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Published 27 June 2014

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

Monday 7 July 2014

1.30 pm

Council House, Plymouth (next to the Civic Centre)

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

**Tracey Lee**

Chief Executive

# **STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

## **PART I**

### **AGENDA**

#### **PART I – PUBLIC MEETING**

##### **1. APOLOGIES**

To receive apologies for non attendance submitted by SACRE members.

##### **2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

##### **3. MINUTES (Pages 1 - 8)**

To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 10 March 2014.

##### **4. CHAIR'S URGENT BUSINESS**

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

##### **5. WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS**

The Chair will welcome new members and provide an update on membership.

##### **6. PLYMOUTH AGREED SYLLABUS FOR RE (Pages 9 - 22)**

The RE Advisor will present the Revised Agreed Syllabus for adoption by Plymouth SACRE.

##### **7. FUTURE SUPPORT FOR SACRE AND RE**

The RE Advisor and Katie Freeman will outline a new structure of support for SACRE.

##### **8. REVIEWING THE SACRE DEVELOPMENT PLAN/CREATION OF A NEW PLAN**

The RE Advisor will lead a discussion on the review of a SACRE development plan, and the creation of a new one.

**9. NATIONAL, REGIONAL AND LOCAL RE UPDATES (Pages 23 - 28)**

SACRE members will be provided with national, regional and local RE updates.

**10. HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY 2015 - "KEEP THE MEMORY ALIVE"**

The RE Advisor will provide SACRE members with arrangements and plans for the 2015 Holocaust Memorial Day.

**11. DATE AND VENUE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will be held on 1 December 2014 at a venue to be confirmed.

**12. EXEMPT BUSINESS**

To consider passing a resolution under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 to exclude the press and public from the meeting for the following item(s) of business on the grounds that it (they) involve(s) the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph(s) of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Act, as amended by the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

**PART II (PRIVATE MEETING)**

**AGENDA**

**MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC TO NOTE**

that under the law, the Panel is entitled to consider certain items in private. Members of the public will be asked to leave the meeting when such items are discussed.

NIL.

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## **Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education**

**Monday 10 March 2014**

### **PRESENT:**

Councillor Aspinall, in the Chair.

Councillors Dr Mahony and Singh.

Dr Judith Beckman (substitute for Anna Kelly), Catherine Bowness, Alison Bradley, Penny Burnside, Katie Freeman, Liz Hill, Pam Shelmerdine, Dr Jatindra Saha, Alison Sturgeon.

Co-opted Representatives: Father G Carpenter, Reverend Gordon Cryer and Dr Clare Hamon.

Apologies for absence: Councillors Drean, Gordon and Stark.

Martin Edmonds, Heather Farrow, Barry Good, Pete Grainger, Jamie Heselden, Gwen Hughes, Caroline McVicker, Helena Mitchell, Barbara Wintersgill.

Also in attendance: Jonathan Marshall (RE Advisor), Fiona Evans (Vital Sparks Project Producer) and Lynn Young (Democratic Support Officer).

The meeting started at 9.40 am and finished at 12.30 pm.

*Note: At a future meeting, the committee will consider the accuracy of these draft minutes, so they may be subject to change. Please check the minutes of that meeting to confirm whether these minutes have been amended.*

### 25. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest in accordance with the code of conduct.

### 26. **MINUTES**

Agreed that the minutes of the meeting held on 13 November 2013 are confirmed as a correct record.

### 27. **CHAIR'S URGENT BUSINESS**

There were no items of Chair's urgent business.

### 28. **WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS**

The chair welcomed the Reverend Gordon Cryer to his inaugural SACRE meeting.

### 29. **HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY**

Jonathan Marshall, RE Advisor, provided an update on events that were held for Holocaust Memorial Day on 27 January 2014.

