



# SACRE ANNUAL REPORT 2016

---

## **Chairman's Introduction**

Welcome to our 2016 Annual Report. As the chair of one of the country's smallest SACREs I am proud of the work we have undertaken over the last year to ensure that teachers, churches and the community work together to ensure that developments in RE are fully communicated, understood and implemented.

As the SACRE moves to a period when the Local Authority has no maintained schools we look forward to continuing to work closely with the new Multi-Academy Trust and its staff here on the Isles and the mainland.

On behalf of SACRE members I would also like to thank Mr Andrew Thomas who has clerked our meetings, Mr David Hampshire who has supported us with professional advice and Mr Keith Grossett who is our link to the local authority. Without them SACRE could not function and we are all grateful to them for their support and encouragement.

Cllr Christine Savill  
Chair of SACRE

## **Introduction**

The Isles of Scilly SACRE was reconstituted in January 2010 under the requirements of the 1996 Education Act.

SACRE consists of four groups as required but has no co-opted members at this time. Each group has two representatives, which is seen as proportionate to the needs of the Isles of Scilly at the current time. SACRE has approached the Roman Catholic Diocese of Plymouth to nominate a representative, the Cornwall Methodist District and has approached the teaching unions in a similar manner and they continue to look into this issue at the time of the writing of this report. In this way the local authority hopes to ensure a broader and more robust representation in Groups A and C.

The Isles of Scilly SACRE is in an unusual position in that there is only one school in the Authority with pupils from Reception to Year 11 spread across five islands. As the school is a voluntary controlled C of E school its collective worship does not come under the remit of this SACRE and is inspected separately by the Church of England's appointed inspectors under the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) framework.

As the Islands are some twenty-six miles out in the Atlantic from the British mainland and the communities are relatively isolated for much of the year, although there is a significant tourist trade in the spring and summer, religious education is seen to be an important entitlement for all children and young people on the Isles.

### **Advice to the Local Authority**

In 2015 SACRE advised the local authority to appoint an Agreed Syllabus Conference and to consider the review currently being made by those authorities that have adopted the syllabus Awareness, Mystery and Value (AMV). During 2015 and 2016 it was noted by SACRE that there was a difference of opinion developing between Somerset County Council and North Somerset Council, along with the other authorities that form part of those that have adopted AMC: Bath and North East Somerset, Bristol City Council and Haringey. SACRE asked the RE Advisor to monitor this situation. When both syllabuses are ready for publication they will be presented to the Agreed Syllabus Conference.

### **Advice to the Agreed Syllabus Conference**

SACRE advised the Conference to take regard of the legal guidance produced by Dr Juss, Kings College London, on non-religious world views as part of religious education in light of the High Court Ruling: *R (Fox) v Secretary of State for Education* [2015].

### **Advice to the Five Island School**

In light of the report by Dr Juss, and the communication to schools from the British Humanist Association, SACRE advised the school to investigate whether the new GCSE specification from 2016 fully discharges the school's duty to religiously educate its pupils or whether it needs to do something in addition without prejudice to non-religious worldviews.

SACRE also recommended the resource: *The RE-searchers. A new approach to religious education in the primary school* and the supporting resource produced by Exeter University. It was further recommended that the Five Islands School participate in the research project being conducted by Exeter University.

Finally, SACRE recommended that the Five Islands School consider becoming part of an assessment research group to feed data back to Dr Wintersgill and the Learn Teach Lead RE (LTLRE) Steering Group with a view to informing how best RE can be assessed in the context of the overall curriculum.

### **Advice to the Department for Education (DfE)**

SACRE wrote to the Secretary of State to highlight its concerns about government policy as set out in the White Paper: *Educational Excellence Everywhere* and the possible impact of these policies on the preparation of RE teachers, both primary and secondary, and the role and future of SACREs and ASCs in light of continued 'academisation' and the proposed changing role of local authorities. SACRE recommended that the DfE rethinks its policies in light of the apparent contradictions that were emerging from a policy where schools (academies) did not have to follow locally agreed syllabuses or the advice of SACREs and yet local authorities had to convene both a SACRE and Agreed Syllabus Conference.

