

Date of issue: Tuesday 25 June 2024

<b>MEETING</b>	<b>STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION</b>  <b>Committee 1 – Christian Denominations and Other Faiths</b> Ashpreet Singh Nainu (Chair), Sue Elbrow, Zubayr Abbas-Bowkan, Waqar Bhatti, Momade Faizal, Karen Appleby and Hardip Singh Sohal  <b>Committee 2 – Church of England</b> Rev Gordon Briggs, Christine Isles and Andrea Sparrow  <b>Committee 3 – Teachers (Representing Primary, Secondary &amp; Special Schools)</b> Primary - Munsoor Malik and Priya Lamba Secondary - Nagina Ali, Ian Sharpe and Andrew Ramsey  <b>Committee 4 – Representatives of the LEA</b> Councillors, Abbasi, Instone, Mohindra, Rana and Zarait  <b>Humanist Non-Voting Co-opted Member</b> Robin Launder
<b>DATE AND TIME:</b>	WEDNESDAY, 3RD JULY, 2024 AT 4.30 PM
<b>VENUE:</b>	MEETING ROOM 1 - THE CURVE, WILLIAM STREET, SLOUGH, SL1 1XY
<b>DEMOCRATIC SERVICES OFFICER:</b> <b>(for all enquiries)</b>	NADIA WILLIAMS 07749 709 961

NOTICE OF MEETING

You are requested to attend the above Meeting at the time and date indicated to deal with the business set out in the following agenda.



**WILL TUCKLEY**  
Chief Executive



**AGENDA**

**PART I**

**STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE)**  
**TERMS OF REFERENCE**

1. Appointment of Chair and Vice-Chair
2. Welcome, Introduction and Vote of Thanks
3. Apologies for Absence
4. Minutes of the Last Meeting held on 6 March 2024 3 - 6
5. Matters Arising
6. Update on the Joint Syllabus Conference held on 16 May 2024
7. SACRE Action Plan 2024-2025
8. SACRE Finance Update
9. National up-dates: 7 - 28  
  
NASACRE Conference feedback - Proposed changes of  
NASACRE to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO)
  - i) Constitution 2023, Draft NASACRE Constitution May 202  
and Proposed CIO Constitution Changes
  - ii) Ofsted Report 2024 and Summary from Schools Week
  - iii) NASACRE Response
10. SACRE RE Newsletter - Summer Term
11. SACRE Membership Update
12. Equality and Diversity - Resources
13. SACRE Membership News (An update from members  
regarding activities undertaken since the last SACRE  
meeting)
14. SACRE Members' Attendance Record
15. SACRE Members' Attendance Record 2023-2024 29 - 30

16. 2024-25 Meeting Dates:  
6 November 2024 and 5 March 2025

**Press and Public**

**Attendance and accessibility:** You are welcome to attend this meeting, which is open to the press and public, as an observer. You will however be asked to leave before any items in the Part II agenda are considered.

In addition, law allows members of the public to take photographs, film, audio-record or tweet the proceedings at public meetings. Anyone proposing to do so is requested to advise the Democratic Services Officer before the start of the meeting. Filming or recording must be overt and persons filming should not move around the meeting room whilst filming nor should they obstruct proceedings or the public from viewing the meeting. The use of flash photography, additional lighting or any non-hand held devices, including tripods, will not be allowed unless this has been discussed with the Democratic Services Officer.

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# **1. SLOUGH STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE)**

1.0 The SACRE is established in accordance with the Education Act 1996.

## **2.0 Membership**

2.1 The Members of the SACRE shall be appointed by the Authority so that they shall represent the following groups. The Council shall take all reasonable steps to assure itself that an individual appointed to represent any religion, denomination or association is representative of the same.

Committee 1 – Christian denominations (except the Church of England) and other religions (12)

The Free Churches (1)  
The Black Free Churches (1)  
The Roman Catholic Church (1)  
Hinduism (1)  
Islam (4)  
Judaism (1)  
Sikhism (2)  
Baha'is (1)

Committee 2 – The Church of England (4)

Committee 3 – Teachers (representing Primary, Secondary and Special Schools (6)

Committee 4 – The Authority (5)

2.2 Committee 4 shall be subject to the proportionality requirements of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

2.3 No Member appointed to the Cabinet shall be appointed to the SACRE.

The SACRE shall be appointed by the Council.

2.4 Members of the SACRE shall serve from the date of their appointment for a term of three years or until their successors are appointed by the Council. They shall be eligible for reappointment after each term for a further term by consultation, if necessary, with the group which they represent. The Council may remove any individual if, in its opinion, the individual ceases to be representative of the religion, denomination or association which they were appointed to represent or where appointed to Committee 4, a member of the Council.

