
DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education

2024 - 2025

FINAL

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Foreword

It is a pleasure to present the Derbyshire SACRE Annual Report for 2024–2025, covering the period 1 September 2024 to 31 August 2025. This report sets out, clearly and transparently, how SACRE has carried out its statutory responsibilities to advise Derbyshire County Council on Religious Education (RE) and collective worship, and how we have supported schools to deliver RE that is rigorous, inclusive and educationally meaningful.

SACRE exists because good RE matters. Done well, it helps young people to make sense of the world they live in: to understand lived religion and belief, to think carefully, to discuss respectfully, and to develop the knowledge and vocabulary needed to engage with difference without fear or caricature. In a county as varied as Derbyshire, that contribution is not an “extra” — it is part of what prepares pupils for adult life.

During 2024–2025, SACRE met formally on two occasions at County Hall, Matlock (11 November 2024 and 17 March 2025). I want to record my sincere thanks to all members across the four committees — faith and belief representatives, education colleagues, our co-opted members and fellow county councilors — for the professionalism and goodwill shown throughout the year.

SACRE’s strength is always in the seriousness of its members: people with different convictions, working together in the public interest.

Our principal achievement this year has been the revision and launch of the Derbyshire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education, providing the legal basis for RE in maintained schools (and for academies that choose to adopt it) from September 2025 to August 2030. The syllabus launch events at County Hall on 19, 20 and 27 June 2025 were attended by nearly 300 schools, and were led by RE Today advisers Ian Nicholson and Debbie Yeomans, with SACRE members present alongside colleagues from primary, secondary and SEND settings. Importantly, a recorded briefing on the legal requirements of the new syllabus was also produced so that schools unable to attend still have direct access to accurate guidance.

We have also continued to take account of national evidence on the quality of RE, including the themes raised in Ofsted’s *Deep and meaningful?* subject report (published April 2024), and the wider work on curriculum quality and teacher support. The new syllabus strengthens progression in both disciplinary skills and substantive knowledge, with a clear expectation that RE should be well-planned, well-taught and properly valued within a school’s curriculum.

In addition, Derbyshire County Council has made available online training materials and downloadable resources to support schools in planning and delivering the agreed syllabus, including materials linked to the Ofsted Research Review and the forms of knowledge within the syllabus framework. This kind of practical support matters: it turns a published document into classroom confidence.

I am grateful to Derbyshire County Council for the funding and wider support that enables SACRE to discharge its responsibilities. I also wish to recognise the vital contribution of officers who provide professional and administrative support to SACRE — in particular Catherine Harris in the Education Improvement Service — and to note again our appreciation for the longstanding work of Steve Ford, who retired in April 2024.

Finally, I want to place on record my personal thanks to Ivan Walters for 42 years of service and for his outstanding public service to Derbyshire County Council. Commitment of that length is rare, and it speaks to a career defined by duty, consistency and a deep care for the communities we serve.

As Chair, my priority is simple: to ensure SACRE remains a constructive, evidence-led partner to schools and the local authority, focused on standards, lawful practice, and the real educational experience of Derbyshire pupils. I commend this report to you and thank all those who contributed to the work it records.



Cllr Jason Isherwood

Chair, Derbyshire Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE).

Overview of the work of SACRE

Since 1988, each Local Authority (LA) has been required by law to have a Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE).

The remit of a SACRE is principally to oversee the Religious Education (RE) and collective worship within the authority principally to:

- advise Derbyshire County Council upon matters connected with Religious Education and Collective Worship in community schools and in foundation schools which do not have a religious character. Religious Education in these schools is to be given in accordance with the Agreed Syllabus;
- advise Derbyshire County Council on teaching methods, choice of materials and teacher training in Religious Education and Collective Worship;
- require Derbyshire County Council to review the locally agreed syllabus for religious education at least every five years.

The reporting period of the 2024 - 2025 report starts from September 1st 2024 and runs to August 31st 2025.

SACRE met on two occasions during the academic year 2024 – 2025.

11th November 2024 – Face to Face meeting at County Hall, Matlock, Derbyshire
17th March 2025 – Face to Face meeting at County Hall, Matlock, Derbyshire

All meetings were quorate and minutes for these meetings are available on the Derbyshire County Council website (these can be found at [Committee details - Standing Advisory Committee for Religious Education - Derbyshire County Council](#)).

Standing items in meetings:

Apologies for absence

New or substitute members

Minutes of previous meeting and matters arising

11th November 2024

Revision of the Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education SACRE development

Co-opted membership

17th March 2025

CAFOD presentation

Annual Report

Section 2: Religious Education

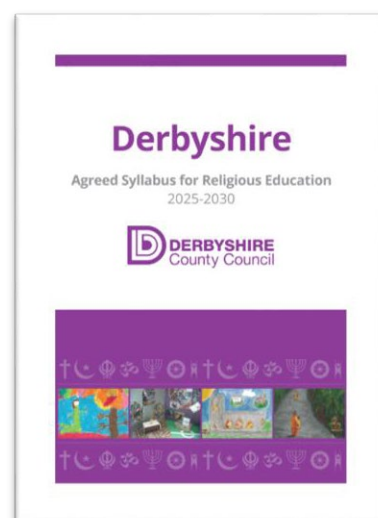
The Locally Agreed Syllabus and RE in schools

RE is not part of the national curriculum. Each LA is required to produce an Agreed Syllabus for RE. Each LA is required to begin reviewing the current Agreed Syllabus within five years of its production.

