



# City of Doncaster Council

## Agenda

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To all Members of the

## **STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE)**

Notice is given that a Meeting of the above Committee is to be held as follows:

**Venue:** Hybrid Meeting - Council Chamber, Civic Office, Waterdale, Doncaster DN1 3BU

**Date:** Thursday, 19th October, 2023

**Time:** 4.30 pm

This will be a hybrid meeting held in the Council Chamber at the Civic Building with the ability to access the meeting remotely using Microsoft Teams. Any Members of the Public or Press wishing to attend the meeting by teleconference should contact Governance Services on 01302 737462/737662 for further details.

### **BROADCASTING NOTICE**

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**Damian Allen**  
Chief Executive

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Issued on: Wednesday, 11th October, 2023

**Governance Services Officer for this meeting**

Rachel Wright  
01302 737662

## Items for Discussion:

	<b>PageNo.</b>
1. Welcome/Introductions and apologies for absence.	
2. Declarations of Interest, if any.	
3. Minutes of the meeting held on 6th July, 2023	1 - 6
<b>A. Reports where the public and press may not be excluded.</b>	
4. Report from the SEND day held on 12th July, 2023 (Vice-Chair, Councillor Glynis Smith and Lat Blaylock).	
5. RE in Schools: RE at Rowena Academy/Delta Academies (Tara Moxon)	
6. Communication with Schools - A strategy for the use of Edulog (Jane Reed)	
7. Review of the REsources project (Chair, Bob Kiddle).	
8. Westhill - Festival of Faith and Ideas - Progress report from meetings held on 17 July and 16 October, 2023 (Jugtinder Singh).	
9. SACRE Membership: Buddhism in Doncaster and Reports from the Gomde open day and the Chair's visit on 26th Sept, 2023 (Chair, Bob Kiddle).	
10. Notes and News	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Last year's annual report (Jane Reed)</li><li>• Next year's annual report (Jane Reed)</li><li>• NASACRE membership and training package (Jane Reed/ Chair, Bob Kiddle)</li><li>• Chair's e-mail address (Jane Reed)</li><li>• The WhatsApp (Chair, Bob Kiddle)</li><li>• StandUp!, SAFE and STEP (Chair, Bob Kiddle)</li></ul> <a href="https://cst.org.uk/about-cst/safe-security-advice-for-everyone">https://cst.org.uk/about-cst/safe-security-advice-for-everyone</a> <a href="https://www.standupeducation.org/">https://www.standupeducation.org/</a> <a href="https://www.facinghistory.org/en-gb/resource-library/discussing-contemporary-islamophobia-classroom">Discussing Contemporary Islamophobia in the Classroom</a> <a href="https://www.facinghistory.org/en-gb/resource-library/discussing-contemporary-islamophobia-classroom">https://www.facinghistory.org/en-gb/resource-library/discussing-contemporary-islamophobia-classroom</a>	
11. Teaching Hours for RE from School Workforce Census (Lat Blaylock).	7 - 8
12. The Syllabus Conference (Lat Blaylock).	9 - 10
13. National SACRE Updates for SACRE - From RE Today / Autumn 23 (Lat Blaylock)	11 - 20

14. Liaison with neighbouring SACREs  
(Vice-Chair, Councillor Glynis Smith).
15. Succession Planning - a Chair-in-waiting (Chair, Bob Kiddle).
16. Future agenda items (Chair, Bob Kiddle).
  - Visits by school curriculum leaders
  - The philosophy of the world view that each member represents
17. Date and time of next meeting

**Thursday 22nd February, 2024 at 4.30 pm**

**Members of the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE)**

Chair – Mr Bob Kiddle

Vice-Chair – Councillor Glynis Smith

Councillors Yetunde Elebuion, Steve Cox and Sue Knowles

Mr Shaheed Syed, Muslim

Mr Behdad Teimoori, Baha’i

Lucy Saxton, Roman Catholic

Mary Sivaanbu, Hindu

Mrs Pahani Kaur, Sikh

Mr Harvey Kasin, Jewish

Ms Jemma Gelder, Church of England

Mr Andy Wright, Church of England

Vanessa Gregory, Church of England

Amy Roddam, Methodist representative

Sally Faulkener, Christian denominations and other religions representative

Ms Tara Moxon, National Education Union

Ms Danielle Heath, National Education Union

Mrs Jugtinder Singh, National Education Union

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# Public Document Pack Agenda Item 3

## CITY OF DONCASTER COUNCIL

### STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE)

THURSDAY, 6TH JULY, 2023

A HYBRID MEETING of the STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE) was held at the COUNCIL CHAMBER, CIVIC OFFICE, WATERDALE, DONCASTER on THURSDAY, 6TH JULY, 2023, at 4.30 pm.

#### PRESENT:

Chair - Mr Bob Kiddle

Vice-Chair – Councillor Glynis Smith

Councillors Steve Cox, Yetunde Elebuibon, Sue Knowles

Sally Faulkner - Christian Denomination

Andy Wright - Church of England

Vanessa Gregory - Church of England

Harvey Kasin - Jewish

Pahani Kaur - Sikh

Mary Sivaanbu – Hindu

Yvonne Teimoori – Baha’I

Jugtinder Singh - Teacher Representative, National Education Union

#### APOLOGIES:

Apologies for absence were received from Danielle Heath, Tara Moxon, Jemma Gelder and Amy Roddam.

