



Rochdale SACRE Annual Report to NASACRE 2017-2018

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1. Chair's introduction and context

a) Introduction and context

Rochdale SACRE (Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education) serves a borough with a mixed faith community, with high percentages of Christian and Muslim followers, and smaller groups of Hindu, Humanist, Jewish and Mormon followers. Non-conformist Christian denominations are also well-represented (Methodist, Baptist, URC and Unitarian). Two of the Local Authority's thirteen secondary schools are Roman Catholic Voluntary-Aided schools and one is a joint Anglican/Roman Catholic Voluntary-Aided school. Eighteen of the Local Authority's sixty-eight primary schools are Church of England Voluntary-Aided schools (one of which is a joint Church of England/Methodist school) and eleven are Roman Catholic Voluntary-Aided schools.

Rochdale's history of the last few years makes it particularly important for local faith communities to be integrated and co-operative, and this is one of Rochdale SACRE's highest priorities. Rochdale SACRE has good representation from all four groups (Church of England, other faiths and denominations, teaching associations and the Local Authority) and enjoys strong links with the local Anglican community and with Rochdale Council of Mosques. There is good representation from primary and secondary sectors and Rochdale SACRE works collaboratively with neighbouring Local Authorities, particularly with Oldham SACRE and with other SACREs in the North-North-West SACRE Hub, attended by the LA representative, which meets termly.

The current Chair of SACRE is Rev Margaret Smith, Rochdale's Town Centre Chaplain, who was elected to the position of Chair of SACRE in December 2015. Gillian Rhodes (ex- School Advisor for Manchester Diocese) and Aisha Mohammad (Head of RE at Oulder Hill) left SACRE in 2017-2018. New appointments in 2017-2018 included Graham Gordon (Jewish Representative Council) and Muhammad Abdulaleem (Local Authority Equality and Community Cohesion Officer). The current Local Authority representative to SACRE is Peter Owen (School Improvement Officer, Early Help and Schools) and the current Clerk to SACRE is Ciara Foley (Local Authority Business Support).

b) Membership 2017-2018

Group A: Christian denominations other than Church of England and other religions

Rev Margaret Smith	Rochdale Town Centre Chaplain (chair)
Ghulam Rasul Shahzad	Rochdale Council of Mosques
Graham Gordon	Jewish Representative Council
Margot Reeve	Branches Christian Fellowship

Group B: Church of England

Gillian Rhodes	School Advisor for Manchester Diocese (left in July 2018)
Rev Frances Guite	St Martin's Anglican Church Castleton

Group C: Associations representing teachers

Kay Bentley	Year 4 teacher and RE Co-ordinator Smithy Bridge
Francis Farrell	Edge Hill College (Higher Education representative)
Katie Fletcher	Year 4 teacher and RE Co-ordinator St Peter's CE Primary
Clair Kitching	Year 5 teacher and RE Co-ordinator St James' CE Wardle
Jan McCabe	Year 5 teacher and RE Co-ordinator Little Heaton CE
Aisha Mohammad	Head of RE Oulder Hill Community School (left in July 2018)
Stacie Searle	Head of RE Falinge Park High School

Group D: Local Authority

Ciara Foley	Local Authority Business Support (clerk to SACRE)
Muhammad Abdulaleem	Local Authority Equality and Community Cohesion Officer
Peter Owen	School Improvement Officer (LA representative to SACRE)

2. Advice to statutory bodies

a) Local Authority

Rochdale SACRE advises Rochdale Local Authority on quality and standards of Religious Education in the schools of the borough as follows.

