

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education
15th November 2023
Report of the Director for Children and Families
An Update on Key Issues

1 Purpose of Report

1.1 To present members of SACRE with a brief update on key issues that have developed or arisen since the last meeting of SACRE.

2 Summary

2.1 Members of SACRE will receive a brief report on a number of key issues. These are matters which have either been raised at previous SACRE meetings and which have moved forward or matters on which it is appropriate to brief members of SACRE.

3 Recommendation

3.1 That members of SACRE receive the report and note the contents

4 Background

4.1 Since the summer term meeting in June 2023 of the SACRE there have been developments in a number of areas which had previously been agenda items for SACRE or which have local or national importance for RE.

4.2 Members will be briefed on these key developments.

5 Equal Opportunities

5.1 This report has been prepared in accordance with the County Council's policies on equal opportunities.

6 Financial implications

6.1 Financial implications may be raised by individual items. These have been dealt with elsewhere or will be raised at future meetings of SACRE.

Contact Officer

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Key Issues November 2023

7a) RE HUBS- There are national meetings, if anyone wants the link to attend it is as follows which explains the benefits of being part of the RE Hubs in the West Midlands: Chris Giles with David Levien & Manjit Kaur **16th November 6:30-8pm**

The main focus will be facilitating a discussion on the 4 agenda questions, see below. If you want to be part of this meeting then you can join on Zoom.

Join Zoom

Meeting <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85140904932?pwd=a2mwdP05VxCXxbvms7qy0woKqJkQOB.1>

Meeting ID: 851 4090 4932

Passcode: 212337

Aims of these meetings:

- Build up our relationship with SACREs in a new way (hopefully finding new people longer term who come onto the NASACRE Executive)
- Give a mid-point in the year from Conference where we can have conversations with our membership.
- In the long term to showcase excellent work done by SACREs regionally to each other, as well as increase our knowledge of that as an Executive
- Give a place where SACREs can support one another to problem solve issues – and if that is not possible a place where they can raise issues with Exec – that we in turn can think about and maybe raise with DfE
- By having a smaller set of SACREs come together it would allow for more voices to be heard than at conference.
- The following documents might be of use to aid discussed as the meeting,
 - i. **Humanist UK & Kent decision and DfE advice:** *Highlight the advice that has been sent to all SACREs and what this means – <https://nasacre.org.uk/latest-updates/> (NASACREs wording is here along with a link to the DfE document)*
 - ii. **FOI report** – how NASACRE exec can help them to be able to use this information (if needed) to ensure that enough funding comes to SACRE for it to be able to discharge its duties. <https://nasacre.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Funding-Report-2023-FINAL.pdf>
 - iii. **Annual report analysis findings** report and how this can help them in writing their up-coming reports <https://nasacre.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/20230610-Final-Analysis-of-SACRE-Annual-Reports-2021-2022-with-front-cover.pdf> Also if SACREs are a subscribed member they can access further support in writing their annual report here <https://nasacre.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Final-SACRE-Annual-Reports-framework-Contents.pdf>
 - iv. **NASACRE website and sharing area** – highlight how they can contribute <https://nasacre.org.uk/shared-space/>
 - v. Add something in around putting up our **membership fees** needing to go up because of our rising costs – we have drawn on our reserves for the last few years, but going forward we think we will need to raise it by 6-10%. (Denise)
 - vi. **GCSE results & Work force data** – ensure they are aware of our upcoming webinar on this with Deborah Weston and that they have this information on workforce data <https://nasacre.org.uk/training-and-support/> 18th January 6:30pm. You can access national GCSE results to compare your local result to via Joint Qualification Council <https://www.jcq.org.uk/>

INTERACTIVE SESSION for our November 2023 meeting

In groups of 2 discuss the following. This will also support the writing of the next Development Plan.

1. What is the SACRE contribution to Religious Education World Views?
2. What are your key challenges as a SACRE?
3. How can SACRE be more effective? You may want to highlight your greatest success as a SACRE/advisor in the last 18 months.
4. How do you see yourself with the emerging educational landscape? (e.g., MATs, Networking, Research, www.re-hubs.com)

7b) GCSE and A level update on results from 2022

i) Public examination entries in Religious Studies (RS)/ Religious Education (RE)

At Key Stage (KS) 4 all pupils should fulfil their entitlement by following as a basis an accredited specification (from a recognised examination board) in Religious Studies or the programme of study provided within the AS.

Schools should provide reasonable time for pupils to complete this and if appropriate, to attain an external qualification.

At KS5 pupils may follow the programme of study provided within the Agreed Syllabus or an accredited specification (from a recognised examination board) in Religious Studies.

ii) Religious Studies GCSE 2022

The GCSE system continues to use the new grading of 9-1, with 9 being the exceptional grade. Students study for GCSE in Year 10 and Year 11.

