

Derbyshire and Derby City SACREs' Report 2022

Introduction:

Message from the Chairs of Derbyshire and Derby City SACRE

This has been an extremely challenging time for all colleagues working in educational settings throughout Derbyshire and Derby City. The Derbyshire and Derby City SACREs (DDCSs) would like to express their appreciation to all colleagues for their efforts to sustain a good quality of education during and beyond the pandemic period.

The Derbyshire and Derby City SACREs have also been busy during this period. The Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education 2020-2025 was produced and successfully launched, acknowledging that the study of religious and non-religious worldviews is a core component of a rounded academic education. The syllabus also acknowledged that young people today are growing up in a world where there is an increasing awareness of the diversity of religious and non-religious worldviews, and they will need to live and work well with people with different outlooks from their own. Therefore, the Derbyshire and Derby City Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education needed to explore the important role that religious and non-religious worldviews played in all human life. This was identified as an essential area if pupils were to be well prepared for life where a world controversy over such matters is pervasive and where many people feel they lack the knowledge to make informed decisions.

The Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education was successfully launched in 2020 and was accompanied by a series of launch events, to which all schools were invited. As a result, over 400 teachers of RE have been trained on using the syllabus. Overall, teachers graded the launch: 94% very good and 5% good. As well as further details of the training programme contained within this report, more detailed case studies from three schools illustrate the importance of Religious Education and the broader focus upon pupils' Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development, both during and beyond the Covid period.

Both SACREs have also been keen to acknowledge the contribution made by the Open Centre, Derby, established in 1981 to promote understanding between different communities by celebrating and raising awareness of their faith and cultural heritage through personal experience. DDCSs continue to support the work of the Open Centre and look forward to the expanding role based upon its new online services.

The DDCSs would also like to acknowledge and support the work being undertaken with regard to the Journeys of Destiny and Destinies initiatives, which in March 2021 were awarded the Children and Young Peoples Arts and Cultural Award. In May 2021, the project was also invited to an online celebration of Amnesty International's 60th year and Social Justice Festival.

Both DDCSs have both welcomed and responded to the ministerial statement made by Robin Walker, Minister of State for School Standards, on the 9 November 2021 in response to a question from Kim Ledbetter, MP. Robin Walker stated that the government firmly believed that religious education (RE) was important. Good quality RE was essential in developing children's knowledge of British Values and traditions and those of other countries. RE was also a vital part of fostering understanding of different faiths and beliefs, which is why it remains a compulsory subject for all state funded schools up to the age of 18. SACRE members felt that this statement was to be welcomed and represents a positive step forward, with members noting the close links to other areas of the curriculum such as citizenship, history and personal, social, health and economic education.

SACRE members also noted that teachers of RE, as well as with all subjects, have been placed under immense pressure over the last few years within schools. Notably some schools have suffered from high levels of staff absences and restricted capacity due to the pandemic. These were issues that the SACREs would like the government to recognise as part of its ongoing support of the education sector. A response from the SACRE chair was duly sent to the relevant Minister. The Department for Education



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Derbyshire and Derby Agreed Syllabus launches

RE Today Services were delighted to work again with Derbyshire SACRE and for the first time with Derby SACRE to produce the 2020-2025 Joint Derbyshire and Derby Agreed Syllabus.

We planned to hold 6 or 7 face-to-face events. The training was planned, written, and delivered by Fiona Moss and Lat Blaylock from RE Today services. These day-long face to events were spread across the county to ensure they were accessible to all schools.

The first four events in February and early March 2020 were held and were a great success with over 250 delegates attending from primary and secondary schools across the city and county. Due to the Pandemic lockdown the next three events were postponed in the hope that they would be able to be held face to face. It became clear that this was not possible and so three virtual full day Syllabus launches were held in October 2020. These events were delivered by Fiona Moss and Lat Blaylock and hosted on their virtual training platform. More than 100 delegates attended these three events, and a recording of the event was provided to some other schools who were unable to attend.

In total over face to face, virtual and recordings of the training almost 400 teachers of RE have been trained on using the syllabus. Overall teachers graded the launch 94% very good and 5% good.

Comments that were typical, included:

Brilliant training, really useful and well structured. Very inspiring x

Thank you for today, it has been really useful and given me lots of ideas to take back into school. Thanks again :-)

I liked the interactive sharing of resources and demonstration of how these could be applied in the classroom. The delivery of information from Lat and Fiona

Thank you so much for a productive and informative day!

Thank you, you've both been fab!



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Case Study 3: Dale Community Primary School

Dale Community Primary School is a large three-form entry school of around 550 pupils. The school stands on the edge of the Derby city centre in the area which sits within the highest 20% nationally for deprivation. The intake is predominantly from a Pakistani Muslim heritage but there are an increasing number of Eastern European families arriving in the area.

As our school is becoming more diverse the importance of developing an understanding of different religions and cultures is growing. Using the new RE syllabus we have chosen to concentrate on Christianity, Hinduism and Judaism. The syllabus enables children to learn about these religions in depth and they are then encouraged to compare religious or cultural practices with their own lives so that they can develop an understanding that different people have very different lives, beliefs, practices and ideas.

We have close links with local places of worship and children regularly visit the local Gurdwara, Mandir and Church. Worship leaders from these places of worship also visit the school. We have found we have a fantastic resource in our own staff who follow many different religions. Children are able to talk to them about their beliefs and how they worship and celebrate. We have close links with local mosques and sometimes ask that they reinforce important messages, for instance about tolerance and respect for others.

Our older children also study Humanism which gives them the opportunity to extend their world view even further. Children enjoy RE lessons and the knowledge that they gain helps Dale to be a thriving multicultural, multi-faith school where children play and learn happily together.



