



**Oldham**  
Council

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

**Annual Report 2022-23**

## Table of contents

Section One: Introduction and the Work of SACRE	3
• Words from the Chair	
• Overview	
• Dates and content of meetings	
• Priorities for 2021-22	
• Self-evaluation	
• Dates for 2022-23	
Section Two: Statutory Responsibilities: Religious Education	8
• Local agreed syllabus	
• Standards and monitoring	
• Professional development and support	
• Other information	
Section Three: Statutory Responsibilities: Collective Worship	11
• Standards and monitoring	
• Complaints and determinations	
• Professional development and support	
• Other information	
Section Four: Links with other organisations	13
Section Five: Other areas of SACRE involvement	13
Section Six: SACRE arrangements	14
Section Seven: Advice to the Local Authority	16

# Section One: Introduction and the Work of SACRE

## Words from the Chair

I am honoured to have chaired Oldham SACRE for another year and to take a lead in mobilizing its purpose in encouraging and equipping RE teachers in their work. RE teachers are a precious resource and as a SACRE, we prioritize our work in supporting and enabling them to teach their subject to a high standard.

Not all teachers of RE are specialists and this motivates Oldham SACRE to seek new ways to support and resource classroom teaching in the subject. Over the past couple of years, we have increased membership from local faith communities to enlist not only advice around the committee table, but to link directly with schools, to deliver lived experience of their faith and belief.

This year I was delighted to achieve a goal I set for myself - to have an RE teachers CPD conference giving practical encouragement to classroom practitioners, based on areas suggested by teachers themselves. I am pleased to report that the conference was held at Ashton Sixth Form College in June 2023, when teachers gathered together to learn, share and gain inspiration from one another.

I now step aside as chair, passing the baton to Claire Harewood, a serving RE teacher, who will bring a new fresh perspective to the work. She will be well supported, as I have been, by our RE consultant/adviser Alastair Ross and his colleague Jake Womack, from Pennine Learning Associates Ltd; also by Tony Shepherd, Assistant Director-Education & Early Years and Rachel Lees, our clerk, from Oldham MBC.

It has been both an honour and a humbling experience to have chaired Oldham SACRE for the past 5 years covering the period of lockdown when children's education was uniquely tested.

Thank you to everyone who supports the learning of our children and young people in Oldham, but most especially in RE; for doing such an amazing job in increasing knowledge and understanding of the faith and beliefs of people living in our neighbourhoods.

The Rev Canon Jean Hurlston  
Chair of Oldham SACRE

## Overview

This annual report is prepared by Oldham SACRE. SACRE as a body is required to advise the Local Authority on matters relating to Religious Education and Collective Worship. This report provides a picture of the support given for Religious Education and Collective Worship during 2022-23. The report is a public document which is also sent to the National Association of SACREs (NASACRE) and the Department for Education.

For further information on the report or on RE and Collective Worship, contact Jake Womack at [jake@penninelearning.com](mailto:jake@penninelearning.com) or the clerk to SACRE, Rachael Lees [rachel.lees@tameside.gov.uk](mailto:rachel.lees@tameside.gov.uk).

## Dates and content of meetings

There were three meetings of Oldham SACRE during the year 2022-23. Meetings are open to the public and minutes are also available on-line. These meetings were held on, 3<sup>rd</sup> October at Saddleworth School, 21<sup>st</sup> March at Shree Swaminarayan Mandir and 7<sup>th</sup> June at the European Institute of Islamic Sciences

As well as considering the general position of RE and collective worship in Oldham, SACRE discussed the following issues at its meetings during the year:

- Annual Report
- CPD for teachers including the Oldham Teaching Conference (SACRE)
- Secondary RE provision
- SACRE audit and work plan
- Organisation of SACRE – exploring roles for SACRE members
- Reports from regional and national bodies (NASACRE and GM Faiths Forum)
- Reports from network and schools
- Questions to be included in enquiry to schools
- Collective Worship
- Publishing advice for schools on sensitive issues about faith in schools.
- Self-evaluation form (SEF) and development plan
- The need for Muslim, Humanist representation as well as teachers
- Census data

## Self-evaluation

During the year, Oldham SACRE completed a process of self-evaluation based on the NASACRE template. Arising from this the following areas for development were identified. Where progress was made, this has been indicated below.

