

---

**DARLINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL  
ANNUAL SACRE REPORT – ACADEMIC YEAR 2020/21**

---

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

---

**Introduction**

1. This has been a challenging time for our SACRE and especially schools as a result of the Covid pandemic, however with the increased use of online platforms for training and meetings this has enabled much greater contact with RE teachers across Darlington.
2. On behalf of Darlington SACRE we would again like to thank all schools, teachers, RE subject leaders, support staff and volunteers from the faith communities who have worked so hard to raise the standard of Religious Education in Darlington during the past year.
3. This report covers a period of time that has seen unprecedented challenges that has affected us all not least here in Darlington. It has been an incredibly difficult time for individuals and organisations and I am immensely proud of the way that the Darlington Community has pulled together to support all our young people during this time. Schools and colleges have coped with a whole range of new challenges including developing a whole new set of skills to manage remote learning so teaching could continue when schools were closed, supporting those young people in ‘exam years’ where the way ahead was so unclear and offering wellbeing and mental health support.

**Table of Contents:**

**Overview**

4. SACRE Members have met during the Academic Year 2020/21 on 9 November 2020; 8 February 2021 and 5 July 2021 (inquorate).
5. On 9 November – Members considered a proposal to recommend to the LA the need to review the Locally Agreed Syllabus for RE which was delayed due to the Covid-19 pandemic and agreed that it was an appropriate time to consider the review and take into account the most recent Ofsted guidance for GCSE/AS and A Levels and also the final report of the Commission for RE ‘Religion and World Views – The Way Forward’.

Members approved the Annual Report for 2018/19 academic year for submission to NASACRE and the Department for Education.

Members examined feedback and analysis of a survey carried out within all schools in Darlington (Academy and Maintained) to collate information on teaching of religious

education within their schools; the use of the Locally Agreed Syllabus; and information on the daily Act of Collective Worship and withdrawal from Collective Worship. Members also discussed how the Agreed Syllabus was driving the curriculum within primary and secondary schools within the Borough and discussed ways schools can facilitate faith groups within their teaching of religious education and how to translate worldviews into the classroom.

8 February – Further consideration of the school consultation exercise and the questions to include in the questionnaire.

6. The Agreed Syllabus Conference have not met during this Academic Year but meetings of the ASC commenced on 6 September 2021 (during the Academic Year 2021/22) to review the current Locally Agreed Syllabus for religious education in Darlington.

### **RE Statutory Responsibilities**

7. The current Locally Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education was approved in April 2015 and was due for review 2020; due to Covid-19 and the restrictions on meetings over the Spring/Summer of 2020 it was agreed to delay the Review until the meeting of SACRE in November 2020. At that meeting it was agreed to advise the local authority to commence the review process and convene an Agreed Syllabus Conference to progress.
8. SACRE commenced a consultation exercise with all schools to collate information in relation to the teaching of religious education within their schools; use of the Locally Agreed Syllabus; and information on the daily Act of Collective Worship and withdrawal from collective worship in readiness for a review of the Syllabus when possible. This was carried out on their behalf by Anne Davison – SEND and Inclusion Advisor. Analysis document attached at **Appendix 1**.
9. This authority is a Member of NASACRE (National Association of Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education) and the Clerk continues to circulate information from NASACRE and any other relevant organisations to the RE Leads in all primary and secondary schools within the Borough of Darlington.

### **SACRE Involvement Locally**

#### **SACRE's own arrangements (Statutory responsibilities)**

10. The SACRE was advised by Anne Davison, SEND Inclusion Advisor from Children and Adult Services and supported by Allison Hill, Democratic Officer.
11. At the meeting held on 9 November 2020 Jenny Uzzell , National Association of School Teacher/Union of Women Teachers was appointed as Chair and Martin Stand, Church

of England was appointed Vice-Chair for a period of three years from the date of appointment.

12. There is a legal requirement on all Local Authorities to establish a 'Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education' (SACRE). A SACRE's main duty is to advise the Local Authority on matters connected with the teaching of Religious Education and Collective Worship.
13. SACRE can advise the Authority to review its Agreed Syllabus and can recommend that particular teaching methods, materials and resources are considered for use in Religious Education.
14. A SACRE may also consider any application from Head Teachers that the requirement for Christian collective worship should not apply to a particular school or class of pupils within that school.
15. Darlington has only three Maintained primary schools, the remaining primary and secondary schools are either standalone Academies or Academies within a Multi Academy Trust; however there is a good proportion of the Borough's schools and academies using the Locally Agreed Syllabus.

