



# **Staffordshire Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education-**

**32<sup>nd</sup> Annual Report  
September 2022 - September 2023**

# From the Chair of SACRE



## Chair's Introduction to SACRE's Annual Report for 2022-23

This Report covers the work of SACRE from September 2022 to September 2023. During this period, the major event has been the launch on February 1<sup>st</sup> of the County's revised Agreed Syllabus in RE, at a very well-attended and inspiring celebratory occasion held at the Kingston Centre. Since then, schools have been helped to implement the revised Syllabus through a series of in-service training sessions and online consultations, with complete implementation due from September 2023.

The revised Syllabus has elements of both continuity and innovation. Many features of the County's previous, widely appreciated Agreed Syllabus have been retained, not least the core triple dynamic of Exploring, Engaging and Reflecting. The Syllabus has evolved so as to give more attention now to the field of "world views", as it is known. Opportunity has also been taken to add new statutory material to cover areas of school life which have themselves recently gained new statutory status.

Within the lively panorama of Agreed Syllabus appraisal and revision across the country, Staffordshire's revised RE Syllabus continues to be in the forefront of current thinking and design, while also remaining teacher-friendly and accessible to the wider public. I am confident that it will serve Staffordshire schools and pupils well over the years ahead.

The Covid pandemic of 2020 continued to have an impact on the delivery of Religious Education and Collective Worship in schools, as it did on every other aspect of school life in 2022-2023. The process of returning to a new "normal" has continued throughout this year; SACRE has sought both to support schools and to monitor the ongoing situation. SACRE warmly thanks RE teachers and senior leaders across the County for their dedicated efforts to ensure pupils receive their entitlement to the highest quality religious education.

One recent development has been the establishing of a national network of regional RE Hubs. These Hubs are intended to work with SACREs and other bodies in coordinating professional support and in providing a forum for RE teachers to interact and share good practice. They will be a resource for all schools - academies, free schools, county schools, diocesan schools. Staffordshire SACRE looks forward to developing strong relationships in the future as part of the West Midlands RE Hub.

Staffordshire SACRE's substantial achievements throughout the year would not have been possible without the unstinting work and professional expertise of the County's Consultant Adviser in RE, Mary Gale. SACRE, and the County, are extremely fortunate to have the benefit of her committed support for RE alongside her many other skills and interests. Our deep and very sincere thanks are extended to her for all she is giving in RE to the County's schools and to SACRE itself. I heartily commend this Annual Report to Staffordshire County Council and to all schools within the County.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael R. Metcalf". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Rev. Prebendary Michael Metcalf Chair Staffs SACRE

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## 1. Introduction

This report covers the work of the Staffordshire SACRE during the academic year from September 2022 to September 2023. Three meetings were held during the period covered by the report.

This report is sent to the headteachers of all schools in the County, to the teachers' associations, to the local faith communities and NASACRE.

Further copies are available from:

The Clerk to SACRE,  
Democratic Services,  
Martin Street,  
Stafford ST16 2LH.

**The statutory duties of the SACRE are given in Appendix 1      Page 18**  
**The membership of the SACRE is given                      Appendix 2      Page 19**

## 2. A summary of the work of the SACRE September 2022-2023

- The SACRE worked in line with the SACRE Development Plan. (See Appendix 5)
- Eight face-to-face meetings were held in schools to give direct support.
- Three online meetings were held in conjunction with the local NATRE group, one per term. Eight- ten people attended these meetings.
- The Agreed Syllabus was reviewed and accepted by SACRE.
- The Agreed Syllabus was shared with schools through a launch.
- The launch of the revised Agreed Syllabus at the Entrust Conference Hall in February 2023 was very well attended with 120 plus schools attending, plus delegates from SACRE and the Local authority.
- Long term planning grid has been provided for Middle schools (Year 5- Year 8)
- Early Years planning has been revamped to take into account the changes to the EYFS framework.
- Spring and Summer planning have been altered to take into account world views.
- Monitoring of Staffordshire primary school RE provision was carried out through a questionnaire which evaluated how the Agreed Syllabus supports effective RE. Also, through a review of school websites.
- Monitoring of Staffordshire Secondary school RE was carried out through a questionnaire which evaluated how the Agreed Syllabus supports effective RE and through scrutiny of the work force census data. In addition, reviews of school websites were carried out.
- The Staffordshire Agreed Syllabus recommends that students at KS4 study an approved examination syllabus. It was not easy for the SACRE to monitor provision and attainment in externally accredited courses in Religious Studies in 2020 and 2021 due to changes to the examination process as a result of COVID-19 so comparisons are not easy to make. The summary below states the key outcomes.
  - **Staffordshire** % achieving grades 9-4 for the RS course in 2020 was 76.4% and 77.5% in 2021. It fell to 73.4% in 2022.
  - **England** % achieving grades 9-4 for the 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 3% lower than the England average, this is an improvement compared to 2020 and this gap remained similar in 2022.

