

# Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education

# Annual Report 2023/2024

This report covers the work of the Cumbrian SACRE serving the schools in Cumberland and Westmorland & Furness for the period September 2023 to August 2024





Working for **Cumberland Council** and **Westmorland & Furness Council** 

#### **Contents**

#### 1. Words from the Chair

It's hard to believe that I have been in the role of Chair for a year, it's been quite a whirlwind. I am grateful for the many opportunities I have had to engage with teachers, attend training, and especially to meet students. It is always a delight to visit a school. This year I have had the privilege of doing that many times. Taking part in a faith panel with other SACRE members or hearing from students during a meeting, SACRE generates so much energy as their enthusiasm is infectious.

One of the highlights of the year for me was our annual RE conference in June 2024 which was attended by nearly 100 delegates. It provided something for teachers from early years through to secondary. There were a mixture of talks, workshops and a range of engaging, interactive sessions. As usual it was well received and there has been lots of positive feedback.

There are two key things that have happened this year. The first is that our new Locally Agreed Syllabus which will become legal in September in 2024. SACRE has been supporting schools to prepare for implementing it and continues to engage with schools to help strengthen teachers' confidence and skills in delivering it. The syllabus has been carefully crafted to provide a way forward for RE for our schools and SACRE is committed to supporting schools across Cumberland and Westmorland & Furness in its use for the years ahead. An example of this has been the collaboration with the Early Years Team Leader to produce RE subject leader guidance which was launched at the SACRE conference.

The second has been updating and agreeing our development plan. This has been a considerable piece of work but has resulted in a valuable document that will ensure SACRE is focused on key priorities. There are two particular aspects of our work that we are committed to strengthening; these are Collective Worship and Community Cohesion. A survey of schools about their Collective Worship has provided valuable information about how best we should approach the topic and provide support and resources. The need for SACRE to address how it can make a significant contribution to the issue of community cohesion was highlighted during the summer with the distressing riots. We are committed to the idea that ensuring good quality teaching of RE and worldviews is an invaluably positive influence on students. This is what drives the dedication of Cumbrian SACRE members.

My sincere and grateful thanks to all the SACRE members, our LA Officers, David Hodgkiss (Westmorland & Furness Council) and Rachel Laverack (Cumberland Council), our Clerk, Sue McGaw and of course Jane Yates, immediate past chair and RE advisor, to name only a few of her many hats, for all their hard work and dedication. Our SACRE is well respected regionally and nationally. The engagement with schools and teachers and the support it provides to strengthen good quality teaching of RE is tremendous.

Karen O'Donoghue SACRE Chair

#### When and where did SACRE meet?

SACRE usually meets once a term. In 2023-2024 the following meetings took place:

# 2 October 2023 – Penrith Methodist Church (also via Teams)

Attendance: 20 members present (Committee A - 6; Committee B - 2; Committee C - 4; Committee D - 3; Co-opted - 3, LA Officers - 2) This meeting was guorate. The main agenda items were:

- Appointment of Chair and Vice Chair
- SACRE Development Plan
- Constitution
- SACRE/RE Conference 2024
- Cumbria Revised Agreed Syllabus
   SACRE Annual Report 2022-23

## 13 March 2024 – Richard Rose Morton Academy (also via Teams)

Attendance: 18 members present (Committee A - 6; Committee B - 2; Committee C - 4; Committee D - 2; Co-opted - 3; LA Officers - 1). This meeting was quorate. The main agenda items were:

- SACRE Conference 2024
- Survey to Secondary Schools
- SACRE Development Plan

- Local and National Update
- NW RE Hubs

## 18 June 2024 – County Hall, Kendal (also via Teams)

Attendance: 17 members present (Committee A – 7; Committee B - 3; Committee C – 1; Committee D - 3; Co-opted - 1; LA Officers - 2) This meeting was guorate. The main agenda items were:

- Feedback from SACRE Conference
- EY Subject Leader Guidance
- Collective Worship Survey

- SACRE Development Plan
- Northwest RE Hubs

# When are future meetings?

Autumn meeting – 9 October 2024 – University of Cumbria (Carlisle) Spring meeting – 11 March 2025 – Voreda House, (Penrith) Summer meeting – 4 June 2025 – venue to be arranged (Cumberland)

