

North Yorkshire Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education

Annual Report for the School Year 2018/19



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The SACRE welcomes any comments on, or enquiries relating to, this report, which should be addressed to Mrs Sally Mitchell, Clerk to SACRE, North Yorkshire County Council, Children & Young People's Service, County Hall, Northallerton, DL7 8AE.
Email: sally.mitchell@northyorks.gov.uk

1: Introduction and context from the Chair of SACRE

It has been a privilege to chair North Yorkshire SACRE this year. It has been a busy and exciting year with a focus on reviewing and developing our new Agreed Syllabus. The agreed syllabus conference and networks through the year were a great opportunity to meet with teachers, share best practice and listen to the changes we needed and to hear suggestions for improving our support for high quality RE in all of our schools. The new Agreed Syllabus was launched to a room of 150 teachers in the summer term, followed by further support in regional meetings for schools who were unable to attend the launch day. We are delighted with the responses we have received to the syllabus and to the supplementary materials we have provided to support schools in different contexts. We look forward to working with our schools over the coming year to support and monitor the implementation of the syllabus and explore any future training needs.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the members of SACRE who commit their time to supporting the work of SACRE, I am grateful for their continued support and encouragement. We continue to focus on ensuring our membership reflects our different faith communities within North Yorkshire and on ensuring that teachers are adequately represented.

Particular thanks also go to Rebecca Swift and Sally Mitchell in their key role in supporting the work of SACRE. I am grateful for Rebecca Swift's commitment to ensuring there are ongoing network meetings for teachers and support for delivering the agreed syllabus.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Mark Cosens, Christopher Devanny, Martin Dickinson, Matt Grassam, Caroline Pratt and Rachael Oates for their valued contribution to the work of SACRE whilst they were members.

I am very pleased to be able to commend this annual report to school governors, head teachers and their staff, and to members and officers of the County Council.

Olivia Seymour, SACRE Chair 2018/19

2: Advice to Statutory Bodies

Over the last few years, SACRE has produced the following resources and guidance documents for schools:

- North Yorkshire SACRE RE Agreed Syllabus 2019-20
- Guidance documents to support the teaching of the Agreed Syllabus
- Knowledge organisers to support learning

In recent years, SACRE has produced:

- Guidance on Collective Worship
- Guidance on organising visits to places of worship
- Case studies of good practice around Collective Worship.

3: Standards and Quality of Provision of Religious Education¹

Public examinations

Key stage 4

(2018 data in brackets)

In 2019, 2,149 (1,866) students were entered for the GCSE full course in Religious Studies in North Yorkshire, which was 36% (31%) of the cohort and an increase of 283 entries from the previous year, reversing the recent trend of a fall in entries year on year. 30 (25) centres out of 46 entered pupils for full course GCSE. Some schools entered the whole cohort, whilst for other schools, Religious Studies GCSE was offered as an option.

The national picture:

- The number of pupils in England and Wales taking GCSE Religious Studies full course has fallen for the third year in a row, down 1.6% against 2018 to 237,862.
- In addition, the number of pupils in England and Wales taking the short course GCSE in Religious Studies has fallen even more sharply, down 19.7% from last year to 27,384. Religious Studies remains by far the most commonly taken short course GCSE, accounting for 94.4% of all short course GCSEs taken in England and Wales.
- When the entries for the full course and short course GCSE are combined, the picture is of significant decline in the number of pupils taking a qualification in Religious Studies. Entries for GCSE RS (combined short and full courses) in England and Wales peaked in 2011 at 461,795. Today's figures show a decline in entries of 42.6% in eight years with almost 200,000 fewer pupils achieving a qualification in RS at the end of KS4.
- The key outcomes for Religious Education in England and Wales at KS4 in 2019 are as follows:
 - There were 237,862 entries for the full course in GCSE RS, a fall of 1.6% from 2018 (241,749)
 - There were 27,384 entries for the short course in GCSE RS, a decline of 19.7% from 2018 (34,087)
 - There were 265,246 entries for GCSE RS (combined short and full courses), a decline of 3.8% from 2018 (275,836). Entries for GCSE RS (combined short and full courses) peaked in 2011 at 461,795. Today's figures show a decline in entries of 42.6% in eight years with almost 200,000 fewer pupils achieving a qualification in RS at the end of KS4
 - 29.8% of entries for the full course in GCSE RS were awarded at least an A or a 7
 - 23.5% of entries for the short course in GCSE RS were awarded an A or an A*.