#### 71 Declarations of Interest, if any

There were no declarations made at the meeting.

#### 72 Minutes of the meeting held on 23rd February 2023.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 23rd February, 2023 be agreed as a true record.

#### 73 SACRE budget 2023/24.

Jane Reed updated the Committee with the budget position for 2023/24. She outlined that she had spoken with finance colleagues and the budget allocated was a satisfactory amount to allow SACRE to carry out the work they wished to do and perform the required statutory duties. Looking forward to the year ahead, the Committee noted that it was approaching the time to review the required syllabus which had to be done every 5 years and this would be achievable within the budget allocation.

The Chair, Bob Kiddle, commented that he had spoken with Jane Reed, Head of Service, Education and Skills, and had some discussions as to what they would use the budget for to have the most positive effect in the coming year and they were satisfied that this could be done.

RESOLVED that the update on the SACRE Budget 2023/24 be noted.

74 Member Training - SEND TRAINING 12/07/23.

The Chair, Bob Kiddle reported that following an earlier postponement, this had now been finalised in the diary for Tuesday 12 July, 2023. Lat Blaylock, reported that there were currently 32 delegates confirmed with only a quarter of these from Doncaster, and many delegates coming from different areas of the country.

Lat reported that he would provide a full report on how the course went at the next meeting of SACRE but it was an extremely positive training course for Doncaster to be holding with a lot of interest put forward. He added that in fact they were slightly ahead of their counterparts in this respect, with the need for work in the area of Special Educational Needs in the area of RE only just becoming apparent.

The Vice Chair, Councillor Glynis Smith confirmed that she would be attending on behalf of Doncaster's SACRE and if anyone else wished to attend, they would need to communicate with Sameena Choudry who had arranged the training.

RESOLVED that the update be noted.

75 National Update for SACRE's Summer Term 2023 - Lat Blaylock. (Attached)

Lat Blaylock, advisor to SACRE from RE Today, provided an update to Members on any relevant SACRE news and information, outlining the key issues nationally at the present time.

Members noted the following points of interest:-

- Census Data and Religion and World Views in our local area - Members noted this was a useable piece of data that provided helpful information. Lat advised he would recirculate the table with the correct data links
- Spirited Arts 2023 – this was a great competition for schools to get involved with
- New RE Lead appointed to Ofsted – The Committee noted that there had been a new subject lead for RE appointed at Ofsted.
- Children's Commissioner Dame Rachel de Souza – Members were informed that an interview had been carried out with the Children's Commissioner which made for a very good read.
- BBC provides early years RE resources – The Committee noted that the BBC has widened its range of resources for RE in primary education, particularly in relation to Early Years with some useful activities and programmes.
- Educate against Islamophobia – this group had produced a number of educational materials for Early Years, Primary and Secondary School levels with a wide range of reflective material to encourage knowledge and awareness.
- Anti Racist materials – within the update, attention was drawn to the work of Jonathan Marshall and the resources he highlighted which complimented NATRE Anti Racist materials and was very useful for educators.
- RE Connect Environmental programme – the RE Connect Program was reported to be a fantastic initiative and Lat Blaylock commented that he would love to see one of Doncaster's schools volunteer for this programme.

After the update had been provided, Members were asked for any comments. The Chair commented that there were a huge amount of resources and support available to them as a SACRE and it was important that Members took the time to follow it up and utilised the resources.

RESOLVED that SACRE noted the National Update from RE Today.

76 Draft SACRE Annual Report 2022-23 (To Follow).

The Committee considered the Draft Annual Report for SACRE for 2022-23 which had been circulated to all Members prior to the meeting. Drafted by the Chair, Bob Kiddle in consultation with Lat Blaylock, advisor to SACRE and Jane Reed, Head of Service, Education and Skills, the report provided an overview of all the work done by SACRE during the period, and once finalised and signed off by the Committee, it would be forwarded to the Department for Education (DfE) as required.

Key points of interest to note in the report included the following:-

- Publication of the REsources Project, which would soon be circulated in all Doncaster Schools;
- The success of the achievement of the Westhill Grant;
- SACRE had provided a lot of CPD to Primary School teachers across the borough over the past year and were continually working to strengthen the link with secondary schools;
- SACRE and a number of Doncaster teachers had visited a Mosque and Gurdwara in Doncaster City Centre and had proven helpful and informative.

Members welcomed the report and were pleased to see it was reflective of all the positive work undertaken by the SACRE Committee over the past year. There were still a number of areas they would be focussing on in the coming year, that would look to further strengthen the work of the Committee and there was a lot of work to be done, but as an overview, Members agreed that it demonstrated a lot of positive work had been carried out.

RESOLVED that once finalised, the report would be signed off by SACRE and forwarded to the DfE for approval.

77 Reports from NASACRE Annual Conference delegates.

The Chair, Bob Kiddle and Sally Faulkner updated the Committee with regard to their experience at the NASACRE Conference which they had attended recently.

They had both found it to be a very worthwhile event, and had provided a lot of information and resources that could be used by SACRE Members in the future.

It was noted that there had been some very meaningful discussions with individuals from all religious backgrounds and different world views which was invaluable.