- i) Ofsted inspection reports on any Rochdale schools who have been inspected are read and scrutinised by the Local Authority School Improvement Team for comments on SMSC, Religious Education, collective worship, British Values, PSHCE or any comments in the Personal Development, Behaviour and Wellbeing section which may have comments of judgments relevant to Religious Education.
- ii) SIAMS (Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools) reports and Roman Catholic Diocesan reports from inspections carried out on Ofsted's behalf are read and scrutinised by the Local Authority School Improvement Team.
- iii) Pupil Outcomes in Religious Education are monitored by the Local Authority School Improvement team by considering the outcomes for GCSE Religious Education when these are available, via the unvalidated Secondary ASP (Analyse School Performance) in December and the FFT Aspire reports on each school. The Local Authority representative on SACRE, who is also a member of the School Improvement Team, advises the Local Authority on SACRE's behalf (as well as reporting to SACRE on the Local Authority's behalf regarding GCSE results in Religious Education in Rochdale's Secondary Schools).
- iv) Any issues reported to the Local Authority regarding the Teaching, Learning and Assessment of Religious Education in Rochdale schools, whether via an Ofsted inspection or via an independent complaint, will be followed-up by a discussion between the School Improvement Team and the LA SACRE representative, who will then report to SACRE regarding any appropriate action to be taken.
- v) In his role as School Improvement Officer, the Local Authority SACRE representative regularly conducts reviews and monitoring visits at Rochdale primary and secondary schools where Safeguarding, SMSC, British Values and PSHCE are a focus. During these reviews or monitoring visits there may be a focus on the provision or teaching of Religious Education, and if there are comments on this in the written report, these will be shared with the School Improvement Team and with SACRE.
- vi) Requests from parents regarding withdrawal from Religious Education (or from schools who have received such requests) are passed to the Local Authority SACRE representative. Any such inquiries are referred to SACRE (time permitting and depending on whether there is a SACRE meeting in the period immediately following the inquiry). In dealing with any such requests, SACRE and the LA representative to SACRE provide advice and guidance to Local Authority officers as well as to the school or parents.

b) Schools

Rochdale SACRE advises Rochdale schools on quality and standards of Religious Education in the as follows.

- i) Rochdale SACRE advises Rochdale schools through the provision of a Locally Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education which was last revised in spring term 2013 for a September 2013 start. SACRE then conducted the process of sourcing a new Locally Agreed Syllabus throughout the year 2017-2018 and the new syllabus, sourced via RE Today, will be launched on 26th April 2019 at an event which will be attended by fifty-six schools.
- ii) Rochdale SACRE advises schools on the procedure whereby they should apply for a determination (which lifts the requirement for the school's worship to be 'wholly or mainly of a

Christian nature'). Rochdale SACRE provides advice and guidance about the circumstances under which a school may apply for a determination and a pro-forma for that application. The pro-forma is submitted to SACRE as that school's application for a determination and SACRE makes a decision accordingly.

- iii) Where a parent makes a request to the school to withdraw their child from Religious Education in whole or in part, or from any aspect of the school's spiritual or religious activities, schools contact Rochdale SACRE via the Local Authority representative to SACRE (who is also a School Improvement Officer). Until 2015-2016 advice and guidance was given to schools on a case-by-case basis, incorporating advice from the Local Authority, the Community Cohesion team, the Diocese and Section 71 of the *School Standards and Framework Act (1988)*. From 2017-2018 onwards SACRE is preparing a package of advice and guidance that can be provided for all schools to support them with parental requests to withdraw.
- iv) Rochdale SACRE advises Rochdale schools on the provision of Religious Education via regular teacher networks and hubs (see below) and by invitation to shared events with other SACREs and Local Authorities (predominantly Oldham). The network and hub meetings are co-ordinated by serving members of SACRE (who are also teachers in Rochdale schools) and provide bespoke training, guidance and support on the preparation, delivery and assessment of Religious Education in Primary and Secondary schools.
- v) Rochdale's Chair of SACRE, Rev Margaret Smith, undertakes an annual programme of visits to Primary and Secondary schools in Rochdale, providing bespoke advice and guidance, and taking assemblies, acts of worship and Religious Education lessons to support schools in their delivery of Religious Education.

c) Government or other statutory bodies

Rochdale SACRE has not provided any specific advice to the government, to any government bodies, or to any other statutory bodies in the academic year 2017-2018.

d) Response to the advice given

Rochdale Local Authority (School Improvement Team and Community Cohesion Officers) have responded to Rochdale SACRE's advice as follows.

