



**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 of Calderdale SACRE

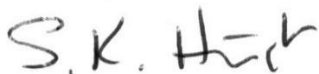
Once again in the past year we saw how world and national events resulted in local, national and global tensions and uncertainties. The behaviours of a minority that unfolded after the tragic death and stabbing of young children in Southport reminds us of and reinforced just how fragile our local communities are when faced with complex and challenging circumstances. However, we also saw many people, from all faiths and backgrounds, who came together to support each other through those difficult times. This was community cohesion in action the building blocks that make a strong, stable, safe and peaceful society.

Calderdale SACRE remains committed to promoting and supporting quality RE in Calderdale schools and the unique contribution RE makes to foster skills that develop an understanding of our own, and other people's views and beliefs which contribute to successful community cohesion. We are confident that our new Agreed Syllabus for RE 2024: Believing and Belonging for Bradford, Calderdale, Kirklees and Leeds schools launched in April will ensure our children and young people will be able to develop those vital skills. This innovative new syllabus includes, not just knowledge about religions, worldviews and religious concepts, but also big questions and themes where our children and young people could apply their knowledge, or experience, of faith. We are sure that this new syllabus will help enthuse and inspire our students to engage with RE in a more meaningful way. This will not only prepare them for the complex, challenging and changing world we live in but also to shape the future of it.

On behalf of SACRE, I would like to thank all the school staff who teach RE, attended the RE Networks and contributed to the development of the new syllabus; Julie Jenkins, Director for Children and Young People's Services, and her team for their continued support for the work of Calderdale SACRE; and our RE Consultant, Ian Ross, for his invaluable expertise, guidance and support for the work of SACRE as well as Pennine Learning for the provision of training and support to our schools.

I would like to thank members of Calderdale SACRE for their continued commitment to the children and young people of Calderdale by their significant support, expertise and contribution to the work we undertake.

You will find more detailed descriptions of the work of SACRE in the report, and I commend it to you.



• Shelagh K Hirst, Chair of SACRE

## Overview

This annual report is prepared by Calderdale SACRE. SACRE as a body 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. The report 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 in Calderdale, contact Ian Ross at [ian@penninelearning.com](mailto:ian@penninelearning.com)

For information on SACRE please contact the clerk, Debby Simpson [debby.simpson@calderdale.gov.uk](mailto:debby.simpson@calderdale.gov.uk)

## Dates and content of meetings

There were four meetings of Calderdale SACRE during the year 2023-24, all held face to face. Meetings are open to the public and minutes are also available on-line. These meetings were held on Wed 4th October 2023 (syllabus and Provision monitoring), Mon 4th December 2023 (agreeing the annual report), Tues 12th March 2024 (LASC), Tues 25th June 2024 (AGM and links with the LA)

Shelagh Hirst was re-appointed chair of SACRE in June 2023 and was ably supported by Mark Sharp as Vice Chair. SACRE membership has increased this last year, but SACRE is conscious that diversity in representation is needed including the range of faiths and beliefs in the area as well as working with CEOs of Multi Academy Trusts.

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 – which was revised and launched in April 2024.
- Revision of guidance on sensitivity to faith in schools.
- Clarification of funding for Calderdale SACRE responsibilities and activities.
- Review of secondary provision for RE, including time allocation.
- Progress on the two sets of films funded by Westhill endowment trust.
- Faith and education project to encourage engagement between faith communities and schools.
- Improving representation on SACRE from those groups currently under-represented.
- Completion of SACRE self-evaluation.

- National Association of SACREs (NASACRE) – items of interest or action, including information from NASACRE conference on the future of SACREs.
- Future joint meetings of chairs and vice chairs across West Yorkshire (WYSACRE).

## **Priorities and actions for 2023 – 24**

### **Continue to revise Local Agreed Syllabus including providing foundation and focus units of work.**

The local agreed syllabus – Believing and Belonging in West Yorkshire 24 – 29 was reviewed. This review included working with SACREs from Bradford, Calderdale, Kirklees and Leeds. A working party made up from representatives in the four local authority areas met at various times in the year to discuss models and teaching content.

The syllabus is based on the Big Ideas in RE from Exeter University. The Big Ideas have been adapted into six pathways of progression. This is compliant with the new Non-Statutory Guidance from The RE Council called the National Content Standard.

The syllabus is accompanied by core units of work for each phase linked to the six pathways of progression. There are also focus units in each phase to support the digging deeper into a particular faith or belief. The Local Agreed Syllabus Conference was held on 12<sup>th</sup> March and launch and training event for up to 100 teachers and headteachers took place on 18<sup>th</sup> April.

