

Agenda

Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE)

Date: **Monday 10 November 2025**

Time: **10.00 am**

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

Notes: For any further information please contact:
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Agenda for the meeting of the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE)

Voting membership

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

Agenda

	Pages
<p>1. WELCOME AND THOUGHT FOR THE DAY</p> <p>To welcome members to SACRE and to receive a thought for the day.</p>	
<p>2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</p> <p>To receive any apologies for absence.</p>	
<p>3. NAMED SUBSTITUTES</p> <p>To receive details of any substitutes nominated to attend the meeting in place of a member of SACRE.</p>	
<p>4. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING</p> <p>To approve and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 11 July 2025.</p>	5 - 8
<p>5. WRITTEN PUBLIC QUESTIONS</p> <p>To respond to any written questions from members of the public received in advance of the meeting.</p>	
<p>6. DRAFT SACRE ANNUAL REPORT 2024/25 DISCUSSION</p> <p>To consider the content of the Herefordshire SACRE annual report, September 2024 - August 2025. A working draft is attached for discussion.</p>	9 - 22
<p>7. PLANNING FOR PRIMARY AND SECONDARY CONFERENCES 2026</p> <p>To consider arrangements for the primary and secondary conferences to be held in 2026.</p>	
<p>8. TEACHER SUPPORT - NETWORK MEETINGS</p> <p>To receive updates on teacher networks and other initiatives, including the Virtual Linking Pilot Project.</p>	
<p>9. CELEBRATING RE - IDEAS FOR A LOCAL RE AWARD</p> <p>To discuss the potential to celebrate RE in local schools; an example award flyer from another SACRE area will be circulated to members separately.</p>	
<p>10. NATIONAL RE UPDATES (AUTUMN 2025)</p> <p>To receive national RE updates for SACRE from RE Today. Any further developments relating to the Department of Education's Curriculum and Assessment Review will also be reported under this item.</p>	23 - 32
<p>11. ROUNDTABLE UPDATES</p> <p>To receive any verbal updates on religious education in Herefordshire from members of SACRE.</p>	
<p>12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING</p> <p>Wednesday 25 March 2026, 10.00 am</p>	

and it may be difficult to obtain additional information from schools given existing pressures.

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 28 March 2025 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 LAUNCH: PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Stephen Pett reported on the Herefordshire Agreed Syllabus Launch: Primary Schools that had taken place at The Bishop of Hereford's Bluecoat School on 10 July 2025, the key points included:

- i. The primary conference had been attended by 75 delegates from 56 schools.
- ii. Feedback on the overall value of the conference was very positive (68% excellent and 32% good).
- iii. Many attendees appreciated that the syllabus had not changed drastically and welcomed the updates that had been made, including the new 'learning tool' icons.
- iv. A draft summary of the evaluations received to date was circulated in the meeting room, with minor negatives noted about the room temperature and the duration of a meditation session.

Comments were made about the positivity and enthusiasm of the attendees, and thanks were expressed to Stephen Pett and everyone involved in the event.

In terms of schools that had been unable to attend the conference, there was a discussion about: options for distributing the revised syllabus, either as an email attachment or as a link to enable the document to be downloaded; the potential for an online 'twilight session' to outline the changes and the resources available; and opportunities to promote future attendance, utilising feedback from the recent conference. It was noted that these matters would be explored by Stephen Pett with Pam Howell.

7. AGREED SYLLABUS LAUNCH: SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Stephen Pett reported that the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Agreed Syllabus Launch: Secondary Schools had taken place at the University of Worcester on 25 June 2025, the key points included:

- a. The secondary conference had been attended by 7 Herefordshire delegates from 6 schools (31 delegates from 22 schools overall).
- b. Feedback on the overall value of the conference was very positive (73% excellent and 27% good).
- c. As with the primary conference, several attendees had commented positively that the syllabus had not changed too much.
- d. Delegates valued the discussion and networking opportunities provided through the conference; it was noted that a Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) Secondary – Religious Education course was available through the university.

The Chairperson commented on the depth of knowledge of the delegates and the benefits of the venue, albeit acknowledging that it involved additional travel for some.

It was noted that options for distributing the revised syllabus to secondary schools would be considered.

8. CIRCULATING THE AGREED SYLLABUS

This matter was discussed during items 6 and 7.

9. NATIONAL RE UPDATES (SUMMER 2025)

Stephen Pett presented the National RE Updates for SACRE from RE Today.

With reference made to the [Curriculum and Assessment Review: Interim Report](#), it was noted that the ambition for 'high standards for all' was stimulating debate in the RE community, particularly in terms of policy options such as the inclusion of RE in the National Curriculum and / or the introduction of a National Content Standard for RE. Points made by SACRE members included: the value of RE to help individuals to make informed life choices; risks around a more prescriptive or politicised approach to the subject; and the need for pupils to be able to explore creative and diverse ideas in safe spaces.

10. ROUNDTABLE UPDATES

The Chairperson commented that various papers were referenced at the Agreed Syllabus Launch: Secondary Schools and said that it would be helpful for SACRE to have access to such resources. Stephen Pett agreed to provide a recommended reading list.

It was reported that Stephen Pett and Tracey Westlake had discussed the potential to celebrate excellence in schools, perhaps through a SACRE run award; reference was made to similar awards in Bristol and Gloucestershire. This suggestion was welcomed by the Chairperson, as it would provide an opportunity to raise the profile of the work being undertaken by local teachers. This was likely to be discussed at the next meeting.

11. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

It was noted that a poll had been circulated to SACRE members to identify dates for future meetings, with the intention to hold meetings on different weekdays and times to accommodate as many participants as possible. The following dates were confirmed:

[Monday 10 November 2025, 10.00 am](#)

[Wednesday 25 March 2026, 10.00 am](#)

[Monday 22 June 2026, 10.00 am](#)

The meeting ended at 2.48 pm

Chairperson



Herefordshire Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE)

Annual Report September 2024 - August 2025

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Foreword

To follow

Geoff Sallis
Chairperson, Herefordshire SACRE
[DATE]

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1. Introduction

1.1. Overview of the work of SACRE

- 1.1.1. The Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) is a statutory body set up to advise the Local Authority on matters related to religious education and collective worship. Its members are drawn from teachers, Local Authority representatives including Councillors, faith representatives from the Church of England and a range of Christian denominations, and representatives from other religious and non-religious groups represented in the region.
- 1.1.2. SACRE's key functions include monitoring the provision and quality of RE, and providing advice and support on the effective teaching of RE in accordance with the agreed syllabus. This includes advice on methods of teaching, choice of teaching material and provision of teacher training. This is primarily done through the review and implementation of the locally agreed syllabus, a process which is required every five years. This is followed by on-going monitoring of its effectiveness in the light of changing national education policy.
- 1.1.3. SACRE endeavours to offer maximum support to schools through its use of conferences and local groups. This year, SACRE held three meetings at Herefordshire Council Offices, Plough Lane, Hereford: Friday 15 November 2024, Friday 28 March 2025 and Friday 11 July 2025.
- 1.1.4. The Local Authority officer is Pamela Howell, School Improvement Advisor.
- 1.1.5. Standing items in meetings:
- Welcome and thought for the day
 - Apologies for absence
 - Named substitutes (if any)
 - Minutes and matters arising
 - Response to written public questions
 - Any other business
- 1.1.6. A brief overview of each meeting can be found below:

15 November 2024

- Agreed Syllabus Conference feedback
- Proposed outlines for RE launch conferences 2025
- SACRE Annual Report discussion
- Three Counties secondary conference feedback
- Teacher Support (network meetings)
- SACRE training
- National SACRE news update

28 March 2025

- Update on the Agreed Syllabus
- Agreed Syllabus Launch: Primary Schools
- Agreed Syllabus Launch: Secondary Schools
- National SACRE news update
- 2025 Herefordshire school workforce data and results

11 July 2025, SACRE

- Agreed Syllabus Launch: Primary Schools
- Agreed Syllabus Launch: Secondary Schools
- National SACRE news update
- Round table updates

2. Religious Education (RE)

2.1. The locally agreed syllabus and RE in schools

- 2.1.1. The revised Herefordshire agreed syllabus was approved in 2024 and launched in 2025. It is an updated version of the 2020 agreed syllabus, based on the model from RE Today and licensed to the Local Authority for use in their schools. It is built around a purpose, aims and a pedagogy that enables pupils to make sense of religious and non-religious worldviews, understand their impact in people's lives, and make connections between their learning and their own lives. It offers a spiral curriculum model, where pupils build on prior learning, with a particular focus on core concepts at the heart of religious (and non-religious) traditions.
- 2.1.2. Adaptations take account of developments in RE, including the interest in 'ways of knowing' (See Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) research review 2021), and also around the religion and worldviews approach advocated by the RE Council and its 2024 Handbook for Curriculum Writers. The revised syllabus incorporates guidance on a religion and worldviews approach, and embeds icons representing different 'ways of knowing' in the unit page plans.
- 2.1.3. Changes also include a focus on Humanism as an example of an identifiable non-religious worldview, three new optional units that explore contemporary issues (anti-racism and the climate crisis), and additional model long-term plans.

2.2. Standards and monitoring of RE

- 2.2.1. Herefordshire SACRE does not ask for schools to report on attainment in RE at Key Stages 1-3. However, formative assessment should be ongoing and schools should have their own individual summative assessment procedures termly, at the end of each year and Key Stage to inform their reports and school development plan.
- 2.2.2. The syllabus contains a section on assessment, which is related to end of Key Stage expectations. Learning outcomes within the syllabus support teachers to judge whether pupils are on track to meet these expectations.
- 2.2.3. GCSE **and A level** Religious Studies examinations data can be seen in Appendix 3 below. At present, exam results from 2025 are unvalidated. SACRE thanks teachers who support students and prepare them for examinations.
- 2.2.4. SACRE regularly reviews school workforce survey data when it is available, reviewing school websites and surveying schools to explore provision further.
- 2.2.5. Ofsted reports can also provide a way of monitoring RE. The 2019 Ofsted inspection framework and RE research review appear to be bringing a renewed focus on RE in schools where RE was struggling to get sufficient curriculum time,

although we are yet to see the impact of changes from November 2025, including the removal of 'deep dives'.

2.3. Teacher training and materials and advice for schools

Network meetings

2.3.1. SACRE teacher representative, Tracy Westlake, has been running a NATRE-affiliated local group each term. These are held online to allow for maximum participation, given the distance for travel across the county. Sessions are sometimes attended by teachers from neighbouring Shropshire and Worcestershire. Sessions have included the following items:

- The School Linking Programme with the Faith and Belief Forum
- Maximising the value from visits
- Responding to conferences and resources provided by RE Today

2.3.2. The Diocese of Hereford runs regular online and in-person training sessions throughout the year.

- The Diocese of Hereford education team have provided training to both church and community schools and academies from Herefordshire. There are 37 Church of England schools in the county including two secondary schools. During the academic year 2023-24 they provided training and support to RE leaders and class teachers. This included the following courses, 'Global Christianity', '101 new to leading RE', 'Understanding Christianity Refresher' and 'An Introduction to Worldviews'. Several schools were given bespoke support to redesign their RE curriculum and to run RE moderations for groups of schools.
- Collective worship training exploring how to celebrate the church year, plus planning and evaluating collective worship.
- As church schools also receive a SIAMS inspection support and training courses were also provided for governors and schools for the RE and worship elements of the inspection. The diocese also undertook a research project about children's ideas about prayer and reflection which has been published nationally.