2.5 Where a nominated representative fails to attend three consecutive meetings of the SACRE and fails to give their apologies s/he, shall cease to be a member of the SACRE and the nominating body shall be invited to nominate another representative provided that:

- (a) the Clerk to the SACRE has advised the member in writing of the provision of this clause following the second missed meeting and at least 10 working days before the third meeting.
- (b) SACRE does not decide to disapply this rule for reasons of extenuating circumstances.

### **3.0 Terms of Reference**

3.1 In accordance with Section 390 and 391 of the Education Act 1996 to advise the Council on:

(a) such matters connected with religious worship in community or foundation schools which do not have a religious character and the religious education to be given in accordance with an agreed or other syllabus as the authority may refer to it or as it may see fit.

To advise, in particular, on methods of teaching, the choice of materials and the provision of training for teachers.

On application made by a Head Teacher of any community or foundation school not designated as having a religious whether it is appropriate for the requirement for Christian collective character, consider worship to apply in the case of that school, or in the case of any class or description of pupils at that school. SACRE shall give the Head Teacher written notification of its decision.

3.2 The representative groups on the SACRE other than that representing the authority may at any time require a review of any agreed syllabus for the time being adopted by the authority.

3.3 The SACRE shall each year publish a report on its proceedings and those of its representative groups, the report to specify any matters on which the SACRE has given advice to the authority and the reasons for offering that advice.

3.4 On any question to be decided by SACRE, each of the four committee groups set out above are entitled to one single vote.

**Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education – Meeting held on Wednesday, 6th March, 2024.**

**Present:-**

**Committee 1 – Christian Denominations and Other Faiths**

Ashpreet Singh Nainu (Chair), Sue Elbrow and Momade Faizal

**Committee 2 – Church of England**

Rev Gordon Briggs and Christine Isles and Rev Gordon Briggs

**Committee 3 – Representatives of Teacher Associations**

Munsoor Malik – Primary

Priya Lamba - Primary

Andrew Ramsey – Secondary

**Committee 4 – Representatives of the LEA**

Councillors E Ahmed (Vice-Chair), Akram, Khawar, Instone and Mohindra

**Apologies for Absence:-** Zubayr Abbas-Bowkan, Karen Appleby, Hardip Singh Sohal, Nagina Ali and Ian Sharpe

**PART 1**

**DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

Councillor (Cllr) Instone declared that he was a governor at the school that a member in Committee 3 (Teachers (Representing Primary, Secondary & Special School) worked at.

**27. Minutes of the Last Meeting held on 2 November 2023**

**Resolved –** That the minutes of the meeting held on 2 November 2023 be approved as a correct record.

**28. Matters Arising**

In relation to Minute 15 - Review of SACRE Membership Report, it was noted that the report would be reported to the Council meeting on 24 April 2024 with the recommendation from SACRE.

- 16.** In relation to Minute 16 – Minutes of the Joint Syllabus Conference meeting held on 18 July 2023, it was confirmed that Cllr Instone was also a member of the Agreed Syllabus Conference.

**29. Update on the Joint Syllabus Conference meeting held on 11 January 2024**

Christine Isles reported that the Pan-Berkshire Syllabus proposal was a work in progress document, and that a revised version (v9) had been circulated as a supplementary paper to provide members with the latest update.

It was confirmed that comments received from SACRE members had been incorporated in this latest version and work on the Syllabus Proposal was still on-going.

**Resolved** – That the update be noted.

**30. SACRE Action/Forward Plan 2023/24 - Updated to March 2024**

The SACRE Professional Adviser provided a brief review of the 2023-24 SACRE Action Plan up to March 2024.

The three main categories of the Action Plan were highlighted as follows:

- A) The Core Business section of being a supportive and proactive SACRE enjoying full and well informed membership was ongoing.
- B) Supported teachers of religious education (RE) to continually improve RE learning in their schools. The next SACRE Teachers' Network meeting would be on 20 March 2024.
- C) Supported the ongoing work of the Pan-Berkshire Hub. Part of the work included the current continuing work on reviewing the Pan-Berkshire Agreed Syllabus, where six different SACREs were working together to also produce supporting materials for RE.

It was noted that the review of the Agreed Syllabus was approaching the finishing stages and highlighted that due to the pandemic, there would be a slight delay in publication. Currently, the Joint Syllabus Conference (JSC) was focussing on the content of the Agreed Syllabus.

