



City of
Doncaster
Council

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE)

Annual Report 2023/2024



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SECTION 1: Introduction

1.1 Words from the Chair of SACRE

The year 2023-24 has seen significant progress in the work of the SACRE. Membership, as ever, moves on. We have lost 2 members representing B'hai and have welcomed an additional 2 members representing the Teaching association. After a long association we have said goodbye to our adviser, with many thanks for their expert advice and guidance and welcomed a colleague from RE Today in their place.

The Westhill project has been a great success. Two of our teacher members, worked tirelessly to put on a day's Festival of Faith and Ideas at Willow primary school. The day was a great success involving pupils from several primary schools and their teachers in a range of activities across several religions and world views. Thanks are due to the headteacher and staff of Willow and many congratulations to the team.

The SACRE has provided a lot of very high quality CPD for primary school teachers during the year. Efforts to involve secondary schools have been less successful but we have hopes that, as communication systems develop

The Doncaster SACRE has had a busy year. The Agreed Syllabus Conference has been a particular focus and a lot of work has gone into exploring various possibilities and deciding who might be invited to tender for providing the base syllabus. Pennine Learning has been chosen and we are now collaborating with them to ensure that the syllabus is ready in suitable time for full implementation in the Autumn Term 2025. To ensure continuity we have extended the current syllabus for one year. We have embarked on a programme of educating ourselves and schools in the changes that are on the way and planning a launch in the Spring.

Finally, I should say how very grateful and admiring I am of the members of both the SACRE and the City Council in the work they have done during the year. RE is a vital subject for children and for society. Members can rightly be proud of what they are doing.

Bob Kiddle, SACRE Chair



1.2 SACRE Overview

The Doncaster SACRE has met once each term to progress its work, structuring this through an agreed action plan. All meetings for this year were hybrid taking place in person and online via Microsoft Teams. These meetings were all live-streamed.

Brief overview of meetings, showing main items discussed.

Standing items for our meetings usually include:

- Welcome and apologies
- Approval of minutes of previous meeting
- Matters arising
- Update on Doncaster schools
- Development plan and budget
 - Feedback from teacher networks and training opportunities
 - National updates relating to education and RE
 - NASACRE updates
 - SACRE projects
 - AOB
 - Dates of future meetings.

19 October 2023

As well as standing items, the following agenda items were discussed:

An account of the SEND Day held on 12th July 2023 which included practical ways to support children with special needs, opportunities for sensory play, examples of children learning and discovering/participating in new experiences, ten case studies that gave practical examples of how different people looked to support children in different ways and how to introduce children to all religions.

Thirty-eight delegates had travelled from across the country to take part, The feedback was very positive.

A presentation from the RE Lead for Rowena Academy, which outlined how RE is taught at the school. We learned that the school follows the RE Today scheme of work from nursery up to year 2 covering a wide range of religions and world views. Students participate in one RE lesson per week.

Children know and understand there are many different religions and how that can have an impact on the world and people's behaviours. They are encouraged to celebrate different religions, and to understand that people have different beliefs.

Whilst each religion is covered throughout the RE lessons taught in school, each year group has a particular focus on one religion throughout the duration of the academic year.

At the end of each term the whole school take part in a festival day celebrating a chosen religion. A different religion is chosen for each festival day.

The Local Authority's Head of Service for Education and Skills, gave a brief verbal update with regard to the communication between SACRE and schools. It was reported that one of the priorities for SACRE during the next academic year would be to continue to raise SACRE's profile. Therefore, every half term there will be a different focus on SACRE and RE posted in the Edulog system. It was noted that The Chair of SACRE now also has a specified email address within the Edulog system.

Strengthening the membership of SACRE by recruiting representatives of other religions and by succession planning so that there would always be people able and willing to take up important roles within the SACRE.

Our priorities for the coming year.

- To continue the profile raising of SACRE
- To continue with CPD and seek further opportunities
- To review the RE syllabus
- To evaluate the curriculum, offer and SMSC offer in schools is across all phases.

It was explained that these priorities should culminate within the SACRE annual report. It suggested that an action plan be implemented to help strengthen those priorities further.

Data was presented to show what the Department for Education collect through their annual statistical survey which showed the number of teaching hours by subject for Doncaster Secondary Schools.

The data highlighted that those schools of religious character were better at providing a suitable amount of time teaching Religious Education to students. Also, that there were two schools listed that reported hardly any time was given to teaching RE.

SACRE were advised that the data showed that Doncaster secondary schools were providing very minimal amounts of curriculum time to the study of RE and world views.

