



**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

This year, Leeds SACRE has overseen the implementation of Believing and Belonging (2024 – 2029), the new Religious Education (RE) syllabus. The syllabus is based on six key pathways designed to support dynamic teaching of RE across all school years, building progressively year on year.

As a subject, we recognise that well-planned RE teaching contributes to the success of other key subjects such as History, Geography, Politics, Art, and Music, as well as Philosophy and Sociology at GCSE and A-level.

SACRE's role is to support all schools, including those catering for special educational needs, from Reception to Year 11 in delivering high-quality RE. As a SACRE, we aim to add value to the education system by fostering meaningful connections, asking questions, and listening to one another, as well as to those we represent, including teachers, people of faith and none, and local authority councillors.

As a committee, we review published national data, such as exam results and Ofsted reports for Leeds schools, to gain insight into the quality of RE teaching. We also reach out directly to Leeds schools via email questionnaires and provide RE lead teacher training for primary and secondary schools.

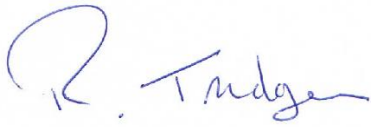
The work of SACRE reaches from the assembly hall to the classroom and beyond the school gates into the city, streets and homes. Whilst this year has been focused on the RE syllabus, we continue to support Headteachers and senior leaders in their pastoral care of pupils through collective worship and spiritual, moral, social and cultural education development.

As SACRE, we recognise the need for social cohesion and fundamental values in our inner-city schools and surrounding towns and villages. This need was amplified this summer with the social unrest in Harehills on the 18th of July, hours after I attended the Public Scrutiny Committee requesting greater funding support for Leeds SACRE.

Looking ahead, there are currently over 119,600 school-aged children in Leeds. Leeds SACRE takes its responsibility to these pupils seriously and will continue to press for more appropriate funding (see page 19) to enable SACRE to carry out its statutory responsibilities.

By continuing to ask questions and identify where help can be provided, Leeds SACRE intends to build on what we have learned this year and connect further with teachers,

governors, heads and pupils. With the support of the local authority councillors, I believe this can be done.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "R. Trudgen". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped initial "R".

Russell Trudgen

Chair of Leeds SACRE 2023 - 24 and Pentecostal representative

Overview

This annual report is prepared by Leeds 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 Leeds, contact Helen Rivers at helen.rivers@leeds.gov.uk

For information on SACRE please contact the clerk, Michael Oates michael.oates@leeds.gov.uk

Dates and content of meetings

There were four meetings of Leeds SACRE during the year 2023-24, all held in person at the following times and places:

September 19 2023 (AGM) – Civic Hall, Leeds

December 7 2023 - Beeston Hill St Luke's C of E Primary School, Holbeck

March 12 2024 (Local Agreed Syllabus Conference) - Dewsbury Town Hall

June 24 2024 - St Aiden's Parish Church, Harehills

Meetings are open to the public and are available from the SACRE clerk.

At the September 2023 AGM, Russell Trudgen (Pentecostal representative) was re-elected as the chair. Afsha Hussain (Muslim representative) was re-elected as vice-chair.

As well as considering the general position of RE and collective worship in the city, SACRE discussed the following issues at its meetings during the academic year 2023 - 24:

- The Local Agreed syllabus review was completed (to be in place for September 2024). A conceptual approach, following 6 'pathways' formed the basis of the syllabus; SACRE members reviewed syllabus content and contributed to accompanying resources. The Local Agreed syllabus conference took place in March 2024.

- Collective worship – SACRE members were encouraged to visit schools to gain insight into collective worship and feed back to SACRE; NASACRE training on CW attended by 5 SACRE members; working party for CW to be set up for 24/25.
- Review of provision for RE in primary and secondary schools via questionnaire and website overview; discussions about contact between SACRE and schools - visits and visitors, assemblies, sharing artefacts.
- Improving effectiveness of SACRE as a council responsibility – focus on communicating with local councillors and encouraging their attendance; continued clarification of funding for Leeds SACRE responsibilities and activities.
- Roles of SACRE members; hearing from individual SACRE members about their role/motivation; working party for completion of SACRE self-evaluation.
- National Association of SACREs (NASACRE) membership – SACRE members have discussed local and national issues following increased attendance at NASACRE training events; two members attended the NASACRE annual conference.
- Ofsted reports, including feedback from Deep Dives in RE and issues around SMSC

SACRE Priorities for 2023-24

In the development plan for 2023-24 (based on the NASACRE self-evaluation framework), the priorities for SACRE were:

SACRE

1. Membership and attendance: SACRE needs to ensure there continues to be consistent attendance from all faith groups and teachers. Regular attendance by local councillors needs to be prioritised. Vacancies for faith groups to be filled.
2. 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
3. Communication: An annual discussion of the report will continue to take place at CYP Scrutiny or similar. Procedures should be put in place so that meaningful contact can be made with and between members outside of SACRE meetings. More opportunities should be found to hear from pupils as well as teachers.
4. Planning and Strategy: The development plan should be reviewed regularly and be the focus of every SACRE meeting. An annual questionnaire will be sent to all schools to elicit relevant information and to enquire about what support might be needed.

Religious Education

1. Information: An annual questionnaire will be used to enquire about RE and other matters, alongside other ways of collecting information such as via primary and secondary RE networks. SACRE will continue to receive and analyse data from public examinations. Together with reviewing Ofsted reports this information should be used to focus on appropriate support and intervention.
2. Issues with communication need to be resolved and alternative routes such as direct mailing, RE networks and more focused advertising need to be explored.

Local Agreed Syllabus

1. Planning for the review and revision of the agreed syllabus, due by 2024, started in September 2022. This fully involves teachers, the maintained and academy sector, and faith representatives. The new syllabus recognises and include latest guidance, research and developments; it will be based around 'Big Ideas'. The review is taking place in partnership with other authorities in West Yorkshire (Calderdale, Kirklees and Bradford.)
2. Agreed syllabus conference to take place in March 2024; Syllabus to be used by schools from September 2024.

Collective Worship

1. SACRE members should continue to visit local schools to discover how Collective worship is planned and delivered. This will raise its profile and enable SACRE to offer review or professional development to schools.
2. Although there are no current determinations in Leeds schools, there needs to be a process for considering these should one arise. SACRE members need some training and briefing about determinations

Community Cohesion

1. Continue to reflect on census information on faith, (published in November 2022) and use this to inform SACRE's work in the wider community.

2. Develop further links with the Communities team and others to ensure SACRE is fully engaged with wider city issues.
3. Promote and develop the synagogue and gurdwara films (Westhill-funded) and explore future similar projects.

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

Meetings for 2024-25

SACRE meetings for 2024-2025 have been provisionally arranged for these dates: September 26 2024 (AGM), December 10 2024, March 19 2025 and June 23 2024. For more information contact the clerk, Michael Oates michael.oates@leeds.gov.uk

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 city. The agreed syllabus has now been reviewed and updated ready for schools to use from September 2024. The framework for the syllabus review was based on 'Section 3 of the SACRE self-evaluation (SEF): 'The effectiveness of the locally agreed syllabus'. This new syllabus is shared with Bradford, Kirklees and Calderdale.

The new Local Agreed syllabus develops understanding of religion and worldviews through six concepts or pathways inspired by 'The Big Ideas in RE'. These act as the framework for sequencing learning at all key stages from age 5 to 18.

Leeds teachers and civic representatives were invited to a launch and training event at Leeds Civic Hall in May. A copy of 'Believing and Belonging (2024)' was formally handed over by the chair of Leeds SACRE to a representative from Leeds city council. The launch event gave an opportunity for SACRE members, local councillors and teachers to recognise and celebrate all the work that has gone into creating the syllabus that will shape RE teaching in

the city for the next five years. Over 150 teachers attended training, following the launch event.

Academies and free schools must teach RE according to the requirements of their trust deed or funding agreement. Although Leeds SACRE and local authorities do not have any responsibility or authority for their curriculum, it welcomes use of their syllabus by all local schools. Results from SACRE surveys of RE provision in Leeds demonstrate that most secondary academies and many primary academies adopted the previous local agreed syllabus, and it is hoped that this will continue with the new syllabus.

Standards and Monitoring of RE

In November 2023, a Leeds SACRE working party created a brief survey about the provision of RE in primary and secondary schools. The questionnaire was circulated via Leeds for Learning, with follow-up reminders via networks, newsletters and headteacher briefings. Only 22 schools responded this year (7 secondary and 15 primary).

The main findings from the survey were:

- Half of the respondents attend networks, either regularly or sometimes
- Most get a newsletter or wish to be added to the list
- Most of the schools that replied carry out visits to places of worship

It was agreed that it may be more productive to conduct surveys every other year rather than annually so that SACRE can focus on specific themes and priorities, allowing time to follow up effectively.

Examination results

National figures for GCSE entry remain steady, with a slight increase in both full course and short course uptake. GCSE RE also had the fourth highest proportion of entries at grade 7, 8 or 9 (30.9 per cent).

GCSE and A-Level results for 2024 were not available 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 authority.

Professional development and support for schools

General support

Professional support for RE continued to be offered through Pennine Learning, a small local company specialising in RE and community cohesion, contracted by Leeds City Council. Pennine Learning also supports SACREs and RE in Calderdale and Kirklees, enabling appropriate collaboration and partnership. Professional support is offered by Helen Rivers (Leeds SACRE, primary schools, training and general RE enquiries) and Alastair Ross (secondary schools). Jake Womack has helped Caroline Dodgeon to facilitate the secondary RE network for Leeds, Kirklees and Calderdale and is offering more secondary support as Alastair steps back from his day-to-day work. Pennine Learning provides forty days support per year in total, though this is arranged as flexibly as possible to facilitate effective working with schools and others.

Through the Learning Service and the RE consultants, support has been available to schools, and used by teachers, in a number of ways, including:

- Review of the syllabus for ready for September 2024 and update of associated schemes of work, including prompt response to queries or difficulties;
- Consultancy over specific or general RE issues, including advice about withdrawal from RE and tackling difficult issues; SMSC review and support;
- Availability by phone, email or virtual meetings;
- Support for schools wishing to develop and improve RE and SMSC following Ofsted inspections;
- Support for schools wishing to prepare for an Ofsted 'deep dive' in RE.

Training

This year courses have included termly primary RE network meetings and a day course for new RE coordinators. Primary Network meetings are offered as afternoon or twilight sessions; numbers are increasing with afternoon sessions usually fully booked (24 places) and twilights having about 6 – 8 attendees. Communication by direct e-mail as well as via Leeds for Learning is proving to be effective in building up numbers at networks.

The secondary Subject Leaders Development Meeting (SLDM) is organized by the Learning Partnership and by leading teachers Julie Knowles from Ryburn Vally High School (maternity cover for Caroline Dodgeon) and Jake Womack from Pennine Learning. The meeting is open

to teachers from Calderdale, Kirklees, and Leeds. Sessions took place in different locations across West Yorkshire. This year, the network witnessed considerable growth in attendance with approximately 30 teachers in attendance. Additionally, the offer was extended to 3 full days of CPD. This was in part due to the expansion of the final session to become a teaching conference at Leeds Trinity University. Such was the success of the final meeting, that Leeds Trinity will continue to work with the network and will again host the final meeting of the year. The final conference-style event included ITTs and ECT teachers. In the future, we will continue to open the offer to them as this will be a key facet in RE teacher retention.

A day course for RE subject leaders to explore the teaching of Islam was facilitated by Equilibria Experience. Over 20 teachers attended. The course was very well received and feedback from teachers was positive.

A series of twilight webinars on subject knowledge of world faiths continued into the 2023/24 academic year. The 23/24 webinars included guests from local faith and belief communities to enrich discussion and answer questions about: Judaism, Islam, Christianity and Humanism. These webinars are promoted and organised in cooperation with partner local authorities and are open to all.