The Chair informed the Committee that there had been information on a number of future events that could also prove very useful and invited all Members to log on to NASACRE and take a look.

RESOLVED that the update from the NASACRE Annual Conference be noted.

78 Update on REsources project - communication with schools and next stage.

The Chair gave a brief update with regard to the REsources project that had been developed over the past year by SACRE, It was reported that whilst they had made good progress with this project initially, it had stalled slightly and some more work needed to be done to get this into schools and raise awareness of it.

The REsources project is a directory of representatives from across all faiths in Doncaster, providing contact names and numbers if schools wished to use this resource for any Religious Education.

It was hoped that once this was projected into schools and teachers realised the benefit of utilising this directory, it would become more widely used in the future.

RESOLVED that the update on the REsources project be noted and the work be continued to complete and promote the project.

79 Westhill Grant - success and plans for implementation of the project.

Jugtinder Singh (Teacher Representative) provided an update to the Members at the meeting as she was leading on this project along with Tara Moxon, (Teacher Representative).

Members heard that the Sub Committee that had been formed at the previous meeting had been successful in their application and had won an amount of £3940 to use for the implementation of the project. Jugtinder Singh reported that the event would be held at her school, Willow Primary, Bessacarr and would host a range of activities for a colourful multicultural event. Members were invited to volunteer if they felt that they could assist in any way with this event.

Jugtinder reported that they would be holding a meeting at Willow School on 17 July, 2023 to discuss this event further and were advised to contact her for more information if they wished to help. The Chair reported that he would send a diary invite to those who had expressed an interest.

RESOLVED that:-

- 1) SACRE note the update with regard to the Westhill Grant;
- 2) Councillor Yetunde Elebuibon and Pahani Kaur be notified of all arrangements for future meetings with regard to this.

80 Membership of SACRE.

The Chair reiterated to Members the need for strengthening the Membership of SACRE and if anyone came across anybody who they felt may be a valued addition to the Committee they were asked to encourage them to think about joining the membership. Whilst it was not in SACRE's gift to appoint them to the Committee, they could make a recommendation to the Authority to do so and in doing so ensure that the work undertaken was meaningful and valid.

RESOLVED that the Chair's comments be noted.

81 Involving teachers, schools and MATs in the work of SACRE.

The Committee heard that like the RE sources project, this was an ongoing project that would continue to progress. Bob Kiddle, Chair of SACRE reported that he had held a brief discussion with Jane Reed earlier that day as to how they could further involve teachers with SACRE in the future, and moving forward would look to liaise more closely with schools.



Tara Moxon, Teacher representative had been due to attend the meeting and give a presentation to the Committee on the RE work carried out within her school but had unfortunately had to submit her apologies. This would therefore be given at the next meeting.

Members proposed that in addition to this, it would also be beneficial to hear from a secondary school alongside Tara, who would be giving information on Primary education and see the differences experienced. In addition to this, it was noted that many secondary schools were not meeting the legal requirements for the provision of RE and it would be interesting to hear a schools perspective. The Chair, at the request of Members informed the Committee he would look to contact Hunger hill Secondary School and enquire as to whether or not someone could attend the next meeting to give their perspective on this.

Jugtinder Singh, Teacher representative commented that she too would love to present information on her school in the future. At Willow Primary, Bessacarr, they were working towards the achievement of an RE Quality Mark and had some very positive work recently, including an assembly at school with the Imam from the Mosque who had been very engaging and informative with the children.

The Vice Chair, Councillor Glynis Smith reported that the Children's Project Worker from the Church in Hatfield had visited all local schools recently and had provided a very positive and engaging experience for the children. Additionally, the pupils from Ash Hill Academy had attended Morning Communion on a Wednesday morning, which many of the children had very much enjoyed.

The Committee agreed that it was examples such as these, that were making a positive difference for RE in schools and it was important that this engagement continued.

RESOLVED that:-

- 1) Tara Moxon's presentation be deferred until the next meeting of SACRE, giving her perspective of Early Years RE; and
- 2) An invite be extended to the RE Department at Hungerhill School to attend and provide an overview of the Religious Education provided there.

82 Succession planning.

The Chair opened up a discussion regarding planning for the future and ensuring SACRE remained relevant and fit for purpose with a good team of Members. He pointed out that looking ahead, he would not be able to stay as Chair of the Committee for many more years, and he looked to other Members to step up and look at taking on the role in the future.

Members noted that over the past year, the current Members of the Committee had all committed to the successful operation of the SACRE and it was important that this momentum didn't stop. The Chair therefore urged all Members to get more involved where possible and if there were any other areas in which they felt they could contribute they were asked to do so,

83 Date and time of next meeting.

RESOLVED that the next meeting of SACRE be held on Thursday, 19 October, 2023 at 4.30 pm.