### **Advice to other bodies**

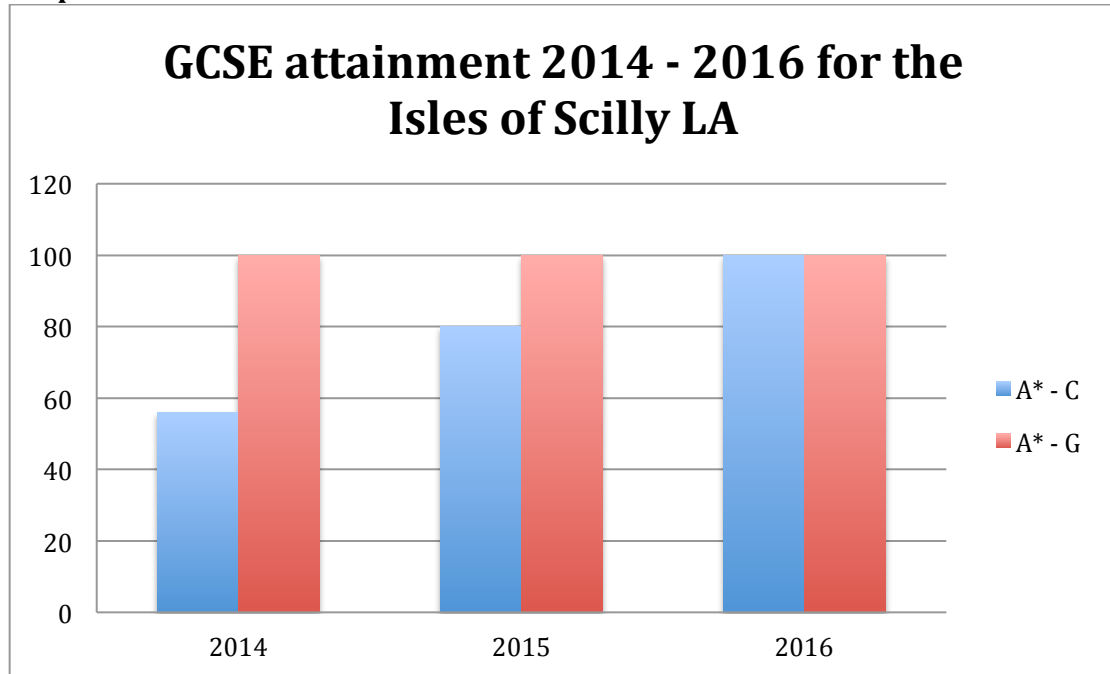
The Isles of Scilly wrote to Professor Trevor Cooling, the Chair of the RE Council of England and Wales, that any review of religious education in England include a thorough investigation of the needs of pupils in rural and geographically isolated areas of England, such as the Isles of Scilly.

### Standards and quality of RE provision

In 2016 12 candidates were entered for GCSE Religious Studies, compared to 5 in 2015 and 9 in 2014. In 2016 100% of the cohort gained A\* - C, compared with 80% in 2015 and 56% in 2014. This should be seen as significant improvement on the past two years. The Average Point score overall for Religious Studies (5.9) was better than that in English (5.6) or Mathematics (5.5), and after Music (54%) and Design Technology (51%) RS had the best pupils progress (29%), along with Geography and Applied Science.

SACRE noted, though, that pupil progress at A\* - A was below that expected for pupils who would have been predicted these grades on the basis of prior performance (-7%). This would indicate that the brightest students were not attaining the highest grades predicted. Whilst this there is no absolute certainty based on prior attainment it is a useful benchmark to use. SACRE will monitor this in the future.

Graph 1



Due to smallness of the cohort it is not possible to make comparisons with national attainment statistics. Nevertheless, it is clear that candidates on the Isles of Scilly did significantly better than others nationally on a purely statistical basis. Nevertheless, SACRE notes that there appears to be a need to provide greater support for pupils expected to be working at the highest levels. SACRE also recognises that these results are due in part to the high level of teaching at the Five Islands School and the hard work of the candidates themselves.

### SACRE and community cohesion

#### Religion and non-religion on the Isles of Scilly

SACRE looked at the religious make-up of the Isles of Scilly on the basis of the data released by the Office of National Statistics taken from the 2011 Census.

