



Oldham
Council

**Standing Advisory Council on Religious
Education
(SACRE)**

Annual Report 2023-24

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Section One: Introduction and the Work of SACRE

Words from the Chair

As the newly appointed Chair of Oldham SACRE, I am pleased to share this year's annual report. I would like to extend thanks to all members of SACRE for their continued dedication and hard work throughout the year. A special thanks goes to our past chair, Jean Hurlston, whose leadership and vision have laid a strong foundation for our continued efforts.

This year, we successfully conducted our annual SACRE questionnaire for schools, which provided valuable insights into the current state of Religious Education and Collective Worship across our community. This feedback is essential as it helps us understand the practices in place and identify areas for support and enhancement, ensuring that we meet the diverse needs of our students and schools effectively.

I had the pleasure of attending the NASACRE conference this year, where I was inspired by the shared commitment to excellence in Religious Education. This particularly highlighted that as a SACRE we are well supported by Oldham Council and have a collaborative commitment to improving RE.

We have also continued our work on the SACRE Self-Evaluation Framework (SEF), ensuring we remain responsive to the needs of our schools and the communities they serve. As we look ahead, I am excited about our collaboration with Pennine Learning to prepare for the new Local Agreed Syllabus. This project represents an important opportunity to refresh and enhance the curriculum for our students, fostering an inclusive and enriching educational experience.

I am looking forward to working alongside all of you in the coming year as we build on our achievements and strive to make a positive impact on Religious Education in our schools. Thank you for your commitment to SACRE and to the students we serve.

Kind regards,

Claire Harewood
Chair, SACRE

Overview

This annual report is prepared by Oldham SACRE. SACRE as a body is required to advise the Local Authority on matters relating to Religious Education and Collective Worship. This report provides a picture of the support given for Religious Education and Collective Worship during 2023-24. The report is a public document which is also sent to the National Association of SACREs (NASACRE) and the Department for Education.

For further information on the report or on RE and Collective Worship, contact Jake Womack at jake@penninelearning.com or the clerk to SACRE, Kate Sanderson kate.sanderson@tameside.gov.uk

Dates and content of meetings

There were three meetings of Oldham SACRE during the year 2023-24. Meetings are open to the public and minutes are also available on-line. These meetings were held on, 3rd October at Saddleworth School, 21st March at Shree Swaminarayan Mandir and 7th June at the European Institute of Islamic Sciences

As well as considering the general position of RE and collective worship in Oldham, SACRE discussed the following issues at its meetings during the year:

- Annual Report
- CPD for teachers including the Oldham Teaching Conference (SACRE)
- Secondary RE provision
- SACRE audit and work plan
- Organisation of SACRE – exploring roles for SACRE members
- Reports from regional and national bodies (NASACRE and GM Faiths Forum)
- Reports from network and schools
- Questions to be included in enquiry to schools
- Collective Worship
- Publishing advice for schools on sensitive issues about faith in schools.
- Self-evaluation form (SEF) and development plan
- The need for Muslim, Humanist representation as well as teachers
- Census data

Self-evaluation

During the year, Oldham SACRE completed a process of self-evaluation based on the NASACRE template. Arising from this the following areas for development were identified. Where progress was made, this has been indicated below.

SACRE

1. **Membership should be widened-** Membership has been increased to include additional teacher representation. We will seek to bolster this with the LAS conference through teacher working groups. Additionally, we have some Buddhist representation from the Oldham Zen Community sitting in on the meetings. However, we will be losing 2 Anglican representatives, so representation from the C of E is needed.
2. **Attendance and participation should be improved-** interesting items were added to the agenda, including a session on Sentientism and items looking at the Religion and Worldviews approach. Attendance was stable. Faith representatives were also involved in subject knowledge enhancement webinars for teachers. This will continue for next year with Olwen supporting with Buddhism.
3. **Members should be encouraged to attend NASACRE training courses and consideration should be given to induction for new members-** Oldham will continue to subscribe to the NASACRE training package. Additionally, Oldham SACRE funded 2 places at the in-person York NASACRE conference. Going forward, we would like to offer this again and explore additional members attending online.
4. **The development plan should be continually reviewed, revised and evaluated as part of meetings.** We are now using a streamlined 2-sided version of the development plan at meetings. This was agreed upon by members of SACRE.
5. **An annual questionnaire should also be sent to all schools to elicit relevant information and to enquire about what support might be needed-** The questionnaire was sent out and actions for SACRE were detailed. These included supporting the networks with CW guidance and reviewing the faith directory document for Oldham.

