

# North Yorkshire Council

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

### September 2024 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 Teacher Training Summer 2024

- 2.1 2 Primary RE Networks in the spring term were attended by 30 RE subject leaders and Headteachers. The network focussed on implementing the newly updated Agreed Syllabus.

Feedback from teachers in the networks:

- This has been an extremely helpful session. Thank you Olivia.
- Thank you - very useful and informative.
- Thanks Olivia. A great session.
- Great thank you for this session. Very informative. I'm on it!
- Thank you - it's been really useful

#### 3.0 Overview of training 2024-25

##### 3.1 Primary RE Networks

Autumn – focus Visits and Visitors to the RE Classroom

13th November 2024 1.30-3.30

21st November 2024 9.30-11.30

Spring – focus on EYFS

6th March 2025 9.30-11.30

19th March 2025 1.30-3.30

Summer - focus on Assessment

5<sup>th</sup> June 2025 9.30-11.30

9<sup>th</sup> June 2025 1.30-3.30

##### 3.2 Primary RE leadership course

This practical course is suitable for new or developing Primary RE subject leads to support their role in developing an effective RE curriculum and leading RE across their school. This course will be split over 2 sessions with a gap task in between

The course focuses on

- developing an understanding of the role of Primary RE lead

- principles for a developing an effective RE curriculum with a focus on the Ofsted research review, subject knowledge and the locally agreed syllabus
- developing meaningful and manageable monitoring and evaluation

As a result of attending, delegates should:

- Gained confidence in leading RE in their school
- have a good understanding of the principles of planning an effective RE curriculum
- have increased confidence in subject knowledge for the Primary RE classroom
- have increased confidence in monitoring and evaluating RE in their school

Session 1 6th February 2025 9.30-12

Session 2 26th February 2025 1.00-3.30

### 3.3 Secondary RE curriculum workshop

This workshop will focus on the principles for a developing an effective RE curriculum with a focus on learning from the Ofsted research review and the North Yorkshire Agreed Syllabus

The session will explore

- The legal framework for RE
- Curriculum intent
- Thinking about substantive, disciplinary and personal knowledge in RE
- Curriculum progression
- Curriculum impact: how do we know our curriculum is working?

Delegates should bring their RE long term plan to the session

Date Tuesday 22nd October 4-6pm

### 4.0 SACRE Newsletter

The summer term newsletter will go out to schools at the beginning of October, any contributions from members would be gratefully received.

### 5.0 GCSE data – press release from RE Subject Association

*RE is the most neglected subject in terms of resources per student say subject leaders in appeal to new Education Secretary*

The number of students taking full course Religious Studies in England and Wales at GCSE has remained stable at 233,288 following a 0.5% rise in entries from 2023 making it one of the most widely studied humanities at GCSE.

223,034 students took RS GCSE (full course) in England, an increase of 0.3%. In Wales 10,254 students took the subject, an increase of 6.4%. For the third year running, the number of students taking a GCSE short course rose in England, this year by 9.5% to 20,627. In Wales however, entries fell by 27.1% to 2,201.

This is despite an ongoing challenge in recruiting specialist teachers amidst a gulf in government funding. Recruitment targets were missed in 11 of the last 12 years during which time school workforce data show that 51% of those teaching RE mainly teach another subject and also that the number of teachers of RE has remained roughly the same since 2011, despite the number of entries growing.

The Religious Education Council of England and Wales (REC) and the National Association for Teachers of RE (NATRE) have now called on the new Education Secretary, Bridget Phillipson MP, to introduce a National Plan for RE that provides a fair allocation of resources and prioritises the subject as part of Labour's plans to recruit more specialist teachers.