### **Membership of SACRE**

16. The membership of SACRE consists of four representative groups (or committees) and co-opted members. The membership below is the current Membership of SACRE.

#### **Representing Darlington Borough Council**

- Councillor Crudass (Chair of Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee)
- Councillor C Hughes (Labour Group Member)
- Councillor Curry (Liberal Democrat Group Member )
- Councillor Renton

#### **Representing Church of England**

- Reverend P. Baker
- Martin Stand
- Beth Miller

#### **Representing Other Faith Groups**

- Rev Vicky Thompson, Darlington Baptist Church
- Morvyn Sanderson, Methodist Church
- Helen Ellis, Roman Catholic
- Bhopinder Singh, Sikhism
- Dr. Chitra Kumari, Hindu Community
- Dr Quader, Islamic Society of Darlington

- Gen Chogma, The Atisha Kadampa Meditation Centre
- Mrs. M. Calderon, Religious Society of Friends
- Margaret Thomson, United Reformed Church
- Bess Robertson, Darlington Hebrew Congregation
- Jenny Uzzell, Paganism

#### **Representing Teaching Associations**

- Stuart Rawle, National Association of Head Teachers (NAHT)
- Fiona Rankin, National Association of School Teachers/Union of Women Teachers

#### **Co-opted Members**

- Mike Fryer
- Janet Mole, Humanist Society

17. Following any resignations from our SACRE Members we continue to appoint to any vacancies as soon as possible to ensure that our attendance at meetings is maximised.

#### **Members of the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education**

Analysis of questionnaires

Question	Analysis
1. What type of school do you work in?	9 Primary Schools- 75% and 3 Secondary Schools-25%
2. What role do you fulfil in school?	11 out of 12 responses were the RE Lead- 92%
3. How much time is spent teaching non-examined RE in each year group?	Up to 30 minutes per week- 1 school (Polam Hall School)- 8.3% 31-60 minutes per week- 10 schools- 83.3% 61-90 minutes per week- 1 school (Carmel College)-8.3%
4. Is RE taught separately or as part of another subject/course?	All schools stated that RE was taught separately.
5. How many teachers teach RE in your school?	5 schools answered-All 1 school said 14 2 schools answered 8 1 school said 9 1 school said 7 1 school said 4 1 school said 1
6. How many teachers teaching RE are RE specialists?	
7. Overall, how confident are RE teachers when teaching the subject?	3 schools indicated the teachers were very confident (Faith schools)- 25% 2 schools stated the teachers were only slightly confident (Hurworth and West Park Academy)- 17% The remaining 7 schools said their teachers were mostly confident- 58%
8. How many TA's /HLTA's teach RE in your school?	7 schools have 1 or no TA's teaching RE- 58.3% In 2 schools, all TA's teach RE- 16.7% 1 school had 8 TA's teaching RE- 8.3% 1 school had 6 TA's teaching RE- 8.3% 1 school stated it varied- 8.3%
9. Overall, how confident are TA's / HLTA's when teaching the subject?	Out of the 7 schools that use TA's to teach RE: 3 are very confident- 43% 1 is confident- 14% 2 are mostly confident- 29% 1 is slightly confident- 14% 1 is not confident- 14%

Analysis of questionnaires

10. Who plans the RE syllabus?	
11. How well resourced is RE compared to other Humanities subjects?	Half of the schools said that RE was averagely resourced- 50% 5 of the schools stated that RE was well resourced- 42% 1 school said it was poorly resourced (Hurworth)- 8%
12. What provision, if any, has been made by the school for your professional development in RE?	4/12 schools said there was no provision or that they didn't need it- 33.3% 4/12 schools have attended CPD- 33.3% (3 of those schools attended Diocesan training, 1 attended the RE sub leader course) 1 school said professional development in RE is equal to that of other subjects, but did not give an example- 8.3% 1 school were not aware of any CPD- 8.3% 1 school said they purchased the Durham scheme of work 3 years ago- 8.3% 1 school stated that CPD was available but did not specify- 8.3%
13. How effective is the role of governors in relation to RE?	2 schools did not answer the question-16.7%  <u>Out of the 10 schools that answered</u> 6 schools said they felt supported by the governors- 50% 4 schools were unsure how effective the role of governors in relation to RE is- 33.3%
14. How often do you access resources to support planning and assessment from the locally agreed RE syllabus?	Half of the schools (6/12) said that they never or rarely accessed resources from the locally agreed syllabus- 50% <u>Of the remaining 6:</u> 2 schools stated they accessed the resources continuously- 16.7% 2 said often- 16.7% 1 said termly- 8.3% 1 uses a North Yorkshire scheme-8.3%
15. Do you access resources to support planning and assessment from a locally agreed RE syllabus other than Darlington's?	5 of the schools said that they did not- 42% 7 of the schools said they accessed other resources- 58%

