

# National RE Updates for SACRE from RE Today Spring 2026 for Herefordshire SACRE

## Curriculum and Assessment Review

The Curriculum and Assessment Review published their long-awaited report into changes to the curriculum in November 2025. Key comments from the report are:

‘Having evaluated the evidence, we are of the view that RE’s importance is not currently reflected in its standing in the curriculum. The Review believes that RE should be moved to the national curriculum to improve access to high-quality provision and to prevent further diminishment’ - page 109

‘The DfE should consider the legislative framework for RE, including, for example, what any changes to its status in the curriculum would mean for functions such as Standing Advisory Councils on RE (SACREs). A long-term plan for implementing potential changes to legislation should be drafted’ - page 111

‘Following any changes, attention may also need to be given to the subject content of the optional GCSE in Religious Studies’ - page 110

In response to the recommendations from the Curriculum and Assessment Review the DfE have stated:

‘We welcome the Review’s work on RE and the careful consideration that the Panel has given, both to how better support the teaching of the subject, and its potential inclusion in the national curriculum. We will be shaped and guided by the sector on this important issue and, to take further steps on moving forward, there will need to be a clear shared position from the sector on the future of RE. Sector consensus should include views from faith, non-faith and wider school stakeholders on an RE curriculum what could be deliverable within all schools as part of a well-sequenced and structured national curriculum. If the sector reaches a consensus on whether this is achievable, we will consult on the content of a draft RE curriculum and on proposed changes to the legislative framework within which RE sits. As part of this we would seek to ensure that sector consensus should underpin future updates to any new RE curriculum.’

The CaAR has proposed a phased, four stage approach

Stage 1	Consensus Building: Independent task and finish group
Stage 2	Drafting and Testing: Very possibly based around the RE Council National Content Standard
Stage 3	Legislative and Structural Review; Define the future role of SACREs and ASCs
Stage 4	Implementation and Support: National Guidance, Exemplification and CPD

## EBacc and Accountability

The Curriculum and Assessment Review reported that the EBacc has constrained pupil choice post 14 (page 124). The DfE has committed to reviewing Progress 8 and Attainment 8 with a breadth area made up of four GCSEs which will have to include subjects from two of the following

- Humanities (including Religious Studies)
- Creative Subjects
- Languages

The DfE are also consulting on a fourth group which would include subjects such as computer science.

Alongside this the DfE have noted that GCSE content will be reviewed in all subjects including religious studies for first teaching in either 2029 or 2030 and corresponding changes to AS and A Level from first teaching in either 2031 or 2032.

## Message from Dr. Vanessa Ogden OBE about the Expert Advisory Group

On 17<sup>th</sup> December, Dr. Vanessa Ogden OBE published a letter with an update on developments from the Curriculum and Assessment Review in relation to the future of RE. Phase One was to establish an Expert Advisory Group to discuss and make recommendations about RE and the National Curriculum.

In the letter, Dr. Ogden made note that the Expert Advisory Group is now in place, with membership based on curriculum expertise and school leadership. She is also establishing two key reference groups, a Religion and Belief Reference Group led by Sarah Lane Cawte, the Chair of the RE Council and an RE Teacher Reference Group led by Katie Freeman, the Chair of the NATRE.

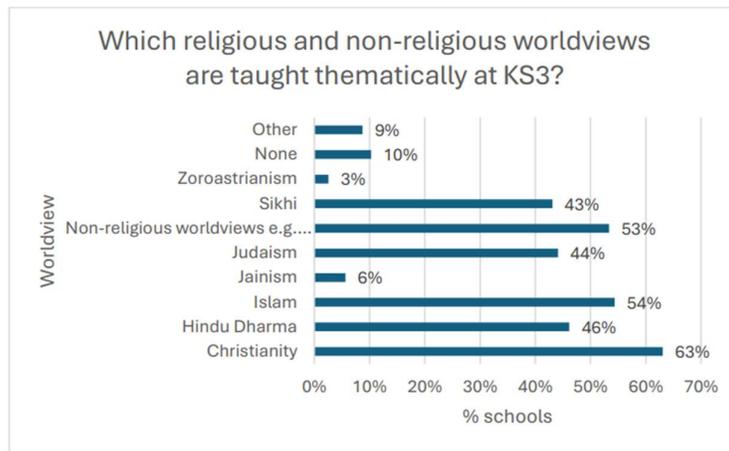
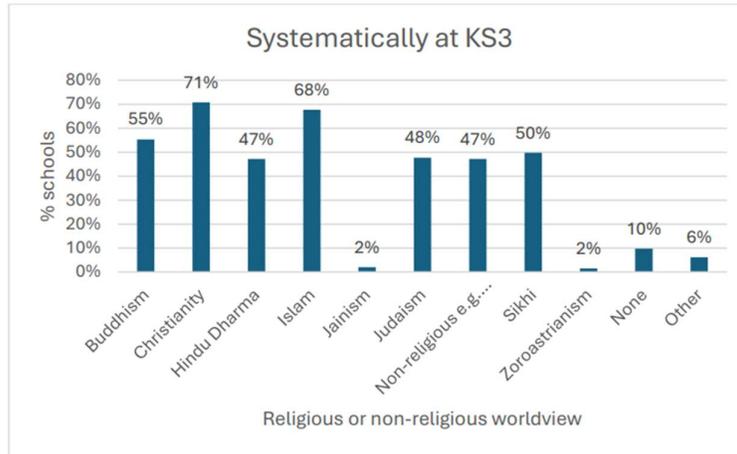
## NATRE Secondary Survey published

