

# Public Agenda Pack



Notice of Meeting of

## **SACRE (STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION)**

**Wednesday, 13<sup>th</sup> March 2024 at 2.00 pm**

**Broughton House, Blackbrook Park Ave,  
Taunton, TA1 2PR**

To: The members of the SACRE (Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education)

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For further information about the meeting, including how to join the meeting virtually, please contact [democraticserviceteam@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:democraticserviceteam@somerset.gov.uk).

All members of the public are welcome to attend our meetings and ask questions or make a statement **by giving advance notice** in writing or by e-mail to the Monitoring Officer at email: [democraticserviceteam@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:democraticserviceteam@somerset.gov.uk) by **5pm on Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> March 2024**.

This meeting will be open to the public and press, subject to the passing of any resolution under the Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12A: Access to Information.

Issued by the Proper Officer on Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> March 2024.

# **AGENDA**

**SACRE (Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education) - 2.00 pm  
Wednesday, 13 March 2024**

## **Microsoft Teams Meeting Link**

5 - 6

### **1 Welcome/Apologies for Absence/Quoracy**

The Chair to welcome all attendees to the meeting, note any apologies, and check for quoracy.

### **2 Introductions**

The Chair to invite each committee member to introduce themselves.

### **3 Minutes of the Previous Meeting on 20th September 2023 (Pages 7 - 14)**

To approve as an accurate record.

### **4 Public Question Time**

### **5 Budget Report Update**

To receive a verbal update on the SACRE budget.

### **6 ASC Membership**

To discuss and agree the ASC membership.

### **7 Faith and Belief Worker**

To discuss and vote on appointing a faith and belief worker.

### **8 Symposium/Newsletter/Website Update from RE Advisors**

To receive a verbal update from Shell Sullivan and Rebekah Guy.

### **9 Annual SACRE Report (Pages 15 - 24)**

Alison Jeffery to present the Annual SACRE Report.

**10 RE Advisors Update**

To receive a verbal update from Shell Sullivan and Rebekah Guy.

**11 Diocesan Report (Pages 25 - 26)**

Pauline Dodds to present the report.

**12 Any Other Business**

**13 Date of the Next Meeting**

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Minutes of a Meeting of the SACRE (Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education) held as a Virtual meeting on-line via Teams, on Wednesday, 20 September 2023 at 2.30 pm.

**Present (all online):**

Niel Apps (Chair)

Leonard Daniels	Rebekah Guy	Cllr Tessa Munt
Eleanor Delaney	Mike Keogh	Cllr Hazel Prior-Sankey
Pauline Dodds	Penny Jerrard	Shell Sullivan
Pat Ebdon	Cllr Tim Kerley	Jessica Witchell
Peter Elliot	Mary Lockwood	

**Officers in attendance (all online):**

Alison Jeffery	Jamie Jackson	Becky Sanders
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**13 Welcome and Apologies for Absence - Agenda Item 1**

Councillor Tessa Munt, as the outgoing Interim Chair welcomed all to the meeting and introduced new representatives, Peter Elliot, Mary Lockwood and Rebekah Guy.

Apologies for absence were received from Kate Daunton and Rachelle Billington.

**14 Minutes of Previous Meeting - Agenda Item 2**

Those present in the meeting were invited to comment on the minutes of the previous meeting held on 28 June 2023. No amendments were suggested and everyone was content that the minutes were an accurate record and could be signed by the Chair.

**15 Public Question Time - Agenda Item 3**

A public question had been submitted by Mr Debenham together with two documents providing some background to his question.

Alison Jeffery noted that the question and background documents had already been circulated to representatives on SACRE for consideration and comment. She explained to the member of the public that the consensus from representatives was that more time was needed to put together a response, and if agreed appropriate, it was suggested that an item was put on the agenda for the next meeting to discuss the nature of what was being requested in the question.

Mr Debenham referred to his background papers and noted the situation had changed over the past few decades regarding people who are non-religious – he considered they were now the majority.

The Interim Chair thanked Mr Debenham for his question and noted his question would be considered in due course and a response provided when able, but it was not a matter for full discussion at this meeting.

#### **16 Election of Chair - Agenda Item 4**

The Interim Chair, Councillor Tessa Munt, advised that only one nomination had been received for the position of Chair, which was for Niel Apps and therefore he was duly elected unopposed. She conveyed congratulations to the new Chair and thanked everyone for their support over that last year.

*Niel Apps now in the Chair.*

The Chair introduced himself, provided a brief background and explained some of his thoughts and principles.