NATRE, August 2019

¹ Public examinations leading to approved qualifications are entitled Religious Studies.

Full GCSE Grades A* - C/Grade 4+			
2019 National	2019 North Yorkshire	2018 North Yorkshire	2017 North Yorkshire
72.5%	75.0%	77.0%	72.0%
GCSE Grades A* - A/Grade 7+			
2019 National	2019 North Yorkshire	2018 North Yorkshire	2017 North Yorkshire
30.5%	30.0%	31.0%	30.0%

In the absence of nationally validated data at the time of writing, it is estimated on the basis of interim data that North Yorkshire's GCSE results for the full course at grades Level 4+ are significantly above the national average. The average point score for North Yorkshire pupils was 5.3 points. This is also above the national average of 5.0 points.

Post-16

	2019 North Yorkshire	2018 North Yorkshire	2017 North Yorkshire	2019 National
Number of entries	140	180	234	17490
A*/A	22%	28%	27%	18%
A*-C	85%	82%	83%	77%
A*-E	100%	98%	100%	98%

A2 Religious Studies was studied in 15 North Yorkshire schools and colleges. This is a reduction in the number of centres by 2, and a fall in entries of 40 candidates. In the absence of nationally validated data at the time of writing, it is estimated on the basis of interim data that North Yorkshire's GCE A level outcomes are significantly above the national average and the average point score of 36, is considered significantly above the national average of 34 points.

The National Picture

The growing number of secondary schools in England and Wales that are failing to provide Religious Education to all pupils until the age of 16 is continuing to impact Religious Studies A-level entries.

While the reduction in the number of students taking an RS A-level examination in Religious Studies in England and Wales slowed this year, the number of entries has declined significantly since its peak in 2016. Figures show a drop of 5.1% in 2019 and 22.8% in 2018.

The decline comes in the context of a smaller cohort of 18-year-olds this year and overall a reduced number of A-level entries across all subjects. Nonetheless, the number of schools failing to provide Religious Education at Key Stage 4 has been increasing. The latest data from the Department for Education's School Workforce Census suggest that a third (33.4%) of all schools are failing in their legal duty to offer the subject, which in turn has consequences for A-level entries.

The figures are an indication that Religious Education remains vulnerable and that the Government should engage further with the recent recommendations for change from the Commission on Religious Education.

The key outcomes of the 2019 A-level results in England and Wales for Religious Education are as follows:

- 17,490 RS A-level entries were recorded, a small decrease of 5.1% on 2018. Much of this decrease is explained by a decrease in the number of 18-year-olds in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland of 2.9%.
- Despite the decrease in entries for RS, there are still 57% more entries than in 2003 (11,132 entries were recorded in 2003).
- The 5.1% decrease in entries for RS is considerably smaller than equivalent figures for many other subjects such as English Language (down 21.8%), English Literature (down 7.8%), Further Maths (down 10.0%), and Drama (down 9.4%).
- The increase of 57% in the number of entries for RS A-level since 2003 is greater than equivalent changes over the same period for such as Geography (down 1%), Law (down 6%), and History (up 23%). Among arts, humanity or social science subjects, only Sociology (up 58%), Economics (up 77%) and Political Studies (up 114%) have seen stronger growth since 2003.
- Entries for RS A-level have declined since a peak of 24,849 in 2016, although this year's decline in entries of 5.1% is considerably less than the equivalent figure of 22.8% last year.
- 21.5% of entries for RS A-level were awarded an A or an A*.
- There were 3,911 entries for RS at AS-level, a decrease of 35% on 2018, this reflects the decline across all subjects where the number of AS entries fell by 49% across England and Wales.

The decline in entries for RS A-level adds further evidence to the case for action to secure the future of Religious Education as a subject for all pupils in all schools. The Commission on Religious Education published its final report in 2018 making recommendations for changes that have so far only been partially taken up by the Government.

