

Education Durham: Report to Durham SACRE 2nd March 2023

Before the previous SACRE meeting, Education Durham commissioned the DCC Data and Performance team to provide an analysis of how Durham schools performed in GCSE R.E., comparing outcomes in 2022 to those of previous years and setting these against national outcomes for R.E. The national statistical release of GCSE results only took place on 20th October 2022, so details of the analysis provided to the November SACRE meeting were not fully developed. The full statistical analysis is attached to this report as an appendix.

Ongoing analysis is being made to assess validity, locally, of NATRE findings that suggest pupils attending schools with higher proportions of disadvantaged pupils are less likely to have the opportunity to take GCSE religious studies. The initial picture seems to corroborate this, with the majority of schools in County Durham that have highest free school meal (FSM) entitlements either entering small cohorts or making no entries at all for GCSE Religious Studies. A fuller report will be made once the analysis is complete.

Analysis of patterns of success relating to early entry is ongoing. The theory, based on research findings over time, that pupils with lower prior attainment who are entered early for their Religious Studies GCSE perform worse than their peers with low prior attainment who are *not* early entrants, is proving difficult to determine in County Durham, due in part to the general interruption to children's education resulting from Covid. However, a final report on this piece of work will be made at the next SACRE meeting.

Nationally in 2022 Religious Studies was one of the most popular subjects for early entry with 15.9 percent of total early entries, the second highest subject after English Literature. Early entry in Durham is likewise higher in Religious Studies than most other subjects.

While more work needs to be done by the DCC Data and Performance team to confirm exact patterns of entry, the following table is perhaps indicative of a decline in GCSE entries for Religious Studies, although only providing data from one examination board:

AQA Religious Studies GCSE - Number of entries in Durham local authority over time						
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2022
Full course GCSE	2760	2467	2196	92	-	
Full course GCSE Grades 1-9	-	-	-	460	310	255
Short course GCSE	98	32	125	85	-	-
Short course GCSE grades 1-9				168	12	15

As stated, further analysis will be completed, and the outcomes reported at the next SACRE meeting.

Ofsted deep dives

At the last SACRE meeting, it was reported that Ofsted does not publish any data on the number of 'deep dives' undertaken in primary school inspections. A range of statements from schools nationally, collected from published Ofsted inspection reports by NATRE, was shared.

It was agreed that a complete round-up of Ofsted comments on R.E. (including SMSC) from reports published on Durham schools would be compiled and presented to Durham SACRE at each termly meeting. The reports published between the last SACRE meeting and this one which refer to R.E. or SMSC, therefore, are given here:

Browney Academy – (inspection date - 08/11/22). Outcome - GOOD

Extract: "Pupils talk with confidence about British values. The school curriculum ensures that pupils have a range of visits to places such as the Centre for Life. However, some pupils have some misconceptions about life in modern Britain. Some pupils also confuse basic information about the major world faiths. Whole-class books/texts support pupils in developing an understanding of diversity."

Chilton Academy – (inspection dates - 12/10/22 and 13/10/22) – GOOD

Mention of diversity; no mention of R.E.

Collierley Nursery and Primary, Dipton – (inspection dates - 18/10/22) – GOOD

Extract: "The curriculum prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain. Leaders are determined that pupils learn about the local community and further afield. Pupils benefit from a broad range of experiences, including trips to the theatre, visiting museums and participating in sporting activities. Pupils learn about different religions and cultures from around the world."

Elemore Hall Special School – (inspection dates - 6th – 8th Sept - residential) – GOOD

Extract: "Children learn about the world around them. They explore topics such as racism, different cultures and faiths. Staff talk to children about the importance of tolerance."

Evergreen Primary Special School – (inspection dates - 6th – 7th December) – GOOD

no mention of R.E.

Ferryhill Station Primary — (inspection dates - 4th / 5th October) - GOOD

Extract: "Leaders have developed a thorough programme of personal development for pupils. Pupils enjoy sports opportunities, fundraising runs and team-building trips. They learn about world views and meet representatives of different faiths."

Frosterley Primary – (inspection dates - 21st September) – GOOD

Extract: "Leaders involve pupils in many community initiatives to extend their understanding of the world. This includes a joint venture with the Bowes Museum based on shared artwork with Japan. Pupils contribute to village life through their performances and articles in the local magazine. By working with industrial partners, leaders highlight potential future careers in the area. The connection with the County Durham Faith Network helps pupils to understand there are people of different faiths and cultures."