CHAIR: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

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# Agenda Item 11

LA name	School name	Religious character	School type	LA Address/Contact
Doncaster	Ash Hill Academy	Does not apply	Academies	lat@retoday.org.uk
Doncaster	Sir Thomas Wharton Academy	None	Academies	lat@retoday.org.uk
Doncaster	The McAuley Catholic High School	Roman Catholic	Academies	lat@retoday.org.uk
Doncaster	Rossington All Saints Academy	Church of England	Academies	lat@retoday.org.uk
Doncaster	The Hayfield School	None	Academies	lat@retoday.org.uk
Doncaster	Trinity Academy	Christian	Academies	lat@retoday.org.uk
Doncaster	De Warenne Academy	Does not apply	Academies	lat@retoday.org.uk
Doncaster	XP School	None	Free Schools	lat@retoday.org.uk
Doncaster	XP East	None	Free Schools	lat@retoday.org.uk
Doncaster	Astrea Academy Woodfields	None	Academies	lat@retoday.org.uk
Doncaster	Doncaster UTC	Does not apply	Free Schools	lat@retoday.org.uk
Doncaster	Armitage Academy	Does not apply	Academies	lat@retoday.org.uk
Doncaster	Hungerhill School	None	Academies	lat@retoday.org.uk
Doncaster	Hall Cross Academy	Does not apply	Academies	lat@retoday.org.uk
Doncaster	The Laurel Academy	None	Academies	lat@retoday.org.uk
Doncaster	Don Valley Academy	None	Academies	lat@retoday.org.uk
Doncaster	Ridgwood School	Does not apply	Academies	lat@retoday.org.uk
Doncaster	Campsmount Academy	None	Academies	lat@retoday.org.uk

Yr 7 hours - RE	Yr 7 hours - philosophy	Yr 8 hours - RE	Yr 8 hours - philosophy	Yr 9 hours - RE	Yr 9 hours - philosophy	Yr 10 hours - RE	Yr 10 hours - philosophy	Yr 11 hours - RE	Yr 11 hours - philosophy	Yr 12 hours - RE	Yr 12 hours - philosophy	Yr 13 hours - RE	Yr 13 hours - philosophy	Total Mixed hours taught	Mixed hours - RE	Mixed hours - philosophy
0.0	2	1.3	2	1.5	2	0.0	2	0.0	2	2	2	2	2	0.0	2	2
2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	0.0	2	2
3.0	2	5.1	2	5.2	2	8.8	2	5.0	2	7.8	2	8.5	2	0.0	2	2
4.0	2	4.4	2	4.9	2	5.4	2	6.0	2	2	2	2	2	0.0	2	2
2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	0.0	2	2
3.9	2	3.7	2	3.6	2	6.9	2	6.8	2	6.0	2	6.0	2	0.0	2	2
2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	0.0	2	2
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2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	0.0	2	2
3.9	2	2.3	2	4.2	2	0.4	2	0.5	2	2	2	0.0	2	0.0	2	2
2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	0.0	2	2
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0.0	2	0.0	2	0.0	2	0.0	2	1.5	2	2	2	2	2	0.0	2	2
2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	0.0	2	2
2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	0.0	2	2
4.0	2	3.9	2	4.0	2	2.3	2	2.2	2	3.1	2	2.9	2	0.0	2	2
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## New RE Agreed Syllabus for Doncaster Schools and Pupils

**Preamble: Doncaster SACRE wishes to collect ideas and views from stakeholders in RE. This questionnaire will be open until November 20<sup>th</sup> 2023, and takes less than ten minutes to complete.**

1. Your Name
2. Your email address (which will only be used to contact you in relation to RE in Doncaster)
3. Your school / your role / your interest in RE
4. Doncaster SACRE is required to review its 2019 RE agreed syllabus after five years, and we plan to publish a revised syllabus in 2024. We intend that the new syllabus will be in continuity with the current syllabus, but thoroughly updated. Is the current syllabus:
  - a. Very useful and fit for purpose
  - b. Somewhat useful
  - c. Not helpful to us in RE
  - d. We do not use the Doncaster Syllabus

### **Open space for commentary**

5. In line with the LA strategic plans in Doncaster, we aim to offer support to schools. Please number the following in order of priority: for better RE we need guidance and support on:
  - a. Planning RE for all pupils
  - b. Meeting inspection requirements
  - c. Teaching and learning methods
  - d. Outcomes and assessment for RE
  - e. RE, spiritual and moral development and British values
  - f. RE in the Early Years
  - g. RE 5-11
  - h. RE 11-14
  - i. 14-19 RE: GCSE and A level

### **Open space for commentary**

6. We would welcome training to develop our teaching of subject knowledge about (select up to 5 in order):
  - i. Christianity
  - ii. Islam
  - iii. Hindu religion
  - iv. Sikhi religion
  - v. Judaism
  - vi. Buddhism
  - vii. Non-religious worldviews

### **Open space for comments**

7. Please tell us the average curriculum time per week given to RE in your school:
  - a. Less than 30 minutes per week
  - b. 30-59 minutes per week
  - c. 60-89 minutes per week
  - d. 90-120 minutes per week
  - e. Over 120 minutes per weekOpen space for comments
8. Doncaster SACRE provides ½ day termly teacher training / professional development for teachers via BuyDoncaster. Recent training has included visits to a mosque and a gurdwara, SEND RE specialist training, focus on Islam and on non-religious worldviews, RE in EYFS, better writing in RE, assessment in RE and other topics. What comments do you

have on the training if you have attended? What topics would you like to see in this programme?

**Open space for comments**

9. Please can you tell us, confidentially, the budget for the RE curriculum in your school in the last year?
10. Please tell us how the subject in your school is led and managed – what subject leadership does your school provide?
11. Please suggest any ways in which SACRE can support better RE in your school

Drafted by Lat Blaylock 9.23

## National SACRE Updates for SACRE From RE Today / Autumn 23

### Open letter from over 30 Parliamentarians

An Open Letter was published on the 18<sup>th</sup> September by the Daily Telegraph. More than 30 MPs and peers have written to the Education Secretary, highlighting that school pupils receive tokenistic religious education or none. The MPs are blaming this on a lack of trained teachers and funding for the poor quality of religious education. They argue that this lack of education leaves children ill-prepared to understand their own and others' worldviews, hindering their ability to participate in society. Link to the [letter](#)

### NATRE provide evidence at Education Select committee enquiry session

NATRE, along with 3 other subject associations, were invited to speak to a session of the Education Select Committee to support their enquiry into Recruitment and retention of teachers. Deborah Weston, NATRE Research Officer and Chair of the RE policy unit (Joint group made up of NATRE, REC, RE Today), gave evidence in the two hour session.

The session can be viewed [here](#)

The TES wrote about the session in which [D&T teachers 'rummage in skips' for materials, MPs told | Tes](#)

Deborah Weston is quoted:

‘Deborah Weston, research officer at the National Association of Teachers of Religious Education, told MPs that “schools are very inflexible places”. She said that the “pressures on headteachers are so significant in terms of accountability...that there’s a nervousness about taking people on part time”. Ms Weston also argued for an increase in the provision of part-time training to become a teacher, arguing that this could boost recruitment and retention.’

### DfE Guidance on the place of Humanists on SACREs

[Guidance for local authorities about membership of Standing Advisory Councils for Religious Education \(SACREs\) \(natre.org.uk\)](#)

Following a request from NATRE, the DfE have produced the guidance below which has now been sent to local authorities. It makes clear that, in relation to committee A, it is the Local Authority who select which groups can be represented on the local SACRE and on the Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC) and that this selection may include representatives from non-religious belief systems.

See DfE guidance below.

***Guidance for local authorities about membership of Standing Advisory Councils for Religious Education (SACREs)***

This note provides information on a recent court ruling and shares the Department for Education’s (the Department) view that representatives from non-religious belief systems may be appointed to Group A of a SACRE and/or to an Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC).

### **Background**

SACREs are established by local authorities, as required by legislation<sup>[1]</sup>, and their membership must consist of the following groups:

- Group A: members that represent Christian denominations and other religions and their denominations who will appropriately reflect the principal religious traditions in the area;
- Group B: members that represent the Church of England;
- Group C: members that represent the teaching profession or other relevant associations that, in the opinion of the authority, ought to be represented; and
- Group D: members that represent the [local] authority.

The recent legal case of *Bowen v Kent County Council* <sup>[2]</sup> (more details in the Annex) clarified that applications for Group A membership from persons who represent holders of non-religious beliefs should be considered in the same way as applications from those who represent holders of religious beliefs.

In the Department’s view, the non-religious beliefs adhered to by the person to be appointed must be analogous to a religious belief. To be “analogous”, the non-religious beliefs must, in accordance with case law under the European Convention of Human Rights and the Human Rights Act 1998, attain the necessary level of cogency, seriousness, cohesion, and importance to attract protection under the Convention Rights. <sup>[3]</sup>

The final decision on appointment of persons to a SACRE or ASC is a matter for local authorities. This may include consideration of whether such a representative would help ensure that the relevant traditions and beliefs in the local authority’s area are appropriately reflected in Group A.

[1] **Section 390(4)(a) of the Education Act 1996**

2 [www.bailii.org/ew/cases/EWHC/Admin/2023/1261.html](http://www.bailii.org/ew/cases/EWHC/Admin/2023/1261.html)

3 This aligns with the policy in Wales, where a non-religious belief for the purposes of education is aligned with those philosophical beliefs that are protected following European Convention of Human Rights caselaw.

## **Recruitment crisis in teaching and especially in secondary RE**

**London, 6<sup>th</sup> March, 2023:** A campaign to attract a new generation of RE teachers has kicked off with teaching groups, religious organisations and parliamentarians stressing the importance of the subject for preparing students for life in modern Britain. As of January, UCAS data show that teacher recruitment for all subjects is down 22% from last year. However RE stands out, being down a third of applicants from the last recruitment cycle.



Government inaction over recruiting teachers to RE has been blamed. The Department for Education (DfE) has so far missed its target for the recruitment of RE teachers in nine of the last ten years.

Despite this year's fall in applicants, the subject continues to grow in popularity. Over the last five years entries to the GCSE have stood around an average of 250,000 with entries to the full course GCSE rising by 30% over the last decade.

The recruitment campaign – entitled 'Beyond the Ordinary' - draws attention to the academic and knowledge rich approach of the subject to life's big questions, and will seek to attract a set of talented graduates up to the task of getting young people to grips with the complex nature of modern belief.

Kathryn Wright, Chief Executive Officer of Culham St Gabriel's Trust, which is supporting the campaign, said: "Religious education is an important curriculum subject enabling children and young people to navigate our complex multi religious, multi secular society. Everyone has a worldview, and it's important we prepare young people to become free thinking, critical participants in public discourse, who can make informed judgements about matters of religion or belief and reflect meaningfully on the big questions in life."

We are looking for ambitious graduates from a range of humanities and social science subjects who can deliver an academic and rigorous curriculum aimed at getting young people to think critically about their own beliefs and those of others."

Last March, the Father of the House, Sir Peter Bottomley MP hosted a roundtable on the future of the subject. In October, a Westminster Hall Debate saw MPs and Peers from across the House agree on its importance for life in modern Britain as well as express concern around a lack of government support for the subject.

Lord Karan Bilimoria said: "The latest teacher recruitment figures are deeply worrying. Parents are concerned, schools are concerned and so too the young people are missing out.

"As a Champion for RE, I've heard numerous times from students that this is one of the few times in the classroom where they get to say what they think about the world around them. At present we face doing a disservice to a generation of young people ill-equipped to deal with the complexities of belief in Britain and the world beyond. This campaign is about getting the best humanities graduates into the classroom to help them deliver a modern RE curriculum reflective of belief in our society."

Teacher training courses are open to graduates from a range of academic disciplines and from all sorts of diverse backgrounds, with Subject Knowledge Enhancement courses available from schools, universities or other providers.

Anyone looking for more information about training to be a RE teacher should visit <https://www.cstg.org.uk/campaigns/teacher-recruitment/becoming-a-teacher>

***Do we know what this problem is like in our Secondary schools?***

## NATRE analysis of GCSE and A level Religious Studies data: National and regional variations

The reports linked to below cover GCSE and A level RS in both England and Wales and reveal many similarities and some differences between the two nations in relation to trends over time. It is clear that the removal of the short course from performance tables has had a devastating impact on the number of children leaving school with a qualification in Religious Studies. In many cases, the loss of the short course has coincided with an increase in the number of schools reporting zero hours of timetable time for RE in year 11 in the school workforce data. At A level, entries have remained fairly stable over recent years in England but in Wales, there is a step decline, of around 33% since 2020. The reasons for this need further investigation.

For example:

A level West Midlands % A\*-C 2023 76.7 % (Nat 79%)

Uptake in West Midlands 2.4% (Nat 1.88%)

GCSE West Midlands % Grade 9-4 2023 69.9% (Nat 72.2%)

GCSE Uptake West Midlands 27.2% (National Average 25.7%)

[NATRE analysis of GCSE and A level examination data for Religious Studies reveals interesting variations between nations and regions](#)

*How can we encourage more pupil entries for GCSE RS, especially as we know disadvantaged pupils often do well in the subject?*

## Shortage of RE Teachers ‘Dangerous cycle’ within Religious Education

The shortage of religious education (RE) teachers has been highlighted in a Religion Media Centre briefing. Only six people have come forward to train as RE teachers in Wales, and in England, no RE teacher training courses have reached their target of entries.

Hundreds have their applications pending because their degrees have not been finalised due to the university lecturers' strike action. Dr Tim Hutchings, from the University of Nottingham, told the briefing that there was a dangerous cycle emerging in the study of Religious Education, where GCSE entries are stable with RE remaining as the 7<sup>th</sup> most popular subject, A-level results show a slight dip in entries, fewer students choose to study Theology or Religious Studies at university and fewer have chosen to train to teach RE.

Teachers, academics and advisers told the briefing that Headteachers want to include RE in the curriculum as the understanding of religion is vital in a global society, but the lack of specialist teachers is an issue. The RE council is campaigning for the government to create a national plan to support high standards in RE provision and bursaries to encourage new teachers.

Link to webinar below

[Shortage of RE teachers “dangerous cycle” within religious education \(natre.org.uk\)](#)

## RE at the Party Political conferences

In late September and Early October, teams of teachers from NATRE will be joining representatives from the Religious Education Council of England and Wales (REC), Culham St Gabriel's and RE Today to attend the Labour, Conservative and Liberal Democrat party conferences.

This lobbying work that NATRE do on your behalf is really important because it enables us to take the voices of teachers and pupils to policy makers. At the party conferences, we will be sharing the importance of high-quality RE for all pupils in all schools, talking about the need for a national standard in the subject, sharing constituency data related to RE with MPs, SACRE members, local councillors and party members and talking about what high-quality RE looks like in Primary and Secondary classrooms.

As an election comes round. Please talk to your candidates when they come to your door and write to them about supporting RE.

Fiona will update you on this at the meeting.

[Your Voice Matters: NATRE's Call to Action to ask your MP to meet us now!](#)

## Training, networking, and other support

### Anti-racist RE: continuing debates and widening resources

Jonathan Marshall, MBE, ran a brilliant RE and interfaith centre in Plymouth before he retired. Thanks to Jonathan for drawing attention to resources which might compliment the NATRE anti-racist RE materials (<https://www.natre.org.uk/about-natre/projects/anti-racist-re/>)

“I think teachers might find the work of the Equiano Project on anti-racist education helpful. In the true spirit of quality RE, some diversity of views might be welcome.”

This black-led project may help teachers of RE who want to understand the complexity of an anti-racist RE approach: they should be encouraged to explore a range of different voices, one of which is to be found on the excellent website of “The Equiano project” <https://www.theequianoproject.com/>

See for example the video “Understanding the new politics of race” by Prof. John McWhorter. At just under twenty minutes, this perspective is an extremely helpful and profound insight into the background and current situation of anti-racism.

### Global Neighbours: school awards from Christian Aid

The Global Neighbours accreditation scheme is an award scheme for schools run by the charity Christian Aid, in partnership with the Church of England Education Office. It is open to all primary schools and has recently expanded into secondary schools too. The scheme has been running for five years and celebrates the development of global citizenship and courageous advocacy in schools. Its aim is to encourage a deeper

understanding of the world and for young people to be empowered to engage with and respond to global issues.

Schools can apply for a bronze, silver or gold award. To achieve accreditation, schools must demonstrate how they are fulfilling criteria relating to:

- Leadership, vision and values
- Teaching and learning
- Collective worship and spiritual development
- Pupil participation in active global citizenship
- Community engagement

For more information please contact Alison Brown (Global Neighbours Schools Programme Officer): [abrown@christian-aid.org](mailto:abrown@christian-aid.org)

## NATRE Membership- direct support for teaching

NATRE is the largest membership organisation which promotes, defends and supports RE teachers and RE teaching. It does this through producing high-quality resources and CPD, lobbying government, being involved in conversations with the DfE and Ofsted, LAs and SACREs, telling teachers' stories and experiences and being a voice for all teachers.



Membership packages for students, ECTs, teachers, schools, RE professionals and RE enthusiasts!

Details: [www.natre.org.uk/membership](http://www.natre.org.uk/membership)

## RE Connect Teacher Fellowship Programme

This programme is designed to help deepen teachers' understanding and confidence for exploring the environmental crisis through the lens of religions and worldviews in RE. The programme is not just about getting ideas, but also enhancing your teaching practice and professional network around this theme.

After a successful pilot of the programme in 2021-22, RE:Connect will be running again from September 2023, thanks to a grant from the Culham St Gabriel's Trust. There are places for **up to 10 teachers** of RE (primary and secondary) on the 6 month teacher fellowship programme.

The initiative is run by Dr Jeremy Kidwell, Associate Professor in Theological Ethics at the University of Birmingham and Dr Ian Jones of St Peter's Sallley Trust, with input from experienced primary and secondary specialists, environmental scientists, climate activists and academic researchers in religion and environment.

The programme offers opportunities to:

- Deepen subject knowledge on the intersection of religion and ecology
- Work with cutting-edge subject specialists on religious ethics/practice, ecology, and climate change policy
- Work as part of a supportive and dynamic team to create and trial new approaches and resources for teaching on this theme
- Become a champion for teaching and learning on religion and environmental crisis

The Teacher Fellowship Programme involves monthly workshops from Autumn 2023 to Spring 2024, with tasks to undertake between workshops. Programme sessions will include one fully-funded weekend residential and 6-8 online evening sessions (roughly one per month). There is no cost of participation to the teacher or their school and Fellows receive a bursary of £500 to cover costs of participation plus travel expenses to enable attendance at in-person sessions.

Interested? Please contact Ian Jones ([director@saltleytrust.org.uk](mailto:director@saltleytrust.org.uk)) to register your interest. Selection for the programme is by a formal application process.

## Philosophy of Religion courses from the FT

*Jack Robertson, RE teacher in north London, is working with the Financial Times to offer free access to FT.com for all schools and colleges teaching sixteen to nineteen year old students. An FT subscription can support students in developing the broad knowledge that will help them stand out to examiners, universities and employers. A Philosophy Class page, [ft.com/philosophyclass](https://ft.com/philosophyclass), is available for teachers and students of philosophy and ethics. It brings together relevant articles from across the FT and provides accompanying questions that prompt students to reflect critically and make connections to areas of the A-level specification. There is also an IB Theory of Knowledge page for IB students.*

*Recent Philosophy Class articles cover topics from the ethics of climate protests and abortion to developments in AI and quantum physics, as well as interviews with philosophers such as MacAskill, Chalmers and Srinivasan.*

*Participating schools receive the same level of access to FT.com as regular subscriber.*

*Check if your school is registered or register your interest via the Philosophy Class page or at [ft.com/schoolsarefree](https://ft.com/schoolsarefree)*

Jack Robertson [JRobertson@qebarnet.co.uk](mailto:JRobertson@qebarnet.co.uk)

## RE Hubs – Website now live!



RE Hubs website is now live at [www.re-hubs.uk](https://www.re-hubs.uk). RE Hubs aim to connect those who can provide resources with those who need them and create a neutral platform being RE professionals together.

Many organizations serve RE/RVE/R&W education in the UK, from places of worship and school speakers to CPD partnerships and resource providers. However, until now, there hasn't been a single place to equip, enable, and signpost everyone within the community.

***How can we encourage speakers and places of worship to sign up to the training and appear on the site? What links do you have where you can share this?***

## BBC Expands early years RE resources

There are new resources for 4 and 5 year olds for RE / RME and RVE from BBC Bitesize Reception. These include some simple craft activities and some recipes for festive food with clear and simple ideas to bring the world of religion alive for small children. The subject is connected to work in the fields of expressive arts and design, helping pupils with their understanding of the world particularly in the field of religion and belief. These new materials cover Christmas, Easter, Eid ul Adha, Vaisakhi, Diwali and more and have now gone live. They include video clips made for the age group, activity sheets and information for teacher-use. Lat Blaylock, who contributed to the work says: 'I'm really pleased to see that BBC have made such a diverse and well thought out contribution to Early Years learning about religion and belief. Teachers will find this is a little treasure trove.'

