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## **STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

Tuesday 3 March 2026  
1.30 pm  
Warspite Room, Council House

**Members:**

Councillor Blight, Chair

Katie Freeman, Vice Chair

Councillors Cresswell, Dann, Stevens, Lugger, Tuohy

Selina Day, David Evans, Arezoo Farahzad, Giles Freathy, Gwen Hughes, Ian Jamison,

Martin Cox, Judith Beckman, Muhinthiny Sivasothy, Kerry Wardle, Claire Wills, Wendy  
Bratherton, David Salter, Sara Wells, Leonore Newson, Gurmit Singh, Denise Prothero

Officers: Ed Pawson, Michael House, Asif Siddique

Members are invited to attend the above meeting to consider the items of business overleaf.

For further information on webcasting, attending Council meetings and how to engage in the democratic process please follow this link – [Get Involved](#)

**Tracey Lee**

Chief Executive

# Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education

## PART I

Please note that there will be an opportunity for the members to comment on the latest SACRE annual report 2024/25 before the start of the meeting. Your feedback is important to us. Please come early (roughly 15 min) so that you can give us your opinions.

### Agenda

**1. Apologies - AS**

To receive apologies for non-attendance submitted by SACRE Members.

**2. Declarations of Interest - Chair**

Members will be asked to make any declarations of interest in respect of items on this agenda.

**3. Minutes from the last meeting - Chair (Pages 1 - 6)**

To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 11 November 2025.

**4. Chair's Urgent Business - Chair**

To receive reports on business which, in the opinion of the Chair, should be brought forward for urgent consideration.

**5. LA Officer input - MH - 10 mins (Pages 7 - 14)**

**6. Curriculum and Assessment Review- EP - 20 mins**

**7. Plymouth SACRE Annual Report: Q and As - Chair- 5 mins (Pages 15 - 24)**

**8. Monitoring and recent Ofsted inspections - EP - 10 mins**

**9. Learn Teach Lead RE report - EP- 5 mins**

**10. Local & National Developments- EP -15 mins**

**11. Member focus: DE (Baptist) -15 mins**

**12. Holocaust Memorial Day 2026 review - AF - 5 mins**

**13. SW SACRE conference 02/03/2026, NASACRE national conference 18/05/2026 - EP - 5 mins:**

**14. LA reorganisation - Chair- 5 mins**

**15. PCFCD Updates - SW- 10 mins**

**16. Date and venue of next meeting**

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 11 July 2026 at Warspite Room, Council House.

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## **PLYMOUTH STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE)**

### **Meeting Minutes**

**Date:** Tuesday, 11 November 2025

**Time:** 1:30 pm – 3:55 pm

**Venue:** Warspite Room, Council House, Plymouth

### **1. Attendance**

**Chair:** Councillor Tess Blight (CTB)

**Vice Chair:** Katie Freeman (KF, Diocesan Board of Exeter)

**Present:** Cllr Sally Cresswell (CSC), Cllr Sue Dann (CSD), Cllr Bill Stevens (CBS), Cllr Tina Tuohy (CTT), Cllr Andy Lugger (CAL), Arezoo Farahzad (AF, PCFCD), Martin Cox (MC, Humanist ), Dr. Judith Beckman (DJB, Jewish Community), Muhinthiny Sivasothy (MS, Hindu Community), Claire Wills (CW, Special Schools), Michala Firth (MF, Diocese of Exeter ), Ed Pawson (EP, RE Advisor), Asif Siddique (AS, Coordinator and Clerk), Dr Alasdair Richardson (DAR, Guest Speaker HET)

**Attending Online:** Gurmit Singh (GS, Sikh Community), Kerry Wardle (KW, DHSB), Chaz Singh (CS, Co-opted Sikh Community), Michael House (MH, Education Advisor, PCC), David Evans (DE, Baptist Church), Leonore Newson (LN, Pagan Community)

**Apologies:** Sara Wells (SW, PCFCD), Dr David Salter (DDS, Quaker Community), Deborah Temple (DT, Co-opted Jewish Community rep), Dr Ian Jamison (DIJ, RS teacher, Plympton Academy), Selina Day (SD, Marjon), Jeremy Skelton (JS, Roman Catholic Church), Saranjit Kaur (SK, Sikh Community)

### **2. Welcome and Introductions**

- Chair welcomed members and noted new attendees: Michala Firth, Jeremy Skelton and our guest speaker Dr Alasdair Richardson.
- Michala Firth introduced herself as part of the education team within the Diocese of Exeter. She is an Education Adviser with a particular focus on supporting church schools with their school effectiveness and Christian distinctiveness. Michala has worked in education for the past thirty years including as a primary school headteacher and a lead for RE and collective worship.
- Chair informed that Jeremy Skelton (Roman Catholic representative) is now replacing Lesley Clark who has recently resigned.
- Chair also introduced the guest speaker, Dr Alasdair Richardson from Holocaust Educational Trust.