NATRE carries out a survey of secondary schools every two years. The results of the 2025 survey are now out. The 2025 findings confirm an increasingly polarised landscape: schools that value and invest in RE sustain strong provision, while others have reduced or removed it entirely. Despite these pressures, teachers continue to demonstrate high professional commitment.

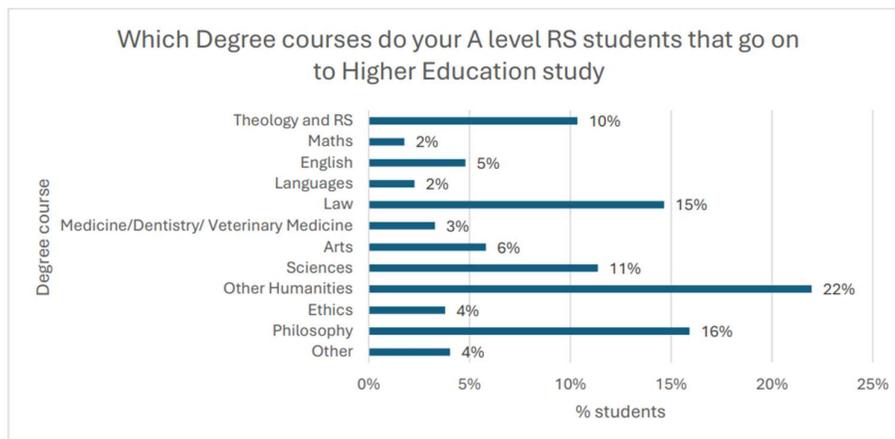
219 schools responded: 130 academies and free schools, 37 community schools using a local agreed syllabus, 31 schools with a religious character, 20 independent schools and one sixth form college.

The key findings at a glance:

- **Staffing:** 22 % of schools increased RE specialist staff, 20 % decreased, 58 % unchanged – identical to 2023.
- **Teaching by teachers who mainly teach another subject:** 82 % of schools use teachers who are not RE specialist for at least part of their provision (up 3 percentage points since 2023).
- **Subject leadership:** 10% of academies/free schools have no subject leader.
- **Curriculum time:** One-third of schools provide no RE for non-examined KS4 pupils.
- **Compliance:** Are statutory requirements met?
  - Overall, KS3 = 93% yes / 7% no; schools with religious character: 100% yes.
  - Overall, KS4 = 56% yes / 39% no; schools with a religious character: 90% yes.
- **Systematic/thematic teaching at KS3:**



- **GCSE RS:** in 56% of schools, entries increased, mainly because of increased student uptake (86%) or moving from option to full course for all (6%). Content overload remains the top concern; 44 % request content reduction.
- **A level:** entries relatively stable but cohort sizes shrinking in many centres. A level students go on to a wide range of degree courses in Higher Education:



- **Workload & retention:** 39% report barriers to staying in post – mainly workload and subject devaluation.
- **CPD:** Almost half (47%) had no in-school RE CPD; 41% none externally.
- **Resources:** 64 % satisfied overall; gaps persist for Dharmic faiths, SEND, and worldviews materials.

You can read the full report here: <https://natre.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/NATRE-survey-report-final-for-publication.pdf>

## NASACRE and Local Government Reorganisation

NASACRE is raising awareness with the Local Government Association and the Department of Education about the impact that the reorganisation of local government will have on SACREs. They have produced guidance for SACREs about the impact of this which can be downloaded from [Advice-for-SACREs-about-Local-Government-Reorganisation.pdf](#)

## The NASACRE Conference and AGM

The annual conference and AGM for NASACRE is to be held at the Hilton Liverpool City Centre Hotel on 18<sup>th</sup> May 2026. The speakers at this event will include Dr. Vanessa Ogden, the CEO of Mulberry Schools Trust and Carrie Alderton, CEO of the Faith and Belief Forum. Bookings are open now for subscribed and non-subscribed SACREs.