In response to a question on whether the focus on the Agreed Syllabus would be on religious education or world views, the Adviser explained that the focus would be on RE but largely veered to World Views.

**Resolved** – That the update on SACRE Action/Forward Plan 2023/24 up to March 2024

**31. SACRE Finance Updated February 2024**

The Adviser updated members on the SACRE Finance up to February 2024.

It was clarified that some listed items would roll over to 2024-25, and that the remaining balance for 2023-24 financial year was £770.85, which would be required to be spent by March 2024.



During discussion members suggested that the unspent money could be put towards funding the launch of the Pan-Berkshire Agreed Syllabus and supporting RE materials. Oxford Diocese should be requested to submit an invoice for this amount to be held until the launch.

The Adviser would find out what other SACREs had budgeted and whether they would be making a contribution towards the launch of the Pan- Berkshire Agreed Syllabus. Members also considered that there should be an agenda for the launch and should include costings and required budget, as well as the contribution that the Pan-Berkshire Hub would be making.

Momade Faizal proposed, seconded by Rev Gordon Briggs and agreed, that Oxford Diocese be requested to submit an invoice for £770.85 to be held and put towards the launch of the Pan-Berkshire Agreed Syllabus and supporting RE materials.

**Resolved** – That the above proposal be agreed. Oxford Diocese be requested to submit an invoice for £770.85 to be held and put towards the launch of the Pan-Berkshire Agreed Syllabus and supporting RE materials for Slough SACRE only or matched by the other SACREs.

### **32. Slough SACRE Winter Newsletters Letter 2023-24 - To Note**

Members noted the Slough SACRE Winter Newsletters Letter 2023-24. The deadline for the submission of items for inclusion was confirmed as the end of March 2024.

**Resolved** – that the Slough SACRE Winter Newsletters Letter 2023-24 be noted.

### **33. SACRE Membership Update**

Members noted that there were still a number of vacancies that were still yet to be filled and further work needed to be done to try and fill them.

It was also noted that there had been a number of absences and highlighted to be mindful of the Terms of Reference (2.5) which stated that:

*“Where a nominated representative fails to attend three consecutive meetings of the SACRE and fails to give their apologies, s/he, shall cease to be a member of the SACRE and the nominating body shall be invited to nominate another representative provided that:*

- a) *The Clerk to the SACRE has advised the member in writing of the provision of this clause following the second missed meeting and at least 10 working days before the third meeting.*
- b) *SACRE does not decide to disapply this rule for reasons of extenuating circumstances”.*

## **Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education - 06.03.24**

**Resolved** – That the update be noted.

### **34. SACRE Membership News (An update from members regarding activities undertaken since the last SACRE meeting)**

Andrea Sparrow announced that a Parish Chaplin had been appointed at Slough and Eton C of E Business and Enterprise College.

Momade Faizal stated that he had applied to become a RE Hub speaker.

**Resolved** – That the update be noted.

*(Cllr Mohindra left the meeting at 5.15pm)*

### **35. Equality and Diversity - Resources**

The Adviser reported that teachers could access the Strictly RE resources for supporting materials relating to equality and diversity.

### **36. SACRE Members' Attendance Record**

**Resolved** – That the Members' attendance record be noted.

### **37. Date of Next Meeting: To be confirmed**

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as 3 July 2024.

Chair

(Note: The Meeting opened at 4.44 pm and closed at 5.53 pm)

# NASACRE Constitution 2023

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## 1. The Name of the Association

The name of the Association shall be the National Association of Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education (NASACRE).

## 2. The Mission of the Association

NASACRE's Mission Statement shall be:

- ❖ NASACRE exists to strengthen local SACREs and to support them in carrying out their statutory duties and responsibilities.
- ❖ NASACRE represents and celebrates SACREs at a strategic national level.

## 3. Basis of membership and duties

- 3.1 Every SACRE in England is affiliated to NASACRE and each SACRE shall be invited to subscribe to the Association, membership being renewable annually on payment of an annual subscription. These subscribed member SACREs constitute the Council.
- 3.2 The Council shall meet at least once annually; this meeting shall be known as the Annual General Meeting (AGM). It will be deemed to be quorate when one quarter of subscribed SACREs is represented.
- 3.3 Each subscribed SACRE shall be entitled to send any number of representatives to the meetings of the Council, but on any matter on which the Council takes a vote, subscribed SACREs shall each be entitled to cast **one** vote only.
- 3.4 The Council shall be responsible for review and amendment of the Constitution, as appropriate.
- 3.5 A majority of one half plus one of the Council shall be necessary for any amendment to the Constitution.

