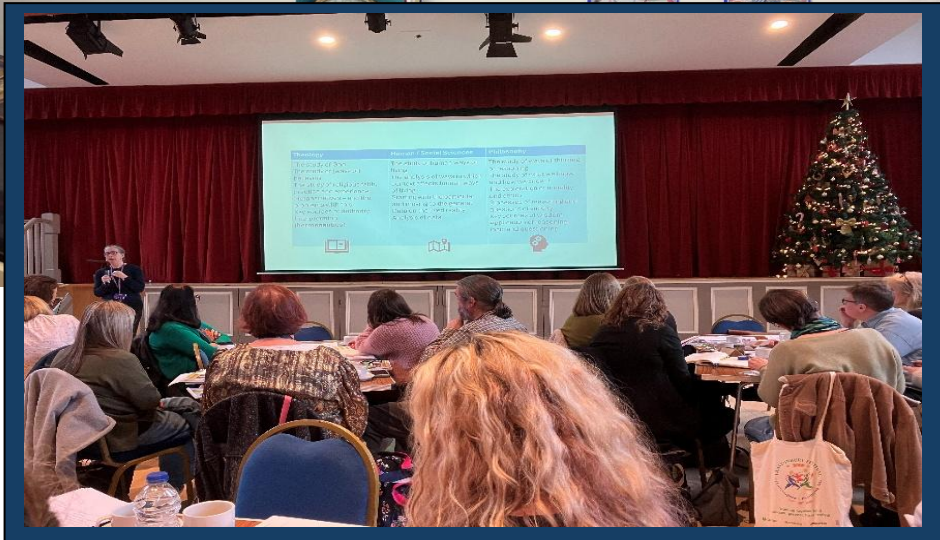




Annual Report

September 2024-July 2025



Launch Of The New Agreed Syllabus For RE 27 November 2025, Devizes

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1. Introduction, overview of SACRE's activities, successes and next steps – Chair, Celia Hicks

The academic year, 2024- 5 has been action packed and a successful year for SACRE. Following on from the worrying [Ofsted report on RE \(Deep and Meaningful, July 2024\)](#) and our own survey of schools in Wiltshire which confirmed the need to revitalise provision, we have set about this in four ways:

- Through an analysis of the workforce census and exam entries at secondary level we identified schools where there was a suggestion that they were not fulfilling their statutory duty and offered them support
- By supporting individual requests for help from teachers
- By providing clear, comprehensive guidance [on Collective Worship \(on Right Choice\)](#)
- Reviewing, more recently, and renewing the [Agreed Syllabus for RE](#) (login required on Right Choice)

Developing the new agreed syllabus for RE has been an exhilarating journey and has involved SACRE collaborating with many teams at the local authority including SEND, EMTAS and Early Years as well as organising an industrious and committed working party of teachers, headteachers, Diocesan advisers and their hub leaders to create something exciting that we hope will better engage our young people and help them navigate an increasingly complex and diverse world. Whilst RE will remain largely Christian in nature, coverage of other worldviews now extends to include non-religious views (e.g. humanism) from as early as Key Stage 1 and, to reflect our own area, e.g. schools may choose to include a unit of work on neo paganism. It is a truly inclusive syllabus in both coverage and in its pedagogy.

In addition, by asking children to adopt a multi -disciplinary approach to their learning, combining theology, social sciences and philosophy, it raises the level of challenge leading to critical thinking, an opportunity to reflect and a better understanding of what makes people tick.

As Chair of SACRE, I would like to formally thank our members for their hard work and dedication to this project. SACRE is very grateful to everyone who has helped to shape this syllabus and we were delighted that the launch in November 2025 was so well attended with around 200 delegates, packed into the venue, from our own schools, academies within and beyond Wiltshire and many of our dedicated SACRE members who generously gave up their own time to attend.

The response has been overwhelmingly positive. The agreed syllabus can be accessed by schools via the [Right Choice website](#). A big thank you to Wiltshire Council for the support it has given this successful project.

