

**Annual Report of the  
Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE)  
Blackburn with Darwen September 2023**

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**Words from the Chair**

SACRE has had an incredibly exciting year this year after the previous two years, when we reported significant change. Together we have re-established a high quality SACRE, ensuring that the Local Authority has met its statutory duties. Together we have ensured that we remained focused on our aim of ensuring that our learning offer from Blackburn with Darwen is vibrant, relevant, and inspiring for the young people.

The membership continues to reflect the diversity of the wider religious and professional community. SACRE meetings continue to be representative, engaging, and productive. All members feel that their views are considered and respected. This year, when we focused on introducing our Agreed Syllabus, we continued to make excellent use of co-option to ensure membership of the SACRE was well informed and highly representative of the diversity of the local community. The SACRE has now embedded a well-developed process of co-option of where local teachers of RE have been co-opted as well as representatives from each School Improvement Group. SACRE continues to have a broad representation from all types of school in the LA.

The launch of our new Agreed Syllabus this year has been incredibly exciting. We have again continued to worked collaboratively with national and local groups to enhance our learning offer.

As Chair I am incredibly grateful to all who have positively embraced our meetings and have again demonstrated their commitment to support SACRE.

We look forward, to be able to report further progress of our work in our report next year.

*Alison Ashworth-Taylor*

## 2. SACRE meetings, 2022-2023 venues and a brief overview of content of these meetings.

Date All meetings via Microsoft TEAMS	Brief overview of content of these meetings. Comprehensive copies of minutes can be found at: <a href="https://blackburn.gov.uk/search?search_api_fulltext=SACRE">https://blackburn.gov.uk/search?search_api_fulltext=SACRE</a>
1 <sup>st</sup> November 2022	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Pupil Conference Review 17th June HS shared the video footage from the Pupil conference. This enabled members to view the feedback from pupils that attended and also gave an overview of the day. The feedback was extremely positive.</li> <li>2. New syllabus. Update re trial units. HS reported that they had an open meeting was held at the end of July were a school team came forward to trial the units and a second school came on board in September. Lots of CPD has taken place and there will be a will catch up mid- November. HS will contact the schools to get their feedback which is an integral part of the process. The schools have been invited to do one of the workshops at the launch and share their experience of the units with attendees .LF reported that they were on schedule and a meeting was held via zoom on 20th October to explain about QUEST for RE and to go through the Christmas units. 11 Primary schools attended the session. A separate meeting will be held with a Special school to see how they could adapt the Quest for RE at his school. The date for the joint launch for Primary and Secondary is 12th January 2023 at Ewood Park. Schools have been told to save the date and that more details will follow.</li> <li>3. Annual Report AAT reported on the above annual report and went through key points of the report: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) A brief overview of the contents of the meetings</li> <li>b) Agreed syllabus consultation</li> <li>c) Development plan and key priorities</li> <li>d) No more Knives- Emma Owen, Message trust</li> <li>e) Linking schools project</li> <li>f) Recommendations from the Syllabus conferences</li> <li>g) Determinations</li> <li>h) Links with other bodies – local arrangements</li> <li>i) It was noted that the annual report is sent to the Secretary of State, the Department of Education and is a legal document.</li> </ol> </li> <li>4. Discussion took place regarding reprising the No More Knives initiative in two years' time. It was also proposed to look at key issues effecting BwD communities including county lines. Colleagues were recommended to view the attach link regarding this. <a href="https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/m0010dbw/hidden-girls">https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/m0010dbw/hidden-girls</a></li> <li>5. AAT reiterated that the Agreed Syllabus cost had been paid for from the SACRE budget. The annual subscription cost to schools will also be paid by the LA for this year, however it was noted that schools will have to pay for the annual subscription cost thereafter.</li> <li>6. Brief discussion took place around another pupil conference and suggestions to look at bringing schools of sanctuary together was discussed. HS added that they have made preliminary enquiries about two exhibitions that will be hosted in the North West for the first time. One is the Jewish experience and the other is a series of photos taken on a visit to Auschwitz. A meeting to look at the Holocaust exhibitions and workshops will be held tonight and HS will have more information to circulate after this meeting.It was noted that BwD have always supported Refugee and asylum seekers .JS reported that Pleckgate is an Anne Frank school and they will be inviting members of SACRE and primary schools to view their exhibition. It was noted that Pleckgate, BCHS and TIGHS are also Anne Frank Schools. Action: JS to contact the ambassadors and invite them to the next SACRE meeting.