The theme of the conference is ***Bringing Communities Together.***

## 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.

NASACRE offer training throughout the year to support the work of SACREs and for those undertaking specific roles in a SACRE. Places can be booked by emailing [admin@nasacre.org.uk](mailto:admin@nasacre.org.uk)

- **25 June 2026: 6:30-8pm: So, you've joined your local SACRE...**  
*Free session for any SACREs to attend specifically for new members of SACRE*

## UK Supreme Court Rules on RE and Worship in Northern Ireland Schools

The UK Supreme Court unanimously held that the Religious Education and collective worship provided in a Northern Ireland grant-aided controlled primary school breached Article 2 of Protocol 1 (A2P1) read with Article 9 ECHR. Both the High Court and Court of Appeal in Northern Ireland had already found that the provision for Religious Education, based on the Department of Education's core syllabus, was not delivered in an objective, critical, and pluralistic manner; this finding was not appealed.

The key issue was whether the Northern Ireland statutory right to withdraw could remedy that lack of objectivity and pluralism. The Supreme Court ruled that it could not. Exercising the right would have placed an undue burden on the parents and risked stigmatising the child, so it was not an adequate safeguard. The Court also confirmed that non-pluralistic religious teaching and indoctrination are legally inseparable: teaching that is not objective, critical, and pluralistic amounts to pursuing the aim of indoctrination.

On the Department's cross-appeal, the Court reaffirmed that both parents and children hold rights under A2P1 and Article 9, and their claims must be considered separately. The Supreme Court therefore allowed the appeal, dismissed the cross-appeal, and reinstated the High Court's declaration of a breach. [In the matter of an application by JR87 and another for Judicial Review \(Appellant\) - UK Supreme Court](#)

The relevance of this to schools in England is to remind teachers that teaching in RE must be 'objective, critical, and pluralistic', and that schools should understand that the right of withdrawal is a legal right for parents, who do not have to meet any criteria before their request is granted.

## Events and publications to note

### Hannah Rich, *Beyond the Classroom: Informal Religion and Worldviews Education in the UK* (Theos, 2025)

This report shows that people learn about religions, beliefs and worldviews not only in schools but throughout everyday life — in youth and community work, arts and culture, public services, sport, the media, higher education and interfaith activity. It maps where this informal religious education is happening across the UK and highlights strong local examples alongside significant gaps.

Provision varies widely: diverse areas tend to offer more natural encounters and stronger interfaith networks, while elsewhere there is often hesitation or uncertainty about discussing religion and belief. The report argues that improving confidence and religious literacy across all sectors would create more opportunities for informal learning and help build a more cohesive society.

The report is available at: [www.theosthinktank.co.uk/research/2025/11/13/beyond-the-classroom-informal-religion-and-worldviews-education-in-the-uk](http://www.theosthinktank.co.uk/research/2025/11/13/beyond-the-classroom-informal-religion-and-worldviews-education-in-the-uk)

### Westhill Awards

There is still another year for your SACRE to consider whether to bid for funding from the **Westhill Endowment Fund**; the deadline for the next round of applications is **28 February 2027**.

The new 2-year cycle allows for SACREs to take more time over projects, creating the opportunity to develop ideas more fully and to bid for a larger grant. NASACRE hopes that this will allow for projects to have greater impact and leave a greater legacy. More information about the bid process and the criteria for the 2027 round will follow soon.

### Ramadan Guidance

Ramadan will start approximately Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> February 2026 from roughly 5.29 am to 5.24 pm. The precise date, is as ever, dependent on the siting of the moon. The holy month of Ramadan will end with Eid-ul-Fitr which is due to be either 19<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup> March. Local masjid will produce timetables to help schools appreciate the impact of the change on the lives of the pupils.

### Jewish Culture Month

The Board of Deputies has launched Jewish Culture Month from 16<sup>th</sup> May – 14<sup>th</sup> June 2026 – the Jewish month of Sivan. This is to accentuate the positive experiences of the British Jewish Community and the contribution to wider society. Support will be provided to Jewish centres, including synagogues, schools and charities in support of the Jewish Culture Month.

### 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 be 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

### 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.

**Applications for Farmington Scholarships and St Luke's/Farmington Scholarships for 2026–2027 are now Closed and will reopen in Autumn 2026 for 2027-2028 Scholarships.** To register your interest please email: [institute@farmington.ac.uk](mailto: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](http://www.re-hubs.uk)

## 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/](http://www.retoday.org.uk/school-support/professional-development-courses/)

### Primary

- **The Ways of Knowing Toolkit: Confident Classroom Practice**  
25<sup>th</sup> March 2026 (4.00-5.30 pm) – Julia Diamond-Conway
- **Big questions, big answers: using disciplines in RE**  
14<sup>th</sup> April 2026 (4-5.30pm) – Stephen Pett

### Secondary

- **Using disciplines in RE: tools, methods and resources**  
15<sup>th</sup> April 2026 (4.00-5.30 pm) – Stephen Pett
- **Understanding Christianity – Secondary**  
7<sup>th</sup> July 2026 (9.30 am – 3.30 pm) – Stephen Pett

A new series of **subject knowledge briefings** for primary and for secondary teachers is available – 90 minutes of high-quality support for deepening knowledge and understanding about matters of central importance in six major traditions. Details available [here](#).

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

SACRE National News Updates from RE Today  
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