#### **17 Appointment of Vice-Chairs - Agenda Item 5**

The Chair advised that only one nomination had been received for a position of Vice-Chair, which was for Eleanor Delaney and therefore she was duly elected unopposed.

The Chair explained that there should also be a second Vice-Chair which would need to be a representative from Group B or D. He proposed Alison Jeffery for the second position of Vice Chair, which was seconded by Councillor Tim Kerley, and agreed by those present with no objections.

#### **18 Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC) process and recommendations - Agenda Item 6**



Alison Jeffery introduced the item on behalf of Kate Daunton who unfortunately was unable to attend the meeting. She reminded everyone that the Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC) had been briefly referred to at the previous SACRE meeting and there was a requirement for the process to start in Somerset. The awareness, mystery and values syllabus was signed off in 2019 and this would be an opportunity to review that. SACRE could consider what is going well, what might not be, and identify changes that may be required and put in place a plan for implementation.

During discussion it was suggested that a guest speaker, Lat Blaylock, be invited to provide a talk / presentation to SACRE to share ideas as his thoughts would be useful. This was supported by several representatives present who recognised the name, knowledge and experience of the speaker.

Alison Jeffery continued with a brief presentation providing an overview of the ASC process and purpose. She noted that the ASC would have to be set up with a membership and she outlined the proposed process to do so and timelines. The nomination letters were due to be sent out imminently to the different membership groups. Dates for provisional ASC meetings were being set up and would also be circulated shortly. She suggested some working groups be established to look at already agreed syllabuses elsewhere around the country, and to look at what else might be out there compared to what we already have etc. Ideally it was hoped that some existing members of SACRE would be willing to step forward to start working on the working groups and undertaking some research activities as soon as possible in readiness for additional members as appropriate.

Referring to the earlier suggestion of inviting Lat Blaylock as a guest speaker, Alison Jeffery asked about when this should be arranged for and who needed to be in the audience. In response, some representatives suggested it should be arranged as a special meeting rather than waiting for the next scheduled meeting in March. The Chair proposed setting a date before Christmas might be appropriate. Alison Jeffery supported the suggestions made and noted a date could be arranged as an ASC extraordinary meeting for that purpose as by that stage it was hoped the membership and Terms of Reference for the ASC would be drawn up. The suggestion to invite the guest speaker and to arrange for a date before Christmas was supported by the majority of those present in the meeting (9 out of 16).

**Action:** Officers to invite guest speaker, Lat Blaylock, to a special meeting of SACRE / ASC, to be arranged if possible before the end of 2023.

## **19 Welcome and Introductions to Primary RE Advisor - Agenda Item 7**

The Chair welcomed Rebekah Guy who is the new Primary RE Advisor. Rebekah

introduced herself and provided an overview of her background and experience, and commented she was looking forward to working with everyone.

## **20 Update from Secondary RE Advisor - Agenda Item 8**

Shell Sullivan provided an update regarding the autumn Somerset newsletter due to be circulated shortly – she shared a draft version on screen and briefly went through each section so that everyone had an overview of the content, which included both secondary and primary elements. She highlighted some of the key sections including upcoming events such as Continuing Professional Development (CPD) courses and the National Association of Teachers of Religious Education (NATRE) event on 11 October. There was also a reminder of the 2023 Curriculum Symposium to be held in November, and details of the guest speakers.

In referring to the Leadership Team / Programme she noted that a request had been made about whether SACRE were able to offer financial assistance, as other SACREs had supported networks in Devon. In response the Chair suggested the topic of funding could be an item on a future agenda, and this was supported by several members. Alison Jeffery clarified that a financial report could be made to the meeting in March as it would be near the end of the financial year and hence an appropriate time to do so.

*(the Chair left the meeting for 10 minutes between 3.10pm and 3.20pm).*

Shell Sullivan noted for interest that she had recently written an article for RE Today and also a blog which was viewable online and via social media.

## **21 Update from the Diocese - Agenda Item 9**

Pauline Dodds introduced her report and provided an update from the Diocese of Bath & Wells. Some of her points included:

- 183 church schools across three local authorities. Encouraging teachers to join hubs and share good practice across the hubs.
- Church School inspections (SIAMS – Statutory inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools). Update – three schools had now received notifications. Inspections now had a much more collaborative approach than previously.
- Highlighted upcoming training events.

She noted would she like to see more events arranged in the Wells and Frome area as many events often took place in Taunton, and Somerset is a large county.

**22 Bahá'í representative enquiry - Agenda Item 10**

Alison Jeffery noted a request had been received from a representative of the Bahá'í faith to join SACRE. She advised the Constitution indicated the representative could be co-opted in the short term without voting rights or could be approved as a full member of SACRE.

