

# **Medway SACRE**

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education

## **Annual Report 2024-25**

*Academic Year September 2024 – August 2025*

## Table of Contents

1. Introduction
  2. Religious Education (Statutory Responsibilities)
  3. Collective Worship (Statutory Responsibilities)
  4. Links with Other Bodies
  5. SACRE's Own Arrangements
  6. Looking Forward: Priorities for 2025-26
- Appendix A: Meeting Attendance Record
- Appendix B: Examinations and Workforce Data

## 1. Introduction

### Words from the Chair

I am honoured to present this annual report for Medway SACRE covering the academic year 2024-25. This year has been one of significant transition and growth for our SACRE.

We bid farewell to Councillor Trevor Clarke, who served with dedication as Chair for 15 years. His commitment to promoting high-quality Religious Education and supporting Medway's diverse communities has left a lasting legacy. We also express our thanks to our former Advisor Ian Hartland who served Medway SACRE for 22 years. We also extend our gratitude to Councillor Tracy Coombs for her service to SACRE in her role as Portfolio Holder for Education.

I am delighted to welcome new members: Councillor Harinder Mahil and Councillor Adam Price, who bring fresh perspectives and enthusiasm to our work. Following extensive discussion and a unanimous vote, SACRE agreed to seek approval to extend Group A membership to include Humanist representation, with a new member expected to join as a co-opted member in September 2025 – pending full council approval. Work was completed with Humanist UK to identify an appropriate representative.

Our key achievements this year include the commencement of our Agreed Syllabus review through the Agreed Syllabus Conference, strengthening our partnerships with local faith communities and schools, enhancing our commitment to professional development through NASACRE training opportunities, and the contextualized support provided by our school-based advisor

SACRE remains committed to ensuring that every child in Medway receives high-quality Religious Education that promotes understanding, respect, and social cohesion. We continue to champion RE as central to pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development and continue to advise schools regarding Collective Worship.

I would like to thank all SACRE members for their dedication and expertise, our clerk Ruth Wells for her excellent support, We look forward to embedding our new strategic plan for the 2025/2026 academic year welcoming Professor Bob Bowie as our new consultant advisor, enhancing our support for RE within an SEN context and continuing to respond to local, regional and national developments.

*Councillor Esther Cook*

Chair, Medway SACRE

### Overview of SACRE Meetings 2024-25

SACRE met three times during the reporting period:

- 19th September 2024 – Hybrid meeting at Chapter Office Garth House, Rochester Cathedral
- 30th January 2025 – Online meeting (including Agreed Syllabus Conference)
- 5th June 2025 – Hybrid meeting at Strood Academy

All meetings were well-attended, with members participating both in person and online. Quoracy was maintained throughout the year.

### Key Discussion Areas

- Election of new Chair and leadership transition
- Agreed Syllabus review and establishment of working party
- Constitution review and membership expansion to include the proposal to amend Group A to include Humanist representation
- Development of terms of reference and conduct for members
- Standards and monitoring of RE in Medway schools
- Wider teacher development facilitated through hub work, website development and specific school review
- Partnership working with faith organisations and schools
- Budget planning and resource allocation
- Implications of Ofsted reforms

### Agreed Syllabus Conference

An Agreed Syllabus Conference was convened on 30th January 2025 to begin the review of Medway's Agreed Syllabus. The current syllabus dates from 2019 and requires updating to reflect contemporary approaches to Religious Education. Key considerations discussed included whether minor revisions or a complete rewrite is needed.

The UK government had announced a review of curriculum and assessment in July 2024, and religious had been subsequently added to be included in the review, the outcome of which could have major implications for an Agreed Syllabus. It was agreed that the outcome of this review should inform Agreed Syllabus determinations.

The strategic plan for 2025-26 includes a working party comprising the Chair, school-based consultants, and the new consultant advisor has been established to develop recommendations for the updated syllabus.

## Executive Summary

This report covers a year of significant development for Medway SACRE:

- **Governance:** Successful transition of Chair role; unanimous agreement to recommend the extension of Group A membership to include Humanist representation and the development of member conduct framework alongside proposed amendments to the constitution
- **Agreed Syllabus:** Convened Agreed Syllabus Conference; established working party
- **Professional Development:** NASACRE training programme promoted to members; support for school-based RE leads, school reviews offered including a focus on RE within an SEN Specialist setting
- **Community Engagement:** Strong partnerships with local community and faith groups and organizations such as Medway Interfaith Forum.
- **Resources:** Continued financial support for schools-based advisors to support the lead advisor, and curriculum knowledge enhancement.

## 2. Religious Education (Statutory Responsibilities)

### The Local Agreed Syllabus and RE in Schools

Medway's current Agreed Syllabus was adopted in 2019. The syllabus is available to all Medway schools, including maintained schools (who are legally required to follow it) and academies, who may choose to adopt it but must provide RE in line with the Basic Curriculum in accordance with their academy funding agreement.