The new **SACRE** Development plan 2024-2029 identifies that the main areas of focus for 2024-2025 will be to:

- Evaluate the new SACRE Development Plan 2024-2029 and reporting progress at each termly SACRE meeting
- Continue to support and consult on the implementation of the Cumbrian Agreed Syllabus (2023) through the annual RE survey, CPD and Cumbrian RE Teacher Group. This includes signposting schools to RE audits and national RE award programmes e.g. Religious Education Quality Mark (REQM)
- Develop a programme of CPD to support and review resources to improve the provision and quality of Collective Worship with the Assistant Education Director for Carlisle Diocese. This includes the introduction of the new NASACRE SMSC Toolkit
- Review current guidance for Collective Worship and revise where necessary
- Organise the annual Cumbria SACRE RE conference in June 2025 with a theme around cohesion of the community, and a focus on Collective Worship.
- Develop processes to find out how schools provide RE to all learners in KS4 and KS5 and how well learners are doing in KS4 and KS5 examinations
- Continue to collate Ofsted summaries relating to RE as part of monitoring for Cumberland, and start collating summaries for Westmorland & Furness
- Complete a school website summary report
- Develop a system to be fully equipped to respond to requests for determinations

- Consult about the current religious, ethnic and cultural diversity in the local area, in conjunction with local interfaith groups and the LA, being more informed about the work of the LA in terms of community cohesion
- Develop stronger relationships with local interfaith groups and individuals through circulating the half termly SACRE newsletter and attending relevant events to explore opportunities to develop and promote initiatives with local interfaith groups for schools.
   Schools to be informed of the distinctive needs and opportunities created by local diversity and the impact on the provision for RE and Collective Worship
- Continue to be informed of national guidance from NASACRE and the LA in relation to community cohesion, Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB) and rights respecting, SMSC and British Values
- Encourage schools to report RE in their newsletters, websites and social media as part of promoting high quality RE
- Continue to increase teacher awareness of SACRE through newsletter, social media and other LA channels, including School Improvement and Governor Services.
- Continue to raise profile and involvement in National Association for SACRE and other national RE organisations, including the regional RE Hub and North West SACRE Hub
- Continue to offer and promote school speaker visits by Cumbrian SACRE members, attending RE Hubs Accredited CPD and featuring on the school speaker section for the North West of the <u>RE Hubs website</u>

#### 2. A section on RE

### What are SACRE's Responsibilities?

To advise the Local Authority (LA) on matters connected with: RE CW etc

### 1. Religious Education (RE) This year SACRE has:

- Completed the working practices of the new Cumbrian SACRE, including a new constitution.
- Developed a programme of CPD to support the introduction and implementation of the new Locally Agreed Syllabus.
- Established joint working with the Assistant Education Director for Carlisle Diocese for CPD delivery.
- Completed the NASACRE self-evaluation process and the new Development Plan (2024-2029)
- Created a new format half termly newsletter
- Collaborated with the Early Years Team Leader to produce RE subject leader guidance to support the Cumbrian Agreed Syllabus for RE. This was launched at the SACRE conference.
- Collated summaries of Ofsted comments relating to RE from Cumberland Council
- Trialled a system for auditing school websites for evidence of RE and Collective Worship
- Organised the annual Cumbria SACRE RE conference in June 2024.
- Devised a survey for secondary RE Leads with a focus on recruitment, retention and training in RE. The report was circulated to all schools and used to inform future CPD planning
- Devised a survey focused on Collective Worship provision for SACRE to be reported to SACRE and inform CPD in autumn 2024
- Continued to disseminate of the Virtual Voices in Religious Education (VVRE) project in conjunction with Cumbria Development Education Centre (CDEC) through CPD and newsletters
- Continued to increase teacher awareness of SACRE through newsletter, social media and other LA channels, including School Improvement and Governor Services.

- Continued to raise profile and involvement in National Association for SACRE and other national RE organisations.
- Engaged with NASACRE through the new regional RE Hubs and North West SACRE Hub
- Continued involvement with Cumbria Development Education Centre, developing their website support for RE.
- Continued to develop a network of RE teachers across Cumberland and Westmorland & Furness through CPD and online channels.
- Encouraged SACRE members to include SACRE in any community cohesion work they do,
   e.g. Inter Faith Week, Holocaust Memorial Day.
- Continue to offer school speaker visits by Cumbrian SACRE members encouraging them to attend RE Hubs CPD to be featured on the school speaker section of the website.