The Chair suggested that the Bahá'í representative be co-opted for the March meeting, and then at that meeting it could be discussed and decided if should be full member of SACRE. This was agreed by all present in the meeting.

**Action:** That the Bahá'í representative be co-opted and invited to the March meeting.

**23 Date of Next Meeting & Close - Agenda Item 11**

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as an in-person meeting at 2.30pm on 13 March 2024, at Broughton House, Blackbrook Park Avenue, Taunton TA1 2PR.

From discussion at this meeting, it was noted the following items would be included on the next agenda:

- Item to discuss the question submitted by a member of the public raised at Public Question Time regarding a request for a Special RE Reform Report.
- Finance report

Also

- To invite Lat Blaylock as a guest speaker to a special meeting of the SACRE / ASC - date to be arranged - requested to be before the end of 2023 if possible.

**(The meeting ended at 3.30 pm)**

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**CHAIR**

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## Public Question Time Responses from the Last Meeting (20<sup>th</sup> September 2023)

### QUESTION 1

**Mr Alan Debenham** - With our new Somerset Council, much now controlled by progressive thinking Liberal Democrats and other 'progressives', surely now is the time to make as much as possible, and campaign for, serious reform in schools so-called religious education according and in line with very serious social and political developments over past decades in the behaviour of residents across society as described in the attached documents. Please could SACRE now produce a Special RE Reform Report with its 'Proposals for Change' before its next meeting with its 'Reform Action Plans 2024' clearly set out for consultation and discussion?

### RESPONSE

Mr Debenham,

Thank you for submitting a question to Somerset SACRE. As Chair of Somerset SACRE, I have sought the views of our members and am able to give you the following response.

I have read your attached documents, they do not really, I feel, help with your question being seemingly created for another purpose. I fail to see how extinction rebellion is relevant to your call for “proposals for change” in your question. I also note that in the document you confusingly seem to favour both pagan beliefs of mother nature and science.

Much of the information presented is unfortunately biased, to the extent that it is incorrect and misleading. For example, in your document helpfully labelled “HUMANISTS UK LATEST ANTI-FAITH SCHOOLS REPORT”, there is a link to the Humanist UK website where it says that the UN has called for “children under 16 to be given a right to withdraw from collective worship.” This right has always been available to parents, it is part of the Somerset agreed syllabus guidance, which you can easily find, children themselves do not have this right as they are minors and need their parents to decide for them in all things.

On the same Humanist website, it suggests that RE is religiously biased, then discuss the situation in Northern Ireland as if this is the same in the rest of the country, you suggest that faith schools do not let students of other faiths to attend without providing a shred of evidence. It is quite true that they can use faith as a criterion, but only if they are oversubscribed, my own church school for instance has many Muslim students, who are provided a prayer room and special dispensation during the Holy month of Ramadan.

You also quote the “British Social Attitudes Survey”, which I agree is reputable and has been undertaken since 1983 clearly showing changes in attitudes to a variety of questions, and which I use it regularly in my lessons. But you are no doubt aware that its sample size is only 3,000 people per year, across the whole country. If we look at the census instead, a much more reputable survey of every adult in the country, 56.9% of people self-labelled themselves as having a religion, compared to 37.2% who said they have no religion. If we further combine those who self-label as Agnostic, Atheist and Humanist, we find 56,000, this is less than those who self-label as Pagan (74,000) and there are more Wicca than Humanist. But if we further limit this to Somerset, which is the focus of this group, the highest proportion of

“no religion” in any district is at 43.7%, so in no place in Somerset is it the case that “no religion” outnumber those of religious belief.

I am not sure what you expect with regards to “proposals for change”. The powers of the SACRE are contained in the 1996 education act and are a continuation of various education acts dating back to the Butler education act in 1945 which brought in compulsory state education up to secondary school age. So, any change would require an act of Parliament. We have had on this SACRE for at least 10 years, a Humanist representative.

In terms of your reference to “so called Religious Education”. The RE teaching in Somerset and elsewhere, does not either evangelise or indoctrinate anyone, we are informing them what other people believe and invite them to critically engage with the learning. The current agreed syllabus dictates that students learn about a range of beliefs. Two in KS1, four in KS2, and three in more depth in KS4. If I were to apply your same principle to other subjects, I wonder if you would describe Science teaching as “so called Science” because they do not require children to learn about Quantum Physics, or History “so-called History” as the curriculum is British based.

