



Agenda

Meeting North Yorkshire Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE)

To: Councillor Alyson Baker (Chair), Professor John Adams, Pam Acheson, Sarah Beveridge (Vice-Chair), Mary-Lou Byrne, Chris Devanny, Hayden Cohen, Nasr Moussa Emam, Councillor Robert Heseltine, Sarah Hodgson, Councillor Janet Jefferson, Abhijeet Kulkarni, Mohinder Singh Chana, Councillor Simon Myers, Leadley-Yoward, Reverend Claire Soderman, and Councillor Annabel Wilkinson.

Date: Tuesday, 21 April 2026

Time: 4.00 pm

Venue: Hybrid meeting held via Microsoft Teams, and in person at County Hall, Brierley Meeting Room

Business

1. **Welcome and Announcements**

2. **Apologies for Absence**

3. **Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday 9 December 2025** (Pages 5 - 8)

Members to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 9 December 2025 as an accurate record.

4. **Declarations of Interest**

All Members are invited to declare at this point any interests they have in items appearing on this agenda, including the nature of those interests.

5. **Public Participation**

Members of the public may ask questions or make statements at this meeting if they have given notice to Edward Maxwell, Clerk to North Yorkshire SACRE (contact details below) by midday on Thursday 16 April, three working days before the day of the meeting. Each speaker should limit themselves to 3 minutes on any item. Members of the public who have given notice will be invited to speak:

- at this point in the meeting if their questions/statements relate to matters which

are not otherwise on the Agenda (subject to an overall time limit of 30 minutes);

- when the relevant Agenda item is being considered if they wish to speak on a matter which is on the Agenda for this meeting.

If you are exercising your right to speak at this meeting, but do not wish to be recorded, please inform the Chair who will instruct anyone who may be taking a recording to cease while you speak.

6. Member Training - Monitoring (Pages 9 - 30)

To receive a training session on monitoring RE in schools.

7. Member Presentation

Members to hear a presentation from a member of the SACRE on an aspect of their work or faith, to increase awareness and understanding.

8. Update by the Professional Religious Education Adviser (Pages 31 - 40)

To inform Members on work undertaken by the Professional RE Adviser since the last SACRE meeting, and to provide members with local and national updates on RE.

9. Update by the Local Authority (Pages 41 - 44)

To inform Members on work undertaken by the Local Authority since the last SACRE meeting.

10. SACRE Development Plan 2024-26 (Pages 45 - 50)

Members to review and comment on the SACRE Development Plan 2024-26.

11. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the SACRE will take place on Tuesday 16 June 2026, at 4:00pm. It will be an in-person meeting, held in The Brierley meeting room, County Hall, Northallerton.

Contact Details:

For enquiries relating to this agenda please contact Edward Maxwell, Clerk to North Yorkshire SACRE, democraticservices.central@northyorks.gov.uk, website: www.northyorks.gov.uk.

Barry Khan
Assistant Chief Executive
Legal and Democratic Services
County Hall
Northallerton

Monday, 13 April 2026

North Yorkshire Council

North Yorkshire Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE)

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday, 9 December 2025 commencing at 4.00 pm.

Group A: Christian Denominations and such other religious denominations as, in the Authority's opinion, will appropriately reflect the principal religious traditions in the area: Professor John Adams (Humanists)*, Sarah Beveridge (Society of Friends), Nasr Moussa Emam (Islam), Mayan Leadley-Yoward (Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints).

Group B: Church of England: Lee Talbot, Revd Claire Soderman.

Group C: Teachers' Associations: Mary Lou Byrne.

Group D: North Yorkshire Council: Councillors Alyson Baker (Chair)*, Janet Jefferson, and Annabel Wilkinson.

Officers present: Stuart Anslow (Senior Education Adviser Monitoring), Edward Maxwell (Clerk to SACRE), Julie Pattison (Principal Education Adviser Monitoring), Olivia Seymour (Principal RE Adviser).

* denotes in person attendance

Copies of all documents considered are in the Minute Book

116 Welcome and Announcements

The Chair welcomed attendees to the meeting, and acknowledged important faith observances taking place recently or in the near future, including Christmas, Hanukkah, and Martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadar. The SACRE wished Tom Clayton well, as he had resigned since the last SACRE meeting.

117 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Hayden Cohen, Abhijeet Kulkarni, and Mohinder Singh Chana (Group A), Sarah Hodgson (Group C), and Councillors Robert Heseltine and Councillor Simon Myers (Group D).

118 Minutes of the Meeting held on 30 September 2025

The minutes of the meeting held on 30 September 2025 were agreed as an accurate record.

119 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

120 Public Participation

There were no public questions or statements.

121 Member Training - NASACRE Handbook

The Professional RE Adviser delivered a training session for SACRE members, focusing on the updated NASACRE Handbook (July 2025) and supporting new member inductions. The presentation outlined SACRE's statutory role as the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education, a legal body advising the Local Authority on RE and collective worship in schools. Members were reminded of SACRE's legal duties, including publishing an annual report, advising on RE matters, and considering determinations from schools, alongside best practice such as monitoring provision, co-opting members, and reviewing the agreed syllabus outside the five-year cycle.

Examples of SACRE's wider impact were highlighted, including the agreed syllabus launch, RE networks, and newsletters. Clarification was given that Local Authority representatives (Group D) do not vote on syllabus reviews to avoid conflicts of interest. The handbook also sets out SACRE's role in supporting RE, collective worship, and SMSC, achieved through officer reports, school questionnaires, and inspection findings.