### **Introduce a new Inclusive Collective Worship Award to schools and visit 10 schools across the borough.**

Work has started on the advice and support for collective worship including a suggested calendar of faith festivals and themed weeks. A thought for the week list has been prepared to support secondary schools. The Inclusive Collective Worship Award will be produced in the academic year 24-25 and will be piloted on self-selecting schools.

### **Continue working with the School Effectiveness Service and Cluster officers to identify schools for support and professional conversations e.g. East Calderdale Learning Cluster**

Ian Ross, the professional advisor for SACRE, attends the partnership meeting of school effectiveness with other hubs e.g. The English Hub, and the cluster officers. The East Calderdale Learning Cluster were selected to receive the five days of support from the Pennine Learning Team. These five days were spent in 9 schools and included a professional conversation, a practice deep dive or an RE Audit. Schools on the whole welcomed this support and one head teacher commented that it changed her whole outlook on how and why RE should be taught. The schools that received support were: Field Lane, Northowram,

Salterlee, St John's Clifton, St Michael and All Angels, Bailiffe Bridge, Cliffe Hill Primary. These schools now regularly contribute to the RE Network and share their good practice. We are very pleased to announce that Greetland Academy were successful in completing the Calderdale SACRE RE Award and this will be presented to the school in the Autumn Term 2024.

## **Self-evaluation**

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

### **Section 1: Management of SACRE and partnership with the LA and other key stakeholders**

- Insist on at least annual representation from LA to discuss priorities for the year and to ensure all LA priorities match those in SACRE. The annual report will be presented to scrutiny in January and actions from this will be discussed in March with the LA representative.
- Continue developing a work plan with assigned roles including attending school visits linking with the network and taking part in collective worship reviews.
- Continue the comprehensive induction programme for new members.
- Develop links with the interfaith council and include liaison around people conferences and interfaith work to be carried out in schools.
- Explore models of engaging with pupil voice in RE maybe through school council or SACRE members attending school visits.

### **Section 2. Standards and quality of provision of Religious Education**

- SACRE and LA/ Scrutiny to share information in a two way process. Develop relationships with data team in the LA on the school effectiveness team to build a picture of standards in RE across the borough.
- Set realistic time scales to receive data about GCSE and a levels. We have been hampered by the timing of data received in the local authority to then report on this in the annual report this in turn hampers the amount of support we can offer schools.

### **Section 3: The effectiveness of the locally agreed syllabus**

There was a successful review, adaptation and sharing of the new Agreed Syllabus in the last year. The new syllabus Believing and Belonging in West Yorkshire 2024 is now being implemented in schools across Calderdale, Bradford, Leeds and Kirklees.

#### **Section 4. Collective Worship**

- Revisit CW at SACRE meetings once a year and offer joint visits for support / CW award.
- Create a collective worship award to encourage schools to reflect on their practise and then share with others as models of excellence. This will require volunteers from SACRE to support these school reviews.

#### **Section 5: Contribution of SACRE to promoting cohesion across the community**

- Strengthen links with Calderdale Interfaith and other organisations e.g. CICS
- Develop closer links with Calderdale Interfaith and ensure a presence during interfaith week and other school projects e.g. school visits.

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

#### **Meetings for 2023-24**

SACRE meetings and themes for 2024-2025 have been provisionally arranged for these dates 16<sup>th</sup> October 2024 (Work Plan and data analysis), 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2024 (agreeing the annual report), 11<sup>th</sup> March 2025 (Collective Worship Monitoring), 17<sup>th</sup> June 2025( AGM and links with the LA). For more information contact the clerk,

[debby.simpson@calderdale.gov.uk](mailto:debby.simpson@calderdale.gov.uk)

#### **Priorities for 2024 - 25**

- Continue to embed the new Local Agreed Syllabus.
- Introduce a new Inclusive Collective Worship Award to schools and visit 10 schools across the borough.
- Continue working with the School Effectiveness Service and Cluster officers to identify schools for support and professional conversations e.g. North Halifax
- Continue developing links with Calderdale Interfaith Council to plan for joint projects e.g. school visits.
- Continue to work with the LA to receive timely information on the GCSE data in order to identify schools for support.

## **Section Two: Statutory Responsibilities: Religious Education**

### **The Local Agreed Syllabus**

The Local Agreed syllabus, 'Believing and Belonging', is the statutory curriculum for all maintained schools in the borough. This syllabus is now shared with Bradford, Calderdale Kirklees and Leeds. Other 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 welcomes use of these resources by all local schools. Results from the recent SACRE survey of all schools in Calderdale demonstrated that the great majority of academies have adopted the local agreed syllabus.

