



SACRE ANNUAL REPORT

Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education Annual Report 2023/2024

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SECTION 1: CHAIR'S INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

As Chair of the Portsmouth SACRE, it gives me great pleasure to provide the introduction to this report as we reflect on another year of helping ensure that all pupils in our schools develop spiritually, morally, socially and culturally as well as academically.

I would like to offer my thanks to our SACRE members as well as the teachers and community members who have worked so hard to support RE in Portsmouth in the year covered by this report. I would also like to thank the primary and secondary schools and the Council for Portsmouth Students (CoPS) which hosted our SACRE meetings over the past year. I am always amazed at the inspiring and thoughtful work we see in schools and the concepts we hear during our 'moment of quiet reflection' at the start of every meeting.

Against a complex education environment in Portsmouth, our SACRE actively seeks to ensure all children in the city have access to high quality and challenging RE. We provide support to primary RE subject leaders through teachers' network meetings which take place online and generally school leaders recognise the importance of allocating school time for staff to attend. Our Inspector's work in schools shows that the golden thread concepts in Living Difference IV are repeated through key stages and support progression as pupils make their education journey. School monitoring visits suggest that RE leadership is strong and RE leaders feel supported by their schools and have a solid, positive relationship with the School Improvement team which actively promotes entitlement to RE.

We contribute to the Portsmouth Education Partnership newsletter which signposts resources, draws attention to issues of interest in the RE world and highlights forthcoming festivals among other features and we also work closely with the Ethnic Minority Advisory Service (EMAS). There is a strong link between the work EMAS does in schools and SACRE's work including in relation to how RE is taught and how families view RE in schools. We recognise the importance of this link as over 20% our pupils speak another language, and 106 languages are now spoken in the city. EMAS also holds and issues SACRE resource boxes to schools alongside its resources and guidance materials in different languages

It is great to see that several academies in the city follow our locally agreed syllabus alongside maintained schools as consistency of provision and access to high quality support and material is important for our pupils. Against this positive background therefore, it is disappointing to note that entries into public examinations are lower than the national average once again, though over the past year numbers have increased slightly. We know that when our pupils do study RE at GCSE and A Level they do very well, and we are encouraged to note that the gap in attainment for SEN and Pupil Premium pupils is smaller than nationally. Also of concern is that the number of specialist RE teachers entering the profession is not high despite the new bursary and the amount of curriculum time devoted to RE does not always provide pupils with the depth of knowledge they need to live in a complex world.

The SACRE is well informed about developments in RE nationally including the recently published Ofsted Subject Report. The SACRE noted that our locally agreed syllabus explicitly identifies religious and non-religious concepts, our work with teachers supports this and teaching plans are available to build core knowledge. Going forward, the Subject Report will form part of our primary and secondary subject leader training, and we have noted that an area for us to explore further with schools is curriculum time allocated to teaching non-religious worldviews. SACRE also promotes RE Hubs to schools and many of our members are registered as accredited speakers.

Locally over the past year, the SACRE has conducted its own surveys to monitor Collective Worship and withdrawals from RE and Collective Worship and we also monitored school websites for how they teach RE and refer to Living Difference IV, our locally agreed syllabus. Our Directory of Places of Worship which encourages visits continues to grow, and pupils' learning in RE has been enhanced by such visits. SACRE believes they also allow our children to experience exciting learning opportunities, promote an ethos of respect for others and build understanding of their own and other cultures and beliefs while celebrating the religious and cultural diversity found in the city.

I continue to be grateful to Debbie Anderson, Portsmouth Head of School Improvement, who assists SACRE and champions our efforts to deliver a high level of support to Portsmouth schools. Finally, I would like to thank Justine Ball who, in her role as Professional Advisor over the past two years has provided invaluable support to both the SACRE and to me personally as well as working hard to support our primary school RE leaders. I look forward to working with Chris May during the forthcoming academic year as he steps up to become our Professional Advisor while also continuing to support our secondary schools. I know the SACRE will be pleased to know that Justine will be guiding us through the development of our locally Agreed Syllabus over the next couple of years as we take on the challenge of ensuring all pupils in Portsmouth continue to have access to a rigorous and challenging RE curriculum.