Other successes include:

- responding to a request from a parent concerned about provision (this saw the school review their offer)
- leading three RE Subject Leader Network Meetings (Online Live) – free of charge to schools
- supporting RE Area Hub Group Meetings (mostly Face To Face) – free of charge to schools
- producing three [Wiltshire SACRE Newsletters](#) per annum full of useful information and resources for schools
- updating our quality [Visits and Visitor list](#) for schools
- supporting [Interfaith Week](#) that takes place annually in November

- promoting the [WIRE award](#) (widening inclusion in RE) that has seen 6 more schools achieve the standard
- keeping our members up to date with information from the National Association of SACREs ([NASACRE](#))
- the attendance of our SACRE members at annual regional conferences:
 - Southwest SACRE conference 03 March 2025 (Online Live)
 - CREative REinspiring RE Conference 26 March 2025 (Online Live)
 - More than just retrieval? Developing deeper knowledge and engagement in Religion and Worldviews – Diocese of Bristol 20 June 2025 (Face To Face in Bristol)

Next steps

During the coming year we aim to:

- support schools to develop their RE curriculum by working with school hubs
- ensure that CPD is available for teachers as they look to implement the new agreed syllabus
- review and update the teacher resources on the Right Choice website
- continue to lead RE Subject Leader Network Meetings and support RE Area Hub Group Meetings
- collaborate with appropriate local partners to better effect

As a result of reaching out to other faith groups we have new members representing Islam and humanism along with new councillor representatives and they have already made a significant and welcome contribution to our work.

SACRE is fortunate in keeping Nicola Coupe, as a co-opted member, who was the Salisbury Diocesan Adviser for RE for many years and has been instrumental in moving RE and Collective Worship forward. We welcome Esther Culy from the Diocese of Salisbury; we are already collaborating with her to find how we can best work together. Also, SACRE is blessed to keep Laura Harris as a representative of the Diocese of Bristol, who was SACRE's adviser.

Finally, huge thanks go to our clerk, Simone Kermode, who has worked tirelessly on our behalf and to Louise Lewis for her energy, enthusiasm and support for the work we do.

2. CPD for schools

The LA continues to run online network meetings three times a year for subject leaders, and these are very well attended with over 30 delegates at each session.

Over the last academic year September 2024-July 2025:

Religious Education Subject Leader Network Meetings 07 October 2024 - 24 teachers attended. Meeting was led by SACRE member Helen Cooke on ideas for the classroom for Interfaith week based on the 'Hats of Faith' book by Medeia Cohan. There was also, a presentation on Senitentism from James Woodhouse which was well received

Feedback from teachers was:

- *I will definitely use some of the Interfaith Week ideas in our World Religions Day - thank you*
- *I will apply ideas about inter faith week to our own RE World Religions Day we are doing soon, especially the ideas for question stem sentences. And check out the new WIRE*

award document. Great ideas about Sentientism to help us when we come to incorporate better World Views education when the Agreed Syllabus is updated

- *I love the idea of having an inter faith day/week and will take the advice of starting small this year and building up*

28 January 2025 – 22 teachers attended. Presentations were given on monitoring and quality assuring the RE curriculum in your school (Celia Hicks), Learning Outside the Classroom (Yousaf Mirza) and Learning Resources Hub (Tina Ward)

Feedback from teachers was:

- *I have an improved understanding how to apply syllabus when planning*
- *I will follow up on the information shared about the RE Curriculum and recent OFSTED inspections in relation to RE*
- *I will share Yousef's power point and use the learning resource power point to remind colleagues to use this resource*

04 June 2025 - 20 delegates attended. Vikki Vince, LA SEND and Inclusion Lead, presented on how to teach RE meeting the needs of pupils with special needs

Feedback from teachers who attended:

- *I will find out what SEN needs can be supported in all classes through the use of IT in RE*
- *I will investigate the Power of AI to support SEND and lower workload*

SACRE and the Diocese of Salisbury continue to run free [RE Area Hub Group Meetings](#) (face to face) for all schools led by teachers for teachers and these are organised regionally to cover the Swindon, Trowbridge, Salisbury and Marlborough areas. Hub leaders also respond to requests for help.

3. Challenges

The [Ofsted Subject report: religious education \(17 Apr 24\)](#) painted a negative picture of the current state of RE teaching nationally. Our own RE survey showed that in Wiltshire a significant number of schools do not fully understand what they should be teaching and are relying on resources that are no longer fit for purpose to meet the requirements of RE teaching.

In addition, a recent survey undertaken by NASACRE suggests that some of our secondary schools may not be meeting their statutory duty and allocate insufficient teaching time to RE.