The Syllabus was agreed by a Local Agreed Syllabus Conference in March 24 and a series of launch and training events took place over the summer term in each local authority area. This syllabus is based on the work of the Big Ideas team from Exeter University and follows six pathways or key concepts which are progressively taught in all years from EYFS to KS5. In addition to the syllabus a series of core and focus units of work have been developed. These are detailed schemes of work to enable teachers to teach the subject well in schools. Each phase of school will teach six core units of work over two or three years and will also be able to choose focus units to dig deeper into a particular faith/ belief.

### **Standards and Monitoring**

#### **Ofsted Reports Round Up**

An analysis of Ofsted reports in the borough was carried during the period of this report. A search was included for any reference to RE/ SMSC and understanding faiths and beliefs. There were many positive comments made in the reports.

#### **Positives**

- Leaders and staff show pupils how to treat everyone with kindness. This is helping pupils to develop respectful attitudes towards each other.
- They talk intelligently about individual liberty and how they should stand up for what they believe and what is right.



- The school's strong Christian ethos is central to leaders' vision to 'promote excellence in a caring, Christian community'. Pupils learn about the importance of values such as truthfulness through a programme of themed worship.
- The curriculum to support pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is well considered.
- Pupils talk about the importance of being 'respectful and resilient'.
- Pupils' moral development is supported through the relationships they build with staff. The 'MIRROR' values are used to help them to understand the impact of their actions on themselves and others. Leaders have broadened the range of books that promote pupils' understanding of different cultures and backgrounds.
- They have a rich knowledge of different religions and cultures. This knowledge and understanding shape their character and are the foundation for the high levels of respect that pupils consistently display towards others.
- Through a carefully planned and well-taught personal development curriculum, including an exciting range of guest speakers in assemblies, pupils develop a strong understanding of personal rights and responsibilities, the beliefs of different faiths and how to keep themselves safe.
- Pupils understand equality and learn about different faiths and cultures.
- They learn about different faiths and values.

### **Negatives**

- Some groups of pupils do not show tolerance and respect for others and discriminatory language and attitudes are present in some year groups.
- The personal, social, health and citizenship education and religious education curriculums are designed to teach pupils about being citizens in modern Britain. Sometimes, this content is not delivered in depth. Pupils do not have a clear understanding of different religions. They do not learn enough about the diversity of modern Britain.

SACRE has identified from this analysis schools that may require some additional support from the professional advisor.

### **Analysis of school website research**

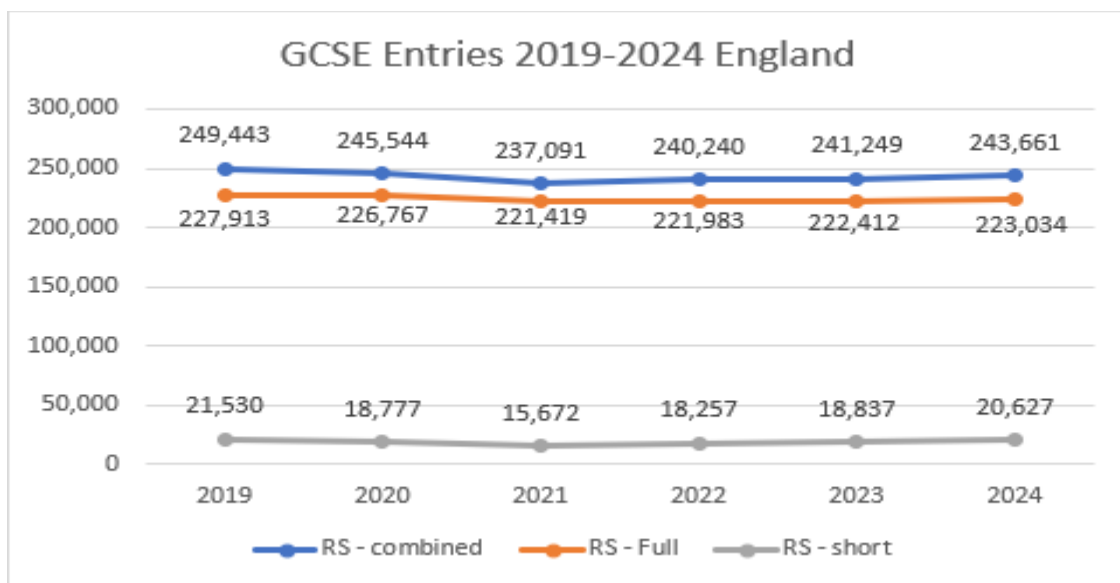
Our analysis of secondary school website research overall shows a positive experience at KS3 with schools using and adapting from the local agreed syllabus. It appears however that some schools do not offer a comprehensive programme of Religious Education at KS4 for those students who do not take an examined route. Some schools combine core RE with other subjects such as citizenship and PSHE. This means that students are not receiving their