- i) Rochdale Local Authority refers all requests for determination and all school inquiries (or parental inquiries) regarding the withdrawal of children from Religious Education to Rochdale SACRE via the LA representative to SACRE and supports any advice and guidance given to schools or parents by SACRE and its representatives.
- ii) Rochdale Local Authority refers any specific inquiries from schools regarding the teaching of Religious Education, collective worship or the celebration of festivals to SACRE and accepts SACRE's advice and guidance on all such matters.
- iii) Rochdale Local Authority refers any FOI (Freedom of Information) requests regarding Religious Education or collective worship to SACRE via the LA representative to SACRE and accepts and implements SACRE's advice on a case-by-case basis.
- iv) Rochdale LA's Community and Cohesion Officer collaborates with SACRE representatives on reviews and monitoring visits of schools, and the LA Community Cohesion Officer served as a member of SACRE in 2017-2018 to increase and strengthen the arrangements which exist between the LA (Early Help and Schools) and SACRE.

Rochdale Primary and Secondary Schools have responded to Rochdale SACRE's advice as follows.

- i) Schools have responded well to the provision of the Locally Agreed Syllabus and to the provision of network and hub support for Religious Education. For the 2019, SACRE have had to make a charge to schools for the provision of a Locally Agreed Syllabus. Despite this, every LA-maintained Primary School, every LA-maintained Secondary School, and every Voluntarily-Controlled Church School have signed up for the 2019 syllabus.
- ii) Schools have contacted Rochdale SACRE (via the Local Authority) on several occasions in 2017-2018 regarding advice around parental withdrawal from Religious Education. This is covered under item 3d (standards and quality of provision of Religious Education: withdrawal from Religious Education) below.

3. Standards and quality of provision of RE

a) Public examinations

Eleven of Rochdale's thirteen secondary schools (all except Matthew Moss High School and Redwood Special School) entered a total of 848 students for GCSE Religious Education in 2018, representing 38% of the Rochdale Year 11. Nationally, 37.7% of the Year 11 cohort entered GCSE Religious Education, so Rochdale's percentage of Year 11 students entering GCSE Religious Education is in line with the national average. In 2017, 51% of the Rochdale cohort entered GCSE Religious Education from twelve secondary schools, so both the number of Rochdale secondary schools who enter students for GCSE Religious Education and also the number of students who took GCSE RE has decreased from 2017 to 2018 (as a total and as a percentage of the cohort).

In Rochdale, only Matthew Moss High School and Redwood Special School did not enter any students for GCSE Religious Education in 2018 (see below). Four secondary schools entered more than 90% of their Year 11 cohort for GCSE Religious Education (three of which are church schools) and two secondary schools entered more than 20% of their Year 11 cohort for GCSE Religious Education (one of which is a church school).

School	Entry	Of cohort	APS	% Grade 4	% Grade 7	Progress
Cardinal Langley RC	166	97.6%	3.6	46%	13%	-24%
Falings Park	223	98.6%	4.6	65%	21%	+5%
Hollingworth Academy	34	14.8%	6.0	88%	38%	+23%
Holy Family RC and CE	105	99.1%	4.9	72%	24%	+2%
Kingsway Park	43	20.8%	5.0	84%	23%	+23%
Middleton Technology	13	6.4%	3.8	54%	0%	-16%
Oulder Hill	18	7.6%	5.7	89%	33%	+33%
Siddal Moor	16	10.4%	4.1	61%	17%	-4%
St Anne's CE Academy	48	46.2%	3.7	50%	4%	-32%
St Cuthbert's RC	170	93.4%	3.3	39%	10%	-23%
Wardle Academy	10	4.7%	6.4	90%	60%	+14%
Rochdale LA	848	38.0%	4.2	58%	17%	-8%
National average		37.7%	5.0	71%	29%	+0%

In the table above, APS represents the Average Point-Score per student in GCSE RE (of those students who took GCSE RE in that school). The percentage achieving Grade 4 (or higher) is the percentage who achieved a 'standard pass' at GCSE (approximately comparable to a Grade C in the previous nomenclature). The percentage achieving Grade 7 (or higher) is the percentage who achieved the approximate equivalent of a Grade A in the previous nomenclature.

