Bury Council

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education

Annual Report, 2025 - 2026

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Foreword

Bury SACRE is a group of professionals and members of faith communities which is actively involved in ensuring that all children in our borough receive a high standard of Religious Education, including non-religious world views. We continue to keep the Bury Agreed Syllabus for RE at the centre of our work and have extended the currency of the existing syllabus until 2027 pending review by the Agreed Syllabus Conference.

We continue to promote the AWARE award (Award for Widening Achievement in RE) to build on our work in promoting the 2021 Agreed Syllabus with both maintained schools in Bury and the increasing number of schools joining Multi Academy Trusts. Four primary schools in Bury have been successful this year, bringing the total to 10 schools.

We provide locally delivered and nationwide training to ensure that teachers and other staff providing RE in our schools have the knowledge and expertise to ensure that we are helping children to develop enquiring minds and an investigative, questioning approach.

The SACRE is supported strongly by the local authority, and active in regional and national networks. I commend this annual report to all interested readers.

Alan Beedie

SACRE Chair

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 Bury 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 Bury Council on teaching methods, choice of materials and teacher training in Religious Education and Collective Worship;
- require Bury Council to review the locally agreed syllabus for religious education at least every five years.

The reporting period of the 2025 - 2026 report starts from September 1st, 2025, and runs to August 31st, 2026.

SACRE met on three occasions during the academic year 2025 – 2026. The dates of these meetings were Wednesday 8th October 2025 (virtual meeting using TEAMS), Monday 23rd March 2026 (virtual meeting using TEAMS), Monday 8th June 2026 (in person meeting at Star Radcliffe Academy with option of joining virtually). The meetings held on Monday 23rd March and Monday 8th June were quorate.

Standing items in meetings:

- Apologies for absence
- Minutes of previous meeting and matters arising
- Additional items in specific meetings:

8th October 2025

- Chair and vice chair for 2025-26
- AWARE award
- Establishment of Agreed Syllabus Conference
- Training for schools
- SACRE membership
- National RE news
- Member updates
- Any other business
- Date and time of next meeting

23rd March 2026

- Bury SACRE AWARE award
- Training for schools

- NASACRE statement on the Curriculum and Assessment Review report, Building a world-class curriculum for all, 2025
- DfE Curriculum and Assessment Review final report
- RE in English schools; non statutory guidance 2010, DfE
- National RE news
- NB this meeting was directly followed by an Agreed Syllabus Conference

8th June 2026

- Any other business
- Date and time of proposed meetings 2026/27
- NB this meeting was directly preceded by an Agreed Syllabus Conference

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 Bury Agreed Syllabus for RE is due for review in the academic year 2025 – 2026 as the current agreed syllabus reaches the end of its five-year cycle on 31st August 2026. The current syllabus is being extended by one year, so can now be used in Bury schools until 31st August 2027.

Schools have been surveyed about the current syllabus, and an Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC) was formed to review it. Changes were agreed by the ASC in June 2026, and these will mainly ensure that the next version of the syllabus will reflect the demographics of Bury to a greater extent. The draft syllabus will be updated by RE Today and approved by the conference in early September. It will then be approved by Bury Council.

Standards and monitoring of RE

Bury SACRE has continued its statutory responsibility to monitor RE in the borough and in doing so has collected information on the success of the Agreed Syllabus through surveying schools. Although some important points were raised, most schools expressed satisfaction with the syllabus. The decision has been taken to extend the current syllabus until the end of the 2026/2027 academic year to allow time for a revised version to be completed in line with the points raised.

Bury SACRE has continued to present schools with the AWARE Award where schools have shown progress against criteria determined by the SACRE for widening achievement in religious education. In the academic year covered by this report the following schools have attained the AWARE award:

Elton Primary School

Radcliffe Primary School

All Saints CE Primary School

St Stephen's CE Primary School

At present, the examination results from Summer 2026 are unvalidated. Please see appendix A for the unvalidated results from 2026.

Bury Local Authority validated GCSE Religious Studies data, Summer 2025

GCSE Religious Studies Count by Grade				Grading									
School	NOE	No. 9-4 Pass	No. 9-5 Strong Pass	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	U
Unsworth Academy	13	6	5	2	2	3	1	1	1		3		
Hazel Wood High School	52	40	33	3	2	4	7	6	8	12	4	3	3
The Heys School	0	0	0										
St Gabriel's RC High School	201	118	99	13	24	39	19	26	21	25	14	13	7
The Elton High School	20	16	15	1	2	1	1		3	6	4	2	
Manchester Mesivta	0	0	0										
St Monica's RC High School	209	171	146	6	6	24	25	32	38	32	23	21	2
The Derby High School	58	45	36	3	3	6	9	12	8	12	4		1
Tottington High School	25	9	5	3	4	6	4	2		3			3
Parrenthorn High School	192	98	68	23	32	28	30	30	22	10	5	1	11
Philips High School	22	19	17		1	1	2	2	2	3	7	3	1
Woodhey High School	15	12	11	1	1	1	1	2	4	1	3	1	
Bury Church of England High School	140	101	86	3	10	22	15	18	31	17	13	7	4
Elms Bank Specialist Arts College	0	0	0										
Grand Total	947	635	521	58	87	135	114	131	138	121	80	51	32

Bury validated A level RS data, Summer 2025

Grade	No.
A	9
B	7
C	13
D	2
E	2
U	1

In the year covered by the report, several schools in Bury received an Ofsted inspection. Two inspection reports included comments about RE:

East Ward Community Primary School: 'Pupils … take part in a wide range of cultural activities including music lessons, performing arts and themed days that celebrate different cultures and faiths.**'**

St Peter's Church of England Primary School stated: 'Pupils reflect on their own beliefs and listen respectfully to the views of others. They speak thoughtfully about different religions and cultures, and visits to places of worship and cultural institutions broaden their understanding further.'