# What Professional Development Opportunities have there been?

The following courses for RE ran:

- Religious Education for the Future 08 Nov 2023 (13:00 14:30) 30 attended Provider – Jane Yates and Laura Watson
- Religious Education for the Future 08 Nov 2023 (16:00 17:30) 26 attended Provider – Jane Yates and Laura Watson
- Disciplinary Approach to Religious Education (Theology) 08 Feb 2024 19 attended Provider – Jane Yates and Laura Watson
- Disciplinary Approach to Religious Education (Philosophy) 22 Feb 2024 19 attended Provider – Jane Yates and Laura Watson
- Disciplinary Approach to Religious Education (Human Sciences) 14 Mar 2024 19 attended Provider Jane Yates and Laura Watson
- Religious Education for the Future (school governors) 30 April 2024 (18:00 20.00) 17 attended

Provider – Jane Yates and Laura Watson

4 June 2024 - SACRE/RE Conference – Guest Speaker Julia Diamond-Conway, National RE Adviser (RE Today) Venue: North Lakes Hotel, Penrith – 96 delegates attended.

Additional workshop presenters included members of Cumbrian SACRE and Grace Lockrobin, Co-director for SAPERE, the national charity for P4C. The conference was chaired by Karen O'Donoghue (Chair) and Jane Yates (RE Adviser to Cumbrian SACRE). A workshop about realising the potential for school speakers was led by SACRE member Rebekah Ackroyd (University of Cumbria) with Karen O'Donoghue (Bahai) Wendy Ridley (Buddhist) and Shelia Gewolb (Jewish). An early years session to launch the new RE subject leader guidance for EYFS was led by Sarah Harrison (SACRE C of E member) and Fiona Fletcher (Inglewood Infants School).

# 3. A section on Collective Worship Collective Worship in community schools

Collective Worship was evaluated as part of the NASACRE self-evaluation process and is one of the main five aims of the new Cumbrian SACRE Development Plan (2024-2029) to promote improvement in the quality and provision of Collective Worship. During May 2024, a survey was carried with headteachers to help SACRE understand local issues of delivering pupil entitlement to Collective Worship and the challenges schools face in providing it. A report of the survey was shared with SACRE members and schools, and will be used to inform CPD for Collective Worship during autumn 2024. This CPD will be led by the RE Adviser to Cumbrian SACRE, Jane Yates and the Diocesan Deputy Director of Education, Laura Watson as part of a collaborative approach to supporting all schools in Cumberland and Westmorland & Furness. The Cumbrian SACRE <u>Guidance to Schools on Collective Worship</u> (2020) will also be reviewed and revised as necessary.

**Determinations - To allow any exception to the law that Collective Worship be broadly or mainly Christian** SACRE has received no requests for a determination for exemption from the law. As per the Cumbrian SACRE Development Plan (2024-2029), a system will be developed to fully respond to any requests for determinations.

SACRE hears any complaints brought to the LA about RE and collective worship. No complaints from parents were received this year.

# What is the RE and Collective Worship support for Cumbrian schools?

For secondary and primary schools please email Rachel Laverack, LA Support Officer – Cumberland, <a href="mailto:rachel.laverack@cumberland.gov.uk">rachel.laverack@cumberland.gov.uk</a> or David Hodgkiss LA Support Officer – Westmorland & Furness, <a href="mailto:david.hodgkiss@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk">david.hodgkiss@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk</a>

## 4. A section on examinations for 2024

#### GCSE Results 2024

#### Westmorland & Furness

Number of pupils entered	% grade 4+	% grade 7+
807	68%	22%
Cumberland		
Number of pupils entered	% grade 4+	% grade 7+
580	66%	Not known
National		
Number of pupils entered	% grade 4+	% grade 7+
223034	72.5%	31.1%

#### A Level results 2024

#### Westmorland & Furness

Westmentalia & Furness							
Number of pupils entered	% A* to C						
39	72%						

#### Cumberland

Number of pupils entered	% A* to C				
52	48.1%				

#### **National**

Number of pupils entered	% A* to C				
16622	78%				

Including a results section in our annual report is new for Cumbrian SACRE. In spring 2025 a meeting was organised with Deborah Weston (Research Officer for NATRE) with the RE Adviser to SACRE, and both LA Officer to explore data from individual schools about GCSE and workforce census data. This was further discussed by the SACRE working group, with feedback to the main committee. Connections with a secondary adviser have also been made, and general issues of concern will be communicated to headteachers. This will be reported in more detail in the 2024-2025 annual report. N.B. Some schools offer A Level Philosophy instead of A Level Religious Studies.