The 'progress' figure is calculated by measuring the GCSE RE outcome for each pupil against the GCSE outcome for all pupils nationally with the same Key Stage 2 point-score. A pupil who achieved better GCSE outcomes (than those who achieved the same Key Stage 2 score) has a positive value for their 'progress' and a pupil who scored worse (than those who achieved the same Key Stage 2 score) has a negative value for their progress. All pupils in a school (who took GCSE RE) have their individual progress scores converted to an average, and this is the school's progress in GCSE RE.

Schools entering more than 90% of the Year 11 cohort for GCSE Religious Education

Cardinal Langley RC entered 166 students for GCSE Religious Education in 2018 (representing 97.6% of their cohort and compared to an entry of 166 in 2017). At Cardinal Langley RC 46% of students entered gained grade 4 or better in GCSE Religious Education in 2018 (16% lower than in 2017 and 25% lower than the national average).

Falinge Park High School entered 223 students for GCSE Religious Education in 2018 (representing 98.6% of their cohort and compared to an entry of 237 in 2017). At Falinge Park High School 65% of students entered gained grade 4 or better in GCSE Religious Education in 2018 (8% higher than in 2017 and 5% lower than the national average).

Holy Family RC and CE College entered 105 students for GCSE Religious Education in 2018 (representing 99% of their cohort and compared to an entry of 110 in 2017). At Holy Family RC and CE College 72% of students entered gained grade 4 or better in GCSE Religious Education in 2018 (2% higher than in 2017 and 1% higher than the national average).

St Cuthbert's RC entered 170 students for GCSE Religious Education in 2018 (representing 93.4% of their cohort and compared to an entry of 202 in 2017). At St Cuthbert's RC 39% of students entered gained grade 4 or better in GCSE Religious Education in 2018 (30.9% lower than in 2017 and 32% lower than the national average).

Schools entering a cohort smaller than 50% of their Year 11 cohort for GCSE Religious Education

Hollingworth Academy entered 34 students for GCSE Religious Education in 2018 (representing 14.8% of their cohort and compared to an entry of 44 in 2017). At Hollingworth Academy 88% of students entered gained grade 4 or better in GCSE Religious Education in 2017 (9% higher than in 2017 and 17% higher than the national average).

Kingsway Park High School entered 43 students for GCSE Religious Education in 2018 (representing 20.8% of their cohort and compared to an entry of 50 in 2017). At Kingsway Park High School 84% of students entered gained grade 4 or better in GCSE Religious Education in 2018 (38% higher than in 2017 and 13% higher than the national average).

Middleton Technology School entered 13 students for GCSE Religious Education in 2018 (representing 6.4% of their cohort and compared to an entry of 14 in 2017). At Middleton Technology School 54% of students entered gained grade 4 or better in GCSE Religious Education in 2018 (39% lower than in 2017 and 17% lower than the national average).

Oulder Hill High School entered 18 students for GCSE Religious Education in 2018 (representing 7.6% of their cohort and compared to an entry of 28 in 2017). At Oulder Hill High School 89% of students entered gained grade 4 or better in GCSE Religious Education in 2018 (14% higher than in 2017 and 17% higher than the national average).

Siddal Moor Sports College entered 16 students for GCSE Religious Education in 2018 (representing 10.4% of their cohort and compared to an entry of 27 in 2017). At Siddal Moor Sports College 61% of students entered gained grade 4 or better in GCSE Religious Education in 2018 (10% higher than in 2017 and 10% lower than the national average).

St Anne's Church of England Academy entered 48 students for GCSE Religious Education in 2018 (representing 46.2% of their cohort and compared to an entry of 92 in 2017). At St Anne's CE Academy 50% of students entered gained grade 4 or better in GCSE Religious Education in 2018 (10% lower than in 2017 and 21% lower than the national average).