SACRE primary RE agreed syllabus launch, 10 July 2025

2.3.3. The primary RE agreed syllabus launch took place in person at The Bishop of Hereford's Bluecoat School on 10 July, 9.00am-3.30pm. 75 delegates attended from 56 schools. It was led by Stephen Pett and Debbie Yeomans from RE Today.

2.3.4. The programme included active sessions on the following:

- Introducing the revised Agreed Syllabus: key features
- Applying 'ways of knowing' in RE
- Long-term planning
- Engaging pupils' personal worldviews

2.3.5. Feedback indicated that 68% of delegates rated the event as 'excellent' and 32% as 'good'.

2.3.6. Representative feedback on the revised syllabus included:

- *Like that it responds to changes in our community dynamic as well as responding to the demands of ofsted.*
- *Very good. I felt the teaching ideas are superb and it covers the learning outcomes well.*
- *Good to see that essentially, not much has changed but what has been added reflect what is happening in society with hopefully, a view to change it.*
- *Very excited to get started as RE subject leader.*
- *Love the new thematic units like caring for Earth as this links to the sustainable development goals.*
- *I like the new units I feel it is more reflective on the children we teach in today's society.*
- *Having not used the syllabus for a few years, and never having attended training, it was thorough with changes made very obvious and good, clear links to the material that has changed.*
- *An excellent update which takes into account the modern world views on religion's relevance (or lack of it) for people.*

2.3.7. Representative feedback on the conference included:

- *Very well presented and helpful. Glad we've been able to talk about aspects we've been querying as a school.*
- *Highly informative and thought provoking*
- *Good to meet up with like minded people to share experiences and problems - also good to have experts on hand to answer questions.*
- *Really clear delivery. Useful having materials online. Passionate speakers. Inspiring and exciting content.*
- *Presenters we're incredibly clear with well-researched information. Presented clearly to enable planning to be straight forward.*
- *Great conference with easily adaptable classroom ideas. I am leaving with lots of motivation and inspiration to go and make R.E even better at my school.*
- *Well organised, staff were fantastic, great venue and lunch options - thank you.*
- *Thank you a helpful, clear day. I am new to the role and have appreciated going through the syllabus.*

SACRE secondary RE agreed syllabus launch conference, 25 June 2025

2.3.8. Herefordshire SACRE collaborated with Worcestershire SACRE to put on this launch event. This was an afternoon event, 1.30-4.30pm, held at the University of Worcester. 31 delegates from 21 schools attended, including 6 Herefordshire secondary schools.

2.3.9. Feedback shows that 73% of delegates rated the conference as 'excellent' and 27% as 'good'. Sample responses to the revised syllabus included:

- *Reflects the changing demographic of students well. Worldviews approach is a positive step forward for RE. Ways of knowing seems to open up opportunities to actively engage students in their learning more.*
- *I feel the Worldviews aspect reflects the cohort of children I teach.*
- *Pleased there isn't a huge change, like the focus on disciplinary knowledge & the organisation of the syllabus.*
- *I like the ways of knowing icons and links to syllabus. I think this will be really helpful to promote skills and critical thinking about topics studied*

2.4. Other information

2.4.1. There were no formal complaints to SACRE about RE during the year.

2.5. Advice given to the local authority

2.5.1. No advice was given to the local authority.

3. Collective worship

3.1. Standards and monitoring of collective worship

3.1.1. SACRE has found it hard to monitor collective worship over the past few years.

3.2. Determinations

3.2.1. No applications for a determination (to alter the character of collective worship for some or all pupils in a school) have been requested in the year 2024-25.

3.3. Teacher training provided

3.3.1. No SACRE training on collective worship has been provided in 2024-25, although the Diocese of Hereford continues to support its schools in this area.

3.4. Other information

3.4.1. There were no formal complaints to SACRE about collective worship during the year.

3.5. Advice given to the local authority

3.5.1. No advice was given to the local authority.

4. Links with other bodies

4.1. National bodies

- Herefordshire SACRE is a member of NASACRE. Its newsletters are circulated to all members.
- Stephen Pett, RE Today, connects SACRE with NATRE, and provides national updates at each meeting. Reports from NATRE, including the School Workforce Data and primary and secondary surveys have proved useful to SACRE when monitoring schools.
- Information from the RE Council has been used in meetings and shared with schools where appropriate.

4.2. Local bodies

- Hereford Diocese provides excellent support to SACRE and local schools.
- Several members of SACRE are members of Herefordshire Interfaith Group, which runs a number of events each term, as well as organising a biennial Interfaith Peace Service for International Day of Peace at Hereford Cathedral.

5. SACRE involvement in the local area

- 5.1.1. SACRE updates governors and headteachers on resources and training via a bulletin.