The Yorkshire and Humber RE Hub gave SACRE a brief overview of RE Hubs, what they are, and the work that is conducted.

Members were advised that the RE Hubs project began last year, to map the breadth of support for RE and world views in each region in England and Wales, and to highlight and strengthen any gaps in provision. The RE Hub aims to build relationships, provide support and resources the SACREs, teachers and other stakeholders in every region. It was recognised that the RE Hubs were a national initiative with national support.

The RE Hubs wished to highlight the RE Hubs offer free accredited training to RE providers across the country which allows organisations that complete training to obtain a nationally recognised kitemark, and a presence on the hub's website. The

website allows the trained organisations and speakers to share their events and training within a calendar that schools and teachers can view.

The first steps towards an agreed syllabus were discussed. It was decided to start with a questionnaire to all stakeholders to inform the process.

A brief verbal overview on Rotherham SACRE was provided. It was advised that whilst Rotherham SACRE has a very small membership which limits the work it can do, it would be beneficial to work with neighbouring SACRE's. It was also noted that Sheffield SACRE had expressed an interest in partnership working.

24 February 2024

As well as standing items, the following agenda items were discussed:

Progress with preparations for the Festival of Faith and Ideas planned for the 25th June

Advertising the CPD provided for teachers by SACRE

Lengthy discussions about the Agreed Syllabus Conference – plans, membership, ideas, timetable and compiling a checklist of things to consider:

- EYFS
- SEND
- Strengthening the place of non-religious world views
- Responding to OFSTED
- Responding to the Commission on RE
- Updating links between syllabus and scheme of work
- More use of census information

The results from the questionnaire were discussed

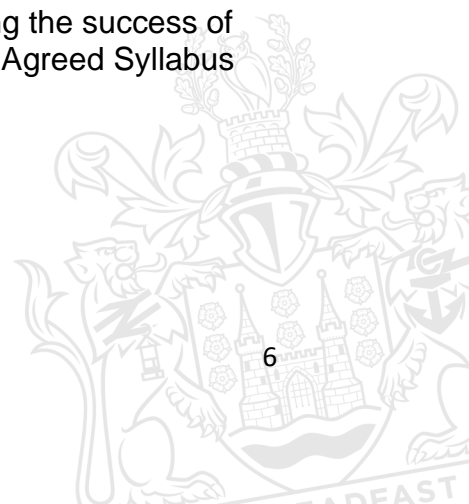
The Ofsted report into RE in schools was discussed at some length.

Results from the questionnaire were discussed.

Our continued membership of NASACRE

Our Resource directory is not having much traction and its function is now duplicated by the RE Hub which also has the resources to manage it.

Some targets for the SACRE were discussed – notably: Optimising the success of the Festival of Faith and Ideas, membership and, particularly, the Agreed Syllabus Conference.



25 July 2024

The Chair, gave notice that he would be standing down as chair at the end of 2024 or earlier if a suitable candidate could be found.

There was in depth discussion about the Agreed Syllabus Conference (see below)

The Chair provided a brief verbal update to the Committee with regard to the Westhill Festival of Faith and Ideas. It had been a hugely successful day and had been well managed, organised and facilitated.

RE Today advisor, updated members on the following:

- Ofsted report on Religious Education
- New toolkit produced to support delivery of RE
- GCSE figures had risen in schools nationally, whereas the number of students taking A-Level RE had fallen.
- NASACRE Webinar information was provided.

Members also received an update with regard to the standard of RE in schools and where success was achieved, and problems faced. The Committee was informed that RE Today's findings implied that the RE Curriculum in schools across the country placed the substance to support children in a very complex world, and improvements were required in order to ensure that children had the tools to live in multi religious and multi secular society.

One point that Members noted was that many teachers in schools had not received subject-based professional development in this area and given the complexity of the subject was recommended. The paper presented to members by RE Today provided a number of recommendations for schools nationally, in order to bring about improvements in the teaching of religious education.



SECTION 2: RE (statutory responsibilities)

2.1 The locally agreed syllabus and RE in schools

Our SACRE Locally Agreed Syllabus was published late in 2018 to provide for RE from 2019-2024. This syllabus, a collaboration with RE Today Services, provides a thorough, plural, and rigorous basis for RE 4-19 in our schools and is warmly commended to – and widely used by – many of our Academy schools. The detailed schemes of work that go with the syllabus are available to schools for purchase at reasonable prices and many of our schools use these. The syllabus is regularly discussed at primary teachers' network meetings, with the training elements of these meetings often focussing on aspects of the syllabus.

