

**The Surrey**  
**Standing Advisory Council**  
**on**  
**Religious Education**



**Annual Report**  
**Academic Year 2022-23**

Approved by Surrey SACRE March 2024

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### I. INTRODUCTION by Sarah Harris, Acting Chair



Surrey SACRE has great pleasure in presenting our Annual Report. Our SACRE continues to flourish with the active support of our members and the professional advice of Rachel Boxer, our local Authority adviser. We have increased the support we give schools, particularly taking advantage of Zoom for our interfaith team to access schools, giving students the opportunity to ask direct questions of faith members, and in supporting the resourcing of the syllabus through videos for classroom use.

The revised Agreed Syllabus is now with schools; this is a major piece of work which could not have been achieved without the hard work and creativity of Surrey teachers.

At this difficult time, it is worth remembering that RE became mandatory in 1944 in direct response to the events of World War II and this was reflected in the first agreed syllabus. Each revision of the syllabus reflects the time and true to this tradition, this syllabus reflects the impact of wider 'worldviews' on students' lives and importantly stresses religion as it is lived.

Once again, our thanks to Rachel Boxer and the team at Surrey County Council.

**Sarah Harris**

***Acting Chair, and Jewish member of Surrey SACRE***

***March 2024***

#### **Contacts**

If you have any issues which you would like to raise with Surrey SACRE, please contact Sarah Harris, Acting Chair, or Rachel Boxer, Associate RE Consultant, and Adviser to SACRE via Liz Mitchell, Clerk to SACRE, by email at: [SurreySACRE@cofeguildford.org.uk](mailto:SurreySACRE@cofeguildford.org.uk)

### 1.1 SACRE Meetings and Attendance

All meetings of Surrey SACRE took place on Zoom during this academic year, in order to maximise attendance during the statutory period of revision. Minutes of these meetings can be accessed from Surrey SACRE's webpages: [Surrey SACRE - Diocese of Guildford \(cofeguildford.org.uk\)](http://Surrey SACRE - Diocese of Guildford (cofeguildford.org.uk))

#### 2022-23 Member Attendance at SACRE meetings (excluding Officers):

Meetings this year include Agreed Syllabus Conferences. Full SACRE meetings are identified in red. Two meetings of the SACRE (one full, one ASC) were not quorate during this academic year, which created some issues during the statutory revision process. More detail about the syllabus review can be found in sections 2.1 & 2.2

	September 21 <sup>st</sup> 2022 ASC	November 16 <sup>th</sup> 2022 with ASC	January 20 <sup>th</sup> 2023 ASC	February 24 <sup>th</sup> 2023 ASC	March 15 <sup>th</sup> 2023 with ASC	April 21 <sup>st</sup> 2023 ASC	June 21 <sup>st</sup> 2023
Group A (12)	6	5	3	4	7	3	4
Group B (4)	2	3	2	1	2	1	0
Group C (6)	3	2	1	1	4	1	4
Group D (3) +1 co-opted	2	1	0	1	1	1	1
% Committee:	52%	44%	not quorate 24%	28%	56%	24%	not quorate 36%

### 1.2 Brief Summary of Issues Raised & Discussion Points for each full SACRE Meeting:

As the SACRE was conducting the statutory review of the locally agreed syllabus, main meetings were shortened to allow for ASC discussions. Outcomes of the ASC meetings resulted in changes to the Agreed Syllabus, which were minuted, but are not included below.

#### Autumn term 2022

- Election of new members;
- Convene working party to conduct review of SACRE's constitution, pending Ahmadiyya application for membership & discussions about who is eligible to stand for the position of the Chair of Surrey SACRE;
- Proposal for development plan for 2023-2026 & setting up of working party to progress this;
- Recruit Speakers' Forum to help with resourcing Primary units of work.

#### Spring Term 2023

- Ratification of the 2022-23 Annual Report;
- Report on progress of constitution review by working party – in consultation with SCC legal team;
- Report on 'Getting RE-ady' modular programme being offered to schools as part of preparation for the revised syllabus;
- Updates by working party in relation to draft development plan & discussion with SACRE.

#### Summer Term 2023: meeting was not quorate, so no formal business was able to be transacted.

##### Discussions included:

- Further updates on progress of constitution review, including changes to the process of electing the SACRE Chair;
- Feedback from NASACRE Conference and AGM: 30 years of SACREs;
- Plans for Agreed Syllabus Celebration event, in person, for SACRE members and members of the teacher writing groups;
- Report on the work of the SACRE in relation to the 2020-2023 Development Plan and proposals for the 2023-2026 Development Plan, to include a programme of self-evaluation.

### 1.3 SACRE Development Plan 2020-2023

During 2022-23, SACRE continued its work in accordance with the development plan, although with amendments in place for year 3, with the syllabus revisions taking place across 2 years. Contract negotiations have begun to extend the SCC contract with the Diocese of Guildford, ensuring support for SACRE at a crucial time in the life of the Agreed Syllabus. The development plan also ensures that the work of SACRE will continue regardless of who is awarded the contract for the years beyond 2023.

As well as fulfilling the requirements set out in the contract for each year of the development plan, further specific priorities have been identified for each year: 7 targets, reported on annually, relate to SACRE's statutory responsibilities, which are set out annually across the three-year plan, and further targets relate to specific projects supporting schools with RE and Collective Worship. These are outlined in [7.6: Appendices](#), by year.

Specific focuses for 2022-23 were:

- to finish the statutory review of the Surrey Agreed Syllabus, which will include implementation briefings for both Primary and Secondary RE leaders, updated websites where schools can access materials, and a suite of non-statutory support materials which are the product of collaboration between Surrey SACRE and the Diocese of Guildford;

- to invest in the professional development for Surrey Primary RE subject leaders, through free induction training to being an RE subject leader;
- to ensure that Secondary schools have opportunity to attend briefings to explain the changes to the Surrey Agreed Syllabus and continue the provision of termly Surrey Primary RE Networks, which will include the final modules in the 'Getting RE-ady for the revised Surrey Agreed Syllabus' programme, with online and video options;
- working with our interfaith group, Speakers' Forum, to produce materials that will enhance their understanding of the Primary phase and provide some high quality bespoke resources, for use with the thematic units particularly.

