

The Solihull Standing Advisory Council on RE (SACRE)

Annual Report 2023 – 2024



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Section 1: Introduction

A message from the Chair of the Solihull SACRE

It is an immense privilege to Chair Solihull's SACRE meetings, ably supported by Executive Members, Jill Stolberg and David Harris.

The Solihull SACRE's two priorities for 2023-2024, following the disruption to RE teaching and learning during the pandemic, have been and continue to be:

- Standards and quality of provision
- Establishing an Agreed Syllabus Conference to review our current Agreed Syllabus

The SACRE has welcomed new members including several teachers to Group C. A Humanist UK representative has recently been appointed to Group A. This has been our intention for some time. The Department for Education's confirmation that new case law allows Humanists to be part of SACREs now applies to all councils in England. This legal change has enabled Solihull to take immediate steps to comply with the changes to the law and to appoint following the nomination by Humanists UK.

An Agreed Syllabus Conference was established in October 2023. Representative teachers of RE in primary schools have already told us what is important to them in teaching RE using the Agreed Syllabus. The conference continues to sit, and the process is ongoing. Working groups are to be developed. Wide consultation will continue to be key to ensuring that the next iteration of our Agreed Syllabus enthuses teachers and pupils and meets some of the most valued outcomes of high-quality Religious Education.

'Religious Education has a vital and powerful contribution to make in equipping young people, whatever their backgrounds and personal beliefs with the skills to understand and thrive in a diverse and shifting world. The ... subject is now under threat as never before, just at the moment when it is needed most'. (All Party Parliamentary Group for RE, 2013)

Ofsted's RE research report in 2021 highlighted some of the many challenges for the teaching of RE, including the lack of specialist subject knowledge and too many pupils learning RE from teaching assistants. Solihull SACRE will consider this carefully as we work together across our community to secure our two current, crucial priorities. These priorities will be sharply focused on making a difference to the RE learning experiences that children and young people have in classrooms, enabled by confident and knowledgeable teachers who enhance pupils' academic and personal development whilst preparing them well for a life well-lived in modern Britain.

Bev Petch

Chair of Solihull SACRE

Meetings

The SACRE has had four scheduled meetings during 2023-2024. One of these was an Agreed Syllabus Conference.

19 th April 2023	Survey to Solihull schools SACRE Constitution and code of conduct for members adopted Agreed SACRE flyer to all Solihull schools promoting NATRE and RE Today resources
19 th October 2023	Agreed Syllabus Conference established
20 th March 2024	Agreed Syllabus Conference Three options for locally Agreed Syllabus presented for consideration
19 th June 2024	Agenda under development

Meetings are typically held virtually on MS Teams. We are mindful that SACRE meetings and Agreed Syllabus Conferences should be held in public unless there are confidential items to be discussed. We have therefore adopted a hybrid approach to meetings whereby SACRE members, and the public, can attend remotely or in person at the Council's Civic Suite.

Section 2: RE (statutory responsibilities)

In 2023, Solihull SACRE developed an online survey for all schools in Solihull to complete and return. The purpose was to enable SACRE, and therefore the local authority, to have greater strategic oversight of RE and collective worship in our family of schools. The level of responses was disappointing at just below 25% of schools. This did not provide sufficient information to provide a complete picture across our schools. However, the responses provided insight into RE and collective worship in twenty schools: eight maintained schools and twelve academies.

Survey responses from schools:

- We have the names and email addresses of the RE subject leaders in the twenty schools that responded. We can contact and support them individually or collectively;
- We have detailed information about how, in the responding schools, leaders assure themselves of the quality of RE in your school including what staff, pupils, parents and governors report;
- Half of the schools that responded have a named linked governor for RE;
- Schools were asked whether RE had been mentioned in the Governing Body's minutes during the previous school year, 2021-22. 60% of respondents responded 'yes', 25% responded with a 'no' and 20% responded more vaguely with 'maybe';
- 90% of responding schools affirmed that financial resource for RE had been allocated from the 2021-22 budget. The amount allocated was consistently higher for faith schools;
- Responding schools have indicated how much time is allocated to RE across the key stages in their school. One secondary academy reported that students receive 30 minutes a week of RE in key stages 3 and 4. From the 2023 examination data, this school, Grace Academy, does not offer Religious Studies (RS) at GCSE or 'A' level. We have concerns

about how far this school is meeting its statutory duties in relation to RE. This will be challenged appropriately, involving the Regional Schools Director if necessary;