Wardle Academy entered 10 students for GCSE Religious Education in 2018 (representing 4.7% of their cohort and compared to an entry of 153 in 2017). At Wardle Academy 90% of students entered

gained grade 4 or better in GCSE Religious Education in 2017 (22% higher than in 2017 and 19% higher than the national average).

b) Attainment in Religious Education not covered by public examination

In Rochdale, only Matthew Moss High School and Redwood Special School did not enter any students for GCSE Religious Education in 2018. Redwood has no GCSE Religious Education provision as only a very small percentage of their students take GCSE. Redwood has been visited by the Chair of SACRE, Rev Margaret Smith, to discuss its Religious Education provision and SACRE's support for RE in Rochdale schools. SACRE will discuss RE provision at Key Stage 4 with Matthew Moss High School in 2018-2019.

c) The quality of Religious Education provision in schools

Forty-nine schools responded to Rochdale SACRE's annual return for Religious Education in 2018. Of those, forty-three were Primary schools and six were Secondary schools. Eight were Roman Catholic schools, thirteen were Church of England schools and twenty-eight were LA-maintained schools. SACRE believes this is a reasonable data-base from which to draw some conclusions about: the teaching and assessment of RE: the delivery of, and provision for, collective worship: and the relationship of RE to whole-school policy, broad and balanced curriculum, SMSC and British Values in Rochdale schools. The responses to the return by Rochdale schools are summarised below.

Does the school have a policy on the teaching of Religious Education?

Forty-seven schools (96% of respondents) do have a policy on the teaching of Religious Education and two schools (4% of respondents) do not have a policy on the teaching of Religious Education.

Does the school have a policy on collective worship?

Forty-two schools (86% of respondents) do have a policy on collective worship and seven schools (14% of respondents) do not have a policy on collective worship.

Does the school have a policy on SMSC (Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Education)?

Forty-three schools (88% of respondents) do have a policy on SMSC and six schools (12% of respondents) do not have a policy on SMSC.

Which Religious Education syllabus do you use?

Twenty-three schools (48% of respondents) use the Rochdale Agreed Syllabus, eleven schools (22% of respondents) use the Rochdale Agreed Syllabus alongside an Agreed Syllabus from another Local Authority and fifteen schools (30% of respondents) use a Diocesan Syllabus.

Does the school meet the minimum requirements for time (for Religious Education lessons) as stipulated in the Rochdale Agreed Syllabus?

Forty-eight schools (98% of respondents) do meet the minimum requirements for time for Religious Education lessons (as stipulated in the Rochdale Agreed Syllabus) and one school (2% of respondents) does not.

Is there a systematic approach to recording assessment of pupil progress in RE in relation to the Agreed Syllabus?

In forty schools (82% of respondents) there is a systematic approach to recording assessment of pupil progress in RE in relation to the Agreed Syllabus and in nine schools (18% of respondents) there is not such a system.

Is provision made for a daily act of collective worship in line with statutory requirements?

Provision for a daily act of collective worship is made in forty-eight schools (98% of respondents) but is not made in one school (2% of respondents).

Do you have regular monitoring, review and evaluation of collective worship provision in your school?

Regular monitoring, review and evaluation of collective worship provision is conducted in thirty-six schools (73% of respondents) but is not conducted in thirteen schools (27% of respondents).

