

SACRE REPORT



**STANDING ADVISORY
COUNCIL FOR
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

Annual Report

2013 - 2014

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FOREWORD

This has been a very busy and challenging year for Religious Education in Plymouth and for all members of Plymouth SACRE!

Two very important and significant reports came out in October which have helped to shape the future of RE across the land. First of all, the long awaited Ofsted Report - "Realising the Potential" which highlighted some serious weaknesses and inconsistencies in the teaching of RE across the country and, also in October, the Religious Education Council launched its own subject review of Religious Education. This important document, although containing non-statutory guidance, in effect, creates a suggested revised curriculum framework for RE.

Both reports were timely for us, as, together with SACRE colleagues from Devon and Torbay, we embarked on revising our own Agreed Syllabus.

The result was the launch, in July 2014, of "Engaging with Religion and Worldviews".

I want to thank all those who contributed, initially through the Agreed Syllabus Conference, and later through a smaller working party. We continue to share, across the three SACREs, the same scope, balance and structure, established through our previous syllabus - "Every Child Matters in RE". But we are delighted in adding, this time, a significant emphasis on the Plymouth story; through an exploration of our local heritage and diversity, whilst enabling our children and young people to explore their own spiritual development.

As we say in the syllabus, "We seek to create and develop a Religious Education syllabus that every school will want to provide and every pupil will want to study.

SACRE congratulates all students who were successful in their Religious Studies examinations in the summer. A big 'thank you' to all our teachers who are doing such a great job and important work in teaching RE and preparing our young people for adult life. It could be argued that in today's complex world, good quality Religious Education is more important than ever.

I would also 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.

Finally, although Jonathan Marshall, our hard working RE Adviser, will still be continuing to support RE through SACRE on a freelance basis, he stepped down from his full time post in July. For many years he has worked to promote better understanding of religious and cultural diversity through his Adviser role and as Director of the Plymouth Centre for Faiths and Cultural Diversity. In thanking him for all he has done I think it is incumbent upon us all to ensure that this vital work, of bridge-building, continues across the City.

Councillor Mary Aspinall
Chair of Plymouth SACRE
November 2014

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.

I 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 past 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.

As mentioned in the Foreword, the new Revised Syllabus “Engaging with Religion and Worldviews” is also derived and influenced by two recent and significant reports on RE - “Realising the Potential” Ofsted – October 2013 and “A Review of RE in England” The Religious Education Council – October 2013.

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. Since January 2012, a new Ofsted Framework for Inspection removed the requirement for Inspectors to report on Community Cohesion. However, Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development is now viewed as a key judgement contributing to the overall effectiveness of the school.

2.1.2 SACRE continues to encourage all schools to use the excellent resource, *Self-Evaluation in RE – a toolkit for subject leaders* (Endorsed by Plymouth SACRE at the June meeting 2006). This document, found on the REonline website, provides exemplary support and guidance for teachers in schools and enables them to contribute significantly to their school’s Self Evaluation. It has also proved to be an excellent resource for parents.

Despite widespread debate about the use of the eight-level scale over many years we are clearly moving towards their removal.

However, our new syllabus proposes to retain the use of this scale, for the time being and, if useful, as a way of measuring progress and ensuring development.

2.2 Examination Results in Religious Studies (Provisional)

2.2.1 This year 11 Plymouth Secondary Schools entered a total of 752 candidates for the full GCSE examination in Religious Studies. This represents just under 27% of the year groups in these schools. 69% of students achieved grades A*-C, this compares with 76% nationally, and 98% achieved A*-G grades.

2.2.2 Owing to a different way of “counting” qualifications this year, short course data was not available to be included in this report.

2.2.3 11 Secondary Schools entered a total of 100 students for the Advanced Level Religious Studies examinations. 100% achieved grades A-E.

2.2.4 9 Secondary schools entered a total of 26 students for AS level and 96% achieved grades A-E.

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 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 extend the development of high quality RE at all levels.

This year the Centre, which operates as a Charitable Trust and is supported by Plymouth City Council, is now in its 13th year.