Members were advised that –

- (a) Holocaust Memorial Day was becoming a prominent part of the Civic diary and Plymouth life;
- (b) a range of events took place across the city to mark Holocaust Memorial Day, and included –
  - the annual civic ceremony of remembrance at the memorial tree in the English Garden at Mount Edgcumbe Country Park;
  - a public exhibition and schools event at Plymouth University;
  - a four day visit from Solly Irving, a Holocaust survivor, who spoke at ten secondary schools and public meetings;
- (c) a motion relating to Holocaust Memorial Day had been proposed and carried at the City Council meeting on 27 January 2014;

Following a discussion, members raised the following points –

- (d) schools had the opportunity to discuss Holocaust Memorial Day with their pupils and could decide in which lesson and at which age to raise the issue;
- (e) Holocaust Memorial Day was an excellent event which engaged children of all ages;
- (f) Holocaust Memorial Day would receive better coverage if events took place in the public domain, eg the city centre;
- (g) SACRE members had the opportunity to influence the RE syllabus to ensure that Holocaust Memorial Day was represented in it. It is also in the History syllabus for year nine.

30. **TOWARDS A NEW RE AGREED SYLLABUS**

Jonathan Marshall, RE Advisor, advised members that -

- (a) the RE syllabus was revised every five or six years;
- (b) the RE syllabus would be revised in collaboration with representatives from Devon and Torbay;
- (c) there was also the opportunity to create a Plymouth dimension to the RE syllabus focusing on local heritage, diversity and spirituality;

Jonathan Marshall, RE Advisor, showed a Powerpoint presentation from Alan Brine, HMI for RE. This was based on the recent long report for RE, (Realising the Potential) conducted every three years. Members were advised that –

- (d) 180 schools had been observed over a three year period;
- (e) six out of ten schools were considered to be inadequate at RE;

- (f) low levels of religious literacy was evident in schools;
- (g) new hubs had been created in Plymouth, led by PLREs (Project Leaders of RE) to support RE teachers;
- (h) young people needed to develop their skills to enable them to analyse and discuss religion;

Following a discussion, members raised the following points –

- (i) it was important that schools would want to buy in to the new RE syllabus;
- (j) a number of children had very little knowledge of RE due to a lack of religious influence in their home life;
- (k) some teachers had very little formal training in RE, and it was important that this was rectified;
- (l) students were unwilling to study RE to GCSE level as they did not value it as a worthwhile subject;
- (m) RE was unique to other subjects as it could develop a child's character and make them a better person;
- (n) it was important to promote RE in schools as the subject was being downgraded;
- (o) parents and headteachers did not value the subject;
- (p) some pupils did enjoy RE lessons but were too embarrassed to tell others;
- (q) teachers of RE in secondary schools were in a position to assist teachers in primary schools;
- (r) teachers of RE needed to be committed to the subject.

31. **THE RE ADVISER'S ROLE AND SUPPORT FOR SACRE**

Jonathan Marshall, RE Advisor, provided an update on his role.

Members were informed that –

- (a) Jonathan Marshall had taken the decision to retire in July 2014;
- (b) in July 2014, the post of RE Advisor would be deleted;
- (c) Jonathan Marshall hoped to work freelance after his retirement, and there was the possibility that he would be able to support SACRE;
- (d) it was vital that the work of SACRE continued, as SACRE had increased in

importance and was more influential;

- (e) Jonathan Marshall would continue to work with SACRE on the new syllabus until he retired;
- (f) support for schools, SACRE and the Plymouth Centre for Faiths and Cultural Diversity needed to continue and a number of discussions were being planned.

*Councillor Dr Mahony left part way through this agenda item.*

32. **SACRE BUDGET**

Jonathan Marshall, RE Advisor, circulated copies of the SACRE budget 2013/14, and asked that any outstanding invoices were submitted to him for payment. He advised members that any money that remained in the budget at the end of this financial year would be carried forward to the next financial year.

33. **RE QUALITY MARK**

Katie Freeman provided an update on the RE Quality Mark.

Members were informed that –

- (a) funding for the scheme was available from two charities;
- (b) Katie Freeman had submitted a bid for funding for four schools. Upon receipt of the award, those schools could then assist other schools with their application;
- (c) the cost of the RE Mark was £475 per school and involved the completion of a substantial amount of paperwork;
- (d) Hyde Park Infants School was looking at achieving the gold grade;
- (e) at least 10 other primary schools were interested in joining the scheme;
- (f) Katie Freeman was a Senior Lead Educator (SLE), and had a lot of credence with other teachers in the city;
- (g) Katie Freeman was to host a meeting for primary school RE teachers at Hyde Park Infants School on Monday 17 March, where she would formulate a plan for Continuous Professional Development (CPD).

34. **LEARNTEACHLEAD RE PROJECT**

Katie Freeman provided an update on the LearnTeachLead RE project.

Members were advised that –



- (a) the LearnTeachLead RE Project was launched in October 2012 for a three year period;
- (b) the LearnTeachLead RE Project was supported by the St Luke's College Foundation (often referred to as St Luke's Trust);
- (c) the LearnTeachLead RE Project was a nationally recognised network for teachers;
- (d) it was hoped that funding for the LearnTeachLead RE project would extend past 2015;
- (E) Katie Freeman was a hub leader for this project, along with Ian Hartley of Ridgeway School.

35. **COLLECTIVE WORSHIP RESOURCES**

Liz Hill provided an update on the Collective Worship Resources pack.

Members were informed that –

- (a) the Collective Worship Resources pack had received very positive feedback;
- (b) packs would be sent to those schools who had not yet received a copy;
- (c) spare packs were available for SACRE members to view;
- (d) the pack was constantly updated.

36. **DVD - 'IN HEART AND ACTION'**

SACRE members viewed the recently produced DVD 'In Heart and Action'.

Members were advised that –

- (a) the DVD was produced by Jonathan Marshall and Fiona Evans, Vital Sparks Project Producer;
- (b) the DVD had been funded by SACRE through Plymouth City Council;
- (c) every school in Plymouth had been sent a copy of the DVD.

Following a request from Jonathan Marshall, RE Advisor, Fiona Evans provided details on the Vital sparks project.

Members were advised that –

- (d) the Vital Sparks project, part of Plymouth Culture Board, was a city-wide initiative designed to inspire arts, culture and creativity in Plymouth;

- (e) the project was a two and a half year initiative funded by Arts Council, England;
- (f) small grants of between £500 and £5000 were available to community, youth and resident groups. The sum of £15,000 was available every six months to fund these grants;
- (g) interested groups did not need a constitution or a bank account to enable them to apply for funding;
- (h) funding was only available to Plymouth residents;
- (i) schools were not eligible to apply for funding, but parents were;
- (j) the application form was available on-line, and paper copies were available at Plymouth Museum.

For more information, SACRE members can contact Fiona on [fiona.evans@plymouth.gov.uk](mailto:fiona.evans@plymouth.gov.uk) or view the webpage [Plymouth City Council - Vital Sparks](#).

37. **NASACRE BRIEFING/AGM**

Jonathan Marshall, RE Advisor, updated members on the previously circulated NASACRE briefing paper.

Members were advised that –

- (a) Barbara Wintersgill had worked with NASACRE to produce a guide for governing bodies;
- (b) spare copies of the 'Guidance to NASACRE' booklets were available to members;
- (c) a volunteer to attend the NASACRE AGM in London on 22 May was required.

Agreed that –

- (1) Jonathan Marshall, RE Advisor, would send information on the guides available for governing bodies to Nick Rich, Governor Development Team, in order for it to be distributed;
- (2) any SACRE member who was available to attend the NASACRE AGM was to inform Jonathan Marshall, RE Advisor, at the earliest opportunity.

38. **SOUTH WEST SACRE CONFERENCE**

Jonathan Marshall, RE Advisor, asked for a volunteer to attend the South West SACRE Conference in Dillington on 20 March. Members were also advised that the March edition

of the Plymouth Centre for Faiths and Cultural Diversity eNewsletter was now available on their website.

39. **DATE AND VENUE OF NEXT MEETING**

Jonathan Marshall, RE Advisor, advised members that the provisional date of the next meeting was Monday 7 July 2014, at a venue yet to be confirmed.

40. **EXEMPT BUSINESS**

There were no items of exempt business.

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2014/0034385POLT

**Elizabeth Truss MP**

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Education and Childcare

Sanctuary Buildings 20 Great Smith Street Westminster London SW1P 3BT  
tel: 0370 000 2288 [www.education.gov.uk/help/contactus](http://www.education.gov.uk/help/contactus)Oliver Colvile MP  
House of Commons  
London  
SW1A 0AA

12 June 2014

Dear Oliver,

Thank you for your letter of 24 April, addressed to the Minister of State for Schools, on behalf of your constituent, Mr Jonathan Marshall, about religious education (RE).

The Government firmly believes in the importance of RE to foster understanding among people of different faiths and cultures, including people with no religious beliefs, and to develop children's knowledge of the values and traditions of Britain and other countries. That is why it remains compulsory for maintained schools and academies to provide RE for all children up to the age of 18.

