

HOW CAN NATIONAL DATA HELP SACRES SPEAK WITH AUTHORITY?

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NASACRE Conference
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NASACRE REPORT

SACRE Funding in England

<https://www.nasacre.org.uk/file/nasacre/1-376-nasacre-report-on-sacre-funding-in-england-2021.pdf>



FUNDING

When asked a parliamentary question about SACRE funding in March 2018, Schools Minister, Rt Hon Nick Gibb MP gave the following written answer:

The Government is continuing to provide local authorities with funding for Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education (SACREs) through the Central School Services Block from 2018/19 onwards. Local authorities are expected to ensure that SACREs are funded adequately to perform their duties. SACREs continue to play an important role in supporting schools to teach high-quality religious education.

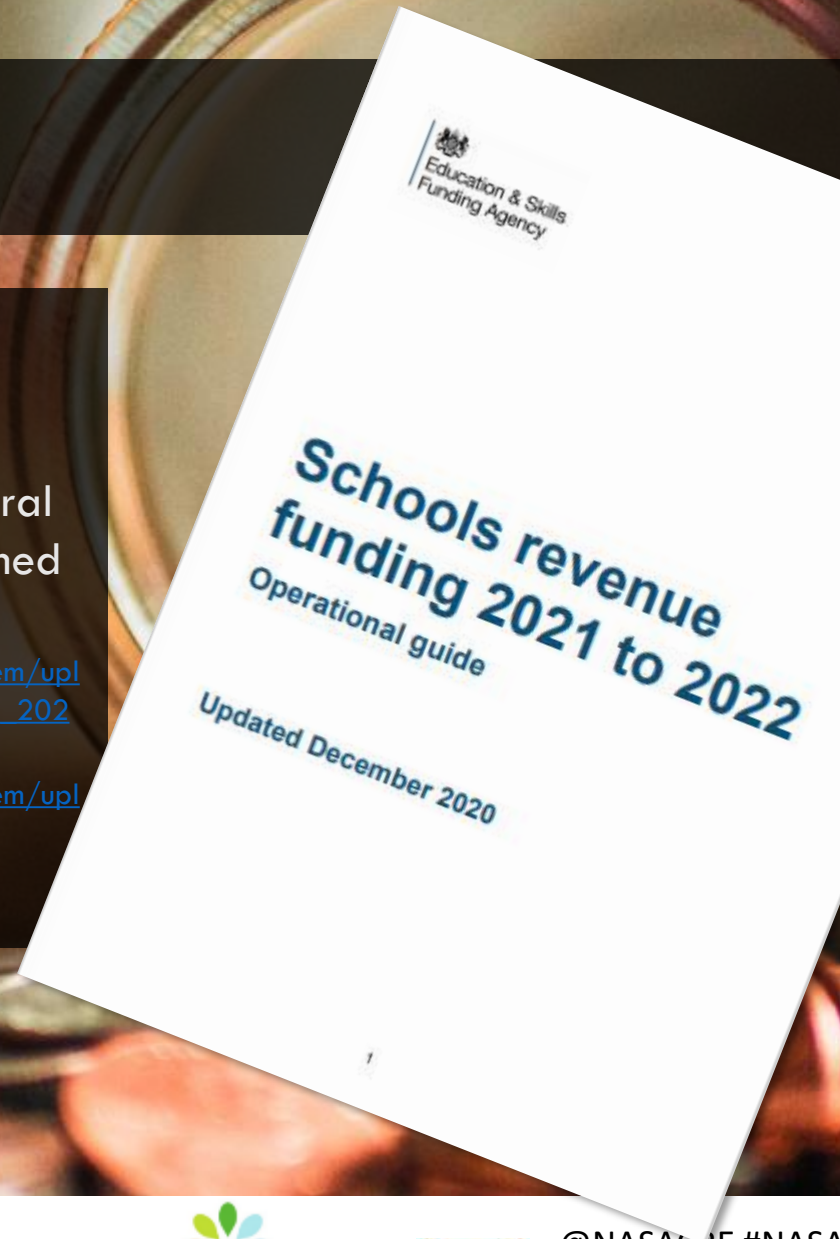
HC Deb, 26 March 2018, cW, <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2018-03-21/133819>



The CSSB (Central Services School Block) is funding allocated by central government (through the Education and Skills Funding Agency) to local authorities to carry out central functions on behalf of pupils in both maintained schools and academies in England.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/945784/Schools_Operational_guide_2021_to_2022_V4.pdf

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/901852/2021-22_NFF_summary_table.xlsx



Annex 2 – central services that may be funded with agreement of schools forums

The split of services between responsibilities that local authorities hold for all schools, and those that relate to maintained schools only are shown below.

Responsibilities held by local authorities for all schools are funded from the central school services block, with the agreement of schools forums.

Responsibilities held by local authorities for maintained schools only are funded from maintained schools budgets only, with agreement of the maintained schools members of schools forums.

The department has included references to the relevant schedules in the [School and Early Years Finance \(England\) Regulations 2020](#).