- Of the five secondary schools that took part in the survey, all academies, 80% teach RS at GCSE. Similarly, 80% enable students to study RS at 'A' level;
- Participating schools have also provided details about their priorities for RE and collective worship in 2022-2023. The list is very varied. They also answered questions about the quality of RE, subject expertise and any support accessed to continuously improve RE teaching and learning;
- Seven academies report using Solihull's locally Agreed Syllabus.
- Oversight of collective worship by SACRE and by the Local Authority is currently patchy at best. More work is needed to have appropriate oversight and assurance.

We know that some schools are not meeting their statutory duties in relation to the RE entitlement for all pupils, apart from those who have been withdrawn by parents or are 18 years old and have exercised their right to withdraw themselves.

Standards and the monitoring of RE

This is currently a significant priority for the Solihull SACRE. The RE and collective worship survey has provided some assurance, but this is insufficient due to low numbers of responses. SACRE needs to optimise opportunities to gather information both formally and informally to gain an accurate, composite picture. The survey does pinpoint where we need to be professionally curious and where further some challenge and support may be necessary. We are not aware of any schools in our locality having applied for or achieved REQM awards. No recent requests for withdrawals have been made.

SACRE has advised the Local Authority as to its statutory duties including adequately funding the work of SACRE in carrying out its functions.



Compliance

LA statutory responsibilities:

The LA must:

Ensure there is a SACRE	In place
Ensure all four groups are represented on the SACRE	In place
Establish an occasional body called an Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC) and appoint members to it	In place and process ongoing
Ensure there is an Agreed Syllabus, reviewed every five years	ASC appointed
Ensure funds and support are in place to enable SACRE to fulfil its duties;	Not yet in place
Take note of and respond to advice from the SACRE.	In place

It is the LA's responsibility to appoint members of the SACRE and the ASC.

The LA should:

Seek nominations from the organisations to be represented	In place
Ensure those appointed are representative of the religion, worldview, denomination or sponsoring group in question	In place
It is good practice for the SACRE to review its constitution periodically to ensure membership is appropriately representative and to advise the LA of any necessary amendments.	Constitution reviewed and finalised January 2023. Included code of conduct for SACRE members.

SACRE statutory responsibilities

A SACRE must:

Advise the local authority (LA) on matters related to agreed syllabus religion education (RE) and Collective worship (CW) either in response to a referral from the LA or as it sees fit	Partially in place
Publish an Annual Report on its work and on actions taken by its representative groups	2023-24 Annual Report developed
Email a copy of the Annual report to the Secretary of State.	2023-24 Annual Report submitted
Meet in public, unless confidential information is to be disclosed	Meetings are hybrid. The public can attend.
Make minutes of its meetings available for inspection at LA offices	Dedicated Council website page in development

Consider appeal from schools wishing to modify the legal requirement for the majority of acts of collective worship to be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character; this procedure is called a 'determination' as SACRE determines whether or not to agree the appeal.	No recent determinations, but SACRE is equipped for this
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An effective SACRE should:

Monitor the provision and quality of agreed syllabus RE and of Collective Worship in order to provide targeted advice and support on teaching agreed syllabus RE	RE and CW survey has identified gaps. SACRE to advise LA.
Advise the LA on the provision of training of teachers	Not yet in place. Potential partnering with RE Today.
Consider complaints about RE and CW referred to them by their LA	No recent complaints, but SACRE is equipped to respond
Consider whether changes need to be made to the agreed syllabus, in partnership with the LA	In place
Offer advice to the LA in respect of the agreed syllabus and its implementation	In place, current ASC

A SACRE may:

Require the LA to review its Agreed Syllabus	Agreed Syllabus Conference appointed. Process underway
Decide to advise the LA on matters to do with RE and CW	In place, SACRE advise as required.
Co-opt individuals who are not members of any of the groups, for example to provide educational expertise, the views of young people and children, or religious and non-religious views that reflect a diverse multi-cultural society.	At least one current co-opted member

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Collective Worship (statutory responsibilities):

Processes are being designed to enable appropriate monitoring of collective worship in schools. This is likely to include monitoring through scrutiny of Ofsted reports, conversations with schools, teacher groups, website trawls, presentations from teachers. The current Agreed Syllabus Conference will ensure wide consultation with schools and many other partners. The SACRE anticipates the need to develop guidance with our schools and to then monitor the impact.