The Secretary of State has reaffirmed his commitment to RE. In order to improve RE teaching, Departmental officials are working with the Religious Education Council to highlight best practice and encourage teachers to develop their own approaches accordingly.

Reforms to school performance measures will further encourage schools to teach Religious Studies GCSE. RE is among the subjects that can form part of the new 'Progress 8' measure. Under the new accountability framework, results of eight subjects, rather than five, will count towards the main indicator of school performance. This change will encourage schools to offer even more students a broad and balanced curriculum, including RE.

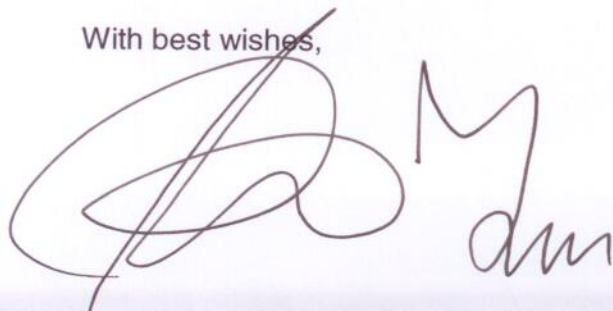
Furthermore, the next steps in the reform of GCSEs and A levels will help to promote good teaching of RE. We are introducing more rigorous content into reformed GCSEs and A levels to be taught from September 2016, and I am pleased to say that Religious Studies is one of the subjects in which we are developing new qualifications.

Under its school inspection framework, Ofsted does not inspect individual curriculum subjects, but is required to report on whether the curriculum offered by the school is broad and balanced and promotes the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils. If, during an inspection, inspectors see practice

that does not conform with statutory requirements, they will set this out clearly in the inspection report.

Please thank Mr Marshall for writing on this important matter and I hope this letter is helpful to him.

With best wishes,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'E' followed by 'Truss'.

**Elizabeth Truss MP**  
**Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Education and Childcare**



## **Engaging with Religion and Worldviews**

**A Revised Religious Education  
Syllabus for Plymouth Schools  
with Supporting Statements,  
Guidance and New Emphases  
from September 2014**

*“The true integrity of religion is that which truly awakens us.” Prof. John Hull*



## Foreword

I am delighted to write this Foreword to our Religious Education syllabus. This is a revised version, with additional emphases, which continue and develop the excellent work from the previous syllabus, "Every Child Matters in RE". It also takes account of two recent and significant national reports at the end of 2013, on Religious Education.

My thanks go to all Devon, Plymouth and Torbay SACRE representatives, who contributed through the Agreed Syllabus Conference, chaired by Jeremy Roberts, from Devon SACRE.

Although there is much common ground in this document, across the three SACREs, I am pleased to note the intention here, to develop a distinct Plymouth approach by encouraging our children and young people to explore Plymouth's unique heritage and diversity whilst acknowledging the importance of their own spiritual development. Religious Education remains a vital part of a broad and balanced curriculum; academically rigorous and also helping prepare our young people for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life. The local authority and Plymouth SACRE are committed to supporting this important work.

Judith Harwood  
Assistant Director for Education, Learning & Families  
Plymouth City Council

## Background

In late 2013 and early 2014 representatives from Devon, Plymouth and Torbay SACREs met together as an Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC), to agree a new syllabus for their respective schools. A small Working Party was convened and this Revised RE Syllabus document is the result of those deliberations.

Although much of the first section is held in common it was felt that the individual SACREs may wish to bring their own additional and particular Guidance and Emphases here and to subsequent sections. This is our Plymouth syllabus.

## Introduction

This document is influenced by two recent and major reports on RE:

“Realising the Potential” Ofsted - October 2013 and  
“A Review of Religious Education in England” The Religious Education Council (REC) October 2013.

This important document by the REC, although containing non statutory guidance, in effect, creates a revised national curriculum framework for RE (NCFRE) It states...

“The NCFRE does not claim to be an exhaustive or final description of the place, value and scope of RE in 2013, and it is not an official document...The extensive consultation about draft versions of this framework means the document provides a widely supported platform for RE which can encourage a coherent range of RE syllabuses.” P12

In his Foreword to the NCFRE document, Michael Gove, Secretary of State for Education wrote that:

“...All children need to acquire core knowledge and understanding of the beliefs and practices of the religions and worldviews which not only shape their history and culture but which guide their own development. The modern world needs young people who are sufficiently confident in their own beliefs and values that they can respect the religious and cultural differences of others and contribute to a cohesive and compassionate society.