### SACRE

1. **Membership should be widened-** Having now secured Muslim and Humanist representatives, work should be done to secure further representation from Primary and Secondary teachers as well as HE. Sikh and Buddhist representation is also needed.
2. **Attendance and participation should be improved-** While some interesting sessions were included at meetings (e.g., an analysis of the National Census data), work needs to be done to ensure more thought-provoking items are included in the agenda. This will dovetail with our aim to include more members in sub-groups and projects. Notably, there has been wider participation from members through the medium of the Oldham Teaching Conference as well as inclusion in the recent online subject knowledge webinars (in their role as faith representatives).
3. **Members should be encouraged to attend NASACRE training courses and consideration should be given to induction for new members-** While several SACRE members attended training, work is needed to increase uptake. NASACRE training should be included in the Oldham SARE induction package.
4. **The development plan should be continually reviewed, revised and evaluated as part of meetings.**
5. **An annual questionnaire should also be sent to all schools to elicit relevant information and to enquire about what support might be needed-** Having completed one with an RE focus, greater focus on collective worship will be needed for the next year.
6. **More opportunities should be found to hear from pupils and teachers-** In conjunction with the drafted survey on CW for next year, we will request student and teacher voice. Additionally, we will plan for another teaching conference, whereby we can elicit additional feedback.
7. **Explore whether a more structured link with MATs is feasible and beneficial-** A list of MATs is still needed. A subgroup may be formed to carry out this objective.

### Religious Education

- 1. An annual questionnaire should be used to enquire about RE and collective worship. Members should undertake a website trawl.** A subgroup will be formed with training on how to conduct the trawls. This information will be fed back to schools along with feedback from the CW survey.
- 2. SACRE should further explore the use of data to support schools.**
- 3. The relationship between SACRE and school senior leaders could be developed further.** Again, this objective dovetails with the need for representation from this group. SACRE will seek to fill this position.
- 4. Explore whether a more structured link with MATs is feasible and beneficial.**

### Local Agreed Syllabus

- 1. Planning for the review and revision of the agreed syllabus will take place in the next academic year.**

### Collective Worship

- 1. Inclusion of questions about CW in an annual enquiry and to the provision of professional development.** A draft has been produced and reviewed by SACRE. This will need to be finalised and sent to schools.
- 2. Student and teacher voice should be sought after as part of RE/CW QA.**

### Community Cohesion

- 1. Membership should be widened, to include attendance from more representatives from faith communities. Additionally, further representation from Primary and Secondary teachers is needed.**
- 2. Reminder of faith sensitivities guidance produced in February 2023.** SACRE should re-promote the faith sensitivities guidance document for use in schools. Network links could be utilised for this.

## **SACRE Priorities for 2023-24**

Self-evaluation has helped to identify key areas for development which are included in SACRE's development plan.

Developing the effectiveness of SACRE and building partnership

- maintain and build wide and participative membership (including a specific focus on Sikhi/Buddhist representation)
- distribute leadership and responsibility within SACRE (especially through subgroups)
- increase uptake in training
- make use of and respond to teacher and student voice
- produce annual report

Promote continuing improvement in standards, quality of teaching and provision in RE (including the syllabus)

- monitor provision
- monitor standards
- keep abreast of wider developments and share information with schools and local authority
- provide or publicise opportunities for professional development
- liaise with teacher networks
- review local agreed syllabus

Promoting continuing improvement in the provision and quality of collective worship

- ensure practical advice is in place
- offer peered support or review
- publicise or make available professional development

Contributing to cohesion across the community

- nurture partnership with local authority and other agencies and groups
- develop practical guidance for sensitivity to faith in schools
- encourage educational collaboration between faith communities and schools

Further details of the self-evaluation or the development plan can be obtained via the clerk to SACRE.

## **Meetings for 2023-24**

SACRE meetings for 2022-2023 have been provisionally arranged for these dates:

- Wednesday 22 November at 2023 4:30 pm
- Thursday 7 March 2024 at 4:30 pm
- Thursday 20 June 2024 at 6:30 pm

For more information contact the clerk, Rachael Lees [rachel.lees@tameside.gov.uk](mailto:rachel.lees@tameside.gov.uk).



## Section Two: Statutory Responsibilities: Religious Education

### The Local Agreed Syllabus

The current Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education was produced by RE Today Services and implemented in September 2020. The agreed syllabus is due to be reviewed and updated by 2025. The process for this review will be introduced at the SACRE meeting in November 2023 and a timeline for completion will be put in place. Following the recent completion of the SACRE self-evaluation (SEF), it was agreed that 'Section 3: The effectiveness of the locally agreed syllabus' will be used as a framework for the syllabus review.