The launch of the Derbyshire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education was held at County Hall, Matlock on 19th June 2025, 20th June 2025 and 27th June 2025. The Agreed Syllabus provides the legal basis for religious education in maintained schools and academies choosing to use it as the basis for the RE curriculum from September 2025 to August 2030.

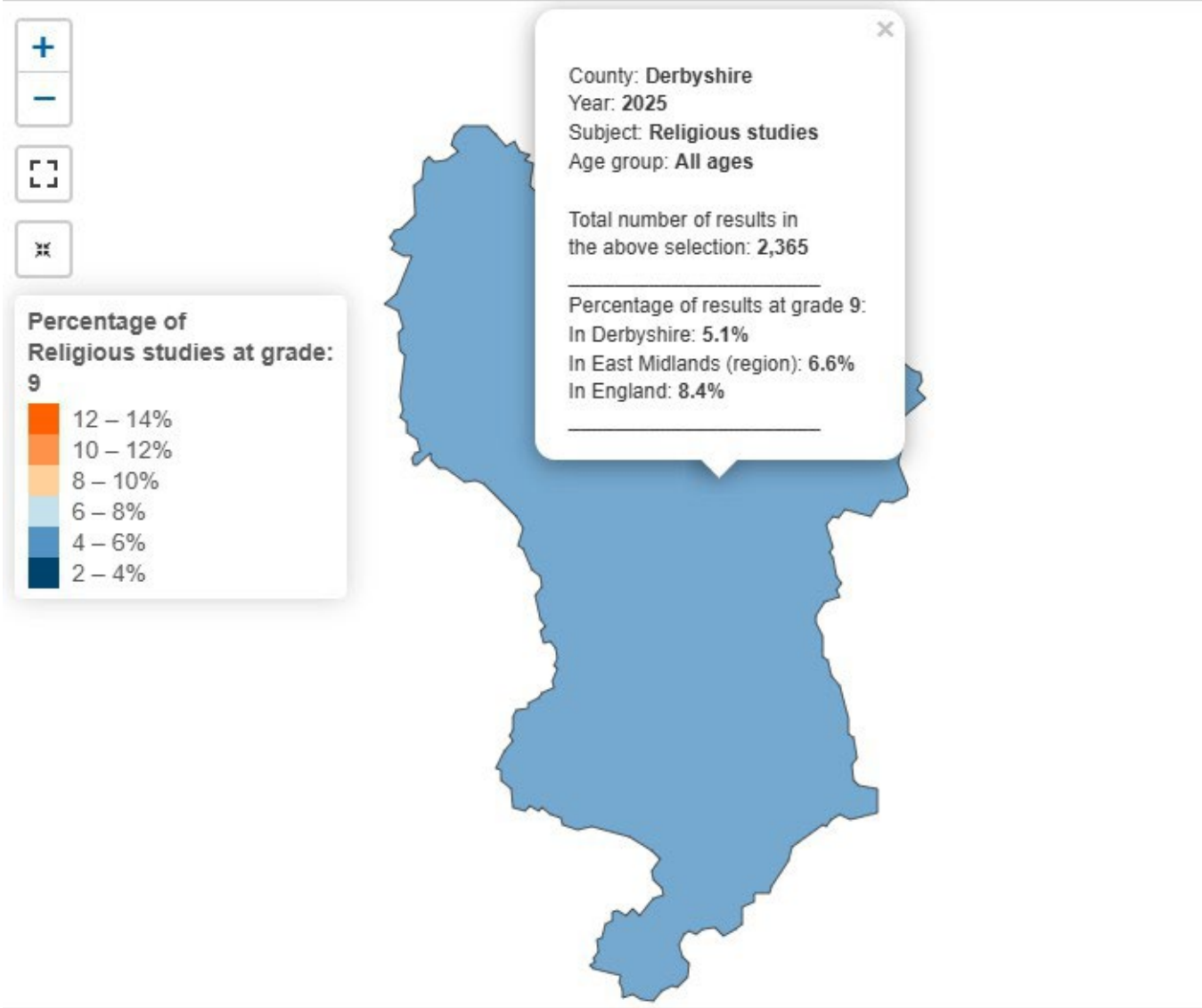
The syllabus launches were attended by nearly 300 schools from across Derbyshire and were led by Ian Nicholson, National RE Adviser for RE Today and Debbie Yeomans, National RE Adviser for RE Today. A recording relating to the legal requirements within the new syllabus was also produced for schools who were unable to attend the event.

Members of the Derbyshire SACRE attended the event alongside teachers from primary and secondary schools as well as SEND provision.



