

City of Leicester SACRE Annual Report 2024-25

Introduction from the Chair

I am pleased to introduce Leicester City Council's SACRE Annual Report for 2024-2025.

Leicester SACRE demonstrates how a group of individuals from diverse worldviews and beliefs can work together purposefully and respectfully. It is an honour to be able to work with people committed to ensuring good quality, appropriate religious education and collective worship is delivered in Leicester schools.

The Agreed Syllabus Conference unanimously approved the new syllabus for 2024-29, which was thoughtfully produced by Wendy Harrison reflecting the changing landscape of Leicester's population. It is written with a worldviews approach and considers the religious and non-religious diversity in Leicester. The new syllabus was officially launched in the autumn of 2024 and positively received and appreciated by schools. We are delighted that an article written by our Consultant RE Adviser featuring the Leicester Syllabus was published in an RE Today magazine.

During the year Leicester City SACRE supported East Midlands RE Hubs on a 'Places of Faith Interest and School Speaker Training' day. This was well attended by Leicester SACRE members and various organisations representing a range of faith and non-faith communities. The event was kindly hosted by the Leicester Hebrew Congregation and attendees received the RE Hubs kite mark accreditation.

We are grateful to Mellor Primary School and Coleman Primary School for hosting us at their schools for their determinations. Both schools applied for determinations so that they could provide collective worship that was more inclusive and relevant for their school population. SACRE members enjoy these presentations and are always ready to commend good practice and offer assistance and support where needed. I am pleased that both schools had their determinations approved.

I was pleased to welcome Ian Ginsburg from the Orthodox Jewish community as a new member of SACRE. Unfortunately, Councillor Mustafa Malik felt he could not give the time needed to fulfil his responsibility to SACRE effectively and handed in his resignation. He wished us well and offered his continued support for which we thank him. I would like to thank Beejal Madhvani for her work as Clerk, Wendy Harrison for her support as Consultant RE Advisor, Anne Fishenden for her invaluable commitment to SACRE as our outgoing Chair and all the members of SACRE for their continued service and dedication.

We hope the new Agreed Syllabus will contribute to ensuring young people are prepared and able to contribute positively to life in modern Britain as responsible citizens.

Seema Ahmad
Chair of Leicester SACRE

Background

The Education Reform Act (1988) established compulsory Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education (SACRE) in all Local Authorities (LAs). The main function of a SACRE is to advise the LA on matters connected with RE and collective worship. SACREs also oversee the five-yearly revision of the locally agreed syllabus for Religious Education (RE) and consider any complaints about the provision and delivery of RE and collective worship referred to it by the LA. ¹

Leicester SACRE is constituted in accordance with statutory requirements and includes representatives from:

Committee A: Christian denominations and other religions and religious denominations

Committee B: The Church of England

Committee C: Teachers' Associations

Committee D: The Local Authority

[Please see Appendix, p. for membership/attendance of Leicester SACRE 2024-25]

Also in attendance at Leicester SACRE meetings

Clerk to SACRE: Beejal Madhvani

Wendy Harrison (WH): Consultant RE Adviser

Executive Summary

This report outlines the work of the Leicester Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) during the academic year 2024–2025. During this period, SACRE focused particularly on:

- Supporting the introduction and implementation of the Leicester Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education 2024–2029.
- Promoting effective practice in collective worship through determinations.
- Supporting teachers through professional development and guidance.
- Maintaining links with local faith communities and national organisations.

Leicester SACRE continues to fulfil its statutory duties to advise the LA on matters relating to Religious Education and collective worship, contributing to the development of inclusive and high-quality RE across Leicester schools.

Meetings and membership

Five meetings were held during 2024-25: 5th September 2024 (City Hall), 12th December 2024 (Mellor Primary School), 11th February (Quaker Meeting House), 1st April 2025 (Coleman Primary School) and 17th June 2025 (at Leicester Progressive Synagogue).

5th September 2024

Agreed Syllabus Conference

An ASC must unanimously approve a syllabus for adoption by the LA, with each committee having a single vote.

