

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 navigate 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.