6. **More opportunities should be found to hear from pupils and teachers-** In the coming year, working groups will be formed to support the new LAS. Additionally, a pupil questionnaire on RE will be constructed so their voices can be represented. Further still, we will continue to offer 2 free local RE awards from SACRE.
7. **Explore whether a more structured link with MATs is feasible and beneficial-** A list of MATs is still needed. We have not yet formed a subgroup to look at this. The LAS Conference and subsequent training could be a springboard for this.

Religious Education

1. **An annual questionnaire should be used to enquire about RE and collective worship. Members should undertake a website trawl.** The questionnaire was sent out and actions for SACRE were detailed. These included supporting the networks with CW guidance and reviewing the faith directory document for Oldham. The website trawl has not yet taken place but work on this will take place in 2024-25. Additionally, OFSTED reports will be reviewed.
2. **SACRE should further explore the use of data to support schools.** Stronger links have been formed with the Secondary Network, meaning results data can be used to offer support to the relevant subject leads. The new LAS will provide greater opportunities to provide training and support.
3. **The relationship between SACRE and school senior leaders could be developed further.** We now have SLT representation from the Primary Phase. We will explore possible candidates to represent from secondary.
4. **Explore whether a more structured link with MATs is feasible and beneficial.** A list of MATs is still needed. We have not yet formed a subgroup to look at this. The LAS Conference and subsequent training could be a springboard for this.

Local Agreed Syllabus

1. **Planning for the review and revision of the agreed syllabus will take place in the next academic year.** Additional meetings have been scheduled to ensure the process is robust.

Collective Worship

- 1. Inclusion of questions about CW in an annual inquiry and to the provision of professional development.** This was sent to schools and results collated. It was analyzed at SACRE and actions were devised.
- 2. Student and teacher voices should be sought after as part of RE/CW QA.**

A pupil voice questionnaire will be devised for the next year. LAS meetings with working groups will provide an opportunity for teacher voice.

Community Cohesion

- 1. Membership should be widened, to include attendance from more representatives from faith communities.** With additional representation from Muslim communities, Humanism, and Buddhism we have made a good start. We have greater teacher representation. We have also moved some of the meetings to places of worship (Shree Swaminarayan Mandir, EIC) and will continue this trend into the next year. However, we need Anglican representation. Work has begun to replace the 2 Anglicans who are retiring.
- 2. Reminder of faith sensitivities guidance produced in February 2023.** This was emailed out, but it will be put on the agenda for the upcoming Primary RE Networks. This will allow Jake Womack to present the document in person.

SACRE Priorities for 2023-24

Self-evaluation has helped to identify key areas for development which are included in SACRE's development plan.

Developing the effectiveness of SACRE and building partnerships

- maintain and build wide and participative membership (this year it will be to increase Anglican participation and locate a representative from Sikhi).
- distribute leadership and responsibility within SACRE (with more participation through subject knowledge webinars and website trawls).
- increase uptake in training (including attendance at the NASACRE conference)
- make use of and respond to teacher and student voice
- produce annual report

Promote continuing improvement in standards, quality of teaching and provision in RE (including the syllabus)

- monitor provision
- monitor standards
- keep abreast of wider developments and share information with schools and local authority
- provide or publicize opportunities for professional development (increasing the northern RE letter distribution and utilising the clerk to circulate resources)
- liaise with teacher networks (leading the primary and attending the secondary RE networks)
- review local agreed syllabus (the year we will be launching the new one)

Promoting continuing improvement in the provision and quality of collective worship

- ensure practical advice is in place
- offer peer support or review
- publicize or make available professional development

Contributing to cohesion across the community

- nurture partnerships with local authorities and other agencies and groups
- develop practical guidance for sensitivity to faith in schools
- encourage educational collaboration between faith communities and schools

Further details of the self-evaluation or the development plan can be obtained via the clerk to SACRE.

