

# **Leicester SACRE Annual Report 2022-23**

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## **Introduction from the Chair**

Leicester SACRE is made up of people from different faiths, worldviews and cultures. We work together in promoting high standards of Collective Worship and RE in Leicester's schools. This knowledge and understanding of each other's values and beliefs helps to promote a cohesive community and prevent the harm caused by 'othering' through ignorance.

The work of SACRE continues to be strongly supported by the contributions of our clerk, Beejal Madhvani, and our Consultant RE Adviser, Wendy Harrison. Also, this year Leicester SACRE had the pleasure of welcoming Imam Muneed Ur Rahman as a new member.

During the year SACRE continued to support the Leicester Schools Peace Project. Primary and secondary working parties produced units of work that could be incorporated into the new agreed syllabus for Leicester.

Members were delighted that in January 2023 Wendy Harrison's proposal to produce the new Leicester Agreed Syllabus was formally agreed by the LA. Future SACRE meetings now include a separate Agreed Syllabus Conference after the main agenda. This reflects the positive desire of all members of SACRE to have some involvement in the new agreed syllabus.

During 2022-23 SACRE received two applications for determination from local schools who felt that 'broadly Christian' acts of Collective Worship would not be suitable for their pupil body. These were both unanimously accepted. A third application was postponed due to the school's difficulties with RAAC in its buildings.

As the outgoing Chair of Leicester SACRE I am very pleased with the developments outlined above and detailed in this report. My gratitude goes to all those who have served SACRE so well and thus served the people of Leicester.

Stephanie Maude  
Chair of Leicester SACRE 2022-23

## 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. <sup>1</sup>

The membership of SACREs comprises four groups, together with nominated Advisers. The groups are:

**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.12 for membership/attendance of Leicester SACRE 2022-23]

### Also in attendance at Leicester SACRE meetings

Clerk to SACRE: Beejal Madhvani

Melanie Gaiderman: LA

Allan Hayes: Co-opted Humanist member

Wendy Harrison (WH): Consultant RE Adviser

## Meetings and membership

Leicester SACRE held five meetings during this period: 12<sup>th</sup> October, 15<sup>th</sup> December, 26<sup>th</sup> January, 30<sup>th</sup> March, 15<sup>th</sup> June. During the October meeting Stephanie Maude was re-elected as Chair and Anne Fishenden as Vice Chair.

During the year it was agreed that SACRE's Constitution needed to be updated so that membership could be seen within that framework. Members considered gaps in representation, absences and how the Constitution overall required updating. It was agreed that parts of it were far too unwieldy, e.g. the formula for working out the numbers for each committee. It was noted that the Constitution states that members should make it a priority to attend meetings and on occasions where attendance is not possible a named substitute should attend on their behalf. Members suggested it would be beneficial if substitutes were named in advance to avoid gaps in representation and non-attendance. It was suggested that members should be contacted directly if they have not attended for 2/3 meetings and confirm if they were still willing to be part of SACRE. It was agreed that SACRE would benefit from representation from a number of communities, including Sikh, Jain, Buddhist, Roman Catholic, Salvation Army, teacher representatives, LA and elected members. It was confirmed that Rachel Buckby was a member of Committee B (Church of England).

During the June meeting members welcomed Iman Muneed Ur Rahman to Leicester SACRE. It was hoped to hold some future meetings at his mosque. Also during this meeting the outgoing Chair, Stephanie Maude, spoke about her role during the previous two years which she had thoroughly enjoyed, despite some significant challenges such as taking over mid-term, Covid, managing the new syllabus

contract, helping to secure funding, etc. She thanked fellow SACRE members for their support, contribution, and involvement in SACRE matters.

## Reports

### **Religious Education Council Report-Still Standing: the future of SACREs (Religious Education Council, 2021)<sup>1</sup>**

WH outlined the main points of the report regarding SACRE membership as this was a current concern. The issue was raised about whether the composition of SACRE committees needed to be updated to ensure they reflected the broader community. WH and AF informed members that there were some current vacancies, e.g. from the Sikh community. (See Meetings and Membership above.)