### **3. Declaration of Interest**

Dol were invited in relation to support to PCFCD via community grants or any links to PCFCD in any other capacity.

CSC, CSD and CTT support PCFCD from Councillor Community Grants fund and AF is the Chair of Trustees. CTB and DJB are trustees of PCFCD.

#### **4. Minutes of Previous Meeting**

- Minutes from **3 July 2025** approved without any amendments.
- Actions from previous meeting reviewed; most completed, some ongoing (constitution review).

##### **4.1 Actions from the current meeting:**

- AS to circulate PowerPoint slides shared by EP in the meeting
- AS to circulate PowerPoint presentation material received from DAR (Holocaust Educational Trust)
- AS to publish the minutes of the previous meeting
- AS to send expenses claim and bank details forms to members with minutes
- Re Constitution, MH to liaise with Legal for final review; adoption at Spring meeting
- EP to continue data collection on secondary RE provision and to include special schools
- EP, Executive group to explore development of Plymouth-specific syllabus units.
- SACRE to support lobbying for RE bursary reinstatement and curriculum reform.
- AS to send invite to SACRE group reps re South West NASACRE event being held on 24<sup>th</sup> Nov 2025
- All - On the 'Members Conduct' part of constitution, SACRE members can provide comments or feedback to MH
- AS to circulate 'Prayers and Meditations for Universal Peace' brochure to members. EP to send to AS
- EP to continue work with Plymouth schools regarding data collection and may look into including special schools in surveys.

#### **5. Chair's Urgent Business**

None

#### **6. Holocaust Educational Trust Presentation (DAR)**

DAR has an education background and currently works at University of Winchester as a reader in Holocaust Education, and is also member of Hampshire SACRE. He gave an introduction to the work of the [Holocaust Educational Trust](#).

- Overview of Holocaust Educational Trust programmes:
  - Lessons from Auschwitz: Four-part project including orientation, Poland visit, and follow-up.
  - Survivor testimony initiatives, digital interactive resources (Testimony 360), and VR experiences.
  - Holocaust Memorial Day events
  - Study visits around the world

- Work with second and third generation survivors
- Youth engagement programme; known as Holocaust Educational Trust ambassadors.
- Teacher training and ambassador programmes. Also running an understanding anti-Semitism course
- Multi school outreach events where survivors speak on zoom.
- Work with Premier League with their academies programme tackling anti-Semitism in football and also have some university projects tackling anti-Semitism on campuses
- Emphasis on:
  - Complexity of Holocaust history and moral dilemmas
  - Different groups of people are persecuted in different ways at different times for different reasons
  - Rising anti-Semitism and challenges in schools
  - Importance of cross-curricular approaches and safeguarding Holocaust education in RE.
- Questions raised on:
  - Future-proofing Holocaust education as survivor numbers decline
  - Tackling anti-Semitism in academia and schools
- Resources and contact details shared for follow-up
- [Here](#) is a link to the teaching resources (including the two DAR modelled during the session) - they are all available free.
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## 7. Local Authority Update & Constitution Review (MH)

### **Budget Position:**

Annual resource: £13,105

Spend to date: £2,532

Planned / Projected Remaining Spend (01/04/24 to 31/03/2025): £8500

Projected remaining: £2,073

MH informed that PCFCD was at Headteachers & Trust Leads Conference on 23rd October. They were part of marketplace, engaging with around 100 delegates throughout the day. MH thanked SW and the team at PCFCD for their valuable contribution and support.

- **Remembrance Sculpture:** Update on “Ebb and Flow” installation and community engagement. MH has been working on this for a number of months with local councillors, Arts University Plymouth and Babcock International, local schools a range of other partners. It's going to be there for the next three months and then will be permanently placed in the Garden on the Hoe.
- **Constitution Review:**
  - Draft revised constitution circulated; includes determinations process and member conduct code.
  - Consultation completed; legal review pending before adoption at Spring 2026 meeting.
  - On the ‘Members Conduct’ part of constitution, SACRE members can provide comments or feedback to MH.