## 4. The Honorary Officers

Honorary Officers shall be nominated by a SACRE and must be an officer to, or a member or co-opted member of, that SACRE.

These shall be elected for a period of two years and shall comprise:

- 4.1 The Chair
- 4.2 The Vice Chair
- 4.3 The Assistant to the Chair
- 4.4 The Secretary
- 4.5 The Treasurer

The Vice Chair / Chair / Assistant to the Chair is a 6 year term of office with 2 years in each Officer role, the Vice Chair being elected to automatically move into the next role after two years. At any one time, 3 officers will be on the Executive at different stages of these roles. If at any time, one of these Officers is unable to continue, the Executive may appoint a temporary substitute from the other two post holders until the next AGM. The Exec may extend period of service on the Committee to ensure posts are filled.

An Honorary Officer may relinquish their office at any time. If an Honorary Officer is absent from three consecutive Committee meetings they shall be deemed to have relinquished their office and would need to seek re-election at the next Council AGM if they so desired.

#### **5. The Executive Committee (the Exec)**

Exec members shall be nominated by a SACRE and must be an officer to, or a member or co-opted member of, that SACRE. Similarly, a person co-opted by the Exec would normally be an officer to a SACRE or a member of a SACRE, but in some cases their specific area of expertise might be deemed more significant than the aforementioned criteria. Exec members are elected to serve for 3 years.

The Exec comprises the elected Honorary Officers together with no more than eight other members elected by the Council. The Exec has the power to co-opt up to three additional members. The Exec shall include the following roles:

- 5.1 Communications Officers who shall have oversight of the Association's communications strategy and communications, including the SACRE *Briefings* sent to SACREs
- 5.2 Conference Organisers who shall have oversight of the Annual Conference in partnership with the Secretary and the Treasurer
- 5.3 Development Officers who shall oversee the production of a Development Plan and report to the Exec and Council on its progress

With the agreement of the Exec, the roles set out in 5.1 – 5.3 may be shared between members of the Exec. Members of the Exec shall serve for a period of three years, after which time they must seek re-election by the Council at the AGM. Normally, members of the Exec should not serve more than six years consecutively. Co-opted members shall normally serve for two years when a review by the Exec will take place; they may serve as a co-opted member for up to six years consecutively.

If a member of the Exec misses three consecutive meetings, they may be deemed to have left the Committee.

The Exec shall be responsible for the planning of other activities and events in fulfilment of the aims of the Association.

#### **6. Subscriptions and Finance**

There shall be a membership fee, which shall be fixed from time to time by the Council. This fee shall not be deemed as the payment for the Annual Conference, which is additional to the annual meeting of the Council (AGM).

#### **7. Winding-up**

If for any reason the Association was to be dissolved, any assets remaining in the Association's bank account(s) shall be divided equally between those SACREs which were subscribed members at the time of the dissolution of the Association, once all other outstanding debts have been cleared.

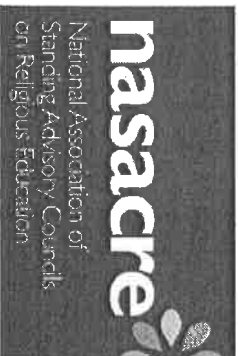
#### **Note**

The association is in process of registering as a **Charitable Incorporated Organisation**.

May 2023

# **NASACRE CIO Registration** **York – 20<sup>th</sup> May 2024**

- 1: Introductions
- 2: Why are we registering as a CIO?
- 3: What do we need?
- 4: The Draft Constitution
  - Mission
  - Membership
  - Mechanisms
- 5: What's Next?
- 6: Membership Consultation and Feedback

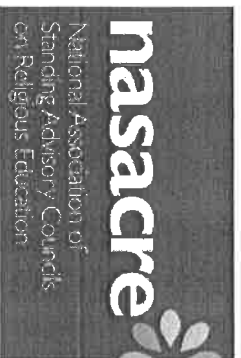


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## Why are we registering as a CIO?

The NASACRE Executive decided to register as CIO in 2023 in order to:

- Secure the future of NASACRE
- Enable NASACRE to write contracts and (potentially) employ staff
- Strengthen NASACRE's ability to apply for (and win!) grants/bids
- Meet the conditions of the bank for a bank account
- Protect the Executive and manage their liability as individuals

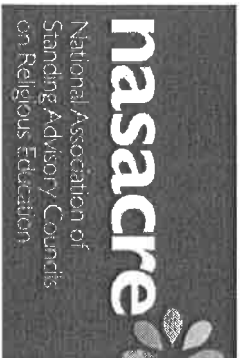


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## What do we need?