NATRE, August 2019

Quality of provision of Religious Education

Foundation stage and key stages 1 and 2

All maintained primary schools follow the North Yorkshire syllabus, other than Voluntary Aided Church schools which follow their diocesan syllabus. Most academies follow the North Yorkshire syllabus and have bought in to the new syllabus.

An increasing number of schools teach RE in an enquiry-based way. Some schools have opted for regular RE themed days, whilst others are adopting a cross-curricular approach.

The teaching multi-faith RE in the more mono-cultural, rural parts of the county continues to be a challenge. SACRE continues to build our data-base of recommended places to visit and visitors to schools and this is now linked with the county's Educational Visits website.

Key stages 3, 4 and post-16

At key stage 3, some schools have developed an inspiring and stimulating RE curriculum, often incorporating some of the 5 units of learning developed to support the 2013 Agreed Syllabus. For some schools, however, curriculum time for RE has been reduced or RE has been incorporated into an integrated, skills-based course, combining with other humanities subjects, or with Personal, Social, Health and Citizenship Education. This can work successfully but is a challenge to teachers and to school leaders to ensure that sufficient time is given to deliver a quality RE curriculum, which allows students to make good progress in the discrete subject.

At key stage 4 there is more variation in the quality of teaching and learning in RE. The trend in recent years has been that whilst more pupils have some RE provision at KS4, this is increasingly part of a non-examination course, with limited curriculum time. However, this year has seen a change to that trend, with 5 additional schools offering a GCSE in RS. With the advent of the new syllabus, introduced in summer 2019, many secondary schools are reviewing their KS4 provision to ensure that all pupils follow a course leading to an appropriate qualification. In the public examination courses offered either for all students or as an option, the quality of teaching is largely good, as evidenced by the GCSE results.

Subject leaders in many secondary schools continue to face the challenge of securing the place of RE within the curriculum. The change to the KS4 requirement in the new RE Agreed Syllabus will support subject leaders in addressing this in their schools.

Special schools

Separate regulations covering maintained special schools require them to ensure that as far as practicable a pupil receives opportunities to explore RE. Most Special Schools use the North Yorkshire RE Agreed Syllabus, at least partially, and adapt it to meet the needs of the pupils. Some Special Schools use the 'Equals' curriculum package which is designed specifically for RE in special schools. There are examples of outstanding practice in RE teaching and learning experiences in special schools.

Summary

The provision for RE in most schools is good and often taught discretely.

In schools where the quality of provision is not as good, factors include:

- lack of curriculum time
- lack of specialist teachers
- staff who are not confident in teaching the subject
- lack of consistency across classes
- priority is being given to other subject areas
- curriculum needing to be reviewed in the light of the changing diversity of the school's population
- greater integration with other subjects is needed.

SACRE has received no formal complaints regarding RE provision or quality this year.

4: Effectiveness of the North Yorkshire agreed syllabus

North Yorkshire SACRE reviewed the Agreed Syllabus in 2019 and a new syllabus was launched in June 2019, with implementation at the beginning of September 2019.

The Agreed Syllabus is supplemented by a range of guidance documents and supporting materials. They include:

Four guidance documents:

- Good learning in RE: guidance for teachers
- Beginner's guides to the religions and beliefs recommended for learning
- Glossary of terms
- Assessment in RE

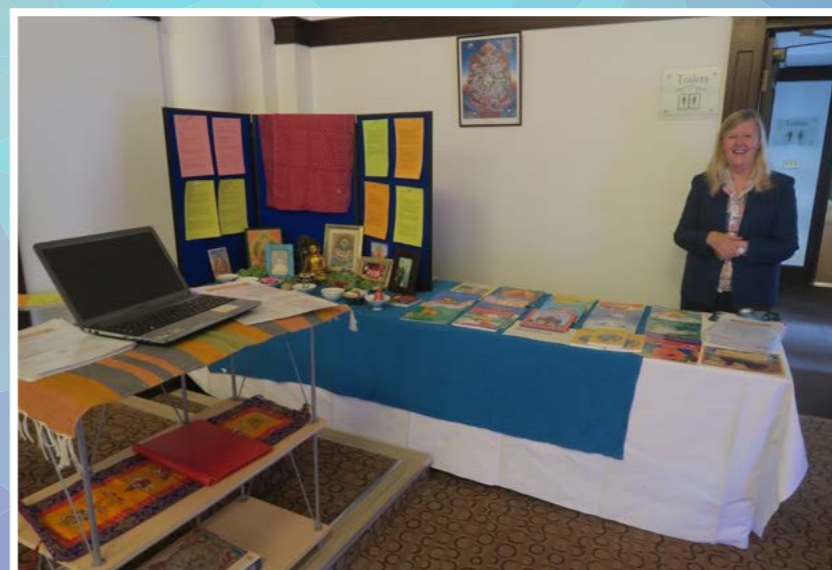
Knowledge organisers on the principal religions