SACRE had previously made the decision to suspend visits to schools during the statutory period of revision, and to also commit energy and resources to connecting with as many schools as possible during the implementation training programme across the 2022-23 academic year. The Speakers' Forum video resources were also made available to Secondary schools, utilising new technology to great effect to ensure that the work of SACRE continued, and linking it from the new Surrey Agreed Syllabus webpages. There is more detail about this in section 2.7 Support for Surrey Schools. We are very grateful to the members of SACRE for their flexibility and creativity!

All the work of SACRE is undertaken with the aim of raising achievement in RE and improving the quality of teaching and learning, to improve the provision and quality of Collective Worship and to help promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, including Fundamental British Values. As a body representing various religions and beliefs in Surrey, it supports inter-faith dialogue and learning about religions for the promotion of respect and racial harmony.

#### 1.4 Status of the Agreed Syllabus Review

The Surrey Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education entered its period of statutory review in July 2021, which was extended due to the pandemic, with the implementation date from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2023. The statutory revision period ended in May 2023, with SCC adopting the syllabus in a full cabinet meeting on May 30<sup>th</sup> 2023. More detail about the revision can be found in Section 2.2.

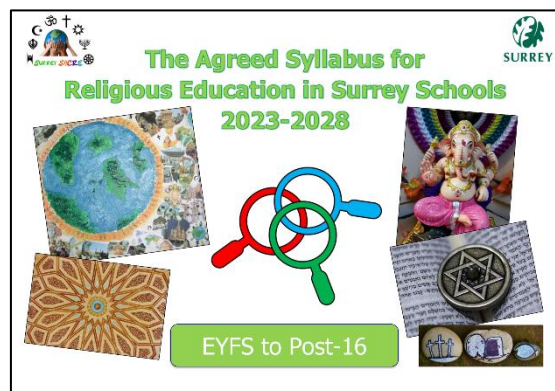
## 2. RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Most of SACRE's work this year has again been in relation to the revision of the syllabus and in preparing schools for the curriculum changes that this will entail. As outlined in our previous Annual Report, the extended timeline for the ASC has enabled far greater engagement with schools. Training for subject leaders has been predominantly conducted via Zoom, enabling a far wider reach than may have been possible face to face. There have been sessions for both Primary and Secondary RE leaders, although the latter far less well-attended. Recorded presentations and resources for subject leaders to use with staff teams have also been provided as part of this package of support. There are 2 free video introductions (one for Primary, one for Secondary) available on the syllabus webpage, enabling all schools to be made aware of the changes to the syllabus and consider the impact on their planning. There are also additional materials for Primary schools, accessible from the 'RE Downloads' section of the schools training portal: <https://gdbe-elevate.org/> Schools will need a free log-in to access these.

All documents and guidance produced by Surrey SACRE can be accessed via their webpage here: <https://www.cofeguildford.org.uk/education-schools/about-surrey-sacre/>. The syllabus has its own separate area, which hosts many helpful documents and links to the non-statutory support materials: <https://www.cofeguildford.org.uk/education-schools/about-surrey-sacre/surrey-agreed-syllabus/>

As a statutory part of Surrey County Council, there is also information about Surrey SACRE on SCC's website: [Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education \(SACRE\) - Surrey County Council \(surreycc.gov.uk\)](https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/standing-advisory-council-on-religious-education-sacre), now updated with details about the new syllabus.

### 2.1 The Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education in Surrey Schools (2023-2028)



On 1<sup>st</sup> September 2023, the newly-revised Surrey Agreed Syllabus became the statutory document for maintained Surrey schools, and was also adopted by the Board of Education of Guildford Diocese, for use in their Voluntary Aided schools. This means that a significant majority of schools across Surrey are now using the same syllabus document, which will improve pupils' transition into the Secondary phase. Surrey SACRE again wishes to remind schools that this Agreed Syllabus has the equivalent legal standing of a National Curriculum order and that **RE continues to be a statutory entitlement for all registered pupils in all schools** (including academies), in addition to the National Curriculum.

Academies and free schools without a religious character may also use an agreed syllabus, and Surrey's Agreed Syllabus is available to them, enabling all schools which choose to use it to fulfil their statutory duty to provide RE for all pupils (unless withdrawn at the request of their parents). Schools wishing to seek guidance about the right of withdrawal should contact Surrey SACRE via the Clerk to SACRE,

## Academies:

Currently, there are only 2 maintained secondary schools in Surrey that have not converted to academy status. Whilst academies are officially outside the remit of the LA (and therefore SACRE), NASACRE states that many are increasingly opening up their previous contacts, or establishing new relationships with the academies in their area. Two of our current teacher-members work in successful academy schools using the Agreed Syllabus, and their contribution and experience are valuable insights to the ongoing work of SACRE across both the Primary and Secondary phases.

## 2.2 Statutory Revision of the Surrey Agreed Syllabus for RE

Over recent years, there have been some significant developments nationally in thinking about both schools' curriculum and Religious Education. Whilst these shifts may not yet have resulted in any change to legislation, they have most certainly impacted on decisions made about the scale and scope of the syllabus revision and the statutory content within it.


The Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC) took advice from two significant reports as part of the revision proposals:


- **Ofsted RE Research Review (Dr Richard Kueh, chief HMI for RE), May 2021**
- **Worldviews in RE (Theos – Cooling, Bowie and Panjwani), 2020**


A further guidance document (in draft) relating to Worldviews, '**Religion and Worldviews in the Classroom: developing a Worldviews Approach**' was published by the **Religious Education Council** in May 2022. Whilst a bit late to be able to fully integrate into the syllabus review, it proved an interesting insight into recommendations for Worldviews Education and will be helpful going forwards in supporting teachers' understanding of this 'culture shift', as well as preparing for future reviews.


During the 2022-23 academic year, through the statutory Agreed Syllabus Conference, SACRE has been working on fleshing out its revision aims (below) into the units of work supporting this slightly different pedagogical approach. A number of schools had volunteered to trial some of the new materials during the year, and their feedback has further informed the ASC's writing team. The proposed syllabus units and the non-statutory support materials have been enthusiastically received by all attending the implementation training during this academic year.

