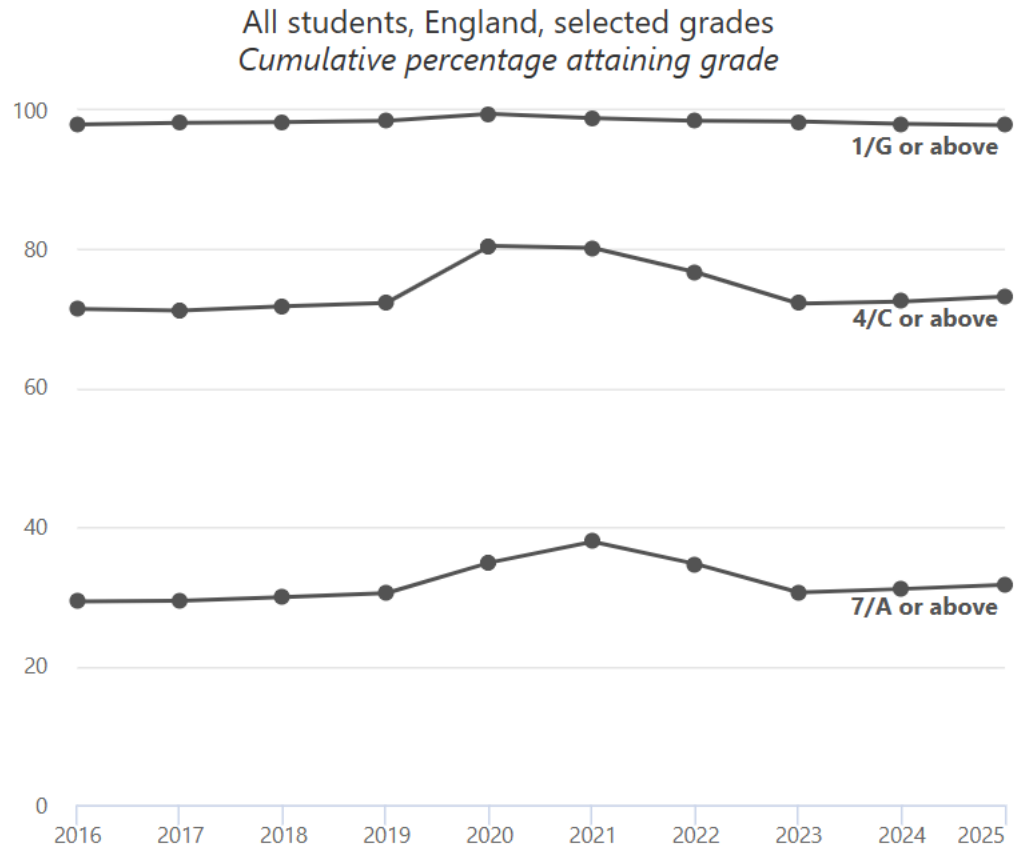
Source: [GCSE and A-Level results analysis - FFT Education Datalab](#)

Entries in religious studies have decreased a little across the UK over the last seven years. The -4.6% change compared to a change of +11.0% in all GCSE entries over the last seven years. Over the same period, the 16-year-old population has changed by approximately 12.9%.



Across the UK, a greater proportion of students achieved good passes in religious studies in 2025 compared to all GCSE subjects. A total of 73.4% of pupils achieved grade 4/C or higher in religious studies compared to 67.4% for all subjects.

