

# **ISLE OF WIGHT LOCAL AUTHORITY**

The Standing Advisory Council  
for Religious Education  
Annual Report

**SCHOOL YEAR 2023-2024**

# **Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education Annual Report 2023/2024**

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## **CHAIR'S INTRODUCTION**

It has been my great privilege to represent the IOW Council on the Isle of Wight SACRE for a number of years now and I have been the chair of SACRE for the last two years. The Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) supports the effective provision of religious education and collective worship in schools. SACRE also advises the Local Authority on its provision of religious education.

The Isle of Wight SACRE membership draws from different faith and belief groups, and I am proud of the diversity and inclusion that makes up our dynamic group who all have a passion for and dedication to Religious Education. SACRE seeks to ensure all our schools offer the highest provision to enable our children and young people to explore their own spirituality and develop their own thinking in a way that is relevant to them. We fully support our Locally Agreed Syllabus Living Difference IV which provides an excellent framework for schools to use and adapt.

This year we have continued the important work of representing the Island both on a local level and also nationally, with attendance at the NASACRE and RE Hubs meeting for the South East, where it was a great opportunity to network with other SACRE members from across the South East of the country.

We have met regularly in 2023-2024, and I am grateful for the support that we have received from the IOW Council Democratic Services Team who make all of the necessary arrangements when we go "on the road" for our SACRE meetings in various locations around the island. Our termly monitoring group, of which I am a member, meets to evaluate the provision for Religious Education in our schools in more detail and helps to shape the agenda and action plan for the SACRE meetings. However, none of this would have been possible without the dedicated work and professionalism of our County Inspector and Adviser, Justine Ball. I offer her my sincere thanks for her continued guidance, advice and monitoring, both to the SACRE and our Island RE teachers, to ensure that the quality of our Island Religious Education provision remains high.

We have promoted the sharing of good practice through our teacher networks until March 2024 when new arrangements for training on the Island began and also support professional development for island teachers in both Primary and Secondary settings and keep them up to date with Religious Education matters.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all members of the Isle of Wight SACRE for their continued enthusiasm and commitment to our children and young people. It really is a genuine privilege to work alongside so many passionate people who give up their valuable time to support the continued development of the subject in order to enable our children and young people to experience religious education in a way which has meaning for them and that they can carry forward into their adult lives.

I am pleased to commend this report to you.

Debbie Andre  
Chair of SACRE

## **1. Information about SACRE**

### **1.1 Duty to establish a SACRE**

Since the Education Reform Act of 1988, all Local Education Authorities (LAs) have been required by law to constitute a Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) within their local area.<sup>1</sup>

### **1.2 What does a SACRE do?**

SACRE is a unique body; it is set up by the LA but is independent of it, with the role to give advice to that LA. The law states that Religious Education must be taught in all maintained schools<sup>2</sup> and a SACRE's role is to advise what needs to be done to improve religious education (RE) and collective worship for schools in its area.

The main purpose of the annual report is to hold the LA to account, by informing the Secretary of State and key partners what advice SACRE gave the LA during the year and how the LA responded to that advice. This includes advice on Religious Education and Collective Worship in those schools for which the LA has responsibility.

### **1.3 Composition of SACRE**

There are four groups or committees, as below:

- A: The Christian denominations and other religious denominations, reflecting the principal religious traditions of the area.
- B: The Church of England
- C: Teacher and head teacher associations
- D: The Local Authority

### **1.4 Membership of SACRE**

The names of the SACRE members and the religious denominations for each group can be found at Appendix A.

### **1.5 SACRE Functions**

- To advise the LA on collective worship and the Religious Education to be given in accordance with the agreed syllabus including methods of teaching, advice on materials and the provision of training for teachers
- To consider whether to recommend to the LA that its current agreed syllabus should be reviewed by convening an Agreed Syllabus Conference.
- To consider whether the requirement that religious worship in a county school should be 'broadly Christian in nature' should be varied (determinations).
- To report to the LA and the Department for Education (DfE) on its activities on an annual basis.