The revised RE syllabus aims to:

 *be flexible enough for schools to make connections with their wider curriculum, whilst providing robust sequencing of RE [substantive] content so that pupils' understanding of key concepts is built over time;*

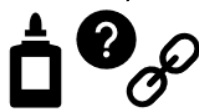
 *help pupils (and teachers) to make connections within and across concepts in order to build schemata, better enabling the recall of 'sticky' knowledge;*

 *articulate clearly what it means to get better in RE across substantive, disciplinary and personal knowledge (Ofsted's three 'ways of knowing');*

 *reflect not just the 'theology' of religion or belief, but the lived experience of different communities, drawing on the rich diversity of global and cultural influences in developing pupils' understanding of both organised ('institutional') and personal worldviews, including their own.*

Recognising the fact that many secondary schools are academies and have already developed their own RE curriculum, the KS3&4 elements of the syllabus consist of a menu of units from which schools can select to construct or support their RE curriculum. The units for KS3 build on what pupils have learned during the Primary phase and also reflect multi-disciplinary approaches through the use of key questions. In support materials designed for this phase, schools can access KS3 curriculum 'walk-through' videos, where three experienced Heads of Department talk about their curriculum design, based on the content in the syllabus. These can be accessed from the [Agreed Syllabus webpage](#), under the Secondary 'Non-statutory support materials' tab.

In the Primary sections of the syllabus, units include:



- Statutory content, which in the syllabus is called '**sticky knowledge**'
- **Six key questions**, and linked with these, **expected outcomes**, reflecting our multi-disciplinary lenses of **theology ('God')**, **sociology ('Community')** and **philosophy ('Identity')**
- Links to prior / future learning to help schools to construct their long term plan.

Alongside each Primary unit of work are comprehensive **non-statutory support materials** to help teachers to create a sequence of learning that will deliver the statutory content. These resources are freely available to all Primary schools using the syllabus, via the GDBE-elevate portal, for which they can register from this link: <https://gdb-elevate.org/register> Locate them in the 'RE Downloads' area: <https://gdb-elevate.org/help#re>

The period of statutory revision ended on May 30<sup>th</sup> 2023, when Surrey County Council formally adopted the revised syllabus. Although implementation will begin on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2023, it will naturally take time to fully embed the new curriculum and for pupils to benefit from its spiral nature. SACRE has granted schools a full academic year (2023-2024) in which to make adjustments to their existing curriculum to take account of the revised syllabus.

During the 2022-23 academic year, through the Surrey Primary RE networks, SAfE RE Hubs (for Secondary HoDs) and Surrey Schools' Bulletin, regular updates have been provided for schools reporting on progress with the revision. There is more detail about this in **section 2.7 SACRE's support for Surrey schools**.

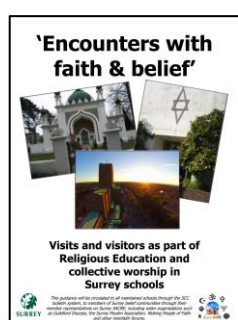
### 2.3 Standards in RE

Ofsted's current inspection framework follows a model where inspectors may conduct a 'deep dive' of specific subjects, of which RE may be one, or where RE may be used as evidence of 'preparing pupils for life in modern Britain' or to triangulate elements of schools' whole curriculum, for example, assessment practices across all subjects. During this academic year, SACRE has again received no information from the local authority in relation to schools inspected under these areas.

In communications during this year (through SCC's Schools Bulletins), SACRE has continued to recommend that schools using its Agreed Syllabus should ensure that they understand and can articulate the **intent** of their current RE curriculum, to **implement** the syllabus in ways that meet statutory requirements, as well as being creative and age-appropriate, and also to reflect on the **impact** of the RE that is being taught in classrooms as part of pupils' entitlement to a broad and balanced curriculum.

### 2.4 Advice to Schools

SACRE's advice to schools during this academic year has prioritised the changes to the Agreed Syllabus and signposting to the implementation training. You can find out about other support that SACRE offers on SACRE's webpages: <https://www.cofeguildford.org.uk/education-schools/about-/surrey-sacre/surrey-agreed-syllabus/>, using the concertinas to navigate.



Surrey SACRE has also produced comprehensive guidance relating to visits and visitors as part of RE and Collective Worship, '**Encounters with Faith and Belief**'. This document establishes some important principles (including a code of conduct) for schools and belief communities to adhere to in order to establish and maintain good relationships and ensure high quality learning for pupils, bringing the authentic voice of a believer into the classroom – either within or outside of school. This guidance can be accessed from the SACRE website or via this link: [Visits and visitors to RE and collective worship in Surrey schools](#)

**This guidance also contains advice to schools about the parental right to withdraw their child(ren) from RE. Schools are also reminded that their school prospectus and/or website should display clear information about withdrawal and how any parents might make such a request.**

### 2.5 Religious Studies Examinations

How the new grades compare with the old one!

Old grades	New grades
A*	9
A	8
B	7
C	6 5 STRONG PASS 4 STANDARD PASS
D	3
E	2
F	1
G	1
U	U

Given the changes to the KS4 examination grading in RS from Summer 2018, there are, at this point only four-year's worth of such results for comparison.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the DfE made the decision to cancel all face-to-face exams that were due to take place in summer 2020 and 2021. As a result, there was limited publication of any school or college level educational performance data based on tests, assessments, or exams for these years, so comparisons with 2020 and 2021 in this report will not be possible. This is the second summer exam series since 2019.

To recognise the disruption that students have experienced, due to the pandemic, Ofqual made arrangements with the DfE and exam boards to put in place an unprecedented package of support for students. This support included some changes to coursework to reflect public health restrictions in place at the time students were doing their assessments and a choice of content in some subjects. Exam boards also published advance information in February

which gave information about some of the topics that would be in the exams. This was intended to help students to focus their revision and make the exams feel less daunting. For all subjects, there has been lenient grading. The above information should be taken into account, when considering any data analysis of GCSE, AS and A level grades.

Across the UK, a greater proportion of students achieved good passes in religious studies in 2023 compared to all GCSE subjects. A total of 70.8% of pupils achieved grade 4/C or higher in religious studies compared to 68.2% for all subjects.