6. Managing SACRE and partnership with the local authority

6.1. Professional and administrative support

6.1.1. Clerk to SACRE

- Ben Baugh
Democratic Services Officer, Herefordshire Council, Plough Lane, Hereford, HR4 0LE

6.1.2. Local authority officer

- Pam Howell
School Improvement Advisor, Children and Young People Directorate, Herefordshire Council, Plough Lane, Hereford, HR4 0LE

6.1.3. Adviser to SACRE

- The local authority has a contract with RE Today Services. Stephen Pett is the RE Today national adviser who delivers the contract to Herefordshire local authority and SACRE.
RE Today Services, S5-S6 1 Devon Way, Longbridge, Birmingham B31 2TS

6.2. Membership, representation and attendance

- 6.2.1. SACRE regularly reviews membership and seeks representation from local communities. Current vacancies, and repeated absences are discussed by the Chair and local authority officer.

- 6.2.2. All groups have been represented according SACRE's terms of reference at each meeting.

6.3. Training for SACRE members

- 6.3.1. The SACRE Chair, local authority officer, clerk and RE adviser are on hand to advise SACRE members.

- 6.3.2. All members are invited to attend the training provided for schools. Several SACRE members attend the primary conference each year, providing support to the RE adviser and spending time meeting and supporting teachers. Members often attend NASACRE CPD and the Southwest SACRE conference, reporting back to members.

6.4. Finance

- 6.4.1. Herefordshire Council supports SACRE with an annual budget of £5000. This covers the cost of the support from RE Today Services, who have supported Herefordshire SACRE for over a decade, and 20% of it accumulates to cover the cost of agreed syllabus renewals every five years.

Appendices

[Appendix 1: SACRE membership](#)

[Appendix 2: Circulation details for this annual report](#)

[Appendix 3: Herefordshire examination results](#)

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Appendix 1: SACRE membership

Group	Representative	15 Nov 2024	28 Mar 2025	11 Jul 2025
Group (A):				
Bahá'í faith	Carolyn Ault	✓	✓	Pete Hulme (sub)
Buddhist religion	<i>Currently no representative</i>			
Hindu faith	<i>Currently no representative</i>			
Humanism	Geoff Sallis (Chair)	✓	✓	✓
Jewish faith	Raoul Smith (from Mar 2025)		✓	
Muslim faith	Samira Kairo			
Other Christian denomination	<i>Currently no representative</i>			
Quaker faith	Ruth Stanier	✓	✓	✓
Other faiths as a whole	<i>Currently no representative</i>			
Roman Catholic	<i>Currently no representative</i>			
Sikh faith	Jatinderpal Loyal			
Group (B): Church of England representatives				
	Barry Stevens			✓
	Mark Harrington	✓		
	Jonathan Nicholas		✓	
Group C: Teacher representatives				
Primary sector	Tracy Westlake	✓		
Secondary sector	Louise Barker (Vice-Chair)	✓	✓	✓
Special education sector	<i>Currently no representative</i>			
Group D: Herefordshire Council members				
	Cllr Rob Owens		✓	✓
	Cllr Justine Peberdy	✓	✓	Remote attendance
	Cllr John Stone	✓	✓	✓
In attendance				
Clerk to SACRE	Ben Baugh	✓	✓	✓
Local authority officer	Pam Howell	✓		
Adviser to SACRE	Stephen Pett, RE Today	✓	✓	✓

Appendix 2: Circulation details for this annual report

Copies of this annual report will be sent electronically to the relevant individuals and bodies below:

- Tina Russell, Corporate Director Children and Young People, Herefordshire Council
- Cllr Ivan Powell, Cabinet Member Children and Young People, Herefordshire Council
- The Department for Education (Central Government)
- National Association of Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education (NASACRE)
- Headteachers and governing bodies of Herefordshire schools
- All members of Herefordshire SACRE, for distribution to the bodies / communities they represent

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Appendix 3: Herefordshire examination results

The provisional data GCSE Religious Studies outcomes show:

Grades	Herefordshire %	Glos % (2310)	Worcs % (1,560)	West- Midlands	England %
1+	98.1	98.3	98.7	97.6	97.9
2+	91.6	93.7	94.2	92.1	93
3+	82.2	87	86.2	83.5	85.2
4+	64.5	75.1	73.7	70.4	73.1
5+	49.5	63.9	61.2	59.6	62.3
6+	32.7	50.4	45.8	45.7	48.3
7+	17.8	33.5	28.5	29.3	31.7
8+	6.5	21	16.3	17.2	19
9	3.7	9.1	5.8	7.6	8.4

Document is Restricted

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

Examination Results 2025

Summer 2025 saw, as always, excited and nervous 16- and 18-year-olds expecting the results of the GCSE and A Level Religious Studies examinations. There was a slight decrease in the number of A Level entries in England, Wales and Northern Ireland for 2025 with the subject being studied by more girls than boys in this cohort.

The full report and analysis from NATRE/RE Today is available to download here:
www.natre.org.uk/resources/gcse-religious-studies-2025-national-report-for-england-and-wales/

The data below, for A Level Religious Studies is provided by the Joint Council for Qualifications (2024 is included for comparison):

Category	Subject	Year	Number Sat	A* %	A*-A %	A*-B %	A*-C %	A*-D %	A*-E %	A*-U %
A Level UK	Religious Studies	2025	16439	5.9	25.5	56.6	81.2	93.8	98.5	100.0
A Level UK	Religious Studies	2024	16622	6.0	25.7	54.9	78.8	92.6	98.2	100.0

	Subject	Sex	Year	Number sat	% of Total number sat	A* %	A*-A %	A*-B %	A*-C %	A*-D %	A*-E %	A*-U %
A level UK	RS	Male	2025	4703	1.2	6.4	24.6	54.2	79.7	93.1	98.2	100.0
A level UK	RS	Male	2024	4839	1.2	6.1	25.4	53.2	77.1	91.7	97.9	100.0
A level UK	RS	Female	2025	11736	2.5	5.7	25.8	57.5	81.8	94.0	98.6	100.0
A level UK	RS	Female	2024	11783	2.5	6.0	25.8	55.6	79.4	92.9	98.2	100.0

21st August 2025 saw the release of the GCSE results in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. The figures below show the UK wide figures as well as the figures for England, for the whole cohort and also included are the figures according to sex.