- Grade 5 plus in 2022 for Staffordshire was 61% compared to the National of 65%.
- At KS5 21 schools in Staffordshire entered pupils for A levels- this represented all types of schools with a total of 164 entries. The average grade was a B grade, which was in line with the national average grade.
- 32.6% of Staffordshire students achieved an A\*-A and 88.2% achieved A\*-C. This compares very favourably with the national % of 36.2% A\*-A and 87.5% A\*-C.
- The Westhill Engage project in conjunction with YouthNet and the Entrust MEAS team supported over 300 pupils across Staffordshire to gain a greater understanding of Christianity and Islam and of living with diversity.
- Originally Entrust offered a face-to-face programme of CPD to support RE teachers across the year, but due to the continued impact of the pandemic only one face-to face training programme was provided for 22 delegates from the primary, first and special school sectors. In addition, three webinars were provided which were moderately well attended. Bespoke support was provided in response to individual school requests, this was mostly addressed through email correspondence and school visits in a number of schools throughout the county. A number of these were special schools. Resources to support schools were discussed in the February 2023 SACRE meeting.
- Support for schools who wish to carry out RE focus day was given by the RE adviser, providing hints and tips and a schedule for the day. Some of this advice included (if funds allow) a visit to the Open Centre-Faith Trail in Derby. Two schools followed this advice and reported that this had been an inspirational focus visit day and suited learners of all ages. For those schools who could not afford a visit to Derby, they arranged for speakers from The Open Centre to visit them to support learning. This was more cost effective.
- Discussion on Religion and the 2021 census.
- Discussion on the Report Card for RE/RS
- Discussion on the draft handbook published by the REC on Religion and world views in the classroom, with a summary provided by the adviser.
- Presentation/ Reflection on Difference, Diversity and Inclusion by Hifsa Haroon Iqbal of Reengage.
- Provision of information on RE and the Schools Bill 2022 and its implications.
- Staffordshire SACRE continues to be represented at the NASACRE (the National Association of SACREs) AGM, NATRE Conference and AREIAC meetings. Some of these meetings have been held in the virtual environment.
- The partnership with NASACRE remains strong. Members of SACRE are also representatives on other SACREs and on bodies such as Stafford and District Friends.
- No determinations have been requested during this academic year.

### **3. Standards and quality of RE and Collective Worship (CW) provision**

#### **3.1 Monitoring**

Monitoring for this academic year continued to take place via email conversations, three online meetings, questionnaires regarding the revised Agreed Syllabus, and scrutiny of examination results and school websites.

Where SACRE is concerned about the provision offered by schools then a formal procedure is followed. See Appendix 3.

## General comments

- The syllabus is used in most schools that provided information, those who do not use the syllabus are Catholic or Church of England Aided schools, or in a Multi Academy Trusts.
- Schools are currently exploring best practices, to ensure consistency across the school and prepare for the introduction of the Agreed Syllabus from September 2023.
- Schools are exploring ways to assess learning of RE many feel the revised syllabus provides support in this area.
- Local faith leaders contribute to CW in some areas of the county through the virtual environment, particularly where there were youth leaders to support this.
- Staff confidence in delivering collective worship continue to develop well.
- Leader confidence in Church of England schools regarding the delivery of CW improved with the help of resources from SACRE. Some leaders stated that the delivery of CW continues to improve because after the pandemic there was more consistency in approach and planning.
- Worship teams (pupils) organise worship more so now compared to before the pandemic.
- Varied weekly timetables of collective worship resumed in autumn 2022.
- Allocation of resources to RE has decreased in some schools since last year.
- RE makes a positive contribution to SMSC in most schools especially during online support for learners.
- Two schools have achieved the Gold award for the RE quality Mark. (REQM)

