

**SACRE REPORT**



**STANDING ADVISORY**  
**COUNCIL on**  
**RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

***Annual Report***  
**2018 - 2019**

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## **FOREWORD**

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

This year has also seen the launch of the new Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education in Plymouth. This was chosen following extensive consultation with teachers and school leaders from the primary, secondary and special schools sectors. I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the unstinting work of the individual members of SACRE, and that of our other colleagues and partners across the city's schools and faith groups, who have worked hard to ensure that high quality RE resources can be made available to every Plymouth school. The syllabus offers valuable support to teachers who may feel less confident about how to approach this complex subject, whilst also providing a suitable level of challenge for those who are more experienced.

I also wish to record our thanks to Helen Rickman and Jamie Sheldon for the sterling work they have undertaken this year in providing administrative support to SACRE. Helen and Jamie have 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.

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.

## **I RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

### **1.1 The Agreed Syllabus**

In late 2018 and during the first two terms of 2019 SACRE representatives from Devon, Plymouth and Torbay SACREs liaised and Plymouth SACRE members met as an Agreed Syllabus Conference to agree a new, revised syllabus. Across the three Local Authorities, the RE Today syllabus was agreed and adopted.

In Plymouth, the syllabus was made available to all Plymouth schools: maintained, academies, free and public schools, free of charge. In addition, all were invited to the launch of the syllabus, that included high quality training. 64 schools attended (85 delegates) and have adopted the syllabus so far. SACRE will seek feedback on this syllabus over the academic year 2019/20

As we continue to move forward, our flexible approach, reflected within the syllabus will allow teachers to take account of relevant 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.
- 2.1.2** SACRE continues to encourage all schools to use the excellent resources now available, nationally, through websites such as RE Today; 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.

<http://web.plymouth.gov.uk/web.plymouth.gov.uk/schoolroomreligiouseducation>

### **2.2 Examination Results in Religious Studies**

- 2.2.1** This year 12 Plymouth Secondary Schools entered a total of 597 candidates for the full GCSE examination in Religious Studies. Plymouth’s entry represents just over 24% of the year groups, in these schools. 50.9% of students achieved grades 9-4, (27% nationally). Fewer students were entered for GCSE, this year, a fall of 224 students on 2017/18. Plymouth SACRE reminds all schools that they are required to teach RE to all their children and young people.

SACRE has a role to monitor the teaching of RE and is supportive of schools requiring help to ensure they are compliant.

- 2.2.2 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 89 students for the Advanced Level Religious Studies examinations and 98% achieved grades A\*-E (97.9% nationally).
- 2.2.4 6 Secondary schools entered a total of 36 students for AS level and 80.5% achieved grades A\*-E (90.9% nationally).
- 2.2.5 SACRE congratulates all the candidates and their teachers on their hard work and achievements at this academic year'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 (PCFCD)**

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

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

The Centre continues to provide opportunities to children and young people across Plymouth to meet representatives from a variety of faiths and cultural backgrounds, either in their schools or in other settings, and is, currently, supported by 44 active faith and cultural speakers.

During the last financial year, over 90 schools accessed the Centre's services either on a subscription or pay-as-you-use basis.

PCFCD provided these schools with sessions and workshops covering a wide range of faiths, the most requested of which were: Islam, Hinduism, Judaism, Buddhism, Christianity, Sikhism & Humanism, and cultural speakers brought alive the Japanese, African, Chinese, and Aboriginal cultures. Storytelling, Meditation/Mindfulness, HMD and British Values workshops were also delivered.

In total, PCFCD's faith and cultural speakers spent more than 400 hours engaged in classroom-based sessions during this period.

PCFCD also provides students with the opportunity to bring their classroom-based learning to life by arranging speaker-led visits and faith trails to places of worship in the city including Plymouth's famous Synagogue, PIETy Islamic Centre, Ashoka Buddhist Centre and many local Churches, including the Greek Orthodox Church, the Minster Church of St. Andrew, Methodist Central Hall and Plymouth Unitarian Church.

During the last financial year, students spent more than 90hrs undertaking these visits and again, the Centre has received positive feedback from its clients.

In total, PCFCD received booking requests that equated to nearly 600 hours of speaker time in the last financial year and, annually, the Centre sees the demand for its services grow with the number of bookings dealt with across the last three years having more than tripled. As a small charity, funding and staffing, both of which have reduced during the same period, have placed pressures on PCFCD to deliver their services to schools.

## **4.2 Courses, Conferences, Meetings**

Plymouth SACRE was represented at the South West SACRE Conference at Dillington in March that always provides practical support and encouragement for members.

## **4.3 Plymouth RE Hub**

**4.4** Plymouth RE Hub remains active and meets six times a year to update current thinking in and to share training with teachers from schools across the city. This year two members of the hub were invited to the House of Commons to attend the launch of the Core Commission final report of Religious Education. Katie Freeman, one of the Plymouth SACRE members, was also invited to the House of Commons in February to talk about 'Excellent RE' in , with Lords and MPs at the APPG for RE. In March, the hub held its annual conference, led by Fiona Moss from REToday. This conference was carefully costed to support schools to attend valuable CPD for RE leaders.

## **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. As part of their Safeguarding review offer to schools, Plymouth City Council Schools Health and Wellbeing Team includes a review of RE provision and Collective Worship, offering advice and guidance, should it be required, as a result of any relevant findings.