## **8. Local Government Reorganisation & Impact on SACRE (Chair)**

- Briefing on national proposals for local government restructuring.
- heads up that the constitution of SACRE is likely to change in Plymouth because of some political reorganisation
- Plymouth may expand to include 13 parishes; implications for SACRE membership and governance.
- The Cabinet will make a decision as to what we, as Plymouth, will present to the government.
- This will be publicly debated in the next full Council on 24<sup>th</sup> Nov
- A lot of changes can be expected for Plymouth SACRE going forward
- Changes expected by in March 2028; monitoring and planning required

## **9. Monitoring & Ofsted Reports (EP)**

- Limited Ofsted feedback this term; no major concerns. 3 Total inspections, 1 each in Secondary, Primary and Special school.
- Only one comment received for the primary school (positive).
- Secondary RE provision survey:
  - Mixed picture; some schools provide GCSE RS, others minimal or no RE beyond Year 9.
  - Legal requirement for RE at all key stages reiterated.
- Special schools confirmed RE provision adapted to pupil needs.
- EP to continue work with Plymouth schools regarding data collection and may look into including special schools in surveys.

## **10. Learn Teach Lead RE & Funding (KF and EP)**

- Successful October conference; strong delegate feedback.
- SACRE agreed £900 contribution to support hub leader training and Plymouth RE network.
- New secondary hub leader appointed

## **11. National Curriculum & RE Reform (KF and EP)**

### **Summary of Curriculum and Assessment Review (Nov 2025):**

- Strong recommendation for RE to join the National Curriculum.
- Independent task and finish group to begin to draft a framework that will need agreement from the wider sector
- Potential implications for SACRE role (shift from syllabus writing to local advisory/monitoring).
- Discussion:
  - Opportunities for improved consistency and accountability.
  - Concerns about safeguarding pluralism and local voice.
  - Impact on GCSE RS and post-16 provision.
- SACRE noted need for proactive engagement in consultation.
- EP congratulated KF on winning the Teach primary Awards 2025

**12. Recruitment & Training Challenges (EP and KF)**

- RE teacher recruitment remains critically low (54% of target met).
- Bursary for RE trainees removed for 2026 intake; lobbying ongoing.
- Subject Knowledge Enhancement courses discontinued; concern for non-specialist teachers.

**13. Local & National Developments (EP)**

- Interfaith Celebration (12 Nov) – hosted by PCFCD; members encouraged to attend.
- Holocaust Memorial Day events planned for January; Plymouth schools participating.
- Proposal to develop local RE units for Plymouth syllabus (e.g., faith communities, heritage sites).
- [PIETY](#), Plymouth Islamic Education Trust is now on RE Hub.
- AS to send invite to SACRE group reps re South West NASACRE event being held on 24<sup>th</sup> Nov 2025.

**14. Interfaith Celebration (AF)**

Interfaith Celebration taking place on 12 Nov in the Council House (Plymouth City Council), between 12 pm – 4pm, all welcome. Next year will be 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of [PCFCD](#).

**16. AOB (Chair)**

Chair shared a message from CS and SK regarding making Langar (Sikh community kitchen, vegetarian) for an organisation in Plymouth to coincide with the Birth of the Founder of Sikhi Guru Nanak Dev Ji.

EP informed that Devon Faith and Belief Forum has reprinted the collection of 'Meditations and Prayers for Universal Peace'. An Interfaith Week celebration was held last Saturday in Exeter. Copies of the collection are available to share, both in print and online. AS to circulate the online version. This initiative is highlighted as a valuable interfaith activity.

**15. Date of Next Meeting (AS)**

Tuesday, 3 March 2026, Council House, Warspite Room, 1:30 pm – 3:30 pm

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**PLYMOUTH STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL  
ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE)**