## Primary and Secondary Monitoring headlines:

- Collective worship is led by a variety of staff. Online worship and assemblies were led mostly members of the Senior Leadership Team.
- The variety regarding the provision for collective worship varies from school to school with schools operating across key stages or class/form or whole school.
- Collective worship continues to take many forms including thought for the day, with the inclusion of Relationship and Health Education, and well-being aspects.
- Withdrawal from CW is only took place in a handful of schools mostly involving Jehovah Witness followers.
- Schools have reviewed their collective worship provision in the past 2 years,
- Schools agreed that the Revised Agreed Syllabus should clearly present what is required by their school in RE. More information will be available in its impact in the June 2025 meeting,
- The majority of schools contacted stated that they had reviewed their RE provision due to the Revised Agreed Syllabus and that planning now covered World Views

## Provision for high schools/workforce data.

Workforce data report for 2021-2022.

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

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

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 is indicated by a dot in that year group column. 18 schools out of 61 schools

There has been an increase in provision in some schools since the previous years and a decrease in others. The good news is that out of 61 schools recorded, 21 have increased their provision. Which is good news. Last year only 16 schools increased the time allocated to the teaching of RE/RS.

10 have decreased their provision. Some of those schools are middle schools.

There is an improving picture of provision. The SACRE investigated the following:-

- The 0 hours allocations- anywhere in the list. This included 3 schools, the previous year this was 7 schools.
- The schools where there were dots- showing no hours recorded for RE/RS. 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 appears that no RE/RS were taught. The overall picture was more positive for the three schools and only one school was not teaching RE/RS as per the statutory regulations. This has now been rectified.

## 3.2 Standards

Staffordshire SACRE reviews and discusses standards and achievement in RE during meetings as appropriate.

Throughout 2022-23 Religious Education network meetings which schools can choose to attend would have included moderation of standards across year groups and schools to support schools with the judgements they make against the Agreed Syllabus Age Related Expectations. Face-to-face development opportunities were offered to schools but due to the continued impact of the COVID-19 pandemic only one opportunity was utilised. In addition, the advisor offered to provide support and information through an online virtual webinar, but no schools took up this offer. Some schools requested instead a face-to-face meeting at their school. This was facilitated in 10 schools,

### **a) Public examination entries in Religious Education (RE) and Religious Studies (RS)**

In the Staffordshire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education, legal requirements state that RE should be provided as part of the basic curriculum for all registered pupils attending a maintained school, this includes high schools.

Academies and Free schools are contractually required through the terms of their funding agreement to make provision for the teaching of RE. They are able to choose to do this by using a syllabus which best suits their needs- this may not be the Staffordshire Agreed Syllabus.

## **Background**

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. 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. Schools that do not offer this opportunity to their students are requested to apply to the SACRE for a variation of practice.

### b) Religious Studies GCSE 2022

The GCSE system continues to use the new grading of 9-1, with 9 being the exceptional grade.

Here are the trends from the 2022 religious studies GCSE results.

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.
- Painsley Catholic High school entered 214 students , 21% achieved grades 8 and 9 and 82.2% achieved 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 St 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**

Country	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 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%

### c) Religious Studies A-level 2022- 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
- ✓ St 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 their 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.

### **3.3 Quality of teaching, quality of leadership and management**

Informal monitoring revealed a picture in the primary schools that responded with a high number of schools engaging in regular reviews of their RE provision. This was due to COVID-19, as schools used time to review their RE provision so that on return to full time education, the curriculum would be fit for purpose. The picture was equally positive for provision in the secondary sector with most schools demonstrating that they reviewed their provision.

Schools have the option to purchase further bespoke support and evaluation of their leadership of RE from Entrust. This is a voluntary option. One school in 2022-2023 requested face-to-face support for leadership, and email support for leadership was provided to twelve schools following requests.

