

Essex SACRE Annual Report 2021-2022

Essex SACRE is a member of the National Association of SACREs

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Section 1 Introduction

It has been a busy year for Essex SACRE, and members have played an active part in SACRE's work. Christine Horton, who had chaired Essex SACRE for four years, came to the end of her term of service in November 2021, and I took over the role of Chair from that point. We are grateful to Christine for her service.

Our Local Authority officer, Cathie Bonich, retired at the end of the Summer term in 2021, and Alison Fiala replaced her. Again, we are grateful for Cathie's work in supporting SACRE and liaising with others in the Local Authority.

SACRE's work has focused on preparations for the introduction of the new Agreed Syllabus. The Agreed Syllabus Conference recommended the adoption of the Norfolk Syllabus, but with some changes to make it more appropriate for Essex, which is a large and diverse Local Authority. The syllabus will be statutory in LA and VC schools from September 2023, but SACRE has hosted a number of online training sessions for teachers in order to equip them to plan their curriculum and to get to grips with the different disciplinary lenses through which the new syllabus explores the landscape of religion and worldviews. This training and support for teachers will continue throughout 2022-2023, and SACRE will plan appropriate support for schools on an ongoing basis.

SACRE members have been conscious of the lasting impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic in many schools, and recognise the importance of supporting teachers and leaders in their work.

As we move into 2023, SACRE aims to make better links with Essex schools, and put in place the necessary support to enable high-quality religious education and meaningful collective worship to be available to every young person.

Sarah Lane Cawte
Chair Essex SACRE

Section 1 Overview

Since 1988, it has been a requirement that every local education authority (LA) has a Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE).

Though legislation sets out both the structure and the remit of a local SACRE – principally, overseeing religious education (RE) and collective worship (CW) – in practice every SACRE has developed its own particular style and character.

Some of the notable features of SACRE's work during 2021-2022 are included in this report, namely its support to schools and its involvement with our new agreed syllabus development, to ensure our new syllabus is fit for purpose. There have been initial training sessions offered and full implementation will be from Autumn 2023.

The current Essex Agreed Syllabus 2015 has remained in place for the academic year 2021/22 due to the pandemic and delay in arranging² training for schools. The revised agreed

syllabus for RE was published in 2022 adopted from the Norfolk Agreed Syllabus 2019. Schools were advised that the full implementation had been put back to September 2023. We are indebted to Norfolk SACRE for allowing us to adopt the syllabus that they have developed, and to their generosity in permitting us to make some changes that reflect the contexts of schools in Essex. We are particularly grateful to John Semmens, the Chair of Norfolk SACRE, and to Simon Oldfield, the former Chair, who have been very supportive throughout the process of adopting the syllabus. We are also grateful to Dr Kathryn Wright, in whose work the interdisciplinary approach is rooted.

It is a legislative requirement that each SACRE produces an annual report of its work and that this is sent to the Department of Education (DFE), NASACRE, to local schools and to other interested parties. Essex LA makes this report available publicly through their website: https://schools.essex.gov.uk/other/Essex_SACRE/Pages/Essex-SACRE.aspx

SACRE met three times across the academic year 2021-2022. These meetings have continued to be held virtually November 2021, February 2022 and June 2022

Background

In the 2021 Census, figures show the religion data for Essex and our new agreed syllabus will enable all schools to engage with religion and worldviews reflecting the county and local context.

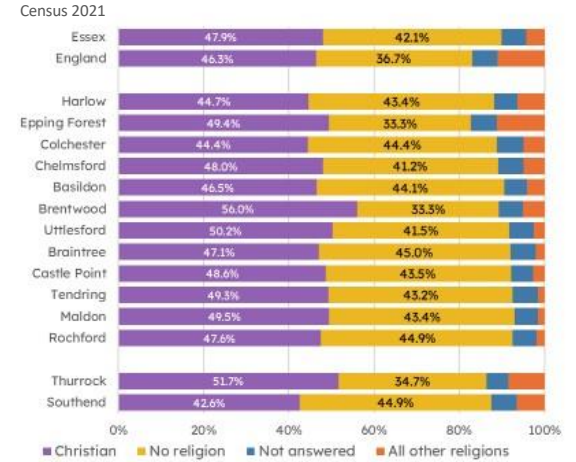
2021 Essex religion data

- No religion 42.1%
- Christian 47.9%
- Not answered 5.7%
- Other religions 4.3% (This is made up of:)
 - Buddhist 9%
 - Hindu 23.8%
 - Jewish 12.5%
 - Muslim 38.0%
 - Sikh – no figure
 - Other religion 11%