The strengths of Religious Education in Rochdale primary schools include:

- a) A project/ themed approach to RE, teaching with a focus on similarities between different faiths to discuss and learn about values through looking at celebrations, stories from special books, clothes people wear and special buildings.
- b) Application for, and successful awarding of, the Centre of Excellence Inclusion Quality Mark which was achieved partly through links to the Rochdale RE Agreed Syllabus.
- c) Developing Catholic Social Teaching and SMSC as embedded characteristics of all of the school's curriculum areas.
- d) Children in Years 5-6 acting as Worship Leaders, setting up the hall for assemblies and collective worship and leading whole-school collective worship each half-term.
- e) Children in all years being given the opportunity to participate in leading worship, which has a positive impact on other children and promotes dialogue, understanding and respect.
- f) Combining a project/themed approach with stand-alone projects such as 'Who is a Christian and what do they believe?'
- g) Using RE topics in Key stage 2 as a platform to discuss values, moral dilemmas and important controversial topics that had an RE focus (for example, what is so special about marriages?) which created a platform to talk about relationships, people we trust, and the difference between forced and arranged marriages.
- h) A Year 6 topic 'why are inter-faith relations important to strengthen our community?' in which pupils learn about living and working together, how you can practise your faith in the community, and what religions say about respecting others, neighbours and the environment.
- i) Having RE mainly taught by the RE Co-ordinator (during PPA time) to ensure progression and sound subject knowledge.
- j) Visits to places of worship (churches, synagogues, mosques) and visitors to school representing different faiths within the community.
- k) Teaching British Values through RE and SMSC and covering key skills in discrete RE lessons.
- l) Giving Collective Worship a high profile in school, with themed assemblies which reflect British Values and skills learned in RE.
- m) Children leading British Values assemblies after a specific class lesson on each of the values, and assemblies for different celebrations of different faiths (Harvest, Diwali).
- n) Children completing pre-learning challenges, giving them the opportunity to reflect on what they already know about different religions and what they would like to know.
- o) A good range of resources (religious artefacts) so that children are able to develop their experiences of other faiths in a classroom setting.
- p) A strong philosophical approach to thinking about moral issues and the content of prayer, discussed regularly in the classroom but also forming part of the collective worship.

- q) The use of Philosophy-4-Children training in which they share some interesting and useful resources for RE, enabling children to discuss subjects such as Harvest Festival in a debate and discussion-type lesson.
- r) Celebrations of Faith throughout the year where children celebrate religious events from the faith calendar (supported by inviting community leaders of different faiths into assemblies).
- s) Some church schools have focal areas where a cross is displayed, a Bible is available (for collective worship time and children to access), reflective displays and copies of prayers.
- t) A timetable of visits to the church for key religious festivals; joining in special services such as Holy Week and Easter.
- u) Working with other faith schools in the Local Authority, with a training focus on collective worship where resources have been shared.
- v) Strong links to other faiths in the community with local faith leaders regularly invited into school to take part in assemblies and Religious Education lessons.
- w) Using online assessment and tracking systems (for example, FROG) to monitor, track and evaluate RE lessons.

The strengths of Religious Education in Rochdale secondary schools include:

- a) Improved quality of GCSE RE results since its introduction as an option.
- b) Improved attitude to British Values and SMSC due to delivery of these through RE, through topics such as war and peace, extremism, racism and discrimination.
- c) In previous external parent surveys (Kirkland Rowell) Religious Studies has been graded as outstanding overall, as good for its contribution towards SMSC, and as a strength for its contributions towards topics such as racism in PHSE.
- d) GCSE Religious Studies is nearly always taught by specialist staff and is well-resourced and well-supported by senior management.
- e) Involvement of Religious Studies subject leaders in SACRE (both Oldham and Rochdale) and involvement in setting-up network meetings for secondary RE teachers.
- f) Involvement of a chaplaincy team that drives the spiritual life of the school, with children in each class being given the opportunity to take part in, and lead, liturgy.
- g) Training from AQA for new syllabuses and specifications with clear impact in terms of understanding and how the exam will be marked.
- h) Regular moderation of students' work between Rochdale schools so that students are able to see best practice and staff are also clear on expectations.
- i) Religious Education becoming more visibly a subject in its own right and moving away from the Humanities structure in the school.
- j) Religious Education contributing significantly to the curriculum offered to Year 8 and Year 9 students around the Holocaust Memorial.
- k) Creating a curriculum that bring together an approach to prayer (children's personal prayer lives and composing prayer) that is based on progression and continuity of learning.