The Charity Commission requires NASACRE to provide:

- Evidence of authorisation/approval to use the name
- Appropriate charitable aim(s)
- An appropriate constitution/governing document

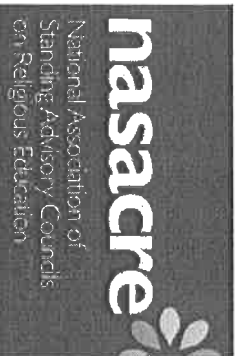


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## The Draft Constitution

- NASACRE's current constitution (set in 2023) is 2 pages long
- The Draft Constitution, developed from the Charity Commission's own template) is nearly 28 pages long!
- Some of the major changes are summarised in the supporting paper

It is a *DRAFT* Constitution – nothing has been finalised yet



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## **NASACRE Mission**

The NASACRE Mission (Objects) is proposed as:

- a) The Charitable Purpose of strengthening and supporting all local SACRES across England in their duties including any future duties that might be required of SACRES following a change in the law.
- b) The Advancement of Education (the subject of Religious Education) through strengthening and supporting all local SACRES across England in their duties, including but not limited to providing
  - i) services, education, advice, information and resources to and through local SACRES
  - ii) workshops, conferences, seminars and/or lectures to and through local

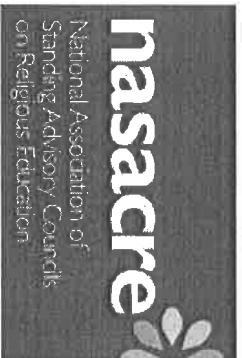


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## **NASACRE Membership**

The Draft Constitution allows:

- any English SACRE that has paid subscription to be a Member, with full voting/nominating rights
- the Board of Trustees to establish other (non-voting) forms of Associate Membership

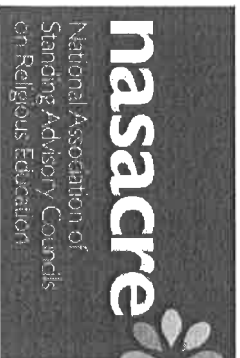


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## NASACRE Mechanisms

The Draft Constitution sets out lots of mechanisms for how NASACRE will run as a charity, including:

- Nominating, voting for and getting rid of Trustees
- Trustee numbers and Terms of Service
- How General Meetings are called and run
- How to manage assets if the charity is wound up

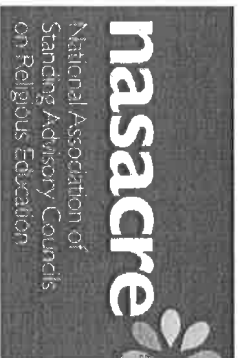


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## **NASACRE – What’s Next?**

The process is:

- Member consultation and feedback from now to the end of June
- Consultation/feedback review by Working Group
- Redraft and Final Draft Constitution review by Executive
- Final Draft Constitution legal review
- Charity registration application, hopefully by September!



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## **NASACRE Member Consultation and Feedback**

Please send your comments and questions to:

Mike McMaster – Barnabas Consulting  
[mike@barnabasconsulting.co.uk](mailto:mike@barnabasconsulting.co.uk)

By Friday 28<sup>th</sup> June 2024

Please be precise in your comments/feedback and, wherever possible, reference specific pages/sections of the Draft Constitution.



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**Significant Changes from the NASACRE Constitution 2023  
to the Proposed CIO Constitution**

In 2023 the Executive applied for CIO status and submitted a short (2 page) Constitution to support that application.

In 2024 the Executive requested that Barnabas Consulting produce a revised Constitution to support a fresh CIO application.

The revised document is almost entirely based on the Charity Commission’s own template Constitution for a small charity. Barnabas Consulting has adapted the template to fit NASACRE’s original proposal wherever possible.

The new Proposed CIO Constitution is nearly 30 pages long as it has to use specific and legal language and definitions for key governance processes. Much of this detail does not change NASACRE’s original approach in significant ways. However, there are a few areas where the new Proposed CIO Constitution is significantly different:

	<b>2023 Constitution</b>	<b>Proposed CIO Constitution</b>	<b>Comments</b>
1	2: Mission	3: Objects	The first statement/object is effectively the same.  The second statement (representation and celebration of SACREs) has been removed.
2	3: Membership and Duties - Membership	9: Membership of the CIO	Proposed CIO Constitution allows that any English SACRE can be a member (if they have paid their subscription!)  Proposed CIO Constitution also allows the Trustees to create other (non-voting) forms of Associate Membership, but it does not define them.
3	3: Membership and Duties - Constitution changes	28: Amendment of Constitution	Proposed CIO Constitution increases the requirement to 75% of votes cast at a General Meeting for a Constitution change.
4	4: Honorary Officers - titles	12: Charity Trustees	Proposed CIO Constitution does not define multiple officer posts. However, it does allow the trustees to create such roles.