In Surrey, in 2023 54.1% of the total number of KS4 students on roll were entered for either the Full course or Short course for GCSE Religious Studies, a slight drop from 56% in 2022. Although Surrey figures compare well to the national figure (34.8%), this still means that there are 45.9% of students (a total of 5,373) not being entered for GCSE and quite possibly not receiving their statutory entitlement to RE. This is an increase of almost 2% from the 2022 figure equating to an additional 498 students. As a result of this data scrutiny, SACRE will be reviewing information about RE on schools' websites and contacting any that would seem to be not delivering students' entitlement to RE. The breakdown of results across these two examinations follows overleaf.

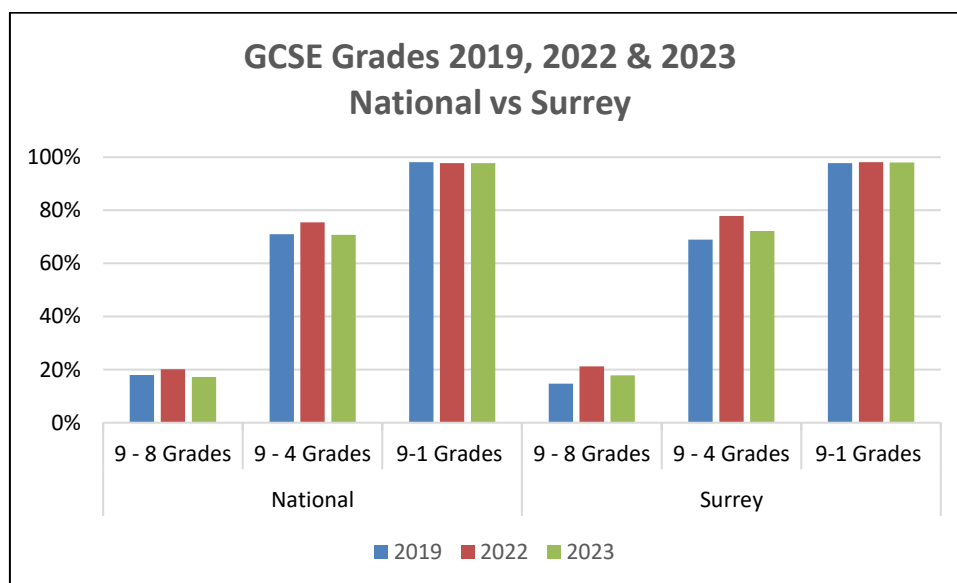
## Full Course GCSE Religious Studies

	Full course 2018	Full course 2019	Full course 2022	Full course 2023	
NOR (Number on roll)	9841	10,388	11,080	11,713	↑
Total no. of entries	5413 (55% of NOR)	5766 (58.5% of NOR)	5771 (52.1% of NOR)	5631 (48.1% of NOR)	↓
Total passes (A*-C / 9-4)	69.9%	68.9%	77.9%	72.2%	↓

In total, the number of students entered for RS Full course GCSE has slightly decreased compared to the 2022 figure, but continues to be significantly above the national percentage of entries compared with the number of students on roll. 1001 students (17.8% of the total number of entrants) across the county's schools achieved the top two gradings (9 and 8), a 3.4% decrease on 2022's percentage, and slightly above the national comparator. In 2023, Surrey's grades continue to be slightly above national figures.

## Full Course GCSE Results with National Comparators – 2018, 2019, 2022 & 2023, 9-1 gradings

	National				Surrey			
	Entries	9-8	9-4	9-1	Entries	9-8	9-4	9-1
<b>2018</b>	201,390 (38.5%)	15.6%	70.2%	97.9%	5413 (55%)	14.4%	69.9%	97.8%
<b>2019</b>	210,810 (38.8%)	17.9%	71%	98.1%	5766 (58.5%)	14.7%	68.9%	97.7%
<b>2022</b>	207,350 (35.1%)	20.1%	75.5%	97.8%	5771 (52.1%)	21.2%	77.9%	98.1%
<b>2023</b>	210,340 (34.7%)	17.2%	70.8%	97.7%	5631 (52.1%)	17.8%	72.2%	98.0%



## Short Course GCSE Religious Studies

8 secondary schools across Surrey entered students for the short course GCSE – an increase from 5 schools in 2022. The 2023 results are also compared with previous years' data. Two thirds of schools were still using the 'old' gradings in 2018, so data has been combined to show total passes.

	Short course 2018	Short course 2019	Short course 2022	Short course 2023
<b>Total entries</b>	1336	953	434	709
<b>% of NOR entered for a short course</b>	13.6%	9.2%	3.9%	6.1%
<b>Total passes</b>	51% (684 students)	71.2% (679 students)	97.5% (423 students)	93.7% (664 students)

## AS Grades in Religious Studies:

A total of 34 students in Surrey were entered for **AS Level Religious Studies** in KS5, an increase of more than double from the 2022 figure of 16 students. This significant increase in entries mirrors the national rise in entries, which is almost double the 2022 figure. In Surrey there was an increase in A grades and A-B grades, but a drop of almost 6% in A-E passes in comparison with 2022 figures. Surrey grades were still above national comparators.

	Entries	A	A-B	A-E
<b>Surrey 2018</b>	373	73 (18.6%)	157 (42%)	338 (90.6%)
<b>Surrey 2019</b>	121	21 (17.4%)	54 (44.6%)	108 (89.3%)
<b>Surrey 2022</b>	16	6 (37.5%)	12 (75%)	16 (100%)
<b>Surrey 2023</b>	34 ↑	14 (41.2%) ↑	26 (76.5%) ↑	32 (94.1%) ↓
<b>National 2018</b>	15590	2588 (16.6%)	5581 (35.8%)	13517 (86.7%)
<b>National 2019</b>	7180	1185 (16.5%)	2585 (36%)	6290 (87.6%)
<b>National 2022</b>	1081	266 (24.6%)	554 (51.2%)	997 (99.2%)
<b>National 2023</b>	2070 ↑	490 (23.7%) ↑	1000 (48.3%) ↓	1890 (91.3%) ↓

## A Level Grades in Religious Studies:

At **A Level**, a total of Surrey 358 students were entered for exams, an increase of 152 students on the 2022 figures. This year-on-year increase from 2019 is as a result of the decision that AS Levels are now two-year courses. Although the number of students being awarded the top grades in Surrey (A\*-B) has decreased from 2022 the percentage of students achieving the top grades is still significantly above the national comparator. Across all grade boundaries the data shows Surrey students outperform A Level national results.