Teacher training materials and advice for schools

CPD sessions have been organized for primary and secondary school teachers in Bury throughout the year.

A full day cross-phase conference, which was provided free to Bury teachers, was held in October 2025.

Throughout the year, primary colleagues had access to three online training sessions, which were provided free to schools:

Teaching Judaism in the primary classroom (15th October)

RE Subject leadership (25th March)

Teaching Non-Religious Worldviews (29th April)

Throughout the year, secondary colleagues had access to three online training sessions, which were provided free to schools:

Better thinking, better writing results – GCSE (18th November)

Effective use of quotations for A level Religious Studies (4th March)

Who are the Nones? Examining research into non-religious worldviews (12th May)

Other information

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

Advice given to the Local Authority

No formal advice was given to the local authority in the period covered by this report. However, SACRE and the Local Authority work together closely, with the Local Authority having involvement in matters such as reviewing the syllabus and updating the constitution.

Section 3: Collective worship

Standards and monitoring of Collective Worship

Determinations

There were no applications for determinations in the period covered by this report.

Teacher training provided

No training was provided in this 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 in the period covered by this report.

Section 4: Links with other bodies

National Bodies

Bury SACRE are pleased to be linked with national bodies and receive national updates from our RE adviser.

Bury SACRE has links with and is a member of NASACRE.

Information from the DfE, NASACRE and NATRE has been used in meetings and shared with schools where appropriate.

SACRE members are able to regularly attend NASACRE webinars.

Local bodies

Local places of worship are well represented on SACRE.

Section 5: SACRE involvement in the Local Area

Governor and head teacher links

All materials pertaining to the SACRE are shared with governors and headteachers through Governor Services.

Advice on community issues

The Chair has a list of visits available. RE advisers regularly give advice on speakers coming into schools and visits to places of worship in both SACRE meetings and training sessions.

SACRE sent a response to the incident at Heaton Park Synagogue, which is very close to Bury and a PowerPoint from the Board of Deputies of British Jews which was useful in helping pupils to talk about the attack was sent to schools in a school briefing. As a result of the incident, Parrenthorn High School took on the work of setting up a school voice conference for 26 local schools. The conference saw over 100 pupils from a range of schools including primary, secondary, special, mainstream and colleges working together to produce the Bury Anti-Hate Charter. The SACRE Chair attended and addressed the conference.

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

Professional and administrative support

During the reporting period, clerking of SACRE was undertaken by Jacqui Mellor of Governor Services.

The Local Authority provided funding to support SACRE activity 2025 - 2026 by contracting with RE Today Services of an RE Consultant for SACRE support, provision of the annual report, management of the AWARE award and CPD.

Julia Diamond-Conway from RE Today took on the role of RE consultant.

Amy Appleyard held responsibility for SACRE support and liaised with the Chair, Clerk and RE consultant.

Membership

The table provided below demonstrates the composition of Bury SACRE. Members in bold signify attendance. (A) signifies apologies were received and recorded in the minutes.

	8 October 2025	23 March 2026	8 June 2026
Committee A	**Alan Beedie (Chair)** Bec Hyndman Alison Knott (A) Russell Conn Mandy Williams Fatima Zubair Martin Knowles (A)	**Alan Beedie (Chair)** **Bec Hyndman** **Alison Knott** Russell Conn (A) **Mandy Williams** Fatima Zubair **Martin Knowles**	**Alan Beedie (Chair)** Bec Hyndman (A) **Alison Knott** Russell Conn (A) Mandy Williams (A) Fatima Zubair (A) **Martin Knowles**
Committee B	Sheryl Farnworth (A) Claire Clark **Gail Branch**	**Sheryl Farnworth** **Claire Clark** **Gail Branch**	Sheryl Farnworth Claire Clark (A) **Gail Branch**
Committee C	Rachel Messenger Zoe Simmons	Rachel Messenger **Zoe Simmons**	**Rachel Messenger** **Zoe Simmons**
Committee D	Cllr M Hayes (A) **Cllr K Hussain**	Cllr M Hayes (A) **Cllr K Hussain**	Cllr M Hayes (A) **Cllr M Walsh**
In attendance	**Jacqui Mellor (Clerk)** **Julia Diamond-Conway** **Sonja Butterworth**	**Jacqui Mellor (Clerk)** **Julia Diamond-Conway** Damian Kay (A)	**Rebecca Taylor (Clerk)** **Ian Nicholson** Julia Diamond-Conway (A) **Amy Appleyard** Ben Dunne (A) Damian Kay (A)
Observer	Ravinder Kaur Joanne Burns	Ravinder Kaur Joanne Burns (A)	Ravinder Kaur Joanne Burns
	8 October 2025	23 March 2026	10th June 2025

Training

Training is available to SACRE members through NASACRE and is advertised to all members of the SACRE.

Finance

The LA allocated funding for support to SACRE from the RE Consultant. Funding was allocated for clerking.

Appendix A

Circulation of the Annual Report

The Bury 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