

Agenda

Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE)

Date: **Friday 28 March 2025**

Time: **2.00 pm**

Place: **Conference Room 2 - Herefordshire Council, Plough
Lane Offices, Hereford, HR4 0LE**

Notes: Please note the time, date and venue of the meeting.

For any further information please contact:

Ben Baugh, Democratic Services Officer

Tel: 01432 261882

Email: ben.baugh2@herefordshire.gov.uk

If you would like help to understand this document, or would like it in another format or language, please call Ben Baugh, Democratic Services Officer on 01432 261882 or e-mail ben.baugh2@herefordshire.gov.uk in advance of the meeting.

Agenda for the Meeting of the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE)

Membership

Chairperson	Geoff Sallis	Humanism representative
Vice-Chairperson	Louise Barker	Secondary school teacher representative
	Carolyn Ault	Bahá'í faith representative
	Mark Harrington	Church of England representative
	Samira Kairo	Muslim representative
	Jatinderpal Loyal	Sikh representative
	Jonathan Nicholas	Church of England representative
	Councillor Rob Owens	Herefordshire Council
	Councillor Justine Peberdy	Herefordshire Council
	Ruth Stanier	Quaker faith representative
	Barry Stevens	Church of England representative
	Councillor John Stone	Herefordshire Council
	Tracy Westlake	Primary school teacher representative
Observing	Raoul Smith	Jewish faith representative

Agenda

		Pages
1.	WELCOME AND THOUGHT FOR THE DAY To welcome members to SACRE and to receive a thought for the day.	
2.	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE To receive any apologies for absence.	
3.	NAMED SUBSTITUTES To receive details of any substitutes nominated to attend the meeting in place of a member of SACRE.	
4.	MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING To approve and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 15 November 2024.	5 - 8
5.	WRITTEN PUBLIC QUESTIONS To respond to any written questions from members of the public received in advance of the meeting.	
6.	UPDATE ON THE AGREED SYLLABUS Further to the discussion on the draft model at the previous meeting, to receive an update on progress with the Agreed Syllabus document.	Verbal Report
7.	AGREED SYLLABUS LAUNCH: PRIMARY SCHOOLS To discuss the primary launch; the conference is scheduled for 10 July 2025. An updated flyer will be circulated for the meeting.	To Follow
8.	AGREED SYLLABUS LAUNCH: SECONDARY SCHOOLS To discuss the secondary launch; the conference is scheduled for 25 June 2025. An updated flyer will be circulated for the meeting.	To Follow
9.	NATIONAL RE UPDATES (SPRING 2025) To receive national RE updates for SACRE from RE Today.	9 - 14
10.	2025 HEREFORDSHIRE SCHOOL WORKFORCE DATA AND RESULTS To consider school workforce data and results. The available details will be circulated to SACRE members separately.	
11.	DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS To consider SACRE dates for 2025/26, provisionally: Friday 11 July 2025, 2.00 pm Friday 14 November 2025, 2.00 pm Friday 27 March 2026, 2.00 pm	

Notes of the meeting of Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) held in Conference Room 2 - Herefordshire Council, Plough Lane Offices, Hereford, HR4 0LE on Friday 15 November 2024 at 2.00 pm

Chairperson:

Geoff Sallis Humanism representative

Voting board members present in person:

Carolyn Ault	Bahá'í faith representative
Louise Barker	Secondary school teacher representative
Mark Harrington	Church of England representative
Councillor Justine Peberdy	Herefordshire Council
Ruth Stanier	Quaker faith representative
Councillor John Stone	Herefordshire Council
Tracy Westlake	Primary school teacher representative

Support officers:

Ben Baugh	Herefordshire Council
Pamela Howell	Herefordshire Council
Stephen Pett	Consultant to SACRE

1. WELCOME AND THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

The Chairperson welcomed attendees to the meeting and shared a quote by Martin Luther King Jr. on the importance of dedication and commitment in addressing social challenges.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Jonathan Nicholas (Church of England representative) and Samira Kairo (Muslim faith representative).

3. NAMED SUBSTITUTES

There were no substitutes present.

4. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting were received.

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 5 July 2024 be confirmed as a correct record and be signed by the Chairperson.

5. WRITTEN PUBLIC QUESTIONS

No written questions had been received.