The composition of SACRE was explained, with four groups (A: faith and belief communities, B: Church of England, C: teachers, D: Local Authority), as determined by the local Constitution. The Local Authority's responsibilities include ensuring SACRE's existence, establishing an Agreed Syllabus Conference, reviewing the syllabus every five years, providing funds, and responding to SACRE's advice. The Clerk outlined the role of Democratic Services in supporting SACRE's operations and communications.

Members reflected on the importance of listening to all perspectives, working collaboratively, and keeping the focus on pupil outcomes. Concerns were raised about the potential impact of political changes on SACRE's support for RE, with reassurance given that NASACRE ensures statutory requirements are upheld regardless of political context. Responsibilities across different school types were also discussed: SACRE has full responsibility for maintained community and voluntary controlled schools, while voluntary aided schools' RE curriculum is overseen by their faith body. Academies must be provided with an agreed syllabus but retain freedom to adopt or design their own provision.

Agreed: That the training be noted, and that the Professional RE Adviser be thanked for an informative and engaging session.

122 Update from Professional RE Adviser - Curriculum and Assessment Review

The Professional RE Adviser provided an update on the final report of the national Curriculum and Assessment Review Panel and the government's response, published in November. The report recommends that Religious Education (RE) be incorporated into the National Curriculum, with the RE Council of England and Wales tasked with drafting proposals within six months. Dr Vanessa Ogden is leading an expert advisory group, supported by reference groups representing religion and belief communities, RE teachers, legal experts, school leaders, and young ambassadors.

It was noted that SACRE's role will remain valued, though its legal function in curriculum determination may be amended if RE becomes a National Curriculum subject. SACRE's local responsibilities for communication, representation, and monitoring will continue to be important.

In discussion, Members acknowledged the early stages the review was at, and the uncertainty about how significant it might prove, but welcomed the potential elevation of RE's status. Challenges in achieving consensus among belief groups were highlighted, along with the possible removal of RE from sixth forms, the review of non-statutory guidance, and the requirement for parliamentary approval for legal changes. Officers responded that consensus is emerging, supported by the existing National Content

Standard, and clarified that legislative changes may be achieved through amendments to clauses rather than primary legislation. Members also asked about SACRE's role in promoting community cohesion, and examples including syllabus launches, school speakers, and engagement with interfaith week were highlighted.

The Professional RE Adviser undertook to continue to keep SACRE informed, both through formal updates in meetings and informally passing information through the Clerk to Members between meetings.

Agreed: That the report be noted.

123 SACRE Annual Report

The SACRE considered the draft 2024/25 Annual Report, which was presented by the Principal Education Adviser. It was reported that since it had first been considered by SACRE at the 30 September 2025 meeting, an image had been removed from the Collective Worship section as it did not relate to Collective Worship. There were no other corrections or amendments suggested. The Clerk reiterated the procedure for voting.

Agreed (unanimously): That the SACRE 2024/25 Annual Report be approved.

124 Update by the Local Authority

The Principal Education Adviser (Monitoring) presented their report, noting a quiet period due to Ofsted's pause on most inspection activity. Seven inspection reports from before the summer holidays, which were published after the collation of the deadline for inclusion in the September report, were shared, with feedback generally positive.

The renewed Ofsted framework is being reviewed for references to collective worship and RE, which are expected to be captured within the personal development and behaviour sections. In discussion, the challenges of delivering RE in Pupil Referral Units was raised. It was confirmed that the LA works with such schools and adapts the curriculum to meet pupil needs within the legal framework.

Agreed: That the report be noted.

125 SACRE Development Plan 2024-26

Members considered the SACRE Development Plan, offering comments and feedback on future items of work which would contribute to its effective implementation. Updates included ongoing work to hold a meeting at an outside venue in June 2026.

Agreed: That the development plan be noted.

126 Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting, on Tuesday 21 April at 16:00, was noted.

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SACRE members training

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- Revisiting - What is the role of SACRE?
- Exploring how we 'know' the standard of RE in our schools



Agenda Item 6

A SACRE must: **page 4-5 of handbook**

- advise the LA on RE in accordance with the Agreed Syllabus
- publish an annual report on its work and on actions taken by its
- representative Groups, specifying matters on which it has advised the LA
- email a copy of the annual report to the Secretary of State; annual reports have been analysed by the DfE and NASACRE since September 2021
- meet in public, unless confidential information is to be disclosed
- make minutes of meetings available for public inspection.
- Advise the LA on matters relating to collective worship, either in response to a referral from the LA, or as the SACRE sees fit
- consider applications from a headteacher that the school be allowed to modify the 'wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character' requirement for collective worship. This is known as a determination.

How do we 'know' the impact of the agreed syllabus in supporting schools developing their own contextual curriculum for their pupils?

How do we 'know' the quality of CW provision in NY schools?

A SACRE should: page 4-5 of handbook

- monitor the provision and quality of RE taught according to the Agreed Syllabus, together with the overall effectiveness of the syllabus
- provide advice and support on the effective teaching of RE in accordance with the locally Agreed Syllabus
- in partnership with the LA, consider whether any changes need to be made to the Agreed Syllabus
- offer advice to the LA, and through the LA to schools, concerning the way an existing Agreed Syllabus can be interpreted to fit with a broad, balanced, coherent and cohesive curriculum.