Revd. Sam Duddles
Chair, Portsmouth SACRE

INFORMATION ABOUT SACRE

1.1 Duty to establish a SACRE

Since the Education Reform Act of 1988, all Local Authorities (LAs) have been required by law to constitute a Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) within their local area¹.

1.2 What does a SACRE do?

SACRE is a unique body; it is set up by the LA but is independent of it, with the role to give advice to that LA. The law states that Religious Education must be taught in all maintained schools² and a SACRE's role is to advise what needs to be done to improve religious education (RE) and collective worship for schools in its area.

The main purpose of the annual report is to hold the LA to account, by informing the Secretary of State and key partners what advice SACRE gave the LA during the year and how the LA responded to that advice. This includes advice on Religious Education and Collective Worship in those schools for which the LA has responsibility.

1.3 Composition of SACRE

There are four groups or committees, as below:

- A: The Christian denominations and other religious denominations, reflecting the principal religious traditions of the area.
- B: The Church of England
- C: Teachers
- D: The Local Authority

The Local Authority has determined that the SACRE should comprise:

- Representatives of Christian denominations and other religious groups reflecting the principal religious traditions of the area
- Four representatives of the Church of England.
- Six teacher representatives of the key stages of education and an association recognised by the Authority.
- Four representatives of the local authority, at least two of whom should be elected members.

Other members may be co-opted from time to time as appropriate for all or part meetings.

1.4 Membership of SACRE

The names of the SACRE members and the religious denominations for Group A can be found at Appendix A.

¹ Education Act 1996 Section 390:1

² School and Standards Framework Act 1998 Section 69

1.5 SACRE Functions

- To advise the LA on collective worship and the Religious Education to be given in accordance with the agreed syllabus including methods of teaching, advice on materials and the provision of training for teachers
- To consider whether to recommend to the LA that its current agreed syllabus should be reviewed by convening an Agreed Syllabus Conference.
- To consider whether the requirement that religious worship in a county school should be 'broadly Christian in nature' should be varied (determinations).
- To report to the LA and the Department for Education (DfE) on its activities on an annual basis.

1.6 Census data on Portsmouth 2021 shows that:

47.1% have no religion
39.4% are Christian
4.9% are Muslim
0.8% are Hindu
0.5% are Buddhist
0.2% are Sikh
0.1% are Jewish
0.6% are Other Religion

1.7 Meetings and attendance

SACRE met on three occasions during the academic year 2023-4:

Wednesday 1 November 2023
Wednesday 20 March 2024
Wednesday 12 June 2024

All the meetings were in person and two took place in schools (one primary school and one secondary school) and one was hosted by the Council for Portsmouth Students. Minutes of all SACRE meetings and the current membership are available from the Portsmouth City Council website: [Committee details - Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education \(SACRE\) Portsmouth City Council](#)

During this reporting period, SACRE has been seeking representatives from the following:

Group A	Baha'i Faith, Portsmouth Catholic Diocesan Office, Buddhist, Hindu, Salvation Army, Muslim and other Christian denominations (1 each)
Group B	CofE representative (1)
Group C	Early Year representative (1) appointed June 2024
Group D	None (0) current appointments run to May 2026

The percentages attendance 2023/24 per group is as follows:

Autumn Term meeting - 1 November 2023

Group A = 60%	6/10
Group B = 66%	2/3
Group C = 20%	1/5
Group D = 25%	1/4

Spring Term meeting - 20 March 2024

Group A = 66%	6/9
Group B = 66%	2/3
Group C = 40%	2/5
Group D = 75%	3/4

Summer Term meeting - 12 June 2024

Group A = 55%	5/9
Group B = 100%	3/3
Group C = 83%	5/6
Group D = 25%	1/4

SECTION 2: STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF PROVISION FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN 2023/24