Meetings for 2023-24

SACRE meetings for 2024-2025 have been provisionally arranged for these dates:

- Wednesday 11th September @ The Boardroom, Oldham Council
- Tuesday 22nd October @ Hathershaw
- Wednesday 5th March 2025 @ Oldham Oasis Academy
- Wednesday 18th June 2025@ Oldham Mandir

For more information contact the clerk, Kate Sanderson kate.sanderson@tameside.gov.uk

Section Two: Statutory Responsibilities: Religious Education

The Local Agreed Syllabus

The current Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education was produced by RE Today Services and implemented in September 2020. The agreed syllabus is due to be reviewed and updated by 2025. A draft timeline has been produced, and an additional meeting will take place in September to agree on the direction we will take. The options we will consider are to update the RE Today Syllabus, adapt the West Yorkshire Syllabus or commission our own syllabus.

Standards and Monitoring

SACRE enquiry

In the Autumn term 2023, Oldham SACRE asked secondary and primary schools to complete a brief survey about the provision of RE and CW. The questions asked about network meeting attendance, trips and CW patterns. There were 30 Primary responses and 12 Secondary responses. This was much lower than the previous survey despite high levels of promotion. The survey could potentially be added to the network agenda to increase responses.

Primary	Secondary
<p>Positive findings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nearly 50% of Primary respondents attended the network meeting. Most Primary schools offered trips/visits (79.2%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most schools who participated understand the nature and purpose of CW.
<p>Areas of Concern</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some responses from the CW question indicated that further guidance is needed. 	<p>Areas of concern</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most Secondary Schools do not attend the network meetings. This could be to do with the package. Further discussion is needed with Cranmer.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some responses indicated that they felt a lack of subject knowledge to lead on RE. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most of the schools in the sample do not run trips or offer faith visitors. Some participants are not aware of CW obligations (and may be offering it without doing so consciously).
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Following the presentation of this information to SACRE, the following actions were agreed:

- Jake Womack to book slots in network meetings to address Collective Worship.
- Guidance of CW from Pennine Learning to be distributed again.
- Faith Directory to be adapted and send out to schools.
- LAS training will contain a section on statutory requirements and will implore the inclusion of lived experience through the use of visits and/or visitors.
- Use of network meetings to boost the completion of SACRE inquiry.

Examination results

GCSE results from Oldham are outlined below. These will be discussed by SACRE in the spring term.

Provision/Insitution	% 9-4	% 9-5	Total Entries	% of Entries
Hollinwood Academy	0	0	0	0
Waterhead Academy	60	42.9	35	34
Co-op Academy Failsworth	50	50	6	6
Oasis Academy Leesbrook	67.4	50.8	132	128
Royton and Crompton School	0	0	3	1
The Hathershaw College	44.4	33.3	9	9
The Saddleworth School	85.2	72.2	54	54
North Chadderton School	0	0	1	0
The Radclyffe School	80	73.8	65	65
The Blue Coat CofE School	81.6	76.2	256	255
The Crompton House Church of England Academy	78.6	61.4	280	278
Blessed John Henry Newman RC College	67.7	55.9	288	284
Oasis Academy Oldham	68	60	50	47
The Oldham Academy North	75.6	64.4	45	45
The Springboard Project	0	0	0	0
New Bridge School	0	0	0	0
Oldham Total	74.1	62.3	1224	1207

SACRE would urge all schools to review their results in line with the national data below.

subject		grade	Percentage achieving
Religious Studies	GCSE	9 to 1	99.1
Religious Studies	GCSE	9 to 4	76.1
Religious Studies	GCSE	9 to 5	61.7

Source: GCSE (Full Course) Results (9-1 Only) - June 2024 (England Only) (DFE)

RE Quality Mark

One Oldham Primary is accredited with the REQM Silver award. This took place in 2022, and so it will expire this coming year. Work needs to be done to improve uptake. Jake Womack will lead on this as part of his Culham St Gabriel Leadership Award. This could dovetail with the national REQM strategy. Additionally, Oldham will offer 2 free spaces for the completion of the Local RE Award. The aim of this is to build confidence to apply for the REQM.