GCSE Full Course Religious Studies UK

Category	Subject	Year	Number Sat	7/A and above %	4/C and above %	1/G and above %	U and above %
GCSE UK	Religious Studies	2025	237515	32.1	73.4	97.9	100.0
GCSE UK	Religious Studies	2024	245019	31.4	72.7	98.0	100.0

GCSE Full Course Religious Studies England

Category	Subject	Year	Number Sat	7/A and above %	4/C and above %	1/G and above %	U and above %
GCSE England	Religious Studies	2025	217483	31.7	73.2	97.9	100.0
GCSE England	Religious Studies	2024	223034	31.1	72.5	98.1	100.0

Category	Subject	Sex	Year	Number sat	% of Total number sat	7/A and above %	4/C and above %	1/G and above %	U and above %
GCSE UK	RS	M	2025	108869	3.5	25.1	67.2	96.8	100.0
GCSE UK	RS	M	2024	111901	3.6	24.1	66.5	97.0	100.0
GCSE UK	RS	F	2025	128646	4.2	38.0	78.6	98.8	100.0
GCSE UK	RS	F	2024	133118	4.3	37.6	77.8	98.9	100.0
GCSE UK	RS	M & F	2025	237515	3.9	32.1	73.4	97.9	100.0
GCSE UK	RS	M & F	2024	245019	4.0	31.4	72.7	98.0	100.0

GCSE Short Course

Category	Subject	Sex	Year	Number sat	% of Total number sat	7/A and above %	4/C and above %	1/G and above %	U and above %
GCSE UK	RS	M	2025	12978	95.8	19.9	55.5	92.1	100.0
GCSE UK	RS	M	2024	13509	95.8	18.6	54.6	92.1	100.0
GCSE UK	RS	F	2025	12524	98.6	32.6	68.2	96.1	100.0
GCSE UK	RS	F	2024	12253	98.1	31.5	69.1	96.6	100.0
GCSE UK	RS	M& F	2025	25502	97.1	26.2	61.7	94.1	100.0
GCSE UK	RS	M & F	2024	25762	96.9	24.7	61.5	94.3	100.0

NATRE’s summaries for GCSE RS: www.natre.org.uk/resources/gcse-religious-studies-2025-national-report-for-england-and-wales/

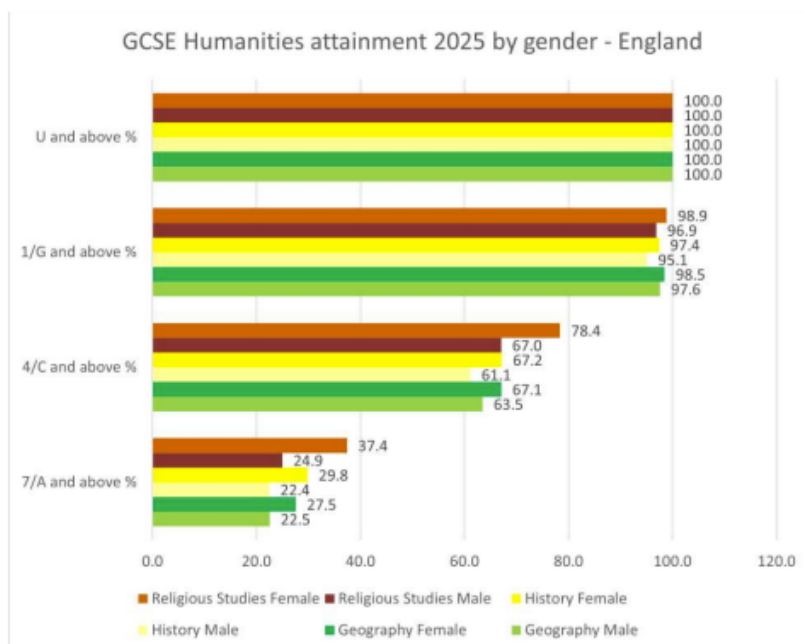
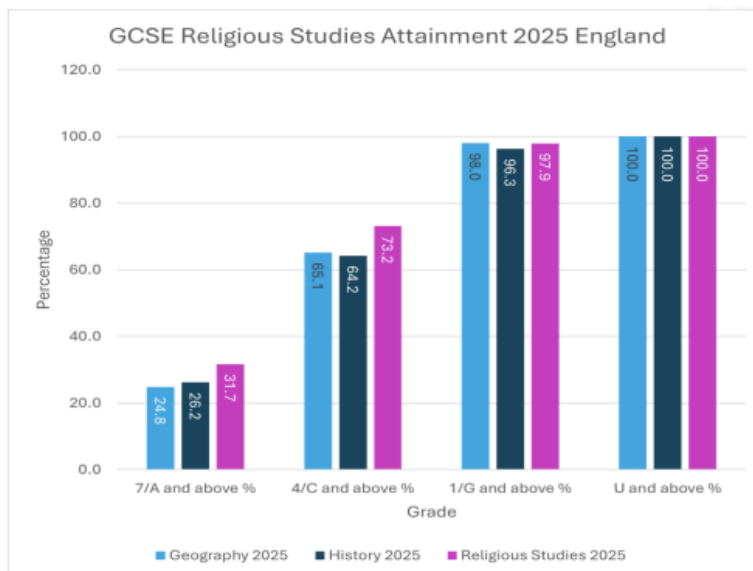
Attainment: RS shows stronger outcomes than History and Geography, particularly at higher grades. In England, 31.7% of RS candidates achieved grade 7/A+, compared to 26.2% in History and 24.8% in Geography.