GCSE grades in religious studies, 2016-2025



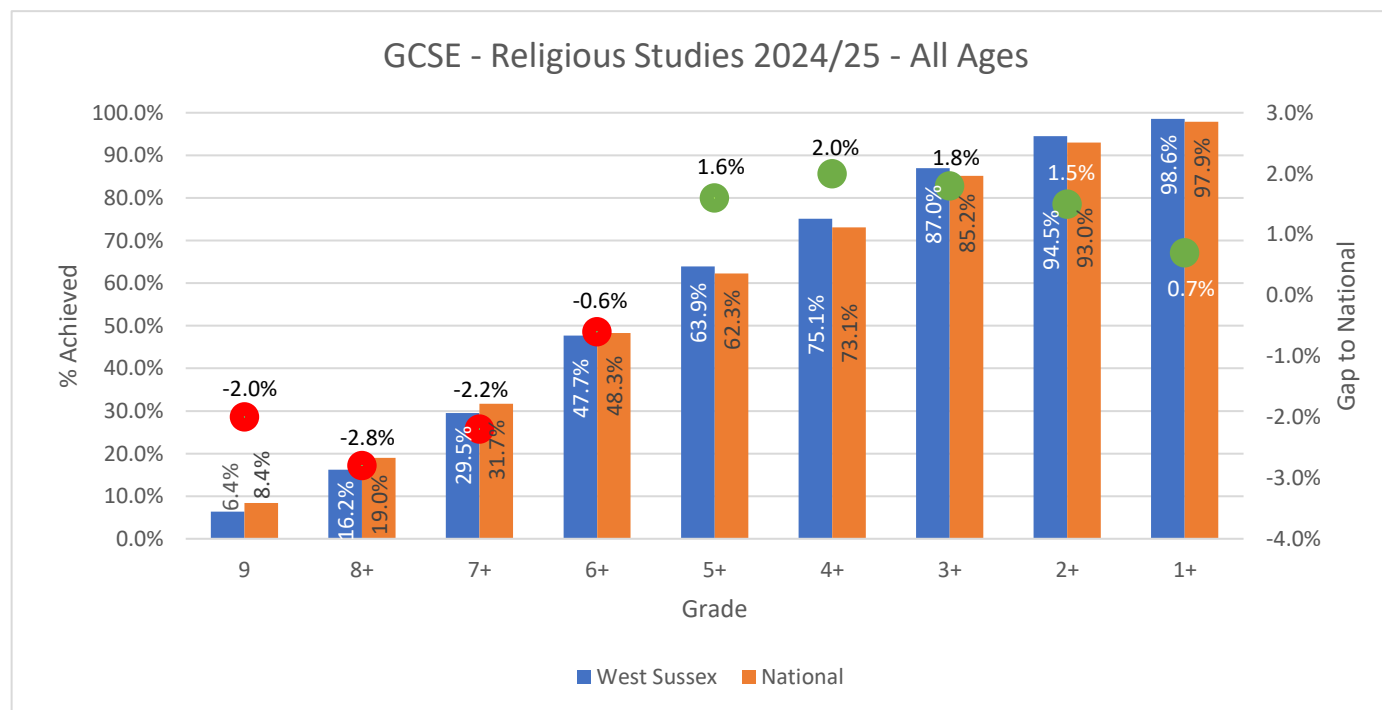
Source: FFT Education Datalab analysis of JCQ data
Project funded by the Nuffield Foundation

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

GCSE - Religious Studies 2024/25 - All Ages									
Grade	9	8+	7+	6+	5+	4+	3+	2+	1+
West Sussex	6.4%	16.2%	29.5%	47.7%	63.9%	75.1%	87.0%	94.5%	98.6%
National	8.4%	19.0%	31.7%	48.3%	62.3%	73.1%	85.2%	93.0%	97.9%
Gap to National	-	-2.8%	-2.2%	-0.6%	1.6%	2.0%	1.8%	1.5%	0.7%

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

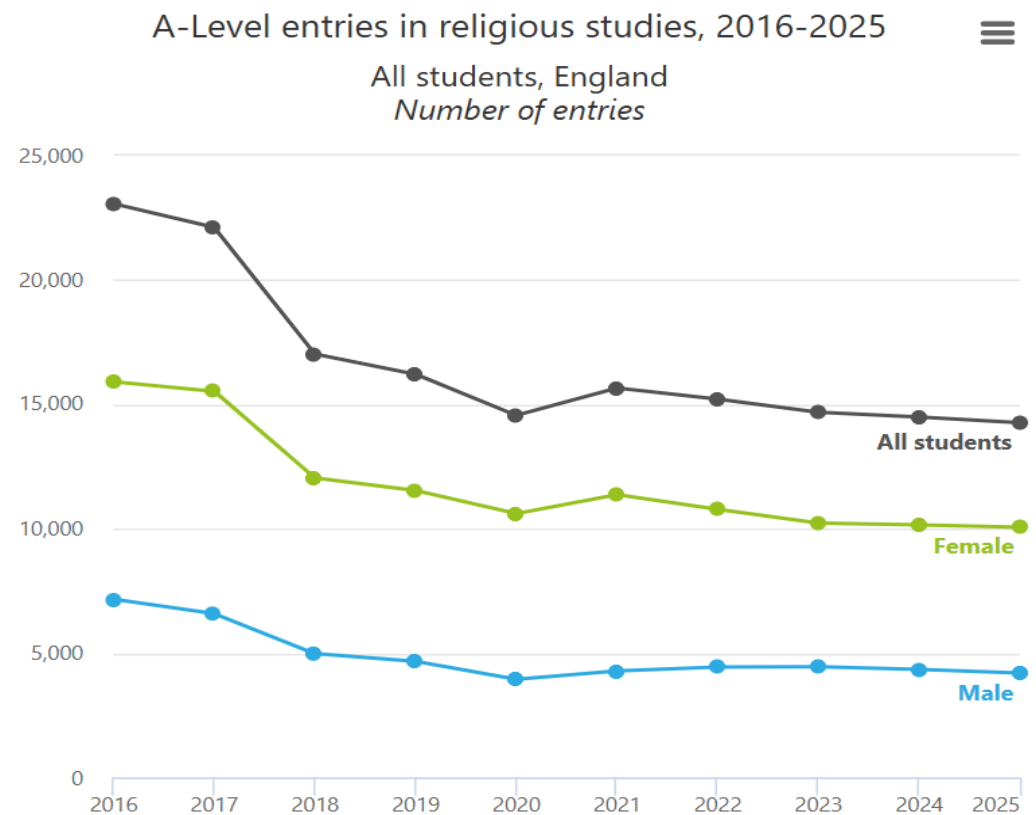
In West Sussex the achievement at a Grade 4 “standard” pass was 75.1%, 2% higher than the national figure. The result at Grade 5, a “good” pass was 1.6% better, at 63.9%, than compared to nationally, 62.3% an increase on only a 0.6% gap in 2024. However, the highest grades, 6-9 all saw that the national figure was higher than the West Sussex figure of between 0.6% and 2.8%.



