

SACRE REPORT



STANDING ADVISORY

COUNCIL on

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Annual Report
2015 - 2016

FOREWORD.....	1
INTRODUCTION.....	2
1 RELIGIOUS EDUCATION.....	2
1.1 The Agreed Syllabus.....	2
2 STANDARDS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION.....	2
2.1 Background to exemplification of Standards.....	2
2.2 Examination Results in Religious Studies.....	2
3 COMPLAINTS ABOUT RELIGIOUS EDUCATION.....	3
4 TRAINING AND SUPPORT	3
4.1 Plymouth Centre for Faiths & Cultural Diversity.....	3
4.2 Courses, Conferences and Meetings	4
4.3 Plymouth RE Hub	4
5 COLLECTIVE WORSHIP.....	5
5.1 Monitoring and offering guidance on Collective Worship	5
5.2 Complaints	5
6 LINKS WITH OTHER BODIES	5
6.1 Devon and Torbay SACRE.....	5
6.2 NASACRE	5
7 SACRE ARRANGEMENTS AND PRIORITIES.....	6
7.1 Development Plan for 2014 - 2016.....	6
APPENDICES.....	7
A. Religious Studies Examination Statistics 2001-2016.....	7
B. List of Organisations to Which Report is Sent.....	8
C. The Duties of SACRE	8
D. SACRE Members 2015 – 2016	9
E. Number of Meetings, Record of Attendance and a Brief Account of Main Issues Discussed at Each Meeting	11

FOREWORD

The role of Chair of Plymouth SACRE follows a two year cycle and this allows me to revisit the forward of the annual report and reflect on the work that members of SACRE, and of the teachers and children in Plymouth have engaged with this past year.

Once again, this report contains much to celebrate and, once again, even more to contemplate and consider as we bridge the school academic years.

The Plymouth Agreed Syllabus: "Engaging with Religion and Worldviews" has been in place for 2 years and SACRE has been keen to engage in conversations with schools as to its use and success. Recognising that the syllabus clearly indicates that "We seek to create and develop a Religious Education syllabus that every school will want to provide and every pupil will want to study", it is a privilege to see so many schools across the city have been doing just that.

Once again, young people and teachers are to be congratulated on their engagement, enthusiasm and success in Religious Education, a year that has seen increases in engagement and achievement in examinations and the best results at GCSE since our monitoring of results began. The Plymouth Hub of the Learn Teach Lead Religious Education (LTLRE) Project continues to welcome teachers from around the city to talk, share and learn together. The Plymouth Centre for Faiths and Cultural Diversity continues to work with an increasing number of schools, bridging the gap between young people and people of faith and support wider educational aims. It was with pleasure that SACRE welcomed back Mr Solly Irving to provide a focus for the Holocaust Memorial Day events, 2016.

The detail of the work carried out by SACRE Plymouth can be found in the pages of this report and I would like to thank all my SACRE colleagues for their enthusiasm and commitment in supporting and raising the profile of Religious Education in our schools, colleges and across the City. We are always looking for new members to join us, in a variety of different roles and if you have a passion for religious education and would like to further the engagement of young people in the City of Plymouth in our work, then please make contact with us.

Finally, my sincere thanks to Jonathan Marshall, our hard working Adviser to SACRE for his guidance and support in helping the four groups of SACRE to work for the good of all young people, and to Lynn Young, our Democratic Support Officer, who ensures that the meetings are orderly and recorded correctly for all to see and celebrate Religious Education in the City of Plymouth.

MarkAndrew Dearden

Chair of Plymouth SACRE
January 2017

INTRODUCTION

Plymouth SACRE is pleased to produce this report as a summary of its work in religious education and collective worship. It provides a valuable opportunity to reflect on its deliberations over the last year and to inform others of its work.

SACRE is a unique organisation and amidst the challenges and issues we face, concerning the place of religion in schools and society, there has never been a more important time for the teaching and learning of RE in schools.

1 RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

1.1 The Agreed Syllabus

In late 2013 and during the first two terms of 2014 SACRE representatives from Devon, Plymouth and Torbay SACREs met together as an Agreed Syllabus Conference to agree a new, revised syllabus for their respective schools. A small Working Party was convened and a new syllabus for Plymouth schools was the result of these discussions.

In short, by maintaining the scope, balance and structure of our previous syllabus "Every Child Matters in RE" established over the previous six years, we wanted to build on this solid foundation and integrate some new emphases, particularly around our local Plymouth heritage and diversity whilst enabling children and young people to explore their own spiritual journey.

Over the first two years of the new syllabus's introduction, feedback has been very positive. Our flexible approach has allowed and indeed encouraged teachers to take account of further national influences and developments in Religious Education.

2 STANDARDS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

2.1 Background to exemplification of standards.

- 2.1.1** For several years now the absence of specific Ofsted comments during Inspection on Religious Education has meant that SACRE has lost a major “intelligence gathering” tool. Recent changes and updates to the Ofsted Framework for Inspection removed the requirement for Inspectors to report on Community Cohesion but Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development and the promotion of British Values are viewed collectively as key judgements contributing to the overall effectiveness of the school.
- 2.1.2** SACRE continues to encourage all schools to use the excellent resources now available, nationally, through websites such as REonline; The Religious Education Council and NATRE. Links to these and other sites can be found on our local SACRE/RE website on Plymouth City Council’s School Room page.

2.2 Examination Results in Religious Studies

- 2.2.1** This year 13 Plymouth Secondary Schools entered a total of 659 candidates for the full GCSE examination in Religious Studies. This represents 25% of the year groups in these schools. 74% of students achieved grades A*-C; this represents continuing success and our best results thus far, since our records began! 99% achieved A*-G grades. Nationally, the average result for the full course GCSE in Religious Studies, A*-C was just under 72%.
- 2.2.2** Owing to a different way of “counting” qualifications, short course and Entry Level data was not available to be included in this report.
- 2.2.3** 10 Secondary Schools entered a total of 93 students for the Advanced Level Religious Studies examinations. As last year, 100% achieved grades A*-E.
- 2.2.4** 10 Secondary schools, entered a total of 68 students for AS level and 90% achieved grades A*-E. This was three more schools than last year and the highest entry number. SACRE is delighted with this trend and schools are to be commended on their commitment to Religious Studies at this level.

NB: This figure represents the aggregated results for Year 13 students only. The results for Year 12 students entered for AS level are NOT included.

- 2.2.5** SACRE congratulates all the candidates and their teachers on their outstanding achievement at this summer’s examinations in Religious Studies.

3 COMPLAINTS ABOUT RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

No complaints about religious education have been received by SACRE.

4 TRAINING AND SUPPORT

4.1 Plymouth Centre for Faiths & Cultural Diversity

SACRE continues to support the innovative work of the Centre which is seen as a unique and major resource for schools to support and enhance the development of high quality RE at all levels.

This year the Centre, which operates as a Charitable Trust, is in its 16th year. With a number of staff changes and the need to find alternative premises by the end of the calendar year this has been a most challenging and stressful time.

The Centre's central aim is to promote education and understanding of world religion and cultural diversity. Through the exploration of different beliefs and cultures, the common thread of human and spiritual values is revealed. These are the values that ensure the future security and well-being of our local and international community. These values are therefore central to the promotion and development of community cohesion and well-being in schools.

The Centre continues to provide schools with a wide range of services which have evolved over the past year. Sixty-seven Plymouth schools, the highest number yet, subscribed to the Centre and approximately five hundred visits were completed by Faith Speakers, including to non-subscribing schools. In all one-hundred and twenty schools and organisations have used the Centre this year. This is a staggering increase in numbers and demand for services. Most popular visits to places of worship continue to be the synagogue and Islamic Centre. Most popular visits to schools were from Jewish, Hindu and Muslim speakers. The feedback from these visits has again been extremely positive with regard to the impact they have had on classroom learning and to the promotion of respect and understanding of religious and cultural diversity.

The Centre and SACRE brought down from London, our old friend Mr. Solly Irving, a Jewish Holocaust survivor to spend four days with us in January. This was his sixteenth annual visit, in the days leading up to Holocaust Memorial Day on the 27th January. This year the theme was, "Don't Stand By". He visited ten Secondary Schools/Colleges, where students listened, with fixed attention, to Solly's personal testimony, which he entitles; "Destined to Survive". He met with the Deputy Lord and also gave a public talk at Plymouth University. We estimate that over the past sixteen years, Solly has spoken to over thirty thousand Plymouth students!

Following meetings with younger members of our Muslim community three sessions were held at PIETY, for Primary teachers, on teaching Islam. These proved very successful and another programme is planned for next year, possibly on teaching Judaism. SACRE was also able to distribute a range of resources to schools on teaching Islam and RE and British Values.

Through a SACRE RE Grants fund we were able to support two local schools in their development of RE projects based on the priorities highlighted in the Plymouth Agreed Syllabus – Heritage, Diversity and Spirituality

4.2 Courses, Conferences, Meetings

Two SACRE members attended the South West SACRE Conference at Dillington in March which always proves supportive and encouraging. The RE Adviser led a workshop on RE and the Prevent Duty.

The RE Adviser continues to support the LearnTeachLead RE project as a Steering Group member. The third annual conference for teachers was held in Cornwall in October and was very successful. There is a real appreciation of the support and inspiration this project offers to our RE community. With national RE speakers, the theme was “The Learning Journey in RE; leading the way through religious understanding”.

From this innovative project support hubs have been created across the Southwest region. Our Plymouth hub is led by a Senior Leader in Education, Katie Freeman (Hyde Park Infants, now St. Matthew’s Academy). The Plymouth Hub provides a great source of support with activities and inspiration for teachers across all key stages. The group now meets each term, (six times a year).

4.3 Plymouth RE Hub

This year has been a particularly exciting one and Katie Freeman notes that our RE Hub has benefited from lots of support from SACRE. Teachers found the training sessions at the Plymouth Islamic Education Trust (PIETY) invaluable and many have said how these, alongside the resources that were also provided, have helped to improve provision for children in RE lessons. The hub has met six times and has been working on an assessment without levels benchmark that can be used by community schools. Our next steps, with this project, will be to meet with a photographer who will create localised images of places of worship, festivals and artefacts that can be used as part of this assessment.

The training for Understanding Christianity, kindly funded by SACRE, was helpful in allowing this to be taken back to the hub for discussion about how schools might like to receive training themselves. As I am not a trainer I am unable to do this myself but having an in depth knowledge of the planning document, I have been able to work with schools who need some help to ‘get going’ with it. Our second RE conference in Plymouth was a huge success and SACRE members were invited to attend and support teachers. Lat Blaylock provided a brilliant day of training which inspired all teachers to take something new back into their classroom.

I have also been working with the Centre Manager at PCFCD to look at how the centre can be publicised more to local schools. We have set the team up with a Twitter account and they are regularly receiving messages and updates through this social media channel.

5 Collective Worship

5.1 Monitoring and offering guidance on Collective Worship

Ofsted reports rarely mention Collective Worship and despite national concerns about non-compliance the Government have no current plans to revisit the issues. At its July 2012 meeting, SACRE considered a document produced by NASACRE "Collective Worship Revisited" as a possible way forward and suggested resource/guidance for schools. Through the work of SACRE members; Liz Hill, Head Teacher and Katie Freeman, a Collective Worship Resource folder, mainly for Key Stages 1 and 2, was launched in November 2013. Together this remains latest guidance and resource material.

5.2 Complaints

No complaints about collective worship have been received by SACRE.

6. LINKS WITH OTHER BODIES

6.1 Devon and Torbay SACREs

As stated under 1.1 above, SACRE members from the three Authorities came together for some initial meetings at the beginning of discussions regarding the new Agreed Syllabus and this continues at an informal level.

Much of the new syllabus remains common to all three Authorities but in Plymouth we continue to encourage schools to develop a unique, local approach based around; heritage, diversity and spirituality.

The annual South West SACRE Conference at Dillington also provides a wonderful opportunity for our representatives to meet, share ideas and concerns in an atmosphere of mutual support.

The RE Adviser is in regular contact with Devon SACRE and serves as a co-opted member.

6.2 NASACRE

SACRE acknowledges the essential role of NASACRE in providing support, representation and guidance for local SACREs in the vital role they perform.

The Annual Conference always provides an opportunity for SACRE representatives to meet and consider best practice and ways forward in these extremely challenging times for RE.

In May, our Chair, MarkAndrew Dearden attended the NASACRE AGM in London, on our behalf and provided SACRE members with detailed feedback at their summer meeting. The two key-note speakers were; Rt. Hon. Baroness Butler-Sloss GBE and Prof. Adam Dinham.

7. SACRE ARRANGEMENTS AND PRIORITIES

SACRE meets once per term and is supported by the following staff from Plymouth City Council: The Independent RE Advisor and a Democratic Support Officer.

Priorities have continued to be guided by SACRE's responsibility to monitor and review standards within Religious Education and Collective Worship.

7.1 Development Plan for 2014 - 2016

Priorities during this period have taken account of the limited RE Adviser time (20 days per year) and the need to encourage and support teachers following the introduction of our new syllabus, "Engaging with Religion and Worldviews". Following lengthy discussion the Development Plan for this period has focused on three key areas of support and development:

- Support, training and resources, including SACRE Grants, for teachers to develop creative and innovative schemes of work related to the current RE syllabus with emphasis on our local heritage, diversity and spirituality
- SACRE/RE projects to promote good quality RE, especially in response to national and local developments
- Support for on-going events (e.g. part funding of Solly Irving and Holocaust Memorial Day related events), talks and promotion of RE and SACRE's work. Support for a Muslim youth forum

APPENDICES

A Religious Studies Examination Statistics 2001-2016

Examination - GCSE Full Course	Number of schools (Total = 17 secondary schools, 2009 onward = 16)	Number of candidates	% of year group entered in these schools	Boys	Girls	% A*-C	% A*-G
2016	13	659	25.0	295	364	74.0	99.0
2015	12	755	28.0	277	478	72.0	98.0
2014	11	752	27.0	267	485	69.0	98.0
2013	14	900	31.6	344	556	66.7	98.3
2012	15	970	36.7	387	583	62.9	97.5
2011	13	766	32.1	306	460	68.3	97.0
2010	11	600	30.3	288	312	66.0	96.0
2009	13	643	27.2	299	344	70.8	98.8
2008	13	570	25.0	239	331	67.0	99.2
2007	14	606	24.8	237	369	55.9	97.7
2006	12	620	28.7	269	351	59.2	95.2
2005	12	646	32.8	270	376	59.0	95.5
2004	13	622	27.1	262	360	69.3	97.6
2003	12	599	28.8	232	367	49.9	91.0
2002	10	506	33.7	197	309	61.5	93.1
2001	11	481	30.0	186	295	55.7	95.4

Examination - A Level	Number of schools (Total = 15 secondary schools, 2010 onwards = 16)	Number of candidates	% of year group entered in these schools	Boys	Girls	%A-E (A*-E from 2011)
2016	10	93	4	35	58	100
2015	11	110	8	30	70	100
2014	11	100	8	30	70	100
2013	9	95	7.8	31	64	100
2012	10	117		45	72	99.1
2011	9	120		48	72	95.8
2010	10	110		36	74	96.4
2009	13	119		45	74	99.2
2008	12	126	5.4	61	65	100

2007	11	108	5.0	48	60	100
2006	9	77	8.8	23	54	98.7
2005	8	89	11.9	35	48	100
2004	10	75	4.3	23	52	100
2003	10	69	8.3	22	47	100
2002	8	64	9.4	15	49	98.4
2001	6	31	5.9	10	21	96.8
Examination - AS Level	Number of schools (Total = 15 secondary schools, 2010 onwards = 16)	Number of candidates	% of year group entered in these schools	Boys	Girls	%A-E
2016	10	68	3	27	41	90
2015	9	25	2	4	21	96
2014	9	26	2	11	15	96
2013	9	30	2.5	15	15	90
2012	10	42		17	25	88.1
2011	9	32		11	21	90.6
2010	8	31		11	20	93.5
2009	9	21	1.2	7	14	95.2
2008	9	32	1.8	16	16	93.8
2007	9	29	1.7	13	16	93.1
2006	7	27	4.1	9	18	77.8
2005	10	20	2.4	4	18	81.8
2004	10	46	2.7	10	36	91.3
2003	6	27	5.3	9	18	92.6
2002	6	22	3.6	7	15	95.5

B LIST OF ORGANISATIONS TO WHICH REPORT IS SENT

Our report will be published, in electronic form, on the Plymouth schoolroom website and sent to the National Association of SACREs (NASACRE) for publication on their website. It will be made available to teachers and parents on request.

C THE DUTIES OF SACRE

SACRE primarily gives advice to the Local Authority about religious education in Community and Voluntary Controlled schools. It can give advice even if the Local Authority does not seek it, but the Local Authority is not obliged to act upon it. In two areas, however, SACRE's decision is binding.

Worship 'Determinations'

It has a duty to make a 'determination' if a community school applies for complete or partial exemption from the requirement that most acts of worship in a school term shall be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character reflecting the broad tradition of Christian belief in a manner appropriate to the ages, aptitudes and family backgrounds of the pupils. (For example, there may be a preponderance of pupils of a faith other than Christianity.) It is important to note that SACRE cannot exempt a school from the requirement to provide some form of worship (even if not Christian worship) for all pupils on every school day. The act of worship need not be in the morning or for the whole school at one time and it is open to individual parents to withdraw their children by arrangement.

There have been no applications of this kind to Plymouth SACRE this year.

Review of Agreed Syllabus

At the end of 2013 Plymouth SACRE asked a representative from each of the four houses, together with the RE Adviser, to serve on the Agreed Syllabus Conference, convened by Devon County Council. This work took place and with further input from a specialist group, the launch of the new Revised Agreed Syllabus, "Engaging with Religion and Worldviews" was held at Plymouth Council House in July 2014.

Why a Report?

An Annual Report has been a legal requirement since the 1988 Education Act. The Education Act 1996, section 391.6 states:

'The Council shall in each year publish a report as to the exercise of their functions and any action taken by representative groups on the Council under Sub-Section 3 above during the last preceding year.

(Sub-Section 3 refers to the procedure for requiring a review of the Agreed Syllabus). The Council's report shall in particular:

- a) specify any matters in respect of which the Council has given advice to the Authority;
- b) broadly describe the nature of the advice given; and where any such matter was not referred to the Council by the Authority, give the Council's reason for offering advice on that matter'.

D SACRE MEMBERS 2015 - 2016

Group A: Christian and other religious denominations, not including Church of England.

Eight places

Astra Parkin	Baptist Church
Ian Kavanagh	Buddhist Community
Shilpa Kulkarni	Hindu Community
Bakari Arabi	Muslim Community
Anna Kelly	Jewish community
Ms Helena Mitchell	Methodist Church
<i>Vacant</i>	Roman Catholic Diocese of Plymouth
<i>Vacant</i>	United Reformed Church

Group B: The Church of England, appointed by the Exeter Diocesan Board of Education

Five places (three vacancies)

Cathy Slow	Diocesan Board of Education, Exeter
Mrs Catherine Bowness	Diocesan Board of Education, Exeter
Ms Penny Burnside	Diocesan Board of Education, Exeter
Ms Katie Freeman	Hyde Park Infants School
Mrs Alison Williams	Diocesan Board of Education, Exeter
Mr MarkAndrew Dearden	University of St. Mark & St. John

Group C: Teachers' Associations, who should nominate RE teachers

Nine places (three vacancies)

Mr Martin Edmonds	NASUWT
Ms Gwen Hughes	NUT
Vacant	PASH (NAHT)
<i>Vacant</i>	NATRE
<i>Vacant</i>	VOICE
<i>Vacant</i>	UCU
Ms Elizabeth Hill	PAPH (NAHT)
Mrs Alison Bradley	ATL
<i>Vacant</i>	Special Schools

Group D: The Local Authority

Six places (three vacancies)

Councillor Mary Aspinall	Plymouth City Council
Councillor Jonny Morris	Plymouth City Council
Councillor Jonathan Drear	Plymouth City Council

Co-opted Representatives

Six places

Representative to be agreed	PCFCD
Mrs Margaret Thompson	Quaker Community
Rev Mark Mesley	Greek Orthodox Community
Rev Gordon Cryer	Plymouth Association of Governors
Ben Kerr	Humanist
Barbara Wintersgill	RE Consultant

Officers

Mr Jonathan Marshall	Consultant Religious Education Adviser
Miss Lynn Young	Democratic Support Officer

E. NUMBER OF MEETINGS, RECORD OF ATTENDANCE AND A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF MAIN ISSUES DISCUSSED AT EACH MEETING

Plymouth SACRE meets once per term and has met on three occasions in the academic year

2015 – 2016.

The Autumn Term meeting was held on 2nd November 2015 at the Plymouth Islamic Education Trust (PIETY). Fourteen members and two officers were present and the issues discussed included:-

- New members and membership update
- The New Prevent duty placed on schools from July 2015
- The Learn Teach Lead RE Project and LTL Conference
- Plymouth schools Ofsted reports and RE
- SACRE grants – feedback from Oreston school
- Religious Studies Examination results – summer 2015
- Feedback from the morning's awareness session on Islam
- SACRE Development Plan
- Holocaust Memorial Day Plans 2016
- News and developments from the Centre for Faiths and Cultural Diversity

The Spring Term meeting was held on 17th March 2016 at the Council House, Plymouth. Eight members and two officers were present and the issues discussed included:-

- Welcome to new members and membership issues
- SACRE Development Plan and budget
- Plymouth RE hub and the Learn Teach Lead RE Project
- Local and National RE issues and developments
- Supporting teachers of RE in Plymouth schools and resources for RE
- Withdrawal from RE and Promoting British values – a possible conflict?
- Feedback on HMD and future plans
- South west SACRE conference - feedback
- Plymouth Centre for Faiths and Cultural Diversity

The Summer Term meeting was held on 14th July 2016 at the University College of St. Mark and St. John, Plymouth. Twelve members and two officers were present and the issues discussed included:-

- Welcome to new members and membership update
- Review of the SACRE Development Plan and budget
- Feedback from the NASACRE AGM
- LearnTeachLead RE project – Plymouth Hub news
- Plymouth RE conference - feedback
- Non-religious worldviews and the RE curriculum
- RE's contribution to the Prevent duty and building resilience
- Plymouth Centre for Faiths and Cultural Diversity – developments

Clerk to SACRE – Lynn Young – Democratic Support Officer