We have, this year been reviewing our agreed syllabus.

At its meeting on 22nd February 2024 the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) considered the results of a stakeholder survey into the current RE

Syllabus and RE provision in schools. At the same meeting, the SACRE also took the decision to establish an Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC), which has the same membership as SACRE. The role of the ASC being to produce an agreed Religious Education Syllabus, which is educationally sound, meets legal requirements and may be adopted by the local authority.

At its meeting on 25th July 2024 the SACRE was provided with an update from the Chair of the Agreed Syllabus Conference on the progress made with the new RE syllabus, including information on the options that had been considered and the processes followed to commission an external partner as the provider of a syllabus for Religious Education in Doncaster Schools.

The options for the design and implementation of a new syllabus the future needs of a syllabus within Doncaster had been considered as well as potential costs, impact on the quality of teaching and learning, pupil progress and effectiveness of monitoring arrangements. The following three options were considered:

Option 1 - the design and implementation of a fully bespoke syllabus

Option 2- use of a franchised syllabus which meets statutory requirements but has enhanced features and options such as teaching materials and resources that can be adapted to meet the needs of pupils and teachers.

Option 3 - Use a franchised syllabus but without the enhanced options of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and extra materials. The following three options for the implementation resolved to support Option 2 which is a franchised syllabus.

The conference supported = Option 2 - a “franchised syllabus” which meets statutory requirements and has enhanced features and options such as teaching materials and continuous professional development which meets the needs of Doncaster young people and teachers.

It was decided to commission an external partner to produce the new agreed syllabus in consultation with the members of Doncaster SACRE’s appointed ASC.

Following a corporate commissioning process, Pennine Learning were awarded a contract worth £12,000 to develop and launch a Locally Agreed RE syllabus in conjunction with SACRE’s appointed ASC that will meet statutory requirements and provide robust support for implementation, providing high quality training and resources for curriculum planning.

Pennine Learning has expertise in this field and similar successful work in other local authorities and regional neighbouring SACREs. Pennine Learning is an organisation established to support RE education including training, consultancy, and resources for schools, local authorities, and others.

Key areas include:

- Religious education (Religion and Worldviews)
- Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development (SMSC) and Fundamental Values
- Equity, diversity, and inclusion

At its meetings on 5th September and 23rd October 2024 members of the ASC were consulted both on the content of the syllabus itself and were invited to make contributions to it. It was decided that the launch event was confirmed will take place on 9th May 2025 at Ecopower Stadium, Doncaster.

The new syllabus includes a specific introduction that sets the syllabus within the local context of Doncaster’s support for RE and the Council’s strategic priorities including the Choose Kindness movement and the Education and Skills 2030 Strategy.

The new syllabus will be for all maintained schools in the City or in accordance with the school’s designated denomination or trust deeds. All schools must teach religious education to pupils at every key stage. Academies, Free Schools and Voluntary – aided schools with a religious character can choose to follow another agreed syllabus or adopt their own.

At its meeting on 14th November 2024 the Chair of the ASC will recommend the 2025 Locally Agreed RE Syllabus to the SACRE and the Local Authority. At the same meeting, the Chair of the ASC will recommend that the SACRE confirms its decision to continue with the 2019 RE syllabus until the end of the 2024/25

Academic Year and commence with the new 2025 RE syllabus from September 2025.

2.3 Teacher training and materials and advice for schools

Training and networking opportunities for teachers provided by Doncaster SACRE.

Teacher network meetings:

Primary teachers continued to attend termly network meetings. These are usually for half a day, on the same day as SACRE, and were delivered by our RE consultant of RE Today covering a wide range of topics and always including valuable teaching and learning help and advice.

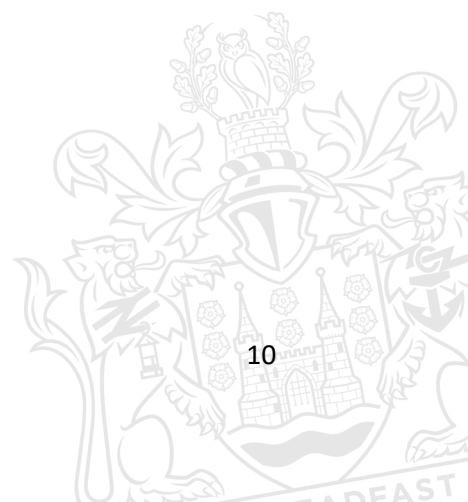
The training focus for each meeting continues to be decided democratically by the teachers attending the previous network meeting. Teachers attending the network meetings are always enthusiastic. They openly share good practice with one another as well as exchanging ideas and discussing concerns. Teachers of varying experience continue to participate at network meetings, which provide a constructive and supportive forum for teachers to develop their practice in the teaching of RE and engagement with collective worship.