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The Open Centre, Derby – the 2022 update!



The Open Centre, Derby was established in 1981 to promote understanding between different communities by celebrating and raising awareness of their faith and cultural heritage through personal experience. The Open Centre works closely with many different communities, faith organisations and places of worship as well as representatives of secular organisations; however the Open Centre is not a religiously based organisation and has no affiliation to any specific faith-based groups.

Pre COVID over 10,000 school children and adults from across the East Midlands visited the Open Centre each year to enjoy the signature **visits to different places of worship** and **hands-on workshops about various cultural and religious practice**. Open Centre staff also go out to schools and groups to deliver workshops. Face to face work began again as soon as was possible and these are again popular options for schools that can and want to travel.

A bonus of the hiatus is that, in the meantime, the Open Centre has expanded its services, online, to meet a need that is further afield, for schools and groups across the East Midlands and beyond.

The Open Centre's new **online services** include a subscription service for our Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 users (Key Stage 3 coming soon) which contains over 50 tailored videos with differentiated accompanying activities based on five different faiths told through the perspectives of our staff. In addition to this we have an additional **video service** of "**Spotlight On**" clips when members of a faith (usually staff members) talk personally about different aspects of their beliefs. This can be taken further with the "**Question Time**" clips, unique and personalised, that are actually prepared to respond to questions submitted from the client, thus enabling the closest possible engagement, short of actual 'face to face.' These videos, which are of about 10-minute length, are a real gift for teachers who want to engage learners in active enquiry.

The Open Centre is a registered charity, once but no longer grant funded, prides itself on providing contemporary services that are excellent value, high quality and responsive to need. The on-line resources are proving a popular addition to the existing and well sought-after range of services.

Further information is available on the [Derby Open Centre website](#).



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Journeys of Destiny and Destinies

Destinies was a co-created theatre piece with young people with care experience and unaccompanied asylum seekers in partnership with Derbyshire Virtual School, Sinfonia Viva and Orchestra Live. Young people developed characters, songs, musical composition, animation and performance skills.



Destinies started rehearsals in 2019 and was originally planned to be a rehearsed play reading for April 2020 with a subsequent tour of schools based on **Journeys of Destiny (JoD)** model. The piece would explore themes of emotional resilience and the challenges/experience of making new friends in a host community. When COVID-19 happened we had to change our plans.

March 2021

Journeys of Destiny and **Destinies** – companion pieces – were awarded Children & Young People Now Arts and Culture Award.

May 2021

Amnesty International (Wirksworth) asked us to contribute to an on-line celebration of Amnesty's 60th year & Social Justice Festival. It was also the 10th year of the Syrian war, and we filmed an interview with Saad AlKassab – whose story was at the heart of JoD. This interview can be viewed from 30 minutes into the footage available on [YouTube](#).

November 2021

Two years later **Destinies** culminated in a filmed theatre production which was screened at Derby Theatre as part of Culture Cares conference – a national conference bringing together leading practitioners, artists and young people with care experience. Many of the young people had gained significant opportunities to develop new skills, grow in confidence but most importantly made new friendships and felt connection. The film has not been released to a wider public audience yet. All the work has been funded by the Arts Council and supported by Derbyshire Virtual School via their Creative Mentors scheme.



Due to a lack of ongoing funding, there are currently no plans to re-tour **Journeys of Destiny** into schools. Ava Hunt Theatre (AHT) continues to work with young people using drama as a pedagogy delivering workshops that explore values and citizenship in Adult Education centres across the county. We developed these workshops with Sally Siner (Prevent Officer for Derby City).

AHT remains open to discussion about how we might fund and continue to use live theatre/drama or our digital theatre resources (as detailed above) to work in schools and further support to the aims and objectives of the Derbyshire and Derby City SACREs.



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Future training proposals from Derbyshire and Derby SACREs 2022-2023

Help I'm the RE subject leader: Primary

1 day: can be provided as a face-to-face event or a virtual event.

This course is ideal for new subject leaders and will take place face-to-face / online. If you have been an RE subject leader for a while and have not attended similar training, you will also find this useful. This gives great support to a new subject leader in a community or a church school during their early days of leading the subject

The three sessions during the day will provide you with the knowledge and confidence to be an effective and inspirational RE subject leader in the primary school. Explore the role of the subject leader, using practical activities to develop your understanding of RE and your leadership and management skills. Focus on creative task setting, planning a scheme of work using your locally agreed syllabus, and effective and manageable monitoring and self-evaluation.

Leading:

- Understanding of the statutory requirements for RE
- The role of the subject leader
- What is RE for? Exploring the aims and purposes of RE
- RE in your school – activities to share with colleagues

Enthuse, empower and inspire:

- Creative and effective task setting in RE
- Activities for children from 4-11 that will challenge, inspire and inform

RE and the curriculum Knowing where you're going:

- Effective and manageable monitoring and evaluation
- Bringing about necessary change.

RE in the Early Years

1 day or half a day: this works best as a face-to-face event

How does RE fit into the new EYFS requirements?

This course will provide ideas for teaching and learning that fit with the new requirements. We will give time for practitioners to share ideas and resources. There will be suggestions of how to include story, festival art and song into RE in the reception class.

Deep diving into RE: Primary and Secondary

Ideally 2 x 2-hour online sessions with a gap task or (less ideal) 1 x 4-hour long afternoon

These sessions/this session helps teacher to consider what a good RE curriculum looks like and how to answer any questions on RE provision, quality and progression in the subject from visitors including OFSTED inspectors.

We will look carefully at the OFSTED research review and consider what that might mean for RE in our schools.