Horndale Infants – (inspection dates - 4th / 5th October) – GOOD

Extract: "Leaders plan trips to notable places of interest in the locality. Pupils enjoyed a recent trip to Durham Cathedral."

New Seaham Academy – (inspection dates - 12th / 13th October) – GOOD
Reference to SMSC - no mention of R.E.

Park View School – (inspection dates - 14th /15th December) – R.I.
No mention of R.E.

Stephenson Way Primary – (inspection date - 18th October) – GOOD
Extract: “Pupils have a very clear understanding of difference and equality. Through the curriculum, pupils learn about a range of other faiths and cultures. They understand the importance of tolerance.”

Westlea Primary, Seaham – (inspection dates - 30th November / 1st Dec) – GOOD
Extract: “Pupils enjoy a wide range of school clubs and sporting opportunities. They learn about world views and cultures. Through these activities, pupils develop a wide range of interests and an understanding of modern society.”

Ofsted subject reviews

Ofsted has begun to publish a new round of subject reviews, with the review on Science published on 2nd February 2023, and we are advised that a R.E. subject review will be published in the coming months.

In the meantime, some of the findings from February’s Science review may throw light on the teaching of R.E. and may anticipate, if not the content of the subject review when it is published, then the priorities of the lead Ofsted inspectors who will write the document:

- Science is taught in blocks in Primary schools and some pupils go for long periods of time without specific lessons in the subject (This may also be true of R.E.)
- Too few schools put a priority on developing specific subject knowledge for their teachers in Science (this is likely also to be the case in R.E.)
- There are few examples of secondary schools understanding the subject curriculum that has been taught at primary level, and then building upon it. The amount of R.E. taught at primary, and the depth, is therefore unlikely to be understood by many secondary teachers.
- Schools should plan the secondary curriculum to build on what pupils learned at primary, rather than repeat it.
- Schools should ensure enough time is built into the subject curriculum for pupils to both learn and remember knowledge.

Support and resources for schools

Training for R.E. teachers in the spring term has taken place as follows:

Judaism explored in the primary classroom. Friday 3rd February (Primary & Special) – all day course, face-to-face.

The session was facilitated on behalf of Education Durham by Catherine Robson, external subject adviser, and delivered with inputs from both NATRE and the Jewish Museum, London. The course was positively evaluated by all attendees. Inputs were recorded and so

these recording can be an ongoing resource for schools. Officers are currently exploring ways to make recordings available on the new schools' portal (live from April). Education Durham is planning with Catherine Robson to include contributions from a range of faith representatives across future networks through 2023/24.

Networks in the spring and summer terms are scheduled as follows:

Fri 10th March 2023 (Primary & Special) – face-to-face and virtual

Friday 3rd March 2023 (Secondary & Special) – face-to-face

Friday 30th June 2023 (Primary & Special) – face-to-face and virtual

Friday 7th July 2023 (Secondary & Special) – face-to-face

The network foci for the rest of 2023 includes developing and articulating a well sequenced curriculum and supporting and developing non-specialist teaching. Future foci for networks will probably emerge following the publication of the Ofsted R.E. subject review. The MS Teams network site will continue to signpost low-cost/no-cost R.E. training and resources.

Attendance for the Primary networks, according to currently booked places, stands at x89 for the spring (primary), and x77 for the summer (primary). For the Secondary networks this is spring (x10), summer (x10).

In-school support for Religious Education –

As part of the drive by Education Durham to build capacity for subject support in schools, consultation with head teachers has led to the identification of five R.E. subject specialists in primary schools who have become part of the Associate Adviser team working alongside Catherine Robson (secondary – Durham Johnson School and Sixth Form).

Yohden Primary
Staindrop Primary
Delves Lane Primary
Burnside Primary
Wingate Primary

This group is undertaking work through the spring term and early part of the summer term to determine the scope and quality of delivery of the primary R.E. curriculum, including challenges facing schools in relation to the teaching of R.E. and the training needs of subject leads and teachers. This is a development from a simple survey mentioned in the previous Education report to SACRE and will hopefully yield information that will be more useful to members of SACRE and have a greater training and development value for schools and leaders in County Durham. This piece of work is planned for completion in time to be presented at the next SACRE meeting.

The R.E. Associate Advisers will be trained and available to provide in-school subject support.

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