Responsibilities held for all schools

Statutory and regulatory duties

- Director of children's services and personal staff for director (Sch 2, 15a)
- Planning for the education service as a whole (Sch 2, 15b)
- Revenue budget preparation, preparation of information on income and expenditure relating to education, and external audit relating to education (Sch 2, 22)
- Authorisation and monitoring of expenditure not met from schools' budget shares (Sch 2, 15c)
- Formulation and review of local authority schools funding formula (Sch 2, 15d)
- Internal audit and other tasks related to the local authority's chief finance officer's responsibilities under Section 151 of LGA 1972 except duties specifically related to maintained schools (Sch 2, 15e)
- Consultation costs relating to non-staffing issues (Sch 2, 19)
- Plans involving collaboration with other LA services or public or voluntary bodies (Sch 2, 15f)
- Standing Advisory Committees for Religious Education (SACREs) (Sch 2, 17)
- Provision of information to or at the request of the Crown other than relating specifically to maintained schools (Sch 2, 21)

Education welfare

- Functions in relation to the exclusion of pupils from schools, excluding any provision of education to excluded pupils (Sch 2, 20)

2% OF CSSB

In a letter dated 15th August 2019, Secretary of State for Education, Rt Hon Gavin Williamson MP stated “it is important that SACREs should be resourced sufficiently to be able to fulfil their statutory functions”. NASACRE considers that an LA would need to allocate at least 2% of the CSSB to the SACRE to enable it to carry out its statutory duties, and significantly more in the year that the Agreed Syllabus is reviewed.

Gavin Williamson (2019) private correspondence, 15th August. <http://www.nasacre.org.uk/file/nasacre/1-246-letter-from-gavin-williamson.pdf>

The Department of Education has commented positively to NASACRE on this advice, acknowledging that its officials might use NASACRE’s estimate of a funding level of 2% of the CSSB to advise local authorities. However, authorities can, of course, determine their own budgets and where funding comes from to support SACREs.

DfE (2019) email to NASACRE, 18th March.

THE DATA

A freedom of Information request was sent to all Local Authorities in England on the 6th November 2020 by the National Association of SACREs. Responses were obtained from 136 LAs, with 15 not supplying answers by the end of March 2021.

THE HEADLINES

The majority of SACREs in England do not get a sufficient share of the CSSB to enable them to carry out their duties well.

Only 12 Local Authorities in 2019-2020 stated that they used 2% or more of CSSB funds on SACRE business, meaning 92% of SACREs were allocated less than 2% of the CSSB.

25 Authorities (18%) claim to use no funding on SACRE business in contravention of statutory responsibilities.

Over a quarter (27%) of Authorities told us they allocate no funds to professional support for the SACRE.

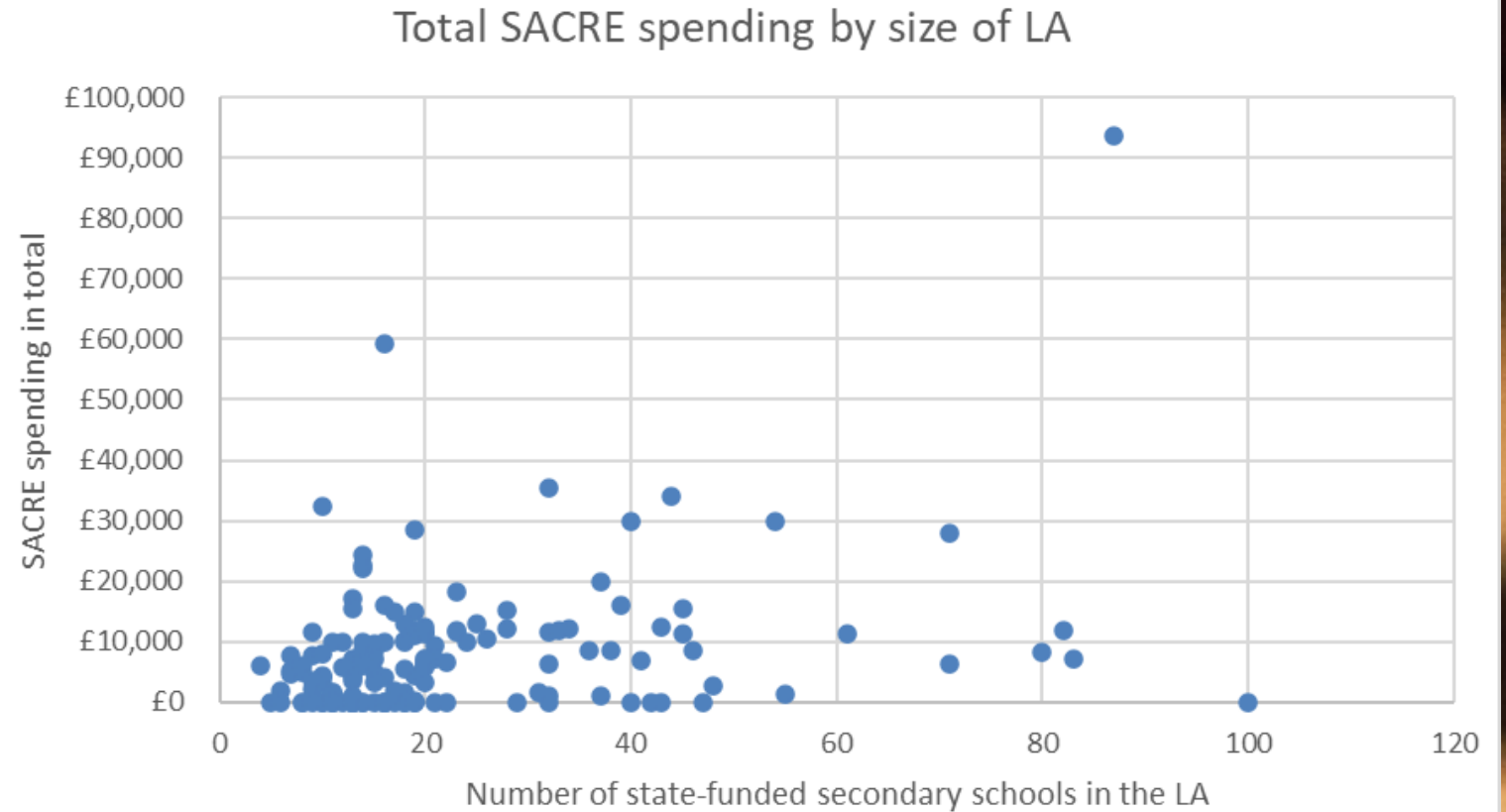
More than half of LAs (42, 53%) disclosed that they do not use any funds to support RE in schools.