<https://url.uk.mimecastprotect.com/s/FB9sCjYL1sgwW3pcWf4Cmxy83?domain=assets.publishing.service.gov.uk>

Leicester SACRE ASC unanimously voted to approve the new syllabus produced by Wendy Harrison and recommended that it was adopted by the LA as the new agreed syllabus for Leicester, 2024 - 29.

12th December 2024

Syllabus update: Consultant RE Adviser

The syllabus had been very well received by schools. Two training days took place soon after it was made available to schools and these were very well attended. The training days were repeated in February 2025 for those who were unable to attend. Schools were also offered the opportunity to purchase resource packs to support teaching and learning.

Determination: Mellor Primary School, see p. 6.

11th February 2025

Agreed Syllabus update: Consultant RE Adviser

WH informed members that they had been sent a link to the new syllabus. This was not to be copied or sent out to any schools. Schools were in the process of implementing the new syllabus and there had already been positive feedback. The syllabus is being adapted for Lincolnshire LA which members agreed reflected the high quality of the document.

Salma Ravat

Members were informed that Salma Ravat, a former Chair of Leicester SACRE, had been awarded an MBE for her services to the homeless through the One Roof Leicester charity, of which she is CEO. Members expressed their congratulations, praising Salma's hard work, dedication and commitment. The charity is a good example of one way in which people from different faiths and worldviews can work together successfully.

Membership

Concerns were expressed about gaps in membership and the non-attendance of some members. Particular concern was expressed about the lack of representation from councillors (and the LA generally), especially following the recent resignation of one member. It was clear that the issue needed to be addressed, along with a review of the Constitution to enable humanists to become full members. AF to lead a sub-group to work on this.

1st April 2025

Determination: Coleman Primary School, see p.6

Leicestershire Syllabus update: Consultant RE Adviser

WH updated SACRE on the presentation she had made to Leicestershire SACRE during their last meeting, supported by AF and SA. She proposed that as their present syllabus was up for renewal, they might consider adopting the new Leicester City syllabus from 2026 onwards. For numerous reasons, it would make sense for the county and city to share the same syllabus. The presentation was well received and some thoughtful questions were asked. Members to be updated when the decision was made.

Membership sub-group

This item was a follow-up from the previous meeting. AF shared information that the sub-group had met just before the SACRE meeting. She identified the current vacancies. Members had each been tasked with following up potential candidates and would share an update at the next meeting.

Annual report 2023-24: Consultant RE Adviser

The report was still pending, awaiting 2024 examination results.

17th June 2025

Due to difficulties with the Wi-Fi connection it was impossible for the Clerk to take part in the meeting via Teams. As a result, brief notes rather than minutes were taken.

Membership

Leicester SACRE was delighted to welcome Harinder Singh from the Sikh community as a new member. Harinder talked about his work with Sikh Lens and shared his publication, 'Jewels from Sikh Wisdom: A Journey of Discovery' with members.

Determinations update - Coleman Primary School, Mellor Community Primary school and Mayflower Primary school update.

- Coleman PS had been contacted, WH to follow up.
- Mellor PS: following an inquorate meeting, the determination was later agreed by members and confirmation letter sent to school.
- Mayflower PS: determination postponed due to the disruption the school has faced for at least a year, due to RAAC issues. LA has been informed.

Annual Report 2023-24

This was approved by members so could be sent to NASACRE and the DfE.

Determinations during 2024-25

12th December: Mellor Primary School

The determination renewal was presented by Rahila Esmail, R.E subject leader and Asif Esat, Deputy Headteacher.

AE gave contextual information about Mellor Community Primary School:

- larger than average primary school with over 585 pupils on roll
- multicultural school - ethnic composition is mainly Indian, Asian, Asian British and a small population of white British and Eastern European.
- 37 languages spoken in the school, 94% of the pupils speak English as an additional language.
- religions: 52.9% Hindu, 32.4% Muslim, just under 5% Sikh and just over 5% Christian, and a few other small denominations - AE explained that this is why a multi faith approach to worship is relevant to the school and why the determination needs to be renewed in order to best serve and meet the needs of the school community.