Sample long term plans.

The revision of the syllabus began in Autumn 2018. The process has included:

- the establishment of an Agreed Syllabus working party
- an online questionnaire to teachers asking for feedback on what they wished to see in the new syllabus
- consultation with teachers at primary and secondary network meetings on possible syllabus models and content
- pupil voice sessions in two primary schools and a secondary school
- an Agreed syllabus conference, with representatives from the four SACRE groups and a range of teachers.

The decision was made to adopt the model syllabus produced by RE Today. The syllabus was launched through a conference in June 2019, attended by 150 teachers and SACRE representatives. The lively conference was led by Lat Blaylock and Fiona Moss from RE Today and was very well received by delegates. Five further half day training sessions at locations around the county were offered to RE subject leads who were unable to attend the conference.



5: Collective worship

There were no complaints registered with the local authority or SACRE in 2018/19 in respect of collective worship.

As in previous years, no determinations were requested by schools.

6: Management of SACRE

SACRE meetings

The SACRE followed a slightly different pattern of meetings as the focus was on the development of a new Agreed Syllabus. One of the meetings followed the Agreed Syllabus Conference. SACRE members were also invited to attend the launch conference or a training session on the new syllabus.

SACRE is professionally clerked by a member of the local authority's Legal & Democratic Services team, for which members and advisers are grateful.

Attendance at SACRE meetings 2018-19

Membership of each of the four Groups which constitute the North Yorkshire SACRE:

Group A: Baptist, Buddhist, Hindu, Humanist, Jewish, Methodist, Muslim, Roman Catholic, Salvationist, Sikh, Society of Friends and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (a single representative of each)

Group B: Four representatives nominated by the Anglican Diocese of Leeds (2) and the Diocese of York (2)

Group C: Five Teachers for Religious Education representing the teachers' associations

Group D: Five elected members of the County Council

Co-opted: There are currently no co-opted members

	8th November 2018	19th April 2018	21st June 2018	Possible Maximum Attendances at each meeting
Group A	6	7	3	(8) 3x vacancies = 11
Group B	3	3	3	(3) 1x vacancy = 4
Group C	2	1	3	(5)
Group D	3	2	2	(5)
Co-opted				(0)
Local Authority Adviser	1	1	1	(1)
Total	14 (14)*	13 (9)*	11 (12)*	22 (26 Total SACRE Membership)

* 2017-18 Attendance

Membership, training and wider involvement

Olivia Seymour was elected Chairman of SACRE and Sarah Beveridge was elected as Vice-Chairman, for the school year 2018/19.

Three teacher representatives, Matt Grassam, Caroline Pratt and Rachael Oates had tendered their resignations from SACRE, citing time pressures of school related commitments. Hannah Spencer, Doug Rice-Owen and Judy Clarke have kindly offered to fill these vacancies.

Mark Cosens representing The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints tendered his resignation from SACRE, as he was leaving the country, but was being replaced by Robert Brownlow.

Christopher Devanny's term of office on SACRE representing the Catholic Church had come to an end, but the Diocese was seeking another representative to sit on SACRE in his place.

Martin Dickinson's term of office on SACRE representing the Society of Friends had come to an end, but the Yorkshire General meeting was seeking another representative to sit on SACRE.

SACRE was delighted, however, to welcome Helen Sellers, as a new member to fill the vacancy on Group A for a Baptist representative.

There were vacancies from the Church of England, Society of Friends, Hindu faith and Salvationists. SACRE welcomes applications for membership from anyone who has an interest in supporting Religious Education in North Yorkshire.