Analysis of questionnaires

	Other resources named were Durham, Hexham & Newcastle, North Yorkshire and Hodder Education Planning tools.
16. Do you access resources to support planning and assessment from your diocesan or faith community syllabus?	6 schools confirmed they did access resources from their diocesan or faith community syllabus- 50% 5 schools confirmed they did not- 42% One school left the question unanswered- 8%
17. Do you access resources to support planning and assessment from different diocesan or faith community syllabus?	7/12 schools stated they did not access these resources- 58% 5/12 confirmed they did access these resources- 42%
18. Do you access QCA/QCDA resources to support planning and assessment?	Only one school confirmed they accessed these resources (Hummersknott)- 8%
19. Do you use resources devised by NATRE or RE Today to support planning and assessment?	Half of the schools used resources devised by NATRE or RE Today- 50% <u>Out of the 3 Secondary schools:</u> 2 schools stated they used these resources- 67% 1 answered no (Polam)- 33%  <u>Out of the Primary schools:</u> 4 schools used these resources ( 2 of which are faith schools)- 44% 5 answered no- 56%
20. Do you use web-based resources to support planning and assessment?	10/12 schools stated they used web-based resources 83.3% Out of that 12, one said they only accessed web-based resources occasionally. Two schools said they did not access web-based resources- 16.7%
21. Do you use a scheme of work devised by the school itself to support planning and assessment?	7/12 -yes- 58% 5/12- no- 42%
22. During RE lessons, how does the school meet the needs of individual pupils who subscribe to a religion or world view not often or ever studied in the school, e.g. the Bahai Faith?	4/12 schools have not encountered this need in school- 33.3% 4/12 schools indicated that all faiths are either taught or there would be planned work should the need arise- 33.3% 4/12 schools said that should any need arise, that discussions and information would be available ( 1 school said a broad curriculum) 33.3%
23. Do pupils get the chance to study expressions of religion and belief NOT described as world religions?	7/12 yes- 58% 5/12 no * 1 answered only if it was in the syllabus- 42%

Analysis of questionnaires

<p>24. How many pupils are withdrawn from RE always or occasionally?</p>	<p>10/12 – none – 83.3% 1/12- indicated 1 or 2 – 8.3% 1/12 – unsure very few- 8.3%</p>
<p>25. When parents exercise their right to withdraw their children from RE, is a reason given?</p>	<p>10/12- N/A – 83.3% 1/12 confirmed parent gave a reason but did not give the reason on the form- 8.3% 1/12 – gave reason(s)- Not compatible with own faith- 8.3%</p>
<p>26. How effective is RE in enabling pupils to think spiritually, ethically and theologically?</p>	<p>9/12 schools said RE was very effective- 75% 1 school said it was fairly effective- 8.3% 1 school stated it was hard to measure the effectiveness- 8.3% 1 school left this question unanswered – 8.3%</p>
<p>27. How could RE be improved in your school?</p>	<p>Responses were varied and included: 2 schools mentioned more resources and easily accessible sources- 16.7% 2 schools mentioned requiring more 1<sup>st</sup> hand experience- 16.7% 1 school said more full time RE staff- 8.3% 2 schools said more quality teaching and increased time spent teaching RE and time for assessment &amp; monitoring- 16.7% 3 schools suggested more funding and frequency of RE related visits- 25% 1 school said more professional development would improve RE- 8.3% 1 school suggested the EBACC recognise RE as a Humanity Subject- 8.3%</p>
<p>28. At Key Stage 4, which exam board syllabus do you teach?</p>	<p>Only the 3 Secondary schools were eligible to answer this question. 1 school answered – EDUQAS- Route B 1 School answered- AQA Polam Hall do not offer RE as a GCSE option.</p>
<p>29. At Key Stage 4, how much time is given to examined RE lessons per week?</p>	<p>Only 2 schools were eligible to answer this question. Carmel College- 2.5 hours per week Hummersknott- 3 hours per week.</p>
<p>30. At Key Stage 4, does your school provide RE to all pupils?</p>	<p>Only 2 schools were eligible to answer this question. Both schools confirmed that they do provide RE to all KS4 pupils.</p>