RE explained that collective worship forms part of daily assemblies which are organised either in classes, phase groups or whole school special assemblies which run throughout the year, e.g. for EID, Diwali and Christmas. These provide an

opportunity for the pupils to reflect on and celebrate the school's values and think about fundamental questions of life.

Collective worship forms an integral part of PSHE lessons across all year groups from EYFS to key stage two. There is a dedicated part of each lesson during which pupils are asked to reflect. A clear distinction between acts of worship and assemblies is signalled using the Mellor assembly thoughts/reflections.

Religions of the World assemblies are one of the ways where an alternative to broadly Christian form of worship is provided. Within each theme aspects of all the major faiths and humanism are covered. Information was provided for members.

AE shared that character education is an integral part of the curriculum, reinforced with character vocabulary, based on existing values, ethos and the drive to '*be the best we can be*'. Words link to their Statement of British Values and Assembly Thought. Information was provided for members.

Consultation about the determination had taken place to gain the views of staff, the School Council, governors, pupils, parent representatives, etc. on whether the school should renew its determination. There was positive feedback from all stakeholders requesting renewal. Parents liked the way that different faiths were celebrated and that their children were learning about different faiths, traditions and beliefs. Quote from the School Council: "It is nice to learn how different people worship and celebrate, all religions are important, and we learn about equality."

Members praised the school's commitment to inclusion, diversity and development of pupils' understanding of the broader issues associated with these concepts. Responses to members' questions reinforced the view that the determination should be renewed. Unfortunately, as the meeting was not quorate a formal vote could not be taken. The Chair and members who were present recommended that SACRE renewed the determination. It was agreed that members who were not present should be contacted and provided with relevant information. Any with reservations should contact WH. If no objections were forthcoming WH would inform the school that their application was successful. [Note: no objections, the determination was renewed).

1st April 2025: Coleman Primary School

The determination application was presented by Kathie Wade, headteacher. She began by giving some background information about the school then went on to make specific points relevant to the determination. She pointed out that it allows the school to encourage pupils to understand and respect each other and the different ways in which they may worship. Pupils belong to different religions (or none) but have many things in common. In terms of religions, pupils come from mainly Muslim backgrounds, but other faiths are also represented. Some families have stated they do not follow any religion or faith whilst a small number refused to say. Staff, parents and pupils acknowledge they are part of a multi-faith community and recognise its importance through celebrations and showing respect for others.

Sixty responses were received in response to the determination renewal questionnaire.

The annual assembly plan, which details all assemblies for the academic year, was shared with members. KW discussed the different types of assemblies at length.

Collective worship forms part of daily assemblies which are organised in classes, phase groups and whole school special occasions throughout the year. Major festivals such as Eid, Diwali and Christmas are celebrated. Phase group assemblies support these events and include celebrations, achievements, British values and key themes.

PHSE lessons provide further opportunities for reflection. The school encourages pupils to reflect upon and apply what they have learned. This often leads to further discussions and meaningful conversations.

Celebration days include visits or presentations from visitors. The school tries to ensure that these cover a wide range of different religions and worldviews.

Each year assembly topics are broadened to include more key figures and additional festivals to ensure that all children feel included and have opportunities to contribute. KW shared that it is good to hear the children talk about their experiences with each other.

The school makes a clear distinction between act of worship and assembly.

KW shared school values and five key characteristics:

1. Creative
2. Resilient
3. Articulate
4. Respectful
5. Flourishing

These are taught through focused assembly days and are built into curriculum planning, allowing children to apply them to all aspects of their lives. This provides pupils with the tools they need to live a successful, happy and fulfilling life.

The school provides opportunities for self-reflection and pupil participation through pupil voice, e.g. School Council, well-being champions, time for thought in PSHE sessions, use of art, dance and music to develop celebratory pieces during festival celebration days. The school believes in bringing the curriculum to life by making it accessible.

