

Gloucestershire Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE)

Annual Report

September 2023 - August 2024

Foreword

Welcome to the Annual Report for Gloucestershire SACRE for 2023/24

It has been an incredibly busy year for Gloucestershire SACRE and I am pleased to present this annual report which details the activities and work of SACRE over the last year.

I stepped in to the role of Chair last year, following in the footsteps of our previous chair of 5 years, Matthew Morgan. On behalf of Gloucestershire SACRE, I would like to thank Matthew for his commitment to SACRE for well over 10 years and for his illustrious stewardship as chair. Also moving on from SACRE this year are Jennifer Silverstone (Jewish representative), Angie Lamburn (ATL) representative and Neil Grecian (Methodist). I would like to thank them all for their valuable contributions to the work of SACRE over the years and wish them well in their future endeavours.

As one door closes, another door opens, and we have been delighted to welcome new members to SACRE this year. I would like to thank all members who give their time, energy and support to SACRE, faith representatives, teachers, LA officers and councillors alike. Thanks too, to the Headteacher and Governors of Sir Thomas Rich's School, Gloucester for accommodating meetings at the school.

The work of SACRE is important. The dedication, passion and contributions of our members ensure that we are able to reflect on our provision of RE, consider the local and national landscapes and make decisions on future actions. We are extremely fortunate to receive expert support and guidance from Stephen Pett, National RE Adviser with RE Today, and we benefit greatly from his in-depth knowledge and understanding of religious education and his tireless work.

As Gloucestershire SACRE we are committed to promoting and supporting high quality RE in Gloucestershire schools and to this end, the last year has had a strong focus on the review and design of a new agreed syllabus for Gloucestershire. This has been a huge undertaking, and we have drawn on the expertise and views of our members, taken in to account the national updates as well as canvassing the opinions of stakeholders to ensure their views have been heard.

We are entering an exciting time as our new syllabus is due to be launched in the summer term 2025. A great deal of consideration has been given to recent developments in RE and the shift to include worldviews. Our new syllabus takes account of the Handbook for curriculum writers, Developing a Religion and Worldviews approach in Religious Education in England, 2024 and is being written with the needs of our children, and the needs of those educating them, at the forefront to ensure our young people have access to high quality religious education in Gloucestershire.

Julia Matson
Chair, Gloucestershire SACRE
January 2025

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1. Introduction

1.1. Overview of the work of SACRE

- 1.1.1. The Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) is a statutory body set up to advise the Local Authority on matters related to religious education and collective worship. Its members are drawn from teachers, Local Authority representatives including Councillors, faith representatives from the Church of England and a range of Christian denominations, and representatives from other religious and non-religious groups represented in the region.
- 1.1.2. SACRE's key functions include monitoring the provision and quality of RE, and providing advice and support on the effective teaching of RE in accordance with the agreed syllabus. This includes advice on methods of teaching, choice of teaching material and provision of teacher training. This is primarily done through the review and implementation of the locally agreed syllabus, a process which is required every five years. This is followed by on-going monitoring of its effectiveness in the light of changing national education policy.
- 1.1.3. It is a legislative requirement that each SACRE produces an annual report of its work and that this is published, sent to the local authority, to NASACRE and to other interested parties such as the Department for Education.
- 1.1.4. This year, SACRE has been engaged in the on-going process of developing a new agreed syllabus, for launch in 2025. It held three meetings of the Agreed Syllabus Conference followed by SACRE at Sir Thomas Rich's School, Oxleaze, Gloucester Tuesday 7 November 2023, Friday 15 March 2024 and Friday 5 July 2024. All three meetings were hybrid, with the in-person meeting at the school also accessible via Teams.
- 1.1.5. The Chair is Matthew Morgan, Headteacher at Sir Thomas Rich's School and representative for ASCL. He moves to another school for September 2024. The role of Chair will be Julia Matson, Headteacher at Barnwood Park Primary School. The Local Authority Officer is Teresa Cross, Education Lead, Education Outcomes and Intervention.
- 1.1.6. Standing items in meetings:
 - Welcome
 - Apologies for absence
 - Minutes and matters arising
- 1.1.7. A brief overview of each meeting can be found below:

7 November 2023, Agreed Syllabus Conference

- Revising the agreed syllabus: update on progress
- Reflecting on how to develop case studies

SACRE

- SACRE constitution
- Support for teachers: RE Hubs, GSP Best Practice Network
- Evaluations on secondary conference 2023
- Proposed outline on primary conference 2024
- Proposed outline on Three Counties secondary conference 2024

- National RE news update

14 March 2024, Agreed Syllabus Conference

- Agreed Syllabus Review draft
- Feedback from primary teachers
- Syllabus launch conferences 2025 plans

SACRE

- Support for teachers: RE Hubs, GRETA (secondary network)
- Update on primary conference 2024
- Proposed outline on primary conference 2024
- Update on Three Counties secondary conference 2024
- REaction award: applications and awards, criteria for Gold award
- Visits and Visitors Guide
- National RE news update

Monday 24 June, Agreed Syllabus Conference

- Agreed Syllabus Review draft
- Feedback from primary teacher groups
- Dates, venues and programme for syllabus launch conferences 2025

SACRE

- Support for teachers: RE Hubs, GRETA
- Feedback on primary conference 2024
- REaction Award applications and awards
- Visits and Visitors Guide
- National SACRE news update
- Teacher support (network meetings)

2. Religious Education (RE)

2.1. The locally agreed syllabus and RE in schools

- 2.1.1. The Gloucestershire agreed syllabus was launched in 2017. It set out a pedagogy based on three elements: enabling pupils to make sense of beliefs, understand their impact in people's lives, and make connections between their studies and their own understanding of the world and of themselves. Feedback from schools has been very positive. The Agreed Syllabus Conference was established in February 2021 for review. One decision taken was to extend the current 2017-2022 syllabus to 2025. This was partly to take into account the challenge of the pandemic, with its impact on how much RE time has realistically been given during lockdowns and during catchup. This meant that the syllabus would not have had its full five-year use. A second reason was to allow for more progress in the RE Council's Religion and Worldviews Project (final report published May 2024), so that it could inform the review.
- 2.1.2. Feedback was sought from teachers at the annual conferences. The initial plan was to apply the Religion and Worldviews (RW) approach as set out in the Draft Handbook (2022) and then the final Handbook for Curriculum Writers (2024) to the 2017 syllabus. That is, to adapt the current syllabus to a new approach. However, in 2024 SACRE agreed that this would result in a hybrid that would not best serve

the interests of pupils or teachers, and so the SACRE agreed to apply an approach that fulfils the RE Council's National Statement of Entitlement (NSE) directly, building a pedagogy around the elements of the NSE: content, engagement, position. The launch will take place in summer 2025.

2.2. Standards and monitoring of RE

- 2.2.1. GCSE and A level Religious Studies examinations data can be seen in Appendix 3 below. At present, exam results from 2024 are unvalidated. SACRE thanks teachers who have supported students and taught them in extremely difficult circumstances.
- 2.2.2. SACRE regularly reviews school workforce survey data when it is available, reviewing school websites and surveying schools to explore provision further.
- 2.2.3. Ofsted reports can also provide a way of monitoring RE. The new Ofsted inspection framework and RE research review appear to be bringing a renewed focus on RE in schools where RE was struggling to get sufficient curriculum time.

2.3. Teacher training and materials and advice for schools

Network meetings

- 2.3.1. The Diocese of Gloucester runs online and face to face hub groups for primary schools, run by hub leaders who are supported with training by the Diocesan adviser, Debbie Helme. The groups meet termly and are attended by teachers from Church of England schools and community schools and academies. The Diocese runs its own annual art competition. As well as the hub groups, the Diocese provides training sessions on:
 - Preparing for SIAMS Inspections
 - Subject leadership in RE
 - Collective Worship
 - Spirituality
 - Responding to bereavement

SACRE primary RE conference, 1 July 2024

- 2.3.2. The annual primary RE conference took place in person at Puckrup Hall. 115 teachers attended, along with SACRE members. It was led by Stephen Pett, Lat Blaylock and Fiona Moss from RE Today. Ruth Flanagan from University of Exeter did the keynote address.