6. AGREED SYLLABUS CONFERENCE FEEDBACK: CONTRIBUTING LOCAL INFORMATION

A confidential, draft model for the Agreed Syllabus had been circulated to SACRE members in advance of the meeting. Stephen Pett introduced the document, highlighting proposed new elements, and invited attendees to contribute local

information for inclusion in the working document; Mark Harrington was thanked for detailed comments and suggestions already provided.

The principal points of the discussion included:

1. It was intended that new forewords would be prepared by the Chairperson and by Herefordshire Council.
2. The inclusion of 'learning tool' icons, to identify ways of knowing / disciplinary approaches, was welcomed.
3. Attendees suggested and considered which places of worship, and other places special to pupils and their families, could be included as examples of places to visit within the county, or within reasonable travelling distance. Attendees also shared different visit experiences. Acknowledging challenges around travel costs, it was suggested that links could be provided to online searchable databases to help schools to identify their closest places of worship.
4. It was noted that the document would include local census data.
5. It was reported that matters to explore at the launch conference would include sample long-term plans and new units of work.

The Chairperson requested that any further contributions on this topic be provided before Monday 18 November 2024.

7. PROPOSED OUTLINES FOR 2025 RE LAUNCH CONFERENCES

Stephen Pett introduced the 'Launching the 2025 RE Agreed Syllabus' document and invited feedback.

Attendees discussed:

- The possibility of utilising a planned conference in Worcestershire on 25 June 2025 to brief Herefordshire secondary schools.
- The potential for a July date for Herefordshire primary schools, with Herefordshire Council to explore venue options.

8. ANNUAL SACRE REPORT DISCUSSION

A draft of the Annual Report September 2023 - August 2024 had been published on the morning of the meeting. Stephen Pett advised the meeting that all SACREs were required by law to produce an Annual Report; to be submitted to the Department of Education and usually copied to NASACRE (National Association of Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education).

An overview was provided of the key elements; it was noted that a foreword would be prepared by the Chairperson and examination results would be added once available.

The Chairperson requested that any changes or additions be provided before the end of November 2024.

9. THREE COUNTIES SECONDARY RE CONFERENCE 25 JUNE 2024 FEEDBACK

Stephen Pett reported on the evaluations from the secondary RE conference. It was noted that all respondents rated the overall value of the conference as 'excellent' (95%)

or 'good' (5%). Attention was drawn to the positive comments received and to potential areas for improvement, e.g. considering content from the perspectives of non-specialists.

10. TEACHER SUPPORT (NETWORK MEETINGS)

Tracy Westlake provided a verbal update on the last network meeting that had been held in September 2024. The key points included:

1. Seventeen schools were represented, including some in Shropshire and Worcestershire.
2. There was a need to raise awareness of the resources available through NATRE (National Association of Teachers of Religious Education), particularly for ECTs (Early Career Teachers).
3. The focus of the session was the 'School Linking Programme', run by The Faith & Belief Forum, which matched schools with different demographics. It was intended that a trial, 'Virtual Linking' project would take place during the current academic year, perhaps with one physical meeting of the two schools at a mutually convenient venue. The potential benefits of exposing pupils to diverse communities and beliefs, and education settings, were noted.

It was commented that the project could be informed by the experience of Stretton Sugwas CE Academy in setting up virtual links with schools internationally.

4. Participants made positive comments about the conference and the resources provided by RE Today.
5. The network discussed how to maximise the value from visits through planning and clarity of purpose.
6. In response to a question, it was reported that network participants did not have anything to add on the new syllabus.
7. It was noted that Kingsland CE Primary School would be holding an interfaith day in 2025.

11. SACRE TRAINING

Stephen Pett commented on the training and support offer available through NASACRE, including a virtual training programme and 'in conversation' regional online events; [link to NASACRE training webpage](#). It was reported that re-subscription to NASACRE was being progressed to enable access to the resources.

The Chairperson noted the potential for SACRE members to visit schools to share their beliefs and experiences. Attendees discussed:

- Potential methods to make the contact details of SACRE members available to schools.
- The RE Hubs project which sought to connect schools to trained and accredited speakers; [link to RE Hubs website](#).
- The courses involving different faith representatives available through the Diocese of Hereford.

- It was suggested that the local network group could invite interested SACRE members to attend online sessions on occasion, to establish connections and build confidence, possibly leading to invitations to visits schools in the future.

