

Middlesbrough Council

**Standing Advisory Council for
Religious Education (SACRE)**

Annual Report 2024-2025

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1. Introduction

1.1 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 Local Authority on Religious Education given in accordance with the agreed syllabus
- Monitoring the provision of and quality of Religious Education in Middlesbrough
- 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 to fit in with a broad, balanced and coherent curriculum.

Please see section 7 for a list of organisations to which this report has been sent.

1.2 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 2024-2025. 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 breadth of discussion at meetings and the knowledge and diversity of the Committee. We would like to thank Celia Wilson from York Diocese for her involvement in the SACRE over the last five years and wish her all the best on her retirement.

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 across once they go out into the wider world. The updated Middlesbrough Agreed Syllabus was launched in April for first teaching in September 2025. It received an enthusiastic welcome from the teachers who use it in their schools. 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 advisors Ian Nicholson and Julie Childs. The

primary sessions led by Julie continue to be well-attended by local schools and Ian's secondary sessions attract schools from across the Northeast. 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. Several schools have made use of the free artefact boxes SACRE has to loan out and these boxes are now advertised through the Northeast RE Hub.

SACRE is legally required by law to produce an Annual Report each year. This report must 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

1.3 Overview of meetings

SACRE has met 3 times, coinciding with the training session dates.

Term 2 meeting:

- Membership
- Budget update
- Training – feedback from today and future sessions; resources boxes; Primary Network Meeting
- Update from RE Today
- Syllabus conference planning
- DfE Curriculum Review evidence submission
- Annual report
- This meeting was held hybrid to increase engagement. In person attendees were located at My Place, Custom House, North Street, Middlesbrough, TS2 1JP.

Term 4 meeting

- Membership - Welcome to new councillors and advisor from RE Today
- Budget update
- Update from RE Today
- Syllabus conference feedback
- Training – feedback from today and future sessions; resources boxes; Primary Network Meeting, SACRE website
- Secondary RE data
- This meeting was held hybrid to increase engagement. In person attendees were located at My Place, Custom House, North Street, Middlesbrough, TS2 1JP.

Term 6 meeting

- Membership – Retirement of a member
- Annual report
- Budget update
- Workforce data review
- Update from RE Today
- Training – feedback from today and future sessions; resources boxes; Primary Network Meeting,
- SACRE award planning
- SACRE code of conduct
- New RE Today contract
- Dates of meetings for next year: 21st October 2025, 25th March 2026, 9th June 2026. Agreed for October date to be face to face with following dates becoming virtual.
- This meeting was held hybrid to increase engagement. In person attendees were located at My Place, Custom House, North Street, Middlesbrough, TS2 1JP.

Average of 9 people in attendance at each meeting.

1.4 Overview of Agreed Syllabus Conference if this is currently sitting, working groups, progress

The Agreed Syllabus Conference was held on the 2nd of April 2025 at My Place, Custom House, North Street, Middlesbrough, TS2 1JP.

The event helped Middlesbrough RE teachers to prepare for the planning and teaching of the new syllabus ready for September 2025. Sessions ran for both primary and secondary colleagues as part of the launch and were facilitated by Ian Nicholson and Julie Childs from RE Today. The sessions included the Intent and Aims of the syllabus, as well as knowledge, planning and assessment. It also provided the opportunity to network with other Middlesbrough leaders and teachers of RE, as well as getting expert advice from our SACRE advisors.

The agenda for the day was set out as per below.

9.00 am arrival for 9.30 start

9.30 am – Welcome by SACRE and purpose of the day

9.40 am – INTENT and Aims of the Agreed Syllabus, legal elements of RE

10.10 am – Knowledge in the Middlesbrough Agreed Syllabus

10.40 am – BREAK

11.00 am – Planning using the new agreed syllabus – Long term, medium term and progression

11.30 am – The twelve steps of planning using the syllabus

12.15 pm – Assessment in the new Agreed Syllabus

12.40 pm – LUNCH

1.20 pm – Split secondary and primary

3.00 pm – CLOSE

41 attendees from Middlesbrough schools attended the conference launch.

2. Religious Education

2.1 Support for implementing the local agreed syllabus

Middlesbrough SACRE have renewed their contract with RE Today and the updated syllabus launched early in 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.

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 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 2024 – 2025.

2.4 Teacher training and materials

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 evidence 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 evidence 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 2025-2026.

Funding was used from a previous financial year for the purchase of four religious education boxes available for Middlesbrough schools to loan for free to be used in lessons. The four religions are Islam, Sikhi, Hindu Dharma and Buddhist Dharma. So far, 2 Middlesbrough schools have loaned a RE box.

2.5. Complaints

No formal complaints have been made to SACRE, concerning Religious Education during 2024-2025. 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 2024-2025. There have also been no requests to SACRE for withdrawal from Collective Worship.

2.6 Advice to the LA

There have been no requests from the Local Authority to SACRE for advice therefore, none has been provided.

3. Collective Worship

3.1 Determinations

There were no requests for determinations in 2024-2025.

3.2 Determinations renewals

There were no requests for determination renewals in 2024-2025.

3.3 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 2024-2025.

4. SACRE Links

A membership is renewed yearly to allow the Advisory Council to be NASACRE members. We have established a working partnership with the local RE Hub.

5. SACRE Local Involvement

No governor training or advice has been offered.

6. SACRE's Arrangement

6.1 LA Support

Middlesbrough Council provides professional support in the form of administration through clerking that includes the following.

- Booking of venues for training and meeting dates, arranging refreshments, providing session detail to schools for booking, collating booking information
- Minute taking
- Budget management
- Updates to Middlesbrough SACRE webpage
- Creation and storing of RE boxes loan contracts

- Hosting of online booking system for those attending training sessions outside of Middlesbrough LA
- Sending of report to NASACRE, The Secretary of State, all schools and colleges within Middlesbrough

6.2 Membership

- 2 x Middlesbrough Council councillors
- 1 x Middlesbrough Council representative
- 1 x Middlesbrough Council clerk
- 1 x Church of England
- 2 x Christian and other denominations
- 4 x Teachers
- 3 x Other Interest Groups

6.3 Finance

£5,100 received for Middlesbrough SACRE. Three payments of £30 were received from attendees attending training outside the Local Authority with one in June and two in November. There was no budget remaining at the end of 2025 financial year.

7. Appendices

7.1 Table of GCSE – short and full, A/S & A Level RS results

The overall pass percentage for Middlesbrough in Religious Studies in 2024 is below:

Grades 5-9	49.3%
Grades 4-9	58.7%
Total Pupils entered	499 (30% of all KS4 pupils)

7.2 Details on CPD provided to schools

Term 2 19/11/24 – Substantive knowledge of Christianity (both primary and secondary).

Term 4 02/04/25 – Middlesbrough Agreed Syllabus 2025 launch (both primary and secondary).

Term 6 12/06/25 – Primary - How to be an effective RE subject lead.

Understanding ways of knowing in the context of the Locally Agreed Syllabus for Middlesbrough.

Secondary Deepening learning of Islam and Islamic Traditions

7.3 Any LA/SACRE policy statements on RE or CW

None this year.

7.4 Development plan tied to funding

N/A

7.5 Circulation details for this AR

MIDDLESBROUGH ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The contact address for the Local Authority is:

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Organisations to which the report has been sent:

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