Ofqual research into comparability, shows that Religious Studies at GCSE sits roughly in the middle of the range in terms of level of difficulty of all subjects.

Gender differences: Girls significantly outperform boys in RS. In England, 37.4% of girls achieved grade 7/A+ compared to 24.9% of boys. The gender gap is wider than in other humanities.

Comparison with other humanities: RS provides girls with higher attainment than they achieve in either History or Geography, consolidating the subject’s role as a strong option for female pupils.

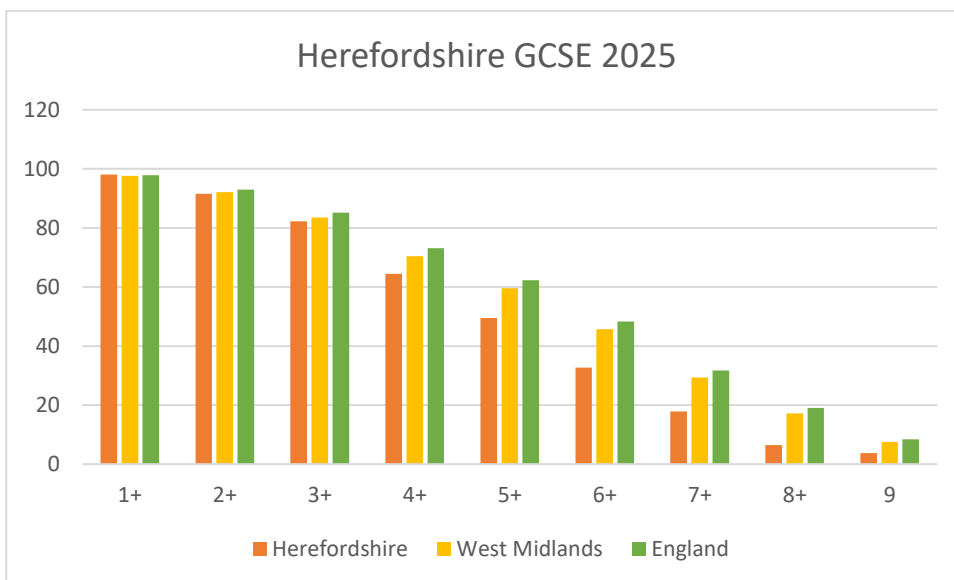
Entries in England: RS entries are stable at around 240,000 annually, showing resilience compared to other optional subjects, despite curriculum pressures.



Herefordshire GCSE data 2025:

The unvalidated data shows Herefordshire GCSE results against nearby counties, the West Midlands and England. There were 535 entries in 2025. [Map of GCSE \(9 to 1\) grade outcomes by county in England](#)
Results for all ages.

Grades	Herefordshire %	Glos % (2310)	Worcs % (1,560)	West-Midlands	England %
1+	98.1	98.3	98.7	97.6	97.9
2+	91.6	93.7	94.2	92.1	93
3+	82.2	87	86.2	83.5	85.2
4+	64.5	75.1	73.7	70.4	73.1
5+	49.5	63.9	61.2	59.6	62.3
6+	32.7	50.4	45.8	45.7	48.3
7+	17.8	33.5	28.5	29.3	31.7
8+	6.5	21	16.3	17.2	19
9	3.7	9.1	5.8	7.6	8.4



Compare with 2024, where there were 540 entries in Herefordshire.

Grades	Heref %	West Mids	England %
1+	97.2	97.7	98.1
2+	88.9	91.9	93.2
3+	80.6	82.9	85.2
4+	67.6	69.5	72.5
5+	52.8	58.9	62
6+	36.1	44.5	47.9
7+	18.5	28.2	31.1
8+	9.3	16.6	18.8
9	2.8	6.7	7.9

2019-2025:

	Entries	Grade 4+	England
2025	545	64.5	73.1
2024	540	67.6	72.5
2023	525	62.9	72.2
2022	520	70.2	76.7
2021	645	79.1	80.2
2020	915	77.6	80.5
2019	655	71.0	72.3

School Census Data

NATRE works with the Department for Education to collate information from the School Workforce Census about religious education teaching in England. NATRE has produced a report analysing the data: <https://natre.org.uk/news/dfe-school-workforce-census-november-2024-report-published-in-june-2025/>

The School Workforce Census allows the DfE to collect curriculum information from a large sample of secondary schools. Not all schools provided complete curriculum information. Where returned information on curriculum is mostly incomplete, the data for these schools has been removed from published analysis. In 2024, 2,800 secondary schools (81.0%) provided usable curriculum information.