Due to lack of adequate support it is increasingly difficult for some SACREs to fulfil their statutory duties; 7 LAs told us that their Agreed Syllabus was over 6 years old. One syllabus was last reviewed in 2010.

Note: All percentages are based on data from those authorities that provided an answer to that question.

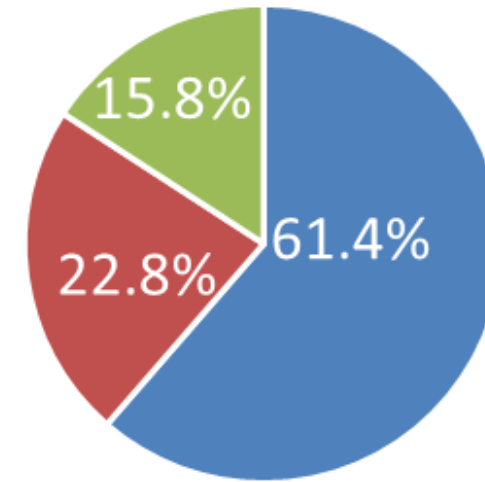
TOTAL AUTHORITY SPEND ON SACRE

Mean spend: £11K
Range: £93K to £105
25: no funding to SACRE



CSSB AND FUNDING SOURCES FOR SACRE

Source of SACRE funding



■ Funds from CSSB

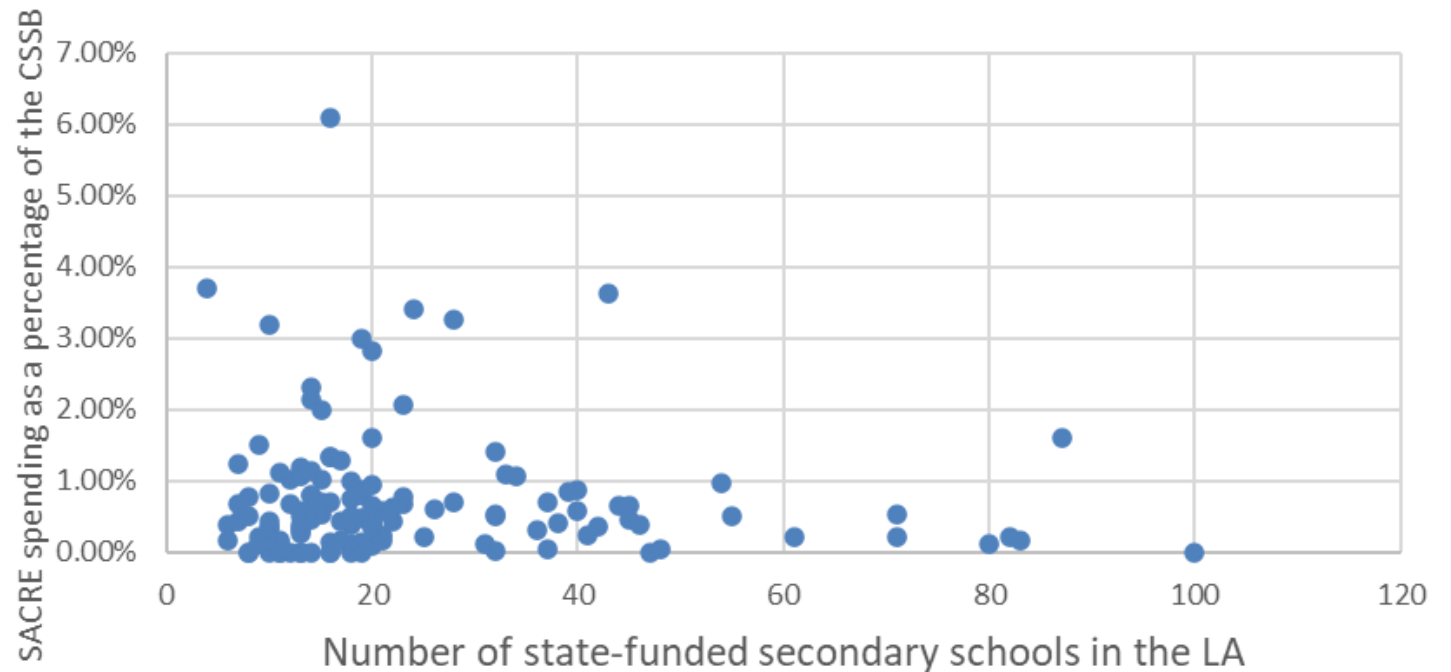
■ Funds outside the CSSB

■ Both CSSB and funds outside

CSSB AND FUNDING SOURCES FOR SACRE

The most well-funded SACRE received 6% of the CSSB from their LA in 2019/20. The average spending on a SACRE, Religious Education and Collective Worship, as a percentage of the allocated CSSB funding source (based on data from 136 LAs) was less than one percent, 0.72%.

What proportion of the CSSB funding do LAs spend on SACRE business?



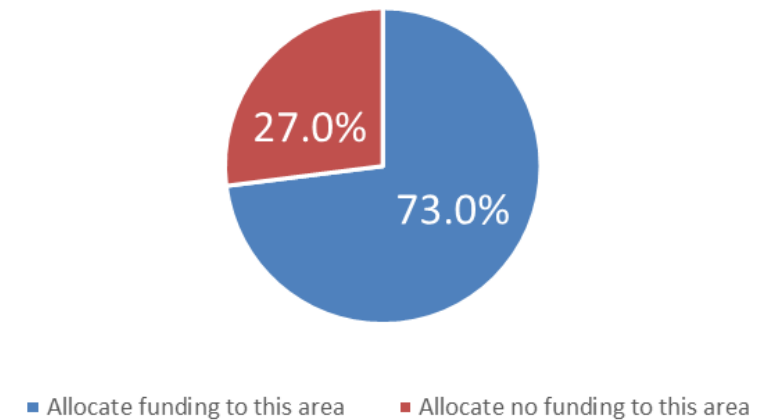
SPENDING ON SPECIFIC ITEMS

We asked LAs how much they allocated to **professional support** including advisers and consultants. 100 LAs answered this question. 27 reported that they allocated £0 of funding to professional support. The average spend on professional support by the 73 authorities that responded to say they allocate funding was £7,095.03. The responses ranged from £59,418 to £145.

We asked LAs how much they allocated to **democratic services** (e.g. clerking). 49 authorities responded to this question. Seven authorities reported allocating £0. 42 authorities responded that they allocate some funds to this area and their mean spend on democratic services was £2648.18. The responses ranged from £25,574 to £200.

We asked LAs how much they allocated to **supporting RE in schools**. 80 authorities responded to this question. 42 authorities allocate £0. The mean spend for the 38 authorities who allocate funding to this area is £2529.07. The level of support ranges from £10,829 to £112.

Spend on professional support



It is difficult to see how a SACRE can be fulfilling its statutory duties, let alone performing well, if an LA does not allocate some budget to professional support, democratic services and support for schools.

THE AGREED SYLLABUS

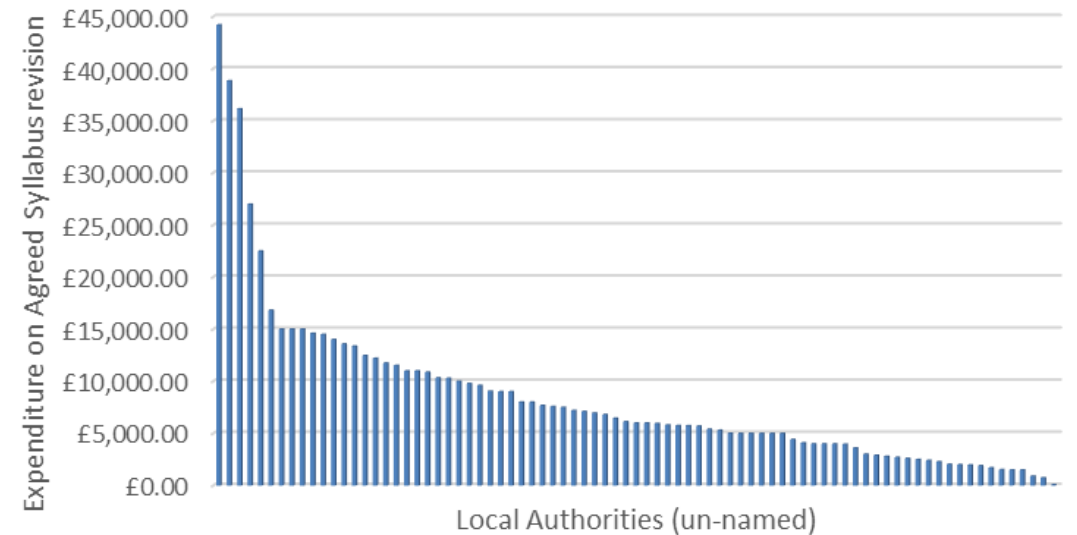
Published: 3 in 2014, 1 in 2013, 2 in 2012, 1 in 2010.

Mean cost: £8.5K

Range: £45K - £81

Most - 30 (of 81) cost £5-10K

Cost of Revising Agreed Syllabus



It is difficult to see how a syllabus can be properly reviewed without a significant spend. If minor changes are required, we would consider £5,000 to be a very bare minimum spend. We would expect a proper review process to cost in excess of £10,000.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Ministers

The DfE

Write to the 25 authorities who declared no spending on SACRE business and ask them how they can be expected to fulfil their statutory duties without using any funds.

Nick Gibb MP “If the Department is informed that an individual SACRE or ASC is experiencing difficulties in fulfilling its statutory duties, the Department will contact the local authority to remind them of their duty to support their activities satisfactorily.”

HC Deb, 28 March 2018, cW <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2018-03-28/134697>

RECOMMENDATIONS

Local Authorities

LAs must adequately fund SACREs to enable them to carry out their statutory duties and to support high quality RE and collective worship in schools. We consider 2% of CSSB to be a reasonable spend to enable this. LAs must set aside sufficient money to ensure the Agreed Syllabus Review can be effective every five years. We reiterate that as a minimum expectation, LAs must provide the following:

- a clerk
- a professional officer who has expertise in RE curriculum design;
- a publicly accessible place to meet;
- the reasonable expenses of members;
- publishing the agreed syllabus and other SACRE materials (including agendas and minutes), most usually on the LA website.
- NASACRE subscription and AGM attendance.

SACREs

Use the data! Share the report with LA. Ask for the LA's response to the FOI. Consider formal advice to the LA. Contact us (NASACRE) if your are not funded adequately.

And continue to do the best job you can – which is often brilliant in even very difficult circumstances.

Lobbying for RE

Can we change
the narrative?

Deborah Weston

National Association for
Teachers of RE



Too much emphasis on compliance as opposed to the big picture?



THE RE DEFENDER TOOLKIT

Resources to support teachers secure provision for RE

<https://www.natre.org.uk/uploads/Member%20Resources/THE%20RE%20DEFENDER%20TOOLKIT.pdf>

Argument 1

RE is statutory
therefore must be
included in the school
curriculum

FACT 1: RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IS COMPULSORY **FOR ALL PUPILS*** IN ALL STATE FUNDED SCHOOLS



- Every maintained school in England must provide a basic curriculum (RE, sex education and the National Curriculum). This includes provision for RE **for all registered pupils at the school** (from foundation stage to sixth form), *except for those withdrawn by their parents (or withdrawing themselves if they are aged 18 or over) in accordance with Schedule 19 to the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. The DfE have confirmed that, **“the duty to teach RE to all pupils means that it must be taught to each year group”**.
- Likewise, the funding agreement for academies requires that RE be taught **to all pupils**. See [p15ff in the model funding agreement](#). Note the references to **‘all pupils at the academy’**. As above, the DfE have confirmed that “all pupils” naturally includes pupils in all year groups including **foundation stage** and years **10 and 11**.
- *“It is also the case that, if a school is required by the agreed syllabus to teach a RS qualification at key stage 4 and enters its pupils for this at the end of Year 10, it should still be teaching RE in Year 11. Otherwise, it does not meet the duty to provide RE as part of its curriculum to ‘all registered pupils at the school’”*
- In case there is any query about the interpretation of the phrase ‘all pupils’, please see the letter paragraph 9 [here](#) which the DfE wrote to the Chair of the National Association of SACREs to clarify a number of issues including this one.

Argument 2

The basic curriculum (RE and the National Curriculum) is like a tapestry. Pupils' progress in each subject is reliant on their progress in several others.



FACT 5: EXCELLENT RE ENRICHES THE STUDY OF MOST SUBJECTS OF THE CURRICULUM



"... we know that a rigorous religious education acts as a Rosetta Stone between different subjects: unlocking our ability to make links and understand the great advances in science, politics, commerce, the arts and history."

Nick Gibb (Minister of State -2012)



- The curriculum is often described as a tapestry with the threads of knowledge, understanding and skill weaving their way through the different subjects of the taught curriculum. Consider way that learning in Religious Education interacts following areas to help support pupils' knowledge and understanding:
- English: Shakespeare is a required text for study in GCSE and features in the National Curriculum. Shakespeare produced works that explored numerous religious themes, raising universal questions concerning doubt, doctrine, and spirituality in the natural world.
- History: The study of the World Wars, the Reformation, the Holocaust, American Civil War all require pupils to consider the impact of religion on individuals, communities and societies
- Science: Pupils studies positive and negative human interactions with ecosystems will be enhanced by their exploration of religious and non-religious responses to these issues

Does studying RS improve your overall academic attainment?

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DOES STUDYING RS GCSE IMPROVE YOUR OVERALL ACADEMIC ATTAINMENT?

Does studying RS GCSE improve your overall academic attainment?

Local Authorities where there are higher rates of entry for GCSE RS, fair well in a range of performance measures. **Data published by NATRE on GCSE RS entries in 2020** shows that rates of entry vary widely between local authorities; from 11% of the cohort at the bottom of the scale and 77% at the top. Furthermore, those authorities with higher rates of entry have:

- higher attainment 8 scores across the curriculum
- higher rates of entry for the English Baccalaureate (EBacc)
- higher percentages of performance for EBacc subjects at grades 9-4



What do we know about the 20 LAs that recorded the highest level of entry for GCSE RS?

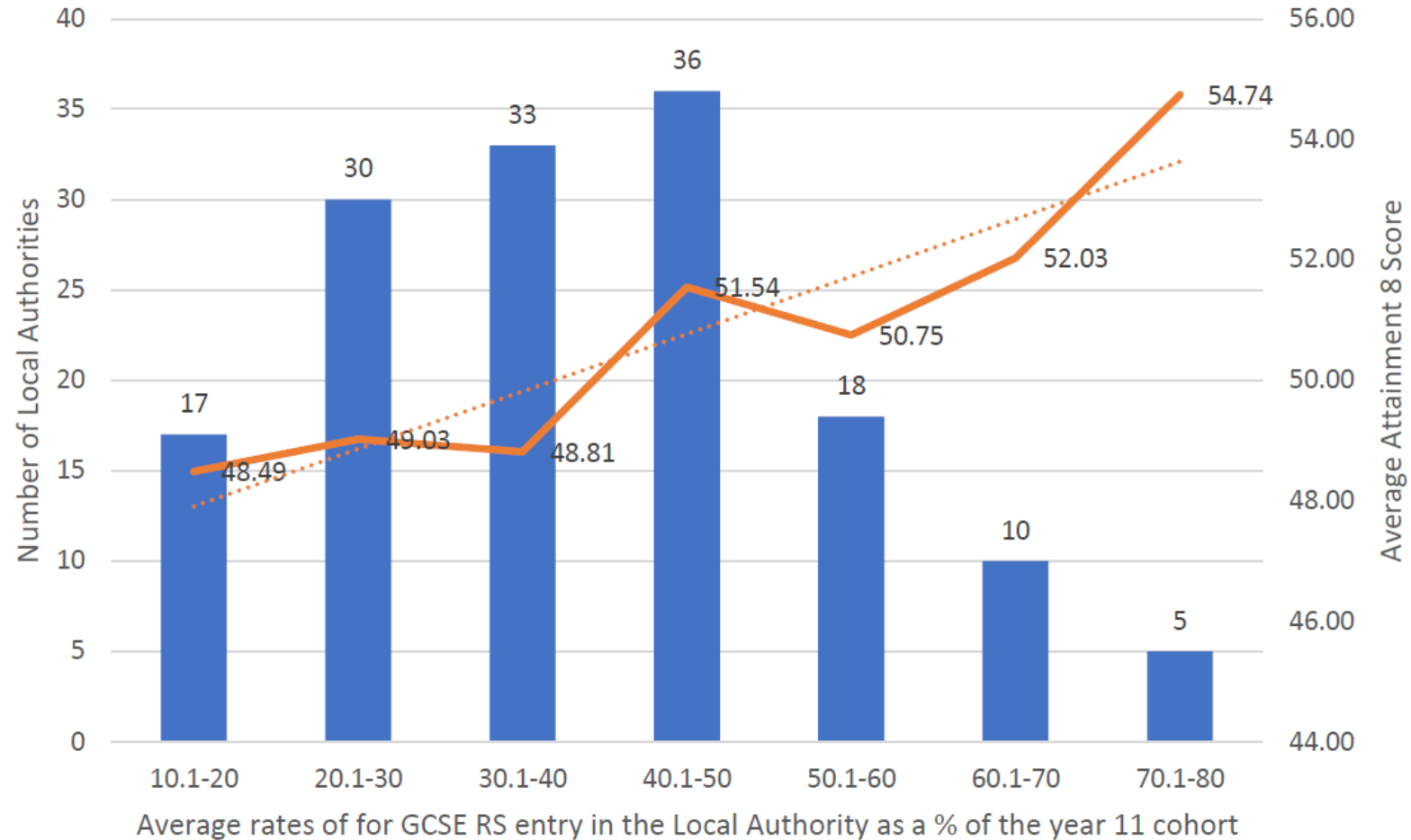
Highest average rate of entry was 77% and the lowest 11%

What do we know about the 20 local authorities that recorded the highest levels of entry for RS GCSE?

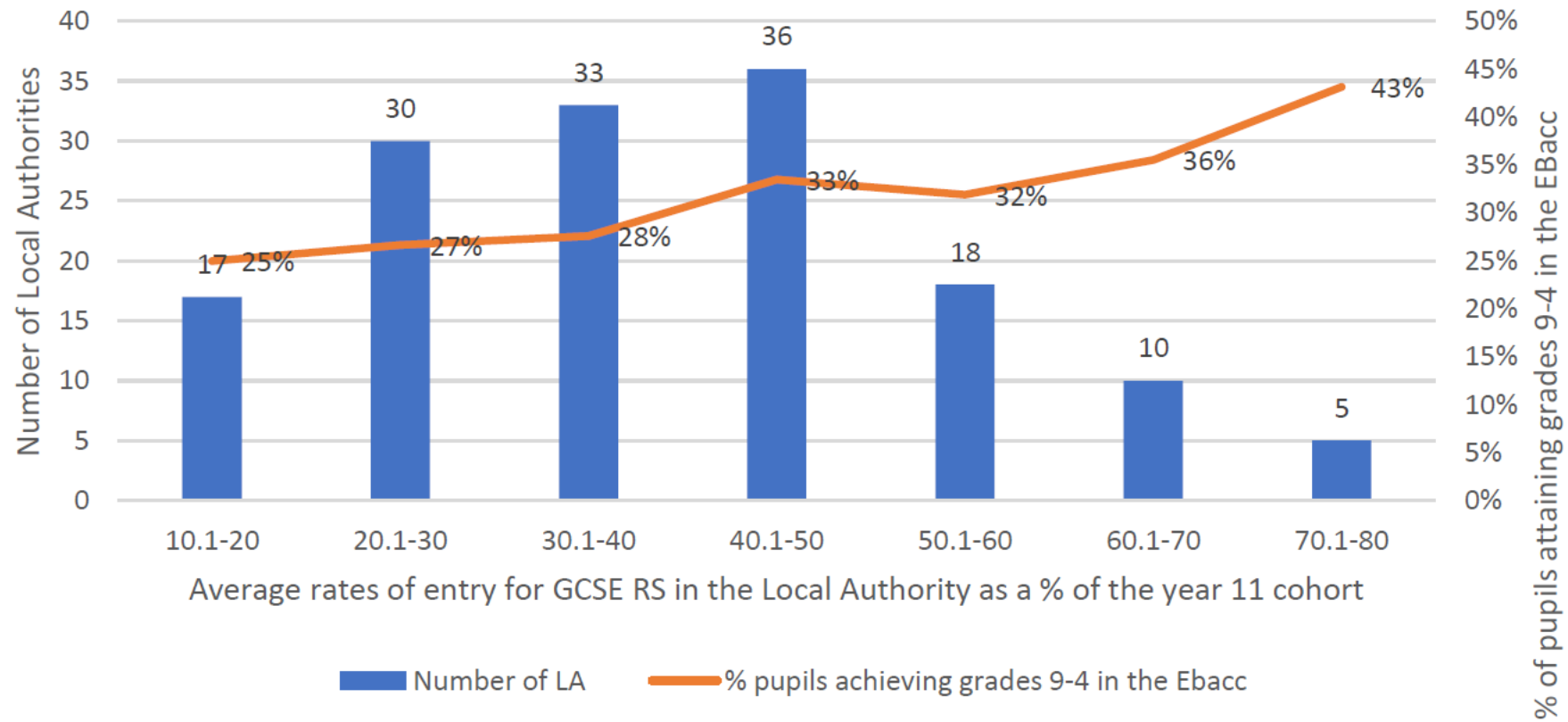
The average:

1. number of students from Black and Minority Ethnic Backgrounds in these local authorities is **18 percentage points above** the national average,
2. number of children in the authority being educated in a school with a religious character is **7 percentage points above** the national average,
3. entry of pupils in schools in these local authorities for GCSE RS is **40 percentage points higher** than the national average,
4. attainment of grades 9-4 in RS is **2 percentage points above** the national average,
5. attainment 8 score is **2 points above** the national average,
6. point score (APS) for EBacc subjects is **0.20 points above** the national average,
7. number of pupils entered for the EBacc in these local authorities is **7 percentage points higher** than the national average,
8. number of pupils that attained grades 9-4 for the English Baccalaureate is **6 percentage points above** the national average,
9. number of pupils entitled to claim free school meals is **0.8% percentage points lower** than the national average,

LAs with different average rates of entry for RS GCSE and their pupils' overall performance scores in 2020

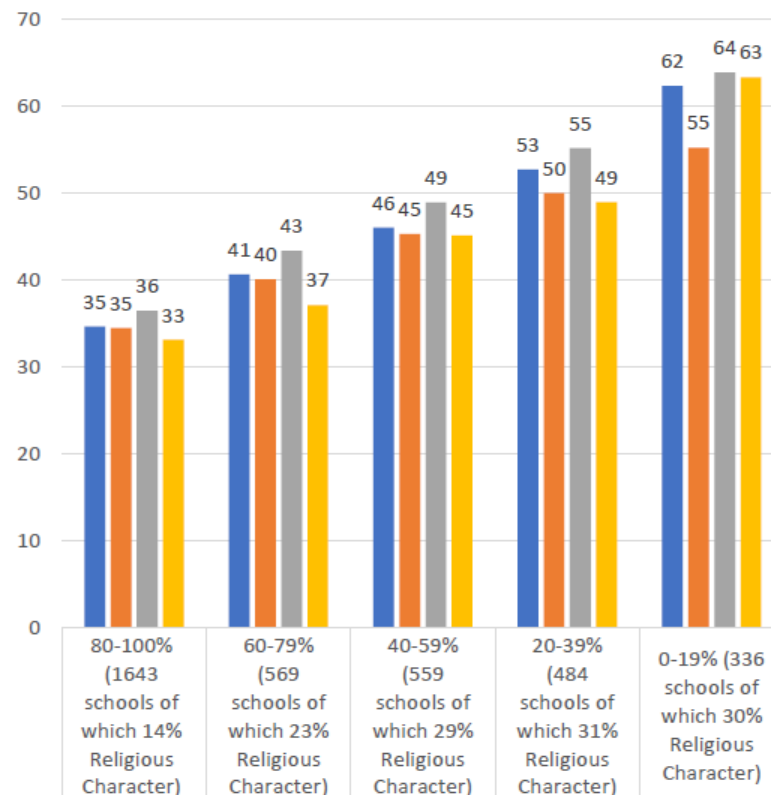


LAs with different rates of entry for GCSE RS and their pupils' attainment in the EBacc



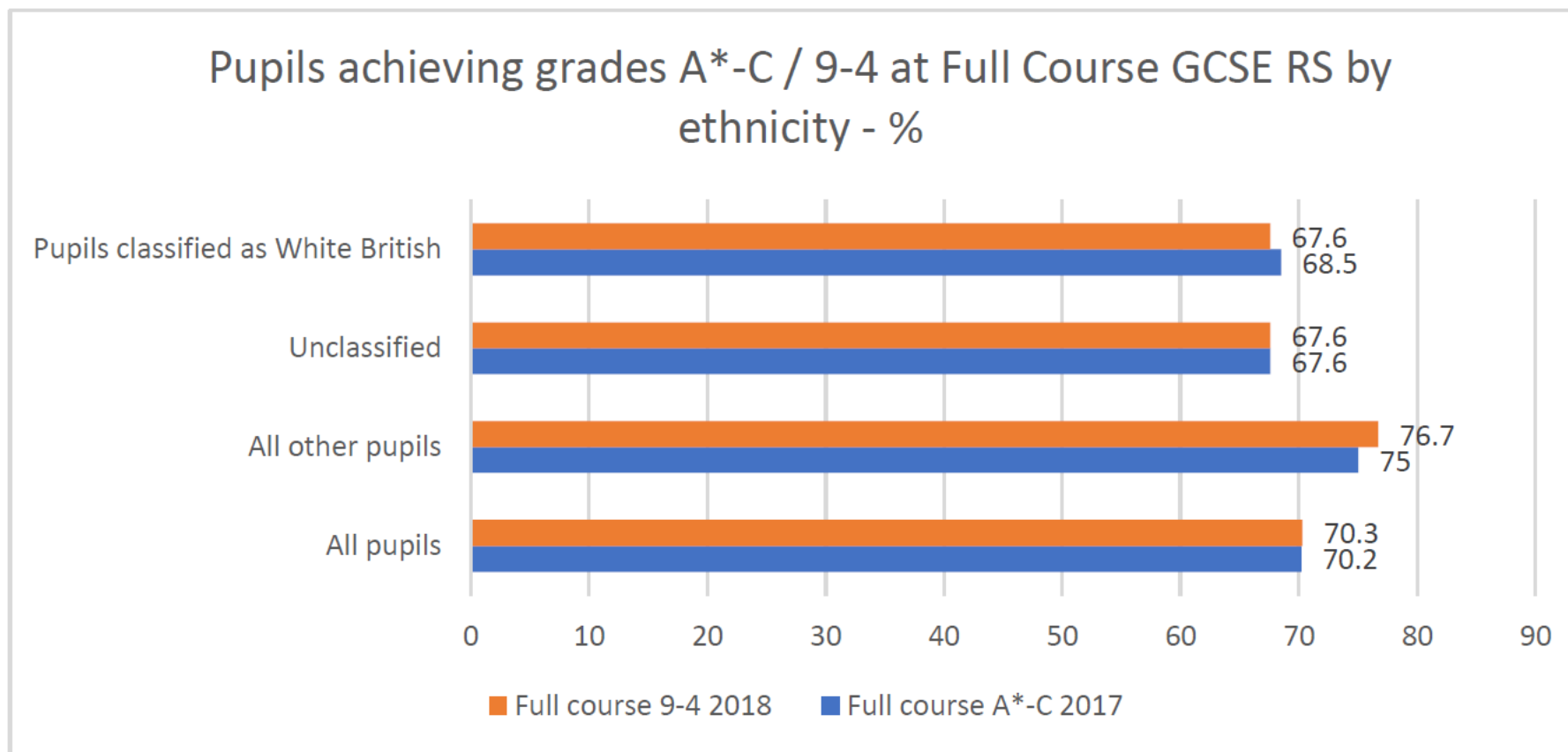
GCSE RS Full Course Entry Rates by Ethnicity of the Year 11 cohort 2018