There has also been a programme of CPD available for schools. 22 schools attended a training session in November 2022 to support the delivery of the revised Agreed Syllabus. Schools that did not book on this training programme preferred to access support through email. This was facilitated by the adviser to SACRE.

### **3.4 Teacher recruitment and retention, level of specialist provision**

Information regarding monitoring, recruitment and retention continues to be reliant on the collation of evidence from advertisements in the educational press. There is no established method of gathering data within the LA.

Information gleaned from the national press indicated that there was a relatively low turnover of subject leaders at the end of the academic year with few changes taking place.

Newly qualified teachers are now referred to as Early Career Teachers- ECTs

### **3.5 Resources**

Much of the work of the Entrust consultant for RE was carried out virtually this past year. This involved support for Religious Education planning and Collective Worship. Resources were sent to schools to support online RE and CW. These were well received by schools.

### **3.6 Collective Worship (CW)**

### **3.7 Practice and provision for Collective Worship**

An advice booklet was made available to Staffordshire schools to support their statutory duties regarding CW.

Schools can also email the commissioned consultant advisor for Religious Education at Entrust for additional support. This academic year there have been no specific training

opportunities for CW although email advice has been provided. Several schools have requested face-to-face meeting with the commissioned consultant to discuss these aspects.

### **3.8 Monitoring determinations for Collective Worship**

There are no existing determinations in Staffordshire.  
No determinations have been applied for or granted in this academic year.

## **4 Managing the SACRE and partnership with the LA and other stakeholders**

### **4.1 SACRE meetings**

Three meetings were held during the year 16<sup>th</sup> November 2022, 1<sup>st</sup> February 2023, and 28<sup>th</sup> June 2023, at the Council Chambers in the County Buildings Stafford, ST16 3AD. All meetings were held at 2.00 p.m.

At the autumn term 2022 meeting the Rev. Prebendary Michael Metcalf was elected as chair for the following year.

### **4.2 Membership**

There was a review of membership in the previous year. It was noted at that time that there were several vacancies which the SACRE tried to fill over the year.

Several changes to the membership of the SACRE were noted during the year.  
See Appendix 2 for full details.

All new members are required to sign the SACRE Code of Conduct on appointment.

### **4.3 Training**

During 2022-2023 professional development activities were offered virtually to teachers, these activities centred around email support for planning and advice regarding the Agreed Syllabus planning and Collective Worship. Governors were updated three times by way of a general update webinar over the year to support their link governor roles, which was well received.

Reverend Preb. M.R. Metcalf and M Gale (Advisor to SACRE) attended the 2023 NASACRE conference **on 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2023** in London.

M Gale Advisor to SACRE attended three of AREIACs regional meetings in 2022-2023. She also attended the face-to-face Church of England conference in London and three NATRE virtual meetings, one per term.

### **4.4 SACRE developments**

#### **Development Projects**

The Explore- Engage -Reflect pupil workshops provided for pupils across Stafford, Stone and Newcastle were all cancelled in 2020 due to COVID-19. These resumed from

September 2021 onwards to the present day with a number of schools taking part and learning about Islam and Christianity.

The proposed high school conferences in conjunction with YouthNet were postponed due to a lack of take up by high schools.

### **Additional Support**

The advisor to SACRE provided support on remote learning for schools during the pandemic.

In addition, advice was provided on Collective Worship and planning for RE including short term and long-term planning.

## **4.5 LA support for the SACRE**

The LA continues to commission its support for Religious Education from Entrust. Support for SACRE 2022/23 was provided by Mary Gale, director of Mary Gale Consultancy. She was commissioned to provide this support and advice to SACRE and schools. This commission continues.

## **4.6 Financial support**

£6,340 was made available to support the work of SACRE during the financial year 2022-2023 as approved by the Service Delivery Agreement (SDA) between Staffordshire County Council and Entrust. Additional funds were provided to support the work of the advisor to review and revise the Agreed Syllabus. This amounted to £3,000. Some of the available budget was also spent. In total this amounted to £4,500. The National mean for such a review is £5,000. Continuing priorities for the year were identified as supporting schools to be aware of their statutory responsibilities with regard to the revised AS and to provide support in relation to fulfilling the statutory functions for SACRE including but not limited to:

- (i) provision of advice and guidance on teaching and learning on the Religious Education syllabus.
- (ii) providing updates to maintained school RE teachers with a refresh on the requirements to the RE Syllabus.
- (iii) Support for specific projects in a small selection of schools ranging from support for resources for CW and RE including advice on application for the RE quality mark. (Gold award successful)
- (iv) Support for the revision and the subsequent publishing and launch of the AS.