In 2011 55.3% of people (1,218 out of a population of 2,203) were identified as Christian, this is 5.1% lower than the national average (60.4%). Compared to the 2001 census this is a reduction in identification with Christianity of 15.2% (2001:70.5%). This reduction can be explained by looking at the rise of those who said they had no religion. In 2001 20.2% identified themselves as having no religion compared to 33.7% in 2011, a rise of 13.5%. The category of 'no religion' will be discussed in the next section of this report.

**Table 1: other religious traditions identified in the 2011 census for the Isles of Scilly UA**

Religion	Number	% 2011 census	% 2001 census
Buddhism	9	0.4	0.3
Judaism	4	0.2	0
Islam	3	0.1	0
Other religions	12	0.5	0.3

The census asked people to identify their religion and 1.2% identified themselves with a religion other than Christianity. Table 1 (above) gives the responses those identifying themselves with mainstream and 'other' religions.

The statistics for those who identified themselves with non-mainstream religions are presented in Table 2 (below). What is interesting, in terms of the Isles of Scilly, is that many groups associated with Paganism are absent, such as Druidism and Wicca, although Heathen would be positively associated with Paganism. Technically Heathen, Heathenism and Heathenry are associated with the pre-Christian Norse religion(s). In terms of modern Paganism and Heathenry neither pre-date 1950. Another interesting feature, caused by the statistical modelling used by the Office for National Statistics, puts the Isles of Scilly at the top of the national rankings for Believe in God, Heathen and Own Belief System. Hence, it is important to note that the number, the percentage of population and the rank are measuring different things not simply reprocessing the same data.

SACRE noted the variety of religious identification within the Census 2011. Eleven religions are represented on the Isles of Scilly. In at least two cases those religions were absent in the 2001 Census. Therefore, it is right to conclude that whilst the number of those positively identifying with religion has gone down the diversity of religion has gone up. Similarly, whilst some numbers are very small it does not follow that for those who identify with a religious tradition that their tradition is not deeply significant to them. It also does not follow that someone who identifies positively with a religious tradition that they actively engage with that tradition. Hence, SACRE felt there was reasonable question in terms of religious education: what does it mean to identify with a religious tradition? This question also applies to those who identify themselves with a no religious tradition.

**Table 2: other religious traditions identified in the 2011 Census for Isles of Scilly outside of those considered mainstream**

Religion	Number	% of population	National rank (n348)
Paganism	3	0.1	70
Spiritualist	3	0.1	17
Mixed religion	2	0.1	29

Believe in God	1	0.0	1
Heathen	1	0.0	1
Own belief system	1	0.0	1
Rastafarianism	1	0.0	10

The great unknown are the 214 who did not complete the section on religion and no religion. They represent 9.7% of the population of the Isles of Scilly and it is of note that this group grew by 1% in relation to the 2001 Census (8.7%)

The census also asked respondents to identify if they had no religion. It is difficult to know exactly what constitutes 'no religion', as shall be explained below. Table 3 (below) sets out the statistics for the Isles of Scilly UA.

SACRE did not find it easy to interpret these statistics. Whilst 33.7% of people of the Scillies stated they had no religion (compared to 24.7% nationally, a difference of 9%) what should we make of Jedi Knights? They constitute 78.6% of those who defined themselves as belonging to a specifically non-religious designation and the Isles of Scilly has the second highest density in terms of population in England and Wales.

**Table 3: those identifying themselves as having no religion in the Census 2011**

	Number	% of population	National Rank (n348)
No religion (total)	742	33.7	24
No religion	725	32.9	24
Agnostic	1	0.0	235
Atheist	2	0.1	19
Jedi	14	0.6	2

In 2013 SACRE looked at the Religion and Society project funded by the ESRC and the AHRC, and other research, showing that moving away from identification with a religion is not the same as not having religious beliefs. Indeed, it is difficult to see what has changed over the ten years since the 2001 Census. There were high-level campaigns led by the British Humanist Association and the National Secular Society in relation to completing the Census and this may have had some effect. Yet during the same period attendance at Cathedral services has grown and religion has become more prominent in the public space. This may be more to do with how people view 'religion' and their relationship to it rather than a loss of religious feeling, sentiment or conviction. What appears to be clear is that religion continues to be a contested concept that has the power to generate debate at a national and local level and this is important for religious education as a curriculum subject.