**LOCAL AUTHORITY OFFICER TO SACRE**

**RESOURCE UPDATE (Spring 2026)**

1. SACRE Budget Position
2. Plymouth SACRE Contact Information

## 1. SACRE RESOURCE POSITION – Spring 2026 Update (1st April 2025 – 31st March 2026)

<b>ANNUAL RESOURCE</b>	<b>£13,105.00</b> (£12,000.00 ESG + £1,105.00 Revenue)
<b>ACTUAL IN-YEAR SPEND – TO DATE</b> (Update to Month 2 – Actual to 12/06/25)	<p><b>£4,731 (Total)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ £110.00 - Supply costs for Katie Freeman to attend the SACRE meeting on 3rd July 2025.</li> <li>○ £110.00 - Supply costs for Katie Freeman to attend the SACRE meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> November 2025.</li> <li>○ £110.00 - Supply costs for Katie Freeman to attend the SACRE meeting on 5th March 2025.</li> <li>○ £115.00 – NASACRE Annual Subscription: Academic Year 2025/2026</li> <li>○ £60.00 – NASACRE Annual Fee for Virtual Training Package</li> <li>○ £2000.00 – Professional Fees (EP) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ SACRE planning meeting, 13/06/25 - Plymouth schools OFSTED report analysis and contacting schools, 03/07/25 - SACRE meeting, 14/07/25 - School visit plus planning - Tor Bridge High, 16/07/25 - Plymouth Hub Meeting, 17/07/25 – SA.</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ £2000.00 – Professional Fees (EP) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 01/10/25, Constitution Committee, 17/11/25 SACRE Meeting etc, 21/10/25 SACRE Planning Meeting, 11/11/25 Plymouth SACRE Meeting, 12/11/25 Plymouth Interfaith Festival, 11/12/25 Plymouth SACRE Annual Report writing.</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ £97.00 – Professional Fees (EP) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Travel &amp; Car Parking Expenses (EP) Plymouth SACRE meeting 03/07/25 - travel and carparking and Tor Bridge High visit 14/07/25 - travel</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ £99.00 – Professional Fees – (EP) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Travel and car parking – SACRE Meeting + Interfaith Meeting.</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ £30.00 – SW SACRE Conference (March 2025) 2 x delegates (Tess Blight / Muhunthiny Sivasothy)</li> </ul>
<b>PLANNED / PROJECTED REMAINING SPEND (01/04/24 to 31/03/25)</b>	<p><b>Between £4000.00 &amp; £6100.00 (Total/Approx/TBC)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ £600.00 - TBC Meeting Expenses Claims / Supply Cover (Approx. £300.00 per meeting)'</li> <li>○ £2100.00 / £4200.00 (+Expenses) – RE Professional Advisor to SACRE (Purchase of Service – EP Consultancy)</li> <li>○ £200.00 – Conferences / Training</li> <li>○ £900.00 - EDPS Ltd (Financial Contribution to support LTRE)</li> <li>○ £200.00 - Sub Group Activity</li> </ul>
<b>ACTUAL IN-YEAR INCOME</b>	<b>£0.00</b> (Total/TBC)
<b>PROJECTED INCOME</b>	<b>£0.00</b> (Total/TBC)
<b>PROJECTED REMAINING RESOURCE</b>	<b>Between £2274.00 &amp; £4374.00</b> (to 31/03/26) TBC

## 2. PLYMOUTH SACRE CONTACT INFORMATION

<b>PLYMOUTH SACRE CONTACT INFORMATION</b>	
<b>SACRE EMAIL</b>	<a href="mailto:sacre@plymouth.gov.uk">sacre@plymouth.gov.uk</a>
<b>SACRE WEB ADDRESS</b>	<a href="https://democracy.plymouth.gov.uk/mgCommitteeDetails.aspx?ID=480">https://democracy.plymouth.gov.uk/mgCommitteeDetails.aspx?ID=480</a>
<b>SACRE CHAIR</b>	Cllr Tess Blight (Plymouth City Council) <a href="mailto:sacre@plymouth.gov.uk">sacre@plymouth.gov.uk</a>
<b>SACRE VICE CHAIR</b>	Katie Freeman (Bickleigh Down CofE Primary School) <a href="mailto:sacre@plymouth.gov.uk">sacre@plymouth.gov.uk</a>
<b>LOCAL AUTHORITY OFFICER TO SACRE</b>	Michael House (Plymouth City Council) <a href="mailto:michael.house@plymouth.gov.uk">michael.house@plymouth.gov.uk</a>
<b>RE PROFESSIONAL ADVISOR TO SACRE</b>	Ed Pawson (Independent Consultant) <a href="mailto:efpawson@gmail.com">efpawson@gmail.com</a>
<b>SACRE CLERK</b>	Asif Siddique (Plymouth City Council) <a href="mailto:asif.siddique@plymouth.gov.uk">asif.siddique@plymouth.gov.uk</a>

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	<p><b>CIVICA FINANCIALS CREDITORS SYSTEM NEW/AMENDMENT TO CREDITOR RECORD</b></p> <p><b>CREDITOR DETAILS FORM</b></p>
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FORM COMPLETED BY	
DEPARTMENT/SECTION	
TELEPHONE NUMBER	

NEW CREDITOR RECORD REQUIRED

AMENDMENT REQUIRED

Is this a purchasing Supplier? YES   
 Do you want to raise a payment request? (auto AFP) YES

NO  (if YES refer to note above\*)  
 NO

CREDITOR NUMBER (If amending existing record please state creditor number)									
PAYEE NAME									
PAYEE ADDRESS									
POST CODE									
EMAIL ADDRESS <i>(for remittance advice)</i>									
PHONE NUMBER									
FAX NUMBER									

The Council's preferred method of payment is **BACS**. Please ensure bank details have been obtained from the creditor.

BANK DETAILS FOR BACS PAYMENT														
SORT CODE														
BANK ACCOUNT NAME								ACCOUNT NUMBER						
BANK/BUILDING SOCIETY NAME														

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# SACRE REPRESENTATIVES TRAVEL EXPENSES CLAIM PROCESS



	PROCESS	INFORMATION
1.	Complete 'CREDITOR DETAILS FORM' and return to Michael House (Plymouth City Council)	<p><b>Representatives will only have to complete this form once.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Please return these forms to <a href="mailto:michael.house@plymouth.gov.uk">michael.house@plymouth.gov.uk</a> for processing.</li> <li>• This will facilitate Plymouth City Council paying expenses into your bank account.</li> </ul>
2.	<b>KEEP ALL RECEIPTS</b>	<p><b>Claimable expenses include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Vehicle Mileage</b> (Paid at £0.45p / mile. Travel within Plymouth and Peninsula including Devon, Cornwall, Somerset and Dorset)</li> <li>• <b>Bus Fares</b> (please include ticket/receipt)</li> <li>• <b>Taxi Fares</b> (where no other form of transport is available – please include receipt)</li> <li>• <b>Train Fares</b> (please include ticket/receipt)</li> <li>• <b>Motorcycle Mileage</b> (Paid at £0.24p / mile)</li> <li>• <b>Bicycle Mileage</b> (Paid at £0.20p / mile)</li> <li>• <b>Parking Fare</b> (please provide ticket/receipt) or</li> <li>• <b>Supply Teaching Cover</b> (please send invoice via your School Business Manager).</li> </ul>
3.	<b>RETURN EXPENSES CLAIMS</b>	<p>Please send all claims to <a href="mailto:michael.house@plymouth.gov.uk">michael.house@plymouth.gov.uk</a></p> <p><b>TRAVEL DETAILS TO INCLUDE:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Name</b></li> <li>• <b>Date of Travel</b></li> <li>• <b>Type of Travel Expense</b> (Car/Bus/Taxi/Train/Motorcycle/Bicycle)</li> <li>• <b>POSTCODE of the start of the journey</b> (the postcode for the Plymouth City Council House is PL12AA).</li> <li>• <b>Cost of Expense (or Mileage)</b></li> </ul> <p><b>Please scan or photograph your receipts and attach to your email</b> (if this is not achievable, please contact Michael House).</p>
4	<b>RECEIVE PAYMENT</b>	Your expenses will be sent to the Finance Team and subsequently paid into your Bank Account.

<b>EXAMPLE EMAIL TEXT</b>	<p><i>Subject: SACRE Expenses Claim</i></p> <p><i>Dear Michael,</i></p> <p><i>Please find my travel expense claim for the most recent SACRE meeting.</i></p> <p><i>Name: Michael House</i></p> <p><i>Date: 19/07/23</i></p> <p><i>Type of Travel: Car</i></p> <p><i>Start Postcode: PL65UF</i></p> <p><i>Cost/Mileage: 6miles</i></p> <p><i>Parking: £3.20</i></p> <p><i>Thank you and I have included a photo of my receipt/ticket.</i></p>
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# **Plymouth SACRE Annual Report 2024/25**

## **Plymouth SACRE Annual Report 2024/5**

### **Foreward**

Welcome to the Annual Report for the Plymouth Standing Advisory Council for RE and Collective Worship. The report reflects another busy year and it has been a pleasure and an honour to continue in the role of Chair of SACRE.

I remain grateful to the members of Plymouth SACRE who contribute to lively, well attended meetings. In particular, we benefit from the wisdom and guidance of Ed Pawson, our Advisor to SACRE and the enthusiasm and indefatigable commitment to the teaching of RE in the city of Katie Freeman, our Vice Chair (who is Chair of the National Association of RE Teachers). Both Ed and Katie have national profiles in RE and, as a consequence, SACRE is well informed about national as well as local issues in the teaching and learning of RE. This report demonstrates our strong partnerships with officers from the Local Authority, school leaders and the Learn Teach Lead RE Hubs. There has been another successful LTLRE conference and regular RE hub meetings for local teachers.

We continue to have strong ties to Plymouth Centre for Faiths and Cultural Diversity (PCFCD) which promotes opportunities for children and young people to meet with speakers from a variety of faiths and cultural backgrounds. It is pleasing to read in this report of the way that SACRE and PCFCD combined to address issues raised by the unrest in the city in August 2024 by providing community and faith-based workshops in our schools to challenge misinformation and promote understanding of our city's growing diversity. We look forward to helping PCFCD celebrate its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2026.

At SACRE meetings this year we have had lively debate about the numbers of students engaged in examination courses in the city's schools. We have heard about positive responses to the new Agreed Syllabus which was launched in June 2024. In addition, SACRE welcomed the Government's Curriculum and Assessment Review, particularly the recommendation that RE should become part of the National Curriculum and the development of the Religious Education Council's National Content Standard.

This is an exciting time for RE. Plymouth SACRE is well placed to help support and encourage the city's schools to face the challenges of 2026 and beyond.

Tess Blight  
SACRE Chair

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- 6 SACRE: regional and national involvement
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### **1 Introduction**

#### **1.1 Membership**

During the year 2024/5 SACRE was pleased to welcome new members: Sarah Lakey, Leonore Newson and Councillor Andy Lugger.

Many thanks to those who have stepped down during the year: Nic Gibson, Alex Parks and Councillor Kathy Watkin (who has been appointed as Plymouth Lord Mayor). Wendy Bratherton and Denise Prothero attended a meeting as observers. See Appendix 2 for a full list of SACRE members.

### **1.2 Details of Plymouth SACRE meetings**

November 2024: 20 attendees, plus clerk and adviser, hybrid meeting

March 2025: 20 attendees, plus clerk and adviser, hybrid meeting

July 2025: 18 attendees, plus clerk and adviser, hybrid meeting

All meetings were quorate.

SACRE has been well led this year by Cllr Tess Blight (Chair) and Katie Freeman (Vice-Chair).

## **2 SACRE's statutory responsibilities**

### **2.1 The new Local Agreed Syllabus (2024-29)**

The new agreed syllabus, launched in June 2024, has been well received by schools. RE leads report that they are embedding the new Religion and Worldviews approaches into their teaching and learning planning. Both community and Church schools have found the new teaching frameworks helpful.

A primary teacher survey reveals that 96% of schools are using the new syllabus, with 71% reporting that it has been fully implemented. 82% of respondents expressed confidence in their understanding of the term 'religion and worldviews'.

Responses show that the new units on teaching about Humanism, caring for the world and diversity within and across religions have been particularly helpful. The development of Ways of Knowing and the use of disciplinary lenses has been well received. Confidence in delivering the syllabus is moderate, and future training needs have been identified.

Some concerns have been raised about the limited engagement from some academy trust networks.

Paid-for training sessions were offered in 2024/5, but due to low take-up the dates had to be cancelled. Much of the post-launch training has been provided through the Learn Teach Lead RE hub networks, offering free twilight training CPD.

### **2.2 Standards and monitoring in RE**

#### **2.2.1 Secondary schools**

Data from the DfE annual workforce survey shows that a number of secondary schools in Plymouth are not meeting statutory expectations for teaching RE. Some are only teaching RE for an hour or less every fortnight at KS3 and 4. Some schools are dropping RE in Year 11. GCSE exam data for 2025 (see Appendix 1) reveals that there are a number of schools that are not entering any students for GCSE RS exams in Plymouth, and others who are only entering low numbers of students.

Many of these schools, and, where relevant, the trusts they are part of, have been contacted. This has resulted in fruitful conversations with a number of headteachers and trust leaders, where we have been able to explore these issues further and offer input to encourage them to develop the place of RE in the curriculum. However, there are some schools and trusts who either do not respond or refuse to engage.

#### **2.2.2 Primary schools**

Monitoring of RE in primary schools continues through sampling of websites and scrutiny of recent Ofsted reports. Over 70% of Ofsted reports include a mention of issues relating to

SACRE's purpose (eg RE, collective worship or SMSC) and the majority of these comments are positive.

Where SACRE has concerns, schools have been contacted to raise issues about standards or profile of the subject. SACRE officers have had conversations with a number of schools where their Ofsted report has highlighted weaknesses in RE or related areas. Where RE is mentioned positively schools have been contacted to thank them for their strong provision. Resources have been shared and advice has been given to a number of schools with regard to parental requests for withdrawal from RE (and/or collective worship). In particular, the Plymouth LTLRE hub leaders have been an important resource in being available to offer support and guidance where schools make contact for help.

### **2.2.3 Headteachers' briefing**

Following the syllabus launch events in summer 2024 the Adviser gave a briefing to a Plymouth headteachers' updates event on the changes to the syllabus.

## **3 Collective Worship**

The current guidance on collective worship and school assemblies from Plymouth SACRE is still in date. This guidance supports schools in developing a suitable CW policy and encouraging active pupil participation in assemblies. We want to help schools put in place effective practice, offering opportunities for reflective experiences for their pupils. The guidance document offers an explanation of the legal obligations, including the right to withdrawal, and outlines some of the rich opportunities that assemblies/ collective worship can offer pupils for spiritual, moral, social, cultural and personal development.

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

## **4 Links with other bodies**

### **4.1 Strong partnerships**

Strong partnerships are a hallmark of the way Plymouth SACRE operates. We have good links with a number of organisations, working closely with Plymouth City Council, the Diocese of Exeter, the Universities of Exeter and St Mark and St John, Plymouth Centre for Faiths and Cultural Diversity and Devon Faith and Belief Forum.

The SACRE Adviser attends the annual conferences for AREIAC (Association of RE Inspectors, Advisers and Consultants) and NASACRE (National Association of SACREs), and sits on the AREIAC executive. He coordinates the SW AREIAC network of advisers (SWARE), organises the annual SW SACRE conference and acts in the role of RE Hubs lead for the SW. The 2025 SW SACRE conference hosted inputs from a number of regional and national RE figures, offering workshops on a range of important inputs for SACRE member training. The keynote address was given by Professor Trevor Cooling on Knowledge in RE.

During the year, Plymouth SACRE officers attended a regional 'In Conversation' forum, hosted by RE Hubs and NASACRE, to receive updates and discuss issues of SACRE effectiveness.

### **4.2 Plymouth Centre for Faiths and Cultural Diversity (PCFCD)**

Plymouth SACRE continues to support the work of PCFCD. PCFCD offers a great provision to enable schools to draw on visitors to classrooms and to inform SACRE about suitable faith and belief representatives when member vacancies occur.

As an organisation they are working hard to keep up the excellent service they offer to schools, but the impact of school budget cuts and administrative issues have made this

harder to achieve. They are also looking for more speakers to fulfil the training expectations required by schools.

SACRE has been working with PCFCD, using money devolved to Plymouth in the wake of the 2024 unrest, to make additional provision of RE workshops for schools.

#### **4.3 Interfaith week activities**

Once again, PCFCD presented a wonderful Interfaith Week 2024 event in the Council Chamber, offering an opportunity for local faith and belief groups from across the city to showcase presentations and performances.

Schools were provided with website links, resources and offers of school speaker visits to enable them to add to the impact of this focus week.

#### **4.3 Learn, Teach, Lead RE**

Plymouth SACRE is pleased to continue to partner and offer financial support to the Learn, Teach, Lead RE programme (LTLRE). Plymouth LTLRE hub is working well to support teachers of RE, offering termly twilight meetings and networking opportunities. We are pleased to welcome Tracy Davis (RE lead at Tor Bridge High) as the new secondary Hub Leader. Hub leaders continue to be a significant resource to teachers of RE in their locality, and termly training days enable hub leaders to keep up to date with current RE issues and initiatives.

The 2024 LTLRE conference was well supported, with over 90 teachers attending from across the region. Both conference and hub meeting evaluations show how valuable teachers are finding these networking and CPD offers.

Here is a sample of conference evaluation comments:

- Great networking opportunity
- Practical ideas for staff development
- Understand how to implement a worldviews approach
- Inspiring, uplifting, imaginative, motivating
- Great choice of workshops for beginners and experienced teachers
- Fantastic wide range of workshops

## **5 SACRE: local involvement**

### **5.1 RE Newsletter**

The half termly RE newsletter gives schools in depth support, information and networking links. It signposts current CPD, hub groups and conferences. Though this newsletter SACRE signposts guidance to schools about significant events, eg religious festivals such as Easter, Ramadan and Diwali, Interfaith Week etc

### **5.2 Holocaust Memorial Day**

The 2025 theme was 'For a Better Future'. Over 50 guests attended the Council House and contributions were given from a variety of speakers, commemorating the 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz and the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Bosnian Genocide. The Council House event was very emotive, powerful and thought provoking.

The plan was to follow this ceremony with a public commemoration to be held in the Peace Garden, but bad weather forced this part of the day to be cancelled.

HMD resources and links were shared with schools.

### **5.3 Response to Recent Unrest in Plymouth**

Following the 2024 unrest in the city the SACRE Chair has written to schools commending the RE agreed syllabus and encouraging schools to use it as part of their community cohesion and inclusive education strategies. This letter highlighted the importance of a

positive debate and discussion taking place in classrooms. There are real fears that religious illiteracy is on a rise and will have unwanted consequences if not addressed.

The adviser attended a consultation about the unrest led by the Department of Housing and Communities. In the meeting he asserted the importance of RE in this context and explained how SACRE takes its role of advocating for RE in Plymouth schools very seriously.

## **6 SACRE: regional and national involvement**

### **6.1 Curriculum and Assessment Review (CaAR)**

Plymouth SACRE was pleased to contribute to the consultation for the DfE's Curriculum Review. In particular SACRE expressed its concern about the huge and unjustifiable variability of standards for RE in schools both locally and nationally. SACRE emphasised the need for a National Content Standard and gave support for the idea of RE becoming part of the National Curriculum.

Concerns were expressed regarding the huge crisis in RE teacher recruitment and the poor provision in training bursaries. SACRE also highlighted the need for systemic support and funding for the subject.

### **6.2 National Content Standard**

SACRE is fully supportive of the REC's National Content Standard. The NCS provides a benchmark for excellence in religion and worldviews in schools or across a MATs in England. SACRE is pleased to support the NCS as a basis for a possible future National Curriculum in RE.

### **6.3 RE Hubs**

SACRE continues to be supportive of the RE Hubs initiative, which is providing teachers with a 'one-stop-shop' website, offering links to school speakers, places of interest, CPD events, local network groups, blogs and resources etc. The school speakers' database is of particular importance for schools who want to invite people into their classrooms with a particular 'lived experience' relating to the worldviews they are studying.

## **7 SACRE organisation**

### **7.1 SACRE leadership and organisation**

Plymouth SACRE is well served through its clerk (Asif Siddique), LA lead (Michael House) and adviser (Ed Pawson). Plymouth City Council is responsive to SACRE's needs and supportive in its administration and organisation. It is well supported financially.

SACRE membership is vibrant and well-engaged, although there are still a few vacancies. We are very proud to have a wide SACRE membership, offering an inclusive representation of the diversity of the City of Plymouth.

A number of SACRE members have taken advantage of useful training opportunities over the last year, both through attendance at the SW SACRE conference and national online NASACRE training events.

### **7.2 Constitution Review**

A review of the Plymouth SACRE constitution has been launched to ensure that it is up-to-date and is providing proper governance for SACRE business. Final discussion and ratification planned for autumn 2025.

## **8 Appendices**

### **Appendix 1**

#### **Plymouth Schools GCSE RS exam data 2025 (anonymised)**

Schools	% of cohort group entered	% 9-5
1.	0.0	0.0
2.	0.0	0.0
3.	0.0	0.0
4.	0.0	0.0
5.	0.0	0.0
6.	0.0	0.0
7.	6.5	45.5
8.	8.2	47.1
9.	8.6	55.6
10.	12.9	40.0
11.	18.1	68.6
12.	21.9	87.2
13.	23.3	87.5
14.	24.7	60.9
15.	25.7	75.4
16.	28.5	97.1
17.	29.9	56.9
18.	89.3	56.9
19.	96.1	44.6
<b>PLYMOUTH</b>	<b>19.6</b>	<b>63.8</b>

## Appendix 2

### Membership of Plymouth SACRE August 2025

**Group A: Christian denominations and such other religions and religious denominations that appropriately reflect the principal religious traditions in the area**

Eight places

David Evans	Baptist Church
Vacancy	Buddhist Community
Muhunthiny Sivasothy	Hindu Community
Vacancy	Muslim Community
Dr Judith Beckman	Jewish Community
Vacancy	Methodist Church
Lesley Clark	Roman Catholic Diocese of Plymouth
Vacancy	United Reformed Church
Martyn Cox	Humanist
Leonore Newson	Pagan Community
Arezoo Farahzad	Baha'I Community
Bhai Gurmit Singh	Sikh Community

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

Five places

Michala Firth	Diocesan Board of Education, Exeter
Katie Freeman	Bickleigh Down Primary (Vice Chair)
Selina Day	University of St Mark and St John

Vacancy	
Vacancy	

**Group C: Teachers' Associations**

Nine places

Kerry Wardle	NASUWT
Ms Gwen Hughes	NEU
Jasmin Rhead	NEU
Vacancy	NATRE
Dr Ian Jamison	NASUWT
Giles Freathy	HE
Vacancy	PAPH (NAHT)
Claire Wills	Special Schools
Father David Bailey	School Governors

**Group D: The Local Authority**

Six places

Cllr Sue Dann	Plymouth City Council
Cllr Tess Blight	Plymouth City Council (Chair)
Cllr Bill Stevens	Plymouth City Council
Cllr Andy Luggar	Plymouth City Council
Cllr Sally Cresswell	Plymouth City Council
Cllr Tina Tuohy	Plymouth City Council

**Co-opted Representatives**

Six places

Sara Wells	Community (Centre for Faiths & Cultural Diversity)
Prof. David Salter	Quaker Community
Deborah Temple	Jewish community and schools speaker
Charanjeet Singh	Sikh Community

**SACRE Officers**

Clerk: Asif Siddique

Adviser: Ed Pawson

LA lead: Michael House



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