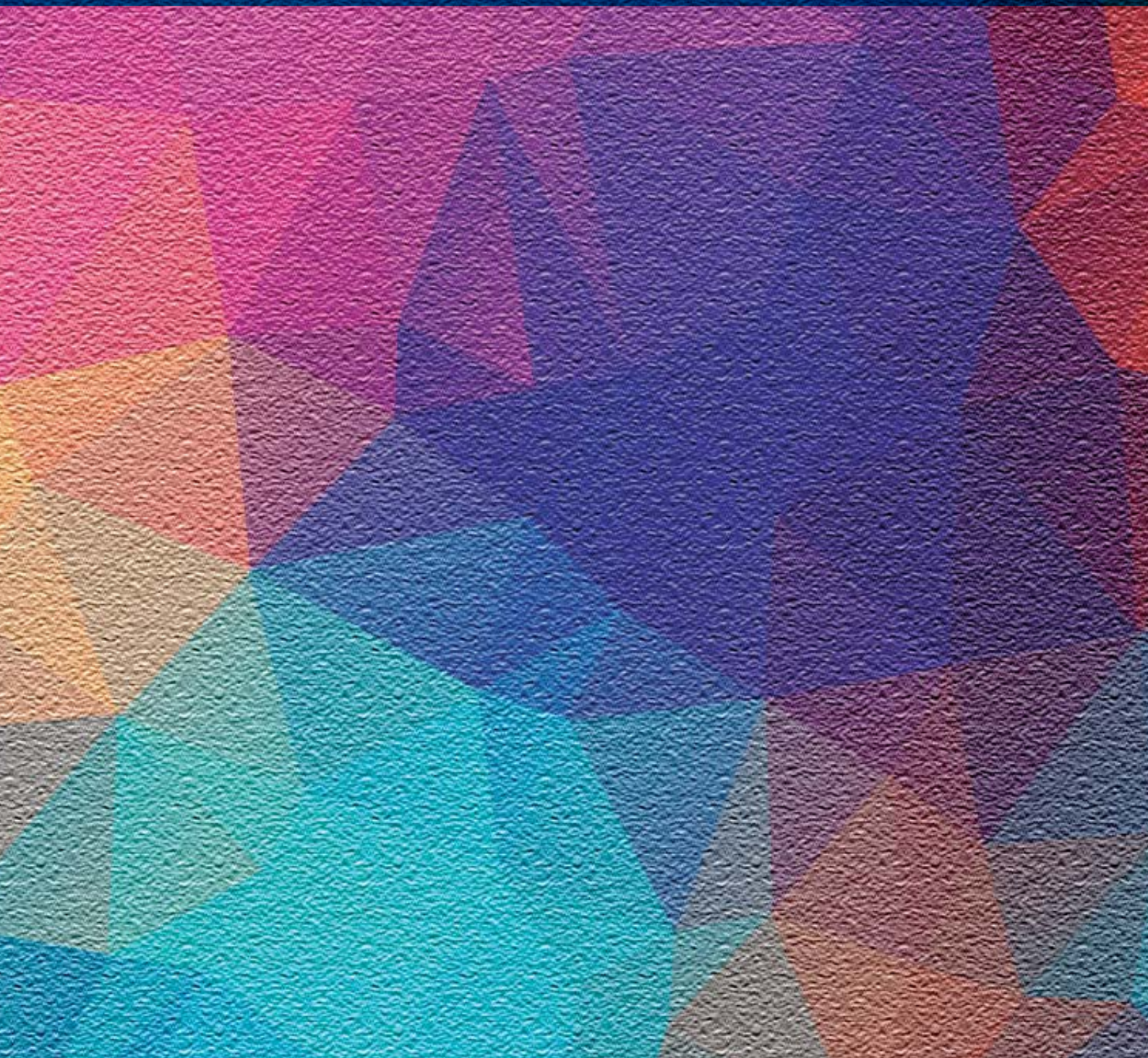
ITEM 7

North Yorkshire County Council

North Yorkshire Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education

Annual Report for the School Year 2019/20



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The SACRE welcomes any comments on, or enquiries relating to, this report, which should be addressed to Patrick Duffy, Clerk to SACRE, North Yorkshire County Council, Legal and Democratic Services, County Hall, Northallerton, DL7 8AE.

