

Middlesbrough Council

Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE)

Annual Report 2023-2024

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1. Introduction

1.1. A letter from the Co-Chairs of SACRE

We are pleased to introduce the Middlesbrough Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) Annual Report for the academic year 2023-2024. SACRE has met three times this academic year.

The membership of SACRE is comprised of representatives of some of the faith communities in Middlesbrough, a Humanist representative, four teacher professional association members and the Local Authority. We continue to actively seek to welcome representatives of different faiths to further enhance the breath of discussion at meetings and the knowledge and diversity of the Committee.

Middlesbrough's SACRE and the Local Authority continue to work together to support all schools, regardless of character, to ensure that their religious education meets the legal requirements and is of the highest standard so that our young people are prepared for the diverse range of beliefs and worldviews they will come cross once they go out into the wider world. The Middlesbrough Agreed Syllabus continues to be taught in schools and supported by SACRE, and its renewal has been agreed and planning has begun for the launch of the update in 2025. Termly training continues to be provided to all schools within the SACRE area free of charge, with those from other local SACREs paying a small fee to access the training and materials. Training was provided by RE Today advisor Ian Nicholson this academic year, with an increase in attendance at the Secondary sessions from teachers outside our Local Authority. Support was also made available for teachers in Middlesbrough schools throughout the year. Requests usually came through contacting either of the Co-Chairs directly, when it was related to teaching and learning. SACRE has also purchased four resources boxes to support the teaching of Islam, Sikhi, Hindu Dharma and Buddhist Dharma, and they are available for Middlesbrough schools to book out on a half-termly loan, free of charge.

SACRE is legally required by law to produce an Annual Report each year. This report has to be sent to the Secretary of State for Education as well as to key partners, including schools and councillors. The main purpose of the Report is to hold the Local Authority to account, by informing the Secretary of State and key partners what advice SACRE gave the LA during the year and how that was responded to; this includes advice on RE and Collective Worship in those schools for which the LA has responsibility.

Co-Chairs of SACRE
Lisa Antill
Jennifer Surtees

1.2 Purpose of this report

The purpose of this report is to give an overview of the work of SACRE and advice given. The Education Act 1996, Section 391 (6) and (7) requires that annually, the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) from each Local Authority (LA) publishes a report as to the exercise of its functions in the previous year. This includes:

- Giving advice to the LA on RE given in accordance with the agreed syllabus;
- Monitoring the provision of and quality of RE
- Advising and supporting on the effective teaching of RE in accordance with the locally agreed syllabus
- Providing advice to the LA and its schools on methods of teaching, the choice of teaching material and the provision of teacher training;
- In partnership with the LA, considering whether any changes need to be made in the agreed syllabus or in the support offered to schools in the implementation of the agreed syllabus to improve the quality teaching and learning of RE;
- Offering advice to the LA, and through the LA to schools, concerning how an existing agreed syllabus can be interpreted so as to fit in with a broad, balanced and coherent curriculum.

Please see Appendix D for list of organisations to which this report has been sent.

2. Religious Education

2.1 Support for implementing the local agreed syllabus

The current Agreed Syllabus was approved by the SACRE at the Summer meeting on 4th July 2019. The Agreed Syllabus was launched in October 2019 to all Primary and Secondary schools in the Local Authority. Context-specific training was offered to teachers as part of the launch itself, and then in March 2020. Training continues to be offered on a termly basis. The Agreed Syllabus is due for renewal in 2024, which was extended by a year to 2025. It has been now agreed to renew the contract we have with RE Today, and the updated syllabus will launch early in 2025 for first teaching from September 2025.

There is a continuing need to support teachers in all contexts as they continue to embed the syllabus in their own schools. This is continuing through termly training sessions and by contacting either of the Co-Chairs if it is support with teaching and learning.

2.2 The Teaching of RE

The Agreed Syllabus is sent to all schools in Middlesbrough and is a comprehensive document designed and written by RE Today for teachers. The Agreed Syllabus is used by maintained and special schools as well as some academies. Additional support is available from RE Today, through the purchase of additional resources including schemes of work and lesson plans, should they be required by schools.

Training for all schools, regardless of their character, takes place termly, with morning sessions for secondary teachers and afternoon sessions for primary. These sessions are determined by the requests of the teachers at the previous session, so are planned specifically for the needs of the schools in Middlesbrough SACRE area. See Appendix C for a detailed report of content for the year 2023-2024.

A primary network that was set up by one of the RE leads in Middlesbrough in the last academic year continues to run this year and regular meetings have been held to support primary colleagues. SACRE share these meetings with SACRE primary partners, though we are not involved in the planning or delivery of them.