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. This year 54 schools subscribed to the Centre and one hundred and sixty visits were made by Faith Speakers, including twenty three to non-subscribing schools. Most popular visits were twenty one, to the synagogue. Jewish and Hindu speakers visited schools on twenty seven occasions each and twenty two visits were made by Muslim speakers. The feedback on

these visits has been extremely positive regarding the impact they have had on classroom learning and to the promotion of respect for religious and cultural diversity.

Solly Irving, a Jewish Holocaust survivor from London, spent four days with us in January. This was his 12th annual visit in the week before Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD). He visited ten Secondary Schools/Colleges and was also invited for tea with the Lord Mayor Cllr Vivien Pengelly.

SACRE and the Centre also organised a very successful schools event at the Roland Levinsky Building on the University campus. Over two hundred young people attended during the day and 6 schools actively took part including The Military Kids Choir and the Young City Laureate.

With financial support from SACRE, the RE Adviser and a local freelance documentary film-maker, Fiona Evans, completed work on a DVD to raise awareness and deepen understanding of faith diversity in Plymouth. Twelve young people (Christians, Muslims, Hindus and Buddhists) shared their experiences, insights and wisdom. Entitled “In Heart and Action” the DVD was launched in December. Copies were distributed to every Plymouth school. Feedback from teachers has been very positive and encouraging.

4.2 Courses, Conferences and Meetings

Another successful joint teachers’ conference for PSHEE/Citizenship and RE was held at Boringdon Park in October and over eighty teachers attended.

In the same week fifteen secondary RE specialist teachers gathered at Coombe Dean for the annual training day. The main focus was on developing a new syllabus in the light of the two major reports on RE from Ofsted and the RE Council.

In February Alan Brine, HMI addressed the three Devon SACREs at Buckfast Abbey on the recent Ofsted Report - “Realising the Potential”. This may be the last long report. A number of Plymouth members attended.

Three SACRE members attended the South West SACRE Conference at Dillington in March.

The RE Adviser continues to support the LearnTeachLead RE project as a Steering Group member. The second annual conference for teachers was held at Dartington in October and was very successful. National speakers included Alan Brine HMI, National Adviser for RE and Lat Blaylock, RE Today Editor and Adviser. The theme was “Sustaining RE – developing the art of subject leadership”.

From this innovative project support hubs have been created across the Southwest region. Our Plymouth hub is led by Ian Hartley (Ridgeway) and Katie Freeman (Hyde Park Infants). These provide a great source of support with activities and inspiration for teachers across all key stages. The group meets three times a year and we hope to be able to increase this to six times next year.

Our new display boards have been a feature at a number of conferences and events over the year and this helps to promote the important work of SACRE.

The RE Adviser provided six INSET – twilight opportunities for Primary and Special school teachers and in addition led a further twelve sessions in schools.

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 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.

Plymouth SACRE supported a Working Group, led by the Head teacher, Liz Hill and classroom teacher, Katie Freeman, from Hyde Park Infants School, set up to develop resources for Collective Worship. Resource packs were distributed at two very successful events in November.

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.

Much of the new syllabus remains common to all three Authorities.

The annual SW SACRE Conference at Dillington also provided a wonderful opportunity for colleagues to meet and share ideas and support.

6.2 NASACRE

SACRE acknowledges the central role of NASACRE in providing essential 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.

The RE Advisor attended the AGM in London in May where Stephen Lloyd MP, Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group on RE gave a very informative and encouraging keynote speech about the importance and future development of RE.

7. SACRE ARRANGEMENTS AND PRIORITIES

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

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

There are also working groups established to lend support to the current Plymouth SACRE Development Plan; the revised outline is as follows:

7.1 Development Plan for 2011 – 2014

- to seek on-going opportunities to raise the profile of SACRE – Miss Helena Mitchell;
- to establish a planned approach to the development of RE and particularly its contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural life of the school – RE Advisor;
- to establish a biennial celebration/ exhibition of RE work – Ms Teresa Griffiths;
- with Devon and Torbay SACREs, revise, as appropriate, the RE syllabus – RE Advisor;
- to revise guidance and identify key resources for collective worship – Mrs Liz Hill.

SACRE is mindful of the need to update this plan and some discussions were held at the July meeting. A small group hopes to meet before the end of term to identify priorities for the next three years. This plan will be presented to SACRE for adoption at its December meeting.