### Standards and Monitoring of RE

SACRE reviewed national KS4 and KS5 Religious Studies examination results. Local data is analysed. Due to COVID-19 impact, meaningful comparisons can only be made between 2019 and 2024 performance data.

SACRE members maintain regular contact with schools through RE network meetings, school visits, support for new RE subject leaders, and classroom observations.

Feedback indicates that school syllabus implementation varies, often using commercial schemes like RE Today.

### Teacher Training and Materials

SACRE supports professional development through:

- **RE Network Meetings:** Led by school-based consultants for RE subject leaders
- **NASACRE Training:** Full programme of online sessions available to members
- **Support from the Consultant and Schools based advisors**
- **Website Resources:** Enhanced with additional teaching materials
- **Signposting schools to recommended resource providers**

### Withdrawals and Complaints

SACRE has received no reports of parental withdrawals from RE or complaints regarding RE provision during this reporting period.

### **3. Collective Worship (Statutory Responsibilities)**

#### **Standards and Monitoring**

SACRE recognises the importance of collective worship in supporting pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development. Monitoring is primarily through review of Ofsted reports, feedback from school visits, and communication with schools.

#### **Determinations**

No schools have applied for determinations during this reporting period.

## 4. Links with Other Bodies

### Medway Interfaith Forum

Public events publicised through the SACRE supported networks to all the schools in Medway.

### Local Faith Community links through SACRE membership

- **Muslim Community:** Imam from Chatham Mosque visited schools with positive feedback
- **Hindu and Sikh Communities:** Active representation on SACRE
- **Jewish Community:** Group A representation
- **Humanists:** New engagement to be confirmed following membership extension decision

### Churches Together in Medway

The SACRE has a representation from CTIM.

### Rochester Diocese

Strong partnership continues with Durham University training offers, Foundation Stage RE story trails (with increased bookings), and ongoing support for church schools.

### Family Trust

Family Trust provides valuable support including three new after-school clubs opened this year, school visits and assemblies, and RE teaching support.

### NASACRE

Medway SACRE maintains membership with NASACRE, which provides comprehensive training, national conference opportunities, policy briefings, and support with Agreed Syllabus development. Representative attended the national conference.

### Medway Council

|

## 5. SACRE's Own Arrangements (Statutory Responsibilities)

### Professional and Administrative Support

Ruth Wells continues as Clerk to SACRE, providing excellent administrative support including organising meetings, managing communications, and coordinating with external organisations.

Ian Hartland retired as consultant advisor after many years of service. Professor Bob Bowie from Canterbury Christ Church University has been invited as new consultant advisor starting in September 2025, bringing extensive RE experience and involvement in national RE review.

SACRE benefits from school-based RE consultants who lead network meetings, provide direct support to schools, and contribute to the Agreed Syllabus working party.

### Membership

Medway SACRE is constituted with four statutory groups:

Group	Members
Group A	Christian denominations and other religions: Dalia Halpern-Matthews, Faran Forghani, Sharon Millar (Vice Chair), Stephen Bello, Dean Collins,
Group B	Church of England: Geraldine Shackleton, Helen Bradshaw, Ruth Gooch
Group C	Teachers' Associations: Carolyn Burch, Lisa Humphries
Group D	Local Authority: Cllr Esther Cook (Chair), Cllr Trevor Clarke, Cllr Adam Price, Cllr Harinder Mahil

### Membership Changes

- Departures: Councillor Tracy Coombs
- New Members: Councillors Harinder Mahil and Adam Price
- Approved Future Member: Humanist representative from September 2025

### Training for SACRE Members

All members have access to comprehensive NASACRE training programme including online sessions, recordings, Agreed Syllabus development training, Group D training, and deep dive sessions on key RE topics.

## **Finance**

SACRE's budget for 2024-25 includes expenditure on clerk and administrative support, consultant advisor fees, NASACRE membership, RE Hub support, Family Trust grant, website development.

## **6. Looking Forward: Priorities for 2025-26**

### **Agreed Syllabus Review:**

- Complete school consultation
- Develop recommendations
- Present proposals to SACRE
- Plan implementation

### **Membership and Governance:**

- Welcome Humanist representative
- Continue recruitment of currently non-represented groups
- Implement induction process
- Ensure constitution signing

### **Communication:**

- Launch termly newsletter
- Enhance website
- Strengthen school links
- Promote SACRE's work

### **Professional Development:**

- Promote NASACRE training
- Support RE networks
- Work with new consultant

### **Monitoring:**

- Analyse examination data
- Develop monitoring approaches
- Encourage RE Quality Mark
- Consider collective worship

## Appendix A: Meeting Attendance Record 2024-25

Member	19 Sept 2024	30 Jan 2025	5 June 2025
<b>GROUP A</b>			
Dalia Halpern-Matthews	×	✓	✓
Faran Forghani	✓	✓	A
Sharon Millar	✓	A	✓
Stephen Bello	✓	✓	✓
Dean Collins	✓	A	✓
<b>GROUP B</b>			
Geraldine Shackleton	A	×	✓
Helen Bradshaw	✓	✓	✓
Ruth Gooch	✓	✓	×
<b>GROUP C</b>			
Carolyn Burch	✓	✓	✓
Lisa Humphries	✓	✓	✓
<b>GROUP D</b>			
Cllr Trevor Clarke	✓	✓	A
Cllr Esther Cook	✓	✓	✓
Cllr Tracy Coombs	A	✓	-
Cllr Adam Price / Harinder Mahil	-	-	✓/A