</li> <li>7. Collective worship – current one was launched in 2009. SACRE purchase guiding light materials. High schools have been invited to the launch for 5th December. WOW for worship – July 2023 with a formal launch will be 2024</li> <li>8. Action Plan AAT shared the action plan for this year with the group. AAT highlighted key points from the Action Plan: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Linked to the SEF</li> <li>b) To start looking at gathering clear and concise data relating to time allocations</li> <li>c) Standards and Quality provision</li> <li>d) Review the membership of SACRE</li> <li>e) New Agreed Syllabus Launch date</li> <li>f) Collective Worship</li> <li>g) Wow Worship materials</li> <li>h) Determinations a major focus for this year</li> <li>i) Social and Racial harmony agenda</li> <li>j) Members accepted the action plan and AAT will include the actions recommended.</li> </ol> </li> <li>9. Proposal: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Determinations</li> </ol> </li> <li>9. Establishment of sub-committee with remit to consider and recommend determinations which could have a wider brief and be called the Monitoring Provision Sub Committee with a number of functions to include: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Determinations</li> </ol> </li> </ol>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>b) 2. Standards in schools</li> <li>c) 3. Monitoring RE</li> <li>d) 4. Monitoring CW</li> <li>e) 5. Contribution to Development Plan</li> <li>f) 6. Contribution to SEF</li> <li>g) 7. Contribution to Annual Report</li> </ul> <p>Sub-committee to have at least 4 members, one from each constituent group  Non-voting: Dot Thomson (Consultant if required)  Paula Johnson Democratic Services  Andrew Hutchinson (Governance - as required)</p> <p>It was agreed to hold a sub-committee meeting half termly to look at specific issues. This committee would attend the SACRE meetings and put forward recommendations for approval. It was agreed this meetings would be held via teams and one representation from each committee would be represented as follows:  Committee A - John East  Committee B – Helen Sage  Committee C – Liz Beaumont  Committee D – Cllr S Liddle  AAT or CD also to attend the subcommittee meetings.  Teaching Hours –two attachments confidential to SACRE Members  10. AAT referred to the email that she had received from Deborah Weston about RE teaching hours in BWD.  Legal requirements were discussed with the group regarding RE and time spent on RE. It was agreed that the figures need to be accurately reported.</p>
14 <sup>th</sup> March 2023	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Membership review and vacancies  “Where a nominated representative fails to attend three consecutive meetings of the SACRE and fails to give their apologies s/he, shall cease to be a member of the SACRE and the nominating body shall be invited to nominate another representative provided that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) the Clerk to the SACRE has advised the member in writing of the provision of this clause following the second missed meeting and at least 10 working days before the third meeting.</li> <li>(b) SACRE does not decide to disapply this rule for reasons of extenuating circumstances.”</li> </ul> Membership of the SACRE Board  AAT highlighted the vacancies currently on the board:  One Sikh member  Baptist member  Roman Catholic –  Vacancy for ASCL  AAT made member aware of an email received regarding a Humanist group who would like to join  Action: AAT will formally respond to the group inviting them on to the board as an observer.</li> <li>2. The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as a true and accurate record.</li> <li>3. Agreed Syllabus Launch” Evaluations from: (Action from minutes) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Primary presentation and feedback by Lisa Fenton  Questful update Feedback from primary colleagues was really positive and thanked LF for her support.</li> <li>b) Secondary presentation and feedback by Helen Sage  HS thanked JS for their part in the Holocaust event.  HS shared with the group videos from the KS3 &amp; KS5 conferences on the Holocaust event.  It was noted that the majority felt that the day exceeding their expectations and there was very positive feedback from the attendees.  DT recommended schools join the UCL programme which is free and of very high quality.  JS recommended the Olive Branch Award with Solutions Not Sides which is a three year programme for schools to be involved in.  DT shared the evaluation summary from the day. The launch was very successful with six schools and ten colleagues attending. The feedback was really positive and attendees were really pleased to meet face to face.  Please see attached:  JS and JK added that they were inspired after the conference, a much smoother transition and looked forward to working with the new syllabus.</li> </ul> </li> <li>4. Standards and Monitoring  Vicki Dugdale (Intelligence Officer, BwD) shared with the group the RE data.  Please see presentation below.  Action: VD to include in the next presentation a comparison of RE data with other humanities subjects</li> <li>5. Determinations &amp; Collective Worship Guidance and Process  AAT shared the document for determinations and collective worship guidance and process. Completed forms to be returned to AAT. AAT asked that the SACRED board agree that this is the guidance that schools will follow.  All were in agreement.</li> </ol>