# JOINT COUNCIL FOR QUALIFICATIONS

# Provisional GCSE (Full Course) Results (9-1 Only) - June 2024 (England Only)

# **CUMULATIVE PERCENTAGES of Subject Results by Grade**

Category	Subject	Year	Number Sat	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	U
GCSE													
England 9													
- 1	Religious Studies	2024	223034	7.9	18.8	31.1	47.9	62.0	72.5	85.2	93.2	98.1	100
GCSE													
England 9													
- 1	Religious Studies	2023	222412	7.7	18.5	30.6	47.3	61.3	72.2	86.0	94.0	98.4	100
GCSE													
England 9													
- 1	Religious Studies	2019	227913	7.4	17.9	30.5	46.6	60.9	72.3	86.3	94.3	98.5	100

## JOINT COUNCIL FOR QUALIFIIONS

# Provisional GCE A Level Results - June 2024 (All UK Candidates)

# **CUMULATIVE PERCENTAGES of Subject Results by Grade**

Category	Subject	Year	Number Sat	A*	Α	В	С	D	Е	U
A Level	Religious Studies	2024	16622	6.0	25.7	54.9	78.8	92.6	98.2	100
A Level	Religious Studies	2023	16853	6.3	26.3	56.2	79.6	92.5	98.1	100
A Level	Religious Studies	2019	19406	4.3	21.9	50.5	76.7	92.1	98.2	100

#### 5. A section on links with other bodies

SACRE has continued to develop strong links with Cumbria Development Education Centre (CDEC), RE Hubs and AREIAC. The RE Adviser for Cumbrian SACRE is also the North West RE Hubs Lead which has led to increased links and promotion of SACRE on a regional and national level. Part of this role includes leading the accredited training of school speakers and places of interest for RE Hubs. Currently 9 school speakers from Cumbria are registered on the North West RE Hubs School Speaker page (3 from Cumbrian SACRE and a further 6 who were involved in the Virtual Voices in Religious Education Project). This has been a wonderful way to ensure the sustainability and development of the VVRE Project.

Two schools in Westmorland & Furness were chosen to be the lead schools for the AREIAC Young RE Ambassadors Project with a focus on advocacy work for Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB). These two schools are The Queen Katherine School and Grayrigg C of E Primary School, both in the Kendal area. The project was officially launched in spring 2024 at the Quaker Tapestry Museum and presentations about the project have been made at NASACRE, AREIAC and Cumbrian SACRE conferences during the summer 2024. This has raised the profile of both Cumbrian SACRE and these two schools. Both schools will be involved in an online parliamentary event during November 2024 and a special parliamentary roundtable

event at Westminster in June 2025. Information and videos about the project can be found on the <u>project page</u> of the AREIAC website with a <u>specific section</u> for the activities of the two schools in the North West. Through the project, connections have been made with the Redbridge <u>Ambassadors for Faith and Belief(AfAB)</u> programme. This has resulted in a termly virtual session for KS2 classes in Cumbria – as highlighted in the photos at the end of this report. In her role as North West RE Hubs lead, Jane Yates is supporting both of these schools on the project. It has been a really productive outreach opportunity.

Cumbria SACRE has continued to develop links with Humanist UK. During 2024, the Humanist member of SACRE became a contracted teacher trainer for Humanist UK and has since led both national and individual school CPD for schools and ITT. This will also include CPD for teachers in Cumbrian in autumn 2024. The Humanist member is currently undergoing training and mentoring to become a national trainer for school speakers for Humanist UK.

# 6. A section on other areas of SACRE involvement locally Virtual Voices in Religious Education (VVRE) project

Title and date of event	Worldview voices involved	School	Age Range		
Faith and Belief Panel February 2024	Christian: C of E; Jewish, Sufi Muslim, Baha'i, Buddhist, Humanist	Keswick School	Year 12 and some Year 10s		



Multi-faith and belief speakers along a table in a school hall of pupils.