Analysis of questionnaires

31. At Key Stage 5, which exam board syllabus do you teach?	Only 1 of the 2 schools eligible answered this and the response was OCR.
32. At Key Stage 5, how much time is given to examined RE lessons per week?	Only 1 of the 2 schools eligible answered and the response as 2.5 hours per week.
33. At Key Stage 5, does your school provide RE to all pupils?	Only 1 school answered and confirmed that it does provide RE to all pupils at KS5.
34. What could the SACRE do to support the work of RE teachers across the Darlington area?	3/12 schools did not answer this question – 25%  <i>Out of the 9 schools that answered:</i> 4 schools mentioned resources-wider selection and easier access- 33.3% 2 schools suggested having a point of contact for faith community leaders- 16.7% 2 schools said arranging teacher network meetings- 16.7% 1 school suggested organising faith events- 8.3%
35. Is the school familiar with the distinction between an act of collective worship and an assembly?	9/12 schools answered yes- 75% 3/12 schools did not answer- 25%
36. Although legislation requires that schools provide ALL pupils with a daily Act of Collective Worship, it is not always possible to do so. In a typical week, how often are ACW's provided?	5/12 of the school responses stated that daily worship occurred daily- 42% 4 schools did not answer- 33.3% 1 school answered between 4-5 a week- 8.3% 1 school answered 3 per week- 8.3% 1 school answered 0 per week (Polam Hall)- 8.3%
37. For what reason or reasons is it not possible to provide a daily ACW?	4 schools did not answer this question – 33.3%  <i>Out of the 8 schools that answered:</i> 4 schools said that this question was not applicable- 33.3% 3 schools answered things such as school trips could mean daily ACW were not possible- 25% 1 school stated they were unsure – 8.3%
38. Are ACW's provided to pupils in year groups, key stages, class groups or for the whole school?	3 schools did not answer this question- 25%  <i>Out of the 9 schools that answered</i>

Analysis of questionnaires

	<p>3 schools indicated ACW's were provided to all groups- 25%</p> <p>1 school said they do not have ACW- 8.3%</p> <p>1 school said the curriculum does not allow this- 8.3%</p> <p>2 schools said ACW provided in year groups and whole school- 16.7%</p> <p>1 school said ACW are provided in key stages and classes- 8.3%</p> <p>1 school stated ACW are held for Harvest Festival, Christmas and Easter which are delivered by Martin Stand from DAYCM-8.3%</p>
<p>39. Legislation requires that an ACW must be "wholly or mainly of a broad Christian character". Can you describe ways in which the school meets this requirement?</p>	<p>6 schools indicated they use prayer- 50%</p> <p>2 schools read from The Bible-16.7%</p> <p>1 school answered provided by DAYCM- 8.3%</p> <p>1 school answered by utilising school reflection- 8.3%</p> <p>2 schools did not answer the question- 16.7%</p>
<p>40. What allowance/arrangements are made during ACWs to meet the needs and aspirations of pupils who are not Christian?</p>	<p>3 schools did not answer the question- 25%</p> <p>Answers were varied and included: invitation to prayer, time to reflect on their own beliefs, option to withdraw and alternative activities</p>
<p>41. While parents have the right to withdraw their children from an ACW, they cannot withdraw them from an assembly. How many pupils are withdrawn from ACWs?</p>	<p>9/12 schools answered that no pupils are withdrawn from ACW- 75%</p> <p>3/12 schools did not answer this question- 25%</p>
<p>42. When parents exercise their right to withdraw their children from ACWs, is a reason given? If yes, what reason /s are given?</p>	<p>7/12 schools said this question was not applicable- 58.3%</p> <p>4/12 schools left this question unanswered 33.3%</p> <p>1 school answered yes and gave reason ( Jehovah's Witness)- 8.3%</p>
<p>43. When was the last time the school referred to NCC's 'Policy and Guidelines for Acts of Collective Worship in Community Schools' to find out how the content of ACWs can be made so inclusive that there is little or no need for parents to withdraw their children from collective worship?</p>	<p>3 schools answered N/A- 25%</p> <p>5 schools did not answer the question- 41.6%</p> <p>4 schools were unsure when the last time the school referred to NCC's Policy- 33.3%</p>
<p>44. When was the last time the school updated its policy and guidelines on collective worship?</p>	<p>4/12 schools did not answer this question- 33.3%</p>

## Analysis of questionnaires

45. Is there anything else you would like to share with us about the opportunities and challenges of providing RE and collective worship at the present time?	4/12 schools did not answer the question- 33.3%  <u>Out of the 8 school answers:</u> 4/8 schools said that there was nothing to add- 50% 2/8 schools commented that they were well supported by the Diocese- 25% 2/8 schools expressed challenges which were (25%): RE is not a priority as it is not tested Meeting suggested to discuss the 'place of RE'