- l) A formal Social Action programme (in Year 9) called *Love Thy Neighbour* in which forms present a charity for the Academy to support.
- m) Participation in the Archbishop of York award.

d) Withdrawal from RE

Rochdale SACRE guides and advises Rochdale schools regarding parental applications to withdraw their children from Religious Education as follows.

i) Rochdale context

Several schools have contacted SACRE regarding parents' intention to remove their children (partly or wholly) from RE, from collective worship or from religious activities which form part of the school's curricular and extra-curricular provision (carol services, faith celebration days). In several instances this has centred on proposed visits with pupils to Mosques or Churches, and there have been instances of Christian parents wishing to remove their children from Mosque visits, and Muslim parents wishing to remove their children from Church visits.

These instances are all unique in their own way. SACRE has consistently offered advice and guidance to schools drawn from statutory documentation (principally Section 71 of the *School Standards and Framework Act* (1988)). SACRE has also collaborated with the Church of England, the Roman Catholic Diocese and the Local Authority Community and Cohesion Team in terms of their advice and guidance in these situations.

ii) Planning for the future

Until 2018, SACRE advised schools on a case-by-case basis as shown above, but as a result of the increasing number of such queries and the likelihood that their frequency will increase, SACRE has prepared a set of documentation which (a) clarifies the legal position, (b) reinforces statutory advice, (c) explores links with Manchester Diocese's policy statement and guidelines and (d) provides guidance on handling such situations and on raising the profile of Religious Education and visits to religious centres.

One Rochdale Primary School has increased the participation in visits to Mosques and Churches from 30% to 100% over the five-year period 2013-2018.

The purpose of the guidance package is to advise schools of their statutory obligations if a parent does request the withdrawal of their child from RE or collective worship, but also to offer a range of actions, drawn from our experience and from the advice of the Local Authority Community Cohesion Team, which would reduce the likelihood of such a situation arising. This package of resources and guidance was made available to Rochdale schools from September 2018 onwards. The key contents and recommendations of the package are as follows.

- Prompt contact with Local Authority and SACRE as soon as a request for withdrawal from Religious Education is received by the school.
- Comprehensive package of advice and guidance sent to the school by SACRE.
- Telephone conversation between Headteacher and Local Authority representative to SACRE and/or Local Authority Community Cohesion Officer as soon as possible.
- Visit to school by Local Authority representative to SACRE and/or Local Authority Community Cohesion Officer if required as follow-up to telephone conversation.
- Model letter (based on the letter written in the case study above) shared with Headteacher as guidance and as an example.

e) Complaints about Religious Education

No complaints have been received about Religious Education provision in Rochdale schools and no complaints have been received about Rochdale SACRE by the Local Authority or Ofsted.

4. Agreed Syllabus

a) If there was a review of the syllabus

The Rochdale Agreed Syllabus for RE was last reviewed and revised in summer 2013 and launched in Rochdale schools from September 2013 onwards, so that syllabus was due for review in 2018. Rochdale SACRE began the review process in late 2017 and the process continued into 2018-2019.

Consequently, this 2017-2018 Annual Report records the beginning of the review process, but because this report is not submitted until early 2019, we are also able to report on the culmination of the review process and the launch of the new Locally Agreed Syllabus in April 2019.

Rochdale SACRE, on the advice of the Chair, Rev Margaret Smith, decided that it does not have the resources to prepare its own Agreed Syllabus, and would therefore explore other options for sourcing an Agreed Syllabus. The options considered by SACRE were either to purchase the Locally Agreed Syllabus of another Local Authority (for example Lancashire or Leicestershire); or to collaborate with Oldham SACRE on the development of a new Locally Agreed Syllabus.

Lancashire SACRE presented to SACRE on 20th February 2018 and we then met with Oldham SACRE on 25th April 2018. Following both meetings a further round of reviews and deliberation took place, as we were determined to make the right decision and establish a Locally Agreed Syllabus that would meet the needs of our diverse community, and our equally diverse range of schools.