RE has recently seen a restoration of the teacher training bursary, but a shortage of specialism in schools remains a challenge given the long-term growth of the subject. The number of those recorded as teaching RE has remained roughly the same since 2011 at 16,200, while those delivering Geography and History lessons has risen by 1,700.<sup>[1]</sup>

Deborah Weston OBE, Chair of the RE Policy Unit, said:

“Poor quality, tokenistic RE taught by non-specialists without subject training, has a knock on effect on not just our communities, but the depth and quality of a young person’s education. Properly taught, GCSE RS provides invaluable academic and life skills that enables young people to think meaningfully about life’s big questions in relation to their own beliefs and those of others. On average, pupils studying the subject at GCSE do significantly better on the Attainment 8 school performance measure, with disadvantaged pupils scoring a full 9 points higher than those who do not take GCSE RS.<sup>[2]</sup>

“If the Labour government is serious about breaking down barriers to opportunities, a national plan for RE that provides a fairer allocation of resources is vital. It would build on the brilliant RE practice that already exists, deliver a new generation of specialist teachers and ensure all students receive their entitlement to an academically rigorous programme of RE.”

Katie Freeman, Chair of the National Association for Teachers of RE (NATRE), said:

“These results are a testament to the incredible hard work of RE teachers up and down the country. RE teachers are a vital asset to their schools, their community, and most importantly the young people who they inspire and educate.”

But with the burden growing on specialist RE teachers, there is a limit to what the teaching community can do. To safeguard the subject and its future, the new Labour government must provide a fairer allocation of resources to the subject, prioritise RE in its plans to recruit specialist teachers, and give young people the head start in life they deserve.”

Sarah Lane Cawte, Chair of the REC, said:

“Now is the time for action to safeguard the subject and meet the demand for high-quality RE in our schools and communities. The Religious Education Council recently launched a suite of resources including a National Content Standard, advocating a contemporary approach to the subject and offering a benchmark of quality to help schools deliver academic, personally enriching, and inspiring RE. A national plan would support schools in rolling this out, extend the teacher training bursary, and deliver ongoing specialist support to existing and aspiring teachers.”

## 6.0 A Level Data

NATRE has produced a helpful overview of national A level data over the last 5 years

[Article 1 A level entries over time 2024.pdf \(natre.org.uk\)](#)

1. The overall trend in A level entries for Religious Studies over the last 5 years has been steeply downward in Wales but fairly stable in England (Figure 2 and 3).
2. Since 2020 entries in Wales have fallen by 37% from 1126 to 702.
3. During the same period, entries in England, remained fairly stable with a fall of just under 0.5% from 14,564 to 14,499
4. Even though the trend for entries in England is downwards, this is within a context where most Humanities subjects have experienced a fall in entries and most science, technology, engineering and maths subjects have seen an increase. It is worth noting that financial incentives for schools will have boosted these entries including the advanced maths premium scheme and a number of schemes established to boost science learning in schools.
5. Of the Humanities, RS in England was one of the smallest decreases between 2023 and 2024 at 1.3%

NATRE has also produced data showing how different counties vary in uptake [Article 4 A level variations by county 2024.pdf \(natre.org.uk\)](#)

## 7.0 School Workforce Survey

Do we need a new focus on a curriculum for community cohesion?

NATRE have published the latest set of DfE data today that demonstrates the level of provision for RE in secondary schools England.

This data is provided by schools to the DfE each November as part of the school census. In this census, 82% schools provided curriculum information.

It will come as no surprise to RE teachers that this evidence suggests that a significant number of schools are failing to provide pupils with their statutory entitlement to RE, especially in year 11.

Scenes of so many young people involved in riots on our streets in recent weeks are prompting some difficult questions in government, communities, schools and families. Many of us are asking whether, the neglect of our subject and of community cohesion initiatives over the last 14 years, has limited the resilience of young people to messages of faith hate that have been so prominent in these events.

Obviously, high quality RE is one of the areas of the taught curriculum and the work of schools more broadly, that can contribute to the statutory duty to promote community cohesion. However, we know how important knowledge and understanding of religion and belief is to combating bigotry. We know that subject specific professional development for those delivering RE, is key to RE realising its potential. We also know that the face to face encounters between people with different religious and non religious worldviews, provided through classroom visitors and visits to places of interest in RE, can change attitudes to difference.

This being the case, schools in this sample who are either not providing RE or providing tokenistic provision that lacks the breadth and depth characteristic of high quality RE, need to rethink their approach and the government needs to take the steps needed to help them do so.

The full report can be accessed here: [NATRE School Workforce Report 2024.pdf](#)

## **8.0 Ofsted Subject Report**

I have included as an attachment the summary produced and previously circulated, for discussion and questions.