### **Time Allocation in Secondary Schools (Religious Education Council, 2023)**

WH shared the REC's breakdown of time allocated to RE, year by year, in city secondary schools. Data showed some gaps where it appeared that no RE was being provided and where the time allocation was well below expectations. Caution was advised about interpreting the data at face value, but members agreed that it raised important questions.

### **Leicester Schools Peace Project (LSP) – standing item**

Leicester SACRE was successful in being awarded funding from Westhill to support the LSP. Regular updates were provided for SACRE members. Andrew Bolton (Director of the project) emphasised the value of the ongoing partnership with the University of Leicester. Primary and secondary school working parties continued to support the project, enabling work to be developed on units of work across the key stages. These would be integrated into the new agreed syllabus.

### **Leicester Agreed Syllabus 2024 – 2029**

Background information was presented to members:

- Agreed syllabuses should be reviewed every five years - this is a statutory requirement. A full review of the Leicester syllabus was currently overdue. Significant updates were required, e.g. to reflect changes brought by the Ofsted Framework 2019<sup>2</sup> and the Ofsted Research Review of RE 2021<sup>3</sup>.
- Government Circular 1/94<sup>4</sup> requires SACREs to set up an Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC) group to oversee the review of the syllabus. This can be a group that meets independently of SACRE or can include all SACRE members. Members agreed that they would all prefer to be part of the ASC which would have its meetings directly after each SACRE meeting.
- Timescales: A tentative completion date of August 2024 was suggested.
- Funding: the expectation of DfE and NASACRE is that SACREs and agreed syllabus conferences are funded from the Central School Services Block.
- WH shared and put forward a proposal to undertake the work as an independent consultant in partnership with local teachers and faith/worldview communities in Leicester. It was noted that the national Association of SACREs

<sup>1</sup> <https://nasacre.org.uk/file/nasacre/1-58-final-still-standing.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/education-inspection-framework>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/research-review-series-religious-education>

<sup>4</sup>

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/281929/Collective\\_worship\\_in\\_schools.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/281929/Collective_worship_in_schools.pdf)

(NASACRE) states, 'we would expect a proper review process to cost in excess of £10,000.'<sup>5</sup>

ST stated that he had no objection in proceeding and put forward a proposal of support for WH to produce the new syllabus. This was supported by EW and SA, who welcomed WH's proposal, particularly the worldviews approach and emphasis upon the lived experiences of people in Leicester. During the January meeting the proposal was formally accepted. Members unanimously agreed that Wendy Harrison be commissioned by the LA to produce Leicester's new agreed syllabus. Following this recommendation by members, it was formally confirmed by the LA that WH had been commissioned to produce the next agreed syllabus for Leicester City Council. The process had at times seemed more complicated than was thought necessary, but members were pleased that the way forward was now clear. Members expressed their gratitude to the LA for the provision of the required funding. It was noted that future meetings of SACRE would include a separate ASC meeting after the main agenda.

#### **Ofsted SMSC analysis**

WH highlighted the fact that inspections were back on track but there had been very few deep dives in RE in Leicester schools. Overall, WH stressed that caution needed be shown when looking at reports as these only showed part of a bigger picture. She explained the meaning of Overall Effectiveness as a broad outcome for schools and made the point that reports no longer contain substantial detail about RE due to the way the present framework is set out. It was noted that in some reports inspectors commented that pupils were not well prepared for life in modern Britain. Members discussed whether location and diversity may have contributed to this. Some reports contained little or no comments about SMSC/ British values or RE. Although the overall picture in Leicester schools is broadly positive, the lack of detail, added to the decrease in WH's funding/ allocation of days meant that members found it difficult to carry out key aspects of their statutory responsibilities, i.e. keeping the LA informed about the quality of RE and collective worship in schools.

#### **Christmas social event**

Members were pleased to be able to meet up socially and invite former members to the event. It was hoped that these events would take place on a regular basis.

#### **Annual Report 2021-22**

The report was agreed by members and sent to the LA, NASACRE and the DfE.