We have just begun, as we do every 5 years, a review of the Agreed Syllabus to adapt to changes in society, so the syllabus is relevant to the community we serve. We are, in this meeting, organising, and discussing how this will be set up and who will take part as delegates. So can I assume that you will take this as evidence that this SACRE is meeting your request for proposals for change, fortuitously the timetable for change has corresponded with your question.

Yours sincerely,  
Niel Apps, Chair

## LA SACRE Report 2023-24

### Welcome from Advisors

Rebekah Guy started as Primary Advisor for Somerset SACRE in September. She has joined the team alongside Shell Sullivan who is Secondary Advisor. Rebekah and Shell have both worked with several primary and secondary schools to support with their curriculum and suggesting resources that could be used alongside the Somerset Agreed Syllabus. Rebekah has also collaborated with the School Library Services on their SACRE resource boxes.

LTLRE (Learn, Teach, Lead RE) hub meetings have continued this year. In the autumn term, a meeting was held with a focus on a multi-disciplinary approach. This included looking at an existing resource and how it could be used within the Somerset Agreed Syllabus. The network of teachers has continued to grow, and more teachers are interested in attending since the Symposium in November. The next meeting is due to be held in the next week. Our thanks to Leanne and Abby for their continued work with LTLRE in Somerset. The annual conference is being held at University of Bristol in conjunction with the Shared Space Project on 28<sup>th</sup> June.

Various events took place across Somerset for Holocaust Memorial Day including Fragility of Freedom, A Commemoration Event at The Church of St John the Evangelist, Taunton.

### Curriculum symposium

This took place at Holyrood Academy on 24<sup>th</sup> November 2023.

The aim was to:

1. Create a network of Somerset RE teachers across all phases, offering clear communication and support.
2. Engage Somerset RE teachers with the national RE changes.
3. Engage Somerset RE teachers with the Agreed Syllabus Conference, which is due in 2024.

We managed to contact many influential RE people who were excited by the prospect of taking part. We secured some amazing speakers - Dawn Cox, Gillian Georgiou, Sophie Smith and Alice Thomas and they were to present on how to use a multi-disciplinary approach in a Religion and Worldviews curriculum.

The teacher feedback was tremendous. 94% gave between an 8 and 10/10 in answering the question 'how useful did you find the symposium today?'. 45.2% gave a 10/10. We had a fantastic time and felt we connected to many teachers, which we look forward to working with. We know we met our aims.

The biggest barrier was getting the contacts for teachers in the first place and ensuring our advertisement was robust and continuous. We wanted as many teachers as possible, so we had to learn how to navigate social media successfully.

Now we have the connections, we are excited to work with SACRE and teachers to develop our present Agreed Syllabus and to further improve the quality of teaching and learning for students in Somerset.

### Locally Agreed Syllabus

Rebekah and Shell have researched many areas of syllabus and curriculum provision. We have looked at other SACRE syllabuses, 'off the shelf' products and reviewed the timeline of creation. The start date of the ASC was pushed back, and the first meeting will be held in April 2024. The Chair and Vice-Chairs have been updated with suggestions from the RE Advisors. An action plan will be decided on at the first meeting and SACRE will be updated accordingly.

### SACRE Resource Boxes

The School Library Service continue to receive requests from schools for loans of SACRE resource boxes. Loan figures for the summer 2023 – February 2024 can be seen below.

	Religion	Number of boxes available	Number of boxes loaned	Number of Schools who loaned boxes
<b>Summer 2023</b>	Buddhism	4	0	
	Christianity	8	2	
	Hinduism	6	4	
	Islam	6	7	
	Judaism	7	7	
	Sikhism	3	2	
				18
<b>Autumn 2023</b>	Buddhism	4	0	
	Christianity	8	9	
	Hinduism	6	7	
	Islam	6	1	
	Judaism	7	7	
	Sikhism	3	1	
				17
<b>Spring 2024</b> (until Feb half term)	Buddhism	4	0	
	Christianity	8	4	
	Hinduism	6	1	
	Islam	6	4	
	Judaism	7	5	
	Sikhism	3	2	
				8



Four schools were unable to receive a Christianity box, and one school was unable to receive a Judaism box in the autumn term as they were already fully reserved.

To maximise use, some boxes were used for shorter loan periods to allow more than one school to use a box in each loan period.

The figures highlight that there have been no requests for the Buddhism resource boxes, although there is one booking in the system for summer term 2024.

### **Ofsted Inspection Reports**

Recent Somerset School Ofsted Inspection reports have resulted in the following comments. Those relating to Religious Education or Diversity have been pulled out.

#### **Primary**

##### **St George's Catholic School (Good, February 2023)**

Pupils learn to respect differences. The promotion of equality and diversity is a priority for leaders.