6 <sup>th</sup> June 2023	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Membership review and vacancies Action: AAT and SV to meet and look at the attendance and will feedback at the Autumn meeting.</li> <li>2. Feedback on SACRE Annual Conference attended by SEO Victoria Weddle)</li> <li>3. Congratulations to SACRE members       <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Jenny Savage <a href="https://www.lancashiretelegraph.co.uk/news/23541305.pleckgate-high-teacher-shortlisted-national-award/">https://www.lancashiretelegraph.co.uk/news/23541305.pleckgate-high-teacher-shortlisted-national-award/</a> It was noted that JS that JS has been shortlisted for a TES Award. JS is one of eight candidates nominated for the Subject Lead of the Year and will attend an awards ceremony in London in June. The board asked for their congratulations to JS be noted and all were in agreement it was very well deserved.</li> <li>b. John East Community Volunteer Awards 2022 – and the winners are... – Community CVS Members congratulated JE on receiving the Renee Black award.</li> <li>c. Congratulations on behalf of SACRE to CII SL on her appointment as Deputy Mayor.</li> </ol> </li> <li>4. Agreed Syllabus representatives Primary Lisa Fenton- All is going according to plan and the Blackburn schools are getting themselves organised with the syllabus. I have had regular contact with several of them so they are getting to know me which is good. There were a good half dozen of them at the recent RE coordinators conference which had a world faiths theme. They are now more than happy to have joint meetings with the Church schools within the LA and across the Diocese. I have responded to particular requests for help with LTP's and schools are trying out units across the school in prep for Sept. I am booked for staff meetings in a couple of schools. I have updated several of the units to ensure there is enough coverage of world faiths for all schools and will continue to work on this. I have also created a new series of documents to help BWD schools with planning – these were created in consultation with several of the RE leads.</li> <li>5. Schools of Sanctuary JE reported that there are a number of schools in Bwd that are Schools of Sanctuary. He proposed that SACRE encourage all schools in Bwd to become Schools of Sanctuary. AAT confirmed that this would included in the SACRE action plan.</li> <li>6. Refugee week JE updated the group regarding refugee week. This year's theme is Compassion.</li> </ol>
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### 3. SACRE Funded Initiatives

#### Holocaust Memorial Day



In January 2023 Blackburn with Darwen Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education SACRE worked in collaboration with Blackburn Diocese Board of Education, Blackburn Cathedral, the North East Religious Resources Centre and the Board of Deputies to host two exhibitions designed to give people the opportunity to learn about Jewish culture and customs.

- a. The 'Jewish Living Experience' was a touring exhibition that gave people an opportunity to experience Judaism through beautifully illustrated display panels and by handling authentic cultural artefacts. School groups also took part in educational activities that promoted experiential learning.
- b. They're only Pictures' was a thought-provoking exhibition of photographs of Auschwitz taken by an interfaith group on a recent visit. It focused on the impact of community dialogue on our understanding of dignity and mutual respect.

These two exhibitions gave our young people a fantastic opportunity to learn more about Judaism. With a small Jewish population, Blackburn with Darwen does not have a synagogue and so opportunities to learn about Judaism and the Jewish culture are limited. By working together, we were able to bring these exhibitions to the borough, around the time of Holocaust Memorial Day.