	Number of entries	A*	A*-A	A*-B	A*-E
<b>Surrey 2018</b>	232	16 (6.9%)	61 (26.3%)	121 (52.2%)	227 (97.8%)
<b>Surrey 2019</b>	182	5 (2.7%)	45 (24.7%)	93 (51.1%)	177 (97.3%)
<b>Surrey 2022</b>	206	18 (8.7%)	70 (34%)	153 (74.3%)	201 (97.6%)
<b>Surrey 2023</b>	358 ↑	28 (7.8%) ↓	132 (36.9%) ↑	259 (72.3%) ↓	356 (99.4%) ↑
<b>National 2018</b>	16490	4.7%	23%	52.3%	98%
<b>National 2019</b>	15980	4.4%	21.7%	50%	97.9%
<b>National 2022</b>	12883	9.8%	31.1%	64%	98.5%
<b>National 2023</b>	14720 ↓	6.0% ↓	25.5% ↓	55.1% ↓	97.3% ↓

It remains SACRE's recommendation in the Agreed Syllabus that all secondary pupils follow the full RS GCSE exam course, with the expectation that pupils be entered for an exam at the end of KS4. If there are pupils who are not taking (or have already taken) an RS GCSE, the teaching of RE still remains **statutory** at KS4 and it should be published on schools' websites how this is being provided. Schools are reminded that Ofsted makes use of website information as a means of monitoring whether schools are teaching a broad and balanced curriculum, which promotes fundamental British Values and includes RE.

## 2.6 SACRE Partnering Visits

During this academic year, planned partnering visits were suspended due to the syllabus review. It is hoped that these will resume beyond the publication of the new Surrey Agreed Syllabus, to help SACRE to understand how it is being implemented, and how SACRE can best support schools.

## 2.7 SACRE's Support for Surrey schools

### RE Training:



RE training for teachers offered by Surrey SACRE's professional adviser during 2022-23 has included a full day course as part of the **Surrey South Farnham SCITT programme**, repeated across 5 locations for up to 90 students at each session. Having been conducted on Zoom for the two previous years, it was wonderful to be back in a normal environment and to meet so many teachers in training face to face. This is not funded

by Surrey SACRE but is an important insight for them in the development of teachers in training within Surrey. Part of the day included a very brief introduction to Collective Worship as part of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For many trainee teachers this is the only input that they receive to equip them to teach RE and deliver collective worship,

A training session for **new Primary RE subject leaders** was also delivered virtually in November 2022, across two twilight sessions, with 21 new subject leaders attending. This session aimed to give teachers an understanding of the statutory role of RE within Primary schools, including its contribution to SMSC and British Values, an appreciation of the 'big ideas' in the RE curriculum, an insight into what good teaching and learning and expected attainment in RE looks like and enabling subject leaders to understand their role in leading and managing RE. It is expected that this training will be repeated during the Autumn term of each new academic year. This year, the session also included an introduction to the revised agreed syllabus, knowing that these new RE leaders would be taking on the implementation of the revised syllabus in their schools.



## Surrey Primary RE Networks:



The Surrey Primary RE Networks for Subject Leaders met termly during 2022-23 on Zoom. These are booked through the training portal: <https://gdbe-elevate.org/> These networks are run by Rachel Boxer, RE Adviser for Surrey SACRE, whose other work as an adviser in Diocese of Guildford means that she brings a broad professional expertise that is much valued by schools. These sessions are free to attend and are repeated across three different dates in the term as twilights (4.00-5.30pm). During this academic year, these have been the main opportunity to help subject leaders prepare for the implementation of the new syllabus,

through the 'Getting RE-ady' modular series.

During the academic year 2022-23:

- In the **Autumn term**, we repeated the first session of the modular agreed syllabus implementation training, 'Getting RE-ady' and ran the 2<sup>nd</sup> session, introducing schools to the structures of each unit and giving support with long term planning, including the essential role of the thematic units in the second half of the Summer term.
- 'Getting RE-ady' session 3 took place in the **Spring term**, and focused on how the syllabus helps to shape substantive, disciplinary and personal knowledge, highlighting pupil progress through the Golden Threads of **God, Community and Identity**;
- In the **Summer term**, subject leaders attended 'Getting RE-ady' session 4, which gave them a chance to hear from schools which had been trialling some of the new units of work and use their experience to highlight how they will plan for implementation in their own schools.

A total of around 500 Primary RE subject leaders have attended this syllabus implementation training across these 4 sessions, as well as some training on Zoom, '**Unpacking RE**', offered to whole staff teams, facilitated by their RE subject leader in school. This 'Unpacking RE' training clocked up over 100 class teachers in one session alone!! Primary schools can also access, at a small cost, a suite of short video tutorials, to walk them through some key elements of the new syllabus. This series, entitled 'Unpacking RE' can be booked via GDBE-elevate (<https://gdbe-elevate.org/help#ure>) and consists of:

1. **Unpacking RE:** Assessment
2. **Unpacking RE:** Golden Threads
3. **Unpacking RE:** Introduction for Subject
4. **Unpacking RE:** Personal Knowledge
5. **Unpacking RE:** RE in Early Years Foundation Stage
6. **Unpacking RE:** Thematic units
7. **Unpacking RE:** Compulsory units
8. **Unpacking RE:** Weaving your curriculum
9. **Unpacking RE:** Staff Meeting
10. **Unpacking RE:** RE for school governors (Church school / Community school / Academy)



## Surrey Primary RE E-Newsletter:

The Surrey RE E-Newsletter has a growing (free!) subscription, with over 100 schools currently signed up to receive regular updates. It is hoped that this will continue to generate a greater engagement with schools, which was especially vital during the period of the Agreed Syllabus review and in preparation for its implementation. For more information about the newsletter, please use the link [here](#) to sign up and view previous publications, or email Liz Mitchell, Clerk to SACRE: [surreysacre@cofeguildford.org.uk](mailto:surreysacre@cofeguildford.org.uk)