4. Overview in date order of:

Four full SACRE meetings followed by an Agreed Syllabus Conference

Agreed Syllabus Working Party Meetings and Workshops

Full SACRE meeting and the Agreed Syllabus Conference Online Live (1/4)

24 September 2024 4pm-5.30pm

Quorate – 10 members attended from Groups A, B, C & D Chair, Celia Hicks

- Chair introduced new members: Buddhist, Tanya Dalley and Muslims, Jameelah and Omar Abdulshakour
- Bal Kaur presented on their faith/worldview – Sikhi and why they joined SACRE?
- Jo Backus, as the last trustee to close the Inter Faith Network, gave an overview of its future and opportunities still available for schools
- Schools were encouraged to apply for a Westhill NASACRE Awards at the RE SL Network Meeting (Online) by Helen Cooke
- Helen Cooke shared the agenda for the RE SL Network Meeting on 07 October 2024
- Chair thanked Helen Cooke for supporting a school who requested help with their RE curriculum

Agreed Syllabus Conference

- Chair reiterated this is the first ASC (for this academic year) and the aim is to have a new Agreed Syllabus for 2026-27 incorporating worldviews

Chair gave an overview of the last meeting 02 Jul 24. Key points from that meeting were discussed:

- SACRE had approached a local authority to enquire if they would sell their agreed syllabus for RE? Depending on this LA's response and Wiltshire LA's standing on financing a new agreed syllabus, perhaps SACRE could consider as one option of updating the current syllabus with teaching resources on Humanism?
- Vicky Bunting, Cllr Alex Boyd, Jo Backus, Bal Kaur, Hannah Crook, Claire Brooks, Reuben Mann and Laura Harris volunteered to be part of the Agreed Syllabus Working party meeting to take place on 12 November 4pm-5pm (details below)

Agreed Syllabus Working Party Online Live (1/3)

12 November 2025 4pm-5pm

SACRE members

Key points discussed:

- Options were discussed - write our own Agreed Syllabus, join a collaboration of other SACREs to create a new Agreed Syllabus or buy an off the shelf agreed syllabus?
- The pros and cons of two syllabi were reviewed in detail:
 - Where do I stand? Suffolk Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education 2023
 - REfocus - Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole 2023-2028 being updated by Dorset
- A post-meeting note from the Chair confirmed the positives of the new Dorset Agreed Syllabus that SACRE should buy

Full SACRE meeting and the Agreed Syllabus Conference (Online Live) (2/4)

03 December 2024 4pm-5.30pm

Quorate – 14 members attended from Groups A, B, C & D Chair, Celia Hicks

- Chair introduced new members: Sarah Alford (Free Churches) and Katie Pyne (Humanist)
- Louise Lewis, Head of SE attended and introduced herself
- Jo Backus presented on their faith/worldview – Buddhism and why they joined SACRE?
- Dennis Wright (external speaker) presented on Paganism
- Helen Cooke and Alex Boyd volunteered to be representatives for LTLRE Area 3 Steering Group meeting, 22 October 11.30 – 12.30 (Online)

Agreed Syllabus Conference

- A review of the following agreed syllabi was undertaken:

Where do I stand? Suffolk Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education 2023

REfocus The agreed syllabus for Religious Education for Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole 2023-2028 (currently being updated by Dorset)

Pennine Learning RE Syllabus – Believing and Belonging 2024-2029 - A briefing for teachers with Oak National Academy's resources. Link to their current resources: Oak National Academy's current resources for RE

- Dorset Agreed Syllabus for RE was reviewed in detail
- Chair proposed a motion for Wiltshire SACRE to buy and adapt the Dorset Agreed Syllabus. A vote took place and all members agreed except for Sarah Alford, as a new member, did not feel qualified to make the decision and abstained
- A post meeting note was added to the minutes: Since the New Agreed Syllabus Working Party meeting on 12 November 2024, the Chair has reviewed the Dorset Agreed Syllabus and requested that the ASC consider buying it. Members had a copy of the syllabus sent with the agenda for 03 December meeting

Agreed Syllabus Working Party Workshop (Face To Face) (1/3)

11 February 2025 1pm-4pm (County Hall, Trowbridge)

SACRE Headteacher and Teacher members and external Headteachers/ RE Subject Leads (1/3)

Agreed Syllabus Working Party (Online Live) (2/3)

11 February 2025 4pm-5pm

SACRE members

From these two meetings the Chair created a detailed table of proposed changes and actions which mainly included:

- Include a section on Neo Paganism
- Ensure the section on the Wiltshire vision better emphasises that this is an enquiry based Agreed Syllabus and that RE is interdisciplinary (asks children to think like social scientists, theologians, and philosophers)
- Change 'Belief, Expression and Action' to 'Believing, Living and Thinking'
- Change the Wiltshire requirement (p10) to be more prescriptive about what each key stage should study rather than spanning from KS1 to KS3