2.1 Activities undertaken by SACRE

SACRE monitors the quality of provision for religious education in a number of ways:

- Visits to Portsmouth schools undertaken by the SACRE Advisor and the Hampshire Secondary RE Teaching and Learning Advisor
- Review of Ofsted reports
- Website monitoring
- Engagement in network meetings and other training opportunities
- GCSE results analysis
- Monitoring of recruitment and vacancies for religious education
- Survey on withdrawals from RE and Collective Worship

The standards and quality of provision is reviewed by the SACRE monitoring group and fed back to the main SACRE. The Monitoring Group has met virtually each term in advance of the full SACRE meeting to monitor the effectiveness of the Locally Agreed Syllabus. The Monitoring Group is comprised of at least one member from each of the SACRE groups along with the two Advisors and the Head of School Improvement for the LA. The group reviews termly the range of monitoring activities that have been undertaken.

2.2 Monitoring of School Provision

- During this period, there have been a number of visits to primary schools. The main focus for the visits has been support for subject leads and staff training. The visits suggest RE leadership is strong in Portsmouth and RE leaders feel supported by their schools and the Head of School Improvement. Two Secondary schools remain within the LA. The Secondary Advisor has maintained contact with several secondary schools, but no secondary visits were undertaken in this period.
- The SACRE Monitoring Group conducted a review of school websites to see what information was made available on the teaching of Religious Education. The data gathered was explored within the Monitoring Group and a summary report provided to the full SACRE. A large majority of LA schools published a statement about how RE was taught on their websites along with clearly identified the curriculum sequencing. The majority of schools did not refer to Collective Worship, or the right of a parent to withdraw their child from RE and/or Collective Worship. These findings were reported to the Local Authority's Head of School Improvement.
- Two SACRE meetings took place in schools; one primary and one secondary. Before the start of these meetings, tours and presentations by the subject lead gave SACRE an insight into the provision within these schools.

2.3 GCSE Religious Studies examination results for the 2022-2023 cohort

- Exam entry numbers have increased and although the numbers being entered for public exams are still small compared to other LA's, the direction of travel is positive.
- Across schools in the city attainment is below national scores on average with some individual exceptions.
- The gap in attainment for SEN and Pupil Premium pupils is smaller than nationally.

SACRE remains concerned about the low numbers of young people in Portsmouth who are entered for the full course RS GCSE and is therefore working to ensure young people can access their entitlement for religious education at Key Stage 4.

2.4 Meeting Training Needs

- Support for schools has been provided through the Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton Locally Agreed Syllabus, Living Difference IV, which is available here for schools, together with planning and further guidance: [HIAS Religious Education Moodle \(hants.gov.uk\)](https://hants.gov.uk/hias-religious-education-moodle).
- The two SACRE officers for both primary, secondary and special schools are available for advice.
- The duties of schools regarding Religious Education is actively promoted through strong relationships with the authority's school improvement service and the Head of School Improvement.

- Headteachers and governors have regular opportunities to attend training on the requirements of Living Difference IV and the entitlement of pupils to high quality Religious Education provision in all key stages.
- While Academies are not required to follow the Locally Agreed Syllabus, a number do. The SACRE Advisor and Secondary Teaching and Learning Advisor are in contact with these schools. SACRE is keen for all schools to use Living Difference IV to give consistency of provision and access to high quality support and materials.
- Training for Religious Education is offered to all schools and Portsmouth schools have the option to attend further training delivered by Hampshire LA. This includes the ability to subscribe to Primary and Secondary news publications and other resource publications through the Hampshire RE Centre.
- SACRE's artefact loan collection continues to be available to schools and is maintained by the Ethnic Minority Achievement Service (EMAS) and the Authority's dispatch team deliver/collect boxes for schools.
- RE Network meetings continue to be offered for Primary RE, and secondary teachers are encouraged to attend the Hampshire network meetings that are enabled through the Hampshire Learning Zone platform. It is extremely useful for Portsmouth teachers to meet with colleagues in Hampshire, since Living Difference IV is shared across the authorities.
- SACRE members are aware of the RE Hubs free training on hosting school visits to their places of worship and speaking to schools on RE and so far, 1 member of the SACRE has enrolled on this training. The resources available through this platform have been actively shared with Portsmouth RE leads.
- The Advisors have also made face to face visits to a small selection of primary schools during this period, which have been completed with LA funding. Reports on these visits are regularly made to the Monitoring Group, which has continued to meet each term during this period.