## Agreed Syllabus Briefing for Secondary Heads of Department:

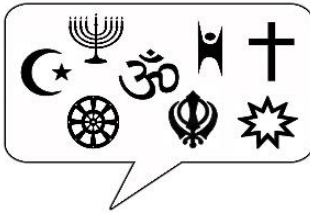
Two sessions for Secondary RE leaders took place during the Summer term. Compared to the Primary equivalent briefings, these were not well attended (18 bookings). The sessions outlined the key changes to the statutory content, expectations in relation to curriculum design & ensuring that schools' curriculum offer for RE meets statutory requirements. From communications received after the events, it would seem that Heads of Department do not always receive the SCC Schools' Bulletin. The session was converted into a short video which would enable any school to receive the same information as had been included in the live briefings. Schools can access this via the links on the Surrey Agreed Syllabus website: [Surrey Agreed Syllabus](#)

## Secondary RE 'Hub':

As part of their support for secondary schools, the Schools Alliance for Excellence (SAfE) run a range of subject 'hubs' which provide discussion forums for heads of department. Within this network, there is provision for Secondary RE leaders to gather regularly and contribute to discussions about teaching, learning and curriculum design. SACRE's RE adviser is connected with this hub, providing a potential channel of communication for SACRE with schools, and schools with SACRE. More information about the RE 'hub' can be obtained by emailing:



[admin@schoolsallexcel.com](mailto:admin@schoolsallexcel.com)



**Speakers' Forum:** One of the roles of any SACRE is to be a resource to support the delivery of their locally agreed syllabus. Speakers' Forum is one way in which Surrey SACRE chooses to do this. As a group of speakers from different perspectives of faith and belief, they are passionate about engaging children and young people with the big questions they have. Over the period of time since they were set up, the group have supported interfaith dialogue in several Surrey secondary schools – and been invited back! During the pandemic, Speakers' Forum also developed a suite of virtual resources, which are now freely available for KS3 and

KS4, located in the Secondary 'Non-statutory support materials' area: [Surrey Agreed Syllabus](#). During this academic year, they have also been creating resources to support a selection of Primary units of work in the new syllabus, especially the thematic units. These materials can be accessed from the '**RE Downloads**' area of GDBE-elevate: <https://gdb-elevate.org/help#re>

### 2.8 Other Guidance:

During the past academic year, SACRE has received several communications from schools in relation to RE provision in the agreed syllabus, as well as some queries about the revision process. The RE adviser, to whom these queries were sent, ensured an appropriate outcome for all emails and phone calls. Further information about the support that SACRE can offer can be found [here](#).

SACRE also received a Freedom of Information (FOI) request asking about the amount of funding allocated to SACRE for conducting its statutory duties, including the 5-year syllabus review, and a second FOI from an academy Junior school relating to the proposed revised content of the Surrey Agreed Syllabus. All information was readily supplied by the professional adviser, on behalf of the SACRE.

### 2.9 Complaints Concerning RE

Every school governing body and LA is required by law to have an accessible and easily understood route through which parents and others can make a complaint about school or other educational matters, including RE. A copy of this procedure should be available in each school and the school prospectus must make reference to it. Local Authorities can seek advice from their SACREs in addressing complaints about RE. No complaints have been made and no such consultations have taken place during this academic year.

## 3. COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

### 3.1 Time to Reflect – SACRE's guidance for Collective Worship in Surrey Schools

Although there are other reports & guidance relating to Collective Worship in schools, schools are strongly encouraged to read Surrey SACRE's Guidance on Collective Worship in community schools, '**Time to Reflect**'. This document outlines what the law requires of this important element of school life, and how schools might realistically interpret these requirements. The law states that Collective Worship is to be "wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character" and may, to many, seem very restrictive. However, it does in fact allow schools a wide scope for the variety and breadth of approach to reflect the religious and non-religious traditions of those who form a part of their school community. It also reflects the challenge to craft collective worship that is inclusive and inspiring, and which embraces the increasingly diverse communities of which we are a part. **You can access this guidance [here](#).**

**This guidance also contains advice to schools about the parental right to withdraw their child(ren) from collective worship. Schools are also reminded that their school prospectus and/or website should display clear information about withdrawal and how any parents might make such a request.**

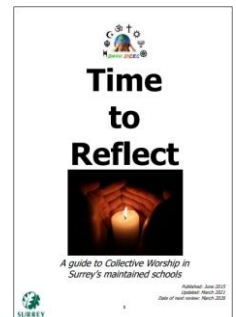
Ofsted continues to confirm the value of Collective Worship as part of schools' SMSC provision in its current Education Inspection Framework. Surrey SACRE believes that '**Time to Reflect**' can help schools, parents and governors to fully understand (and meet) the legal requirements for Collective Worship.

### 3.2 Determinations

No Surrey maintained schools currently have determinations in regard to Collective Worship. SACRE provides details of the process and criteria for applying for a determination, linked both from the guidance document above and via this link: [Applying for a determination](#)

### 3.3 Complaints

As with RE, every school governing body and LA is required by law to have an accessible and easily understood route through which parents and others can make a complaint about collective worship. A copy of this procedure should be available in each school and the school prospectus must make reference to it. Local Authorities can seek advice from their SACREs in addressing any complaints. No complaints have been made and no such consultations have taken place during this academic year.



## 4. LINKS WITH OTHER BODIES

### 4.1. Links with Other Agencies – National

Surrey SACRE is a member of NASACRE (National Association of SACREs), and a representative attends national meetings, with the professional adviser. A representative also attends any regional meetings for SACRE.

Surrey SACRE's adviser for RE is a member of AREIAC (The Association of RE Inspectors, Advisers and Consultants) and NATRE (National Association for Teachers of RE) and attends regional and national meetings whenever possible.