Professional development and support for schools

General support

During the year professional support continued through the RE consultant, Jake Womack who is contracted through Pennine Learning, a small regional company specializing in RE and community cohesion. The team also includes three other experienced consultants in primary and secondary RE. Oldham Council contracted ten days during the year though this time is arranged as flexibly as possible to facilitate effective working with schools and others. Pennine Learning also supports SACREs and RE in neighbouring Tameside, Calderdale and Kirklees, enabling appropriate collaboration and partnership.

Support is available to schools in a number of ways, including:

- Advice on the local agreed syllabus;
- Consultancy over specific or general RE issues, including advice about withdrawal from RE;
- Support for schools wishing to develop and improve RE following Ofsted inspections
- A SACRE Merit award which dovetails with the REQM to increase uptake
- Professional conversations with subject leaders/coordinators

Training

This year, Jake Womack has co-ordinated the Primary RE network, with the support of two local Primary teachers. The networks have been very well attended and feedback has been excellent. Next year, the networks will be administrated by Cranmer, and so further strategic discussion needs to take place.

The secondary network has been established for Oldham and Tameside and is run by the Northern Teaching Alliance based at The Blue Coat School. This is led by Shabnam Khaliq. Jake Womack has attended some of the meetings as a representative of SACRE. Jake should attend more of these meetings next year.

A successful series of subject knowledge webinars on world faiths took place over the academic year and included guests from faith communities and SACRE membership. These were held in cooperation with partner local authorities. Pennine Learning will deliver a similar set of subject knowledge webinars next year.

A half-termly newsletter and CPD digest is sent to all schools, and this includes information about professional development opportunities in RE regionally and nationally. Oldham teachers have been able to access training for RE coordinators and sessions for subject knowledge development. This was publicized again at networks, and distribution has increased.

A 'Deep Dive' in Religious Education is also offered to schools. This half-day session focuses on a review of curriculum provision, looking at its scope, rigor and sequencing.

Oldham Schools are particularly fortunate to have access to visits provided through the Oldham Interfaith Forum and to the Oldham Pledge project.

Oldham SACRE offer a document on sensitivity to issues relating to faith in schools. This is available to schools as practical information and support to school leaders.

Oldham will be providing SACRE Awards based on the REQM. 2 free spaces will be provided. Additionally spaces can be arranged.

Section Three: Statutory Responsibilities: Collective Worship

Standards and Monitoring of Collective Worship

Guidance is offered to schools and Ofsted reports are scrutinized in order to keep up to date with current issues and concerns. The recent SACRE survey focussed on collective worship provision and website trawls will be undertaken next year.

Complaints and determinations

There were no complaints made during the year to SACRE about Collective Worship. There were no new or reviewed determinations to vary statutory requirements in any maintained school in Oldham. Responsibility for determinations in English academies and free schools rest with the Schools Funding Agency.

Professional development and support for schools

SACRE is always ready to advise or support schools on request. A half-day course on planning for collective worship/ inclusive assemblies is available to aid schools in developing an effective and inspiring programme.

SACRE has produced revised advice on collective worship which is available for schools.

SACRE focussed its inquiry on CW and had agreed on actions to support its development. This includes network session delivery slots and the redistribution of guidance in person.

Other information

Parents have a statutory right to withdraw their children from collective worship. Guidance on good practice and protocols for withdrawal is available to schools; consultants are available if further support is needed. SACRE recognizes parents' legal rights but hopes all children will be enabled to receive stimulating and balanced RE as part of their entitlement to a broad curriculum.