SECTION 3: COMPLAINTS ABOUT RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

SACRE has received no formal complaints about religious education in the past year.

SECTION 4: STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF PROVISION FOR COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

Within Portsmouth advice is available to schools around Collective Worship (CW) through three forms:

- Hampshire's published advice on CW in schools (available from the Hampshire RE centre)
- The SACRE RE Advisor, and
- An annual collective worship course run by Hampshire County Council.

Monitoring Collective Worship

- The survey on withdrawals from RE and/or Collective Worship showed that the vast majority of responding schools (82%) had no withdrawals from all or part of RE, and that this was equally the case for Collective Worship (76%). Where withdrawals did occur, this was mainly linked to the family's religious beliefs.
- Ofsted reports sometimes mention collective worship in relation to evidencing that a school is promoting children's SMSC development and personal wellbeing. The comments viewed have been positive.

SECTION 5: COMPLAINTS

There have been no complaints about Collective Worship in schools.

SECTION 6: DETERMINATIONS

No requests for determination have been submitted to SACRE and there are no current determinations for review.

SECTION 7: LINKS WITH OTHER BODIES

- The SACRE Advisor is a member of the AREIAC executive and the Secondary RE Teaching and learning Advisor is a member of the AULRE executive.
- SACRE members have also attended the NASACRE virtual monthly training program which has helped maintain links with NASACRE.
- Some of the SACRE members have hosted school visits to their places of worship throughout the year. SACRE members have also gone into schools to lead collective worship times as well as being a school faith visitor.

7.1 Links with other Authorities and SACREs

- Portsmouth retains strong links with the Hampshire SACRE through members who are on both bodies and through the SACRE adviser and the Secondary RE Teaching and Learning Adviser.
- Portsmouth SACRE is also represented at the South Central SACRE Hub meetings in Winchester.

7.2 NASACRE

- Portsmouth SACRE is a member of NASACRE and NASACRE bulletins are regularly circulated to all SACRE members by the Clerk.
- SACRE members have attended a range of NASACRE and HIAS training events during the year:

Provider	Date	Topic
NASACRE	September 2023	So you've joined your local SACRE
NASACRE	November 2023	Collective Worship
NASACRE	December 2023	How may SACREs effectively monitor schools?
NASACRE	February 2024	Being an effective SACRE clerk, part 2
NASACRE	February 2024	Dealing with beliefs and practices about loss & death in your Agreed Syllabus
NASACRE	March 2024	Convening an Agreed Syllabus Conference – legalities and processes.
HIAS	April 2024	Training on the Living Difference IV syllabus for school speakers

7.3 South Central RE/SACRE Hub

Portsmouth SACRE members are invited to the South-Central Hub meetings during the period of this report. During the period of this report the SACRE hub meeting was held virtually, and this has enabled SACRE members to attend more frequently.

SECTION 8: SACRE'S CONTRIBUTION TO SUPPORTING SCHOOLS THROUGH EVENTS AND TRAINING

- SACRE continues to be responsive to the needs of teachers in Portsmouth. In addition to the training needs mentioned already in this report a range of further training and support continues to be offered. This has included webinars offered on Ofsted and RE requirements offered to teachers, school leaders and SACRE members.
- A cross phase RE Conference took place in October 2023 with delegates from a range of Portsmouth primary and secondary schools in attendance. The conference offered a range of workshops to support teaching and learning with Living Difference IV including supporting pupils with SEND needs and subject knowledge enhancement.
- The SACRE Advisor conducted a training session with Bilingual Assistants at EMAS to further support the provision of high quality RE for all Portsmouth pupils.