### 4.2 Links with Local Bodies

Through membership on SACRE, there are also established links with:

- Surrey Muslim Association [Home \(surreymuslims.org\)](http://surreymuslims.org);
- Jewish Board of Deputies; [Board of Deputies of British Jews - Board of Deputies of British Jews \(bod.org.uk\)](http://bod.org.uk)
- Humanists UK; [Humanists UK](http://humanists.uk)
- Diocese of Guildford [www.cofeguildford.org.uk](http://www.cofeguildford.org.uk)
- Schools Alliance for Excellence (SAfE) [Schools Alliance for Excellence | Schools Alliance for Excellence](http://schoolsallianceforexcellence.org.uk)
- Local interfaith forums: Guildford & Godalming Interfaith Forum, Elmbridge Multifaith Forum, Woking People of Faith and Surrey Heath Faith Forum. Find contact information in the Interfaith directory: [Local Inter Faith Groups- South East - The Inter Faith Network \(IFN\)](http://interfaithnetwork.org.uk)

## 5. OTHER AREAS OF LOCAL INVOLVEMENT

### The Role of the Governing Body

The role of the Governing Body in monitoring coverage of the Agreed Syllabus is critical for its successful implementation. Governors also have a key role in providing a challenge to schools to raise standards in specific areas and SACRE believes that this can have a significant impact on standards in RE. Schools are encouraged to identify a governor with specific responsibility for RE. There is now an information leaflet for governors about RE in schools, SACRE and its work. This can be found in the section '[SACRE support for Religious Education](#)' on the SACRE website.

**The SACRE also regularly draws on advice from faith and belief members in order to answer relevant queries from schools.**

## 6. SACRE'S ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS

### 6.1 SACRE Contract – Professional Adviser and Administrative Support

SCC currently hold a contract with the Diocese of Guildford to provide management support to Surrey SACRE, which has been further extended to the end of August 2024, allowing for the full implementation of the syllabus to take place. The contract provides for the efficient operation of the work of SACRE which undertakes its statutory duties autonomously and independent of the Diocese of Guildford whose sole engagement with SACRE is through its membership of Committee B of Surrey SACRE.

Operational management of Surrey SACRE is exercised through SCC's commissioning officers and the Director of Education for Guildford Diocese, Alex Tear.

The professional adviser to Surrey SACRE is Rachel Boxer, who has been working with SACRE since 2011 and administrative clerking support was provided during 2022-23 by Jane Whittingdale, as part of the contractual agreement. We are indebted to her for her diligence and eye for detail, which has proved crucial during the syllabus review. Liz Mitchell became the new clerk on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2023.

## 6.2 SACRE Membership, as at March 2024 (Full membership list available in [Appendix 7.5](#))

<b>Group A</b> 10 members, 2 vacancies representing:		<b>Group B</b> 3 members, 1 vacancy representing	<b>Group C</b> 6 members, 1 vacancy representing	<b>Group D</b> 4 members, 1 vacancy representing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Methodist</li> <li>• <i>United Reformed Church (vacant)</i></li> <li>• Baptist</li> <li>• <i>Society of Friends (vacancy)</i></li> <li>• Roman Catholic, Diocese of Westminster &amp; Diocese of Arundel &amp; Brighton</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hindu</li> <li>• Sikh</li> <li>• Surrey Muslim Association</li> <li>• Jewish Board of Deputies</li> <li>• Buddhist, Woking Dhammakaya Temple</li> <li>• Baha'i</li> <li>• Humanists UK</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diocese of Guildford</li> <li>• Diocese of Guildford</li> <li>• Diocese of Southwark</li> <li>• <i>Diocese of London (vacancy)</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NEU (National Education Union)</li> <li>• NASUWT</li> <li>• Secondary teacher rep. (Priory School)</li> <li>• Surrey Primary RE networks</li> <li>• NATRE Primary teacher representative</li> <li>• <i>Secondary &amp; Academies rep (vacancy)</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SCC member</li> <li>• SCC member</li> <li>• SCC member</li> <li>• SCC member</li> <li>• <i>SCC member (vacancy)</i></li> </ul>

During this academic year, SACRE has been considering an application from the Tilford Ahmadiyya Muslim Community to join SACRE group A. This has generated some significant discussions at SACRE meetings and with the SCC legal team. This is currently being revisited as part of the review of SACRE's constitution, and will be resolved during the 2023-24 academic year, following instructions from SCC. SACRE also received the formal resignation of the Chair of SACRE, Cllr Liz Bowes and is now in the process of electing a new Chair in accordance with its newly-revised constitution.

We were also saddened to announce the passing of Deborah Drury, one of our longest-standing members of SACRE, who as a member of Group C, contributed to no less than 5 Agreed Syllabus reviews during her 20-year tenure and leaves a legacy in the pages of the new Agreed Syllabus.

## 6.3 Training for SACRE members:

### New member induction

In response to the irregular timescales for new members joining SACRE, a pre-recorded module is being prepared which can be accessed by new members as they join. This will be ready by January 2024, and will be followed by an opportunity for new members to attend a drop-in session on Zoom as part of their induction process. All new members are encouraged to avail themselves of the opportunity to attend these sessions in order to help them understand their new role.

The training covers SACRE's statutory responsibilities for RE and Collective Worship, a brief tour of the Surrey Agreed Syllabus, other key documents for RE, and guidance that SACRE has produced for schools, as well as opportunity to find out about how SACRE supports schools and think about what it means to be a 'good' SACRE member. We are grateful to the more 'experienced' SACRE members who have also offered their support and advice.

## 7. APPENDICES

### 7.1 GCSE – short and full, A/S & A Level RS results:

This data has been published in section 2.5

### 7.2 Details on CPD provided to schools

SACRE provided no CPD for schools this academic year, although the professional adviser has been providing termly CPD for Primary RE subject leaders, and briefings for Secondary RE leaders. as outlined in section **2.6 SACRE's support for Surrey schools.**

### 7.3 LA/SACRE policy statements on RE or CW

Please see links in previous sections 2.7 Religious Education: 'Encounters with Faith and Belief' and 3.1 Collective Worship: 'Time to Reflect'. Documents are clearly signposted on SACRE's webpages.