1. There has been a decrease in the number of schools that report offering zero hours of RE in year 11 from 16.4% in 2023 to 14.4% in 2024. While indicating an improvement, this equates to 1 in 6 schools are breaching their statutory duty to provide RE for all pupils in all year groups. It is worth noting that because the number of schools reporting other subject data but not RE has increased, SACREs will need to verify the levels of provision in those schools by another method. They will also need seek information from those who did not report curriculum data at all this year.
2. In 2024, more than 42% of state funded secondary schools reported offering less than 3% of curriculum time in year 11. However, this is a decrease from 46% in 2023. When this data is cross referenced with GCSE entries, it suggests that where schools report a small percentage of provision, this equates to a small GCSE option group. Again, this practice represents a breach of statutory entitlement because those pupils who do not opt for the GCSE course are entitled to their statutory RE. The new [Ofsted toolkit](#) references pupil's entitlement, NATRE hopes that more attention is drawn to this.
3. The gap between levels of provision in schools with a religious character and those without has been widening each year. More than 81.3% of schools and academies with a religious character offer more than 3% of curriculum time in year 11 for Religious Education compared to 23% of schools and academies without a religious character. This level of provision is not a big ask for a core subject of the basic curriculum. In a 30-period week this represents only 45 minutes approximately each week. The time recommended to fulfil the requirements of most local agreed syllabuses is 5% i.e. about 75 minutes.

Ofsted's renewed Education Inspection Framework and Toolkit 2025

Ofsted has brought out a [new toolkit](#) to advise schools on the areas that will be evaluated and graded renewed inspection framework.

[NATRE has produced a slide show](#) that compares the current 2024 handbook with the new 2025 Toolkit (due for implementation from November 2025).

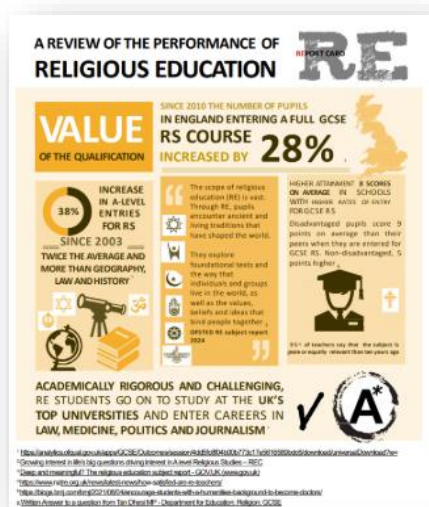
The presentation highlights what continues and what's new for RE, including:

- RE's place in the **basic curriculum**
- the strengthened framing of the curriculum as an "**entitlement for every pupil**" (including pupils with **SEND**)

- the re-framed **Personal development and well-being** area (with explicit references to **faiths and beliefs** and **British values**)
- a clearer emphasis on **Inclusion** and **protected characteristics**
- explicit recognition of **prejudice-motivated bullying** (including on grounds of **religion or belief**), and
- expectations to **track participation** so all pupils including those with SEND, access RE and related opportunities.

NATRE's new Report Card: the state of RE in England 2025

64% of the UK adult population think an education in religion and worldviews (or RE) is important yet just under 1 in 6 schools report not offering it in year 11.



The National Association of Teachers of RE (NATRE) has been reporting on the data from the workforce census for the last ten years. Our agreement with the DfE allows us to share this information with school providers, SACREs and Academy Trusts.

This year's data shows slightly fewer schools offering no RE in year 11, but it is still the case that just under one in six schools told the DfE that they do not offer RE to this year group at all and far more admit to not providing RE to pupils who do not choose a GCSE Religious Studies as one of their options. In both these cases, this means that effectively, pupils' religious education ends when they are just 13 or 14 years old, when the law in England requires that the subject be taught to age 18.

You can read the full report here: www.natre.org.uk/resources/a-review-of-the-performance-of-religious-education-report-card-2025/

NASACRE Training

NASACRE (National Association of Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education) continues to work to celebrate, support, strengthen and promote the work of local SACREs and represents their interests at a national level, including training for SACRE members.

- November 2025 (various), 6:30-8pm: NASACRE in Conversation (regions) Free session for all SACREs to attend - but specifically for Chairs, Vice-Chairs, SACRE consultants and LA link officers
- 4 December 2025, 4-5:30pm Supporting your SACRE as a Professional Advisor Free to SACREs who have bought the annual webinar package £25 for a subscribed SACRE and £35 for a non-subscribed SACRE
- 22nd January 2026, 7-8pm, Chair/Vice-chair & LA link officer focus How to ensure your SACRE is fit for purpose? Free to SACREs who have bought an annual webinar package £25 for a subscribed SACRE and £35 for a non-subscribed SACRE
- 25th June 2026 So, you've joined your local SACRE... Free session for any SACREs to attend specifically for new members of SACRE

Survey on Withdrawal from RE and Collective Worship in England

School staff are invited to take part in a brief online survey regarding withdrawal from RE and Collective worship in English schools. The survey is being conducted by Exeter University. It aims to gather information on how widespread the request for withdrawal is, and where requests are received, how they are managed, by whom, and with reference to what sources of advice and guidance (if any). The survey does not collect any identifying information, so responses will remain anonymous. The survey should take less than 10 minutes to complete, and will remain open until 31st Dec 2025.

The survey can be accessed here: <https://forms.office.com/e/vMeinypKTx>

Events and publications to note

Interfaith Week 2025

Inter Faith Week is an annual initiative held in November that aims to strengthen interfaith relations across the UK. It aims to raise awareness of the diverse contributions of faith communities and promote understanding among people of different religious and non-religious beliefs. This year, Inter Faith Week 2025 will take place from **Sunday, 9 – Sunday, 16 November**.

Explore how to get involved: www.interfaithweek.org/events/about

Find out about local events: www.interfaithweek.org/

Resources can be found here: www.interfaithweek.org/resources

The theme of this year's Interfaith Week for schools is **Community: Together we Serve**.

Schools have a dedicated site for Interfaith Week: www.ifw4schools.co.uk/ This site includes carefully curated resources to support schools throughout the week and events running throughout it.