How do we 'know' the provision and quality of RE according to the agreed syllabus?

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A SACRE may:

- require the LA to review the Agreed Syllabus; if a vote is taken on this matter, SACRE Group D (the LA) is not entitled to cast a vote; a majority decision by the three other committees is sufficient
- decide to advise the LA on matters related to its functions; equally, an LA may decide to refer matters to the SACRE
- co-opt members who are not members of any of the four SACRE Groups; such co-opted members may provide educational expertise, young people's views or religious and non-religious views, reflecting a diverse multicultural society.

SACRE's role is to support good RE and collective worship within its schools by:

page 4-5 of handbook

- giving advice on ways of teaching the Agreed Syllabus, including the choice of teaching materials
- monitoring schools' provision for RE and collective worship as well as pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC)
- advising the LA on the provision of RE training for teachers
- considering complaints referred by the LA about the provision and delivery of religious education or collective worship.
- In order to offer advice, SACRE should monitor school approaches to assessing pupils' progress in RE and review the uptake and standards achieved in external religious studies examinations.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

SACRE should be aware of the contribution that RE and CW can make to pupils' personal development including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Additionally, members of Groups A and B may support pupils' awareness of religious beliefs and their influence on the formation of pupils' attitudes and values.

The most effective SACREs may also:

- monitor good practice in the delivery of the Agreed Syllabus in a range of ways, taking note of any difficulties
- disseminate good practice in the teaching of RE
- review provision for in-service training and development
- receive school inspection reports, in whole or part

How do we 'know' the impact of the agreed syllabus in supporting schools developing their own contextual curriculum for their pupils?

The role of SACRE

SACREs are responsible for oversight of the religious education and collective worship in their local schools. Levels of responsibility vary.

For example:

- In voluntary aided schools, RE is determined by the governors and taught according to the school's trust deed, not necessarily the Agreed Syllabus
- In all schools with a religious character, collective worship can be reflective of that religion
- In academies (even those which follow the LA agreed syllabus)
RE must be taught it is part of every academies funding agreement

In summary

SACREs:

- Are statutory bodies which all local authorities have to have and support
- Are representative of the local community
- Are responsible for RE and CW in most schools
- Are instrumental in ensuring quality experiences for all pupils in RE and CW
- Have to report annually to the DfE and NASACRE
- Have the potential to contribute to social harmony and community cohesion

How do we know? What activities might we undertake?

What do we do already?

School questionnaire

Presentations to SACRE

Feedback from training

Examining data - Workforce data, exam data, Growing up in North Yorkshire data

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What could we do?

Looking at the school website

Looking at the school RE policy

Talking to pupils

Talking to a Headteacher and subject leader on a visit

Talking to staff on a visit

Looking at examples of pupil work

** NATRE resource for SACRES

What questions might we ask? Thinking about compliance

For Primary Schools:

Do all pupils participate in RE in all year groups?

Have there been any parental requests to withdraw their children from RE? how can SACRE support the school with advice on this?

For secondary schools:

Do all pupils participate in RE in all year groups?

How is RE organized in KS4? Do all pupils follow an accredited course?

If not all pupils follow an accredited course how does the school ensure all pupils have RE on their timetable?

Have there been any parental requests to withdraw their children from RE? how can SACRE support the school with advice on this?

What questions might we ask? Thinking about curriculum and the impact of the Agreed Syllabus

How have you organized your RE curriculum?

What is the range of religions and worldviews your pupils study through the curriculum?

Do you include visits and visitors in your curriculum to enhance RE provision?

How has the locally agreed syllabus supported you in developing the curriculum in your school?

What are your biggest challenges at the moment? What further support could SACRE offer you?

Considering school visits:

The purpose of school visits is to:

- Ensure compliance with relevant aspects such as delivery of locally agreed syllabus
- Provide contacts and advice where appropriate for RE and Collective Worship
- Gather information for North Yorkshire SACRE's statutory annual report
- Identify and celebrate best practice in the delivery of Religious Education in North Yorkshire schools

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Remember:

- We work in partnership - LA officers would guide and support us on a visit
- As SACRE members we are not there to make judgements
- We are not there to promote our own beliefs or views (this is a different visit from visiting as a member of a religion or belief community)
- We are there to observe and notice to inform our understanding
- We should ask questions
- We should celebrate best practice
- We should bring back to SACRE questions we have

An example of a visit form

SACRE school visit form

SACRE members from time to time are interested in visiting local schools to see examples of Religious Education (RE) and Collective Worship (CW) taking place. This is to help members understand the nature of both of these areas of the curriculum in Newham, so they can become better informed when SACRE meets to make decisions about how to support RE and CW in Newham schools.

It would be helpful to the SACRE member if the person they liaise with in setting up this visit at the school could have 15-30 minutes with them at the start or end of their visit to answer any questions about what they have or will see.

School Visit:

Date:

Contact:

Phone contact:

SACRE member to fill in and share from at next SACRE meeting:

Commentary: *Write about what you saw, did on your visit*

An example of pupil voice – REQM primary and secondary questions



PRIMARY

What do you think about RE in your school?

This questionnaire will help your school decide how well you are learning in Religious Education (RE).