5	4: Honorary Officers - terms	13: Appointment of trustees  16: Reappointment of trustees	Proposed CIO Constitution (with 1/3 <sup>rd</sup> of trustees stepping down at each AGM) effectively has a 3-year maximum term of service for a trustee, and a maximum of 3 consecutive terms before they must break for at least 1 year.  This would allow the trustees to operate the “rolling” officer roles (as per the 2023 Constitution) but does not define/require it in the Proposed CIO Constitution.
6	4: Honorary Officers - absence	15: Retirement and removal of trustees	2023 Constitution has absence from 3 consecutive committee meetings as deemed relinquishing of office.  Proposed CIO Constitution has absence from all meetings in a 6-month period.
7	5: the Executive Committee - numbers	12: Charity Trustees	Proposed CIO Constitution requires minimum 3 trustees, maximum 12. Also the terms “Executive” and Honorary Officer are not in the Proposed CIO Constitution. The governing body is the Board of Trustees.
8	5: the Executive Committee - other roles	12: Charity Trustees	The 2023 Constitution defines other roles such as Communications Officer, Conference Organiser etc.  These are not defined in the Proposed CIO Constitution, but the trustees have the power to create them as they choose.
9	7: winding up	29: Voluntary winding up or dissolution	The 2023 Constitution requires assets to be distributed to SACREs.  The Proposed CIO Constitution requires the assets to be distributed according to the CIO’s charitable objects.





# Deep and meaningful? The religious education subject report

## Main findings

The RE curriculum often lacked sufficient substance to prepare pupils to live in a complex world. The RE content selected rarely was collectively enough to ensure that pupils were well prepared to engage in a multi-religious and multi-secular society.

A superficially broad curriculum does not always provide pupils with the depth of knowledge they require for future study. In most cases, where the curriculum tried to cover many religions, like equal slices of a pie, pupils generally remembered very little. In cases where the curriculum prioritised depth of study, pupils learned much more.

The RE curriculum rarely enabled pupils to systematically build disciplinary knowledge or personal knowledge.

The content of some secondary curriculums was restricted by what teachers considered pupils needed to know for public examinations at the end of key stage 4. In a significant number of cases, teachers taught examination skills too prematurely. This significantly limited the range and types of RE content taught.

In the secondary phase, most statutory non-examined RE was limited and of a poor quality. A notable proportion of schools did not meet the statutory requirement to teach RE to pupils at all stages of their schooling.

Where RE was weaker, the knowledge of traditions specified for pupils to learn was overly and uncritically compartmentalised. Sometimes, pupils were presented with over-simplistic assertions about religious traditions, which were often based on visible entities, such as places of worship.

What schools taught was rarely enough for pupils to make sense of religious and non-religious traditions as they appear around the world. Curriculums did not identify clearly the suitable mix of content that would enable pupils to achieve this.

There was a profound misconception among some leaders and teachers that 'teaching from a neutral stance' equates to teaching a non-religious worldview. This is simply not the case.

In some schools, leaders were rightly focusing on developing the curriculum before considering assessment. However, even when leaders had systems of assessment in place, these rarely gave them the requisite

assurance that pupils were learning and remembering more and increasingly complex content over time.

Long gaps between lessons hindered pupils' recall. When the timetable was organised so that pupils had regular RE lessons, they remembered more.

Although a few teachers had received subject-based professional development in RE, the overwhelming majority had not. Given the complexity of the subject and the kind of misconceptions that pupils were left with, this is a significant concern.

## **Recommendations**

### **Curriculum**

Schools should:

- ensure that there is a distinct curriculum in place for teaching RE at all key stages. They should make sure that this is rigorous and challenging and that it demonstrably builds on what pupils already know
- carefully select the knowledge they expect pupils to gain to make sense of a complex and diverse world. They should make sure that important content and concepts are clearly identified and sequenced. They should also make sure that curriculums do not contain oversimplifications of traditions, including, where appropriate, non-religious traditions
- balance the breadth and depth of study of religious and non-religious traditions to ensure that these are collectively enough for pupils to make sense of a complex world
- ensure that all pupils have the opportunity to deepen their knowledge in RE over time. Leaders in secondary schools should make sure that the curriculum is designed to meet or exceed exam board specifications (rather than being driven by them)
- make sure that curriculums clearly identify how pupils will develop disciplinary and personal knowledge through the chosen substantive content