- Insert our enquiry questions with our own list taken from the current Agreed Syllabus and organise into a chart of golden threads that shows progression from KS1 onwards. Nicola Coupe to complete the chart she began with the help of Jo Needham, Cathy Wallace and Steve Griffith

Full SACRE meeting and the Agreed Syllabus Conference (Online Live) (3/4)

04 March 2025 4pm-5.30pm

Quorate – 14 members attended from Groups A, B, C & D Chair, Celia Hicks

- Reuben Mann presented on their faith/worldview – Evangelism and why they joined SACRE?
- A vote was taken on approving the Annual Report for Sep 23-Aug 24 which was unanimously approved
- A review of the positive feedback from the RE SL Network Meeting (28 Jan 25) was undertaken
- Laura Harris shared resources from the Oak National Academy
- A discussion took place on how SACRE can join up the Religious Education Area Hub Group Meetings (face to face) with the 3 x RE SL Network meetings (online)
- Nicola Coupe talked through the CPD events which are promoted on [Right Choice](#)
- A discussion took place on why 3 Secondary Schools are not delivering the full entitlement, and it was agreed that the Chair was to send a sympathetic letter to the Headteachers of the 3 Secondary Schools that are not delivering the full entitlement

Agreed Syllabus Conference

- Chair, with the two working party groups, to reconsider the minimum requirement with regards to non-religious worldviews being taught earlier in the curriculum
- Members agreed that the minimum requirement table should be re-written so that it is clearer
- Chair gave an overview of the amendments made to the new Agreed Syllabus (using Dorset's as a template) and the introduction written by Ed Powe (HT, Staverton Primary School)
- Chair explained the rationale for changing the questions and deleting pages from the Dorset Agreed Syllabus
- A vote was taken to invite Ed Powe as a co-opted member to the Agreed Syllabus Conference and was unanimously approved
- The first Headteacher/RE Lead Agreed Syllabus Working Party (AS WP face to face) took place on 11 February 2025. Chair thanked Nicola Coupe for paying for 2 members to attend. This meeting was followed by SACRE members AS WP (online) on the same day
- Nicola Coupe gave an introduction on Core Themes (golden threads)
- Becky Pearce, from the Agreed Syllabus Working Party (face to face) group, has written a section on paganism which will be reviewed by the working party
- SACRE was not successful in their two bids for a grant to have the new agreed syllabus printed. Chair will investigate the cost of having it printed inhouse

<p>Agreed Syllabus Working Party Workshop (Face To Face) (2/3)</p> <p>27 March 2025 1pm-4pm SACRE Headteacher and Teacher members and external Headteachers/ RE Subject Leads</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was agreed that an appendix to be produced around questions that lend themselves to theology/philosophy/social science by the end of April • Details regarding the Launch of the new Agreed Syllabus for RE was discussed
<p>Agreed Syllabus Working Party (Online Live) (3/3)</p> <p>22 April 2025 4pm-5pm SACRE members</p> <p>Key outcomes from the meeting were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Merge the 'Attainment' statements to just KS1 and KS2 rather than Yr 9 etc • The new Agreed Syllabus is to reflect people first, rather than 'isms', and this needs to be checked through the Agreed syllabus, e.g. Christianity becomes Christians • Changing the coverage grid to have other worldviews in the final column • Update the syllabus with the LA's SEND team suggested assessment with wording that reflected Wiltshire with advice that schools were to follow their own policy • Members agreed to keep the 'spirituality' section • As titles to the columns have been changed, the information in the columns need to be moved • Vicky Bunting offered her help on any support required for Buddhism and Hinduism
<p>Agreed Syllabus Working Party Workshop (Face To Face) (3/3)</p> <p>19 May 2025 9.30am-12.30pm SACRE Headteacher and Teacher members and external Headteachers/ RE Subject Leads</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worked examples were discussed of planned units that SACRE can offer as an appendix with the heading, e.g. "Here are some examples of how you might wish to develop a unit of work from the Agreed Syllabus. However, we recognise that schools plan in many different ways and we do not advocate any one approach"

Full SACRE meeting and the Agreed Syllabus Conference (Online Live) (4/4)

01 July 2025 4pm-5.30pm

Quorate – 12 members attended from Groups A, B, C & D Chair, Celia Hicks

- Chair welcomed Esther Culy, School Improvement Adviser. Nicola Coupe's replacement from the Diocese of Salisbury
- A unanimous vote was undertaken for Nicola Coupe, Reuben Mann and Sarah Alford to join SACRE as co-opted members
- Chair thanked Nicola Coupe for continuing as vice-chair until the launch of the new agreed syllabus on 27 November 2025
- External speaker, Lynda Ford-Horne, gave a presentation on 'A Buddhist, a Christian, a Humanist, a Jew and a Muslim go into a ...?'
- SACRE and the Diocese of Salisbury are supporting a secondary school with advice on teaching the full requirement of RE