Please tell us what RE is called in your school: _____

Thank you for sharing your ideas.
The REQM team

1) What do you learn about in RE?	
2a) What do you learn about other people's beliefs in RE? 2b) Do you learn about what you believe too?	
3) What kind of questions does your teacher ask you in RE?	
4a) Do you ask questions in RE? 4b) What have you have asked, and why?	

6) How do you know how to make progress in your RE learning?	
7) How does your RE work link up with other subjects in school, or with other schools?	
8) What opportunities are there for using creative approaches to learning? For example, do you explore or record your learning in writing, artwork, multimedia?	
9) What opportunities do you have in RE to visit significant places (of worship or of value) or to meet with visitors from different backgrounds?	
10) How do these encounters with other places and people help your learning?	
11) How does your RE help you to learn about people beyond your local area - for example around the country, or around the world?	

Discussion and questions



What activities will help us know the quality of RE curriculum in our North Yorkshire schools?

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What do you think about RE in your school?

This questionnaire will help your school decide how well you are learning in Religious Education (RE).

Please tell us what RE is called in your school: _____

Thank you for sharing your ideas.
The REQM team

1) What do you learn about in RE?	
2a) What do you learn about other people's beliefs in RE? 2b) Do you learn about what you believe too?	
3) What kind of questions does your teacher ask you in RE?	
4a) Do you ask questions in RE? 4b) What have you have asked, and why?	

<p>5a) How do you know how well you are learning in RE?</p> <p>5b) How do you know which steps to take next?</p>	
<p>6a) What activities do you do in RE? (for example: art, music, writing, roleplay?)</p> <p>6b) How do they help you learn?</p>	
<p>7) What interesting things did you learn from a visitor you had in RE, or from a visit to a special place?</p>	
<p>8) How does your RE help you to learn about people beyond your local area - for example around the country, or around the world?</p>	
<p>9) What would make your learning in RE even better?</p>	
<p>10) What else would you like to tell us about RE?</p>	



What do you think about Religious Education (RE) in your school?

This questionnaire will help your school decide how well you are learning in RE.

Please tell us what RE is called in your school: _____

Thank you for sharing your ideas.
The REQM team

1) Which aspects of RE do you find especially interesting?	
2) What opportunities do you have in RE to explore questions and important ideas about life?	
3) Which religions and other worldviews do you study in RE?	
4) How do you reflect on your own beliefs or views in RE?	
5) On a scale of 1-5 (1 = least challenging, 5 = most challenging), how much learning challenge is there in your RE lessons? Please give a reason for the number you have chosen.	

<p>6) How do you know how to make progress in your RE learning?</p>	
<p>7) How does your RE work link up with other subjects in school, or with other schools?</p>	
<p>8) What opportunities are there for using creative approaches to learning? For example, do you explore or record your learning in writing, artwork, multimedia?</p>	
<p>9) What opportunities do you have in RE to visit significant places (of worship or of value) or to meet with visitors from different backgrounds?</p>	
<p>10) How do these encounters with other places and people help your learning?</p>	
<p>11) How does your RE help you to learn about people beyond your local area - for example around the country, or around the world?</p>	
<p>12a) What would make the learning in RE even better?</p> <p>12b) Is there anything else you would like to say about RE?</p>	

SACRE school visit form

SACRE members from time to time are interested in visiting local schools to see examples of Religious Education (RE) and Collective Worship (CW) taking place. This is to help members understand the nature of both of these areas of the curriculum in Newham, so they can become better informed when SACRE meets to make decisions about how to support RE and CW in Newham schools.

It would be helpful to the SACRE member if the person they liaise with in setting up this visit at the school could have 15-30 minutes with them at the start or end of their visit to answer any questions about what they have or will see.

School Visit:

Date:

Contact:

Phone contact:

SACRE member to fill in and share from at next SACRE meeting:

Commentary: *Write about what you saw, did on your visit*

Compliment: *Write about what you enjoyed from doing/seeing on this visit*

Conversation: *Are there any questions that the visit left you with that would be good to raise with SACRE at our next meeting? Please find out if the school feels supported by Newham SACRE around CW?*

Question that might be useful to think about on your visit

<p>1. What is the title of this lesson, what are its learning aims/objectives?</p>	
<p>2. How long is the lesson and to which year group?</p>	
<p>3. What important RE questions have pupils been asked in the lesson today?</p>	
<p>4. Can you see that pupils have been given suggestions of how to improve their work in their RE books?</p>	
<p>5. Have you seen anything creative happening in the lesson?</p>	

<p>6. Ask the teacher at the end of the lesson what are their biggest challenge at the moment with RE in their school, is there anyway SACRE could support them?</p>	
<p>7. If you have the opportunity ask some pupils what they like most about their RE lessons, and what would make their learning in RE even better?</p>	
<p>8. Did what the pupils did in the lesson match and complete the lesson aims and objectives?</p>	
<p>9. Is there anything else you want to tell us about your visit to a RE lesson?</p>	

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North Yorkshire Council

North Yorkshire Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) –

April 2026

Update from Professional RE Adviser

1.0 Purpose of the Report

To inform Members on work undertaken by the Professional RE Adviser since the last SACRE meeting.

To provide members with local and national updates on RE

2.0 Training Programme 2025-26

Primary RE networks 2025-2026

The Primary RE network ran in both the autumn and spring term. 11 RE leads attending in autumn term with a focus on the new Ofsted Inspection Framework and RE and resources to support Interfaith Week. 12 RE leads attended in the spring term with a focus on the National Content Standard for RE and an exploration of film resources to support the teaching of RE.