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<sup>1</sup> Education Act 1996 Section 390:1

<sup>2</sup> School and Standards Framework Act 1998 Section 69

## **Census data on the Isle of Wight 2021 shows that:**

43.9% of the population had no religion  
47.7% of the population are Christian  
0.4% of the population are Buddhist  
0.2% of the population are Hindu  
0.1% of the population are Jewish  
0.4% of the population are Muslim  
0.0% of the population are Sikh  
0.8% of the population are any other religion

## **2. Standards and Quality of Provision for Religious Education**

Within the Isle of Wight, advice is available to schools about RE in many different ways:

- The Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton Agreed Syllabus, Living Difference IV
- The Hampshire RE Moodle, which contains the syllabus, advice and both long term and medium-term planning for all teachers who use the syllabus
- The SACRE RE Advisor and the Hampshire Secondary RE Teaching and Learning Adviser
- The RE Curriculum site in addition to the RE Moodle, which Isle of Wight teachers are also able to use. The Curriculum site has further planning and resources which are all helpful to teachers in planning their curriculum.
- Primary RE News on-line publication, produced by Hampshire Inspectors is also available for Isle of Wight schools to subscribe to.
- Other published resources available to support the teaching of Living Difference IV through the Hampshire RE Centre in Winchester, such as primary teaching packs on a large range of different units. Isle of Wight teachers can purchase these packs at a reduced price throughout the year.

The Locally Agreed Syllabus emphasises the importance of high-quality Religious Education provision for all young people throughout their school life, including non examination, core Religious Education for KS4.

A survey on RE training and CPD was sent to Isle of Wight Headteachers in this reporting period.

90% reported that they followed the syllabus recommended exemplar plans available  
100 % use the syllabus End of Year Expectations to assess their RE and  
100% use the golden thread concepts required by the syllabus.

Compliance with the syllabus therefore is high. However, there is an optional opportunity to introduce a self-directed learning unit, pondering time and only 18% of the schools surveyed had introduced this. Further resources for this will be placed on the RE moodle to help schools with this if they wish to introduce it.

Those completing the survey asked for further training on:

non-religious traditions  
Ofsted requirements  
golden thread concepts and  
Buddhist traditions

This will be prioritised in the coming year.

## **GCSE Religious Studies examination results August 2023: overall findings**

The Island continues to see a gap from the national average with results at 4+ being 15% below national. This is a slight widening of the gap from 2019 when it was 12%.

It was noted that only a small number of pupils sat GCSE RS this year and this number had decreased over the last few years. The Island saw a 6% drop in 7+ grades and 17% at 5+. This was reflected nationally too, but the Island has seen a sharper decrease than the national picture.

The Island has seen a closing of the gap with SEND students, which is a positive to note. At 4+ the gap with national is 15%, compared with 33% last year. The pattern is similar at 5+, but at 7+ the gap with national is only 2% compared with 7% in 2019, showing some progress with the top grades.

The Island has seen a widening of the Pupil Premium gap with national results from both last year and 2019 with 33% achieving 4+ compared to 57% nationally.

SACRE remains concerned about the low numbers of young people on the Isle of Wight who are entered for the full course RS GCSE and therefore are concerned to ensure through all means possible that young people are able to access their entitlement for religious education at Key Stage 4. It committed this year to raising the profile of Religious Studies with both governors and young people so that the wider community was aware of the strengths and importance of the subject.

Therefore, SACRE repeated its training for governors on Religious Education during March this year, with governors attending from a wide range of schools.

SACRE also ran its first youth voice to SACRE this year with a variety of secondary school students attending, with a theme of environment and religion and beliefs. This was very successful and received a lot of praise from those attending. It was very useful in helping to raise the profile of Religious Studies as a GCSE option, as well as widening the discussion about the importance of the teaching of Religious Studies to a younger audience. Several of the SACRE members attended this to help support the event.

### **Training for SACRE members:**

Training is offered regularly to SACRE members by SACRE officers when there are enough new members to require this. SACRE members are also regularly updated through NASACRE information, advice and training which the SACRE subscribes to. As part of this, the training programme for SACRE members is shared with members each term and members are encouraged to attend as many training sessions as possible.