12. NATIONAL RE UPDATES FOR SACRE

Stephen Pett introduced the National RE Update for SACRE from RE Today (Autumn 2024). In particular, attention was drawn to the Curriculum and Assessment Review, set up by the Department for Education, including a call for evidence for people to share their ideas for potential improvements; the deadline being 22 November 2024. It was reported that NASACRE had urged SACREs to consider submitting evidence but recommended that unique responses be provided to ensure that repeated points were not filtered out. Comments were made about: how education was increasingly being talked about in terms of pupil wellbeing, as well as academic achievement; and the potential role of RE in exploring self-awareness and understanding of others.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

It was reported that the Hereford InterFaith Group, to mark National Inter Faith Week, were due to conclude a pilgrimage walk with a pancake brunch at Hereford Cathedral on 16 November 2024.

13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next scheduled meeting was Friday 14 March 2025.

[Note: this was changed to [Friday 28 March 2025](#) subsequently]

The meeting ended at 3.34 pm

Chairperson

National RE Updates for SACRE from RE Today Spring 2025 for Herefordshire SACRE

NATRE Primary Provision Survey

In 2024 NATRE conducted their biannual survey into religious education in primary schools. The findings are used by NATRE to provide guidance to its work with RE teachers.

Time: most Agreed Syllabuses recommend that the equivalent of approximately 60 minutes per week be spent on RE at Key Stage 1 and about 75 minutes at Key Stage 2. The survey data suggests that in **just under a third of schools without a religious character (30.7%) insufficient time is being spent on the teaching of RE** to ensure that pupils make good progress. On the other hand, in around 94% of schools timetable time has either increased or remained the same.

Budget: Funding is an issue for all schools in the current climate. If resources are up to date and appropriate to modern teaching methods, it is vital that subject leaders have appropriate funds at their disposal. School funding is expected to rise this year and RE subject leaders will need to make the case for appropriate resourcing for RE. The most common budget is less than 50p per pupil per year and **a third of subject leaders have no set or no budget for RE.**

Teachers: In **54% of schools (63% in 2022) some RE is being delivered by adults other than teachers.** This was raised as a matter of concern by Ofsted in 2013 when in 24% of schools RE was delivered by teaching assistants. **In just over one in five schools, (one in four in 2022) more than 25% of RE teaching is delivered in this way.**

ITT training: more than 56% of the teachers in primary schools report that they received between 0 and 3 hours of training to teach RE in their initial teacher training (ITE). This represents an increase from 40% in 2022. **18% of these received no hours at all.** This serious issue was the focus of Recommendation 6 of the Commission on RE (2018) Report. It links with the question about teachers' confidence. **60.5% of our respondents' colleagues feel reasonably or very confident in how to teach RE and 63.2% about what to teach in RE.**

Teacher confidence in teaching specific religions and beliefs varies significantly. **Christianity, Islam and Judaism were ranked most highly in terms of teachers' confidence** about their subject knowledge. Conversely, they were **much less confident about teaching religions such as Zoroastrianism, the Bahá'í faith, Jainism and Paganism** and also about **non-religious worldviews such as Humanism.**

Experienced leaders: RE is now commonly led by more experienced teachers. Far fewer subject leaders are recently qualified teachers than when we first began conducting this survey. The overwhelming **majority of subject leaders have more than 10 years teaching experience.** They also tend to hold the position for a number of years, 67% for more than 3 years and 42% for over 5 years.

Withdrawal: The number of parents exercising the right to withdraw their child from RE is small but remains **at around one in five schools** but generally **affecting fewer than 10 children per school**, most frequently one or two. **82% of schools reported that there had been no withdrawal from RE** in the last academic year. The fact that parents can withdraw their child from RE without giving any reason or justification means that the ability of schools to educate pupils for life in a diverse modern

world is compromised. The most common use of the right of withdrawal is from teaching about anything other than the home religion or belief. This is cited in 54% of cases.

Spirited Arts 2025

NATRE has announced the subject areas for its annual Spirited Arts competition for 2025. This annual competition asks pupils to use their creative talents to explore questions of religious and non-religious worldviews.