Olivia Seymour  
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01/09//2024

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Background documents: Ofsted Report Summary, data appendix

## GCSE and A Level national Data tables

### GCSE Religious Studies

Subject	Gender	Number Sat	% of Total No. Sat	CUMULATIVE PERCENTAGES by Grade			
				7/A	4/C	1/G	U
Religious Studies	Male	111901 (111854)	3.6 (3.8)	24.1 (24.0)	66.5 (66.6)	97.0 (97.6)	100.0 (100.0)
	Female	133118 (131881)	4.3 (4.5)	37.6 (37.3)	77.8 (78.0)	98.9 (99.0)	100.0 (100.0)
	Male & Female	245019 (243735)	4.0 (4.1)	31.4 (31.2)	72.7 (72.8)	98.0 (98.4)	100.0 (100.0)

#### Percentage of candidates gaining grade

	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	U	9-4	Entries
Religious Studies												
2024	7.9	10.9	12.3	16.8	14.1	10.5	12.7	8.0	4.8	1.9	72.5	223034
2023	7.7	10.7	12.1	16.7	14.0	10.9	13.8	8.0	4.4	1.6	72.2	222421
2022	9.7	11.9	13.1	17.2	14.2	10.7	10.3	7.5	3.9	1.5	76.7	221983
2021	11.5	12.4	14.0	15.5	14.2	12.6	9.8	5.8	3.1	1.1	80.2	221419
2020	9.6	11.3	14.0	16.3	15.4	13.9	10.9	5.5	2.6	0.5	80.5	226767
2019	7.4	10.5	12.6	16.1	14.3	11.4	14.0	8.0	4.2	1.5	72.3	227913
2018	7.1	10.1	12.7	16.0	14.5	11.4	13.7	8.4	4.4	1.7	71.8	229183
2018	7.1	10.1	12.7	16.0	14.5	11.5	13.6	8.4	4.4	1.7	71.9	229765
	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U	A*-C	A*-U	
2018	11.3	20.6	22.7	19.0	10.6	6.4	4.2	2.9	2.3	73.6	23853	
2017	10.1	19.5	23.3	18.4	12.2	7.3	4.6	2.7	1.8	71.3	282193	
2016	10.4	19.1	23.5	18.6	12.0	7.2	4.5	2.8	2.0	71.6	296010	
2015	10.8	19.0	23.6	18.8	11.9	7.2	4.4	2.6	1.7	72.2	295730	
2014	10.9	19.3	23.0	18.3	11.8	7.4	4.5	2.8	2.0	71.5	282099	
2013	11.2	19.7	22.8	18.7	11.8	7.0	4.4	2.7	1.7	72.4	263988	
2012	11.8	20.3	22.9	18.7	11.4	6.8	4.2	2.4	1.5	73.7	239123	
2011	11.7	20.2	22.7	18.7	11.4	6.9	4.3	2.5	1.6	73.3	221974	
2010	12.0	20.1	22.6	18.4	11.5	7.1	4.5	2.4	1.4	73.1	188704	
2009	12.6	20.1	22.3	18.4	11.6	7.0	4.3	2.3	1.4	73.4	182288	
2008	13.2	19.4	21.8	18.1	11.7	7.3	4.5	2.5	1.5	72.5	179139	
2007	12.3	19.2	21.4	18.6	11.8	7.5	4.8	2.6	1.8	71.5	171123	
2006	11.2	19.3	21.3	18.8	12.2	7.8	4.7	2.8	1.9	70.6	159681	
2005	10.5	18.8	20.8	18.5	12.5	8.3	5.4	3.1	2.1	68.6	147516	
2004	9.4	17.9	20.3	18.2	13.1	9.0	6.1	3.5	2.5	65.8	141037	
2003	9.1	16.4	19.5	18.8	13.2	9.3	6.3	3.9	3.5	63.8	132304	
2002	8.5	14.6	19.5	19.1	13.0	10.0	7.2	4.4	3.7	61.7	122637	
2001	8.0	13.7	18.5	19.4	13.5	10.7	7.6	4.8	3.8	59.6	119550	
2000	7.5	13.5	18.4	19.5	13.9	10.7	7.7	4.8	4.0	58.9	116234	
1999	6.6	13.1	18.2	20.3	14.3	11.0	8.0	4.9	3.6	58.2	115679	
1998	5.5	12.6	18.5	19.9	14.2	11.3	8.5	5.4	4.1	56.5	113381	
1997	4.9	12.0	18.7	21.0	15.0	11.7	8.5	5.2	2.8	56.7	118545	
1996	4.4	12.0	18.8	20.7	14.7	12.1	8.9	5.3	3.1	55.9	116549	
1995	3.5	12.2	19.6	21.4	14.6	12.3	8.7	5.1	2.6	56.7	110373	
1994	2.9	12.0	19.8	22.1	14.2	12.1	8.9	5.5	2.5	56.8	102544	