SECTION 9: SACRE'S OWN ARRANGEMENTS

- During this period SACRE has adopted a code of conduct and reviewed the constitution.
- The SACRE Advisor consulted members from each group of SACRE, and recommendations were approved by the full SACRE. The revised constitution will go to the Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education on 30 October 2024 for approval.

APPENDIX A - PORTSMOUTH SACRE MEMBERS 2023-24

Group A Representatives - One representative of each of the religions and other bodies listed in the constitution

Baha'i Faith - Elizabeth Jenkerson (to January 2024)
Baptist - Geoff Wheeler (reappointed March 2022)
Buddhism - vacant position
Evangelical Church - Pastor Chris Thomas (reappointed March 2022)
Hinduism – vacant position
Humanist UK - Barbara Spiegelhalter (reappointed June 2021)
Humanist UK - Geoff Wade (nominated reserve representative reappointed June 2021)
Muslim - vacant position
Methodist Church – Revd Ray Goddess (appointed March 2022)
Muslim - Sheikh Fazle Abbas Dato (reappointed June 2022)
Judaism – Michael Zeffertt (appointed 2023)
Quakers - sarah coote (reappointed March 2022)
Roman Catholic – vacant position
Sikh - Jaswant Singh-Digpal (appointed March 2021)
The Assemblies of God - vacant position
Salvation Army - vacant position
United Reformed Church - Christine McMillan (reappointed June 2022)

Group B Representatives - Church of England

Sue Bowen (reappointed March 2022)
Revd Sam Duddles (reappointed March 2022)
Jane Kelly (reappointed March 2022)

Group C Representatives - Six teachers representing the various key stages and an association recognised by the Authority for the purposes of consultation and negotiation.

Ella Harbut - Early Years Representative (appointed June 2024)
Rachael Osborne - Primary Headteacher Representative (June 2022-June 2024)
Zoe Killick - Primary Headteacher Representative (appointed June 2024)
Fiona Kelly - Primary Teacher Representative (June 2023-June 2024)
James Newsam - Primary Teacher Representative (appointed June 2024)
Beth Smith – Secondary School Representative (appointed November 2022)
Kari Laing - Post-16 Representative (reappointed March 2022, appointed Vice Chair March 2022)
Helen Reeder - Teacher Liaison Panel (June 2022-June 2024)
Trish Gumedde - Teachers Liaison Panel (appointed June 2024)

Group D Representatives - Four representatives of the Authority, at least two of whom shall be elected members of the Authority

Taki Jaffer (reappointed June 2022)
Councillor Benedict Swann (appointed June 2022)
Councillor Asghar Shah (appointed June 2022)
Councillor Abdul Kadir (appointed June 2022)

Co-opted members

Jessie Wilson - Council of Portsmouth Students representative

Officers in Attendance:

Justine Ball (HIAS), Professional Adviser

Debbie Anderson, Head of School Improvement

Chris May, Secondary Teaching and Learning Adviser, HIAS

Karen Martin, PCC Democratic Services

APPENDIX B: LIST OF ORGANISATIONS RECEIVING THIS REPORT

Copies will be sent electronically to the following relevant bodies:

- Director of Children, Families and Education, Portsmouth City Council
- Deputy Director of Deputy Director of Children, Families and Education, Portsmouth City Council
- Cllr Suzy Horton, Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education, Portsmouth City Council
- The Department for Education (Central Government)
- NASACRE (National Association of Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education)
- Headteachers and Governing Bodies of all Portsmouth Schools
- All members of SACRE
- The Anglican Diocese of Portsmouth
- The Catholic Diocese of Portsmouth

This report will be available on the Local Authority and NASACRE websites for interested parties to download.