Defining Collective Worship:

- It is mandatory for all pupils in all maintained schools and should take place daily;

- It comprises pupils who are part of same educational community; they may possess diverse religious, agnostic and non-religious life stances (NB called 'corporate worship' if all share the same religious beliefs);
- It may take many forms but always presents pupils with specific concepts, themes and thoughts;
- It can use structures of religious worship but does not require actual worship;
- It allows deep thinking and individual spiritual response to the concepts explored;
- It is not corporate worship!

The Solihull Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education

Solihull's locally Agreed Syllabus for RE was launched in 2018 and is available at <https://www.solgrid.org.uk/sacre/wp-content/uploads/sites/29/2019/01/Agreed-Syllabus-July-2018.pdf>

This now requires a review. Therefore, an Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC) was established in October 2023. The ASC remains in place and an action plan is under development.

Section 3: other information

Determinations

No schools have requested determinations in 2022-2023 or in 2023-2024.

In January 1994, the Department for Education released Circular 1/94, which states that all maintained schools must provide 'daily collective worship for all registered pupils' and that this 'must be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character'. Circular 1/94

It is acknowledged that this may not be appropriate for all pupils in all schools. Maintained schools under the control of their LA may, therefore, apply to the local SACRE for a 'determination'. The determination lifts or modifies this requirement for some or all pupils, while safeguarding the interests of children from Christian families. Academies should apply for a 'determination' directly to the DfE.

Teacher training and resources

The Solihull SACRE is currently exploring a partnership with RE Today and/or other organisations that provide RE expertise. Opportunities for schools to access high-quality resources and continuing professional development are promoted through our weekly communication to all schools. This includes promoting the RE Hubs and associated networks. Information about RE and schools' legal duties have been shared with Governing Bodies on Governor Hub. Specific training for Governors on the legal responsibilities on schools in relation to RE and collective worship will be provided in the summer term as part of Solihull's 2024-25 Governor training package.

Links with other bodies

Solihull SACRE is a full, subscribing member of NASACRE; the National Association of Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education. The membership allows SACRE members to take part

in useful training and enables the Chair and clerk to circulate materials to support the work of the SACRE. The membership is invaluable to the work of SACRE.

The vice-chair of the Solihull SACRE works for the Church of England diocese. The Chair is involved in annual arrangements for Holocaust Memorial Day. A member of the SACRE is part of the local inter-faith network. The forum exists to bring together faith groups who are interested in fostering greater mutual understanding and friendship.

SACRE's own arrangements (statutory responsibilities):

The LA supports the SACRE by providing professional and administrative support from an experienced clerk. This arrangement has been in place for several years. There is currently no RE adviser attached to the SACRE, but this expertise is being sought. Recent successes with recruitment have seen four teachers join Group C and a Humanist representative join Group A of the SACRE. Increased membership is ensuring quoracy and adding to the dynamic of the SACRE, particularly with the recently joined teachers in Group C.

Circulation details for this Annual Report:

- All members of Solihull SACRE
- All schools in Solihull
- Director and Assistant Director of Children's Services and Skills
- NASACRE
- Department for Education
- To be shared on the Council's website page