In the coming year a full range of CPD and consultancy will be available through Leeds for Learning. RE is included in the Primary Learning Partnership so that schools can take advantage of discounts if they book multiple networks in a range of subjects. All details are on the RE resource page of Leeds for Learning.

RE Reviews /REQM Awards

Schools are offered two ways to evaluate provision in RE and plan for future improvement:

- The SACRE RE Merit offers a framework to enable subject leaders to review the provision of RE, including curriculum planning, teaching, learning and leadership. Four primary schools and 2 secondary schools have worked with a consultant to review their RE using this framework. It is expected that at least two schools will achieve the SACRE RE Merit award for good quality RE in the coming academic year.
- A more detailed evaluation of RE ('Deep Dive') is also offered to senior leaders. This half-day session focuses on a thorough review of curriculum provision, looking at its scope, rigour and sequencing.



These opportunities for review and development are promoted via Primary and Secondary RE networks. The framework and review documents are available on Leeds for Learning. No Leeds schools have achieved a quality mark for REQM this year.

Other information

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

- RE Policy
- Withdrawal from RE
- Collective Worship
- Celebrating Diversity
- Engaging with faith communities
- Sensitivity to issues relating to faith in schools
- Question for RE subject leaders (preparation for Deep Dive in RE)

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

All are available via Leeds for Learning RE resource page:

<https://www.leedsforlearning.co.uk/Page/19092>

Section Three: Statutory Responsibilities: Collective Worship

Standards and Monitoring of Collective Worship

One of SACRE's key priorities in the year 23/24 was to raise the profile of collective worship and enable SACRE to offer professional development to schools. SACRE members have received training about collective worship, and some have visited schools to gain insights into how collective worship is planned and delivered.

In July 2024, a working party was formed with the aim of developing SACRE's support for schools in developing collective worship, including offering light-touch review conversations with practical suggestions for senior leaders and those who plan and deliver assemblies. Guidance about collective worship is offered to schools via documents shared on Leeds for Learning and by direct contact with SACRE. Ofsted reports are scrutinised in order to keep up to date with current issues and concerns.

Complaints and determinations

There were no complaints made during the year to SACRE about Collective Worship. There are no determinations to vary statutory requirements in any maintained school in Leeds. Responsibility for determinations in English academies and free schools rests with the Schools Funding Agency. The determination process has been discussed by Leeds SACRE; new SACRE members will be informed about this process as part of their induction.

Professional development and support for schools

SACRE is always ready to advise or support schools on request, usually via the RE adviser. Some SACRE members are well-placed to support collective worship in schools and these members will form part of the working party outlined above. A number of SACRE members attended NASACRE training in order to help them become more confident in practical support and monitoring of collective worship.

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 via Leeds for Learning; consultants are available if further support is needed, and two schools have sought this support over the past academic year. Guidance is also provided to schools in fulfilling statutory obligations over collective worship and promoting good SMSC development.

SACRE recognises parents' legal rights but hopes all children will be enabled to receive stimulating and balanced collective worship as part of their entitlement to spiritual, moral, social and cultural 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
- Leeds for Learning
- Leeds School Improvement Service
- RE Today Services
- 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. We want to broaden pupils' experience and perspectives of the faith communities in Leeds; to this end, 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 direct engagement and an opportunity for dialogue. It also includes general information about places and organisations.



Free training is offered to faith communities in order to inform them of the requirements of the Leeds RE Syllabus, and to support them in hosting visits from schools. This project continues to build up worthwhile links between schools and faith communities. Local organisations such as Concord Interfaith Fellowship and Leeds Interfaith are supportive in publicising and supporting training events.

An audit tool, 'Appreciating different faiths and beliefs' is available, along with consultancy support, for promoting tolerance and understanding of different faiths in schools. This is available on Leeds for Learning and is promoted via RE networks.

Section Six: Leeds SACRE arrangements

Leeds City Council 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.