### **Teaching and assessment**

Schools should:

- be ambitious for pupils to develop all aspects of knowledge: substantive, ways of knowing and personal knowledge. They should make sure that teachers have high expectations of what pupils will know and remember

- provide opportunities for pupils to review and build on important knowledge over time. They should make sure that pupils use the knowledge that they gained in previous years as the curriculum becomes increasingly more complex and demanding
- ensure that teaching specifically develops pupils' knowledge of the complexity of religious and non-religious traditions
- develop manageable assessment methods that move beyond the simple recall of factual information. They should check that pupils recall and understand the intended curriculum over time and that the domain of their knowledge is expanding

## **Systems at subject and school level**

Schools should:

- ensure that all teachers have the subject and pedagogical knowledge that they need to teach RE well
- check that the time allocated for teaching RE at all key stages is used effectively so that pupils learn a curriculum that is both broad and deep
- organise the timetable for RE so that gaps between teaching are minimised
- ensure that the curriculum for statutory non-examined RE at key stages 4 and 5 is ambitious and consistently implemented. They should make sure that the RE content is clearly identified and builds on what pupils have learned at key stage 3

## **Recommendations for others**

- The government should urgently update guidance for schools about its statutory expectations for RE. The government should also ensure that there is appropriate clarity about what is taught in RE, and when and where it is taught, for those schools where Ofsted inspects the subject. This would help schools and, particularly, leaders and teachers of RE.
- Those involved in writing syllabuses and commercial curriculums should make sure that these enable pupils to build deep knowledge of the chosen religious and non-religious traditions. They should make sure that curriculums identify what pupils should learn and when. They should ensure that it is clear to teachers when pupils will revisit and review important content and concepts.
- Those involved in commissioning and organising professional development should increase access to, and the range of, training available to all leaders and teachers, to improve their subject knowledge.
- Those involved in training teachers and early career professional development should prioritise helping trainee teachers and those who are newer to the profession to gain the subject knowledge that they need.
- Exam boards should recognise that the way in which schools use exam-style questions is not always appropriate. They should make sure that their communication with schools reflects this.

## Schools Week Summary

Ofsted said a “notable” number of schools are still not meeting the legal requirement to teach religious education to all pupils, and has told government to “urgently” update guidance.

The watchdog today published its latest subject report, looking at the strengths and weakness of how RE is taught in schools in England.

It found the RE curriculum in schools is often “superficially broad”, but lacking in depth. “Problems and challenges facing RE persist” 10 years on from Ofsted’s last such report, they added.

Sir Martyn Oliver, Ofsted’s chief inspector, said a “strong RE curriculum is not only important for pupils’ cultural development, it is a requirement of law and too many schools are not meeting that obligation”.

“I hope that the examples of good RE curriculum in our report help schools develop their own practice and support the development of a strong RE curriculum for all,” he added.

The report is based on Ofsted’s findings from visits to 50 schools in England between September 2021 and April 2023.

Here is your trusty *Schools Week* speed read of the key findings...

### **1. DfE should ‘urgently’ update guidance**

Ofsted found a “notable proportion of schools did not meet the statutory requirement to teach RE to pupils at all stages of their schooling”.

In secondary schools, it said “most statutory non-examined RE was limited and of a poor quality”.

It recommended ministers “urgently” update guidance for schools about its statutory expectations for RE, to ensure “appropriate clarity” about what is taught and when and where this happens. It said this would help school leaders and teachers of RE.

Schools should ensure the curriculum for statutory non-examined RE at key stages 4 and five is “ambitiously and consistently implemented”.

They should also make sure there is a “a distinct curriculum in place for teaching RE at all key stages” which is “rigorous and challenging”.

The DfE has been approached for comment.

## **2. ‘Curriculum substance insufficient for complex world’**

The RE curriculum “often lacked sufficient substance to prepare pupils to live in a complex world” and the “superficially broad curriculum” often lacked depth, Ofsted said.

It noted that, in most cases, “where the curriculum tried to cover many religions, like equal slices of a pie, pupils generally remembered very little”. Whereas “where the curriculum prioritised depth of study, pupils learned much more”.

Schools should carefully select the knowledge they expect pupils to gain to make sense of the world, such as by ensuring “balance the breadth and depth of study of religious and non-religious traditions “.

Ofsted found the RE curriculum “rarely enabled pupils to systematically” build knowledge. It said they should have opportunities to review and build on important knowledge over time.