Primary RE leadership course

The leadership course was cancelled due to low numbers.

3.0 Curriculum and Assessment Review – see separate paper written by Olivia Seymour as RE Hubs Lead for Yorkshire and Humber. In addition Olivia will give a further verbal update on the current status of the sector engagement work.

4.0 Protecting What Matters: Towards a more confident, cohesive, and resilient United Kingdom.

The government released a Policy Paper published on 9th March 2026 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/protecting-what-matters-towards-a-more-confident-cohesive-and-resilient-united-kingdom> The report talks about RE, religious literacy and SACREs positively. Some selected sections are:

Celebrating faith and belief communities. We will:

Working closely with faith and belief communities, we will expand Inter Faith Week, boost faith and belief literacy in government and wider society, and strengthen the role of Religious Education, including through improved engagement with Standing Advisory Councils for Religious Education (SACREs). (pg10)

Promote the role of Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education (SACREs) by supporting improved analysis of their annual reports, to better understand the role they play in communities including in relation to cohesion (pg 25)

Teaching our values and history. We will:

Drive up standards in the teaching of Religious Education. We will carefully consider including Religious Education in the national curriculum, subject to the sector reaching consensus on the content of, and approach to delivering, a curriculum. (Pg 24)

NASACRE have written a statement which I have copied below for ease: [statement-26-03-10.pdf](#)

Government commits to supporting SACREs

NASACRE is delighted to read the Policy Paper published on 9th March 2026 Protecting What Matters: Towards a more confident, cohesive, and resilient United Kingdom. We welcome the government's fresh commitment to acting on social cohesion. The paper recognises that His Majesty's Government has already made steps to improve cohesion but has more to do, and so the paper takes the form of an action plan. In this we are pleased to see a commitment to celebrating faith and belief communities by expanding Inter Faith Week, boosting faith and belief literacy in government and wider society, and most significantly for us, strengthening the role of Religious Education, including through improved engagement with Standing Advisory Councils for Religious Education (SACREs). The government is committed to driving up standards in RE and is carefully considering including RE in the national curriculum.

SACREs already play a strategic role in local community linking, especially through collaborative working between different faith and belief communities in creating:

- locally focussed RE syllabuses which promote critical thinking and can help pupils avigate our complex local, national and global society,
- supporting other multi-faith engagement events (such as Inter Faith Week)
- providing collective worship guidance.

The local nature of SACREs is a protective factor against division, because locally grounded RE helps pupils to understand the diversity around them.

NASACRE looks forward to continuing our work with MHCLG and the DfE and welcomes the recognition of the role of SACREs in promoting social cohesion. We await further detail of how these two departments will promote the role of SACREs and welcome their offer of support with analysis of SACRE annual reports. With this improved analysis, we hope to help government to better understand the role SACREs play in communities including in relation to cohesion.

NASACRE Chairs group, March 2026

5.0 What are the new style Ofsted reports saying about Religious Education?

As of Monday 16 February, 160 new-style Ofsted reports have been published for primary, secondary and cross-phase schools, excluding schools with a religious character. In the past, the RE community has raised concerns that Religious Education has been overlooked in inspection reports, even allowing for the fact that RE is not normally inspected by Ofsted in schools with a religious character. The early evidence from the new-style reports suggests that this is not the case any longer. Around half of the published reports in schools without a religious character, refer to the teaching of religious beliefs or faiths. The breakdown is shown in the attached report from NATRE.

What are the new style Ofsted reports saying about Religious Education?

As of Monday 16 February, 160 new-style Ofsted reports have been published for primary, secondary and cross-phase schools, excluding schools with a religious character. In the past, the RE community has raised concerns that Religious Education has been overlooked in inspection reports, even allowing for the fact that RE is not normally inspected by Ofsted in schools with a religious character. The early evidence from the new-style reports suggests that this is not the case any longer. Around half of the published reports in schools without a religious character, refer to the teaching of religious beliefs or faiths. The breakdown is shown below.

NEW STYLE OFSTED REPORTS PUBLISHED UP TO 16TH FEB	
PRIMARY	118
SECONDARY	39
CROSS PHASE	3
TOTAL	160

NEW STYLE REPORTS THAT EXPLICITLY MENTION RE		
	NUMBER	%
PRIMARY	58	49
SECONDARY	17	44
CROSS PHASE	1	33
TOTAL	77	48

Of the 77 reports that explicitly mention RE, only two references appear under the curriculum and teaching heading. Both are positive comments relating to primary schools. In one case, leaders had adapted the RE curriculum to include a wider range of worldviews. In another, the school was recognised for its creative use of web-based resources to broaden pupils' understanding of religions and worldviews. It is worth noting that the new-style reports focus strongly on the child's experience of school. They do not include subject deep dives and rarely highlight individual subjects in either primary or secondary phases, particularly beyond English and Mathematics.

All other references to RE appear within the personal development and wellbeing section. Again, it is rare for RE to be named explicitly as a subject. Instead, around half of reports refer more generally to pupils learning about religious beliefs within the broader personal development framework.