Two SACRE members attended the SW AREIAC conference in March 2024 and summarised the training at the following SACRE meeting for other members. One SACRE member attended the NASACRE training on using data effectively and one attended the South East NASACRE and RE Hubs briefing for SACRE's on sharing best practice and ideas

#### **a) The Quality of Religious Education provision in Isle of Wight Schools**

Religious Education network meetings have been provided by the SACRE adviser up to March 2024. Attendance at these was very good and indicated that schools are developing their curriculum to ensure compliance with the Locally Agreed Syllabus, Living Difference IV. Time allocation for Religious Education in the primary phase is usually

good. The syllabus recommends that qualified teachers teach the subject and that it is blocked for effective teaching. This is checked on visits and on training or subject meetings with schools. In the secondary phase time allocation for all pupils in KS3 is generally good and is discussed at network meetings with advice provided. SACRE has continued to monitor the teaching of core Religious Education and public examination Religious Education at KS4 through network meetings and has offered advice and support on this to schools. It will continue to be a focus going forward.

In the summer term of 2024, Island headteachers took over the running of RE networks and no information has been available to SACRE as yet about the content or success of these. This has been raised with the Local Authority by SACRE as a concern. **SACRE has advised the Local Authority that feedback from all RE and Collective Worship training needs to be shared with them so that effective planning, delivery and monitoring impact can be provided going forward.** A meeting was held with the education team in the late summer term to share these concerns and to request that regular feedback is given to SACRE going forward.

### **3. Complaints about Religious Education**

No complaints have been received about Religious Education during the period of this report.

### **4. Standards and Quality of Provision for Collective Worship**

Within the Isle of Wight advice is available to schools around Collective Worship in three ways:

- Hampshire's published advice on Collective Worship in schools (available from the Hampshire RE centre)
- The SACRE RE consultant and
- An annual collective worship course available through Hampshire training, online

Advising on Collective Worship is a focus area for the SACRE and during the period of this report the SACRE decided to focus on Collective Worship as well as RE on school visits. Training on Collective Worship is planned for all Island schools early in 2024-2025 as part of this commitment, funded by the SACRE.

An action point to support and monitor Collective Worship across schools has also been included in the SACRE's 3-year Action plan.

### **5. Complaints regarding Collective Worship**

There have been no complaints received regarding Collective Worship this academic year.

### **6. Determinations**

There have been no applications for Determinations in Collective Worship during this past year.

### **7. SACRE Links with other bodies**

The Island SACRE is a member of NASACRE and has access to the support offered by NASACRE in its annual programme of training.

The SACRE has close links with Portsmouth and Winchester Church of England Diocese and the local faith groups on the Island. For example, several members attended the Visit my Mosque initiative on the Island held in 2023 and volunteered to go into schools for Interfaith week in November.

The professional adviser has held the position of Executive Assistant on the Association of RE Inspectors, Advisers and Consultants (AREIAC) during the period of this report, as well as the post of South East for the RE Hubs project. This ensures that SACRE matters and Religious Education locally are part of national discussions about the subject.

## **8. SACRE contribution to supporting schools through events and training**

During this period there have been several professional development opportunities available to provide high quality advice to support schools in their consistent implementation of the syllabus.

- The professional adviser and the HIAS County Inspector/Adviser for Secondary Religious Education have continued to run termly secondary and primary networks until March 2024. The network meetings have provided advice and support for the implementation of Living Difference IV and on managing and leading RE, assessment in RE and subject specific CPD. Secondary networks have been held virtually and the primary have been a mix of virtual and face to face meetings.
- SACRE members have conducted a face-to-face visit to a special school during this period. This has been done with the professional adviser and reports are made to the monitoring group.
- All Island schools have been able to access the Hampshire RE and Collective Worship courses that are available to support all RE subject leaders. Many of these are online and after school which has helped attendance at these.
- An Island Governor briefing was held on RE and Collective Worship to raise the profile of the subject in the Spring term 2024.