#### **School Issue**

During the June meeting members were asked for advice from the headteacher of a Leicester primary school. The school had received correspondence from a parent who asked why their child was not able to have a halal school meal provided by the LA's catering providers. Members shared the view that schools should be inclusive and did not understand why the problem had arisen. NJ offered further assistance to the headteacher if further discussion was needed. She made the point that if a school has one or more children with special dietary requirements, this need would be met. NJ explained that at her school they have ensured an inclusive culture within school and that includes mealtimes and snack-times. She pointed out that the caterers are already making halal meals for other schools, therefore it was difficult to understand why there should be an issue. Members agreed that the next step would be to advise the LA of their views, stressing that we are a multicultural society and all

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.nasacre.org.uk/file/nasacre/1-376-nasacre-report-on-sacre-funding-in-england-2021.pdf>

needs should be met. The issue was resolved soon after it had been brought to the attention of SACRE.

### **Feedback from NASACRE Annual Conference 2023**

One SACRE member (EW) attended this conference.

- Keynote speaker: Dr Catherine Wright, CEO, Culham St Gabriel's Trust. EW urged members to look at their website for more information and the e-learning (free online) courses for teachers engaged in education in religion and worldviews. Dr Wright spoke about the importance of strengthening, supporting innovation and representing the RE community. She emphasised the celebration and spoke of some SACREs who are trailblazers in terms of their agreed syllabuses, which are innovative and strengthening of different partnerships.
- Second speaker: Charles Clarke, a former parliamentarian and government minister and academic. He spoke about how SACREs need to take a strong moral high ground, even when the world is living with the consequences of extremes, whether in politics and life generally. SACREs can help to bring about community cohesion in terms of different cultures and traditions. This is a commitment that other groups often do not have.
- The work of local RE hubs were encouraged.
- Speaker: David Hampshire: has held advisory roles around the country, is currently Senior Policy Advisor for historic places of worship at Historic England and has completed a review of SACRE annual reports 2019-22. This will be published in the coming months. He discussed the uneven levels of funding for SACREs and stressed the importance of the role of elected members. At best they act as advocates for SACREs and can hold their LAs to account. He recognised the time constraints that many consultants and RE advisers must contend with.
- There are 151 SACREs currently in the country, and most of them were represented at the conference.
- Funding for some SACREs is a significant concern.
- NASACRE will be developing their offer to SACREs in terms of their online training and advice. There was evidence of hope and energy, particularly where there is either recent or current and ongoing development of agreed syllabus.

### **Determinations**

#### **December 2022: Sandfield Close Primary School**

The application was presented by Amanda Dhillon (AD), headteacher, who shared a PowerPoint presentation with members. AD provided background information to provide a context for the application. Main points:

- AD shared the school experience of the Dandu puppet performance, which is linked to Diwali celebrations in Leicester. She explained how special it was in terms of visual representation and the way in which it linked to the themes of friendship, play, light and darkness.
- The school recently purchased books to support RE/spirituality. These contain cartoon pictures which the children can relate to. This was a contrast to outdated traditional R.E books which often showed stereotypical pictures of communities. AD shared how it was a great opportunity for children to learn about different faiths and compare celebrations of a particular faith community to their own.

- The school also uses mindfulness sessions with pupils and these have been very useful in terms of supporting well-being. The sessions enable children to identify and discuss their feelings and emotions. Children often link and identify what their family members may do, e.g. prayer, rituals and other practices. AD shared a selection of books used at the school which support children in their emotional and spiritual development.
- The children celebrate and participate in many different faith celebrations and festivals. AD gave the example of a neighbour who may not be Muslim but who celebrates Eid. Everyone takes part in Vaisakhi, Diwali and Christmas celebrations. The school organises a feast and decorations, in which everyone participates and looks forward to. Pupils are open-minded and reflective, despite challenges posed by the present climate and outside world.

### **Response/Questions**

AF said that she had enjoyed the presentation, particularly the focus on how people feel, and how children respond to things, e.g., by praying, carrying out a ritual, playing football or going for a walk. SM enquired whether the link between emotions, relationships, nature and spirituality was made explicit. AD responded that the link was made to a certain extent, being mindful not to say anything that would give the impression that the school prioritises one religion over another. EW asked for information about how the assemblies were organised over a week, term and year and how they were planned. AD explained that full assemblies stopped during Covid and were only just returning to normal. The school has not yet returned to full assemblies or inviting parents in.

SA thanked Amanda for the presentation and commented how lovely it was to hear about the support from parents and that there were no withdrawals.