As well as hosting visits from local secondary school and sixth form pupils, the exhibitions were open to anyone in our local community who wanted to learn more about the Jewish faith.



### What is the cost of freedom and faith?



Two full day pupil conferences were organised and run at Blackburn Cathedral on the theme of “What is the cost of freedom and faith?”

26th January 2023 Years 8 and 9 and on the 31st January 2023 for Years 12 and 13

To enable pupil and student to explore two significant exhibitions linked to expressions of faith, persecution and the right to freedom

The Conference objectives were as follows:

#### Years 8 and 9

- Empower children and young people to identify why and how people express their faith and what impact that has on them individually, their family and the local and global community
- Explore a quality religious education unit from the Blackburn with Darwen Agreed Syllabus at KS3 and engage with how it impacts on the delivery of the provision of religious education within the local borough.
- Inspire and exemplify new ways to deliver Judaism lessons in accordance with the Locally Agreed Syllabus for KS3 and illustrate how those units feed and contribute to a spiral curriculum

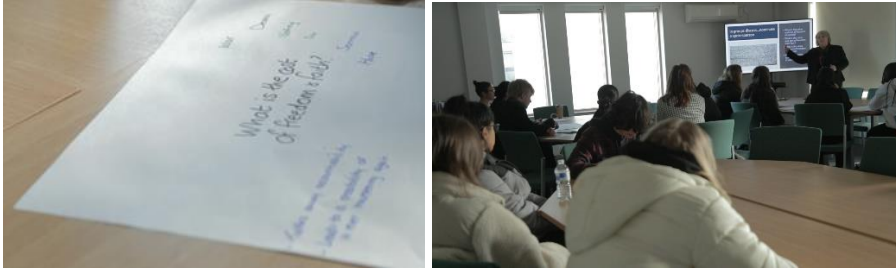
#### Years 12 and 13

- Empower students to identify what they consider to be the cost of freedom and their role in community cohesion and as a global citizen
- To enable students to explore two significant exhibitions linked to expressions of faith, persecution and the right to freedom
- Encourage students to connect to their prior knowledge and deepen their understanding to identify why and how people express their faith and what impact that has on them individually, their family and the local and global community
- Explore a quality religious education unit from the Blackburn with Darwen Agreed Syllabus at KS5 and engage with how it impacts on the delivery of the provision of religious education within the local borough.
- Inspire and exemplify new ways to deliver Judaism lessons in accordance with the Locally Agreed Syllabus for KS5 and illustrate how those units feed and contribute to a spiral curriculum

The reviews from students and staff were incredibly positive and thought provoking, some of these are captured below:

- *Ernie was fantastic. We heard about his father. I would have loved to hear about his mother.*
- *The content of the activities was really good. Learning about Judaism today was interesting. The photo exhibition was very powerful.*
- *I was fascinated with the knowledge shown to me as it helped me get a better understanding of it all.*
- *I realised the importance of history and how it emotionally, physically and psychologically impacted people.*
- *To have a personal connection and a story allows a better understanding of what went down and the impact it had.*
- *Students really enjoyed the time for reflection on the photo exhibition. The quiet time for individual thought and reflection is something we don't always have time to do in the classroom. The 3 sessions were a great balance of discussion listening and reflection. All sessions enthusiastically delivered and inspired our students. Jamilia's testimony – powerful example to use*
- *Lots of interactive and hands on activities. Students stayed engaged well. There was plenty of depth in each of the sessions.*
- *Good use of Jewish artefacts/specialists to help students about the religion. Good way of understanding the importance of the holocaust.*
- *Really informative, engaging.*

- *Participation of the students. Questions asked made children think before responding.*
- *Very interactive. Fast paced and well explained. Breakout sessions helped to maintain engagement. Very enjoyable day, thank you.*



The vision, support, drive and guidance from Helen Sage and Dot Thomson for these and other endeavours this year has been absolutely outstanding.

I extend my personal gratitude as Chair and also on behalf of SACRE.