##### **St Benedict's Church of England Voluntary Aided Junior School (Good, January 2023)**

Pupils learn how to maintain positive physical and mental health. They understand that people have different beliefs. Leaders provide a wide range of purposeful opportunities for pupils to learn about their community and beyond. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

##### **Preston School Academy (Good, January 2023)**

They learn about religions, beliefs and cultures that may be different to their own.

##### **Huish Primary School (Outstanding, January 2023)**

Pupils have a very strong awareness of faiths and cultures different to their own.

##### **Kilmersdon Church of England Primary School (Good, February 2023)**

The school promotes pupils' spiritual development well and works with other partners to develop pupils' understanding of social, moral and cultural issues.

##### **St Dubricius Church of England Voluntary Aided School (Good, February 2023)**

Pupils talk confidently about the Christian values of the school. Links with the neighbouring church are strong. For example, many pupils attend a 'Jesus and Me' afterschool club. Children in Nursery visit residents in a local care home. These activities help pupils to learn more about their place in the world and how to be kind, respectful citizens.

Pupils understand the importance of respect and tolerance. They learn about different beliefs and cultures.

##### **North Town Academy (Good, March 2023)**

They respect people from other backgrounds and know to treat everyone equally.

**Nether Stowey Church of England Primary School** (Good, March 2023)

Pupils have clear views on equality and tolerance. They speak passionately about gender inequality. For example, the differences between men and women's pay in society. However, they say that at Nether Stowey, everyone is treated equally regardless of gender, race, or background.

**Nerrols Primary School and Nursery** (Good, March 2023)

Children's understanding of the world is developed through the study of different faiths and cultures. For example, children in Nursery learn about Ramadan.

**St Lawrence's CofE Primary School** (Good, March 2023)

Pupils enjoy the opportunity to focus on the school's core values, such as during assemblies. They are well informed about other faiths and cultures. For example, pupils recently participated in celebrations to mark Chinese New Year.

**Eastover Primary School** (Good, May 2023)

Pupils learn the importance of respecting diverse cultures, faiths, and backgrounds through their work in geography and religious education.

**Hambridge Community Primary School** (Good, April 2023)

In specialised workshops, pupils learn about diversity. This helps pupils to become active citizens in modern Britain.

**Blackbrook Primary School** (Good, May 2023)

Pupils learn to respect different faiths, cultures, and lifestyles.

**Hamp Nursery and Infants' School** (Good, April 2023)

Pupils learn to understand and celebrate people's lives different from their own.

**Puriton Primary School** (Good, May 2023)

This is an inclusive school. Pupils celebrate diversity and actively condemn discrimination, saying that you should 'always treat others as you would want to be treated.'

For example, in Year 6 religious education, pupils used their prior knowledge of Islam to debate whether completing Hajj makes a person a better Muslim.

hat pupils develop personally. As a result, pupils become deep, reflective thinkers. They are keen to learn about the similarities and differences of children across the world through the school's partnership with a school in Kenya. Pupils understand the importance of everyone in society having an equal say, following the law, and respecting others.

**Isambard Kingdom Brunel Primary School** (Good, May 2023)

Pupils celebrate diversity and they learn to respect differences.

**Stoke St Michael Primary School** (RI, May 2023)

Pupils learn about people from different backgrounds. They know the importance of tolerance and mutual respect.

**St Cuthbert's Church of England Academy Infants and Pre-School** (Good, June 2023)

Pupils get lots of opportunities to learn about the world around them, both locally and further afield. Pupils enjoy visits to the local church and the Bishop's Palace.

**Timberscombe Church of England First School** (Good, June 2023)

Pupils are confident and self-assured because they know that they are valued members of the community. Pupils have a very strong knowledge of other faiths and know the similarities and differences to Christianity. They understand that people of all faiths and backgrounds deserve respect.

**Curry Rivel Church of England VC Primary School** (Good, June 2023)

Pupils are taught a well-considered curriculum to support their broader development. Leaders ensure that pupils learn about a wide variety of cultures. Pupils have a mature understanding of equality and diversity.

**Butleigh Church of England Primary School** (Good, June 2023)

Pupils learn about different cultures, faiths and identities.

**Old Cleeve CofE School, Washford** (Good, July 2023)

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is stimulated very effectively through regular school and church calendar events. Teachers help pupils reflect on big ideas and more complex concepts, either through 'thunks' or during lively collective worship. Pupils learn about different cultures, diversity and fundamental British values. Trips and visits are utilised, whenever possible, to enrich and enhance pupils' learning. For example, pupils talk positively about visiting varying places of worship, including Hindu temples and churches.