Key: ✓ = Present, A = Apologies, × = Absent, - = Not yet member

## Appendix B: Examinations and Workforce Data

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Permanent data table

## 'Subject pupil level local authority data' from 'Key stage 4 performance'

Created: 12 February 2026

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Percentage of pupils achieving the grade for 'Subject pupil level local authority data' for 9 to 1, 9 to 4, 9 to 5, GCSE, Religious Studies and 1 other filter in England and Medway between 2022/23 and 2024/25

			GCSE			
			2024/25	2023/24	2022/23	
Religious Studies	England	Total pupil entries	z	z	z	
		9 to 1	97%	97%	98%	
		9 to 4	71%	71%	71%	
		9 to 5	60%	60%	60%	
	South East	Medway	Total pupil entries	z	z	z
			9 to 1	98%	97%	95%
			9 to 4	75%	76%	71%
			9 to 5	65%	66%	61%

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Permanent data table

## 'Entries and Results - A level and AS by region and subject (single academic year)' from 'A level and other 16 to 18 results'

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'Entries and Results - A level and AS by region and subject (single academic year)' for A level and Total Religious Studies in Medway between 2022/23 and 2024/25

			2024/25	2023/24	2022/23
A level	Religious Studies	Total Religious Studies			
		Percent achieving grade A*	0.0%	0.0%	3.8%
		Percent achieving grade A* - A	4.0%	12.5%	9.6%
		Percent achieving grade A* - B	24.8%	35.4%	38.5%
		Percent achieving grade A* - C	56.4%	62.5%	71.2%
		Percent achieving grade A* - D	76.2%	85.4%	88.5%
		Percent achieving grade A* - E	90.1%	93.8%	94.2%

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LA name	School name	Religious character	School type	% year 7 hours - RE	% year 8 hours - RE	% year 9 hours - RE	% year 10 hours - RE	% year 11 hours - RE	% year 12 hours - RE	% year 13 hours - RE	% hours - RE	KS4FCEntriesPerc	KS4ALEntriesPerc	NoEntriesPerc	OfstedRating	Percentage-4FC
Medway	Chatham Grammar School for Boys	Does not apply	Academies	3.97	5.41	4.62	4.66	2.3	0	2.76	3.25	12.7	12.7	87.3		100
Medway	St John Fisher Catholic Comprehensive Scho	Roman Catholic	Local authority maintained	9.29	8.55	12.73	12.53	12.36	6.88	9.42	10.5	92.7	92.7	7.3	Good	58.4
Medway	Holcombe Grammar School	Does not apply	Academies	3.97	5.41	4.62	4.66	2.3	0	2.76	3.25	12.7	12.7	87.3		100
Medway	The Thomas Aveling School	None	Academies	0	1.16	0	2.1	0	0	0	0.51	49.8	49.8	50.2	Good	38.9
Medway	The Howard School	None	Academies	4.22	4.13	2.11	1.97	0.95	0	0	2.27	17.8	17.8	82.2		79.2
Medway	Brompton Academy	Does not apply	Academies	4.28	4.67	4.66	1.2	1.14	4.39	1.8	3.06	4.7	4.7	95.3	Requires improvement	90.9
Medway	The Robert Napier School	None	Academies	0.73	1.54	1.37	2.31	1.36	6.54	0	1.82	10.3	10.3	89.7	Good	52.6
Medway	The Howard School	None	Academies	4.22	4.13	2.11	1.97	0.95	0	0	2.27	17.8	17.8	82.2	Good	79.2
Medway	Fort Pitt Grammar School	None	Academies									10.2	10.2	89.8	Outstanding	100
Medway	Sir Joseph Williamson's Mathematical Schoo	None	Academies									6.9	6.9	93.1	Outstanding	100
Medway	The Rochester Grammar School	None	Academies	0.94	1.88	4.17	5.67	7.75	0	0	2.94	90.2	90.2	9.8	Outstanding	96.1
Medway	The Thomas Aveling School	None	Academies	0	1.16	0	2.1	0	0	0	0.51	49.8	49.8	50.2		38.9
Medway	The Rochester Grammar School	None	Academies	0.94	1.88	4.17	5.67	7.75	0	0	2.94	90.2	90.2	9.8	Good	96.1
Medway	Fort Pitt Grammar School	None	Academies									10.2	10.2	89.8	Outstanding	100
Medway	Sir Joseph Williamson's Mathematical Schoo	None	Academies									6.9	6.9	93.1	Outstanding	100
Medway	The Hundred of Hoo Academy	None	Academies									0.4	0.4	99.6	Good	100