full entitlement to the RE curriculum. As a SACRE we will be writing to all schools to remind them of the statutory nature of RE from age 5 to 18 and also of the benefits of a deep and meaningful RE to other aspects of personal development.

**Examination results**

GCSE and A Level results for 2024 were not available again at a local level when this report was published. This has meant that SACRE could not fulfil one of its core duties to monitor the effectiveness of RE in the borough.

National figures for GCSE entry remain steady, with a slight increase in both full course and short course uptake.



**RE Quality Mark**

We are delighted to report that Todmorden High School have achieved the Gold Award in REQM. The Gold Award in REQM recognises the sustained and substantial support for RE locally through the subject leader providing highly effective assistance in other schools locally and a commitment to support local and regional groups.

Additionally, Calderdale 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. We are immensely proud of Greetland Academy who achieved the SACRE RE Award in July 24.

## Professional development and support for schools

### General support

During the year this professional support continued through Pennine Learning, a small local company specialising in RE and community cohesion. The team at Pennine Learning provide twenty-four days support per year in total, though this is arranged as flexibly as possible to facilitate effective working with schools and others. They also support SACREs and RE in Leeds and Kirklees, enabling appropriate collaboration and partnership.

Through the School Effectiveness Service and the RE consultants, support has been available to schools, and used by teachers, in several ways, including:

- Development of the syllabus and its schemes of work, including prompt response to queries or difficulties.
- Consultancy over specific or general RE issues, including advice about withdrawal from RE.
- Availability by phone, email or virtual meetings.
- Support for schools wishing to develop and improve RE following Ofsted inspections.

### Training

This year courses have included a termly primary RE network meeting, a day course for new RE coordinators.

The secondary RE network is organised in partnership with Kirklees and Leeds and is open to teachers from all three local authorities.

A successful series of twilight webinars on subject knowledge of world faiths took place over the academic year and included guests from faith communities. These were held in cooperation with partner local authorities. In the coming year a full range of CPD and consultancy will be available through the Calderdale Strategic Improvement Plan.



### RE Reviews and SACRE RE Award

The review and award continue to be available on line and face to face. A small number of schools have worked with a consultant to review their RE provision using the award framework. A 'Deep Dive' in Religious Education is also offered to schools. This half-day session focuses on a review of curriculum provision, looking at its scope, rigour and sequencing. These opportunities are promoted via RE networks and our half termly newsletter.

## **Other information**

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

- RE Policy
- Withdrawal from RE
- Collective Worship
- Celebrating Diversity
- Engaging with faith communities
- Sensitivity to Faith in Schools (Sharing the Journey)

In addition, a half termly newsletter and index of resources is available to all schools, together with a directory of possible visits and visitors.

## **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. This will include offering an award for schools offering inclusive collective worship.

### **Complaints and determinations**

There were no complaints made during the year to SACRE about Collective Worship. There is one determination to vary statutory requirements in a maintained school in Calderdale and this has been reviewed this year. Responsibility for determinations in English academies and free schools rest with the Schools Funding Agency.

### **Professional development and support for schools**

Through the consultant, SACRE is always ready to advise or support schools on request. It has been noted that some SACRE members are well-placed to support collective worship in schools and opportunities for discussion about this will be included to support collective worship reviews in 24-25. A half-day course on planning for collective worship/ inclusive assemblies will be offered in the academic year to aid schools in developing an effective and inspiring programme. It is hoped that SACRE members will become more involved in practical support and monitoring. These questions may be helpful to SACRE members 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. Guidance is also provided to schools in fulfilling statutory obligations over collective worship and promoting good SMSC development.