Here are the trends from the 2022 religious studies GCSE results (Year 11)

The proportion of grade 9 results achieved by students nationally fell to 10.4% in 2022 compared to 11.45 in 2021 and compared to 9.6 per cent in 2020 and 7.5 per cent in 2019.

- **England** % achieving grades 9-4 for the full RS course in 2020 was 80.5% and 80.2% in 2021. This fell to 76.7% in 2022.
- Therefore **Staffordshire** % of students achieving grades 9-4 for the full RS course in 2021 was 4% lower than the England average, this is an improvement compared to 2020 and this gap remained similar in 2022. See table below.
- Grade 5 plus in 2022 for Staffordshire was 61% compared to the National of 65%.
- John Taylor High School entered the most students with 256- entries. 29% achieved grades 8 and 9. 82% achieved the Grades 9-4.
- Alleyne's High School Stone entered 211 students. 7% achieved grades 8 and 9. 65% achieved the Grades 9-4.
- Kiing Edward VI High School entered 209 students, 8% achieved grades 8 and 9. 69% achieved the Grades 9-4.
- Closely followed by Rawlett School (AET Academy) who entered 197 students, 9% achieved grades 8 and 9. 94.9% achieved the Grades 9-4.
- And Sir John Fisher High School who entered 186 students, 15% achieved grades 8 and 9. 73% achieved the Grades 9-4.
- And Erasmus Darwin High School who entered 180 students, 12% achieved grades 8 and 9. 73.3% achieved the Grades 9-4.

Here are the overall figures to report for 2022 for GCSE

County	Number of candidates	Grade 9 and above - %	Grade 8 and above - %	Grade 7 and above - %	Grade 6 and above - %	Grade 5 and above - %	Grade 4 and above - %	Grade 3 and above - %	Grade 2 and above - %	Grade 1 and above - %
England	178,980	8.4	23.8	37.7	53.2	65	76.7	89.9	95.7	98.9
Staffordshire	3,394	6.5	14	23	55	61	73.4	85.7	95.4	99.2

Compared to 2021

County	Number of candidates	Grade 9 and above - %	Grade 8 and above - %	Grade 7 and above - %	Grade 6 and above - %	Grade 5 and above - %	Grade 4 and above - %	Grade 3 and above - %	Grade 2 and above - %	Grade 1 and above - %
England	201975	11.4	23.8	37.7	53.2	67.5	80.2	89.9	95.7	98.9
Staffordshire	4,320	7.1	17.2	31	46.9	62.6	77.5	89.7	96.4	99.1

Historically

2019 National Average 9 to 4 72.3%

2019 Staffordshire Average 9 to 4 65.9%

2020 National Average 9 to 4 80.5%

2020 Staffordshire Average 9 to 4 76.4%

2021 National Average 9 to 4 80.2%

2021 Staffordshire Average 9 to 4 77.5%

2022 National Average 9 to 4 76.7%

2022 Staffordshire Average 9 to 4 73.4%

iii) Religious Studies A-level 2022- studied in Year 12 and Year 13- updated data provided by SCC is as follows

	Number of entries	A*-A	A*-C	A*-E	Average Grade
Staffordshire	164	32.6%	88.2%	97.8%	B
National	15, 220	36.2%	87.5%	98.7%	B

- This shows that Staffordshire in comparison with the top grades is nearly 4% below the National, but when comparing A*-C grades, we are just above the National %.
- At KS5 the information in the table shows the picture for A level results. 21 schools in Staffordshire entered pupils for A levels- this represented all types of schools with a total of 164 entries.
- ✓ John Taylor High School entered the most candidates- 36 entries. 56% achieved A*-A and 80.6% achieved the A*-B
- ✓ Blessed William Howard entered 15 candidates. 6.7% achieved A*-A and 66.7% achieved the A*-B
- ✓ Walton High School entered 13 candidates. 15.4% achieved A*-A and 38.5% achieved the A*-B
- ✓ The De Ferrers Academy entered 14 candidates. 14.3% achieved A*-A and 57.1% achieved the A*-B
- ✓ Sir John Fisher Catholic entered 11 candidates. 18.2% achieved A*-A and 54.5% achieved the A*-B
- ✓ The Friary entered 11 candidates. 27.4% achieved A*-A and 45.5% achieved the A*-B
- ✓ The remainder entered between 1-9 candidates.
- All schools achieved well- see table.
- 17 out of 21 schools achieved gradings of A*-A- for some of its pupils-this is indeed praiseworthy.