This is the 21st year for Spirited Arts and there are six themes for pupils to choose from

- Living in a Diverse World
- Stories that Change Lives
- Thinking about God
- Sacred Places
- All God's Creatures? (Sponsored by [AIA](#) & [VinE](#))
- Making Sense of Life

Schools can submit up to entries which should be received by the closing date of 31st July 2025. Full details are available at [Spirited Arts 2025 - Inspiring students to explore big questions through art](#)

RE Hubs

The RE hubs are offering training for speakers who would like to support schools bring to life their curriculum through first hand experience of meeting and talking with people from different religions and non-religious worldviews, as well as experts in social sciences, philosophy and theology.

Once the training has been completed then speakers are kite marked and then included on the RE hubs web site for the local region. Schools can then access a full list of speakers in their area to help bring RE to life in the classroom. There are a range of training dates available through the RE hubs website from 29th January 2025 through to 7th July 2025. Potential speakers, which may include members of SACREs can register at [Register as a school speaker](#)

RE Hub network meeting for MAT RE Leads

1 April 2024, 4-5.30pm, free CPD for NATRE and AREIAC members

Speaker: Hazel Henson, HMI for RE at Ofsted, talking about high-quality RE in academies, plus Q&A.

This is a networking opportunity for MAT RE leads, giving you an opportunity to have a say in the government's curriculum review on RE, and offering updates and links to opportunities and resources for MATs.

www.re-hubs.uk/mat-re-leader-network/



NATRE responds to the DfE Call for Evidence for the Curriculum Review

Following NATRE's submission of evidence to the review in November, NATRE has continued its conversations and correspondence with the Department for Education. This has included engagement with Professor Becky Francis OBE, Chair of the review, other members of the review panel and officials.

NATRE have continued to make clear the case for considering key issues that we included in their Call for Evidence response. These included:

- The advantages, disadvantages and legal issues around including RE in the subjects of the National Curriculum rather than the basic curriculum.
- The extent to which changing the legal status of RE would alleviate the key changes being faced by teachers of the subject, including securing high-quality provision
- RE Council's National Content Standard and evidence of the level of consensus around this document
- Issues around the current GCSE and A level specifications
- The right of withdrawal from RE for teachers and for parents
- The nature of RE in different types of schools and the importance of opportunities to build on previous learning, especially when children move between schools in the same or different area

We anticipate the publication of the interim report of the review in 'early spring' and have offered to consult members of NATRE about specific proposals as soon as these become clear.

Explaining Atheism

RE Today is delighted to be working with the Explaining Atheism research project as part of its outreach programme. A short video has been released that explains the research and the outreach projects: [Outreach — Explaining Atheism](#)

Leading on behalf of RE Today is National RE Adviser, Stephen Pett, who has been working with a number of researchers from Explaining Atheism to bring findings from their core research and affiliated research projects into classrooms across the UK. Stephen is working in collaboration with filmmaker Briony Campbell and photographer Aubrey Wade to create learning resources from their projects. In October 2024 this work was trialled with groups of RE pupils at a pop-up exhibition and workshop series at Conway Hall in London, led by Lat Blaylock.

RE Today will be publishing teacher resources to link to the Explaining Atheism research. Earlier research from the project has been featured in *Challenging Knowledge in RE: Studying Worldviews* (2021) and *Investigating Non-Religious Worldviews* (2023).

Speaking about this opportunity, RE Adviser Stephen Pett said:

"It is a privilege to work with the researchers on this extensive and illuminating project. Findings help to show something of the complexity of what it means to have non-religious worldviews in the UK and in five other countries around the world. The multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary approaches are helpful for the RE community as we embrace the use of diverse ways of knowing in the classroom. I look forward to presenting our teaching and learning materials when they are ready to go!"

The video will serve as a helpful resource for RE teachers across the UK. It highlights the importance of including non-religious perspectives in the conversation, ensuring that all pupils can engage meaningfully with the diversity of worldviews that shape our world.

Jerusalem Trust Applications – RE Grants for Schools

Applications are now open for RE Grants for Schools from the Jerusalem Trust. The Jerusalem Trust's Small Grants to Schools Scheme supports the teaching of Christianity within Religious Education. The scheme operates by providing schools with grants of up to £600 to purchase Christianity resources for use in RE lessons. The grants are available for all state funded schools in England and Wales.

Any school wishing to apply for the grant should visit [Grant Criteria – The Jerusalem Trust](#) which outlines what the grant will and will not cover and there is also a Frequently Asked Questions section available for schools to support them in making an application [FAQs – The Jerusalem Trust](#).