### Standards and Monitoring

#### SACRE enquiry

At the end of the summer term 2022, Oldham SACRE asked secondary and primary schools to complete a brief survey about the provision of RE. The questions asked about the time provision given to RE and whether this was taught by teachers or support assistants, specialists, or non-specialists. It also asked what support would be valued by schools.

There were 12 responses from Secondary and 43 responses from Primary schools. The questionnaire provided free entry responses, so similar results were aggregated together.

Primary	Secondary
<p>Positive findings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Nearly 75% of those who responded use the Oldham LAS.</li><li>Most schools allow at least 1hr of curriculum time each week for RE.</li><li>20% of those who responded felt comfortable in implementing and delivering RE.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The Majority of schools who answered used either the LAS or Diocesan provision.</li><li>Most schools offered 1hr of RE per week to KS3 students.</li><li>Most schools who answered offer GCSE and provide a sufficient time allocation.</li></ul>

<p>Areas of Concern</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The majority of RE is not delivered by the class teacher. In most cases, it was the TA. Where both share the responsibility, it was not clear how much time was allocated to each.</li> <li>• When asked about the syllabus, some schools named packages and schemes of work. This could mean they are not aware of the syllabus.</li> </ul>	<p>Areas of concern</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A number of schools do not meet the requirement for KS4 non-examined pupils.</li> <li>• Some schools who answered don't yet offer GCSE RE.</li> </ul>
---	--

In addition to the above, SACRE enquired as to any support that those who completed felt they would benefit from. These can be summarised as follows:

- More subject knowledge enhancement CPD
- Support with implementing the LAS
- QA of marking and supporting assessment

Following the presentation of this information to SACRE, the following actions were realized:

- Letters were drafted and sent to each school that had responded. They gave praise for success along with support and guidance on making improvements. A checklist for compliance was included as was an offer for an hour curriculum conversation to support curriculum planning and implementation.
- Reminders were sent to the schools who has not responded.
- A series of subject knowledge webinars were hosted. Some of these will continue into the next academic year. Notably, SACRE faith representatives took part in the delivery and Q&A sessions online.
- Recommendations to join Primary and Secondary networks were made.

## Examination results

GCSE results from Oldham are outlined below. These will be discussed by SACRE in the spring term.

Provision/Insitution	% 9-4	% 9-5	Total Entries	% of Entries
Hollinwood Academy	N/A	N/A	N/A	0%
Waterhead Academy	70%	56%	54	19%
Co-op Academy Failsworth	80%	60%	5	2%
Oasis Academy Leesbrook	64%	51%	138	95%
Royton and Crompton School	45%	27%	11	5%
The Hathershaw College	45%	36%	11	5%
The Saddleworth School	69%	62%	52	19%
North Chadderton School	68%	63%	19	7%
The Radclyffe School	77%	61%	82	28%
The Blue Coat CofE School	85%	77%	247	99%
The Crompton House Church of England Academy	79%	66%	205	88%
Blessed John Henry Newman RC College	59%	49%	293	97%
Oasis Academy Oldham	59%	52%	61	21%
The Oldham Academy North	71%	61%	28	12%
The Springboard Project	N/A	N/A	N/A	0%
New Bridge School	N/A	N/A	N/A	0%

SACRE would urge all schools to review their results in line with the national data below.

subject		grade	Numbers achieving	Percentage achieving
Religious Studies	GCSE	9 to 1	218862	98.4
Religious Studies	GCSE	9 to 4	157799	72.1
Religious Studies	GCSE	9 to 5	133943	61.2

Source: GCSE (Full Course) Results (9-1 Only) - June 2023 (England Only) (DFE)

## RE Quality Mark

One Oldham Primary is accredited with the REQM Silver award. While this is excellent news for Micklehurst CofE, we would like to see the number of awards increase across all phases. SACRE will look to support schools with a SACRE Merit to encourage and back REQM uptake over the next cycle. Additionally, SACRE will write to congratulate any schools that have completed the REQM.

## **Professional development and support for schools**

### **General support**

During the year professional support continued through the RE consultant, Alastair Ross who is contracted through Pennine Learning, a small regional company specialising in RE and community cohesion. The team also includes three other experienced consultants in primary and secondary RE. Oldham Council contracted ten days during the year though this time is arranged as flexibly as possible to facilitate effective working with schools and others. Pennine Learning also supports SACREs and RE in neighbouring Tameside, Calderdale and Kirklees, enabling appropriate collaboration and partnership.

