



City of Doncaster Council

Agenda

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, 22nd February, 2024

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 should contact Governance Services on 01302 737462/736723/736709 for further details.

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Damian Allen
Chief Executive

Issued on: Wednesday 14th February 2024

Governance Services Officer for this meeting: Amber Torrington
amber.torrington@doncaster.gov.uk

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A. Reports where the public and press may not be excluded.	
4. Membership Update (Chair) – <i>For Information</i>	
5. Syllabus Review:	
a) Appointment of Agreed Syllabus Conference (Chair) – <i>For Decision</i>	
b) Stakeholder Consultation and Results (Jane Reed) – <i>For Information</i>	9 - 10
6. West Hill Update (Chair) – <i>For Information</i>	
7. SACRE Annual Report 2023/24 (Chair) – <i>For Comment</i>	
8. Ofsted Annual Report and Implications for SACRE (Chair) – <i>For Discussion</i> Ofsted Annual Report Says Schools Have Poor Quality RE – REC (religiouseducationcouncil.org.uk)	
9. RE Today Update (Ian Nicholson) – <i>For Information</i>	11 - 16
10. Date and time of next meeting: Thursday 4th July, 2024 at 4.30 p.m.	

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

Chair – Mr Bob Kiddle

Vice-Chair – Councillor Glynis Smith

Councillors Yetunde Elebuibon, 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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Agenda Item 3

CITY OF DONCASTER COUNCIL

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE)

THURSDAY, 19TH OCTOBER, 2023

A MEETING of the STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE) was held at the COUNCIL CHAMBER, CIVIC OFFICE, WATERDALE, DONCASTER DN1 3BU on THURSDAY, 19TH OCTOBER, 2023, at 4.30 pm.

PRESENT:

Chair - Mr Bob Kiddle
Vice-Chair - Councillor Glynis Smith

Councillors Yetunde Elebuibon and Sue Knowles, Danielle Heath, Mr B Teimoori, Tara Moxon, Sally Faulkner, Harvey Kasin and Amy Roddam

APOLOGIES:

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Steve Cox and Vanessa Gregory

84 WELCOME/INTRODUCTIONS.

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions were made.

85 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST, IF ANY.

There were no declarations of interest made at the meeting.

86 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 6TH JULY, 2023

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on the 6th July 2023 be agreed as an accurate record.

87 REPORT FROM THE SEND DAY HELD ON 12TH JULY, 2023 (VICE-CHAIR, COUNCILLOR GLYNIS SMITH AND LAT BLAYLOCK).

Vice-Chair, Councillor Glynis Smith and Lat Blaylock, representative from RE Today, provided the Committee with an overview of the SEND training day that was held on the 12th July 2023.

Those who attended the day were provided with;

- Practical ways to support children with special needs in many different ways, that were appropriate for them and their learning styles.
- Opportunities for sensory play.
- Examples of children learning and discovering/participating in new experiences.
- 10 case studies that gave practical examples of how different people looked to support children in different ways and how to introduce children to all religions.

It was added that 38 delegates travelled from across the country to take part in the SEND training day in Doncaster and that positive feedback was received.

Councillor Smith noted that she had thoroughly enjoyed participating in a joyful day and gave thanks to Lat and his colleagues for organising a successful event.

Following a question from Jane Reed, Lat responded that relevant material written for the SEND training day could be used to meet one of the priorities for the statutory curriculum review. This would show Doncaster SACRE's continued commitment to the inclusion needs of all pupils.

RESOLVED that;

- The report be noted
- Lat Blaylock proceed with publishing relevant information provided for the SEND Day as an appendix to a new syllabus.

88 RE IN SCHOOLS: RE AT ROWENA ACADEMY/DELTA ACADEMIES (TARA MOXON)

The committee received a presentation from Tara Moxon the RE Lead for Rowena Academy, which outlined how RE is taught at the school.