The budget was a standing item on the agenda at each meeting see Appendix 4.

SACRE provided information to NASACRE via a Freedom of Information request regarding their funding from the LA This resulted in a report of all LA support for SACREs. It is pleasing to note that our funding is average for SACREs around the country receiving approximately 2%.

The results from National SACREs were varied but showed that most SACREs did not receive the share of the Central School Services Block (CSSB) of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) that they should in order to support SACRE. The report provided useful evidence in NASACREs discussions with the government.

## 4.7 Information and advice

During the period covered by this report, the SACRE took time to talk to school regarding the steps being taken to ensure RE and CW resumed their significance in the curriculum of schools post pandemic.

Members were advised of the national picture regarding RE. SACRE has used this information effectively to advise the LA on the range of issues covered elsewhere in this report.

## 4.8 Partnerships with other Key Stakeholders

### NASACRE

The Chair of Staffordshire SACRE, Michael Metcalf, was until May 2022 the treasurer of the National Association of SACREs (NASACRE).

A report from NASACRE is a standing agenda item at each meeting.

At each of the three meetings, the Chair gave a brief update on key issues raised by the National Association of SACREs. Matters for 2022-23 are included in the minutes from each meeting. SACRE subscribes to NASACRE receiving updates as appropriate.

It is particularly noteworthy that our chair Michael Metcalf was nominated and subsequently received an award at the National SACRE conference in London and provided the closing speech for this conference, celebrating 30 years of support for SACREs..

Here is a summary of his nomination.

#### ***Reasons for nomination***

*As a longstanding member of the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education, Prebendary Michael Metcalf has played an instrumental role in the promotion of RE education in the region since SACREs were set up after the 1988 Education Act, when Religious Education (RE) was confirmed as a compulsory part of the curriculum, and it became a statutory requirement for every Local Authority (LA) to appoint a SACRE. He has represented the Diocese of Lichfield on Staffordshire SACRE to the current day, with a short break in the middle years. In 2002 he was nominated as Chair of SACRE by Committee A. He was duly elected and has remained in that position to this day.*

*Throughout his tenure, Michael has consistently demonstrated a deep commitment to improving the quality of RE education for students across Staffordshire. He has worked tirelessly to promote inclusivity and diversity ensuring that all have access to a well-rounded education that respects and celebrates the beliefs and cultures of all faiths. In addition, he has worked on the National SACRE body since 1993 supporting developments nationwide- his influence is far reaching. He has only recently retired from this elected post.*

*Under Michael's leadership, the Staffordshire SACRE has developed innovative programs and initiatives that have helped to raise standards and improve outcomes for students. He has worked closely with teachers, educators, advisers and inspectors (including Paul Bellingham, Heather Farr, Emma Jardine Phillips and for the past 8 years with Mary Gale) across the region to provide guidance, support, and commissioned training, guiding all to develop the skills and knowledge needed to deliver effective RE education. We are particularly proud of his support for the Staffordshire SACRE **Explore, Engage and Reflect** project- a legacy project from the 2017 Westhill grant, which continues in Staffordshire schools to this day.*

*Michael's contributions have not gone unnoticed. He is widely respected and admired in Staffordshire and throughout the Lichfield Diocese by his fellow colleagues and members of SACRE, who have praised his dedication, passion, and expertise. His ability to engage in*

*intellectual debate has been a source of inspiration and motivation for countless stakeholders. His life experiences are a major factor in his ability to guide and support those working in the RE field. His impact on education especially on RE in Staffordshire and the Lichfield Diocese is immeasurable. His contribution towards the writing of the Staffordshire Agreed Syllabus over the years has been considerable, especially the writing of the very recent 2023 revised syllabus. This was launched in February 2023.*

## **AREIAC (Association for Religious Education Inspectors, Advisers and Consultants) and NATRE (National Association for the Teaching of RE)**

SACRE subscribes to these organisations, receiving updates as appropriate. The consultant advisor also attends meetings and conferences with members of these organisations ensuring SACRE receives regular information which supports them in carrying out their core duties. During COVID-19 all communication was through online platforms. These continue. Mary Gale has attended 3 such meetings.