Following further extensive consultation with schools, SACREs and other Local Authorities, and discussion at SACRE meetings on 26th June 2018 and 18th October 2018, SACRE agreed to approach RE Today to construct a bespoke Locally Agreed Syllabus for Rochdale. SACRE Chair (Rev Margaret Smith), SACRE Clerk (Ciara Foley) and Local Authority representative (Peter Owen) then met with Lat Blaylock (representative of RE Today) to agree the content, format and pricing structure for the syllabus.

As a result of the above, Rochdale SACRE is able to offer a five-year syllabus to all schools for a very reasonable cost. The cost includes (a) hard copy and online copy of the syllabus; (b) ongoing online support from RE Today; and (c) attendance for two school representatives at the launch of the syllabus, which will also constitute a valuable day of RE CPD (provided by Lat Blaylock). The launch will take place on Friday 26th April 2019.

Rochdale SACRE has been mindful of its statutory responsibility to provide a Locally Agreed Syllabus to all LA-maintained and Voluntarily-Controlled church schools, so we are pleased to report that fifty-six schools have signed up for the syllabus, and that the only schools not signed-up are Voluntarily-Aided church schools or academies. Attendance at the launch is high, and we look forward to a day celebrating the success of Religious Education in Rochdale schools.

Rochdale SACRE acknowledge that the process of sourcing a new Locally Agreed Syllabus has been longer and more complex than we first imagined it would be. We also acknowledge that the syllabus planned for a September 2018 launch will actually be launched in April 2019.

However, SACRE believe that the length of the process is justified by the quality of the syllabus we are now able to present to our schools. SACRE would particularly like to record their gratitude for, and appreciation of, the work of Chair (Rev Margaret Smith) and Clerk (Ciara Foley) in achieving this positive outcome.

b) When the next review will take place

Following the launch of the new Locally Agreed Syllabus in April 2019, SACRE would anticipate schools implementing it fully from September 2019 onwards. Consequently the new syllabus will run 2019-2024 and SACRE will begin the process of reviewing the syllabus in its first 2023 meeting which will take place in January or February 2023.

5. SACRE Projects

a) Working with Churches and the Town Centre Chaplaincy

In October 2017 the Town Chaplaincy and a group of local churches liaised with SACRE to hold a 'thanks for the Harvest' event. This included some local businesses and churches putting on a display of what Harvest means to them: biblically, spiritually, practically and economically. Primary and Secondary schools were invited to submit a display of what Harvest means to their school and to send pupils to experience some interactive stalls. Five schools sent display items and four schools visited the event sending approximately 110 pupils.

b) Supporting teachers

In July 2018 an RE resources exhibition was organised for all schools. All the information and contacts were later circulated to all schools. Those attended found it useful and benefitted from meeting SACRE members. SACRE continues to support the Primary and Secondary RE teacher networks. The Primary RE teacher network is chaired by Clair Kitching, and the Secondary RE teacher network operates flexibly as a series of small group meetings on particular topics, including shared moderation activities.

c) SACRE Chair activities

During 2017-2018 Chair of SACRE has visited several schools to discuss RE with Heads of RE and Headteachers. Chair of SACRE has been involved in undertaking some assemblies and an innovative day of taking one school's Year 2 on an interactive journey through the Bible. SACRE continue to work hard to encourage a wide representation of different faiths, schools and geographical areas that accurately reflect Rochdale. This is not easy as many members are busy and heavily committed. We are also trying to increase the profile of SACRE by regular news-mails, letters to schools and by developing a resource-base.

This report was submitted to NASACRE and to the Department for Education on Friday 29th March 2019 and constitutes the annual report for Rochdale SACRE for 2017-2018. The report will also be submitted to Rochdale SACRE at their next meeting on Wednesday 1st May 2019.

Rev Margaret Smith
Town Centre Chaplain
Chair of SACRE

Peter Owen
Performance and Achievement Officer
LA Representative to SACRE

Ciara Foley
Business Support
Clerk to SACRE