Agreed Syllabus Conference

- To support teachers with resources for the new Agreed Syllabus presentations took place from:
 - Sarah Bareau, Regional Advisor (South West), Jigsaw Education
Group: www.jigsaweducationgroup.com
 - Adam Robertson, RE Subject Lead, Oak National Academy [Introducing our RE curriculum partners | Oak National Academy](#)
- Chair thanked all members who have worked hard in either proof reading, editing and creating resources for the agreed syllabus (or all 3!)
- Core Themes (golden threads) were produced by the RE Hub Leaders
- Nicola Coupe explained the rationale for the changes and asked members for their view on the section, Progress towards End of Key Stage Statements
- Chair talked through the section on which Worldviews should be taught when
- Nicola Coupe presented on the edited version of the 'Summary of progress...' (assessment)

5. SACRE arrangements and statutory function of SACRE for a Local Authority

Chair: Celia Hicks

Clerk – Simone Kermode - SACRE@wiltshire.gov.uk

Local Authority link officer – Louise Lewis, Head of School Effectiveness

A Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) is an independent body in the United Kingdom that considers the provision of religious education in the area under the jurisdiction of its Local Authority. The SACRE advises and is empowered to require a review of the locally agreed syllabus for Religious Education (RE). The legal constitution of SACREs is set out in the [1996 Education Act Paragraph 390 subsection 4](#).

The representative groups required by this subsection are:

- a group to represent Christian denominations and other religions and denominations that, in the opinion of the authority, appropriately reflect the principal religious traditions in the area;
- a group of persons to represent the Church of England;
- a group to represent associations representing teachers as, in the opinion of the authority, ought to be represented, having regard to the circumstances of the area; and
- a group to represent the authority.

Each SACRE has wide-ranging statutory powers including:

- ratify syllabi written for them by the Agreed Syllabus Conference of their Local Authority;
- improve quality of Collective Worship;
- monitor quality of RE teaching and SMSC provision and assisting where necessary or informing head teachers or governing bodies of difficulties;
- recommend speakers and places of worship to visit;
- design supplementary teaching materials;
- contribute to teacher training and teachers' in-service training, and;
- foster interfaith and community links especially to the end of community cohesion.

6. SACRE membership (members highlighted in blue joined Sep 24- Aug 25)

Group A: Representatives from the Christian denominations and other religions and religious denominations

(11 votes - 3 votes for Free Churches, 2 for the RC Church and 1 vote each for representatives from the Muslim, Jewish, Sikh, Buddhist, Hindu and Humanist communities)

Roman Catholic	Richard Sanderson
Muslim	Jameelah and Omar Abdulshakour (Sep 24)
Jewish faith	Cllr Alexandra Boyd
Sikhism faith	Bal Kaur
Buddhism	Jo Backus
Buddhism	Tanya Dalley (Sep 24)
Humanist	Katie Pyne (Dec 24)

Group B: Representatives from the Church of England

(5 votes – at least 2 from the Diocese of Salisbury and 1 from the Diocese of Bristol)

Diocese of Salisbury	Esther Culy (Jul 25)
Diocese of Salisbury	Helen Cooke
Diocese of Bristol	Katherine Bloomer

Group C: Headteacher and Teacher Representatives

(5 votes – 3 votes for teachers of primary, secondary and special schools. 1 vote each for a Primary and secondary Headteacher)

Primary Headteacher	Emma Dixon
Secondary Headteacher	Vicky Bunting Head of RS (representing HT, Kingdown)
Primary Teacher (shared vote)	Hannah Crook
Primary Teacher (shared vote)	Claire Brooks
Primary Teacher (shared vote)	Amanda Garton
Secondary Teacher	Mark Perraton

Group D: The Local Authority representatives

(6 votes – 4 elected councillors, Director for Education/ representative, The Equality and Diversity Manager/representative)

LA Officer(s)	Celia Hicks
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SACRE officers

Clerk to SACRE	Simone Kermodé (Clerk)
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Co-opted members

Emmanuel Church, Marlborough	Reuben Mann (previously under Free Churches)
The Bridge Youth Project	Sarah Alford (previously under Free Churches)

Co-opted member	Nicola Coupe (Jul 25)
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Co-opted member	Ed Powe, Staverton CofE Primary School
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