Members were unable to agree renewal of determination as a meeting was not quorate. The consensus from all the representatives present agreed to renew the determination. This was later confirmed (January meeting) by the full SACRE membership.

### **Spinney Hill Primary School (March 2023)**

The application was presented by Catherine Stretton (CS), headteacher, supported by the deputy head, Simon Wheeler (SW).

CS provided contextual background to the application form. She explained that parents had been contacted and there had been a good return rate to the consultation, which was also given out during parents evening.

Main points of presentation:

- The school's vision and values have been developed over the last 4 years and embedded into the taught and hidden curriculum. All are informed by the drivers of, for example, communication, identity, aspiration to develop independent, emotional, resilient learners.
- Post-Covid: the school has been working with the 10 Keys of Happier Living programme. CS demonstrated how some of these linked in with their collective worship e.g. pictures showing values of giving and charity, Wesley Hall Food bank, growing vegetables in the small school garden and the harvest festival. Strong parental confidence was seen throughout the support during the recent festival celebrations in school.



- Pupils show an awareness and appreciation of what is around them, including the discovery of new religions, curiosity, being inspired, acceptance and how to connect with others. There is an emphasis upon celebrating differences and similarities.
- CS talked about the use of Picture News which poses questions for pupils to think about. Pupils are encouraged to reflect in class after assemblies in a variety of ways, e.g. orally, visually and through written reflections. Reflections are developed in different ways, allowing children to make connections and talk further about the theme and its application. Pupils respond and engage in a variety of ways, ranging from short comments to writing their own poetry. Many examples of this were shown in photographs.
- Assemblies are enhanced by the use of artefacts, moral and religious stories, videos, images, talk partners, music and singing.
- The changing religious/cultural profile of the school was discussed. There has been a slight increase in number of Sikhs and Hindus and an increase of eastern European children, especially from Bulgaria.

Members discussed the presentation and unanimously agreed to renew the determination.

### **Mayflower Primary School (June 2023)**

This has been postponed indefinitely due to the ongoing issues with Raac at the school. Members wished the headteacher and teachers well at this stressful time.

<h3><b>Examination results 2023</b></h3>
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An overview, based on NATRE report.<sup>6</sup>

#### **Key points:**

1. In both England and Wales, GCSE entries for RS Full Course **have risen** substantially.
2. Since 2010, GCSE entries for RS Full Course in England have risen by just over 30% (51,645) from 170,767 to 222,412.
3. Similarly, GCSE entries for RS Full Course in Wales, have risen by just over 36% (3537) from 6100 to 222,412.
4. **Short Course** entries in both nations in the same period, **have fallen dramatically**, but in England more rapidly than in Wales, almost certainly due to the removal of the short course in all subjects from performance measures in England.
5. In the same period, Short Course entries in England have fallen by just over 92% from 254,698 to 18,837.
6. Far fewer pupils in England and Wales leave school with a qualification in RS in 2023, than did in 2010.
7. Whereas around 425,465 pupils in England entered a GCSE qualification in 2010, in 2023 only 241,249 pupils did so in 2023 – a fall of 184,216 pupils (43%).
8. The trend in RS Full Course entries over the last 5-6 years has been stable at around 22,000 students in England and between 9 and 10,000 in Wales.

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.natre.org.uk/uploads/NATRE%20News/2023/Report-on-GCSE-Religious-Studies-2023.pdf>

9. When compared to the other Humanities subjects, the number of entries for RS are relatively similar but whereas the trend for RS is stable, the trend for History and Geography is upwards.
10. There are significant **regional** variations in rates of entry for GCSE and performance. These warrant further investigation.

### Examination results summary: GCSE Full Course

*National Averages in brackets*

<b>2022</b>		
<b>Gender</b>	<b>9-4 (Standard pass)</b>	<b>9-5 (Strong pass)</b>
Male	71.8% (70.4%)	60.2% (58.2%)
Female	88.3% (82.2%)	97.4% (72.8%)
<b>All</b>	76.5% (76.8%)	68.5%(61.1%)
<b>2023</b>		
<b>Gender</b>	<b>9-4 (Standard pass)</b>	<b>9-5 (Strong pass)</b>
Male	59.9 (64.9% )	50.1% (52.8%)
Female	71.5(82.2%)	62.9% (65.8%)
<b>All</b>	65.7% (72.2%)	56.5%(61.3%)

### 2023

- NA down overall on 2022.
- Girls significantly out-performed boys, though numbers entered for exam need to be taken into account.
- Leicester results lower than NA overall.

