

STANDING ADVISORY

COUNCIL on

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Annual Report

2016 - 2017

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.....	3
3 COMPLAINTS ABOUT RELIGIOUS EDUCATION.....	3
4 TRAINING AND SUPPORT	3
4.1 Plymouth Centre for Faiths & Cultural Diversity.....	4
4.2 Courses, Conferences and Meetings	5
4.3 Plymouth RE Hub	5
5 COLLECTIVE WORSHIP.....	5
5.1 Monitoring and offering guidance on Collective Worship	5
5.2 Complaints	6
6 LINKS WITH OTHER BODIES	6
6.1 Devon and Torbay SACRE.....	6
6.2 NASACRE	6
7 SACRE ARRANGEMENTS AND PRIORITIES.....	6
7.1 Development Plan for 2014 - 2016.....	7
APPENDICES.....	8
A. Religious Studies Examination Statistics 2001-2017.....	8
B. List of Organisations to Which Report is Sent.....	9
C. The Duties of SACRE	10
D. SACRE Members 2016 – 2017	11
E. Number of Meetings, Record of Attendance and a Brief Account of Main Issues Discussed at Each Meeting	13

FOREWORD

SACRE Chair's Report

The strong results again achieved by Plymouth students in GCSE Religious Education are to be celebrated as evidence of the commitment of our students and the skills of the city's teachers.

One highlight of this year's SACRE meetings was a talk from newly-elected Member of Plymouth Youth Parliament Alizeh Rahman. As part of her role, Alizeh visited schools, spoke with students and even taught lessons. Attending a SACRE meeting in the summer, Alizeh expressed her view that religious education is not simply learning about the main faiths but learning about the world we live in and the exploring the many complex issues that we all see in the news. We are all confident that Alizeh will continue to make a strong contribution to Religious Education in the years to come.

Jonathan Marshall will be relinquishing his long-held role as RE Advisor in March. It is important to place on record our sincere thanks for the years during which he has provided strong leadership, advice and guidance on Religious Education across the city. Jonathan is respected throughout Plymouth's schools for his breadth of knowledge, ability as an organiser and skill as a teacher. As Jonathan begins his well-earned retirement, I know that he will leave SACRE with everyone's appreciation and fondest wishes.

I also wish to record our thanks to Helen Rickman for the sterling work she has undertaken this year in providing administrative support to SACRE. Helen has ensured that our meetings have run smoothly and were recorded efficiently so that the good work being undertaken in Religious Education across the city's schools can be shared more widely.

It was with deep sadness that we learned of the passing of Mr Solly Irving (October 2017). For the final 17 years of his life, Solly devoted his energies to sharing his personal experience as a survivor of the Holocaust. Over that time, tens of thousands of staff and students across the city have been privileged to hear his testimony of the reality and brutality of the Nazi death camps. Solly often concluded his visits by reminding the audience that he would not be around forever and when that time came it would be for us to speak as his witness.

The power of words will be the theme for Holocaust Memorial Day 2018. Our words can make a difference – both for good and evil. As this is the first year when Solly will not be with us to share his experiences, it is for us all to remember his request and to act as his witness in the actions we take and the words we use.

Martin Edmonds
Chair of Plymouth SACRE

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 profound 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 good quality 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.

Since the introduction of the new syllabus, feedback has been very positive. As we move forward, 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 fundamental 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 821 candidates for the full GCSE examination in Religious Studies. In a year when the national figure dipped for the first time in many years, Plymouth's entry represents just over 32% of the year groups, in these schools. 64% of students achieved grades A*-C, (71% nationally) and with higher entry numbers this represents continuing success for our students. 97% achieved A*-G grades.

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 11 Secondary Schools entered a total of 106 students for the Advanced Level Religious Studies examinations and 99% achieved grades A*-E.

2.2.4 10 Secondary schools, entered a total of 37 students for AS level and 67% achieved grades A*-E. Although these results, for some, were disappointing SACRE is delighted with this approach and schools are to be commended on their commitment to offer Religious Studies at these levels.

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 hard work and achievements 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 18th year and is now happily settled into its new accommodation within the University Technology College (UTC) in Devonport.