Committee A	Faith communities except for the Church of England
Committee B	Anglican representatives
Committee C	Teachers and schools
Committee D	Leeds City Council

Membership for 2023-4 was as follows:

Buddhist	A	Lee Howson
Hindu	A	Saroj Chauhan
Jewish	A	Gail Taylor
Muslim	A	Afsha Hussain
Sikh	A	Vacancy
Humanist	A	Ian Harris
<i>Bah'ai</i>	A	<i>Vacancy</i>
Christian denominations (Methodist)	A	Ruth Barlow
Christian denominations (Orthodox)	A	Vacancy
Christian denominations (RC)	A	Diane Brodowska
Christian denominations (Pentecostal)	A	Russell Trudgen
Christian denominations (Quaker)	A	Pauline Leonard
Christian denominations	A	Vacancy
Christian denominations	A	Vacancy
Christian denominations	A	Vacancy
Church of England	B	Denise Brogden
Church of England	B	Ann Nicholl
Church of England	B	Ben Cordy
Church of England	B	Susie Smith
Church of England	B	Vacancy
Teachers associations	C	Melanie Robinson
Teachers associations	C	Sameena Abbas
Teachers associations	C	Jane Pollard

Teachers associations	C	Salma Begum
Teachers associations	C	Vacancy
Local authority	D	Cllr Ryk Downes
Local authority	D	Cllr Zara Hussain
Local authority	D	Cllr Oliver Edwards
Local authority	D	Cllr Sam Firth
Local authority	D	Cllr Wayne Dixon
Co-opted	LA	Katie North
Co-opted	Z	Available
Co-opted	Z	available

SACRE needs to ensure that attendance continues to be consistent by members of all groups. There are a number of vacancies in group A that need to be filled. From group D, only two local councillors either attended regularly or sent apologies.

Leeds SACRE is exploring a more structured link with MATs; a small SACRE .working party has taken on the task of developing and improving links with MATs.

Training is provided by NASACRE and offered to SACRE members. Leeds SACRE subscribed to the NASACRE training package for 2023/24 in order to take advantage of free and reduced-price training. Training includes an introduction to SACRE, which provides the basis for the induction of new SACRE members.

Other training undertaken by members included Loss and Bereavement in RE, Collective Worship and also regional training and updates.

This subscription has been renewed for 2024/25.

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 discuss bringing it in line with national recommendations and good practice. We recognise current funding constraints but would urge the council to work with Leeds SACRE to explore how they fulfil their statutory obligations. The DfE recommends that local authorities allocate 2% of Central School Services Block (CSSB) grant to SACRE. At present less than 0.5% is allocated in Leeds to fulfil essential SACRE services, including the clerk, RE advisor (Pennine Learning), CPD for schools, and the writing and review of the Agreed Syllabus. This underfunding limits the work of SACRE.
2. To recognise that the council has responsibility for RE as a statutory subject and should prioritise support and encouragement for all schools, especially those that are not fulfilling their duty to offer high quality RE to all pupils.
3. To provide training and support in order to implement the local agreed RE syllabus in all schools in Leeds.
4. To enable SACRE to reach out to schools that have not accessed the support offered for RE in Leeds by offering training, networks and events for teachers at low cost.
5. To fulfil the legal responsibilities of Leeds City Council by providing councillors for SACRE group D (Local Authority) and ensure the designated local councillors attend all SACRE meetings; To review the membership of SACRE annually to ensure it reflects the breadth and diversity of the city in terms of faiths and beliefs.
6. To ensure SACRE's annual report is considered carefully by the Scrutiny Panel of the Council and its content acted upon.
7. To review arrangements for the teaching of RE at Key Stage 4 to non-exam classes by evaluating and applying the example of schools with good practice in RE provision at Key Stage 4.

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, Michael Oates michael.oates@leeds.gov.uk



This annual report is prepared for Leeds Standing Advisory Council on RE (SACRE) as part of its statutory responsibility. For further information on the report or on RE and Collective Worship in Leeds, please contact Helen Rivers at helen.rivers@leeds.gov.uk