Appendix 1: 2023 GCSE and A level outcomes 2023

2023 NPD -Religious Studies																			
KS4 Grade Summary by Subject as %																			
QAN: 60184000		Subject: Religious Studies (4610) / Exam: GCSE (9-1) Full Course (391)																	
Est. No.	NOR	NOE	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	U	X	9-5	9-4	9-1	Avg Pts		
- National (All Schools)	671390	113680	8.6	11.1	12.1	16.6	13.9	10.4	13.8	7.5	3.8	1.5	0.7	62.3	72.7	97.8	5.2		
- National (State Funded)	606910	105240	7.3	10.2	11.7	16.6	14.3	10.9	14.7	7.9	4.0	1.6	0.7	60.1	71.0	97.7	5.1		
- LA (State Funded)	3283	545	1.7	5.0	8.8	17.2	16.7	12.8	20.2	9.5	4.4	3.1	0.6	49.4	62.2	96.3	4.4		
4015 Alderbrook School	264	15	-	6.7	13.3	33.3	33.3	-	6.7	6.7	-	-	-	86.7	86.7	100.0	5.5		
4030 Heart of England School	200	172	2.9	6.4	6.4	18.0	19.2	12.2	20.9	8.1	4.1	1.7	-	52.9	65.1	98.3	4.6		
4661 John Henry Newman Catholic Colleg	215	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	100.0	-	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0		
4012 Langley School	201	34	2.9	2.9	14.7	29.4	11.8	14.7	17.6	5.9	-	-	-	61.8	76.5	100.0	5.1		
4018 Light Hall School	231	224	0.9	4.0	10.3	14.3	16.1	14.7	19.6	10.3	5.8	3.6	0.4	45.5	60.3	96.0	4.2		
4019 Lode Heath School	220	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0		
4000 Lyndon School	238	77	1.3	6.5	7.8	19.5	16.9	11.7	27.3	9.1	-	-	-	51.9	63.6	100.0	4.7		
6906 Park Hall Academy	203	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	100.0	-	-	-	-	0.0	0.0	100.0	2.0		
4037 Smith's Wood Academy	174	14	-	-	7.1	7.1	-	14.3	14.3	21.4	7.1	21.4	7.1	14.3	28.6	71.4	2.4		
4003 Tudor Grange Academy Kingshurst	209	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	16.7	50.0	33.3	-	0.0	0.0	66.7	0.8		
QAN: 60185946		Subject: Religious Studies (4610) / Exam: GCSE (9-1) Full Course (391)																	
Est. No.	NOR	NOE	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	U	X	9-5	9-4	9-1	Avg Pts		
- National (All Schools)	671390	5810	12.0	13.0	14.8	15.5	12.4	10.9	10.2	6.0	3.3	1.5	0.4	67.7	78.6	98.0	5.6		
- National (State Funded)	606910	4960	10.4	11.2	14.2	15.3	12.8	11.9	11.5	6.9	3.8	1.7	0.4	63.8	75.7	97.8	5.4		
- LA (State Funded)	3283	49	-	4.1	4.1	20.4	14.3	12.2	16.3	10.2	14.3	4.1	-	42.9	55.1	95.9	3.9		
4019 Lode Heath School	220	49	-	4.1	4.1	20.4	14.3	12.2	16.3	10.2	14.3	4.1	-	42.9	55.1	95.9	3.9		
QAN: 60188790		Subject: Religious Studies (4610) / Exam: GCSE (9-1) Full Course (391)																	
Est. No.	NOR	NOE	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	Q	U	X	9-5	9-4	9-1	Avg Pts	
- National (All Schools)	671390	48600	7.1	10.0	11.8	15.6	14.3	11.9	12.8	9.0	5.1	-	1.6	-	58.9	70.8	97.7	5.0	
- National (State Funded)	606910	47060	6.6	9.7	11.6	15.6	14.5	12.1	13.1	9.2	5.2	-	1.6	-	58.0	70.2	97.7	5.0	
- LA (State Funded)	3283	210	7.6	8.1	15.2	11.9	16.2	7.6	11.0	9.5	8.6	-	2.4	1.9	59.0	66.7	95.7	4.8	
4661 John Henry Newman Catholic Colleg	215	209	7.7	8.1	15.3	12.0	16.3	7.7	11.0	9.1	8.6	-	2.4	1.9	59.3	67.0	95.7	4.8	
4003 Tudor Grange Academy Kingshurst	209	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	100.0	-	-	-	-	0.0	0.0	100.0	2.0	
QAN: 60300632		Subject: Religious Studies (4610) / Exam: GCSE (9-1) Full Course (391)																	
Est. No.	NOR	NOE	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	U	X	9-5	9-4	9-1	Avg Pts		
- National (All Schools)	671390	25130	8.0	10.9	11.4	17.4	13.2	10.0	14.0	7.8	4.9	1.8	0.6	61.0	71.0	97.6	5.1		
- National (State Funded)	606910	24040	7.6	10.6	11.2	17.4	13.2	10.2	14.3	8.0	5.1	1.8	0.6	60.0	70.2	97.6	5.1		
- LA (State Funded)	3283	82	9.8	11.0	18.3	23.2	7.3	8.5	11.0	7.3	2.4	1.2	-	69.5	78.0	98.8	5.6		
4017 Arden	295	44	13.6	13.6	29.5	18.2	6.8	2.3	11.4	4.5	-	-	-	81.8	84.1	100.0	6.3		
4030 Heart of England School	200	1	-	-	-	100.0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	100.0	100.0	100.0	6.0		
6906 Park Hall Academy	203	7	-	-	-	28.6	-	28.6	-	42.9	-	-	-	28.6	57.1	100.0	3.7		
4003 Tudor Grange Academy Kingshurst	209	18	5.6	-	5.6	16.7	5.6	22.2	22.2	5.6	11.1	5.6	-	33.3	55.6	94.4	3.9		
4014 Tudor Grange Academy, Solihull	280	12	8.3	25.0	8.3	41.7	16.7	-	-	-	-	-	-	100.0	100.0	100.0	6.7		