### **NATRE**

Mary Gale continues to communicate with NATRE on a number of topical RE aspects. She receives publications and news as appropriate and disseminates this information to schools and Governors. She has attended three virtual NATRE meetings and meets with the local representative to explore RE issues.

The provision of regional RE hubs has been a new initiative of 2022; this is still in its infancy but should prove to be beneficial for schools and organisations.

### **Local Authority**

The Staffordshire Agreed Syllabus (AS) for Religious Education is the key document for the provision of RE in local schools. Schools receive reminders regarding the statutory status of this syllabus on a regular basis. As the key curriculum document for pupils in all Staffordshire's maintained schools and in some Multi Academy Trusts (this at the discretion of each Trust board) the local authority is responsible for ensuring that guidance is in place. The advisor to Staffordshire SACRE and the Assistant Director for Education Strategy & Improvement have continued to remain in regular contact and work together to ensure that schools are clear about their statutory responsibilities for Religious Education. The review of the Staffordshire Agreed Syllabus commenced in July 2021 in line with legislation which advises that the AS is reviewed every 5 years. There was a delay to the launch of the revised AS, but this was realised in February 2023 and is now in use in Staffordshire schools as appropriate.

## **5 The effectiveness of the local agreed syllabus**

### **5.1 Guidance/monitoring and evaluation of the agreed syllabus**

Previously in September 2016, the Staffordshire Agreed Syllabus (AS) for Religious Education was formally adopted by Staffordshire County Council and introduced into Staffordshire's schools.

The review of the 2016 AS commenced in 2021. Due to the impact of COVID-19 this review was delayed and was completed in late autumn 2022 ready for its launch in February 2023. Schools will be teaching the revised AS from September 2023, although many adopted the AS from summer 2023.

Ongoing guidance was provided in the following formats:

- RE news was provided through the headteacher Electronic Bag and through the Governor Information Pack together with targeted emailed to schools to support them with aspects of teaching and learning.
- Schools have been invited to phone/email the commissioned consultant advisor for Religious Education at Entrust for advice and support on all aspects of their RE provision- there have been a number of queries.
- Revised long and medium-term plans have been made available to schools to support high quality Religious Education. These plans will be further revised in 2023-2024.

## **5.2 The Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC).**

The meeting of the ASC continued into 2022-2023 where each of the four SACRE Committees with the support of Staffordshire Local Authority, agreed to the Religious Education Agreed Syllabus Review and the work to be undertaken.

Rev Metcalf was appointed as the Chair of the Conference.

The review stages were outlined in a development plan including feedback from schools and stakeholders on how the 2016 syllabus was being utilised. The second stage of the review considered any developments or changes in RE since the previous syllabus was written. The review continued throughout the year resulting in a draft AS being written ready for scrutiny to the ASC in autumn 2022 and then after further revisions as per the advice of the conference, the final version of the AS was ready for an official launch in February 2023 with the AS being the statutory document for the teaching of RE in Staffordshire schools from September 2023 (according to the status of the school).

## **6 Contribution of the SACRE to the wider community**

### **6.1 Representative nature of the SACRE**

The membership of the SACRE indicates that it is representative in nature. There are currently vacancies which the SACRE are seeking to fill.

### **6.2 Knowledge and understanding of the local religious, cultural and ethnic minorities.**

A number of the SACRE members are also representatives on the Stafford Friends of Faith Forum, a local interfaith network. Where opportunities arise SACRE members and members of Stafford Friends of Faith Forum support each other's events to promote positive community relations. This relationship supports SACRE members knowledge and understanding of the local religious, cultural and ethnic minority.

The commissioned consultant/advisor for RE works alongside the Entrust MEAS (Minority Ethnic Achievement Service) and the local YouthNet team.

There are several Inter faith/cultural experiences/workshops available for schools to book which aim to enhance RE in Staffordshire schools.