Email: patrick.duffy@northyorks.gov.uk

1: Introduction and context from the Chair of SACRE

It has been a privilege to chair North Yorkshire SACRE again this year, though much of the year has not been as we would have wished or expected. The work of SACRE was limited in many respects as the focus turned to supporting schools through limited opening. The RE networks that ran were, however, a great opportunity to meet with teachers, share best practice and support the embedding of the new agreed syllabus in our schools. We are delighted with the responses we have received to the syllabus and how schools have found the syllabus effective in supporting the shaping of a meaningful and engaging RE curriculum in their varying contexts. We look forward to working with our schools again over the coming year through a renewed training programme.

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.

Grateful thanks go to Rebecca Swift and Sally Mitchell who left their roles in working with 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. We are particularly grateful to Patrick Duffy who has taken on the role of clerk and to Adrian Clarke and Katharine Bruce from the Local Authority who have ensured there has been continued support for the work of SACRE through the interim arrangements.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Dr. Neville Packter who has stepped down as our Jewish representative for his valued contribution to the work of SACRE whilst a member.

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 2019/20

2: Advice to Statutory Bodies

Over the last year, SACRE has provided the following resources and guidance documents for schools:

- An update on progression for the North Yorkshire SACRE RE Agreed Syllabus

In recent years, SACRE has produced:

- Guidance documents to support the teaching of the Agreed Syllabus
- Knowledge organisers to support learning
- Guidance on Collective Worship

3: Standards and Quality of Provision of Religious Education[1]

Public examinations

The DfE will not hold schools and colleges to account on the basis of exams and assessment data from summer 2020 and that data will not be used by others, such as Ofsted and local authorities, to hold schools and colleges to account.

The DfE will not be publishing school, college or multi-academy trust (MAT) level performance data based on summer 2020 tests, assessments and exams at any phase.

The DfE will not be publishing, or sharing, school, college or MAT level accountability measures, such as Progress 8 and level 3 value added, using the summer 2020 data.

The performance tables that were due to be released in October and December 2020, and in January and March 2021, will not go ahead. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-school-and-college-performance-measures/coronavirus-covid-19-school-and-college-accountability

Religious Studies A-level

The number of Religious Studies A-level exam entries has declined at a lower rate than other humanities in 2020, performing better than some subjects despite a backdrop of overall declining entries and changes to the examination system. 15,692 RS A-level entries were recorded in England and Wales this year, compared with 17,490 in 2019. Although this represents a decline of 10.3%, it compares favourably with Geography (down 13.9%) and History (down 13.2%).

The overall number of A-Level entries in England and Wales fell this year by 2.6% from 768,217 in 2019 to 748,905 in 2020. The reduction reflects both a smaller cohort of 18 year olds (599,393 in 2020 compared with 618,873 in 2019 [Office for National Statistics]) and changes to the assessment of A level and AS examinations that had an effect in 2018, when the majority of schools changed their policies to recommending three A-levels, versus four in previous years. The number of AS exam entries also declined by 24.6% following AS and A-level reforms.

The demographic shift and changes to the examination system mean that it is difficult to draw concrete conclusions from comparisons with previous years, however the key outcomes of the 2020 A-level results in England and Wales for Religious Education are as follows:

- 15,692 RS A-level entries were recorded, a decrease of 10.3% on 2019.
- Despite the decrease in entries for RS, there are still 41% more entries than in 2003 (11,132 entries were recorded in 2003).
- The 10.3% decrease in entries for RS is smaller or the same as equivalent figures for some other subjects such as Geography (down 13.9%), History (down 13.2%), and Political Studies (down 11.1%).

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

- The increase of 41% in the number of entries for RS A-level since 2003 is greater than equivalent changes over the same period for subjects such as Geography (down 14.9%), Law (down 5.4%), and History (up 7.1%).
- Among arts, humanity, or social science subjects, only Sociology (up 61.9%), Economics (up 80.1%) and Political Studies (up 90.5%) have seen stronger growth since 2003.
- The relative stability of entries suggests that candidates continue to recognise the value of RS A-level for Higher Education entry, graduate employment, and as a valuable life skill.