## **Section Four: Links with other organisations**

SACRE has active links with the following organisations:

- National Association of SACREs (NASACRE)
- West Yorkshire SACREs (WYSACRE)
- The Association of RE Inspectors, Advisers and Consultants (AREIAC)
- Local faith organisations and interfaith groups
- Calderdale School Effectiveness Service
- RE Today Services
- National RE Hubs
- And other local organisations and charities such as Equilibria

## Section Five: Other areas of involvement

### Welcoming Schools

Visits to local places of worship and links with faith communities continue to be promoted to fulfil our obligation to promote fundamental values of respect and tolerance. As in-person visits have resumed following the pandemic, we want to broaden pupils' experience and perspectives of the faith communities in Calderdale. A directory of faith visits and visitors is regularly updated. It includes individuals from faith communities who are willing to come into school and bring some direct engagement and an opportunity for dialogue. It also includes some general information about places and organisations. We have worked with Sail Suleman and the Calderdale Interfaith Council to support school visits and visitors in Calderdale.

It is anticipated that 'virtual' sessions will continue to be offered and promoted alongside in-person visits and events.



Free training is offered to faith communities in order to inform them of the requirements of the Calderdale RE Syllabus, and to support them in hosting visits from schools. Training was offered in-person at venues in Leeds and Kirklees. Some SACRE members have participated in training and this project continues to build up worthwhile links between schools and faith communities. Calderdale SACRE have prioritised working more closely with Calderdale Interfaith Council to support publicity and participation in training events.

An audit tool and consultancy support is available for promoting tolerance and understanding of different faiths in schools. This has been promoted via the Pennine Learning website and in RE networks.



## **Westhill Project**

Leeds SACRE had been awarded a Westhill grant to support Religious Education in the local area. Alongside some additional funding from Kirklees and Calderdale SACREs, this grant funded the production of two professionally produced films to introduce young people to a synagogue and a gurdwara in Leeds. Interviews with representatives from the two faith communities have been filmed and edited along with footage of worship and activity in the places of worship themselves. The films are offered to schools, alongside supporting materials and the option of a live session online or in person with representatives of the faith community.

As a SACRE we are hoping to expand the range of videos and interviews of lived experience through applying for different grants e.g. Culham St Gabriels.

## **Faith sensitivities**

During the past few years Calderdale SACRE has worked with partners in Leeds, Kirklees, Oldham and Tameside to produce advice on sensitivity to issues relating to faith in schools. This is available to schools as practical information and support to school leaders and is called 'Sharing the Journey.' This has been re issued to all schools in the borough to ensure continuity in approach to areas such as religious dress, fasting and prayer.

## Section Six: Calderdale SACRE arrangements

Calderdale MBC funds the operation of SACRE by contracting its consultants, providing a clerk and supporting its work through links with senior education officers.

SACRE membership includes representatives from all four constituent committees.

Group A	Faith communities except for the Church of England
Group B	Anglican representatives
Group C	Teachers and schools
Group D	Calderdale MBC

Membership and attendance for 2023-4 was as follows:

Name	Representing	## ## ## ## ##	## ## ## ## ##	## ## ## ## ##	## ## ## ## ##
Jake Womack	Pentecostal	P	A	P	A
Peter Baron	Baptist	A	A	A	A
Maryam Siddiqa	Islam	A	A	A	A
Dipan Mistry	Hindu	A	P	S	P
Robert Fox	Methodist	A	P	A	A
David Hymas	Catholic	A	A	A	A
Patricia Boyd	C of E	P	A	A	A
James Allinson	C of E	A	P	A	A
Helen Lever	C of E	P	P	A	P
Shelagh Hirst	C of E	P	P	P	P
Janet Laphorne	C of E	P	P	P	P
Mark Sharp	Primary Headteacher	P	P	P	P
Katie Jennings	Primary Teacher	A	A	P	A
Simon Bedford	Primary Teacher	A	P	A	A
Helen Crowther	Primary Headteacher	P	A	P	A
Ruth Walker	Secondary School Teacher			P	P
Dot Foster	LA	P	P	P	P
Brenda Monteith	LA	P	P	A	P
Ann Kingstone	LA	A	A	A	A

SACRE needs to ensure there continues to be consistent attendance and needs more teacher representatives. 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. Training is provided by NASACRE and offered to SACRE members including an induction pack.

## Section Seven: Advice to the Local authority

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

1. To review the funding of SACRE to ensure it is in line with national recommendations and good practice.
2. To review the membership of SACRE to ensure it reflects the breadth and diversity of the borough 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 investigate the provision of RE for non-examined students at KS4 in all schools.
5. To investigate how SACRE can work effectively with Calderdale Interfaith Council and the Communities team to ensure effective community cohesion.

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, Debby Simpson [debby.simpson@calderdale.gov.uk](mailto:debby.simpson@calderdale.gov.uk)