A-Level

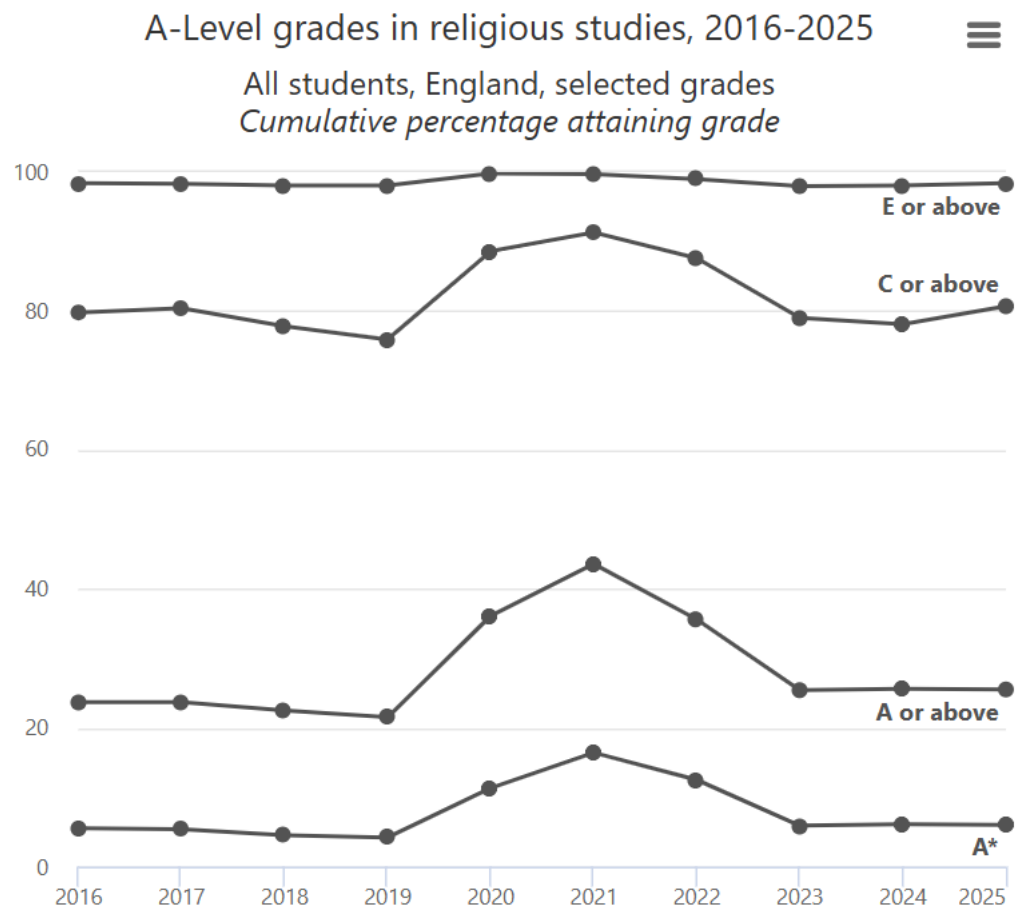
Source: [GCSE and A-Level results analysis - FFT Education Datalab](#)

Entries in religious studies have decreased across the UK over the last seven years. The -15.3% change compared to a change of +10.2% in all A-Level entries over the last seven years. Over the same period, the 18-year-old population has changed by approximately 6.1%.



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

Across the UK, a smaller proportion of students achieved the top grades in religious studies in 2025 compared to all Level subjects. A total of 25.5% of pupils achieved A*-A grades in religious studies compared to 28.3% for all subjects



A-

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

A-Level - Religious Studies 2024/25 - State Funded Students						
Area/Grade	A*	A* - A	A* - B	A* - C	A* - D	A* - E
National	4.5%	21.6%	52.0%	78.3%	92.4%	97.8%
South East	4.8%	20.0%	48.5%	74.1%	90.1%	96.7%
West Sussex	2.7%	12.7%	42.7%	71.8%	89.1%	95.5%
Gap to National	-1.8%	-8.9%	-9.3%	-6.5%	-3.3%	-2.3%

In West Sussex the achievement at all grades were less than those of the national figures. A* results had the smallest gap of 1.8% lower than the national equivalents and 2.1% to those in the South East. However, A*-A and A*-B, the national figures were lower than the West Sussex figure by 8.9% and 9.3% respectively. For the South East the gaps were 7.3% and 5.8% respectively.

Source: [Step 6: Explore data - Create your own tables on a level and other 16 to 18 results](#)