Religious Studies GCSE

- The number of pupils taking GCSE Religious Studies in England and Wales has remained stable in 2020 despite ongoing challenges, reflecting the relevance of the subject and its popularity among young people.
- In England, RS GCSE entries for the full course fell by less than 1% to 225,719 compared to 227,913 in 2019. In Wales, entries fell by a similar amount from 10,129 in 2019 to 10,037 in 2020. Overall entries in England, including both full and short courses, fell by 2.3% to 243,786, compared with 249,443 in 2019. Full course entries in 2020 were still almost one third higher than in 2010. In Wales, combined entries fell by just under 2% from 16,327 in 2019 to 16,003 in 2020. Until this year, there has been a gradual decline in full course RS GCSE entries since a peak in 2016, when 269,839 entries were recorded in England. Full and short course entries reached a high of 461,795 in 2011 but declined rapidly as schools in England opted not to enter pupils into the short course following Government policy changes, despite a requirement among all schools, including Academies, to provide Religious Education to all pupils at all key stages. In Wales however, the short course entries have not declined at the same rate and fell by just 3.74% (from 6,198 to 5,966). In England, short course entries fell by more than 16%.

The key outcomes for Religious Education in England and Wales at Key Stage 4 in 2020 are as follows:

- There were 225,719 entries in England and 10,037 in Wales for the full course in GCSE RS, a fall of less than 1% from 2019 (227,913 England and 10,129 Wales).
- There were 18,067 entries in England and 5,966 in Wales for the short course in GCSE RS, a decline of 16.1% in England and 3.74% in Wales from 2019 (21,530 and 6198 respectively).
- There were 243,786 entries for GCSE RS (combined short and full courses) in England, a decline of 2.3% from 2019 (249,443). In Wales combined entry figures were 16,003 a fall of 1.98% from 2019 (16,327).
- Despite a decline since the peak in entries, the number of pupils receiving a full course GCSE in Religious Studies in England in 2020 (225,719) is still 32% greater than in 2010 (170,767). In Wales entries for the full course are 65% higher in 2020 (10,037) than in 2010 (6,100).

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
History	199852	200992	198316	202630	238928	236304	227619	242834	239027	244401	261537	273778
Geography	176034	175347	163604	169968	204497	207857	211721	228463	231297	242268	251121	255344
Religious Studies Full	164647	170767	199752	216373	239409	258067	271917	271973	256729	229189	227913	225719
Religious Studies	261399	254698	233998	211269	150621	99661	68890	53093	36962	26229	21530	18067
Religious Studies	426046	425465	433750	427642	390030	357728	340807	325066	293691	255418	249443	243786

Sources:

http://www.jcq.org.uk/examination-results/gcses

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/results-tables-for-gcse-as-and-a-level-results-in-england-2020

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.

Using the teaching and learning model of the Agreed Syllabus many schools are planning their curriculum based around the enquiry questions provided. Training from the launch and onwards is focussed on supporting schools to build an effective curriculum for RE using the Agreed Syllabus. This includes a focus on the intent, implementation and impact of RE. An increasing number of schools teach RE in an enquiry-based way. Some schools have opted for regular RE themed days to support their delivery of the curriculum.

A programme of visits and visitors particularly in more 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 Advisory Service. This sits alongside a planned programme of continuing professional development including subject knowledge support for schools.

Aided Church schools 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.

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 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 identified a planned programme to ensure it discharges its duties relating to the monitoring of standards in RE and monitoring the provision of collective worship. This has been delayed due to the Coronavirus pandemic but will be enacted for initial reporting in next year's report.

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.

Due to the Coronavirus pandemic, it has not been possible to measure the success of the implementation of the new syllabus.

5: Collective worship

SACRE encourages all schools to comply with their legal duty to provide a daily act of Collective Worship for their pupils. This may take place at any time of day and in class, year group, or whole school settings.

North Yorkshire SACRE believes that acts of collective worship or spiritual reflection should be meaningful and relevant to all those present. In order for this to be the case, SACRE has identified six principles which schools should apply with regard to daily collective worship.