This indicates that Ofsted recognises the role of RE in preparing pupils for life in an increasingly diverse society. However, there is a potential risk if this leads school and trust leaders to view RE solely as a vehicle for personal development, rather than as a subject with its own distinctive body of knowledge and disciplinary approaches. There is a danger that citizenship, RSE and RE could be blended together in ways that dilute subject depth - a concern reflected in Ofsted's recent subject report on RE.¹

Within the 76 reports that explicitly mention the teaching of religious beliefs in the personal development and wellbeing section, eight include critical comments. These concerns focus on lack of depth or on pupils struggling to recall what they have been taught. Of the 77 reports that explicitly mention RE, two include next steps specifically related to strengthening pupils' knowledge of faiths.

Personal Development and Wellbeing Judgements

The table below shows the distribution of grades awarded for personal development and wellbeing across the 160 schools.

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND WELLBEING								
	PRIMARY		SECONDARY		CROSS PHASE		TOTAL	
	NUMBER	%	NUMBER	%	NUMBER	%	NUMBER	%
EXCEPTIONAL	1	1	6	15	0	0	7	4
STRONG STANDARD	52	44	12	31	2	67	66	41
EXPECTED STANDARD	62	53	21	54	1	33	84	53
NEEDS ATTENTION	3	3	0	0	0	0	3	2
URGENT IMPROVEMENT	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	118	101	39	100	3	100	160	100

The table below shows the number and percentage of schools within each rating for personal development and wellbeing that explicitly mention RE. For example, there are six secondary schools rated as exceptional for personal development and wellbeing, and three of these (50%) explicitly mention RE

NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF SCHOOLS MENTIONING RE AT EACH PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND WELLBEING RATING								
	PRIMARY		SECONDARY		CROSS PHASE		TOTAL	
	NUMBER	%	NUMBER	%	NUMBER	%	NUMBER	%
EXCEPTIONAL	0	0	3	50	0	0	3	50
STRONG STANDARD	28	54	5	42	1	50	34	52
EXPECTED STANDARD	30	48	9	43	0	0	39	46
NEEDS ATTENTION	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
URGENT IMPROVEMENT	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Most schools are judged to be at expected standard or above for personal development and wellbeing. All schools that explicitly mention the teaching of religious beliefs are graded at expected standard or above in this area. Of the six schools judged exceptional, half include an explicit reference to teaching about faiths or religious beliefs.

Overall, 52% of schools rated strong standard for personal development and wellbeing include an explicit mention of teaching about faith or religious beliefs. In the primary sector this figure is 54%.

Conclusion

Early evidence from the new-style Ofsted reports suggests that learning about religious beliefs is increasingly recognised as an important element of pupils' personal development. However, RE is rarely discussed explicitly as a curriculum subject, and only a very small number of reports reference it in relation to curriculum intent or teaching. This raises important questions for school and trust leaders about how RE is positioned within wider personal development agendas.

While it is encouraging to see inspectors valuing pupils' understanding of religion and belief, there is a risk that, without explicit recognition as a subject discipline, RE becomes absorbed into broader pastoral or values-based provision, with a potential unintended consequence of reduced curriculum time. There therefore remains a need to ensure that RE is not marginalised in this way but

continues to be developed and protected as a rigorous subject with its own knowledge, concepts and disciplinary approaches.

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South West SACRES Dr Vanessa Ogden

Overview of the structure of the work

- There is a set of reference groups and task and finish groups to enable the work
- Legal group – chaired by Charles Clarke
- Teacher group – chaired by Katie Freeman
- Religion and belief group – chaired by Claire Clinton via REC
- Young Ambassadors group
- Drafting group – led by Dr Richard Kueh and Deborah Weston – This draws upon expertise in various ways to draft the materials

There have been multiple individual meetings in addition to this (3 sides of typed A4 of all the groups and individuals and that excludes the list of teachers consulted) and all interactions are recorded for transparency.

It is important to note that this is sector engagement rather than a consultation process but this has been comprehensive. **If the secretary of state decides to take this work forward there would then be a formal consultation.**

There have been significant discussions around the content of programmes of study and then a complimentary set of pathways which is very important for the dual system of English education (schools with a religious education and schools without – both financed through the state). Whatever is recommended cannot interfere with this as there won't be a settlement without this. The Secretary of State accepts this as long as there is a benchmark in terms of curriculum standards.

Programmes of Study

The starting point has been the National Content Standard but this has been iterated accordingly based on discussions as part of the process. It is a form of curriculum but not detailed curriculum – like all other National Curriculum documents for other subjects. There is a wealth of opportunities for curriculum development in the sector through SACRES and RE advisory work that then enables outworking of the programme of study outline. The Programme of Study do not recommend one methodological or pedagogical approach. Rather it is exemplar to enable further development for specific contexts.

The programmes of study will include 'local study' and there is role for SACRES to support this in their locality.

There is a focus on breadth and depth. Work has been done to situate this to enable different ways of the programmes of study being outworked (methodological and pedagogical) as long as the substantive disciplinary and personal knowledge overview is met.

Slides shared by Deborah Weston I am unable to share this due to restrictions placed on the meeting.