2.4 Other information

The SACRE is not aware of any complaints regarding RE in the Local Authority's schools.

2.5 Advice to the Local Authority

SACRE has not provided specific advice to schools in the local authority this academic year.



SECTION 3: Collective Worship (statutory responsibilities)

3.1 Standards and monitoring of CW

Ofsted have not raised any concerns with regards to the compliance with the law or standards in relation to collective worship in Doncaster's schools.

3.2 Determinations

Doncaster SACRE has not received any applications for determinations.

3.3 Teacher training provided (locally, or national training circulated to schools)

Doncaster SACRE provides extensive training and networking opportunities its schools. Training requirements are determined by teacher requests at network meetings. As teachers have indicated that their training needs relate to RE, no specific training has been provided this year relating to collective worship.

3.4 Materials and advice for schools

The SACRE has distributed all relevant information relating to supporting collective worship in schools via termly network meetings and updates in the Local Authority's newsletter.

3.5 Other information

The SACRE is not aware of any complaints regarding collective worship in the Local Authority's schools.

3.6 Advice to the LA

The SACRE has not given any specific advice to the Local Authority this academic year.



SECTION 4: Links with other bodies

4.1 National bodies

Doncaster SACRE is an active member of NASACRE. SACRE members are given the opportunity each year, paid for by SACRE, to attend the NASACRE Conference and AGM, as well as NASACRE's programme of online training events.

Doncaster SACRE has worked closely with RE Today to provide a varied and extensive programme of training to teachers. It actively encourages teachers and schools to become members of NATRE (National Association for Teachers of RE).

4.2 Local bodies

The Doncaster SACRE has established and active links with local communities and seeks to enhance these links via the REsources directory as this is developed.

SECTION 5: Other areas of SACRE involvement locally

We have had contacts with our RE Hub which is largely replacing the role playing by our own REsources directory.

SECTION 6: SACRE's own arrangements (statutory responsibilities)

6.1 Professional and administrative support and how the LA supports the SACRE

The LA provides the SACRE with an annual budget to fund its work, enabling it to fulfil its statutory duties as well as deliver training and network meetings to teachers.

The LA provides a clerk to the SACRE and organises SACRE meetings through its democratic services unit.

Elected councillors and senior Education staff are pro-active members of the SACRE, and whole-heartedly support the SACRE's work.



6.2 Membership, representation & recruitment

The SACRE is active in recruiting members to represent all groups. It also considers co-opting those with skills, knowledge and experience who can help to develop its work.

Membership vacancies are discussed at meetings alongside the SACRE development plan and recruitment of new members keen to get involved is ongoing.

SACRE meetings are mostly quorate.

6.3 Training for SACRE (and ASC) members

All new SACRE members receive a guide to SACRE and the responsibilities associated with SACRE membership. The SACRE Clerk, LA Officer and RE Advisor are on hand to advise SACRE members.

Members are invited to attend training provided for schools.

They are also offered a place at the NASACRE Conference and AGM, paid for by the SACRE, and are also encouraged to attend the online training events provided by NASACRE throughout the academic year. In addition, SACRE meetings sometimes incorporate presentations from the SACRE advisor on key topics.

6.4 Finance given to SACRE for its work

The LA is moving from an ad-hoc model towards a budget matched to a future facing development plan informed by comparison with the recommended 2% of the LA's central school's services budget.



SECTION 7: Appendices

7.1 Results of External Religious Studies examinations: short and full GCSE, A/S & A Level RS

The Local Authority is awaiting the published datasets from the DfE.

7.3 LA/SACRE policy statements on Religious Education or Collective Worship

The Local Authority does not have a policy statement on Religious Education or Collective Worship.

7.5 Circulation details for this Annual Report

Copies will be sent electronically to the relevant bodies. This report will be available on the Doncaster Local Authority and NASACRE websites for interested parties to download.

- Director of Children's Services, Doncaster Borough Council
- Lead member for Children's Services, Doncaster Borough Council
- The Department for Education (Central Government)
- NASACRE (National Association of Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education)
- Headteachers and Governing Bodies of all Doncaster Schools
- All members of Doncaster SACRE