**Holy Trinity Church of England Primary School** (Good, September 2023)

Pupils learn about different religions and about the importance of tolerance and respect. Pupils learn to appreciate difference and to celebrate the things they have in common.

**Secondary**

35 Secondary schools (all categories) were inspected in the period from last Annual report.

**3 schools were rated outstanding** – Dovecote Independent school, Fiveways Special School, and The Castle School. There is mention of excellent personal development provision in all reports, but nothing on RE.

**20 schools were rated good** -

3 Dimensions

Avalon School

Bishop Fox's School

Chilton Bridge School

Court Fields School

Crispin School Academy

Fairmead School

Frome Community College

Holyrood Academy  
Hugh Sexey Church of England Middle School  
Newbury Manor School  
Park House School  
Preston School Academy  
Sedgemoor Manor School  
Sexey's School  
The Blue School  
The Mendip School  
The Orchard School  
Wessex Lodge School  
Westfield Academy

**Beliefs and cultures education was mentioned positively in:**

Crispin school  
Fairmead School

**No lack of RE, or poor quality RE is mentioned.**

**7 schools were rated requires improvement.**

Ansford Academy  
Bridgwater College Academy  
Danesfield Church of England Voluntary Controlled Community Middle School  
North Hill House  
Petherton Park School  
Robert Blake School  
West Somerset College  
No mention of RE positively or negatively.

**1 school is rated inadequate.**

Minehead Middle School

This is mentioned as what they do and do not do well within PSHE: *'While pupils learn about cultures and beliefs that are different to their own, their knowledge and understanding vary considerably.'*

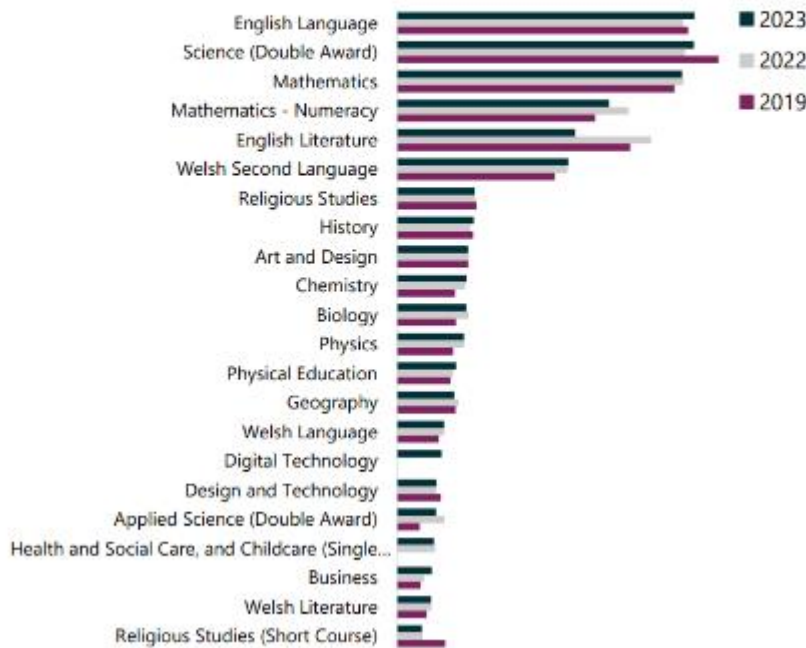
### **GCSE Religious Studies**

RE GCSE entries in England have increased but have decreased in Somerset from last year. A level entries have decreased nationally and locally.

**Approved GCSE entries by subject**

Figure 5 compares total summer approved GCSE entries for 2023, 2022 and 2019 by subject.

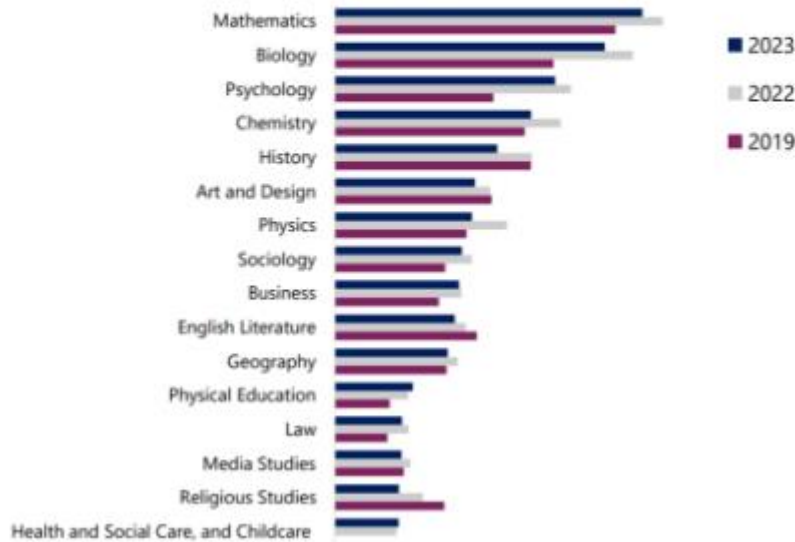
**Figure 5: Summer 2023 GCSE total entries broken down by subject**