2.3.3. The programme was as follows:

Keynote 1: 'Don't underestimate the Force!' Ruth Flanagan, University of Exeter

Workshop A:

A1. RE and spiritual development Fiona Moss	A2. Ways of knowing 5-7s: hermeneutics with infants Lat Blaylock	A3. Engaging pupils' personal worldviews Stephen Pett
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Workshop B:

B1: Festivals and celebrations Fiona Moss	B2. Ways of knowing 7-11: philosophical approaches Lat Blaylock	B3. Employing worldviews in practice Ruth Flanagan
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Workshop C:

C1. Assessment in RE: the Basics Fiona Moss	C2. Ways of knowing 5-11: values and ethics Lat Blaylock	C3. Case studies in Islam with 5-7s Stephen Pett
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Keynote 2: Revising the Gloucestershire syllabus: update and response Stephen Pett

2.3.4. 90 teachers gave feedback. 94% rated the day as 'excellent' and 6% as 'good'.

Representative feedback included:

- *Wonderful setting, speakers, set-up and range of workshops. So well organised and communicated (such as parking info – thank you – as many of us are +1 hours away).*
- *Thank you ever so much – my favourite CPD event every year – your team is fantastic and the ideas explored are so important for development next steps. See you next year!*
- *Very well organised with knowledgeable professionals. The sessions were a good length and provided lots of ideas and resources.*
- *Very informative and useful. Given me a bit more knowledge and confidence leading the subject (I have only just started leading).*
- *Thoughtful – and inspired/challenging. Helped to create a vision of where RE heading.*
- *Always a joy and an inspiration! Always recommend it to new subject leaders. So many refreshing ideas to use in the classroom and encourage us.*
- *Don't underestimate the Force – wow! So thought-provoking. Great ideas to help children/staff find out about their own worldviews. Looking forward to trying some of these as always. Lots to take away.*
- *Fantastic ideas to take away – encouraging speakers who helped remind me why Re is a fun and important subject to teach.*

2.3.5. Teacher evaluations included details of what they planned to do as a result of the conference, some requests for future training. One of the seminars (Case studies in Islam) included draft units for the 2025 syllabus, and the final keynote set out the plans for the religion and worldviews approach to be taken in the syllabus. Both sessions gave teachers the opportunity for detailed feedback, which has been used in the review.

[SACRE Three Counties secondary RE conference, 25 June 2024](#)

2.3.6. Gloucestershire SACRE collaborates with Herefordshire and Worcestershire SACREs in putting on a secondary conference each year. The venue was Puckrup Hall Hotel near Tewkesbury. 30 delegates attended from the three counties.

2.3.7. The programme, and evaluations, were as follows:

	excellent	good	satisfactory
Explaining atheism: getting to grips with non-religion <i>Stephen Pett</i>	95%	5%	
Rich study of Islam at KS3 for exam excellence at GCSE and beyond... <i>Ian Nicholson</i>	75%	20%	5%
Worldviews: current research, excellent practice <i>Dr Chris Hancock</i>	58%	42%	
Beyond the spec: developing a coherent GCSE curriculum <i>Ian Nicholson</i>	65%	30%	5%
Encountering Jews, Hindus, Christians and Sikhs at KS3: real lives, real living <i>Stephen Pett</i>	67%	28%	5%
Venue: how do you rate it?	100%		
Overall value of the conference	95%	5%	

2.3.8. Representative feedback included:

- *Lovely opportunity to meet and reflect on our practice. Resources from RE Today are great.*
- *It has been fantastic for a non-specialist - everyone has been amazingly helpful.*
- *The level of knowledge assumed re Islam was too academic! As a newbie, it lost me so I didn't manage to access this bit.*
- *This has been really interesting for meeting other professionals in RE, and thinking about curriculum design through a worldview perspective was particularly helpful.*
- *Excellent - really insightful. My brain hurts, but in a good way! I'm excited to take this on as I start my teaching career. Thank you to everyone for such a great day.*
- *Really positive - affirming, encouraging and motivational.*
- *Really inspiring! Lots of new ideas which are easily accessible and will really engage students. The speakers made me think outside of the box, and want to go back to school and evaluate the curriculum.*
- *A day of reflection, inspiration and networking. So lovely to have face to face training again! RE is experiential and cannot always be delivered over a screen. Final session was exceptional.*
- *Wow! Could we please have more on Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhi, etc?*
- *Amazing content! The only issue is the applicability to groups with low ability/lack of basic knowledge.*
- *Always useful to meet others. And interact and share ideas. Such a wealth of ideas and knowledge among us.*

2.4. REaction award

2.4.1. Gloucestershire SACRE has been running its REaction award for four years now. It celebrates high quality RE in schools, with teachers demonstrating the impact of visits and visitors on pupils, involvement in a competition beyond the school (such as NATRE's Spirited Arts, and the impact of CPD on teachers. In 2023-2024, 6 schools have achieved the Bronze award, and 1 school has achieved the Silver award. At least 7 schools who achieved Bronze in previous year are applying for Silver in 2024-2025. The criteria for Gold are being established and schools will be able to apply in 2024-2025. SACRE representative, David Crunkhurn, has advertised the award at headteacher meetings, subject leader network meetings, and visited two schools to help them with their applications.

2.5. Other information

2.5.1. There were no formal complaints to SACRE about RE during the year.

2.6. Advice given to the local authority

2.6.1. No advice was given to the local authority.

3. Collective worship

3.1. Standards and monitoring of collective worship

3.1.1. SACRE has found it hard to monitor collective worship over the past few years.

3.2. Determinations

3.2.1. No applications for a determination (to alter the character of collective worship for some or all pupils in a school) have been requested in the year 2023-24.

3.3. Teacher training provided

3.3.1. No SACRE training on collective worship has been provided in 2023-24, although the Diocese of Gloucester continues to support its schools in this area.

3.4. Other information

3.4.1. There were no formal complaints to SACRE about collective worship during the year.

3.5. Advice given to the local authority

3.5.1. No advice was given to the local authority.

4. Links with other bodies

4.1. National bodies

- Gloucestershire SACRE is a member of NASACRE. Its newsletters are circulated to all members. Stephen Pett, adviser to SACRE, and Professor Trevor Cooling, Committee B, presented a workshop on the Worldviews Project to NASACRE members in February 2022.

- Stephen Pett, RE Today, connects SACRE with NATRE, and provides national updates at each meeting. Reports from NATRE, including the School Workforce Data and regular primary and secondary surveys have proved useful to SACRE when monitoring schools.
- Information from the RE Council has been used in meetings and shared with schools where appropriate.
- The REC Religion and Worldviews Project Handbook for Curriculum Writers on a religion and worldviews approach (May 2024) has been a helpful resource for discussion for SACRE, and in the shaping of the syllabus review.

4.2. Local bodies

- Gloucester Diocese provides excellent support to SACRE and local schools.

5. SACRE involvement in the local area

- 5.1.1. SACRE updates governors and headteachers on resources and training via briefings, the Heads Up and What's Up Gov bulletins.

6. Managing SACRE and partnership with the local authority

6.1. Professional and administrative support

6.1.1. Clerk to SACRE

Abbie Maskell
Executive Support Assistant
Gloucestershire County Council
Shire Hall, Westgate Street, Gloucester GL1 2TP

6.1.2. Local authority officer

Teresa Cross
Education Lead
Education Outcomes and Intervention
Gloucestershire County Council
Shire Hall, Westgate Street, Gloucester GL1 2TP

6.1.3. Adviser to SACRE

The local authority has a contract with RE Today Services. Stephen Pett is the RE Today national adviser who delivers the contract to Gloucestershire local authority and SACRE.
RE Today Services, S5-S6 1 Devon Way, Longbridge, Birmingham B31 2TS

6.2. Membership, representation and attendance

- 6.2.1. SACRE regularly reviews membership and seeks representation from local communities. Current vacancies, and repeated absences are discussed by the Chair and local authority officer. It also considers co-opting those with skills, knowledge and experience who can help to develop SACRE's work.

- 6.2.2. All groups have been represented according SACRE's terms of reference at each meeting.

6.3. Training for SACRE members

- 6.3.1. The SACRE Chair, local authority officer, clerk and RE adviser are on hand to advise SACRE members.
- 6.3.2. All members are invited to attend the training provided for schools. Several SACRE members attend the primary conference each year, providing support to the RE adviser and spending time meeting and supporting teachers. Members often attend NASACRE CPD and the SouthWest SACRE conference, reporting back to members.

Appendices

[Appendix 1: SACRE membership](#)

[Appendix 2: Circulation details for this annual report](#)

[Appendix 3: Gloucestershire examination results](#)

Appendix 1: SACRE membership

Group	Representative	7 Nov 2023	14 Mar 2024	24 Jun 2024
Group (A):				
Baha' i community	Jenny Lockwood to Nov 2023 Tanya George		✓	
Baptist community	David Crunkhurn (Vice Chair)			✓
Buddhist community	<i>Vacancy</i>			
Community Churches	<i>Vacancy</i>			
Gloucestershire Humanists	Sarah Pinegar	✓	✓	
Hindu community	Daxa Mehta	✓		
Jewish community	Jennifer Silverstone to Jul 2024 Jane Hill	✓	✓	
Methodist community	Neil Grecian to Jul 2024 Revd Rachael Leather		✓	
Muslim community	Atique Miah			
Pentecostal community	Howard Padley	✓	✓	✓
Quaker community	Chris Lee		✓	
Roman Catholic Church	<i>Vacancy</i>			
Salvation Army	Cliff Matthews			
Sikh community	<i>Vacancy</i>			
Unitarians	<i>Vacancy</i>			
United Reformed Church	<i>Vacancy</i>			
Group (B): Church of England representatives				
	Debbie Helme	✓	✓	✓
	Debbie Glover	✓		✓
	Trevor Cooling	✓	✓	
Group C: Teacher representatives				
NEU	Lynda Britton	✓		✓
NASUWT	Angie Lamburn to Jul 2024	✓		✓
NAHT	Julia Matson	✓	✓	✓
ASCL	Matthew Morgan (Chair) to Jul 2024	✓	✓	✓
Group D: Gloucestershire Council members				
LA Officer	Teresa Cross		✓	
Cabinet Member for Education	Cllr Philip Robinson			✓
In attendance				
Clerk to SACRE	Ros Ellinor (to autumn 2023) Abbie Maskell	✓	✓	✓
Adviser to SACRE	Stephen Pett, RE Today	✓	✓	✓

Appendix 2: Circulation details for this annual report

Copies of this annual report will be sent electronically to the relevant individuals and bodies below:

- Kirsten Harrison, Director of Children's Services, Gloucestershire LA
- Cllr Philip Robinson, Cabinet Member for Education, Gloucestershire LA
- The Department for Education (Central Government)
- NASACRE (National Association of Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education)
- Headteachers and Governing Bodies of Gloucestershire schools
- All members of Gloucestershire SACRE, for distribution to the bodies/communities they represent

Appendix 3: Gloucestershire examination results

The provisional data GCSE Religious Studies outcomes show:

Gloucestershire GCSE results

Number of GCSE entries	%9-5 Grades	% 9-4 grades	%9-1 grades
1574	62%	73%	98%

National GCSE results

Number of GCSE entries	%9-5 Grades	% 9-4 grades	%9-1 grades
209614	60%	71%	97%

Gloucestershire A level results

No of pupils	Number of A level entries	A*	A	B	C	D	E	U
	177	13	25	49	39	30	17	2
		7%	14%	28%	22%	17%	10%	1%

UK A level results 2024 (cumulative percentages by Grade)

No of pupils	Number of A level entries	A*	A	B	C	D	E	U
	14,477	883	2852	4155	3388	2012	840	347
		6%	20%	29%	23%	14%	8%	2%