RE Today is a proud partner in the Interfaith Week for Schools initiative and is making resources freely available for all schools to use throughout the week. **These free resources can be found at: [Interfaith Week for Schools 2025: Celebrating Diversity and Unity](#)**

YouGov data on belief in God

YouGov has been collecting and collating data on beliefs about God. The data is displayed over a few years from 2019 to 2025 in relation to believing in a God/Gods, having no belief in God/Gods and that there is no God but there is a belief that there is something spiritual in the world. The data can filtered in terms of age, gender, region and social background. The data is available on the following link [Brits' beliefs about God\(s\)](#)

Religious Media Centre updates

The Religion Media Centre is an impartial and independent organization aiming to increase further cohesion and understanding in society by helping the media report and understand religion and belief. It does not promote any one religion or belief and has no editorial line other than religion matters. Instead, it exists to provide accurate, timely and relevant information to the media, enabling the public to be better informed. You can sign up for a weekly bulletin that will keep you up to date with the latest news relating to religions and faith. It also has 130 factsheets ideal for subject knowledge for SACRE members or teachers.

<https://religionmediacentre.org.uk/>

Training and support for teachers

Masters scholarships

CSTG Masters Scholarship Programme offers teachers and others working in the field of Religious Education, Religion Values and Ethics or Religious and Moral Education (RE/RVE/RME) an opportunity to undertake relevant masters-level professional development at reduced cost, and to see the impact of it in their workplace e.g. in their teaching, advisory work. There are a very limited number of scholarship places allocated each year to UK residents. They will pay up to £4000 towards your masters fees. In most cases you will be employed as a qualified teacher, teaching assistant or HLTA in a school in the UK. However, applications will also be considered from those working as advisers, educators or researchers in other settings.

www.cstg.org.uk/scholarship-programmes/masters/

Applications for this year have closed, but anyone interested in looking ahead to future years, you need to contact fiona@cstg.org.uk for a formal conversation before submitting an application.

Farmington scholarships

Every year Farmington supports around 30 primary and secondary teachers (including head teachers) working in RE or associated subjects (for example, philosophy or moral and ethical education, SEND) to have up to 30 days out of the classroom to pursue a project of their own. It provides a supportive supervisor and access to a university library, if needed, as well as running an Induction Day for new scholars. Scholars attend the Annual Conference the year before they hold their scholarship, and the Conference at the end of the year, where they have to present their research. Scholars also arrange a presentation of their research at their school – to other teachers, to governors, and to other interested people from the locality.

Applicants must have the written support of their head teacher and must have worked at their current school for two years when they start the scholarship. They accept joint applications from two or more teachers working on the same project (not necessarily at the same school), but both teachers must fill in an application form.

Farmington pays costs for a cover teacher for the school, as well as all costs for the conference, travel and the induction day.

A scholar based in the West Country may be designated that year's **St Luke's Farmington Scholar**, through a partnership with the St Luke's College Foundation which provides generous support.

Their partnership with the Temple Grove Schools Trust allows them to offer up to 6 **Temple Grove Farmington Scholarships** each year. These are available to primary teachers in any subject, with the aim of promoting excellence in primary teaching.

2026-27 Applications will open Autumn 2025, to register your interest please email: institute@farmington.ac.uk

RE Hubs

Don't forget that the RE Hubs website offers extensive and growing links to people and places, locally and nationally. www.re-hubs.uk

FREE Training is offered for teachers leading local groups.

For new leaders: www.re-hubs.uk/uploads/new2leading.pdf

- Thursday 4th December Session 2: 4-5:30pm

For current leaders, a session on growing your RE network: www.re-hubs.uk/uploads/localleadercpd.pdf

- Thursday 20th November 2025 - 4 PM - 5.30 PM

Network for MAT RE Leads: www.re-hubs.uk/uploads/RE-Hubs-CPD-flyers-v2-202526-2.pdf

FREE for NATRE and AREIAC members

- 14 October 2025 - 4.00 - 5.30 PM Speaker: Emma Salter, leader of the personal knowledge in RE research project

NATRE-supported webinar for teachers of A level Religious Studies

Libby Ahluwalia, an experienced examiner and teacher will be offering an online meeting for teachers of A Level Religious Studies in order to provide guidance and supporting on advising students with university applications. Libby will cover a variety of elements including choosing the correct course, writing a statement and interviews skills. The event is being held on **Thursday 6th November between 6pm and 7pm**. Any teacher who wishes to attend should email k.steele@worc.ac.uk to join the NATRE A Level group and to register for the event.

Upcoming RE Today courses for the Summer Term and beyond!

RE Today supports a number of SACREs, and offers a variety of training courses to teachers as well. See more details on any of these courses at www.retoday.org.uk/school-support/professional-development-courses/

Primary

- **Primary - Understanding Christianity**

13th November 2025 (afternoon 1.00 pm – 4.00 pm) – Julia Diamond-Conway

Day 2 – 27th January (1.00 pm – 4.00pm) and Day 3 – 20th May (1.00 pm – 4.00pm)

RE Today has an online e-learning course for [Understanding Christianity](#).

Secondary

- **GCSE RS – Better thinking, better writing, better results**

13th October 2025 (Afternoon 1.30 pm – 4.30 pm) – Angela Hill

- **Understanding Christianity – Secondary**

5th November 2025 – (All Day 9.30 am – 3.30 pm) – Stephen Pett

- **Powerful Knowledge in RE**

12th November 2025 (Afternoon 1.30 pm – 4.30 pm) – Angela Hill

RE Today also offers bespoke training and support for schools. See [here](#) for more information.

SACRE National News Updates from RE Today
November 2025

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