# 7. A section on SACRE's own arrangements (statutory responsibilities)

Who was on Cumbria SACRE in 2023-2024

Chair: Karen O'Donoghue

Committee A: Christian denominations (other than Church of England) & other faiths

Mohammed Dhalech (Muslim)

Sheila Gewolb (Jewish)

Karen O'Donoghue (Baha'i)

Rashmi Manemi (Hindu) Substitute Shweta Marali

Wendy Ridley (Buddhist)

Jane Yates (Humanist)

Rev David Milner (Methodist)

Micheal Watmough (Quaker)

Committee B: Church of England

Richard Cox Sarah Harrison Laura Watson – Substitute Charlotte Tudway

**Committee C: Teacher Associations** 

James Douglas (NEU) Irene Roberts-Green (Vice Chair) (NAHT)
Brian Eaton (Community) Bernadette Little (NASUWT)
Katherine France (NATRE)

Committee D: Local Authority
Neil Hughes (Liberal Democract)
Elaine Lynch (Labour)
Sue Sanderson (Liberal Democrat)
Christopher Southward (Labour)

**Co-opted Members** 

Georgia Prescott Vicky Bunter (Dowdales School)
Carolyn Reade

LA Support Officer (W&F) David Hodgkiss Clerk to SACRE Sue McGaw LA Support Officer (Cumberland) Rachel Laverack

#### What is the SACRE Budget?

SACRE's budget covers the cost of meetings, venue expenses, supply cover for teacher members, postage, photocopying, travel expenses, and subscription costs for membership of national organisations for RE. Additional resources are obtained from the County Council when necessary for the review, development and publication of the revised Agreed Syllabus.

In the year 2023-2024 the total amount spent was £4,386 (Travel expenses £782; Venues; £146.80 Supply £127.20; Training fees £1130; Subscriptions £450; Professional RE Adviser Fees £1750).

This document is the annual report for the academic year 2023-2024.

Anyone wishing to receive the minutes of termly meetings can contact Sue McGaw by email <a href="mailto:sue.mcgaw@cumberland.gov.uk">sue.mcgaw@cumberland.gov.uk</a> or visit Cumbria SACRE's website:

## **Useful Websites**

https://www.cumberland.gov.uk/schools-and-education/support-and-information-schools/standing-advisory-council-religious-education
https://www.westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk/schools-and-education/information-

schools/standing-advisory-council-religious-education

http://www.nasacre.org.uk/

https://www.re-hubs.uk/

http://www.reonline.org.uk/

https://natre.org.uk/

Twitter: @CumbriaSACRE. We welcome all schools in Cumbria to share photographic evidence of RE and Collective Worship using the hashtag #CumbriaSharingRE The Twitter account also follows the key local and national organisations for RE and will retweet relevant updates. Examples of RE in schools is shared in our new style half termly newsletter. Feedback from headteachers was to have a regular, shorter newsletter.



**Facebook: RE Teachers in Cumberland and Westmorland & Furness.** This is a closed social media group for primary and secondary teachers to enable an information exchange for RE and CW, training, events and new resources. Cumbria SACRE members also use this as a forum to keep teachers updated. Current membership is 177.

SACRE is pleased to receive photographic, written or anecdotal evidence of good work in RE and Collective Worship in Cumbria's schools. If you have things you wish to share please contact Sue McGaw on 01228 226805, email sue.mcgaw@cumberland.gov.uk

Non-members are welcome to attend, to observe SACRE meetings. Please contact Sue McGaw (email <a href="mailto:sue.mcgaw@cumberland.gov.uk">sue.mcgaw@cumberland.gov.uk</a>) for confirmation of times and venues.

#### Do you have any comments on this SACRE Report?

Responses to this Annual Report from school governors, elected members, head teachers, teachers or members of the public are welcomed by SACRE. Please email Rachel Laverack, LA Support Officer – Cumberland, <a href="mailto:racheld.laverack@cumberland.gov.uk">racheld.laverack@cumberland.gov.uk</a> or David Hodgkiss LA Support Officer – Westmorland & Furness, david.hodgkiss@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk