



Devon SACRE Annual Report 2018/9

SACRE's role is to provide advice and support, and to monitor the provision and quality of Religious Education and Collective Worship in Devon schools

Forward by Chair of Devon SACRE

At a time when the very role and purpose of SACREs is under scrutiny I am very pleased to report that Devon SACRE thrives. Through a partnership with Babcock, SACRE has been able to focus on the needs of schools and teachers; to develop collaborative projects with faith communities; support 'Learn Teach Lead RE' and find shared cause with neighbouring SACREs. All of this has only been possible through the engagement of members and with hugely important leadership of Ed Pawson. I would like to pay tribute to Ed's work and to that of Gerry Rufolo our clerk.

Notwithstanding all the other excellent work done by Devon SACRE last year, the crowning achievement was the introduction of a new locally agreed syllabus for RE. The new syllabus represents our vision for excellent RE in schools, regardless of the type or phase of school. It was chosen after extensive consultation with teachers and has been well received. In particular, it offers extensive support for teachers in the planning, resourcing and delivery of engaging learning activities. At a point where Ofsted is bringing a new focus on intent, implementation and impact, this syllabus provides a clear articulation of curriculum provision. The high-quality training programme that was offered to teachers at the launch events was well supported and provided the chance to build a delivery model with which both Devon County Council and Babcock plc were pleased to collaborate.

The Learn, Teach, Lead RE (LTLRE) programme continues to provide important support for teachers of RE across the region, with termly hub meetings and an annual conference. The networking opportunities this offers enables teachers to connect with and support each other across the county.

The Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD) 2019 was marked by many schools, with 16 schools bringing pupils to Exeter for the day on 27th January. The theme, Torn From Home, was a powerful stimulus to explore some of the issues faced by people in the holocaust and subsequent 20th century genocides. Events included educational talks, walks, visits and films. Devon SACRE would like to congratulate students and staff in Devon secondary schools for all the hard work put into studying for exams. RE continues to be a subject that the majority of schools in Devon take seriously, recognising the important part it plays in helping to prepare young people for life in modern Britain. The entitlement of learners to high quality RE is something that SACRE takes very seriously. Where support and encouragement are required SACRE is committed to working with schools to develop the most effective possible delivery. The role of Devon SACRE continues to be vitally important, enabling teachers to be supported in providing high quality RE for Devon's young people. I look forward to seeing the way in which the new RE syllabus beds down and improves practice and teacher confidence in schools across the county.

Jeremy Roberts

Chair of Devon SACRE 2018/19

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1 SACRE organisation

a) Membership

SACRE would like to say a big thank you to Karen Chape, Nuala Nation, MarkAndrew Dearden, Tanya Pritchard, Paul Cornish, Cllr John Berry, Cllr Andy Hannan, Cllr Richard Younger-Ross, Paula Fletcher, Teresa Griffiths, Jonathan Marshall, Alex Parks who all moved on from SACRE duties during the year. We want to express our thanks for their generous commitment and contribution over many years.

SACRE is pleased to welcome new members: Phil Randall, Gurmit Kang, Ruth Flanagan, Cllr Greg Sheldon, Cllr Iain Chubb, Cllr Gordon Hook, Belinda Twiggs, Rosemary Khreisheh, Bex Northcott

b) Professional support for RE

During this year SACRE has been well supported by Gerry Rufolo on behalf of Devon County Council and Sally Watts and Sam Chapman on behalf of Babcock/LDP. Ed Pawson has acted in the role of Adviser to SACRE with Jeremy Roberts as chair.

2 SACRE activity and updates

a) A new RE syllabus for Devon schools

In collaboration with Torbay, Devon SACRE is pleased to have successfully launched a new RE syllabus, suitable for all maintained, academy and Church of England schools across. The new syllabus, which was chosen after extensive consultation with teachers and school leaders, offers valuable support across all phases. It sets out a carefully planned pedagogical approach, accessible resources, clear assessment expectations, structured planning and detailed subject knowledge support. SACRE believes it will make a significant impact on raising the quality of RE in our schools and it is especially timely, given the way it mirrors the new Ofsted approach of intent, implement and impact.

Over 250 delegates attended the three launch events and feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. A number of schools reported that it was the most significant RE training they had ever received.

Comments included:

- 'A thorough syllabus, well presented and organised'
- 'A vast improvement on the previous syllabus'
- 'Very comprehensive- valuable for teachers'
- 'A lot more teacher/child friendly for staff who are not comfortable teaching RE'
- 'Flexible and will inspire deeper thought'
- 'I feel much more confident'
- 'Excellent and engaging vision for the future of RE'
- 'I cannot wait to introduce this to my school'

More follow-up syllabus introduction events have been planned for the coming year. Many schools signed up for additional training courses to gain a deeper understanding of the supporting units and others have purchased additional resource units to aid their teaching. During 2019/20 SACRE will be carrying out a survey to discover how well the new syllabus has been received.

To access the new syllabus: <https://www.babcockldp.co.uk/improving-schools-settings/curriculum-additional/religious-education>

For the password, contact efpawson@gmail.com

b) Learn, Teach, Lead RE (LTLRE)¹

The Learn, Teach, Lead RE programme is a learning partnership which focuses on creating a community of enquiry and professional development for teachers of RE across the southwest. The project aims to support all teachers of RE irrespective of their experience or qualifications through practical support at termly hub meetings and the opportunity to participate in projects that develop their teaching skills and the learning experiences of those they teach. The programme is built on collaboration and peer-to-peer support, encouraging the sharing of innovative ideas and good practice.

LTLRE hub groups across the SW (including 5 hubs in Devon) have become nationally recognised for the high-quality cross-phase support they offer for teachers of RE through termly twilight meetings and our annual conference. These networks have established themselves as important providers of professional development for teachers of RE, working through hub leaders, who are provided with 2 annual training days.

All hub leaders are teachers themselves who are developing their own practice. Some are Specialist Leaders in Education who work with Teaching Schools or support Initial Teacher Education Programmes, others work nationally supporting the teaching of RE. A key strength of the project is that hub leaders are equipped through specialised training giving them skills and expertise. In addition, the annual conference is a springboard for much work in schools, offering all those who attend the opportunity to hear national figures in Religious Education.

c) Commission on Religious Education

SACRE has taken time to consider some of the recommendations made in the final report of the Commission on RE² (published in September 2018), set up by the Religious Education Council to create a national plan for RE. Members were pleased to hear that, as a consequence of the report, the DfE has reinstated the bursary payment for trainee secondary RE teachers. Members also responded favourably to a possible name change to Religion and Worldviews. Concerns were also raised about the proposed changes to the role of SACREs, in particular relating to the removal of the duty for SACREs to advise the local authority with regard to the RE agreed syllabus. Some members agreed with analysis from NASACRE that the proposed changes might undermine the democratic links between SACREs and the local authority.

Discussion of the Commission report's findings through LTLRE hubs have shown teachers to be largely enthusiastic about the new vision being proposed by the report, embracing the suggestion that the subject should pay more attention to the lived experiences and worldviews of pupils in our classrooms.

¹ <http://www.ltlre.org>

² <https://www.commissiononre.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Final-Report-of-the-Commission-on-RE.pdf>

d) Training and CPD

The central feature of RE training during 2018/9 was the launch events for the new RE syllabus. These were well attended, with a significant number of schools and school networks from across the County represented. Evaluations from the launch events showed 83% of primary teachers rated the day excellent, an 16% as good, with 95% of secondary teachers rating it as excellent.

SACRE will be offering more training days in 2019/20 to further develop the new syllabus. A significant number of teachers of RE from Devon schools attended the annual LTLRE conference in October 2018.

A new System Leader Qualification in RE and School Ethos, in collaboration with MarJon University, was offered for 2018/9. This course was heavily subsidised by St Luke's College Foundation, with a central focus on helping delegates to develop their coaching and mentoring skills. The Devon teachers who took part said they had gained greatly from their participation.

e) Diversity issues

SACRE is pleased to be continuing to support the work done by Devon and Cornwall Police to tackle Hate Crime, raising awareness about the Zero Tolerance to Hate Crime Pledge³ in schools. SACRE also recommends that schools should adopt the use of the new LGBT toolkit⁴

f) South West SACRE conference

Devon SACRE sent 6 delegates to the SW SACRE conference at Dillington House in March 2019. Evaluations showed a very positive appreciation of the addresses made by Rudi Eliot Lockhart, Paul Smalley and Joyce Miller on the implications of the CoRE report for SACREs and RE.

g) Half termly RE newsletter

The half termly RE newsletter continues to give extensive advice about cpd events, conferences and teaching resources for primary and secondary schools. This is emailed out to all schools and can be found on the homepage of the Learn, Teach, Lead RE [website](#).

h) Withdrawal from RE and collective worship

With seemingly more issues about religion and beliefs gaining media attention, schools seem to be coming under increased pressure from a small element of parents who are requesting their children to be withdrawn from RE or collective worship. All schools should have a statement on their websites explaining that this is a legal duty.

While parents have the right to withdraw their children without giving any specific reasons, SACRE always recommends that the first step for schools is to invite the concerned parents in to talk through their concerns. Please contact the SACRE adviser if you need support on this issue. Guidance for all schools can be found on the NATRE website⁵ or for Church of England schools on the Exeter Diocese website⁶

³ <https://www.devon-cornwall.police.uk/advice/threat-assaultabuse/hate-crime/sign-the-pledge/>

⁴ <https://new.devon.gov.uk/equality/lgbttoolkit>

⁵ <https://www.natre.org.uk/membership/guidance-on-withdrawal/>

⁶ <https://exeter.anglican.org/schools/religious-education-worship/>

3 Interfaith work

Devon SACRE continues to work closely with faith and belief groups in the region, including Devon Faith and Belief Forum (DFBF).

a) Faith and belief school visitors

Contact details for potential faith and belief visitors are advertised in the half termly RE newsletter and can be found on the LTLRE website.⁷

b) Dying Matters interfaith conference

SACRE was pleased to work in collaboration with DFBF to run a very successful interfaith conference in November 2018 at Exeter Racecourse on 'Dying Matters'. Nearly 200 secondary students attended to listen to speakers from a diverse range of faith and belief backgrounds, as well as medical and palliative care experts.

4 Holocaust Memorial Day

Holocaust Memorial Day 2019 events were a significant success again with 12 schools attending the varied events in Exeter. For the first time the Opening Ceremony took place in Exeter Cathedral, with a school choir singing, and speeches from dignitaries and school students who had visited Auschwitz. The talks and events during the day were very powerful and students found the input very moving. The theme of the day, Torn From Home, was brought into focus by the Syrian couple who talked about having to leave their home in Damascus to flee torture and war, escaping to make a new home in Exeter.

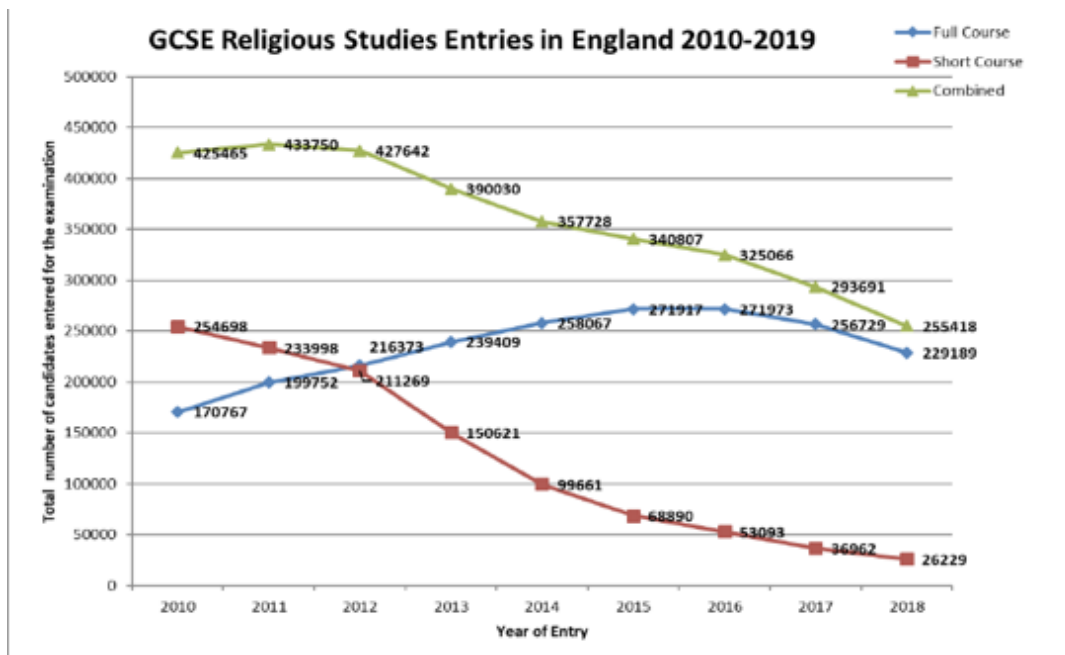
5 Standards in Religious Education

One of the roles of SACRE is to monitor standards and compliance with the law for RE. Data from exam results represents the only consistent external measure available, so this means that we lack coherent understanding of how schools are performing at EYFS-KS3. However, the new Ofsted framework (September 2019) will bring renewed attention to standards in curriculum subjects, and SACRE expects to be able to gain information on RE from some of these reports.

a) GCSE Religious Studies and KS4 RE

Graph A Trends in GCSE entries for Religious Studies

⁷ <https://www.ltlre.org/resources/>



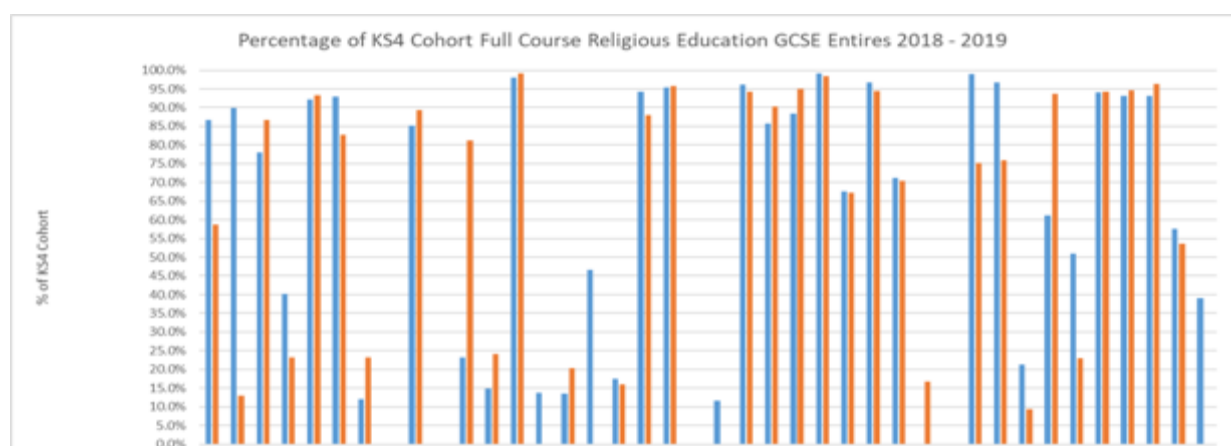
Graph A shows the continued downward trend of Religious Studies exam entries nationally. RE is a statutory subject at KS4 and all students in all schools (maintained and academies) must study RE. The most common way for schools to meet this requirement is by following accredited (GCSE) courses. Some schools do offer meaningful non-examined RE courses at KS4 for those not following a GCSE course, but evidence shows that many do not. The trends on the graph suggest that nationally an increasing number of schools are failing to meet their statutory duty to make provision for all KS4 students to receive their entitlement to religious education.

Table A Trends in Full Course RS GCSE entry in Devon schools

GCSE Full Course entries (% of Y11 cohort)	2016	2017	2018	2019
National	45	43	41	Not available
Devon	53	61	58	54

Table A shows that the percentage students entered for the GCSE RS exam has fallen back this year, but Devon schools continue to enter more students than the national average.

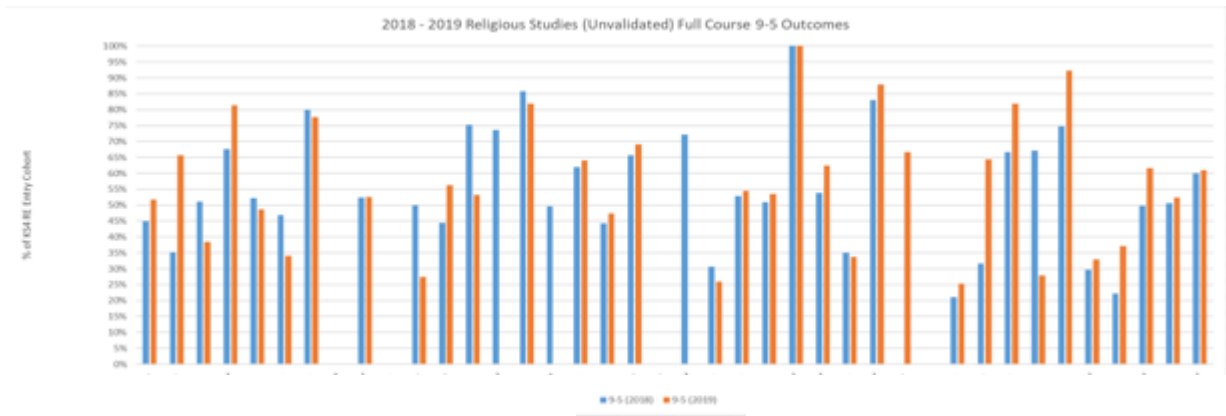
Graph B: Full course GCSE entries for 2019



■ % of KS4 RE Entry Cohort 2018 ■ % of KS4 RE Entry Cohort 2019

Graph B shows the percentage of Y11 cohort who were entered by Devon schools for the GCSE Religious Studies exam in 2018 (blue line) and 2019 (orange line). The gaps represent schools that did not enter any students. The short lines represent the schools that entered very few students.

Graph C: Full course GCSE results for 2018-9 (Grades 9-5)



Graph 3 shows how well students performed in gaining top levels at GCSE. Each set of blue and orange lines represents a single secondary school (the names have been removed). This shows the comparison of percentages for grades 9-5 for 2018 (blue line) with 2019 (orange line). **The lines on the far right are for national average, second from the right is the Devon average.** This shows that, on average, students in Devon schools are achieving lower grades than their peers nationally.

Table C: Full course GCSE results for 2018-9 (Grades 9-5)

	9	9-7	9-5	9-4	9-1
National	7.5	30.5	61.1	72.5	98.5
Devon	5.7	24.9	52.9	65.2	98.2

Table 3 shows that Devon schools have again scored less well for GCSE RS than the national average.

Analysis of these grades show that Devon schools enter more students at GCSE than the national average, but on average gain weaker grades. Devon schools enter more students for a GCSE exam than schools do nationally. This is good news, although there is evidence that a number of schools are teaching GCSE full course on less time than is recommended by the assessment organisations. This is detrimental to the students’ experience of RE and is not recommended by Devon SACRE.

b) Monitoring RE in secondary schools

Devon SACRE continues to offer support to secondary schools, especially where there are concerns about compliance, time allocation or low examination entry/grades in Religious Studies at GCSE. Schools who performed well at GCSE in 2019 have been contacted to give

congratulations. Schools that appear not to have entered any or many students have also been contacted to offer support.

Most schools contacted during the year have responded positively, showing an appreciation for the support offered by SACRE, leading to an expectation of further development of the curriculum opportunities for Religious Education. However, as can be seen from the exam data above, some schools continue to struggle to offer a coherent RE curriculum.

With a new syllabus and a new subject-specific focus from Ofsted and a possibility of a 'deep dive' into RE, a number of schools are realising the need to review their RE provision.

c) Monitoring standards and compliance in RE in Devon primary schools

Given the large number of primary schools in Devon and the lack of evidential data, it is impossible to fully monitor the provision of RE in all schools. However, SACRE undertakes to conduct an analysis of school websites every year, to check whether the school is publishing details of its RE curriculum. Several schools have been contacted during the year to discuss the place of RE and to make an offer of a partnership visit.

In addition, Ofsted reports are regularly scrutinised, and where there are references to inadequate provision of RE, British values, collective worship or SMSC, SACRE will make contact with the school to offer support.

6 Collective Worship

There have been no formal complaints about Collective worship in schools and no applications for determinations.

SACRE has scheduled a working party, in collaboration with Devon, Plymouth and Torbay SACREs, to review the guidance given to Devon schools on collective worship. This will report in June 2020.

APPENDIX 1: MEMBERSHIP OF DEVON SACRE 2019

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

13 places: Appointment for four years ending on 30 April 2021

Jude Taylorson	Buddhist Community
Mary Hext	Methodist Church
Ravi Nathwani	Hindu Community
Richard Halsey	Jewish Community
Bernard Lane	United Reformed Church
Helena Hastie	Baha'i Community
Keith Denby	Devon Humanists
Maia Miller	Pagan Community
Gurmit Kang	Sikh Community

Group B: The Church of England

6 places: Appointment for four years ending on 30 April 2021

Claire Hulbert	Diocesan Board of Education
Jeremy Roberts	Diocesan Board of Education
Tatiana Wilson	Diocesan Board of Education
Belinda Twiggs	Diocesan Board of Education

Ruth Ingrouille
Sandra Gill

Diocesan Board of Education
Diocesan Board of Education

Group C: Teachers' Associations

12 places: Appointments for four years ending on 30 April 2021

John Goody	Teaching union/ATL
Lorna Clay	Teaching union/NASUWT
Wendy Harrison	Teaching union/NUT
Sue Shute	RE teachers association/NATRE (secondary)
Gerry Winnall	RE teachers association/NATRE (primary)
Phil Randall	Secondary school leaders/SHA
Ruth Flanagan	Higher Education/ITE/UCU
Edgar Mihas	USU (FE)
Penny Hammett	DAPH

Group D: The Local Authority

6 places:

Cllr Emma Brennan	County Councillor
Cllr C Channon	County Councillor
Cllr P Colthorpe	County Councillor
Cllr Iain Chubb	County Councillor
Cllr M Squires	County Councillor
Cllr Gordon Hook	County Councillor

Co-opted members

Up to 6 places: Appointments for two years ending on 30 April 2021

Saxon Spence
Rosemary Khreishah
Rebecca Northcott