APPENDICES

A Religious Studies Examination Statistics 2001-2014

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
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)
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
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 sent, in electronic form, to Head teachers, Principals and Chairs of Governors of schools including voluntary schools, the Local Authority and NASACRE. It will be made available to teachers and parents on request.

The report will also be sent to the Directors of Services for Children and Young People and Chairs of SACRE in Devon, Torbay and Cornwall.

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 in Plymouth.

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 – it was chaired by Jeremy Roberts. 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 2013 – 2014

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

Eight places (one vacancy)

Mrs Pam Shelmerdine	Baptist Church
Mr Barry Good	Buddhist Community
Dr Jatindra Saha	Hindu Community
Mr Bakari Arabi	Muslim Community
Mrs Anna Kelly	Jewish Community
Ms Helena Mitchell	Methodist Church
Mr Jamie Haselden	Roman Catholic Diocese of Plymouth
Vacant	United Reformed Church

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

Five places

Mr Mark Andrew Dearden	Diocesan Board of Education, Exeter
Mrs Catherine Bowness	Diocesan Board of Education, Exeter
Ms Penny Burnside	Diocesan Board of Education, Exeter
Ms Katie Freeman	Diocesan Board of Education, Exeter
Mrs Alison Sturgeon	Diocesan Board of Education, Exeter

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

Nine places (three vacancies)

Mr Martin Edmonds	NASUWT
Ms Gwen Hughes	NUT
Mr Pete Grainger	PASH (NAHT)
Vacant	NATRE
Ms Elizabeth Hill	PAPH (NAHT)
Vacant	VOICE
Vacant	UCU
Mrs Alison Bradley	ATL
Mrs Heather Farrow	Special Schools

Group D: The Local Authority

Six places

Councillor Mary Aspinall	Plymouth City Council
Councillor Jonny Morris	Plymouth City Council
Councillor Chaz Singh	Plymouth City Council
Councillor Jonathan Drean	Plymouth City Council
Councillor Dr David Salter	Plymouth City Council
Councillor David Stark	Plymouth City Council

Co-opted Representatives

Six places

Ms Caroline McVicker
Dr Clare Hamon
Christoforos Mamas
Rev Gordon Cryer
Mr Ben Kerr
Dr Barbara Wintersgill

AST (Secondary)
Quaker Community
Greek Orthodox Community
Plymouth Association of Governors
Humanist
RE Consultant

Officers

Mr Jonathan Marshall
Lynn Young

Religious Education Advisor
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 2013 – 2014

The Autumn Term meeting was held on 13 November 2013 at All Saints Church of England Academy, Plymouth. Fifteen members and three officers were present and the issues discussed included:-

- New members
- Humanist representation on SACREs
- Plans for Holocaust Memorial Day
- Launch of Collective Worship Resource Pack
- The Learn Teach Lead RE Project
- Examination results for Religious Studies – Summer 2013
- Plymouth SACRE's Annual Report
- Planning towards a Plymouth Dimension in the Revised Agreed Syllabus
- A co-opted SACRE representative for “Ambitious Plymouth”

The Spring Term meeting was held on 10 March 2014 at the Council House, Plymouth. Eighteen members and two officers were present and the issues discussed included:-

- Welcome to new members
- Report on Holocaust Memorial Day
- Towards a new Agreed Syllabus
- The RE Adviser's role and future SACRE support
- SACRE budget
- The RE Quality Mark
- Learn Teach Lead RE Project
- Collective Worship Resources
- “In Heart and Action” DVD launch
- NASACRE briefing and AGM
- South West SACRE Conference

The Summer Term meeting was held on 7 July 2014 at the Council House, Plymouth. Eighteen members and two officers were present and the issues discussed included:-

- Appointment of Chair and Vice-Chair
- Welcome to new members
- Plymouth Agreed Syllabus for RE
- Future support for SACRE and RE
- Review of the SACRE Development Plan
- National, Regional and Local RE updates
- Plans for Holocaust Memorial Day – January 2015

Clerks to SACRE – Helen Rickman and Lynn Young – Democratic Support Officers
Plymouth RE Advisor – Jonathan Marshall