Support is available to schools in a number of ways, including:

- Advice on the local agreed syllabus;
- Consultancy over specific or general RE issues, including advice about withdrawal from RE;
- Support for schools wishing to develop and improve RE following Ofsted inspections
- A SACRE Merit award which dovetails with the REQM in order to increase uptake
- Professional conversations with subject leaders/coordinators

### **Training**

This year the primary RE network has been led by a local head and member of SACRE, Sue Callaghan. However, she will now be retiring and handing the running of the network over to Hayley Green and Gemma Wood. Jake Womack will also offer support for the Primary Network.

A secondary network has been established for Oldham and Tameside and is run by the Northern Teaching Alliance based at The Blue Coat School. This had been run by Kate O'Connell and will now be led by Ms. Shabnam Khaliq.

A successful series of subject knowledge webinars on world faiths took place over the academic year and included guests from faith communities and SACRE membership. These were held in cooperation with partner local authorities.

A half termly newsletter and CPD digest is sent to all schools and this includes information about professional development opportunities in RE regionally and nationally. Oldham

teachers have been able to access training for RE coordinators and sessions for subject knowledge development.

A day course for new RE coordinators in Oldham was held in October 2022.

A 'Deep Dive' in Religious Education is also offered to schools. This half-day session focuses on a review of curriculum provision, looking at its scope, rigour and sequencing. RE Policy.

Oldham Schools are particularly fortunate to have access to visits provided through Oldham Interfaith Forum and to the Oldham Pledge project.

During the year Oldham SACRE worked with partners in Calderdale, Kirklees, Leeds and Tameside to produce advice on sensitivity to issues relating to faith in schools. This is now available to schools as practical information and support to school leaders.

SACRE ran the Oldham RE Teaching conference which took place in the Summer at Ashton Sixth Form College. There were specific Primary and Secondary sessions led by Liam Spencer and Sue Callaghan, as well as addresses from Jake Womack and Alastair Ross on updates in RE. Further to this, there were stalls with representatives from organisations and faith communities as well as plenty of opportunity for cross phase networking. A faith panel with Q&A also featured.

## **Section Three: Statutory Responsibilities: Collective Worship**

### **Standards and Monitoring of Collective Worship**

Guidance is offered to schools and Ofsted reports are scrutinised in order to keep up to date with current issues and concerns. It has been difficult for schools to maintain an effective programme of collective worship during the pandemic and one of SACRE's key priorities in the coming year will be to remind, facilitate and support schools. This will include offering light-touch review conversations with practical suggestions.

### **Complaints and determinations**

There were no complaints made during the year to SACRE about Collective Worship. There were no new or reviewed determinations to vary statutory requirements in any maintained school in Oldham. Responsibility for determinations in English academies and free schools rest with the Schools Funding Agency.

### **Professional development and support for schools**

SACRE is always ready to advise or support schools on request. A half-day course on planning for collective worship/ inclusive assemblies will be available to Oldham schools in the summer of 2023 to aid schools in developing an effective and inspiring programme.

SACRE has now produced revised advice on collective worship which is available for schools.

SACRE has drafted questions for the upcoming school enquiry, and it will focus on collective worship. This will allow us to determine the nature of future support.

Pennine Learning delivered a course on Collective Worship.

## **Other information**

Parents have a statutory right to withdraw their children from collective worship. Guidance on good practice and protocols for withdrawal is available to schools; consultants are available if further support is needed. SACRE recognises parents' legal rights but hopes all children will be enabled to receive stimulating and balanced RE as part of their entitlement to a broad curriculum.

## Section Four: Links with other organisations

SACRE has active links with the following organisations:

- National Association of SACREs (NASACRE)
- The North-north-west SACRE Hub
- RE Today
- The Association of RE Inspectors, Advisers and Consultants (AREIAC)
- Faith communities and organisations
- Oldham School Performance Team
- Northern Teaching Alliance based at The Blue Coat School
- The Oldham Inter Faith Forum
- Greater Manchester Interfaith Network
- Oldham and Tameside RE Practitioner Network

## Section Five: Other areas of involvement

### The Oldham Interfaith Forum

SACRE is grateful to the work of the Interfaith Forum in, among other things, supporting links between schools and local faith communities. This helps to fulfil our obligation to promote fundamental values of respect and tolerance.

