

Education Durham's report to SACRE

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Introductory comments

This report introduces our new in-school advisors joining SACRE this term, a summary of the professional development and networking opportunities available to RE leaders and teachers, contracted support delivered and summaries from Ofsted deep dives into RE in County Durham.

New in-school advisors joining SACRE

We are delighted that Paul Bray (Durham Johnston Comprehensive School), Emma Downing (Wingate Primary School) and Victoria Mitchell (Yohden Primary School) are joining SACRE as in-school advisors. Paul, Emma and Victoria all lead on RE in their respective schools and their experience stands them in good stead to be able to share school perspectives on the planning, delivery and impact of RE in schools today. All three have supported with school-to-school contract work and their expertise is highly valued.

Course and network offer 2024-2025

Please find a summary of the courses and networks Education Durham is offering to schools this academic year below.

Autumn 2024

- Primary RE network
- Secondary RE network
- New to leading primary RE course

Spring 2025

- Primary RE network
- Secondary RE network
- Hinduism course/ ensuring progression in RE course

Summer 2025

- Primary RE network
- Secondary RE network
- Disciplinary literacy in RE course
- Knowing the impact of your RE curriculum course

We continue to offer termly networks for primary and secondary RE leaders across County Durham. Primary networks remain well-attended. Secondary networks recruit minimally which is something we are reviewing as part of a broader conversation. This term we received 2 secondary bookings compared to 61 primary bookings.

'New to leading primary RE' was one of a series of foundation subject courses offered earlier this term and received 14 bookings. It received positive feedback, exemplified by the comment below:

"A real co-ordinator sharing good practice in an authentic and helpful way. She was passionate about her subject, focussed on the key messages and had a breadth of knowledge. The course was well-paced, motivating and comprehensive."

A course around Hinduism was requested by schools and, on looking at course feedback, we felt that schools needed more support around ensuring progression in RE. This has been scheduled for the spring term with both parts taking place over one full day to make it easier for schools to plan cover arrangements.

'Disciplinary literacy' and 'knowing the impact' courses are part of a series of courses we are offering across foundation subjects. They will be led by members of our team with Ofsted experience and our leadership advisors who support on a strategic level across schools.

Contracted support

Since the summer term 2024, we have received 21 hours of contract requests for support with religious education. These have come from four schools:

- Seaham High School
- Bowes Hutchinson CE Aided Primary School
- Copeland Road Primary School
- Durham Gilesgate Primary School

Requests vary in nature and support provided is bespoke to each school. Themes have included:

- a review of RE provision with recommendations around next steps
- guidance on high-quality teaching and learning in RE plus checking for sufficient multi-faith coverage
- support for a new subject leader including an audit of resources
- advice around mixed age planning and assessment in RE

Ofsted deep dives

Over the last year, there were only four 'deep dives' into Religious Education: all were in primary schools. Until this year, deep dives were carried out in both section 5 (long) and section 8 (short) inspections. Deep dive subjects do not receive a judgement in isolation: the findings from these are triangulated with other evidence to establish a verdict around the quality of education being offered by a school. Since September 2024, Section 8 (ungraded) inspections do not include a subject deep dive.

Dean Bank Primary	22 nd and 23 rd May 2024	Requires improvement
"In other subjects such as religious education... pupils can remember little of what they have been taught".		

Fencehouses Woodlea Primary	30 th April and 1 st May 2024	Section 8 short inspection
In religious education there has been careful thought into planning visits to places of worship so that pupils have a good understanding of the world they live in and different world faiths."		

Stanley Crook Primary	16 th April 2024	Section 8 short inspection
<i>No mention in the report</i>		

Sugar Hill Primary	4 th October 2023	Section 8 short inspection
<i>No mention in the report</i>		

The Spring report to SACRE will include information relating to examination results for the summer 2024 series.