Average rate of entry for GCSE Religious Studies 2018 - % of Year 11 cohort



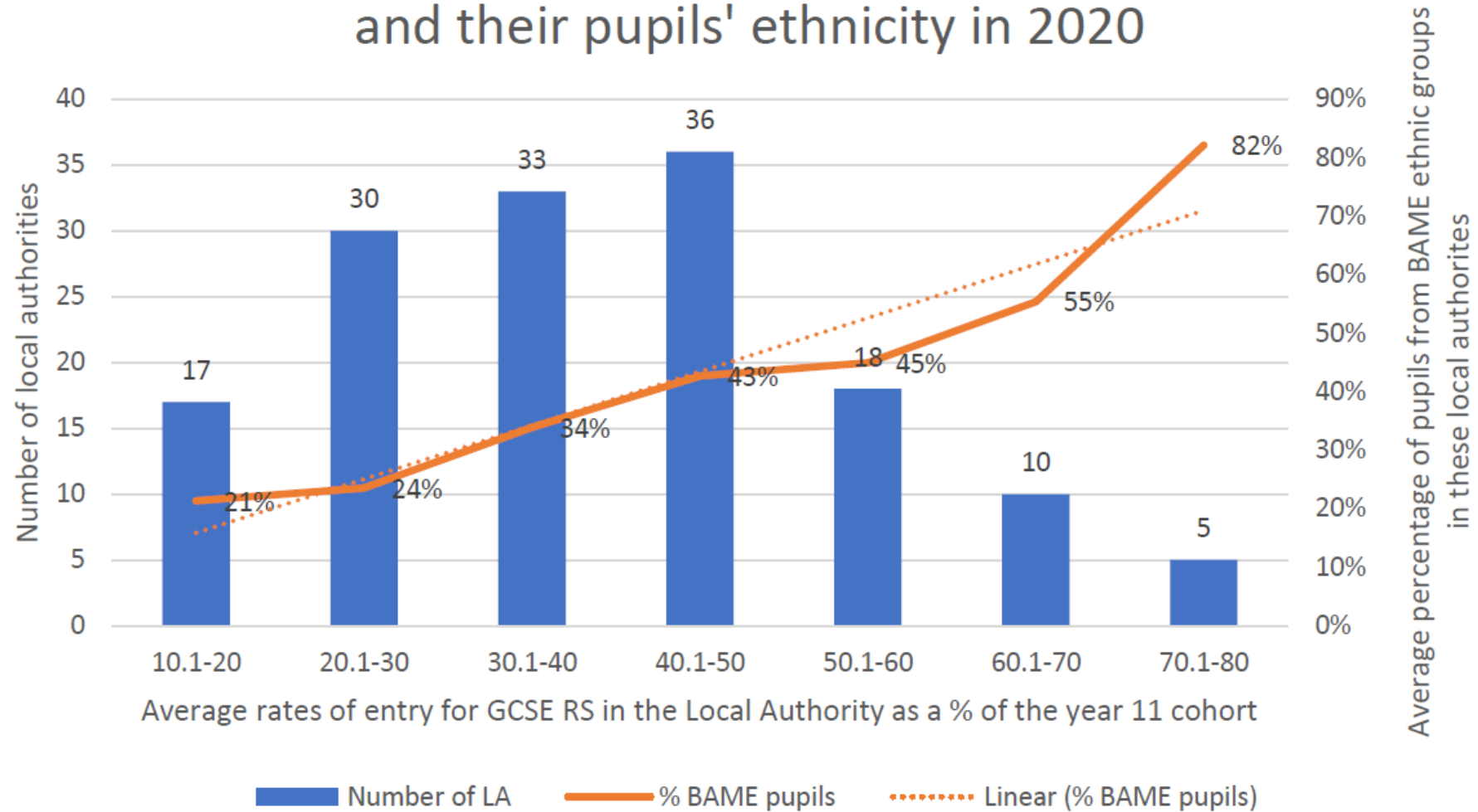
■ Average Entry for GCSE RS all pupils	35	41	46	53	62
■ Average Entry GCSE RS for White British pupils	35	40	45	50	55
■ Average Entry GCSE RS for all other pupils	36	43	49	55	64
■ Average Entry GCSE RS unclassified pupils	33	37	45	49	63

% of pupils classified as White British



BAME pupils score on average 9 percentage points higher in GCSE RS than their white British peers.

LAs with different average rates of entry for RS GCSE and their pupils' ethnicity in 2020



Can we change the narrative?

When RE is included in the curriculum, pupils tend to perform better overall.

This is especially the case for BAME pupils



DISCUSSION AND CALL TO ACTION!