Main religion

- Christianity is the most common religion in Essex, 47.9% of residents listed Christianity as their main religion.
- Following Christianity, the next most common responses were No Religion (42.1%) and Not Answered (5.7%). Other religions make up the remaining 4.3% of residents, with Muslim (1.63%) and Hindu (1.0%) being the most common religions in Essex.
- The largest changes between the 2011 census are a decrease in the number of people listing Christianity as their main religion (down by c. 140,000), and increases in the number of people listing No Religion (up c.240,000), Muslim (up c.11,000), and Hindu (up c.7,000).

Main religion



Main religion

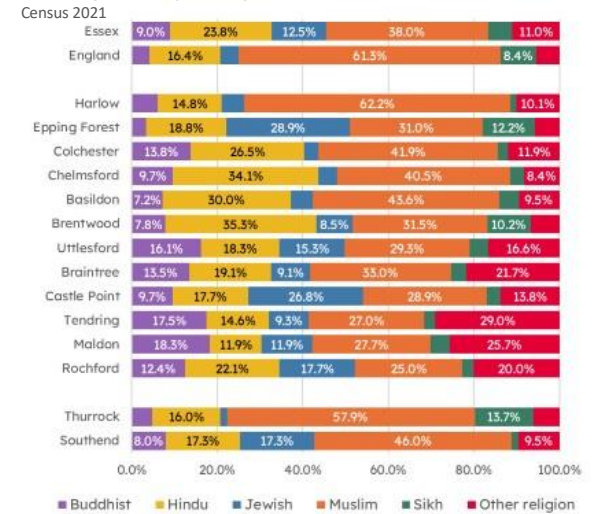
- The chart shows the main religions in the "All other religions" group across Greater Essex after removing the three most common responses (Christianity, No Religion & Not Answered).

Overall this accounts for less than 5% of residents.

The numbers in the chart have been rebased to sum to 100% to show the relative scale of religious groups within Essex. The percentage figures do not, therefore, relate to the percent of the total population.

Numbers and percentages for all groups are available in the appendix.

Main religion in the "All other religions" group only (not showing Christianity, No Religion, or No Answer)

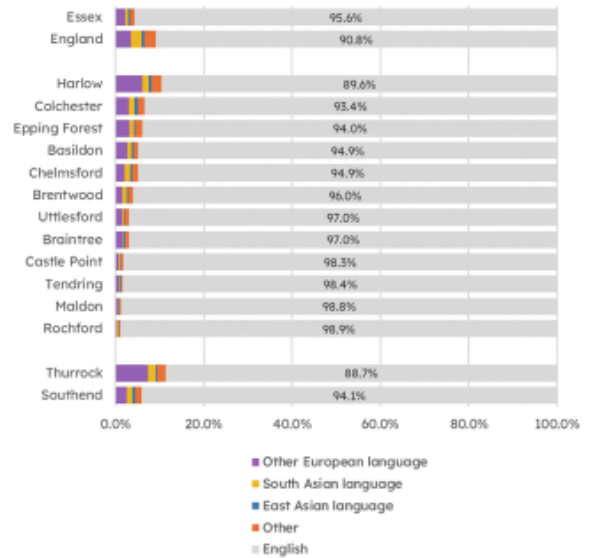


Note: This chart shows the proportion of 'other religions', not including Christianity, No Religion, and No Answer. These three groups account for 95.7% of all religions of Essex residents. They have been removed from the chart to better show differences in the other groups which would not otherwise be visible. See the table in the appendix for more detailed numbers.

Main language

- Language diversity is increasing across Essex. 95.6% of Essex residents have English as their main language, compared to 97% in 2011.
- The change between Census 2011 and 2011 is similar in scale to that seen across England as a whole.
- But Essex residents are more likely to have English as their main language than across England as a whole (95.6% compared to 90.8%).

Main language Census 2021

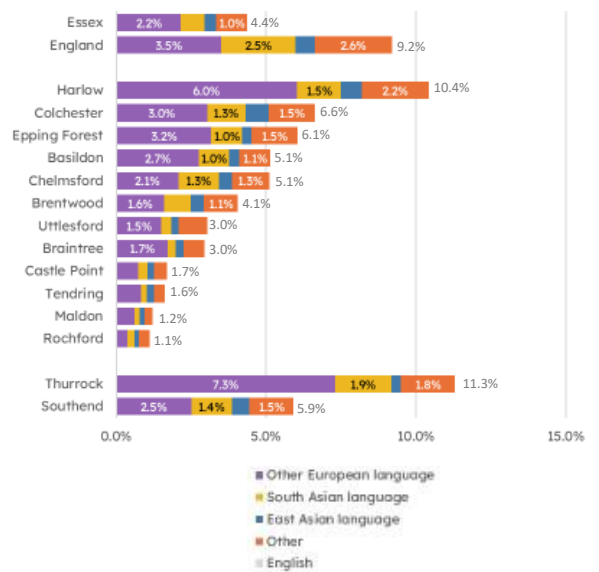


Main language

- Removing English from the chart opposite allows us to see more clearly the variation in other languages spoken across Greater Essex
- Other European languages are the second most common main languages spoken.
- The table below shows the top 10 main languages (other than English) spoken in Essex.

Common main languages	Number	Percent
Romanian	10,534	0.70%
Polish	7,730	0.51%
Lithuanian	2,725	0.18%
Turkish	2,376	0.16%
Portuguese	2,363	0.16%
Spanish	2,217	0.15%
Malayalam	2,069	0.14%
Bulgarian	1,920	0.13%
Italian	1,770	0.12%
Tamil	1,767	0.12%

Main language (English not shown) Census 2021



Slides– Census 2021 Ethnicity, Language, Religion- December 2022 Essex County Council- Research and Insight Chief Executives Office (downloaded 03.01.23)

Number of Schools by Status

	Academy	Community	Foundation	Voluntary Aided	Voluntary Controlled	Total
Nursery		2				2
Infant	18	16	5	3		42
Junior	22	9	4	4		39
Primary	187	84	22	33	40	366
Primary Phase Total	227	111	31	40	40	449
All through	2					2
Secondary	75		1	3		79
Special	14	5	1			20
Total	318	116	33	43	40	550

Last updated 12 October 2022

Section 2 Standards and quality of provision of Religious Education (RE)

2.1 Within Essex, advice is available to schools around RE through:

- The Essex Local Agreed Syllabus
https://schools.essex.gov.uk/other/Essex_SACRE/Documents/RE%20AGREED%20SYLLABUS%202015%20exploRE.pdf and support units of work
- the SACRE RE consultant

2.2 The LA/RE consultant to SACRE has given advice to the local authority on several occasions in 2021/2022

- The SACRE consultant has provided support and guidance to schools through e-mail and online meetings when requested by the school and guidance from the LA
- Supported the planning and preparation for the new Local Agreed Syllabus 2022. Schools were advised that the full implementation had been put back to September 2023.
- Co-ordinated and sent out support information linked to the implementation of the new local agreed syllabus following attendance at the initial training sessions offered during Spring and Summer 2022.

SACRE provides guidance on the statutory 'right of withdrawal' of pupils from Religious Education. From the LA's monitoring of schools we know that no pupils have been withdrawn from RE lessons across primary.

2.3 Complaints about RE

There have been no complaints received about RE from any Essex schools during 2021 - 2022

2.4 Public examinations

As public examinations have been disrupted as a result of the pandemic, in line with DfE advice we will not publish comparisons of results for schools or the LA for the year 2021-2022.

2.5 Essex Agreed Syllabus

The current Essex Agreed Syllabus 2015 has remained in place for the academic year 2021/22 due to the pandemic and delay in arranging training for schools.

In the Spring Term 2022 and Summer Term 2022 initial online training was offered to schools for the new Essex Agreed Syllabus 2023 and work continued to ensure that full implementation can take place from Autumn 2023.

2.6 The quality of RE provision in schools

Schools continue to make use of the Agreed Syllabus in assessing pupils' attainment in RE.

The LA consultant has worked with primary and secondary subject leaders through e-mails and phone calls to signpost further assessment information when requested.

Monitoring the Agreed Syllabus is recognised as an area for development for the group, with ideas to be discussed for implementation in the next academic year as the new Agreed Syllabus is implemented.

The LA consultant systematically reviewed Essex school Ofsted reports in order to maintain an overview of standards within schools.

Ofsted reports have mentioned in 2021/22 the following around RE and CW

Maple Grove Primary School – Leaders have designed a curriculum which is ambitious and well thought. It focusses on the key knowledge pupils need to learn in each subject. Leaders have sequenced the curriculum so that pupils understand the links between different subjects. For example, pupils have knowledge from history about how civilizations used materials that are introduced in art lessons. Leaders ensure teachers have appropriate curriculum planning documents to underpin teachers' subject knowledge. As a result, pupils remember much from the subjects they are taught. Some teachers' knowledge of what need to be taught is not fully developed. They are still getting to grips with the content of some subjects, such as history, geography and religious education (RE). Occasionally, assessments are not precise enough for teachers to check whether pupils have learned important pieces of knowledge. This means that teachers have some, but not all, of the information they need to ensure pupils have fully grasped the intended learning.

The James Hornsby School – Leaders’ promotion of pupils’ personal development is a strength. Pupils learn about healthy relationship, respect for the cultures and beliefs of others and issues such as discrimination.

North Crescent Primary School – Through the curriculum, pupils reflect on their place in the world. For example, pupils explore the United Nation’s Rights of the Child. This contributes towards supporting pupils to have confidence in their identities and voices. From the moment children start in Reception they begin to develop their social skills effectively. Positive interactions, modelled by staff, provide a strong foundation for personal development. Across the curriculum, pupils are exposed to key themes such as culture. These strands are revisited regularly, over time. This is supporting pupils to understand acceptance and to celebrate differences between themselves.

Section 3 Standards and quality of provision for Collective Worship (CW)

- 3.1 Within Essex, advice is available to schools around CW through the SACRE LA Consultant. It is recognised by SACRE that there is a need to revisit advice and support for schools in this area. It is part of our development plan and we will start work in 2022/23
- 3.2 The LA Consultant has given advice to a few schools in 2021/2022 signposting to relevant current documentation.
- 3.3 Compliance with the statutory requirement:

SACRE did not receive any notifications from schools of parental withdrawals from Collective Worship.

- 3.4 Determinations: There were no requests for a determination from schools in 2021-2022, and there were no renewals.

Section 4 SACRE links with other bodies

Nationally: Essex SACRE is part of NASACRE and the LA consultant is a member of AREIAC, NATRE and the AREIAC executive. SACRE members attended the NASACRE virtual conference in May 2022 and the monthly webinar programme throughout the academic year. From these individual members gained knowledge and ideas to bring back to what we could do as Essex SACRE.

We are indebted to Norfolk SACRE for allowing us to adopt the syllabus that they have developed, and to their generosity in permitting us to make some changes that reflect the contexts of schools in Essex. We are particularly grateful to John Semmens, the Chair of Norfolk SACRE, and to Simon Oldfield, the former Chair, who have been very supportive throughout the process of adopting the syllabus. We are also grateful to Dr Kathryn Wright, in whose work the interdisciplinary approach is rooted.

Essex SACRE makes use of other support and signposts schools to support from groups such as:

- [RE Today](#)
- [NASACRE](#)

Section 5 SACRE's contribution to support schools through events and training

SACRE members have made contributions to schools virtually during 2021-2022 to support teaching and learning.