These offer the opportunity for an interactive experience for pupils where they meet with members of a faith and learn about what that faith means to them. The MEAS team support

the Westhill Legacy project. The SACRE are pleased to be associated with the work of the MEAS team.

Support for schools, particularly around diversity and race relations had been provided through information on Black History month, on the Holocaust Educational Trust learning support tool and Interfaith support. Emphasis had been put on the schools embedding all such aspects in all that they do, not just during the national awareness periods.

### **6.3 Understanding the intrinsic contribution which RE can make to social, racial and religious harmony and to the wider community.**

The Staffordshire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education affirms that the role of RE is to foster in each pupil a growing level of religious literacy, through three complementary aims, encapsulated as Exploring, Engaging, Reflecting. This was emphasised in the revised 2023 Agreed Syllabus.

These three aims call for pupils to “acquire a growing range of the social, spiritual and emotional skills and dispositions appropriate to living well in a religiously plural and open society, by reflecting on the reality of religious diversity and on the issues raised by living in a diverse world”.

Pupils studying RE are now specifically required to reflect on the issues raised by living in a diverse world, through studying world views in addition to studying Abrahamic and Dharmic religions. These aims highlight the key role played by Religious Education in developing, supporting and promoting a knowledgeable society with respect for and sensitivity towards the beliefs and life choices of others. The 2023 revised syllabus emphasises that, in a civilised society, difference can be celebrated when we also seek out and build on shared values and experiences.

The SACRE is committed to the syllabus and to the role it plays in building a cohesive community.

# Appendices



**32<sup>nd</sup> Annual Report**  
**September 2022-September 2023**

## Appendix 1

### The Statutory Duties of a SACRE

All LAs are required to establish a SACRE.

A SACRE's main function, as set out in the 1996 Education Act is:

"to advise the local education authority upon such matters connected with religious worship in county schools and the Religious Education to be given in accordance with the agreed syllabus as the authority may refer to the council or as the council may see fit". [s.391(1)(a)]

Such matters include:-

"methods of teaching, the choice of materials and the provision of training for teachers".

A SACRE also:

- can require the local authority to review its current agreed syllabus [s.391(3)]
- must consider applications made by a headteacher, that the requirement for collective worship in county schools to be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character shall not apply to the collective worship provided for some or all of the pupils in a particular school ('determinations'). [s.394(1)]

Every SACRE must, by law, produce an annual report on its work and on actions taken by its representative groups, specifying any matters on which it has advised the local authority, broadly describe the nature of that advice and set out reasons for offering advice on matters not referred to it by the local authority. [s.391 (6) and (7)]

A copy of the report should be sent to The National Association of SACREs (NASACRE)

## Appendix 2

### SACRE Membership

#### Attendance at Meetings and Vacancies 202 /2023

✓ = Attended

A = Apologies Submitted

- = No Response

NA = Not a member at the time of the meeting

	16 Nov 22	1 Feb 23	28 Jun 23
<b>Committee A - Christian and other religious denominations</b>			
<b>Free Churches (4)</b>			
Sam Phillips	A	A	A
Maddy Belle	A	A	A
Vacancy			
Vacancy			
<b>Hindu (2)</b>			
Mr. G. Devadason	-	-	-
Vacancy			
<b>Jewish (1)</b>			
Vacancy			
<b>Muslim (2)</b>			
Mohamed Sedky	-	-	-
Mohamed Parekh	✓	-	Resigned
<b>Quakers - (1)</b>			
Gabi Oldfield	A	✓	✓
<b>Roman Catholic (2)</b>			
Claire Tomlinson	✓	A	Resigned
Vacancy			
<b>Sikh (2)</b>			
Mr Tajinder Singh	-	-	A
Vacancy			
<b>Salvation Army (1)</b>			
Amy Bayliss-Fox – from June 22 onwards	✓	✓	✓
<b>Buddhist (1)</b>			
Ven. Dr Phramaha Laow Panyasiri	-	-	-
<b>Humanist</b>			
Ian Horseywell	-	A	-
<b>Baha'i</b>			
Julie Thompson	✓	A	A
<b>Committee B - Church of England (5)</b>			
Vickie Longson	✓	A	✓
Vicky Priestley	✓	A	✓
Lauren Nicholson-Ward	✓	A	A
Rev. Preb. Michael Metcalf	✓	✓	✓
Zoe Cahalan	✓	A	✓