It was highlighted to SACRE that;

- The school follows the RE Today scheme of work from nursery up to year 2 covering a wide range of religions and world views. Students participate in one RE lesson per week.
- The children know and understand there are many different religions and how that can have an impact on the world and people's behaviours.
- Children are encouraged to celebrate different religions, and to understand that people have different beliefs and that is ok.
- As part of the RE lessons there is a focus on learning from religion and about religion. The different elements of religion such as people and places are made relatable to each child.
- Whilst each religion is covered throughout the RE lessons taught in school, each year group has a particular focus on one religion throughout the duration of the academic year.
- RE lessons are reviewed by the RE lead.
- Children are assessed on their knowledge and skills periodically throughout each year and at the end of each key stage.
- At the end of each term the whole school take part in a festival day celebrating a chosen religion. A different religion is chosen for each festival day.

During discussion Lat and Tara provided reassurance to the board that children between the ages of 5–14 years old learn about all religions and world views as part of the RE Today syllabus.

Tara confirmed following a question that community cohesion and links with local religious places and people are planned into the RE lessons taught at the school.

RESOLVED that the presentation be noted.

89 COMMUNICATION WITH SCHOOLS - A STRATEGY FOR THE USE OF EDULOG (JANE REED)

Jane Reed, Head of Service for Education and Skills, gave a brief verbal update with regard to the communication between SACRE and schools. It was reported that one of the priorities for SACRE during the next academic year would be to continue to raise SACRE's profile. Therefore, every half term there will be a different focus on SACRE and RE posted in the Edulog system.

It was noted that The Chair of SACRE now also has a specified email address within the Edulog system.

RESOLVED that the update on the strategy for the use of Edulog be noted.

90 REVIEW OF THE RESOURCES PROJECT (CHAIR, BOB KIDDLE).

The Chair, Bob Kiddle, noted that it was 12 months since the REsources project was instigated and asked that some members of SACRE form a sub-committee to review the information currently held, and discuss how the project should progress. Those that wished to participate in reviewing the project were; Amy Roddam, Councillor Glynis Smith, Pahani Kaur and Sally Faulkener.

RESOLVED that the REsources project sub-committee review the REsources project and provide recommendations to progress the project at the next SACRE meeting in February 2024.

91 WESTHILL - FESTIVAL OF FAITH AND IDEAS - PROGRESS REPORT FROM MEETINGS HELD ON 17 JULY AND 16 OCTOBER, 2023 (JUGTINDER SINGH).

Tara Moxon gave the committee an overview of the arrangements for the Festival of Faith and Ideas. The date for the festival was confirmed as the 25th June 2024 at Willows Primary School. A wide range of religions are to be covered with six schools invited to bring one teacher and a few students to the festival. Various activities including food tasting and ceremonies will be on offer for everyone to take part in during the day.

The Chair wished to inform committee members that they would be welcome to observe the day if they wished.

RESOLVED that the progress report be noted.

92 SACRE MEMBERSHIP: BUDDHISM IN DONCASTER AND REPORTS FROM THE GOMDE OPEN DAY AND THE CHAIR'S VISIT ON 26TH SEPT, 2023 (CHAIR, BOB KIDDLE).

The Chair reiterated to the committee the need for strengthening and increasing the membership of SACRE, and provided an update on his efforts in order to do so.

RESOLVED that the update be noted.

93 NOTES AND NEWS

Jane Reed reminded SACRE that the purpose of the committee's annual report was to hold the Local Authority to account. As the statutory body, SACRE must ensure and be satisfied that the status of RE in schools is high.

It was reported that SACRE had four agreed priorities for the next academic year, which are detailed as follows;

- To continue the profile raising of SACRE
- To continue with CPD and seek further opportunities
- To review the RE syllabus
- To evaluate the curriculum offer and SMSC offer in schools is across all phases.

It was explained that these priorities should culminate within the SACRE annual report. Jane suggested that an action plan be implemented to help strengthen those priorities further.

Following discussion about CPD and a member of the committee's experience as a governor of a school, The Chair suggested a presentation be tabled at the next meeting.

SACRE members were encouraged by the Chair to join the SACRE Whatsapp group and use it appropriately.