The relative stability of entries suggests that candidates continue to recognise the value of RS A-level for Higher Education entry, graduate employment, and as a valuable life skill.

7c) Work Force Data

Work force data report for 2022. This report is always one year out of date. The 2023 data is released in the next report.

This data was reported by schools to the DfE as part of the school census in November 2022.

Hours taught for years 7 to 13, in subjects RE, philosophy and all subjects, reported by state-funded secondary schools with electronic timetabling software are published.

61 Staffordshire schools are included- the same amount as in 2021.

Aspects to note:

Where schools reported that they allocate teaching hours to a specific year group, but have not included RE in that report, this amounted to 17 schools out of 61 schools.

As would be expected, the schools that reported the most hours of teaching RE/RS also enter more pupils for an examination such as GCSE and also achieve the best results.

There has been a very slight increase in provision in some schools since 2021, the number of schools with a decrease in provision has increased.

The SACRE investigated the following:-

- The 0 hours allocations- anywhere in the list. This included 1 school in 2022. In 2021, this was 3 schools.
- The schools where there were 'zs'- showing no hours recorded for RE/RS were investigated further.

It is the general feeling that this is not essentially a true account as the census form may have been populated incorrectly.

Some of these are Catholic schools and we are certain that RE/RS is taught as they have examination results.

The advisor to the SACRE scrutinised websites and visited schools where it appeared that no RE/RS were taught. The overall picture was more positive for the one school, the school website indicated that RE/RS is being taught but it is labelled Philosophy and Ethics.

It is pleasing to report that 98% of schools are teaching RE/RS in Year 7 and 8 which is an improvement.

Governors and Trustees are more aware that it is a statutory requirement to teach RE/RS. From Years 9-13, where there is no examination class, RE/RS is not consistently taught or it is taught on alternate weeks with Relationship, Health and Sex Education (RHSE) or during Tutor time.

7d) The West Hill Legacy project on Explore, Engage, Reflect.

The workshops were halted at the start of the autumn term due to long term sickness of the Entrust MEAS team workshop lead. She remains on long term sick. An alternative lead has been sourced and she will start workshops late in this autumn term and into the spring term.

A list of schools has been compiled with the hope that we will be able to commit to re commencing these workshops.

7e) Support for schools

The adviser has provided support in the form of revamped suggested planning for schools for the spring and summer term for Next the autumn term planning will be revised.

Middle schools appreciated the provision of a long-term plan and advice.

It would be good practice to provide this planning on a dedicated website. Could this be facilitated by the clerk? The Agreed Syllabus would be included, and the suggested planning and ideas added as they are developed.

Currently the AS is available here:

<https://moderngov.staffordshire.gov.uk/mgConvert2PDF.aspx?ID=170188>

In addition, the adviser has provided email support and advice for a number of schools, mostly primary schools and special schools. These requests for advice come through Entrust.

7f) Application for Culham St Gabriel (CSTG) charity grant including the Development of a Safeguarding Policy- see agenda item 9.

The application was for a grant of £6500 from CSTG. This was successful.

The adviser to SACRE applied for a grant to support a project which involves the ongoing developments in schools. Along the lines of bringing about a development in the mindset for some, and a refinement for others in enabling them to lead organisations that provides an inclusive respectful and enriching educational experience for all stakeholders.

One condition of the grant was to write a Safeguarding policy document and another to present the accounts of three years of our SACRE to the Trustees.

7g) The Development Plan 2023-2024

This will be confirmed after the outcomes of this meeting.

It is hoped that it will include:-

- further support for schools through a website to share suggestions for planning, resources and delivery of effective RE.
- sustaining the workshops linked with the 2023 Agreed Syllabus for schools under the West Hill Legacy project on Explore, Engage, Reflect.
- Commence work on the Culham St Gabriel's Trust project for leaders in schools.
- Fill the current vacancies on the SACRE- consider associate members if appropriate.
- Support new members to understand their roles and responsibilities.

7h) The Religious Education Quality Mark

Two schools have achieved REQM in Staffordshire during 2023. They have both achieved the GOLD quality mark.

The schools include St Chad's at Pattingham and St Luke's at Cannock.

St Chad's received support from SACRE to apply and achieve this award. This was funded by SACRE.

St Luke's will receive a workshop for Year 5 and Year 6 on Islam as their support from SACRE.

This award recognises high quality RE through:-

- Invigorating RE teaching practice and creativity contributing to whole school outcomes.
- raising the profile of RE in the school and the school community,
- sharing quality resources via networking.

The headteacher of St Luke's and the SACRE adviser undertook a monitoring visit of a school in the Staffordshire Moorlands and as a result supported the raising of the profile in RE in the wider context.