## 4. Religious Education

### Local Agreed Syllabus

The new Blackburn with Darwen agreed syllabus for religious education 2023-2027 Questful RE (Primary) and Illuminating Pathways (Secondary) was officially launched on 12th January 2023, after unit trials in volunteer schools had taken place in Autumn Term 2022.

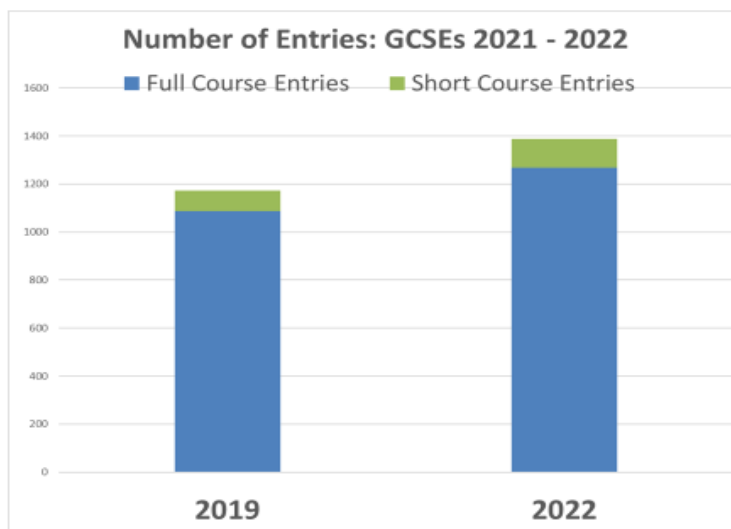
Positive and informative feedback was gathered from attendees on the following:

The quality of the experience, general reflections on the content and learning strategies used in this session, next steps for individual schools/academies. Attendees were also asked to outline the steps that they needed to take to implement the new syllabus and to identify further future Professional development needs.

### Standards and monitoring of RE

On the 13th March Vicki Dugdale (Intelligence Officer, BwD) shared with the RE data with SACRE as follows:

#### Key Stage 4



**LA KS4 Attainment 2022 · Actual results**

Religious Studies GCSE · 1020 pupils

Avg Point Score Religious Studies GCSE

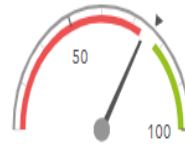
5.1 pts -



Significantly below the national average (5.3) ◀

% Grade 4+ Religious Studies GCSE

74%

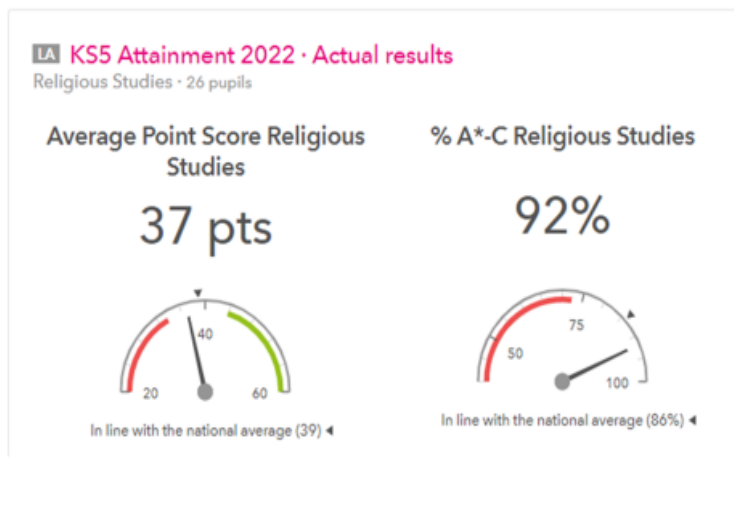


In line with the national average (76%) ◀

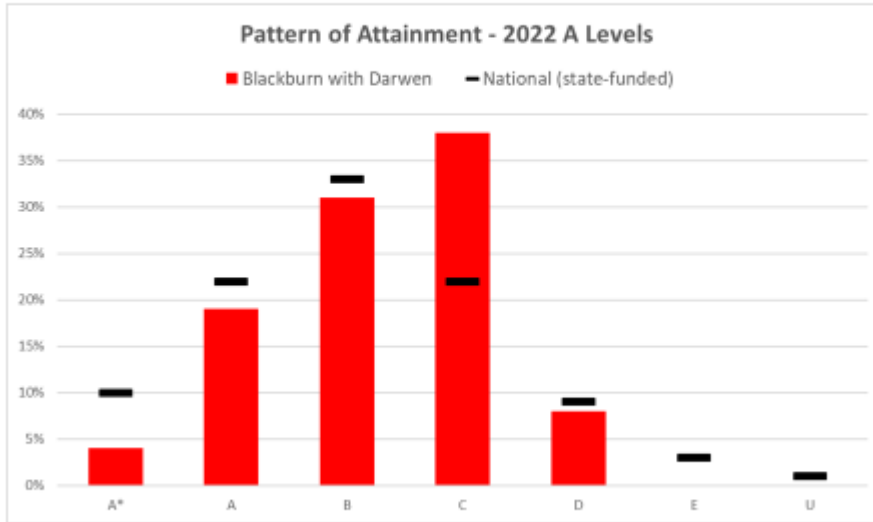


**Key Stage 5**

**Summary of 2022 A Level entries**



# Summary of 2022 A Level entries



**KS5 Attainment 2022**  
Religious Studies - 26 pupils

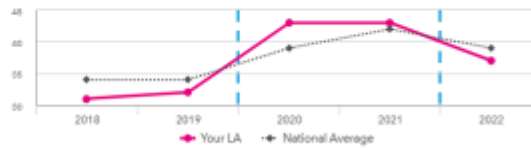
Average Point Score ▼

**37 pts**

FFT Rank

100 BETTER ▶ 1

In line with the national average (39)



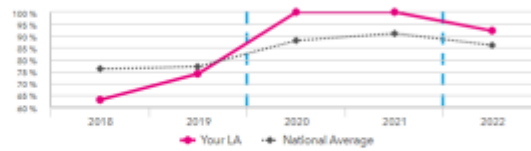
% A\*-C ▼

**92%**

FFT Rank

100 BETTER ▶ 1

In line with the national average (86%)





## **5. Collective Worship**

This year our SACRE have worked tirelessly again to review and relaunch the clear procedure already established, to ensure an efficient response to any request for determination. The procedure and protocol for dealing with any requests for determination is now in place. All maintained schools currently who have a determination or may need to renew have been identified. The RSC and ESFA have also been contacted to ascertain the status of worship included in the agreements of academies and free schools.

In Autumn Term 2023 the Chair of SACRE will implement the process of review with the identified maintained schools who wish to apply for a determination.

SACRE have not received any withdrawals by phase or complaints.

## **6. Links with other bodies**

SACRE is a member of NATRE, NASACRE and members actively attend conferences. We are currently planning our CPD engagement for 23-24.

The Chair of SACRE was until recently the lead for School Effectiveness and SEND in Blackburn with Darwen and was previously teaching school lead and a system leader. As a School Effectiveness Officer she can and does promote SACRE.

In 2022-2023 the Chair has again been given opportunities to communicate with the headteachers to generate interest around SACRE through face to face meetings, termly presentations and bulletin inserts. There is a real “buzz and chat” around the potential for new developments.

Governors too are being kept informed via bulletin updates and Director’s Reports.

## **7. Blackburn with Darwen, SACRE’s local arrangements**

At the beginning of the academic year 2020 the deputy director of children’s services, Jo Siddle ( now Director), made a firm commitment to re-establish a high quality SACRE, to ensure that the Local Authority was properly able to meet its statutory duties. To demonstrate this commitment, they have appointed a Clerk, Sharifa Valli to SACRE. They funded the independent consultant Dot Thomson and provide support for the website design and upkeep from IT services. Legal Support is also provided each meeting by either Paula Johnson, Solicitor, or Gillian Emmott, Solicitor, from Democratic Services. They have also allocated £15,000 as budget for 22-23 and again for 23-24.

Induction support will be provided each September to all new members who have joined and will be a refresher for existing members.