<b>Committee C - Teacher Associations (5)</b>	<b>16 Nov 22</b>	<b>1 Feb 23</b>	<b>28 Jun 23</b>
Samantha Kirwan (NEU)	A	A	A
Judy Wyman (ASCL)	✓	✓	✓
Shaun Miles (NAHT)	-	✓	✓
Linda Goodwin (NEU)	✓	A	✓
Harold Gurden (NASUWT)	A	A	-

<b>Committee D - Local Education Authority (5) (Membership change in November 2021)</b>	<b>16 Nov 22</b>	<b>1 Feb 23</b>	<b>28 Jun 23</b>
Councillor Philip Atkins, OBE	✓	✓	✓
Councillor Paul Northcott	✓	✓	✓
Councillor Kath Perry, MBE	✓	A	✓
Councillor Paul Snape	A	✓	A
Councillor Mike Wilcox	A	✓	✓

<b>Co-opted - Spiritualist National Union</b>	<b>16 Nov 21</b>	<b>1 Feb 23</b>	<b>28 Jun 23</b>
Vacancy			

<b>Clerk to SACRE:</b>	<b>16 Nov 21</b>	<b>1 Feb 23</b>	<b>28 Jun 23</b>
Simon Humble	✓	✓	✓

<b>Officer</b>	<b>16 Nov 21</b>	<b>1 Feb 23</b>	<b>28 Jun 23</b>
Mary Gale	✓	✓	✓

## Appendix 3

### Procedures for schools causing concern.

Where, in carrying out its statutory duty to monitor the provision of Religious Education as appropriate within the Local Authority, the SACRE has identified a cause for concern:

1. The SACRE or a sub-committee will request that a letter be sent from the Consultant Adviser for RE or an appropriate LA officer to outline concerns to the school and offer support.
2. Any responses will be referred to the SACRE or a sub-committee for consideration.
3. Where no reply is received, a further letter will be sent by the chair of SACRE reiterating concerns and offering the support of the Senior Adviser or appropriate LA officer.
4. Any responses will be referred to the SACRE or a sub-committee for consideration.
5. Where no reply is received, the SACRE, through the chair, will send a further letter to the school reiterating concerns and alerting the school to further action:
  - a) Concerns to be raised with relevant LA officers with a request that the SACRE be informed of the outcome of any ensuing discussion.
  - b) A note of concern be sent to the Senior LA officer with responsibility for SACRE.
  - c) The SACRE to hold a note of concern on its records

## 2022-2023 Budget

GL Account Codes for : Enquiry Group: Curr Budget (v2) v Act + GRNI/GL Account Code Range: EM1100/\*\*\*\*\* to EM1100/\*\*\*\*\* /  
 Enquiry Year: 2022/ Period: 00 to 12

<u>GL Account Code</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Current Budget (v2)</u>	<u>Actual + Grni</u>	<u>Actuals</u>	<u>Variance Bud v(Act +GRNI)</u>	
EM110010002	SACRE Teachers Gross	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
EM110025502	SACRE Rent/Lease of Premises	0.00	81.00	81.00	(81.00)	
EM110044038	SACRE QLS Curriculum Advice	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
EM110046204	SACRE Conference Fees	0.00	40.00	40.00	(40.00)	Attendance at the NASACRE Conference
EM110047017	SACRE Grants to third parties	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
EM110047202	SACRE Subscriptions General	0.00	105.00	105.00	(105.00)	
EM110048342	SACRE Contingency	6,340.00	0.00	0.00	6,340.00	
EM110064550	SACRE Tfrs to Oth Accounts	(10,080.00)	(10,080.00)	(10,080.00)	0.00	
		<b>(3,740.00)</b>	<b>(9,854.00)</b>	<b>(9,854.00)</b>	<b>6,114.00</b>	

**Total Available before commitments**

**6,114.00**

Less committed amounts:

7 days for Agreed Syllabus work with MEAS team	3,150.00
4 days for AS support and planning	1,800.00
Agreed Syllabus Launch	1,000.00