The performance of individual schools was discussed during the SACRE meeting when the Annual Report was discussed.

### Agreed Syllabus Conference: June 2023

WH gave a presentation where she outlined the following:

- The new Agreed Syllabus will meet the legal requirements and reflect the religious traditions of Great Britain; Christianity + the teaching and practices of other principal religions represented in Great Britain.
- Significant changes have taken place since the current syllabus was written and these will be included as part of the review process. These changes include a new Ofsted Framework (2019), different approaches to RE such as a Worldviews perspective, Ofsted Research into RE (2021), etc.
- Schools are moving towards the Worldviews approach, reflecting the more complex, diverse nature of religion, beliefs, and faith. This also incorporates the influence of personal worldviews and lived experiences of faith.
- One meeting had taken place with the primary advisory group – teachers agreed that a clear conceptual framework was required, with progression built in through different strands. They are keen to ensure that pupils have a real understanding of what it means to identify with different worldviews/religions and ensure that the syllabus reflects Leicester's diversity.

Members were in agreement that a religions/worldviews approach should be followed as it would reflect the lived experience of faith in Leicester rather than a 'text

book' approach. WH explained that Barbara Wintersgill's Big Ideas had provided a good starting point in relation to what the strands or concepts might look like.

Members looked forward to being part of the process and their involvement in it.

Tentative deadlines:

- Introduction and primary section to be completed by the end of December 2023 – but this will depend on the detail of the content.
- Secondary by end of April 2024
- Other sections, e.g. Ofsted, assessment by July 2024
- Completion by 31st of August 2024

### **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), 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 through regular training in meetings delivered by the Consultant RE Adviser. They are also directed to appropriate online training from organisations such as 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 1: SACRE Membership and Attendance 2022-23

### SACRE Attendance record 2022-23

#### Group A

Faith	Name	31.08.22	12.10.22	15.12.22	26.01.23 Cancelled	30.03.23	15.06.23	
Baha'i	Stephanie Maude		Apologies	P		P	P	
Free Evangelical	Pastor Brian Niblock							
Hindu	Dipak Kumar Fakey		P					
Hindu	Hiten Bhatt							
Hindu	Vibhooti Acharya						P	
Methodist	Stephen Thompson		P	P			P	
Muslim	Seema Ahmad		P	P			P	
Ahmadiyya Muslim	Iman Zartasht						Apologies	
	Imam Muneeb Ur Rahman	n/a – 1 <sup>st</sup> meeting 15 <sup>th</sup> June					n/a	P
Quakers	Anne Fishenden		P	P			P	
Salvation Army	Jean Denton		P					
Jewish	Sarah Cohen							

#### Group B

Faith	Name	31.08.22	12.10.22	15.12.22	26.01.23 Cancelled	30.03.23	15.06.23	
Church of England	Elizabeth Wayne		P	P		P	P	
	Jill Carr		P				Apologies	
	Rev Elizabeth (Liz) Wilson		Apologies				Apologies	Apologies
	Kim Peake							
	Rachel Buckby		Apologies	P				P
	Tracey Manns		Apologies				Apologies	Apologies

Group C

Faith	Name	31.08.22	12.10.22	15.12.22	26.01.23 Cancelled	30.03.23	15.06.23
CLARET Secondary	Jill Patterson		P	P		P	P
NAHT Primary	Nazma Jassat		P			P	P
NATRE Primary	Nausheen Aziz						
NUT/NEU Primary	Emma Wright						
Secondary	Mayuri Parekh						
NATRE Primary	Rachel Buckby		Apologies	P			P

Group D

	Name	31.08.22	12.10.22	15.12.22	26.01.23 Cancelled	30.03.23	15.06.23
Members of the Local authority LCC	Cllr Deepak Bajaj						
	Cllr Manjula Sood		P	P		P	
	Melanie Gaiderman						

Faith	Name	31.08.22	12.10.22	15.12.22	26.01.23 Cancelled	30.03.23	15.06.23
Humanist	Allan Hayes			P			