At the time of the writing of this Herefordshire SACRE update there is availability for both primary and secondary schools to apply for the grant. The application will take between 15 and 20 minutes to complete.

Windows into Buddhism

A new resource has been produced to support the delivery of Buddhism in the RE curriculum. The web site allows teachers to access topics areas in Buddhism from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 5 as well as giving access to webinars on key areas such as Why do we suffer? On 2nd May. Access to the resource is at <https://windowsintobuddhism.com>

Woolf Institute

The Woolf Institute is a charity based in Cambridge, specialising in the Abrahamic religions. Their aim is to develop better understanding of these faiths and a number of resources are available for schools to access to support delivery in religious education at [Woolf Institute \(en-GB\)](#)

Living in Harmony resources explore artistic, intellectual, and cultural sharing between Jews, Muslims, and Christians through music, architecture, and science. *Gender in Religious Experience* resources explore diverse lived experience of gender in Judaism, Islam, and Christianity as it relates to scripture, marriage and divorce, head covering, sacred space, and leadership. The resources include teachers' guides, videos, lesson plans, glossaries, and discussions encouraging students to relate content to their own experience and worldviews.

Understanding Humanism

Understanding Humanism provides a wealth of resources for EYFS through to KS5, to support the teaching of Humanism. All resources are designed for classroom teachers, but are also of use to SACREs and Agreed Syllabus Conferences to further the teaching of humanism amongst non-religious worldviews. All resources are available at [Understanding Humanism](#)

Multidisciplinary RE

Over the last few years, the Templeton World Charity Foundation has funded a series of major research projects connected to its theme, Big Questions in Classrooms (BQIC).

BQIC seeks to develop teachers' and pupils' understanding and insight about "how knowledge works," particularly in the domains of science education and religious education (RE) in England. The intention is to nurture pupils' curiosity and their appreciation of how various forms of knowledge can come together to enrich our questioning, reasoning, and learning.

This [short video](#) tells the wider story of the purpose and impact of the BQIC programme.

Projects include:

- [Challenging knowledge in RE](#) – this project researched and developed an approach for multidisciplinary RE, resulting in a series of [six publications for primary](#) and [six for secondary teachers](#). These support teachers in using different disciplines or ways of knowing in RE, as described in the [Ofsted Research Review](#)
- [Epistemic Insight](#) – training pupils to think critically about how knowledge is communicated and how it can be applied in different contexts
- [Argumentation is science and religious education](#) – developing students' abilities to form claims based on logical and rational evidence in science and RE

The BQIC programme also funded the **RE Council's religion and worldviews project**. This 3-year project developed key guidance on a religion and worldviews approach, culminating in the publication of the [Handbook for Curriculum Writers](#) and a selection of sample frameworks that put the Handbook model into practice.

This short film from TWCF celebrates the value of multidisciplinary approaches in science and in RE, and of the religion and worldviews approach in RE. <https://youtu.be/GStlIVDd4VE>

Upcoming RE Today Courses for the Spring Term and beyond!

For more details on any of these courses, click here: www.natre.org.uk/courses-events/upcoming-courses-events/?page=1

Primary Phase CPD

Primary - Understanding Christianity

19th May 2025 1.00 pm – 4.00 pm (with two additional dates in Autumn 2025 and Spring 2026)

This course aims to give teachers the confidence and subject knowledge to teach about *Christianity: Text Impact Connections* through this tried and tested course which is supported by a substantial whole-school teachers handbook. The locally agreed syllabus include requirements for teaching Christianity that are directly supported by this resource.

Secondary Phase CPD

Peaceful and Purposeful Discussion in RE

29th April 2025 (Twilight 3.30 am – 5.30 pm)

The best RE is not afraid of controversy! This session will explore practical strategies for helping pupils engage in peaceful and productive discussion of contested issues in RE.

Cross Phase CPD

Introducing a Religion and Worldviews approach

7th May 2025 (Afternoon 1.30 pm – 4.30 pm)

What is a religion and worldviews (RW) approach? How is it different from current RE practice? What are the benefits to teachers and pupils? This session offers a practical introduction to worldviews and explores what an RW approach means for subject content and how we teach it, as well as reflecting how it develops pupils' personal worldviews. Drawing on the 2024 RE Council Handbook and Frameworks, including resources and strategies, this session will show how to enrich and deepen pupils' understanding of religious and non-religious worldviews.