An overview of what will be included:

- Aims of RE- set out in bullet points - RE should be academically rigorous and personally inspiring
- A rationale statement for religious education
- Structure of RE - The document will be set out into 3 strands: Substantive, disciplinary and personal knowledge. The Curriculum will be the progression model
- Traditions studied – this follows evidence from the research review that you cannot teach everything there is to know about religious and non-religious beliefs. The model aims to ensure a balance between breadth and depth e.g in terms of breadth KS1 and KS2 pupils encounter a range (not the same as learning in depth for all). In terms of depth at KS1 and 2 there is an expectation of Christianity and at least one other tradition in depth. In addition, there will be an expectation of balance of Abrahamic and Dharmic/Indic traditions – so pupils will encounter all 7 religions and beliefs across KS1 & 2
- Substantive knowledge – 4 themes which include e.g matters of central importance to traditions, ultimate questions
- Personal knowledge – same language across KS1-4 as outworked differently in curriculum and not assessed – explores things such as positionality, reflexivity
- There will be core RE specified at KS4 alongside GCSE model to ensure statutory requirement for all.
- There will be a recommendation of timing – 5% of curriculum time

Dr Vanessa Ogden discussed the importance of SACRES considering how to continue the work that ASCs have previously done in terms of developing materials to support the work of the programmes of study. Government is keen to ensure the work of SACRES supporting local teachers continues.

A focus on SACRES

SACRES are really important and will have continuing role. The only legislative change recommended will be around the Agreed Syllabus Conference. Dr Vanessa Ogden talked about the role of SACRES including the role of producing resources, supporting access to speakers and places of worship, monitoring and quality assurance of RE, giving advice on the right of withdrawal and collective worship which is separate and not in the purview of this piece of work.

Dr Vanessa Ogden has also spoken to Department of Communities and is speaking to the minister for community cohesion next week at No10. This is specifically around the role of SACREs and the strengthening of their role in regards to community cohesion. SACREs are seen as a ready-made resource around community cohesion that government nationally and locally is not utilising well enough presently. Dr Vanessa Ogden explained that there is agreement that this needs specifying as important and made visible as important. For example, particularly around advice to local government when matters of critical community significance happen so that communities stand side by side. Dr Vanessa Ogden and others (e.g NASACRE exec) are planning work to specify the importance of work of SACRES in this space and are trying to get funding to SACREs ring-fenced.

There is a Phase 2 of the work needed that Dr Vanessa Ogden will write in to her report

Some trusts and organisations willing to support financially. This phase would include bringing together the different parts of the sector that have begun through this process. This includes the work of RE Hubs which Dr Ogden sees as a conduit that could be used by government to support and highlight high quality RE.

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North Yorkshire Council

North Yorkshire Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE)

April 2026

Update from the Local Authority

1.0 Purpose of the Report

To inform Members on work undertaken by the Local Authority since the last SACRE meeting.

2.0 Communication and resourcing

- 2.1 The SACRE Spring term newsletter was distributed to schools via the red bag system on 23rd January 2026.
- 2.2 The SACRE Ramadan guidance was distributed to schools via the red bag system on 30th January 2026.
- 2.3 LA officers have submitted the Annual SACRE Report to the DfE and NASACRE in time for the 31st December 2025 deadline.
- 2.4 LA officers presented the Annual SACRE report to the Council's Children's and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 25th March 2026.
- 2.5 LA officers continue to support the development of the next SACRE development plan through their mid-cycle meetings.

3.0 Support for Senior Leaders and Governors

- 3.1 A named member of the School Improvement team continues to have dedicated management time assigned to them to liaise and co-ordinate work with the Professional RE Adviser.
- 3.2 The LA continues to facilitate the coordination of RE subject leader networks alongside RE subject leadership courses. Data confirming uptake and feedback from any networks that have taken place since the last SACRE meeting is reported within the professional adviser report.
- 3.3 The LA continues to provide information and guidance for schools for its RE and collective worship provision through bespoke advice and through specialist pages on CYPs-info. The link to these pages is included for information: [Collective worship | CYPsinfo](#), [North Yorkshire SACRE | CYPsinfo](#) and [Religious Education \(RE\) | CYPsinfo](#).

4.0 Ofsted inspections

- 4.1 Since the last LA report to SACRE until the 28th February 2026, Ofsted have published a further 4 reports for state-funded schools within North Yorkshire from a total of three Section 5 inspections (renewed framework) and one Section 8 monitoring visit (legacy framework). The inspection breakdown by school type and phase is outlined in the table below.

School Type	Primary	Secondary
Voluntary Aided	1	
Community	1	
Academy (Community School prior to conversion)	1	1

- 4.2 The extracts on the next page are taken from North Yorkshire school inspection reports published between the 1st December 2025 and the 28th February 2026 and reflect where inspectors have identified behaviours and/or understanding that pupils have demonstrated that are in line with the principal aims of the RE curriculum and Collective Worship, as identified within the agreed syllabus. Comments from all schools inspected within North Yorkshire have been included. SACRE members are reminded that SACRE's remit for the RE curriculum is only for maintained Community, Voluntary Controlled and Foundation schools alongside any Academies that choose to adopt the syllabus and that SACRE's remit for collective worship extends only to maintained community schools and academies without a religious characteristic. Where there are gaps, or an inspected school is not reflected in the table, no relevant comments were made within the inspection report.