Section Four: Links with other organisations

SACRE has active links with the following organizations:

- National Association of SACREs (NASACRE)
- The North-north-west SACRE Hub
- RE Today
- The Association of RE Inspectors, Advisers and Consultants (AREIAC)
- Faith communities and organizations
- Oldham School Performance Team
- Northern Teaching Alliance based at The Blue Coat School
- The Oldham Inter-Faith Forum
- Greater Manchester Interfaith Network
- Oldham and Tameside RE Practitioner Network

Section Five: Other areas of involvement

The Oldham Interfaith Forum

SACRE is grateful to the work of the Interfaith Forum in, among other things, supporting links between schools and local faith communities. This helps to fulfil our obligation to promote fundamental values of respect and tolerance.

The virtual faith trail, *Many Faiths, One Community*, is also a great resource for schools and comprises a set of videos for schools, exploring what goes on in four places of worship: a Christian Church, a Hindu Temple, a Mosque, and a Synagogue. Schools should contact the Interfaith Forum or the SACRE consultants for the link.

Faith sensitivities

The *Sharing the Journey* resource detailing faith sensitivities and how schools can address them was released. It is available for the use of educators. It will be re-publicised in networks in the coming year.

Section Six: SACRE arrangements

Oldham Council funds the operation of SACRE by contracting its consultant, providing a clerk and supporting its work through links with senior education officers.

SACRE membership includes representatives from all four constituent committees.

Committee A	Faith communities except for the Church of England
Committee B	Anglican representatives
Committee C	Teachers and schools
Committee D	Oldham Council

Buddhist	A	Olwen Smith (attending)
Hindu	A	Mrs Krishna Sisodia
Hindu	A	Nitiksha Raghvani
Humanist	A	Kevin Malone
Jewish	A	Rabbi Daniel Walker
Muslim	A	Mr Bilal Brown
Muslim	A	Mohibur Rahman
Sikhi	A	Vacancy
Oldham Interfaith forum	A	The Rev Howard Sutcliffe
Oldham Interfaith forum	A	Samia Farid
Salvation Army	A	Vacancy
Free churches/Oldham Congregational churches	A	Mr Peter Butler
Evangelical church	A	Mrs Mary Butt
Free churches	A	Vacancy
Free churches	A	Mr Ian Whitehead
Roman Catholic Church	A	Ms Claire Mitchell
Church of England	B	Vacancy
Church of England	B	Vacancy
Church of England	B	Vacancy
Church of England	B	Vacancy
	C	Shabnam Khaliq
Secondary teacher	C	Aisha Mohammad
Primary teacher	C	Rachel Whittle
Special School head	C	Ms R Lomax
NEU	C	Miss Jacqueline Beattie
Secondary academies (Hathershaw)	C	Ms Claire Harewood
Special schools (Kingfisher)	C	Ms Nicola Smith
Teaching school	C	
Teachers associations and HE	C	Francesca Frazer-Davies
Local authority	D	Cllr Pam Byrne
Local authority	D	Cllr Umar Nasheen
Local authority	D	Mr Tony Shepherd
Co-opted	Z	Available
Co-opted	Z	Available
Co-opted	Z	Available

SACRE needs to ensure there continues to be consistent attendance and needs more teacher representatives. The LAS will provide a springboard to develop this. Additionally, new Anglican representatives are needed and we should identify a Sikhi representative.

Training is provided by NASACRE and offered to SACRE members, though better induction is needed locally. Going forward, we would encourage our new members to attend the, *So you have joined your local SACRE* session as well as other relevant training session from NASACRE. An additional induction meeting should also be booked for new members as needed.

Section Seven: Advice to the Local authority

The following advice is given by SACRE to the local authority:

1. Ensure SACRE's annual report is considered carefully by the Scrutiny Panel of the Council and any of its content is noted.
2. The local authority should ensure that SACRE has its full complement of attending local representatives, especially from faith communities. New Anglican representation is required.
3. The local authority should encourage the best local provision for skilled and specialist RE teaching in Oldham, especially given the low numbers in RE recruitment.
4. The local authority should ensure the funding of the new Locally Agreed Syllabus.

No appendices are attached to this report; all the relevant information is contained within the main body. However, any further information can be requested via the clerk.



This annual report is prepared for Oldham Standing Advisory Council on RE (SACRE) as part of its statutory responsibility. For further information on the report or on RE and Collective Worship, please contact Jake Womack via jake@penninelearning.com