## A Level Religious Studies

Percentage of candidates gaining grade		%gaining grades								Number graded
	A*	A	B	C	D	E	N	U	A*-E	
Religious Studies										
2024	6.0	19.7	29.2	23.9	13.8	5.6		1.8	98.2	16622
2023	6.3	20.0	29.8	23.4	12.9	5.6		1.9	98.1	16853
2022	12.3	23.9	31.6	19.8	8.4	3.0		1.0	99.0	17789
2021	16.0	28.4	28.8	18.7	5.7	2.0		0.3	99.7	18382
Teacher										
2020	11.3	25.1	30.0	23.2	8.1	2.1		0.2	99.8	17539
2020	5.8	19.3	29.9	25.7	13.2	4.8		1.3	98.7	17539
2019	4.3	17.6	28.6	26.2	15.4	6.1		1.8	98.2	19406
2018	4.6	18.2	29.9	26.1	13.9	5.5		1.8	98.2	20527
2017	5.2	18.3	31.2	26.1	12.8	4.7		1.7	98.3	26086
2016	5.2	18.3	31.1	25.8	13.4	4.6		1.6	98.4	27032
2015	5.0	18.8	30.6	25.7	13.6	4.9		1.4	98.6	25773
2014	6.2	18.6	29.4	25.3	13.8	5.2		1.5	98.5	24213
2013	4.9	20.6	29.8	25.0	13.8	4.7		1.2	98.8	23354
2012	5.0	20.5	30.4	24.4	13.3	5.0		1.4	98.6	23042
2011	5.5	21.8	30.5	23.4	12.5	4.8		1.5	98.5	22325
2010	6.0	21.5	28.5	23.3	13.3	5.7		1.7	98.3	21233
2009		26.7	30.7	23.6	13.0	4.6		1.4	98.6	21079
2008		26.7	30.0	24.2	13.1	4.6		1.4	98.6	20134
2007		27.0	31.0	23.6	12.5	4.6		1.3	98.7	19006
2006		26.5	29.4	24.3	12.9	5.3		1.6	98.4	18205
2005		25.3	30.5	23.9	13.3	5.4		1.6	98.4	16859
2004		24.9	30.5	24.1	13.6	5.2		1.7	98.3	14418
2003		23.0	28.8	25.3	14.8	6.0		2.1	97.9	12671
2002		20.8	28.7	25.2	15.5	6.7		3.1	96.9	10685
2001		18.2	22.8	25.0	17.4	9.2	4.4	3.0	92.6	9532
2000		16.0	22.6	23.2	18.7	10.5	5.4	3.6	91.0	9178
1999		17.4	20.4	23.9	17.7	10.5	5.7	4.4	89.9	8997
1998		14.9	21.2	22.1	19.1	12.0	6.0	4.7	89.3	9138
1997		14.1	19.0	23.9	20.4	12.5	5.7	4.4	89.9	9261
1996		14.3	19.8	23.6	19.8	11.6	6.0	4.3	89.7	9053
1995		13.1	18.3	23.0	20.1	13.7	6.8	5.0	88.2	8933
1994		12.0	16.4	21.7	20.9	14.9	6.9	7.1	85.9	8718
1993		12.7	14.3	19.8	20.8	13.7	8.1	10.7	81.2	8551