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 extended and evolved over the past year and are supported by 39 active faith and cultural speakers. This year the Centre secured 72 subscribing schools from Plymouth and the surrounding area and 633 bookings were handled - the highest number yet! This continues to be a staggering year-on-year increase in numbers and demand for services.

The most popular visits to places of worship remain the Synagogue (60 visits) and PIETY Islamic Centre (21 visits).

The most popular visits to schools were from Jewish (65 visits), Muslim (60 visits), Hindu (47 visits), Christian (40 visits) and Buddhist (33 visits) speakers.

The most popular workshops in schools were Australian Culture (26), Japanese Culture (25) and Meditation Workshops (24)

The feedback from these visits, from both pupils and teachers, has again been extremely positive with regard to the impact they have had on classroom learning and the promotion of respect and understanding of religious and cultural diversity across the city.

Due to illness, our good friend, Solly Irving was unable to visit us in January to share his powerful testimony as a Jewish holocaust survivor.

(Although beyond the scope of this report, it seems appropriate, at this point, to provide a sad update. As has already been mentioned in the Chair's report, in October 2017, after battling with continuing ill health for several months, Solly died in London. He was 87 years old. A great friend to us in Plymouth, Solly gave tireless service each year as a speaker and witness of the holocaust. Solly regarded this as his duty and in memory of his father's words to him when he was eleven years old; "Stay alive and tell people what happened to us." He created a unique relationship with Plymouth schools and we estimate that over 30.000 students heard him speak during a sixteen year period. The outpouring of tributes from past and present students and teachers was deeply moving and we must now ensure that Solly's legacy and message continues and that holocaust education remains a priority.)

Through our 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. This year both schools also linked their work to the forthcoming Mayflower 2020 theme. SACRE seeks to make this fund more widely available to schools.

4.2 Courses, Conferences, Meetings

Helena Mitchell attended the South West SACRE Conference at Dillington in March which always provides practical support and encouragement for members. The key-note address was provided by Dr. Joyce Miller. A number of helpful and practical workshops and training sessions were also very well received.

4.3 Plymouth RE Hub

This year has been a particularly exciting one and Katie Freeman notes that our RE Hub has benefited from support from SACRE. Many teachers took up the offer of free training provided by SACRE and the Synagogue to improve subject knowledge in Judaism. Teachers were given training alongside REtoday resources to inspire them to teach at a deeper level, encouraging greater depth in RE. The hub has met six times this year and has been working on responses to the interim report from the Commission on RE, planning for progression in RE, assessment and guided reading materials based on different scripture and religious stories.

In her NATRE role Katie has been invited to attend the Labour Party conference to talk to members and MPs about the place of RE in the curriculum. This interesting opportunity has meant that she has been able to share discussions and views of RE with members as well as giving them up to the minute updates on developments within the subject. In November Plymouth RE hub was lucky enough to host Juliet Lyal (NATRE and Commission on RE) who told teachers about the recommendations in the RE Commission's interim report. The hub then held a discussion and responded to the commission, sharing its views. As a result of this, three members of the hub; Katie Freeman, Kayti Selby and Tania Hawker, were invited to London to share their views on the entitlement with commissioners. The hub also held its annual conference with Lat Blaylock (RE Today) and Deborah Western (NATRE) which helped to build on the subject knowledge development in Islam from last year's SACRE training with Piety Islamic Centre.

Links between the hub and PCFCD are growing ever stronger and it has been a real strength to have Claire's support at conferences and hub meetings.

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. A small working party has been re-visiting this issue and it hopes to produce further practical guidance and advice for schools in the autumn. (Sent to all schools, January 2018)

5.2 Complaints

No complaints about collective worship have been received by SACRE this year.

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 the key themes; 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.

A Plymouth group also worked with colleagues across Devon and Torbay SACRE's on Assessment.

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, MarkAndrew Dearden attended the NASACRE AGM/Conference in York, on our behalf and provided SACRE members with feedback at their summer meeting.