Collective worship should:

1. Promote a sense of community;
2. Be educational;
3. Promote spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development;
4. Be a special time;
5. Enable participants to be actively involved;
6. Be of high quality.

Further information on this is available in the document, "Guidance to schools on Collective Worship", which may be accessed by schools via https://secure2.sla-online.co.uk/v3/Resources/Page/11790 once logged into https://www.nyeducationservices.co.uk

Resources to support the provision of Collective Worship are accessible at https://secure2.sla-online.co.uk/v3/Resources/Page/11790 once logged into https://www.nyeducationservices.co.uk

Schools may apply to SACRE for a determination in order to provide Collective Worship of a non-Christian or other form. No schools have done so during this academic year.

There were no complaints registered with the local authority or SACRE in 2019/2020 in respect of collective worship.

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

6: Management of SACRE

SACRE meetings

For the period covered by this Annual Report, there have been two formal SACRE Meetings – September 2019 and January 2020. This was because of the Covid-19 pandemic. However, lines of communication have been retained with SACRE Members. An informal meeting was held with Members remotely in May 2020.

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

Attendance at SACRE meetings 2019-20

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

Committee	9th September 2019	30th January 2020	Possible Maximum Attendances at each meeting
Committee A	3	7	**12** (includes four vacancies)
Committee B	1	3	**4** (includes one vacancy)
Committee C	2	2	**5** (one Member was on a sabbatical in 2019/20)
Committee D	2	5	**5**
Local Authority Adviser	1	1	**1**
Total	**9**	**18**	**27** (Total Membership)

Please note: the local authority adviser is not a member, as such, but their attendance is included above, given the key role they play

Membership, training and wider involvement

Olivia Seymour was elected Chair of SACRE and Helen Sellers was elected as Vice-Chair, for the school year 2019/2020.

One of the Teacher Representatives, Sarah Beveridge, was on a sabbatical from Membership for 2019/20.

Bill Kimberling has replaced Robert Brownlow as the representative of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Hazel Hornsby was appointed as the representative of the Catholic Church, to replace Christopher Devanny whose term of office came to an end.

Dr. Neville Packter, a long-standing representative of Judaism on the Committee, resigned.

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).

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. A key focus this year was on subject knowledge with workshops led by Muslim Learner Services and Humanists UK.

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.

Training was limited this academic year due to Covid-19 however the Primary RE training day did take place in March and some schools accessed local RE networks and the face to face and online subject knowledge workshops in partnership with LTLRE.

8: Executive Summary

- There were no complaints registered with the local authority and SACRE in 2019/20 in respect of religious education or collective worship.
- No determinations[2] were requested by schools.

Due to the Coronavirus pandemic, we currently do not have GCSE or A Level information for the academic year 2019/2020. The DFE are due to release the GCSE and A Level Statistical First Returns in October (date not available). However, at this time of writing the local authority does not know the content of the SFRs or the dates that we might receive further information/data sets for analysis.

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 2019-2020

Baptist	Mrs H Sellers (Vice Chair)
Buddhist	Vacancy
Hindu	Vacancy
Humanist	Professor J Adams
Jewish	Dr N Packter
Methodist	Mrs B Belsham
Muslim	Mr N Moussa Emam
Roman Catholic	Mrs H Hornsby
Salvationist	Vacancy
Sikh	Mr M Singh Chana
Society of Friends	Vacancy
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints	Mr. B Kimberling

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 Ms J Clarke Mrs Hannah Harrison Mrs R Oates (until July 2019) Mr Doug Rice-Bowen Miss H Spencer
Local Authority	County Councillor Robert Heseltine County Councillor Janet Jefferson County Councillor Andrew Lee County Councillor Patrick Mulligan County Councillor Annabel Wilkinson
Co-opted Member	Vacancy
Local Authority Adviser	Rebecca Swift (until December 2019) Katharine Bruce January 2020 onwards
Clerk to SACRE	Sally Mitchell (until December 2019) Patrick Duffy (January 2020 onward)

Notes

Notes

Contact us

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

Our Customer Service Centre is open Monday to Friday 8.00am - 5.30pm
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