Here is a link:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/z24kqyc>

## Against Islamophobia: new resources free for schools

**Educate Against Islamophobia (EAI)** has recently published a plethora of educational materials for the Early Years, primary schools, high schools and educational practitioners across the U.K. The teaching and learning materials are reflective of the respective curriculums and national frameworks, and offer learners with learning opportunities that are applicable to their respective nations.

### Early Years resources:

- Amna & Amy Storybook
- 2 lesson plans.

The storybook and accompanying lesson plans aim to support children in the Early Years to develop an awareness of equality, diversity and respectful behaviour and introduce learners to aspects of the Islamic identity.

### Primary school resources:

- Unit of work

The unit of work which comprises 6 lesson plans supports KS1-KS2/P2-P7 learners in developing positive attitudes towards diversity. This unit of work also aims to introduce learners to the Islamic identity and will enable them to explore some of the similarities and differences between Islam and other faiths/culture.

### High school resources:

- Unit of work

The unit of work which comprises 6 lesson plans supports KS3-KS4/S1-S4 learners in developing an awareness of Islamophobia, including its manifestations and dangers. Learners will explore the issue of Islamophobia through a range of themes and lenses including human rights, anti-bullying and media literacy.

### Educator resources:

- Islamophobia awareness training session
- Equality, diversity and inclusion audit

The Islamophobia awareness training and EDI audit aims to promote an awareness of Islamophobia and equip practitioners with the understanding of how to address it in the school community. These materials will also assist educational practitioners to meet their Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act (2010).

To download your free copy of EAI's materials, visit: <https://eai.org.uk/>

If you would like to learn more about Educate Against Islamophobia's work and services contact [info@eai.org.uk](mailto:info@eai.org.uk)

## Fischy Music: 25 years nurturing emotional and spiritual well being

Lots of schools use Fischy Music in RE as well as assemblies. 2023 is an exciting year for Fischy Music, this year celebrating its 25th Anniversary! Free online concerts streaming live every month throughout this year, so whole classrooms and assembly halls of children can join in with 30 minutes of uplifting songs!

Founded in 1998 by Stephen Fischbacher, Fischy Music ([www.fischy.com](http://www.fischy.com)) is a children's charity, writing songs for and with children to nurture positive mental health and help them express and manage a range of emotions.

Songs are at the heart of Fischy's work, with Health & Wellbeing and RE & Collective Worship songs and teaching resources made available to children, families, schools and churches. In addition to live events the innovative song-streaming platform, Fischy Music Online has made it easy for teachers everywhere to access over 140 songs and teaching resources, with new songs regularly added.

*"Fischy Music songs open an emotional door allowing children to have the confidence to discuss issues and problems that we might otherwise not pick up on."*

Teacher, St Philomena's Primary School, Glasgow

Schools can subscribe to Fischy Music Online to access over 140 songs. The RE Package includes resources created in conjunction with Lat Blaylock, RE Today, to help staff use music well in RE and connecting to significant Christian concepts (eg from Understanding Christianity). The resources can be used by all staff and are useful in all primary schools wherever you want to enable spiritual reflection and can also be used in assemblies and services for collective worship. To find out more, email: [info@fischy.com](mailto:info@fischy.com)

## Faith inspired Art to encourage conversation, reflection and action

*Cheryl Homer, Westhill Endowment, writes:* RE Today and NATRE have always been great supporters of the arts and if you are wondering if using faith inspired arts in your school might be beneficial the answer is most likely 'yes'. But where do you start?

Westhill Endowment are here to help, with years of experience working with faith inspired arts. The charity has 10 art collections which are available FREE\* to schools and community venues around the UK.

Many communities have already benefited from these resources which aim to encourage conversation, enable reflections, and inspire action.

A Year 10 textiles student recently reflected on her experience with the Gethsemane Garments: "I liked the green garment [representing Hope] showing the rips and tears of the fabric, but with the sides being restitched to show signs of healing and positivity."

A Primary School Teacher reflected on a creative lockdown session provided by their local vicar using the exhibition Bald Statements: "The creative artwork [the children produced in response] has been thought provoking and the children were able to speak honestly on their feelings and experiences of lockdown."

The art collections come with a variety of themes and mediums, including free standing and wall mounted works of art. Additional materials such as booklets, education packs, and films are available. Westhill will also consider funding applications for events around your exhibition.

Westhill Endowment work one to one with all exhibition hosts helping you tailor your exhibition to suit your space and your audiences. If you'd like to know more, please contact Westhill's Arts Coordinator, Cheryl Homer, on [cheryl@westhillendowment.org](mailto:cheryl@westhillendowment.org) or check the website or social media. [www.westhillendowment.org](http://www.westhillendowment.org)

[www.facebook.com/WesthillEndowment](https://www.facebook.com/WesthillEndowment)

[www.youtube.com/channel/UCHKjKpunQ0C4XSXD4j88XZA](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCHKjKpunQ0C4XSXD4j88XZA)

*\*You may incur transport and insurance costs, please ask if this is applicable.*