The virtual faith trail, *Many Faiths, One Community*, is also a great resource for schools and comprises a set of videos for schools, exploring what goes on in four places of worship: a Christian Church, a Hindu Temple, a Mosque, and a Synagogue. Schools should contact the Interfaith Forum or the SACRE consultants for the link.

### Faith sensitivities

During the year SACRE has worked with partners in Calderdale, Kirklees, Leeds and Tameside to produce advice on sensitivity to issues relating to faith in schools. This has now been realised with the dissemination of the *Sharing the Journey* resource. It is available for the use of educators.



## Section Six: SACRE arrangements

Oldham Council funds the operation of SACRE by contracting its consultant, providing a clerk and supporting its work through links with senior education officers.

SACRE membership includes representatives from all four constituent committees.

Committee A	Faith communities except for the Church of England
Committee B	Anglican representatives
Committee C	Teachers and schools
Committee D	Oldham Council

Buddhist	A	<b>Vacancy</b>
Hindu	A	Mrs Krishna Sisodia
Hindu	A	Nitiksha Raghvani
Humanist	A	Kevin Malone
Jewish	A	Rabbi Daniel Walker
Muslim	A	Mr Nasim Ashraf
Muslim	A	Mr Bilal Brown
Muslim	A	Mohammad Jakir Ahmad
Muslim	A	Mohibur Rahman
Sikh	A	<b>Vacancy</b>
Oldham Interfaith forum	A	The Rev Howard Sutcliffe
Salvation Army	A	Major Annette Allen
Free churches	A	Mr Peter Butler
Free churches	A	Ms Jenny McGhee
Free churches	A	Mr Ian Whitehead
Roman Catholic Church	A	Mr Patrick McMahon
Church of England	B	The Rev Canon Jean Hurlston
Church of England	B	Mr Graham McGuffie
Church of England	B	<b>Vacancy</b>
Church of England	B	<b>Vacancy</b>
Primary head (Denshaw) & network lead	C	Sue Callaghan
Secondary head	C	<b>Vacancy</b>
Special School head	C	Ms R Lomax
NEU	C	Mrs Mary Butt
NEU	C	Miss Jacqueline Beattie

Secondary academies (Hathershaw)	C	Ms Claire Harwood
Special schools (Kingfisher)	C	Ms Nicola Smith
Teaching school (N Tchg Alliance)	C	Laura Almond
SLE and network lead	C	Ms Kate O'Connell
Teachers associations and HE	C	Francesca Frazer-Davies
Local authority	D	Cllr Pam Byrne
Local authority	D	Cllr Umar Nasheen
Local authority	D	Mr Tony Shepherd
Coopted	Z	<b>Available</b>
Coopted	Z	<b>Available</b>
Coopted	<b>Z</b>	<b>Available</b>

SACRE needs to ensure there continues to be consistent attendance and needs more teacher representatives. Contacts with partners, such as HE providers, should be developed. It is worth exploring whether a more structured link with MATs is feasible and beneficial

Training is provided by NASACRE and offered to SACRE members, though better induction is needed locally. Going forward, we would encourage our new members to attend the, *So you have joined your local SACRE* session as well as other relevant training session from NASACRE. An additional induction meeting should also be booked for new members as needed.

## **Section Seven: Advice to the Local authority**

The following advice is given by SACRE to the local authority:

1. Ensure SACRE's annual report is considered carefully by the Scrutiny Panel of the Council and any of its content noted.
2. The local authority should ensure that SACRE has its full complement of attending local representatives, especially from faith communities. Sikh and Buddhist representation is required.
3. The local authority should encourage the best local provision for skilled and specialist RE teaching in Oldham, especially given the low numbers in RE recruitment.
4. The local authority should ensure that SACRE is sufficiently funded to carry out its statutory work. The benchmark for this is 2% of the CSSB. This will ensure appropriate funding for the upcoming Locally Agreed syllabus.

No appendices are attached to this report; all the relevant information is contained within the main body. However, any further information can be requested via the clerk, [shajia.begum@oldham.gov.uk](mailto:shajia.begum@oldham.gov.uk).



This annual report is prepared for Oldham Standing Advisory Council on RE (SACRE) as part of its statutory responsibility. For further information on the report or on RE and Collective Worship, please contact Alastair Ross at [alastair@penninelearning.com](mailto:alastair@penninelearning.com).