### 7.4 List of organisations to which SACRE's Annual Report has been sent:

Copies of Surrey SACRE's Annual Report are distributed to all maintained schools in the County via Surrey's School Bulletin system with a request that governing bodies consider the report and take any appropriate action. A copy has also been sent to NASACRE, Surrey County Council, Schools Alliance for Excellence (SAfE), nominating bodies represented by SACRE members, and the Department for Education. It is also available to view on the SACRE website: [Surrey SACRE](#)

## APPENDIX 7.5 SACRE Membership (as at March 2024)

**Chair** Vacancy (from Summer 2023)  
**Vice-Chair** Sarah Harris (acting Chair until March 2024)

### Committee A: Other Faiths and Beliefs (10 members, 2 vacancies)

Jennie Johnson (Group Chair) Humanists UK  
Rev Allan Taylor Methodist Church  
Vacancy United Reformed Church  
Rosslyn Doney Cranleigh Baptist Church  
Vacancy Society of Friends  
Peter Ward Roman Catholic, Diocese of Westminster & Diocese of Arundel and Brighton  
Rajendra Pandya Hindu (Sanatana) Dharma, Kingston Interfaith Forum and Shree Vishwa Sanaatan Dharma Mandir, Croydon  
Inderjeet Singh Rehncy Sikh [nominating body TBC]  
Kawther Hashmi Surrey Muslim Association (to March 2024)  
Sadia Irfan Surrey Muslim Association (from March 2024)  
Sarah Harris Jewish Board of Deputies  
Patrick Jatumet Buddhist, Woking Dhammakaya Temple  
Simon Mortimore Bahá'í [nominating body TBC]

### Committee B – The Church of England (3 members, 1 vacancy)

Jane Whittington (Group Chair) Diocese of Guildford  
Shaun Burns Diocese of Southwark  
Rev. Sarah Hutton Diocese of Guildford  
Vacancy Diocese of London

### Committee C – Teachers (5 members, 1 vacancy)

Deborah Jackson NEU (National Education Union) (elected June 2023)  
Saadia Nawaz NASUWT (elected June 2022)  
Alex Page Secondary teacher, The Priory School, Dorking (elected Nov 2022)  
Vacancy Secondary & Academies teacher rep.  
Rashida Nasir Primary teacher representative (Surrey RE networks)  
Saima Saleh Primary & Academies teacher rep. & NATRE exec member

### Committee D – Local Authority (4 members, 1 vacancy)

Cllr Jordan Beech (Group Chair) SCC member, Conservative  
Cllr Buddhi Weerasinghe SCC member, Conservative  
Cllr Bob Hughes SCC member, Conservative  
Cllr Dennis Booth SCC member (elected March 2024)  
Vacancy SCC member

### Officers in Attendance

Rachel Boxer (Adviser) Associate Consultant for Primary RE, Surrey SACRE & Guildford Diocese  
Liz Mitchell Clerk to SACRE (from September 23)  
Carrie Traill Commissioning Officer, SCC (from October 2021-March 2023)  
Nicola Morgan Senior Educational Effectiveness Advisor, acting in place of Commissioning Officer (from March 2023)

## **APPENDIX 7.6 Surrey SACRE's Development Plan 2020-2023**

**Surrey SACRE is a statutory body, working on behalf of Surrey County Council to support and advise maintained schools on Religious Education and Collective Worship, in partnership with the Diocese of Guildford, who manage the SACRE contract on behalf of Surrey County Council.**

This 2-year contract began in April 2019 and was extended twice to cover the period until the end of August 2024, so this development plan covers the period of the contract, ensuring that the Surrey Agreed Syllabus (2017-2022) receives its statutory review and is in place to be implemented from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2023. In the current contract, the following requirements are set out by the local authority for the work of SACRE:

- Provide a suitably qualified RE teacher/consultant who is a registered member of The National Association of Teachers of Religious Education (NATRE) to advise three meetings per year of the Surrey SACRE.
- Provide clerking services to all meetings, ensuring that all SACRE meetings run smoothly and all minutes and supporting paperwork are distributed in a timely manner.
- Liaise at least 3 times per year with the Chair/Vice-Chair of SACRE for agenda and report planning.
- Liaise with the SCC Commissioning Client and the Chair of SACRE regarding the booking and payment of meeting venues.
- Produce the draft annual report on the quality of RE teaching in Surrey maintained schools in accordance with NASACRE guidelines.
- By agreement with SACRE, liaise with schools to enable SACRE members to undertake pre-arranged visits to monitor the impact of the Surrey Agreed RE syllabus.
- Provide support, advice and guidance to SACRE to address general correspondence received in relation to RE or collective worship in schools.
- Provide appropriate support to the commissioning client to ensure that the Surrey SACRE website pages are updated and relevant.

These requirements are taken into account and will be repeated for each year of the development plan, actioned along with further specific priorities for each year agreed by SACRE, so that it will continue to improve outcomes for pupils in local authority schools (as well as other settings that use the Surrey Agreed Syllabus, though at no extra cost to SACRE), and contribute to the professional development of RE leaders and class teachers.

All the work of SACRE is undertaken with the aim of raising achievement in RE and improving the quality of teaching and learning, to improve the provision and quality of Collective Worship and to help promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, including Fundamental British Values. As a body representing various religions and beliefs in Surrey, it supports inter-faith dialogue and learning about religions for the promotion of respect and racial harmony.

**Surrey SACRE, March 2024**

### **Annual objectives to meet SACRE's statutory responsibilities, for each year in the Development Plan**

1. Ensure SACRE conducts its statutory duties efficiently
2. Ensure that SACRE is informed about national developments
3. Provide regular information to SCC client on progress of contract
4. Ensure Surrey SACRE representation at regional / national meetings
5. Produce the annual report on the work of SACRE
6. Ensure Surrey SACRE website pages are regularly updated and relevant
7. Monitor standards of RE & Collective Worship in Surrey schools through school websites

### **Additional priorities for 2022-23**

8. Complete statutory revision of the Surrey Agreed Syllabus
9. Invest in the professional development of Primary RE subject leaders in Surrey schools
10. Ensure Primary RE subject leaders are informed about local, regional & national developments in RE
11. Ensure all schools using the Agreed Syllabus have access to free implementation training
12. Ensure Speakers' Forum group are able to support revised units of the Surrey Agreed Syllabus