	2023 NPD Religious Studies KS5 Grade Summary by Subject %																
		Subject: Religious Studies (4610) / Exam: GCE A level (111)															
Est. No.		NOE	*	A	B	C	D	E	U	X	A*-A	A*-B	A*-E	Avg Pts			
-	National (all entries)	14700	6.1	19.7	29.5	23.4	13.0	5.7	1.9	0.7	25.8	55.3	97.3	35.5			
4017	Arden	16	-	43.8	31.3	18.8	6.3	-	-	-	43.8	75.0	100.0	41.3			
4030	Heart of England School	5	-	20.0	20.0	20.0	40.0	-	-	-	20.0	40.0	100.0	32.0			
6003	Solihull School	18	16.7	22.2	27.8	16.7	16.7	-	-	-	38.9	66.7	100.0	40.6			
8600	Solihull Sixth Form College	29	-	17.2	37.9	31.0	6.9	3.4	-	3.4	17.2	55.2	96.6	34.8			
4650	St Peter's Catholic School	7	-	57.1	-	42.9	-	-	-	-	57.1	57.1	100.0	41.4			
		Subject: Religious Studies (4610) / Exam: GCE AS level (121)															
Est. No.		NOE	A	B	C	D	E	U	X	A-B	A-E	Avg Pts					
-	National (all entries)	2070	23.8	24.7	20.5	14.0	8.7	7.0	1.2	48.5	91.8	15.8					
4661	John Henry Newman Catholic College	6	50.0	-	-	-	-	50.0	-	50.0	50.0	12.5					
	2023 NPD Religious Studies KS5 Grade Summary by Subject Counts																
		Subject: Religious Studies (4610) / Exam: GCE A level (111)															
Est. No.		NOE	*	A	B	C	D	E	U	X	A*-A	A*-B	A*-E	Avg Pts			
-	National (all entries)	14700	900	###	4340	3430	1910	840	##	110	3800	8140	14310	35.5			
4017	Arden	16	-	7	5	3	1	-	-	-	7	12	16	41.3			
4030	Heart of England School	5	-	1	1	1	2	-	-	-	1	2	5	32.0			
6003	Solihull School	18	3	4	5	3	3	-	-	-	7	12	18	40.6			
8600	Solihull Sixth Form College	29	-	5	11	9	2	1	-	1	5	16	28	34.8			
4650	St Peter's Catholic School	7	-	4	-	3	-	-	-	-	4	4	7	41.4			
		Subject: Religious Studies (4610) / Exam: GCE AS level (121)															
Est. No.		NOE	A	B	C	D	E	U	X	A-B	A-E	Avg Pts					
-	National (all entries)	2070	490	510	420	290	180	150	30	1000	1900	15.8					
4661	John Henry Newman Catholic College	6	3	-	-	-	-	3	-	3	3	12.5					