It was confirmed to SACRE that the following links <https://cst.org.uk/about-cst/safe-security-advice-for-everyone> <https://www.standupeducation.org/> and [Discussing Contemporary Islamophobia in the Classroom | Facing History & Ourselves](#) were circulated to schools through Edulog. The committee were advised that if they wish to use the Edulog system to circulate communications to schools then they should send the relevant documents or information to Bob Kiddle.

RESOLVED that the updates be noted.

94 TEACHING HOURS FOR RE FROM SCHOOL WORKFORCE CENSUS (LAT BLAYLOCK).

Lat Blaylock presented data that the Department for Education collect through their annual statistical survey which showed the number of teaching hours by subject for Doncaster Secondary Schools.

Lat went on to highlight that the data showed that those schools of religious character were better at providing a suitable amount of time teaching Religious Education to students. Also that there were two schools listed that reported hardly any time was given to teaching RE.

SACRE were advised that the data showed that Doncaster secondary schools were providing very minimal amounts of curriculum time to the study of RE and world views.

Councillor Sue Knowles wished to note that the data provided within the agenda pack for this item was illegible.

RESOLVED that the data be noted.

95 YORKSHIRE AND HUMBER RE HUB

Olivia Seymour from the Yorkshire and Humber RE Hub gave SACRE a brief overview of RE Hubs, what they are and the work that carry out.

Members were advised that the RE Hubs project began last year, to map the breadth of support for RE and world views in each region in England and Wales, and to highlight and strengthen any gaps in provision. The RE Hub aims to build relationships, provide support and resources the SACREs, teachers and other stakeholders in every region.

It was recognised that the RE Hubs were a national initiative with national support. There is also a steering group that has representation from key national organisations which support the RE Hubs.

Olivia wished to highlight that the RE Hubs offer free accredited training to RE providers across the country which allows organisations that complete training to obtain a nationally recognised kitemark, and a presence on the hubs website. The website allows the trained organisations and speakers to share their events and training within a calendar that schools and teachers can view.

Members were assured that the information uploaded to the website was quality assured.

It was also confirmed that it remains the schools responsibility to run all relevant safeguarding checks on any visitors or speakers that they invite into school.

RESOLVED that;

- the presentation be noted
- the presentation be circulated to SACRE members.

96 THE SYLLABUS CONFERENCE (LAT BLAYLOCK).

Lat provided SACRE with a list of proposed questions that will form a questionnaire. The questionnaire aims to obtain the views of stakeholders in RE in Doncaster. The answers, ideas and views collected as a result of the questionnaire will be used to inform the new RE syllabus.

The committee were encouraged to submit any suggested modifications to the questionnaire to Lat following the meeting.

Once confirmed the final version of the questionnaire will be circulated as a link through the Edulog system and sent to schools to complete. The results of the questionnaire to be tabled at a future SACRE meeting.

RESOLVED that the draft questionnaire be noted.

97 NATIONAL SACRE UPDATES FOR SACRE - FROM RE TODAY / AUTUMN 23 (LAT BLAYLOCK)

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

From the update Lat wished to highlight to SACRE;

- A letter to the Education Secretary questioning whether the training of new RE teachers be given higher priority.
- Education Select Committee
- DfE guidance on the placements of Humanists on SACRE. Doncaster already has Humanist involvement on SACRE and has done so for some time.
- Recruitment Crisis
- RE at the Party Political Conferences – those attended by RE national bodies representatives were positive with contacts made with parliamentarians.
- Training and networking – continue to work on anti-racist RE.
- RE Connect Teacher Fellowship Programme – Lat advised this will be circulated with all Doncaster schools.
- Further training opportunities within the report.

The Chair encouraged all SACRE members to read the update provided.

RESOLVED that the update be noted.

98 LIAISON WITH NEIGHBOURING SACRES (VICE-CHAIR, COUNCILLOR GLYNIS SMITH).

Hannah Lambert gave a brief verbal overview on Rotherham SACRE. It was advised that whilst Rotherham SACRE has a very small membership which limits the work it can do, it would be beneficial to work with neighbouring SACRE's. Hannah also noted that Sheffield SACRE had expressed an interest in partnership working.

RESOLVED that the update be noted.

