



Herefordshire Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE)

Annual Report September 2024 - August 2025

DRAFT

Foreword

As Chair of the Herefordshire SACRE, it gives me great pleasure to provide the introduction to this report as we reflect on another year of helping to ensure that all pupils in our schools develop spiritually, morally, socially and culturally as well as academically.

I am grateful for the committee that has worked hard over the last year and continue to be grateful for the diversity and commitment that is represented. I would also like to thank Stephen Pett, who in his role as Professional Advisor and Ben Baugh as Clerk, for providing invaluable support to both SACRE and to me personally, as well as working hard to support our school RE leaders.

I would like to offer my thanks to our SACRE members and the teachers and community members who have worked so hard to support RE in Herefordshire in the year covered by this report. I would also like to thank Herefordshire Council for its support in hosting SACRE meetings over the past year.

SACRE actively seeks to ensure all children in Herefordshire have access to high quality and challenging religious and non-religious beliefs. Against this positive background there is still the concern that the number of specialist RE teachers entering the profession and the amount of curriculum time devoted to RE does not always provide pupils with the depth of knowledge they need to live in a complex world.

Going forward we have our locally agreed syllabus for 2025/30, which explicitly identifies religious and non-religious concepts. We had received a clear steer from schools that we did not need a radical overhaul of its content as the existing syllabus was still largely appropriate. However, it was clear that a greater emphasis on a wider view of world religions and beliefs was required to give a better understanding of the richly diverse society that is Britain today.

Our Directory of Places of Worship which encourages visits continues to grow, and pupils' learning in RE has been enhanced by such visits. SACRE believes they also allow our children to experience exciting learning opportunities, promote an ethos of respect for others and build understanding of their own and other cultures and beliefs.

Finally, I would like to thank those members, including Peter Fawcett, who left us during the year for all their contributions to help and enhance our children and young people's education.

Geoff Sallis
Chairperson, Herefordshire SACRE
November 2025

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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.

- i. The Diocese of Hereford's education team has provided training to both church and community schools, as well as academies in Herefordshire. There are 37 Church of England schools in the county, including two secondary schools. The team offers advice to various maintained schools, single academies, and multi-academy trusts.
- ii. During the academic year 2024-2025, the team provided training and support to Religious Education (RE) leaders and class teachers. This included courses focused on subject knowledge development for Islam, Hinduism, and Judaism, training for new RE leaders, teaching ideas for world religions, and refresher training for Understanding Christianity. Several schools received tailored support to redesign their RE curriculum maps and to conduct RE moderation of work. This support also extended to training governors on incorporating pupil voice in RE.
- iii. Additionally, the team offered collective worship training that explored how to celebrate the church year, as well as strategies for planning and evaluating collective worship for educators and church visitors supporting schools. The cathedral conducted workshops for students that explored the Bible through drama.
- iv. As church schools undergo inspections under the SIAMS framework, the education team provided support and training for both governors and schools, specifically focusing on the RE and worship elements of these inspections.

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 (Peter Fawcett stood down in November 2025)</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

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