## **3. Pupils taught exam skills ‘too prematurely’**

The content of some secondary curriculums was “restricted” by what teachers thought pupils needed to know for exams at the end of key stage 4, Ofsted said.

In a “significant number of cases” teachers taught exams skills “too prematurely”, which “significantly limited the range and types of RE content taught”, it added.

Secondary school leaders should make sure the curriculum is “designed to meet or exceed exam board specifications (rather than being driven by them)”.

Schools should also “develop manageable assessment methods that move beyond the simple recall of factual information”.

## **4. Long gaps between lessons hindered recall**

Ofsted also said “long gaps between lessons hindered pupils’ recall” and that pupils remembered more when they had regular lessons.

Schools should organise the timetable for RE so that gaps between teaching are minimised, it said.

## **5. Teachers need professional development**

The “overwhelming majority” of teachers had not received subject-based professional development in RE, Ofsted said.

“Given the complexity of the subject and the kind of misconceptions that pupils were left with, this is a significant concern,” it added.

Schools should ensure all teachers have the subject and pedagogical knowledge that they need to teach RE well, and ensure the time allocated is used effectively, it urged.

Ofsted said those commissioning and organising professional development should “increase access to, and the range of, training available to all leaders and teachers”.

It comes after the inspectorate published its subject report for English last month.

**NASACRE** welcomes the Ofsted subject report [\*Deep and meaningful RE?\*](#) (published Wednesday 17 April 2024). We are interested to note that the report highlights issues that NASACRE, along with other RE bodies, have raised for some time with government. The report contains many helpful messages & recommendations for NASACRE to use in its work with SACREs.

For example, the report will support SACREs to:

- be able to provide relevant and effective advice to their LA around the provision and quality of teaching of RE in local settings
- engage with those who can endeavour to ensure there is sufficient funding available to support RE locally
- work with senior leaders and governors in schools to support high quality RE
- work alongside schools to improve professional development for practitioners, so they can improve their subject knowledge, pedagogical practice and confidence in teaching RE
- support schools in being able to plan an ambitious, broad and balanced curriculum for RE, focusing on depth of understanding rather than broad superficial knowledge.

We agree with Ofsted that the government should ‘urgently’ update guidance for RE and we will continue to work with the DfE to raise NASACRE’s concerns around this. We also look forward to furthering our work with Ofsted, to ensure that schools provide high quality ‘deep and meaningful RE’ for all pupils.

We will also work with our RE partners to ensure that this report has a positive impact in schools. We agree with NATRE’s hope, that from this report, *“OFSTED will take responsibility for its role and there will be considerably more deep dives into RE during the ordinary inspection process.”*

As a national association, we will be looking to work with SACREs through our webinar programme over the next twelve months to explore how this report can be used effectively in the local context.

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**SACRE MEMBERS' ATTENDANCE RECORD 2023/24**

<b>Member</b>	<b>Representing</b>	<b>04.07.23</b>	<b>02.10.23</b>	<b>06.03.24</b>
Sue Elbrow	The Free Churches	P	P	P
Zubayr Abbas-Bowkan	Islam	Ap	Ap	Ap
Waqar Bhatti	Islam	Ab	P	Ab
Shujah Hamid	Islam	Ab	Ab	
Momade Faizal	Islam	P	Ab	P
Karen Appleby	Judaism	Ap	Ap	Ap
Hardip Singh Sohal	Sikhism	*P	Ap	Ap
Ashpreet Singh Nainu	Sikhism	P	P	P
Rev Gordon Briggs	The Church of England	Ap	P	P
Christine Isles	The Church of England	P	P	P
Andrea Sparrow	The Church of England	P	P	P
Munsoor Malik	Primary	P	Ab	P
Priya Lamba	Primary	P	Ap	P
Ian Sharpe	Secondary	Ap	P	Ap
Nagina Ali	Secondary	P	Ap	Ap
Robin Launder	Co-opted - Humanism	P	Ap	Ab
Councillor E Ahmed	Slough Borough Council	P	P	P
Councillor Akram	Slough Borough Council	P	Ab	P
Councillor Instone	Slough Borough Council	P	P	P
Councillor Khawar	Slough Borough Council	P	Ab	P
Councillor Mohindra	Slough Borough Council	P	P	P
Councillor Naveed	Slough Borough Council	P	Ap	Ab
David Rees	Professional Adviser	P	P	P

P = Present for whole meeting  
Ap = Apologies given

\*P = Present for part of meeting  
Ab = Absent, no apologies given

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