99 SUCCESSION PLANNING - A CHAIR-IN-WAITING (CHAIR, BOB KIDDLE).

The Chair, Bob Kiddle stressed the importance of succession planning and that the committee should have members that were available to take over the leadership role if and when required.

100 FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS (CHAIR, BOB KIDDLE).

The Chair asked for comment and the committee discussed inviting a representative of RE from a Doncaster Secondary School to a future SACRE meeting. Amy suggested and agreed to approach contacts within Astrea Trust.

Bob also suggested that each SACRE member discuss their own faiths at future SACRE meetings.

101 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED that the next meeting of SACRE be held on Thursday 22nd February 2024, at 4.30pm.

CHAIR: _____

DATE: _____

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Agenda Annex

Doncaster SACRE wishes to collect ideas and views form stakeholders in RE. This questionnaire will be open until 31 January 2024, and takes less than 10 minutes to complete

Required

1.Your Name

2.Doncaster SACRE is require to review its 2019 RE agreed syllabus after 5 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. In your current school 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

3.Your email address (which will only be used to contact you in relation to RE in Doncaster)

4.Your school / your role / your interest in RE: (Subject leader for RE, Headteacher, teacher of RE, governor, other

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:

- Planning RE for all pupils
- Meeting inspection requirements in RE
- Teaching and Learning methods in RE
- Outcomes and assessment for RE
- RE, spiritual and moral development and British values
- RE in the Early Years
- RE 5 - 11
- RE 11-14
- 14 -19 RE : GCSE and A Level
-

6.We would welcome training to develop our teaching of subject knowledge about (select up to 5 in order)

- Christianity
- Islam
- Hindu Religion
- Sikh Religion

- Judaism
- Buddhism
- Non-religious world views
-

7. Please tell us the average curriculum time per week given to RE in your school:

- less than 30 minutes per week
- 30 - 59 minutes per week
- 60 - 89 minutes per week
- 90 - 120 minutes per week
- Over 120 minutes per week
-

8. Doncaster SACRE provides 1/2 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 non religious world views, 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?

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

Submit

National SACRE Updates for Doncaster SACRE from RE Today Spring 2024

Religious Education in the HMCI Annual report

The **Ofsted Annual Report** published at the end of November 2023 presents the organisation's findings for the areas they inspect including schools. NATRE is pleased to see the recognition of the challenges faced by teachers of RE and the impact on children.

Ofsted found the following issues in many schools:

- schools failing to meet the statutory requirement to teach RE to all pupils in all year groups;
- pupils not being taught enough substance to prepare them to engage in a complex, multi-religious and multi-secular society,
- non-examination provision typically not being of high quality;
- schools not teaching topics in the RE curriculum deeply enough for pupils to develop a substantial understanding of the subject matter;

Ofsted recommends a coordinated effort by stakeholders to improve the quality of RE in schools including:

- the provision of high-quality professional development
- curriculum publishers identifying clearly what pupils will learn and when
- the government proving clear expectations about RE provision in schools
- non-statutory guidance for RE needing to be updated and include clear information for schools about the breadth and depth of the syllabus they are expected to teach

These findings add further weight to the call from NATRE and others for a National Plan for RE and for government support for the National Content Standard published by the RE Council last month.

See Appendix A below for extracts relating to RE – quoted in full

Appendix A

Extracts from the report relating to RE are quoted in full below:

From the Curriculum Section of the report as follows.

However, some subjects still do not receive the attention they deserve:

- in many secondary schools, pupils do not benefit from a broad and ambitious music curriculum. In physical education (PE), pupils typically experience a broad range of activities. However, schools do not always ensure that these contribute enough to developing pupils' knowledge and skills.
- in too many primary and secondary schools, the religious education (RE) that pupils receive is of a poor quality and not fit for purpose, leaving pupils ill-equipped for some of the complexities of contemporary society.

Religious education

RE in schools is generally of poor quality. Although it is a statutory subject, schools often consider RE as an afterthought. As a subject on the curriculum, it is under-valued. RE is a complex subject, and the lack of clarity and support from government makes schools' job harder.