## **9. SACRE's Own arrangements**

SACRE has been supported by a LA clerk since the summer of 2021. In addition, SACRE is supported by a Professional Adviser for its activities and monitoring of the syllabus. Standards and quality of provision for Religious Education in Isle of Wight Schools are regularly reviewed by the SACRE monitoring subgroup which meets each term with the Professional Adviser. During 2023/2024, findings have been regularly submitted to the full SACRE at the termly meetings.

### **Attendance at SACRE by Committee 2023-2024**

#### **Group A:**

Faiths represented:

Church of England, Methodist, Free Church, Catholic, Jewish, Buddhist, Hindu, Bahai, Quaker, Muslim.

**Group B:** Church of England



**Group C:** Teachers Liaison Panel

**Group D:** County Councillors

### **Attendance**

#### **Autumn - October 2023**

Group A = 28%	2/7
Group B = 33%	1/3
Group C = 33%	1/3
Group D = 66%	2/3

#### **Spring - March 2024**

Group A = 40%	3/7
Group B = 66%	2/3
Group C = 33%	1/3
Group D = 66%	2/3

#### **Summer - June 2024**

Group A = 71%	5/7
Group B = 33%	1/3
Group C = 33%	1/3
Group D = 33%	1/3

During this year the SACRE has worked hard to find representatives for some of its vacancies. It has filled one of the remaining two vacancies on the Church of England group and sought to add to the group A representatives during the period of this report, SACRE is still seeking a Hindu representative and is seeking a Sikh representative. During this year the SACRE has been without a deputy Chair, but this post was filled in the summer term of 2024.

### **Summary**

As last year, through continued links with Hampshire, SACRE has benefited from the support of the two Hampshire RE inspector/Advisers; one of whom is designated as the Professional Adviser to SACRE. Their expertise and advice continue to be invaluable in supporting SACRE fulfil its statutory duties. The main advice though SACRE has given to the Local Authority is to ensure that a regular, detailed link is maintained with SACRE about the provision of RE training and CPD going forward, to ensure that schools are supported in the best way possible.

The Clerk continues to act as a link between SACRE and schools and representatives of different faiths. SACRE members are engaged with visiting schools as well as supporting training for teachers. Church of England Diocesan networks also run on the Isle of Wight for subject leaders in Church Schools. Some of these teachers also attended the LA network meetings. All schools are teaching the Locally Agreed Syllabus Living Difference IV.

The Isle of Wight SACRE continues to have a strong sense of team spirit, commitment and cooperation and meetings are held in an open, frank, manner. The four groups of SACRE ensure SACRE is able to meet its statutory responsibilities.

## **Annexe 1**

### **SACRE Membership**

#### **SACRE Membership 2023-2024**

#### **Committee A**

##### **One member representing the Roman Catholic Church**

Sister Stella Kelly

##### **Members representing non-Christian faiths**

Dr. Lionel Alexander	(Jewish faith)
Mrs Anne Sechiari	(Buddhist)
Sylvia Clare	(Buddhist)
Mrs Norma Corney	(Baha'i)
Mr Ebrahim Jeewa/ Mr. Abdul Basith	(Muslim)

#### **Committee B (4 members in total)**

##### **Representing the Church of England**

Mr Harry Kirby

Mrs Beryl Miller

Sarah Rowe (appointed summer term 2024)

#### **Committee C (4 members in total)**

##### **Representing the teachers of the Isle of Wight. Nominated by appropriate groups.**

Secondary	Miss Beth Feltham	The Bay CE School
Primary	Mrs Rebecca Lennon	Brightstone CE Primary School
	Ms Charlotte Gould	Nine Acres Primary School

#### **Committee D (3 members in total)**

##### **Representing the Local Authority. Two elected Members. Two nominated by the Director of Education**

Cllr Debbie Andre

Cllr Claire Critchison

Mr. Stuart Brenchley

Christ the King College

#### **In attendance**

Marie Bartlett

Clerk

Justine Ball RE Inspector (Primary)

Adviser