Section 6 SACRE's own arrangements

SACRE has been quorate for all of its meetings in the year September 2021 – August 2022

Chart of SACRE attendance 2021-2022

SACRE	Role	10/11/2021	23/02/2022	16/07/2022
Alex Crawford	Member – Other faiths	Apologies	Apologies	Apologies
Alison Fiala	LA Officer	N/A	Apologies	Y
Amy Dennis	Observer - Teacher	N/A	N/A	Y
Bill Stephenson	Member – Other faiths	Y	Y	Y
Briony Wilson	Member - Teacher	Apologies	Y	Y
Cathie Bonich	LA Officer	Y	N/A	N/A
Chris Thompson	Member – Other faiths	Y	Y	Y
Christine Horton	Member – C of E	Y	N/A	N/A
Councillor Aidan McGurran	Member - LA	Y	Y	Apologies
Councillor Andy Wiles	Member - LA	Apologies	Apologies	Apologies
Councillor Jane Fleming	Member - LA	Y	Apologies	Apologies
Councillor Jude Deakin	Member - LA	Apologies	Apologies	Apologies
Councillor Ross Playle	Member - LA	Y	Y	Y
Esther Eddy	Co-optee	Apologies	Y	Apologies
John Lee	Co-optee	Y	Apologies	Apologies
Lisa Fergus	Rep for LA Officer	N/A	Y	N/A
Maggie Woods	Member – Other faiths	Apologies	Y	Apologies
Margot Spurling	Member - Teacher	Y	Apologies	Apologies
Melissa Marable	Member - Teacher	Y	Y	Apologies
Naomi Shaw	Member – Other faiths	Y	Y	Y
Pamela Draycott	Member – C of E	Apologies	Y	Apologies
Pauline Collier	Member – C of E	Apologies	Y	Apologies
Revd. Alex Jeewan	Member – C of E	N/A	Y - observer	Y
Richard McIntosh	Member – Other faiths	Y	Y	Apologies
Ruth Everett	SACRE Consultant	Apologies	Y	Y
Sarah Lane Cawte	Member – Other faiths - CHAIR	Y	Y	Y
Sidra Naeem	Member – Other faiths	Y	Y	Apologies
Smita Rajesh	Member – Other faiths	Y	Y	Apologies
Susan Garratt	Member – Other faiths	Y	Apologies	Apologies

Sushila Karia	Member – Other faiths	Apologies	Apologies	Y
Val Cleare	Business Support ECC	Y	Y	Y

SACRE costs

Professional and administrative support

During the year 2021-2022, the following supported SACRE professionally and administratively:

- Cathie Bonich as the Local Authority officer followed by Alison Fiala
- Val Cleare as Business Support ECC to SACRE.
- Ruth Everett as professional SACRE consultant

Finance: The sum of £12,000 was made available through the LA to support the work of SACRE during the year. The sum covered the cost of employing an RE consultant, the cost of clerking SACRE, printing of the new Agreed Syllabus, training for the new Agreed Syllabus, subscription to NASACRE membership and attending conferences.

Appendix 1 Membership of Essex SACRE 2021-2022

SACRE support

Mrs Cathie Bonich – Local Authority Representative (November 2021)

Mrs Alison Fiala – Local Authority Representative

Mrs Ruth Everett – Consultant to SACRE

Miss Val Cleare – Business Support, Essex County Council

Group A – Other faiths panel

Alex Crawford (Buddhist)

Sushila Karia (Hindu)

Naomi Shaw (Jewish)

Richard McIntosh (Salvation Army)

Maggie Woods (Methodist)

Sidra Naeem (Muslim)

Chris Thompson (Roman Catholic)

Smita Rajesh (Hindu)

Sarah Lane Cawte (**Chair**) (United Reformed Church)

Bill Stephenson (Humanists UK)

Susan Garratt (Society of Friends)

Group B – Church of England panel

Christine Horton (**Chair**) (November 2021)

Pauline Collier

Pamela Draycott

Revd Alex Jeewan

Group C – Teacher panel

Margot Spurling

Melissa Marable

Briony Wilson

Esther Eddy

John Lee

Group D – Local Authority Panel

Councillor Jude Deakin

Councillor Jane Fleming

Councillor Aidan McGurran

Councillor Ross Playle

Councillor Andy Wiles

Appendix 2: SACRE priorities for 2021-2022

- Support the implementation of the new Agreed Syllabus
- Promote understanding and collaboration between schools that serve different communities across Essex
- Support the development of Primary RE leadership
- Support the subject knowledge of RE teachers
- Improve SACRE impact and effectiveness