Some schools steer through these challenges well, but most do not. We found that:

- many schools do not meet the statutory requirement to teach RE at all stages

- pupils are rarely taught enough substance to prepare them to engage in a complex, multi-religious and multi-secular society (where religion and non-religion play different parts in different people's lives)
- too often, schools do not teach topics in the RE curriculum deeply enough for pupils to develop a substantial understanding of the subject matter
- non-examined RE is typically not high quality.

All pupils should develop a broad and secure knowledge of the complexity of religious and non-religious traditions. It will take coordinated effort by stakeholders to improve the quality of RE in schools:

- schools need high-quality professional development to teach RE well
- curriculum publishers need to identify clearly what pupils will learn and when, building on knowledge over time, so that pupils develop a deep knowledge of the chosen religious and non-religious traditions
- the government should provide clear expectations about RE provision in schools. Schools should follow these. Current non-statutory guidance for RE should be updated and include clear information for schools about the breadth and depth of the syllabus they are expected to teach

National Content Standard for Religious Education

NATRE is pleased that the RE Council of England and Wales has launched its **National Content Standard** for Religious Education in England. We have previously reported on the postcode lottery of RE provision in England, evidenced in the Ofsted **Research Review**, NATRE **primary** and **secondary** surveys, and **analysis of the DfE's own data**. However, until now, there has been no national benchmark to cite when we are asked, "What exactly does high-quality RE look like?"

NATRE Chair, Katie Freeman said,

"It is genuinely encouraging to see so much agreement around the need for a National Content Standard that applies to all types of school in England. I hope that those who choose to work with this benchmark will find it useful to evaluate their own RE curriculum. If this standard achieves widespread support across the sector, that will give us the greatest chance of achieving our vision of securing high-quality teaching and learning in RE/Religion and Worldviews for all pupils in all schools."

You can read the National Content Standard [here](#) and a blog about it by Deborah Weston [here](#).

NATRE Secondary survey on RE: Results

This is an analysis of the data gathered from a questionnaire on impact of political policies on Religious Education in England, RME in Scotland and RVE in Wales. It relates particularly to the level of provision in different types of school, the experience of teachers in relation to initial teacher training and continuing professional development and the type of examination and non-examination courses offered at key stages 4 and 5. Through publicising this survey, NATRE hopes it can be used widely seeks to make the case for more attention to be paid to the level of provision and quality of our subject in all schools and, in England for there to be a National Plan for RE as recommended by the Commission on RE in 2018.

This tenth survey was conducted during the summer term of 2023 via a number of teacher networks supported by the National Association of Teachers of Religious Education (NATRE), and RE Today Services. The survey was publicised via social media networks and via the electronic networks of other RE organisations including AREIAC, AULRE, and NASACRE. Replies were received from 241 teachers in different

parts of the United Kingdom. Respondents did not all respond to every question. Responses that are significantly different, according to school type of the respondent, have also been discussed.

Access the full report

NATRE Secondary Survey 2023

Advanced British Standard Consultation

The DfE are currently consulting on the Advanced British Standard, a potential new qualification framework for 16-19 year olds.

NATRE have pointed that current plans have not included the statutory position of RE for those studying 16-19 within a school setting.

Parliamentary question on RE: Supporting and funding RE

Yet another example of where what **Ofsted describes** as “the lack of clarity and support from the government makes schools’ job harder” in relation to delivering high-quality RE. Minister of State for Education; Damian Hinds, MP (Pictured to the right) **answered this written question** from Jim Shannon MP as follows:

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether her Department plans to take steps to fund network hubs for Religious Education; and if she will make a statement.

Damian Hinds MP, Minister of State for Education responded

“Religious education (RE) is an essential part of a school’s curriculum and remains a compulsory subject in all state-funded schools, including academies, to all pupils up to the age of 18. RE develops an individual’s knowledge and understanding of the religions and beliefs which form part of contemporary society, as well as serving to inform their own values and behaviour.

Although the Department has not been involved in the establishment of the RE Hubs project, the Department welcomes its work to support teachers and practitioners. The Department currently has no plans to provide funding for the project. The Department does, however, provide support for RE in other ways.”