Standards and monitoring of RE

At present, the results from 2025 are unvalidated. Please see appendix A for the unvalidated results from the examination cycle in the Summer of 2025.



Derbyshire County Council validated GCSE RS data 2024

GCSE Grade	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	U	X	Total RS Entries	%4-9	%5-9	Total Pupils at end of KS4	Total not entered
Derbyshire Mainstream Settings	95	144	212	134	170	196	133	106	61	39	7	1297	61.7%	51.3%	8064	6767
England All Schools	10896	17990	28429	23589	31387	37201	27235	24370	18154	4301	1379	224933	72.0%	61.5%		

Derbyshire County Council validated A level RS data 2024

DFE No	A Level Grade								Total RS Entries	%A*-A	%A*-C	Total A Level Students
	A*	A	B	C	D	E	U	X				
Derbyshire LA	3	10	24	27	14	14	2	1	95	13.7%	67.4%	2242
England All students	907	2893	4159	3397	2014	839	268		14552	26.1%	78.0%	
England All state-funded students	526	2039	3367	3018	1890	796	263		11963	21.4%	74.8%	

Teacher training materials and advice for schools

Derbyshire County Council have provided online video training materials for schools to use when planning and delivering the Derbyshire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education. There are also downloadable materials available to schools with respect to the Ofsted Research Review 2021, the Deep and Meaningful Report 2024 and the forms of knowledge in the agreed syllabus.

Other information

There were no formal complaints to SACRE about RE during the year.

Advice given to the Local Authority

No advice was given to the local authority during the period of this report.

Section 3: Collective worship

Standards and monitoring of Collective Worship

No training or support was provided to schools in Derbyshire with relation to Collective Worship during the period covered by this report.

Determinations

No determinations were requested during the period covered by this report.

Other information

There were no formal complaints to SACRE about collective worship during the year.

Advice to the Local Authority

No advice was given to the local authority during the period covered by this report.

Section 4: Links with other bodies

National Bodies

Derbyshire County Council SACRE are pleased to be linked with national bodies and has received support from Ian Nicholson, RE Today National Adviser.

Local bodies

Derby Diocese provide excellent support to SACRE and we are pleased to have its Acting Director of Education as a member of committee B.

Local places of worship are well represented on SACRE.

Section 5: SACRE involvement in the Local Area

Governor and head teacher links

All materials relating to the work of the SACRE are available to all relevant parties through the Derbyshire County Council web site.

Advice on community issues

RE Hubs for the East Midlands regularly gives advice on speakers coming into schools and visits to places of worship locally.

Section 6: Managing the SACRE and partnership with the Local Authority (LA)

Professional and administrative support

Catherine Harris, Senior Adviser for School Improvement from The Education Improvement Service holds responsibility for SACRE support.

Membership

The table provided below demonstrates the attendance at SACRE meetings during the period covered by this report.

	11 th November 2024	17 th March 2025
Committee A	N Feldman	N Feldman N Hoskin Stone I Newberry L Whitney
Committee B	N O'Callaghan	N O'Callaghan L Seymour
Committee C	D Hammond P Monk D Wells	P Monk
Committee D	Councillor J Bryan Councillor C Dale Councillor R Flatley (Chair) Councillor S Swann	Councillor J Bryan Councillor C Dale Councillor R Flatley (Chair) Councillor S Swann
Co-opted		G Waker
In attendance	C Harris M Sharma I Walters	
Apologies	D Allen N Hoskin Stone I Newberry A Rehman L Seymour L Whitney	D Allen D Hammond A Howes A Rehman

Finance

The LA allocated funding for support to SACRE. It should be noted that the Local Authority spent more widely on Religious Education during the reporting period with money being allocated to the launch of the Derbyshire Agreed Syllabus for RE.

Appendix A:

Unvalidated Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5 Exam Data, Summer 2025 GCSE

GCSE Grade	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	U	X	Covid Impacted	Total RS Entries	%4-9	%5-9	Total Pupils at end of KS4	Total not entered
Derbyshire Mainstream Settings	105	130	166	118	160	214	144	116	74	24	0	0	1251	66.0%	56.6%	7833	6582
England All Schools	10877	17193	26215	23612	30457	35806	27322	22780	18398	4525	1451	1	218637	72.4%	61.6%		

A level

A Level Grade	A*	A	B	C	D	E	U	X	Total RS Entries	%A*-A	%A*-C	Total A Level Students
Derbyshire LA	3	11	29	22	13	8	1	0	87	16.1%	74.7%	2208
England All students	888	2822	4287	3378	1779	679	215	1	14049	26.4%	81.0%	
England All state-funded students	524	2020	3568	3079	1659	646	210	1	11707	21.7%	78.5%	

Appendix B:

Circulation of the Annual Report

The Derbyshire County Council Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education Annual Report will be:

- Provided, via e-mail, to all SACRE Members
- Provided, via e-mail, to the Department for Education
- Provided, via e-mail, to NASACRE
- Published on the Local Authority website