### **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, SACREs across the three Authorities have liaised regarding the new Agreed Syllabus and this continues at an informal level. Informal liaison is also undertaken by the Plymouth SACRE facilitator and the SACRE lead for Devon and Torbay

The new syllabus is common to all three Authorities and in Plymouth we continue to encourage schools to develop a unique, local approach based around the key themes relevant within their unique communities.

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

The RE Adviser for Devon and Torbay is a serving member of Plymouth SACRE.

## **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 provides an opportunity for SACRE representatives to meet and consider best practice and ways forward.

## **7. SACRE ARRANGEMENTS AND PRIORITIES**

SACRE meets once per term and is supported by staff from Plymouth City Council: a Senior Education Adviser 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 Developments across 2018 - 2019**

Priorities during this period have taken account of the limited Education Adviser time and the need to launch the new syllabus.

## APPENDICES

### A Religious Studies Examination Statistics 2001-2018

<b>Examination - GCSE Full Course</b>	<b>Number of schools (including KS4 schools from 2016 onwards)</b>	<b>Number of candidates</b>	<b>% of year group entered in these schools</b>	<b>Boys</b>	<b>Girls</b>	<b>% A*-C (9-5 from 2018)</b>	<b>% A*-G (9-1 from 2018)</b>
<b>2018</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>597</b>	<b>24.0</b>	<b>266</b>	<b>331</b>	<b>50.9</b>	<b>96.5</b>
2017	13	821	32.6	397	424	63.8	97.0
2016	13	659	25.0	295	364	74.0	99.0

<b>Examination - A Level</b>	<b>Number of schools (Total = 15 secondary schools, 2010 onwards = 16 from 2016=18)</b>	<b>Number of candidates</b>	<b>% of year group entered in these schools</b>	<b>Boys</b>	<b>Girls</b>	<b>%A-E (A*-E from 2011)</b>
<b>2018</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>4.8</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>98</b>
2017	11	106	5.3	33	73	99
2016	10	93	4	35	58	100

<b>Examination - AS Level</b>	<b>Number of schools (Total = 15 secondary schools, 2010 onwards = 16)</b>	<b>Number of candidates</b>	<b>% of year group entered in these schools</b>	<b>Boys</b>	<b>Girls</b>	<b>%A-E</b>
<b>2018</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>80.5</b>
2017	10	37	2	14	23	67.6
2016	10	68	3	27	41	90



## **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 2018 Plymouth SACRE asked a representative from each of the four houses, together with the SACRE facilitator, to serve on the Plymouth Agreed Syllabus Conference. This work took place and with further input from all Plymouth SACRE members, the launch of the new Revised Agreed Syllabus, as noted in the report above, was held at Plymouth Council House in July 2019.

### **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 2018 - 2019**

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

Eight places

Malc Halliday	Baptist Church
Jayesh Bhagat	Buddhist Community
<i>Vacant</i>	Hindu Community
Bakari Arabi	Muslim Community
Dr Judith Beckman	Jewish community
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

Dr Catherine Bowness	Diocesan Board of Education, Exeter
Ed Pawson	Diocesan Board of Education, Exeter
Katie Freeman	Bickleigh Down Church of England Primary School
Emma Butler	Diocesan Board of Education, Exeter
<i>Vacant</i>	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
vacant	PASH
<i>Vacant</i>	NATRE
<i>Vacant</i>	VOICE
<i>Vacant</i>	UCU
Elizabeth Hill	PAPH (NAHT)
<i>Vacant</i>	ATL
Mirella Paganuzzi	Special Schools

## Group D: The Local Authority

Six places

Councillor Aspinall	Plymouth City Council
Councillor Morris	Plymouth City Council
Councillor Drean	Plymouth City Council
Councillor McDonald	Plymouth City Council
Councillor Mrs Johnson	Plymouth City Council
Councillor Tuohy	Plymouth City Council

## Co-opted Representatives

Seven places

Sara Wells/Claire Linden	Centre for Faiths & Cultural Diversity
Margaret Thompson	Quaker Community
Louis Efthymiou	Greek Orthodox Community
<i>Vacant</i>	Plymouth Association of Governors
Ben Kerr	Humanist
Dr. Barbara Wintersgill	RE Consultant
Mr Jono Madeley	Pagan Community

## Officers

Heather Ogburn	Senior Education Adviser
Michael House	Education Associate
Helen Rickman	Democratic Advisor
Jamie Sheldon	Democratic Advisor

## 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 2018 – 2019.

The Autumn Term meeting was held on 12 November 2018 and 12 members and three officers were present and the issues discussed included: -

- Student Voice
- Religion and World Views
- Agreed Syllabus Group Update
- Budget Update

The Spring Term meeting was held on 25th March 2019 at the Council House, Plymouth. 15 members and three 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
- BIG NASACRE survey
- Feedback on HMD and future plans
- South west SACRE conference - feedback
- Plymouth Centre for Faiths and Cultural Diversity
- Agreed Syllabus

The Summer Term meeting was held on 18<sup>th</sup> July 2019 at the Council House 14 members and two officers were present and the issues discussed included:

- Welcome to new members and membership update
- Future development of RE in Plymouth
- LearnTeachLead RE project – Plymouth Hub news
- Plymouth Centre for Faiths and Cultural Diversity – developments

Clerks to SACRE – Helen Rickman and Jamie Sheldon – Democratic Support Officers  
 Consultant Education Advisers to Plymouth SACRE – Heather Ogburn and Michael House.