Questions raised by members

Some very positive comments were expressed to the headteacher. A suggestion that emerged from the discussion was that some assembly themes could be tied more closely to spirituality, religions and worldview and could include, for example, texts from sacred texts or other writings.

The Chair and members who were present recommended that the determination should be renewed. Any development points would be shared with the headteacher by WH. However, the meeting was not quorate (no representation from Committee C (teachers)). It was therefore agreed that members from the teaching group would be contacted by WH, provided with relevant information and asked if they would approve the determination. If no objections were forthcoming WH would inform the school that their application had been successful. [Note: the determination was approved.]

Examination results 2025

Examination results summary: GCSE Full Course

National Averages in brackets

2023		
Gender	9-4 (Standard pass)	9-5 (Strong pass)
Male	59.9 (64.9%)	50.1% (52.8%)
Female	71.5(82.2%)	62.9% (65.8%)
All	65.7% (72.2%)	56.5%(61.3%)
2024		
Gender	9-4 (Standard pass)	9-5 (Strong pass)
Male	66.6 (53.2%)	51.3% (53.2%)
Female	78.9 (76.2%)	67.2% (66%)
All	71% (65.7%)	60% (56.5%)
2025		
Gender	9-4 (Standard pass)	9-5 (Strong pass)
Male	66% (65%)	53% (53%)
Female	78% (77%)	67% 66%)
All	72% (71%)	59.5% (60%)

Leicester results for 2025 broadly similar to those for the previous year, with girls out-performing boys (reflecting the national picture) and 'all' being in line with national figures.

Links with other organisations

Leicester SACRE has links with organisations such as the National Association of SACREs (NASACRE), RE Today/National Association of Teachers of Religious Education (NATRE), RE Hubs, Association of RE Inspectors, Advisers and Consultants (AREIAC), the Religious Education Council (REC) as well as local faith communities.

SACRE Training

Members are kept up to date about local and national initiatives by the Consultant RE Adviser. They are also directed to appropriate online training from organisations such as AREIAC, NASACRE and Culham St Gabriel's.

SACRE Funding

This continues to support the work of the Consultant RE Adviser for approximately two days per month.

Appendix: SACRE Membership and Attendance 2024-25

Group A

Faith	Name	05.09.2024	12.12.24	11.02.25	01.04.25	17.06.25
Baha'i	Stephanie Maude	P	A	P	P	
Free Evangelical						
Hindu						
Methodist	Stephen Thompson	P	A	A	P	P
Muslim	Seema Ahmad	P	P	P	A	P
Ahmadiyya Muslim	Imam Muneeb Ur Rahmam		P	P	A	A
Quakers	Anne Fishenden	P	P	P	P	P
Salvation Army						
	Ian Ginsburg			P first meeting	P	A
	Michele Benn		P	A	P	P
Sikh	Harinder Singh					1 st meeting
Humanist	Allan Hayes					
	Martin Ward					

Group B

Faith	Name	05.09.2024	12.12.24	11.02.25	01.04.25	17.06.25
Church of England	Elizabeth Wayne	P	P	P	P	P
	Jill Carr	A	A	P	P	P
	Rev Elizabeth (Liz) Wilson	P	P	A	A	A
	Kim Peake					
	Tracey Manns	A	P	A	A	A

Group C

Faith	Name	05.09.2024	12.12.24	11.02.25	01.04.25	17.06.25
-------	------	------------	----------	----------	----------	----------

CLARET Secondary						
NAHT Primary	Nazma Jassat	P		P	P	
NATRE Primary						
NUT/NEU Primary						
Secondary						
NATRE Primary	Rachel Buckby		A		A	

Group D

		Name	05.09.2024	12.12.24	11.02.25	01.04.25	17.06.25
Members of the Local authority LCC	Cllr Mustafa Malik	A	A	resigned.			
	Cllr Manjula Sood	A	A	A	P	P	
	Melanie Gaiderman						