The answer then goes on to cite spending on the new bursary which was finally reinstated this year but is still very small in comparison to other shortage subjects such as geography and languages including Latin, the Oak National Academy materials which will eventually be rolled out to all subjects and the eight-week funded subject knowledge enhancement courses for potential trainee teachers of RE – again offered to many other subjects.

DfE’s annual report and accounts set out government policy:

“Our main levers to support schools are our Curriculum Hub programmes (music, computing, languages, English and mathematics), the Behaviour Hubs programme and our model curricula guidance ... (page 72)

Music hubs will receive £79m a year until at least 2025 and there seems to be money available for other subject support too. For example, Schools Week **reported** on 1st December 2023 that the £320 million PE and sports premium for primary schools will be extended for at least another year from September.

So NATRE’s question is, if “Religious education (RE) is an essential part of a school’s curriculum and remains a compulsory subject in all state funded schools” and in relation to the RE Hubs project, “the Department welcomes its work to support teachers and practitioners”, why does the government not back up these fine words with action by funding the subject on a par with other subjects in the curriculum – including of course **RE Hubs**?

A question for any prospective parliamentary candidates; How will you support high quality RE for all pupils in all schools in RE?

House of Lords Debate Quality Religious Education

If you missed it, Religious Education was in the spotlight on January 18th 2024, as the Lords debated standards in RE in the Grand Committee. NATRE worked with the RE Policy Unit to help brief several peers who offered to speak in this debate proposed by Lord Harries of Pentregarth.

In his contribution, Lord Harries of Pentregarth raised concerns about schools' poor quality of religious education (RE) and quoted data collected by NATRE. He also referenced the damning 2023 HMCI Annual Ofsted report from Amanda Spielman, where RE was described as "poor quality" and "not fit for purpose". Ofsted suggested, he said, that RE was "undervalued" and often considered as an "afterthought" by schools and the "lack of clarity and support" from the Government made schools' job "harder".

The peer criticized the lack of government support, citing the survey conducted by NASACRE in August 2023, which found that five authorities declared no spending on RE at all, and a further 34—39 in all, or 31%—stated they did not spend any money supporting RE in schools.

Lord Harries closed his remarks by calling for a National Plan for RE, including a benchmark for the curriculum. He made a list of matters for inclusion in this National Plan.

1. it should include a budgetary provision at least comparable to that received for other subjects such as music;

- the plan should include a benchmark for what is expected from the syllabus,
- that what happens locally should be judged by this benchmark;
- that RE should be taught by people who have qualifications in the subject and who are given regular opportunities to enhance their professional skills,
- that more bursaries and more money for enhanced professional training should be made available to this end.

Responding to the Government, Baroness Barran – parliamentary under-secretary of state for Education, commended Lord Harries for initiating the debate on religious education (RE) and said she appreciated the insightful contributions from other speakers. She highlighted the importance of high-quality RE in a society with a changing religious demographic, emphasising its role in developing children's knowledge, understanding, and tolerance of religious and non-religious beliefs.

Baroness Barran addressed the unique nature of RE, which contributed, she said, to personal, social and academic benefits, fostering respect and providing opportunities for exploring questions of belief, values, and morality. She acknowledged the significant shift in the religious demographic, as Lord Warner and Lady Meacher highlighted, and stressed the importance of adapting to this diversity.

Regarding teacher recruitment and retention, Baroness Barran outlined the Government's efforts to transform teacher training and recruit specialists in RE. Introducing a £10,000 bursary for RE trainee teachers in the 2024-25 academic year aims to incentivise more applicants. She also mentioned subject knowledge enhancement courses and the need for teachers to feel supported in handling sensitive content. She explained the poor recruitment for this year's RE initial teacher education (44%) by saying that the Government had increased the target by around the same amount but failed to acknowledge that the Government had inexplicably cut the target a few years ago, and the target had been restored to previous levels due to the apparent undersupply of secondary RE teachers.