**Total approved A level summer entries by subject**

Figure 14 compares total summer approved A level entries for 2023, 2022 and 2019 by subject.

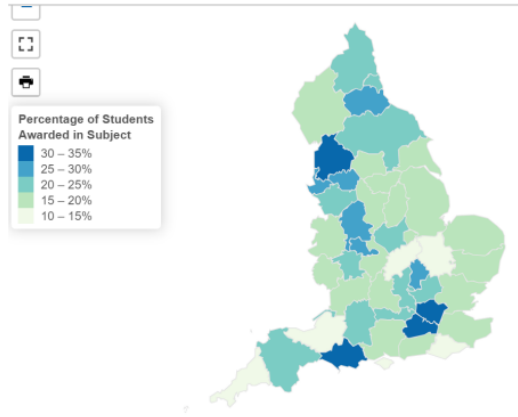
**Figure 14: Total approved A level entries by subject**



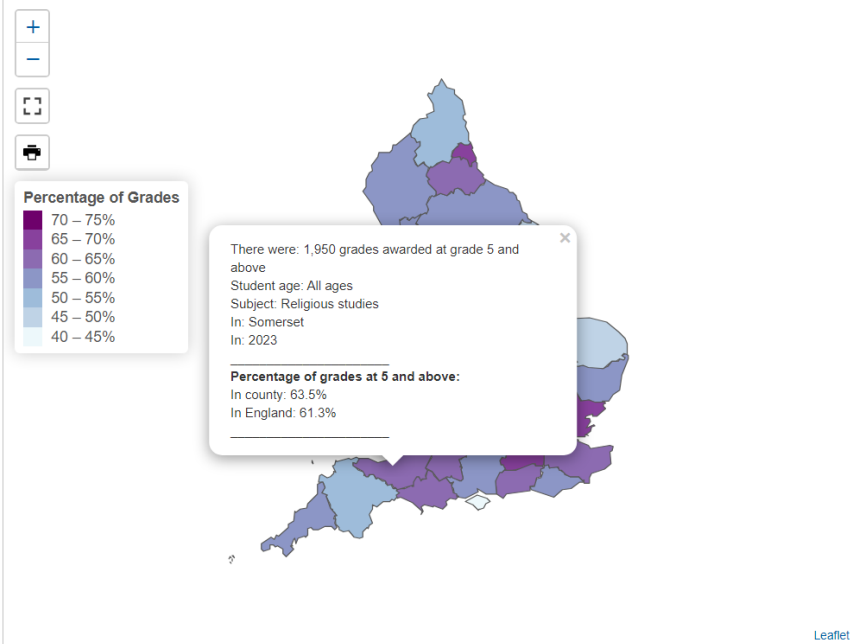
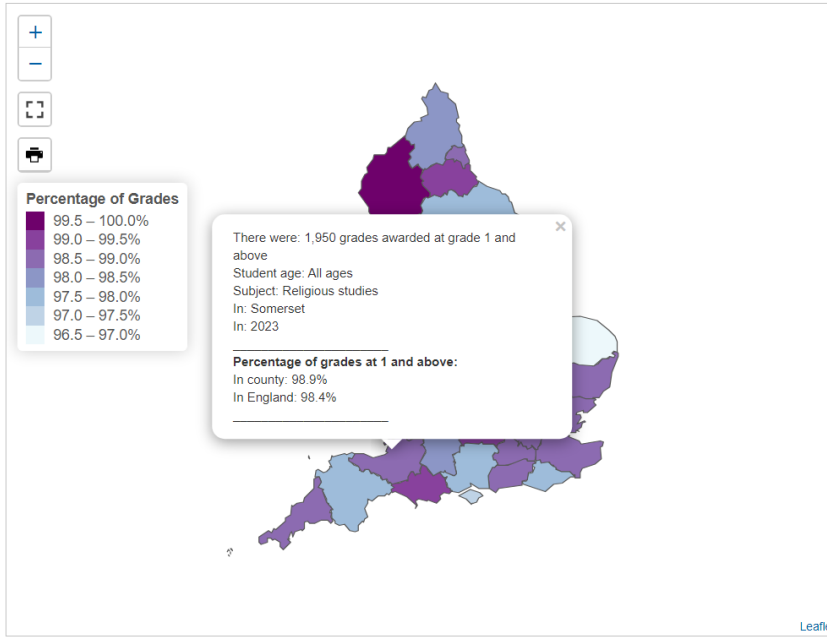
### How does GCSE uptake vary between the counties in England?