Name	Comments relating to Collective Worship	Comments relating to RE
<p>Thomas Hinderwell Primary Academy (18 November 2025 – Section 5)</p> <p><i>(Community School prior to academisation)</i></p>	<p>Pupils talk about kindness, fairness and respect in ways that show these values are part of everyday school life.</p>	<p>Through lessons, assemblies and discussion, pupils learn about equality and begin to engage with ethical issues around respect and difference.</p> <p>Pupils' understanding of fundamental British values and world faiths, while present, is less secure in depth. They describe respect and fairness but are less confident in explaining how British values apply in varied real-life situations or how different religions are practised.</p>
<p>Barlby High School (25 November 2025 – Section 5)</p> <p><i>(Community School prior to academisation)</i></p>		<p>The PSHE curriculum is complemented by the 'Respect programme', which offers pupils the opportunity to debate topical issues and share their beliefs regularly. This helps pupils to develop a secure understanding of fundamental British values.</p>
<p>Selby, Longman's Hill Community Primary School (7 January 2026 - Section 5)</p>	<p>The '60 Amazing Experiences', linked to the school's values, encourage pupils to build resilience, kindness and independence.</p>	<p>Leaders encourage pupils to develop understanding of a wide range of different beliefs and cultures. Through their time in the school, pupils are given opportunities to visit a range of different places of worship, take part in a wide range of sporting events, attend drama and singing clubs and explore their own interests.</p> <p>Pupils learn about important concepts, such as respect, tolerance and understanding, through carefully crafted lessons.</p>

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NORTH YORKSHIRE SACRE – DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2024-2026

The North Yorkshire SACRE Development Plan is shaped around the five key functions of SACRES contained in the NASACRE Self-Evaluation Toolkit, namely:

1. To improve the management of SACRE and build the partnership between SACRE and other Key Stakeholders
2. Promoting improvement in the standards, quality of teaching and provision in RE
3. Evaluating the effectiveness of the Locally Agreed Syllabus
4. Promoting improvement in the provision and quality of collective worship
5. Contributing to cohesion across the community and the promotion of social and racial harmony

Updated 13 April 2026

Objective One: To increase Member engagement				
Intended Impact: SACRE has active Members engaged with and contributing to the work of SACRE				
Links to NASACRE Self-evaluation toolkit:				
Priority One				
To improve the management of SACRE and build the partnership between SACRE and other Key Stakeholders				
Priority Five				
Contributing to cohesion across the community and the promotion of social and racial harmony				
Ref	Action	Cost	Timescale	Progress
1.1	SACRE to enhance Faith Group representation by working with Faith Groups to enhance Group A Membership.		Ongoing	Contact made with faith groups in Spring 2026 to invite nominations.
1.2	SACRE to enhance Teacher Representation, ensuring a balance of primary and secondary backgrounds, headteachers and RE leads, maintained schools and academies.		Ongoing	Mary Lou Byrne has been welcomed to SACRE in 2025, bringing her experience as an RE lead to the group.
1.3	Implement a programme of Member presentations at each SACRE meeting, with a specific focus on a named SACRE aim.		Ongoing.	Now established at SACRE meetings, including presentations from faith groups and teachers.
1.4	Implement a visits framework, allowing SACRE to combine a visit with holding one meeting per year in a school setting.	Travel expenses School Time	By Summer 2026.	Training planned for April 2026 meeting to allow for development of visits framework.
1.5	To engage schools in designing a logo for SACRE.			

Objective Two: To monitor the effective teaching of RE throughout the Local Authority and explore ways to model best practice in RE

Intended Impact: SACRE Members have an informed understanding of the quality of RE provision and standards in RE across NYCC schools

Links to NASACRE Self-evaluation toolkit:

Priority Two

Promoting improvement in the standards, quality of teaching and provision in RE

Ref	Action	Cost	Timescale	Progress
1.1	Arrange a programme of visits to a range of Schools in North Yorkshire to see RE in action, and develop a SACRE Visits Policy and Visits Form.	Travel expenses, school time	Ongoing from September 2024	Pending completion of the visits training (Obj Two, 1.4).
1.2	Implement a system for receiving pupil feedback on RE.		Ongoing from September 2024	

Objective Three: To review the locally Agreed Syllabus
Intended Impact: SACRE Members implement a locally agreed syllabus for 2024-29 taking account of national developments and consultation with schools

Links to NASACRE Self-evaluation toolkit:

Priority Three

To evaluate the effectiveness of the Locally Agreed Syllabus

NOTE: This is primarily a priority for the second year of this Development Plan

Ref	Action	Cost	Timescale	Progress
1.1	SACRE to consult with the Local Authority, SACRE Members, and Schools on the effectiveness of the current Agreed Syllabus.	Travel expenses School time	From Summer 2024 onwards.	Rolling monitoring, in advance of next Agreed Syllabus launch in June 2029.
1.2	SACRE to work in partnership with the Local Authority to put in place ongoing training and support to ensure full implementation of the Agreed Syllabus in NYC schools.		From Summer 2024 onwards.	A schedule of training and support for schools is in place.

Objective Four: To review and update SACRE guidance to schools on collective worship
Intended Impact: schools have updated and clear collective worship guidance that take account of national developments

Links to NASACRE Self-evaluation toolkit:

Priority Four

To promote improvement in the provision and quality of Collective Worship

NOTE: This is primarily a priority for the second year of this Development Plan

Ref	Action	Cost	Timescale	Progress
1.1	SACRE engage with and respond to the NASACRE national report on Collective Worship.		Ongoing.	This report has not yet been published by NASACRE.
1.2	A SACRE working party review and update guidance for Schools.		2025 onwards.	Awaiting feedback from schools on current state of CW before meeting again to draft recommendations.
1.3	SACRE develop a programme of training and support for schools on Collective Worship.		2025 onwards.	A Working Group to prepare draft recommendations for discussion at a future SACRE meeting.

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