Various speakers contributed to the debate which can be read in full here: [**Religious Education in Schools - Hansard - UK Parliament**](#)

Listen via Parliament TV [Parliamentlive.tv](https://www.parliamentlive.tv) - [Lords Grand Committee](#)

RE Featured in Radio 4's Beyond Belief

On Monday 29th January, BBC Radio 4's Beyond Belief focused upon Religious Education. The episode was entitled [What Should We Teach in RE](#). Guests discussed the subject's importance, what they think should be taught in the subject and how, alongside challenges faced by RE at this time. The panel included Henna Karin-Sayer (RE teacher and TikTok content creator), Fiona Moss (CEO of NATRE, the National Association of Teachers of RE), Stephen Evans (CEO of the National Secular Society) and Rabbi Benjy Rickman (Head of RE at King David High School, which has a Jewish faith character).

The episode can be listened to on the [BBC's website](#).

Institute for Jewish Policy Research: Key Findings from National Jewish Identity Survey

[This study](#) provides a up to date profile of how Jews in Britain understand and live their Jewish lives. It is the largest survey of its kind, being conducted among a research panel of nearly 5000 members and is free to download. Headlines include:

- 94% of Jews in the UK say that ethical and moral behaviour make up part of their Jewish identities.
- Nearly 1/3 of Jewish adults had personally experienced antisemitism in the year leading to the survey.
- Over half of British Jewish adults in the UK belong to a synagogue. More than this practice aspects of Jewish religious culture.

The key findings of the report can be found in the film [Who Are Jews in the UK Today?](#).

How can SACRE encourage school RE to reflect the picture of lived religion in this report and in the UK in general?

Bayt al Fann: Exploring Art and Culture Inspired by Islamic Tradition

'Bayt al Fann' is Arabic for 'Art House'. It was launched in November 2021 and welcomes all to explore the past, present and future of Islamic art, culture and heritage. It's [website](#) is a huge treasure trove of information and examples of art and culture linked to Islam from ancient scriptures to modern calligrafitti and architecture.

For those who want more, there are events and workshops and a new quarterly periodical with the first edition centred around Islamic pattern. There are regular, detailed social media posts across many platforms including Instagram (baytal.fann), Threads (baytal.fann), TikTok (@baytalfann) and X (@BaytAlFann).

List of Resources to Support Schools with Contentious Topics

Together is a coalition of some of the UK's best known organisations that aim to build a kinder, closer and more connected society. As one of its campaigns, 'Together for Humanity' is building a movement to stand against rising antisemitism and anti-Muslim hate in the UK amidst the conflict in the Middle East. The campaign is working to support schools, universities and councils to build bridges in their communities.

It has created a document containing links and information to offer guidance that schools and teachers may find helpful. There are also some resources that could potentially be used with pupils on this document.

Access resource

With which schools should SACRE share this document. How should it be shared?

Training, networking, and other support

RE Today Primary curriculum and NATRE Membership- direct support for teaching

RE Today in partnership with NATRE have created a primary curriculum made up of learning pathways for each half term, lesson by lesson power points, retrieval questions, knowledge organisers and much more.

Schools will receive this if they become NATRE school enhanced members which is an annual subscription currently priced at £270 per school.

www.natre.org.uk/primary/retoday-primary-re-curriculum/

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

NASACRE Training for SACRE members

Wednesday 26th June 6.30-8.30 So you have joined your local SACRE

Description: A rerun of the September session, to help new SACRE members to understand their role, how SACRE works, its statutory responsibilities and how members make their contribution to SACRE's work.

Free

Other training and resources available on the NASACRE site- do log in

[Welcome to NASACRE - NASACRE](#)

New RE Today Learning Zone

RE Today Services are delighted to have launched a new e-learning platform that puts teachers in control of their CPD. Courses already available on the Learning Zone include subject knowledge webinars for both primary and secondary teachers on Buddhism, Christianity, Hindu Dharma, Islam, Judaism, Sikhi and Non-Religious Worldviews alongside the ever-popular Understanding Christianity course for primary colleagues. Teachers of RE can select those courses and webinars most relevant to them – each can be accessed and used at times convenient for the participants, or even accessed in short bursts over a few weeks or months. More will be added to the Learning Zone over the coming months.

To find out more, please go to [RE Today Learning Zone. Login](#)