2.3 Monitoring

There are a range of methods used to monitor the standards of RE. An LA officer attends Ofsted feedback where possible and also analyses Ofsted reports for information about RE or related matters. The LA has examined reports where RE has been noted in relation to how pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural (SMSC) has been developed and promoted.

As well as analysis of Ofsted reports, LA officers carrying out advisory roles in school consider SMSC as part of their visits and evaluation of the school's ethos and culture, as well as wider curriculum provision. The LA have not reported any concerns regarding the standard of RE and SMSC to SACRE in 2023-24.

As current teachers, the Chairs of SACRE attend RE training sessions in Middlesbrough, and RE Today also provide feedback to SACRE on this training. The training provides an opportunity for schools to discuss their practice and share ideas; reports from the training evidences that the practitioners who attend are committed to providing high quality religious education and are enthusiastic about developing teaching in their schools further. Feedback such as this evidences the good practice that is in place that can be shared further through RE meetings and training and provides a strong foundation for SACRE to advise the LA on the further development of RE in 2024-2025.

3. Complaints

No formal complaints have been made to SACRE, concerning Religious Education during 2023-2024. There have been no requests to SACRE for withdrawal from RE. There have also been no formal complaints to SACRE concerning Collective Worship during the academic year 2023-2024. There have also been no requests to SACRE for withdrawal from Collective Worship.

4. Collective Worship

4.1 Determinations

There were no requests for determinations in 2023-2024.

4.2 Determinations renewals

There were no requests for determination renewals in 2023-2024.

4.3 Advice on collective worship

New SACRE guidance was commissioned to support Collective Worship in schools, and was made available for all schools in the academic year 2022-2023. There have been no further requests for support in 2023-2024.

5. Finance

The previous reported balance of the 2023-24 budget for Middlesbrough SACRE was £5,100. SACRE received a payment of £30 from an attendee from outside the Local Authority at training in June 2024. The balance at the end of the academic year was £2001.60

COMPOSITION OF SACRE AND ATTENDANCE

Name	Role	Attendance (3/3)
Lisa Antill	Co-Chair/Teacher Representative	2/3
Jennifer Surtees	Co-Chair/Teacher Representative	3/3
Amjid Khazir	Vice-Chair/Faith Representative	3/3
Craig Marshall	Faith Representative	2/3
Celia Wilson	Faith Representative	2/3
Louise Moores	Teacher Representative	3/3
Rebecca Laird	Teacher Representative	2/3
Geeta Sharma	Faith and Teacher Representative	1/3
Paul Fussey	Teacher Representative	2/3
Sheila Marley	LA Representative	1/3 (via proxy)
Bess Robertson	Faith Representative	0/3
Val Hart	Humanist Representative	3/3
Cllr Craig Wright	Council Representative (until March 2023)	0/2
Cllr Jo Nicholson	Council Representative (from July 2023)	0/1
Cllr Tony Grainge	Council Representative (from July 2023)	0/1

OVERVIEWS OF MEETINGS

Meetings: Main Issues Discussed

Term 1 meeting:

- Membership
- Introduction of new advisor from RE Today, taking over in January
- Teacher members
- Hybrid meeting possibilities to improve attendance
- Training – feedback from today and future sessions; resources boxes; Primary Network Meeting; offer of training from Media Cultured
- Annual report
- Budget update
- Update from RE Today and syllabus update
- Dates of next meetings confirmed: 20/2/24; 18/6/24
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Term 2 meeting

- Membership
- Welcome for new adviser from RE Today
- Training – feedback from today; planning of next session
- Budget update
- Update from RE Today and syllabus update
- Agreed syllabus renewal

Term 3 meeting

- Membership – one new councillor added to membership after recent Local Elections – invited to attend but no response
- REC/NASACRE Briefings
- Budget update
- Update from RE Today
- Agreed Syllabus renewal – RE Today Syllabus A+ agreed. Launch to take place early 2025.
- Training and support for schools – resource boxes; booking system; Primary Support Network; training sessions for 2024-2025
- Possible support for Redcar & Cleveland SACRE discussed
- Dates of the next meetings – 19/11/24; 2/4/25; 12/6/25

OVERVIEW OF TRAINING

Term 1	Primary Network: Using the Scheme of Work for enhancing RE	Secondary Network: Substantive Knowledge
Term 2	Primary Network: Deep and Meaningful	Secondary Network: Using Deep and Meaningful to action plan
Term 3	Primary Network: Planning for the new academic year in Ways of Knowing	Secondary Network: Assessment in RE

MIDDLESBROUGH ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The contact address for the officials is:

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Head of Achievement

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Organisations to which the report has been sent:

- NASACRE
- The Secretary of State
- All schools and colleges with in Middlesbrough;
- Copies available for public inspection at the main libraries and council public service points with in the Borough.