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 - 2017

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:

- To provide 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
- To create SACRE/RE projects/guidance to promote good quality RE and Collective worship, especially in response to national and local developments. Ensure SACRE members' development
- Continue to support 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 Plymouth RE hub

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
2017	13	821	32.6	397	424	63.8	97.0
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 from 2016=18)	Number of candidates	% of year group entered in these schools	Boys	Girls	%A-E (A*-E from 2011)
2017	11	106	5.3	33	73	99
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
2017	10	37	2	14	23	67.6
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 2016 - 2017

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

Eight places

Astra Parkin	Baptist Church
Ian Kavanagh	Buddhist Community
vacant	Hindu Community
Imam Bakari Arabi	Muslim Community
Anna Kelly	Jewish community
Helena Mitchell	Methodist Church
Dr. David Lundy	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

Catherine Bowness	Diocesan Board of Education, Exeter
Ed Pawson	Diocesan Board of Education, Exeter
Katie Freeman	St. Matthews Prim.&Nursery Academy
Alison Williams	Diocesan Board of Education, Exeter
MarkAndrew Dearden	University of St. Mark & St. John

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

Nine places (three vacancies)

Martin Edmonds	NASUWT
Gwen Hughes	NUT
Gary Futcher	PASH
<i>Vacant</i>	NATRE
<i>Vacant</i>	VOICE
<i>Vacant</i>	UCU
Elizabeth Hill	PAPH (NAHT)
Alison Bradley	ATL
Mirella Paganuzzi	Special Schools

Group D: The Local Authority

Four places

Councillor Mary Aspinall	Plymouth City Council
Councillor Jonny Morris	Plymouth City Council
Councillor Jonathan Drean	Plymouth City Council
Councillor Richard Ball	Plymouth City Council

Co-opted Representatives

Six places

Sara Wells/Claire Linden	Centre for Faiths & Cultural Diversity
Margaret Thompson	Quaker Community
Rev Mark Mesley	Greek Orthodox Community
Jon Goulder	Plymouth Association of Governors
Ben Kerr	Humanist
Dr. Barbara Wintersgill	RE Consultant

Officers

Jonathan Marshall	Consultant Religious Education Adviser
Helen Rickman	Democratic Support Officer
Jamie Sheldon	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 2016 – 2017.

The Autumn Term meeting was held on 14th November 2016 at St Matthews' Primary and Nursery Academy. Fifteen members and two officers were present and the issues discussed included:-

- New members and membership update
- The Prevent duty in schools– a report from Senior Adviser Heather Ogburn
- The Learn Teach Lead RE Project and LTL Conference
- The National Commission on RE
- Assessment working party
- Annual Report and Religious Studies Examination results – summer 2016
- Understanding Christianity – a resource for schools
- SACRE Development Plan
- Holocaust Memorial Day Plans 2017
- News and developments from the Centre for Faiths and Cultural Diversity

The Spring Term meeting was held on 27th March 2017 at the Council House, Plymouth. sixteen members and two officers were present and the issues discussed included:-

- Welcome to new members and membership issues
- SACRE Annual Report
- Plymouth RE hub and the Learn Teach Lead RE Project
- Local and National RE issues and developments
- What is religious literacy? - presentation
- Supporting teachers of RE in Plymouth – SACRE grants
- BIG NASACRE survey
- Feedback on HMD and future plans
- South west SACRE conference - feedback
- Plymouth Centre for Faiths and Cultural Diversity
- Assessment and Collective Worship working groups

The Summer Term meeting was held on 10th July 2017 at the University College of St. Mark and St. John, Plymouth. Fifteen members and two officers were present and the issues discussed included:-

- Welcome to new members and membership update
- Future development of RE in Plymouth
- Feedback from the NASACRE AGM
- LearnTeachLead RE project – Plymouth Hub news
- Promoting religious tolerance in schools - presentation

- Assessment and Collective worship groups
- HMD future plans and possibilities
- Plymouth Centre for Faiths and Cultural Diversity – developments
- Future RE Adviser support

Clerks to SACRE – Helen Rickman and Jamie Sheldon – Democratic Support Officers
Consultant RE Adviser to Plymouth SACRE – Jonathan Marshall