Through the year SACRE members were informed of developments in RE from the National Associations of SACREs (NASACRE) The national Association of RE Teachers (NATRE) and the Religious Education Council (REC).

The Chair of SACRE, Mrs Olivia Seymour attended the NASACRE AGM and Conference on 22th May 2019 with a theme 'Cohesive Communities and Effective Partnerships; RE near and far. This was a great opportunity to meet with and learn from other SACRES as we work together to support our schools.

North Yorkshire SACRE continues to be a partner in Learn Teach Lead RE Yorkshire and Humber. In March 2019 Learn Teach Lead RE hosted its second regional conference with a focus on Leading Primary RE. Teachers from across the region, including many North Yorkshire Schools, had the opportunity to hear from national speakers including Mark Evans, HMI for RE and Fiona Moss from RE Today.

Complaints

No complaints have been received by SACRE about Collective Worship or RE.

Information and advice

The SACRE continues to employ the wide range of knowledge, skills and experience represented in its membership to provide information, advice, support and wise counsel to the local authority and its schools on matters relating to RE, Collective Worship and the wider agenda of inclusion, diversity and community cohesion, for which the local authority is grateful.

In turn, professional advice has been provided to the SACRE by the Equalities Adviser in the School Improvement Service.

7: Contribution of SACRE to the wider Local Authority Agenda

Improvement and development planning

In addition to developing a new Agreed Syllabus, the SACRE has continued to contribute to the 'Learn, Teach, Lead RE Programme' in Yorkshire.

Training for schools

The local authority continues to support the leadership and management of RE, and thus teaching and learning in all schools, through facilitating a secondary subject leader network day for RE subject leaders and two network days for primary RE subject leaders.

For teachers new to leading RE in primary schools, there is an annual training day on 'Developing Primary RE'.

In addition, PSHE, Equalities and well-being network days were provided at no additional cost to all schools within the Service Level Agreement. These covered a range of topics such as SMSC, British Values, the Prevent Duty and Equalities Duties.

8: Executive Summary

- There were no complaints registered with the local authority and SACRE in 2018/19 in respect of religious education or collective worship.
- No determinations² were requested by schools.
- The number of pupils entered for GCSE full course Religious Studies rose slightly, with 35% of the cohort sitting the examination. Results dipped slightly, but are significantly above national outcomes.
- At GCE A level the number of entries continued to fall, decreasing by a further 22%, which can partly be explained by a smaller cohort size this year. Outcomes were above the national average with 22% achieving grades A*/A (18% national), and 85% at A*-C (77% national).
- Annual subject leader network meetings took place for primary and secondary schools

² In respect of requests for exemptions from the legal requirement for broadly Christian collective worship.

9: Membership of The North Yorkshire Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education 2018-2019

Baptist	Mrs H Sellers
Buddhist	Mrs C Taylor
Hindu	Vacancy
Humanist	Professor J Adams
Jewish	Dr N Packter
Methodist	Mrs B Belsham
Muslim	Mr N Moussa Emam
Roman Catholic	Vacancy
Salvationist	Vacancy
Sikh	Mr M Singh Chana
Society of Friends	Mr M Dickinson
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints	Mr R Brownlow
Church of England	(Anglican Diocese of York) Mrs M Gibson Mrs O Seymour (Chair) (Anglican Diocese of Leeds) Rev'd S Bennett Vacancy
Teachers	Mrs S Beveridge (Vice Chair) Mrs K Hill Mrs R Oates (until July 2019) Mr Doug Rice-Bowen Miss H Spencer
Local Authority	County Councillor Jim Clark (replaced by Janet Jefferson after May elections) County Councillor Robert Heseltine County Councillor Andrew Lee County Councillor Patrick Mulligan County Councillor Annabel Wilkinson
Co-opted Member	Vacancy
Local Authority Adviser	Mrs R Swift
Clerk to SACRE	Mrs S Mitchell

Contact us

North Yorkshire County Council, County Hall, Northallerton, North Yorkshire, DL7 8AD

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(closed weekends and bank holidays). Tel: **01609 780 780**

email: **customer.services@northyorks.gov.uk** web: **www.northyorks.gov.uk**

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