In light of this SACRE has been concerned that it needs to do two things. Firstly, to look at expanding Groups A and C on SACRE to ensure wider representation and to build resilience into the SACRE process, ensuring meetings are quorate. Secondly, to continue to work towards interfaith events drawing upon resources in Cornwall. Both of these actions have been difficult to achieve in 2016.

### **SACRE Business**

It is of note that SACRE only met twice during 2016, spring and summer. Unfortunately, due to circumstances beyond the control of SACRE it was not possible to arrange a SACRE for winter 2016. The Council is working to ensure that this does not happen in 2017.

SACRE looked at a number of things not dealt with in the report so far.

SACRE sent a representative to NASACRE's AGM in London who reported back to SACRE. SACRE has found the briefings from NASACRE useful in the development of its own agendas and discussions.

It was also regularly updated on the Learn Teach Lead RE (LTLRE) programme and the training and conferences available to teachers. It was also made aware of the SW SACREs conference held at Dillington House, Somerset.

SACRE also considered the future of religious education and collective worship in light of various reports that had been produced over a period of three years. It also looked at what such proposed futures would mean for SACREs.

### **Contribution of SACRE to promoting cohesion across the community**

SACRE has been working with the Local Authority to promote one event that will promote religious understanding within the community in conjunction with the Cornwall Faiths Forum and has sought to ensure that Local Authority community cohesion and equality initiatives are reported at SACRE to facilitate coordinated work across these agendas.

### **The Agreed Syllabus Conference**

Developments in terms of the Agreed Syllabus have been dealt with earlier in this report. The Conference met in the summer of 2016. Whilst the Awareness Mystery Value (involving a number of local authorities) review group, mentioned in the 2015 Annual Report, had not concluded its business it was felt important to get the process underway. What was clear was that there had been a split between Somerset County Council and the other authorities involved in the review of Awareness Mystery and Value 2011, especially in relation to standards and assessment. The work of the Conference will continue in 2017, notwithstanding the need to look at SACRE's recommendation about an entitlement to learn about non-religious worldviews, although there is no clear definition of these at the moment.

The work of the Agreed Syllabus Conference has been influenced by the outcomes of the Five Islands School Section 5 OfSTED inspection in September 2016. As a result of the OfSTED judgment of Special Measures a directed academy order was issued and the Regional Schools Commissioner identified a Multi-Academy Trust to work closely with the school. The ASC took this opportunity to align the agreed syllabus for the Isles of Scilly with that followed by the MAT.

The Conference has consulted the curriculum guidance produced by the RE Council in England and Wales in 2013: A Curriculum Framework for Religious Education in England. During 2016 it decided to follow the developments in other authorities that use Awareness, Mystery and Value and make a decision on the way forward when it is clear what the alternate syllabuses will contain.

## **Conclusion**

The Isles of Scilly SACRE, as reconstituted, is a small SACRE. Given that there is only one school and that SACRE is a relatively small body it has taken its task seriously and recognises that it can be a force for good on the Isles. SACRE also recognises the good will of the school in wanting to work with SACRE to improve and support the religious education of pupils at the school. SACRE would like to thank the Director of Children's Services for the continued support of the Local Authority; Andrew Thomas, the Clerk to SACRE, for preparing the agendas, publishing the reports; and, The Adviser for RE who has provided professional support and guidance to SACRE.

## **SACRE membership**

### **Group A – denominations and religions other than Church of England**

Rev Charles Gibb (Methodist)

### **Group B – the Church of England**

Rev Canon Paul Miller (Spring and Summer 2015)

Rev Canon Perran Gay (Autumn 2015)

Mrs Jo Osborne (Diocese of Truro)

### **Group C – Teacher organisations**

Mr Kevin Leeman (until summer of 2016)

Mrs Sam Grossett

### **Group D – local authority**

Cllr Christine Savill

Cllr Molly Peacock