Counties ranked by % students entered for GCSE RS (Bold indicates average uptake above the national average for England) TABLE 5

County	uptake county % Students (Nat 25.7%)	County % grade 9-4 (Nat 72.2%)
Surrey	34.6	77.6
Dorset	34.1	73.2
Lancashire	33.8	67.6
Greater London	32.5	77.3
Merseyside	29.1	58.8
Durham	27.7	73
Greater Manchester	27.5	68.6
West Midlands	27.2	69.9
Bedfordshire	26.7	68.6
Staffordshire	25.9	67
Hertfordshire	24.9	79.4
Berkshire	24.5	77.4
Cheshire	24.1	65.6
North Yorkshire	23.6	70.4
Wiltshire	23.2	75.8
Buckinghamshire	22.8	77.3
Tyne and Wear	22.1	77
Leicestershire	21.6	73.1
Northumberland	21.6	65.9
Devon	21.1	63.8
Worcestershire	20.8	71.9
County of Bristol	20.4	78.9
Warwickshire	19.8	68.6
Cumbria	19.7	69.7
Lincolnshire	19.4	67.5
Herefordshire	18.8	63
Rutland	18.5	82.1
Kent	18.5	74.6
Oxfordshire	18.2	78.4
Shropshire	18	65.8
West Sussex	17.7	77.8
Norfolk	17.1	62.1
West Yorkshire	17	73.5
Essex	16.8	74.6
Nottinghamshire	16	69.9
Suffolk	16	69.1
Hampshire	15.9	72.9
Derbyshire	15.8	68.4
Gloucestershire	15.4	73.9
East Riding of Yorkshire	15.2	59.7
South Yorkshire	15.1	63.5
Somerset	13.8	73.4
Cambridgeshire	13.6	79.6
East Sussex	13.6	76.8
Northamptonshire	13.4	69.9
Cornwall	12.4	66.7
Isle of Wight	10.7	56.8



Deborah Weston OBE: Research Officer NATRE (September 2023)



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Somerset SACRE

Diocesan report February 2024

## Introduction

Our support continues for individual Somerset schools in terms of RE through requests for advice, school visits, staff meetings and our CPD offer. Increasingly we are working with Trusts and encouraging a coherent, shared approach to RE in their schools.

## SIAMS inspections

To date 14 Somerset Schools have had their SIAMS inspection this academic year. None have been judged **not** to be living out their foundation as a church school (J1) (No more grades i.e Excellent, good, RI or Inadequate)

Examples of comments about RE (extracted from the whole text):

'The quality of RE teaching is good, with a gently reflective approach evident. The age-appropriate curriculum stimulates thinking and personal spiritual development. Assessment is used to identify difficult areas and as a result it informs future planning. However there is little understanding of Christianity as a multicultural world faith.' (small VA First School)

'Pupils understand the effect that religion might have on people's lives. Pupils readily display clear and confident knowledge of Christianity and other world faiths, for instance they easily express an appreciation of the Sikh message of equality before God, arising from the Sikh approach to hospitality for all.' (VC Primary)

## Curriculum Symposium

Two members of the Diocesan Education Team attended and found it hugely interesting and enjoyable. One of our team is looking forward to being part of the working party looking at the Agreed Syllabus Review.

## LTLRE

Not much to report. We continue to support the hubs and look for suitable RE leaders in schools to develop their skills by leading a hub. We actively encourage RE teachers to join their nearest hub, or any hub that is online.

## CPD

- 'Help, I've been given RE' in October
- Collective worship in November
- Spirituality in Schools in January
- SIAMS forum in February
- **RE Conference in Flourish House, Wells.** Speaker Adam Robinson, former teacher in Bristol, adviser to Bristol SACRE, trainer with RE Today, now working on the Oak

Academy RE curriculum '**Challenging, Relevant and Diverse RE**', focussing on Islam, Judaism and Hinduism.

Whole day plus lunch – all welcome. Please spread the word, there are plenty of available places. Booking details below'

<https://www.bathandwells.org.uk/schools/education-training-and-support/>

Pauline Dodds