RE’s place in the curriculum will be strong if its role and importance are communicated effectively and widely understood...”

“RE should primarily be concerned with helping pupils make sense of the world through religion and belief.”

*Ofsted Report 2013*

***Religious Education: A legal requirement***

***RE is a statutory subject of the school curriculum of maintained schools. Academies and free schools are contractually required through the terms of their funding to make provision for the teaching of RE to all pupils on the school roll.***

***The law requires that local authority RE Agreed Syllabuses and RE syllabuses used in academies that are not designated with a religious character 'must reflect the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian, while taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain'. This means that from the ages of 5 to 19 pupils in schools learn about diverse religions and world views including Christianity and the other principal religions. (In this agreed syllabus the principal religions are defined as Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism.) All schools need to recognize the diversity of the UK and the importance of learning about its religions and world views, including those with a significant local presence.***

**Purpose of study**

Religious education contributes dynamically to children and young people's education in schools by provoking challenging questions about meaning and purpose in life, beliefs about God, ultimate reality, issues of right and wrong and what it means to be human. Pupils should gain and deploy the skills needed to understand, interpret and evaluate texts, sources of wisdom and authority and other evidence. They learn to articulate clearly and coherently their personal beliefs, ideas, values and experiences while respecting the right of others to differ.

*(RE Review 2013)*

**Time allocation**

It is recommended that Religious Education should be given 5% of curriculum time. Voluntary Aided and Voluntary Controlled schools are subject to a statement of entitlement to which they are required to adhere.

## Engaging with Religion and Worldviews

### The six areas of Enquiry or Strands

These remain as before but are expressed in a slightly different form in the NCFRE, as follows:

Beliefs, teachings, sources of wisdom and authority

Ways of living

Ways of expressing meaning

Questions of identity, diversity and belonging

Questions of meaning purpose and truth

Questions of values and commitment

### Foundation Stage

The foundation stage describes the phase of a child's education from the age of 3 to the end of reception at the age of 5 years.

<b>Religious Education is statutory for all registered pupils on the school roll</b>
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During the foundation stage, children begin to explore the world of religion in terms of special people, books, times, places and objects, visiting places of worship and through celebration. Children listen to and talk about stories. They are introduced to specialist words and use their senses in exploring religious beliefs, practices and forms of expression. They reflect upon their own feelings and experiences. They use their imagination and curiosity to develop their appreciation and wonder of the world in which they live.

### Key stage 1

At Key Stage 1 pupils learn about different beliefs about God and the world around them. They encounter and respond to a range of stories, artefacts and other religious materials. They learn to recognise that beliefs are expressed in a variety of ways, and begin to use specialist vocabulary. They begin to understand the importance and value of religion for believers, especially other children and their families. Pupils ask relevant questions and develop a sense of wonder about the world, using

their imaginations. They talk about what is important to themselves and others, valuing themselves, reflecting on their own feelings and experiences and developing a sense of belonging.

At Key Stage 1 pupils should study Christianity and Judaism, in particular, with examples drawn from other religions and consider non-religious worldviews, as appropriate.

### **Key stage 2**

At Key Stage 2 children investigate and consider the impact of religion and belief locally, nationally and globally. They make connections between different aspects of religion and belief and consider different forms of religious expression. They consider the beliefs, teachings, practices and ways of life central to religion. They learn about sacred texts and other sources of wisdom and consider their meanings. They begin to recognise diversity in religion, learning about similarities and differences both within and between religions and the importance of dialogue between them. They extend the range and use of specialist vocabulary. They recognise the challenges involved in distinguishing between ideas of right and wrong, and valuing what is good and true. They communicate their ideas clearly, recognising other people's viewpoints. They consider their own beliefs and values and those of others in the light of their learning in religious education.

At Key Stage 2 children study, in a more systematic way, Christianity, Hinduism, Judaism and Islam and other non-religious worldviews such as Humanism. But references, illustrations and examples can also be drawn from Buddhism and Sikhism, as appropriate.

### **Key stage 3**

At Key Stage 3 pupils build on prior learning in RE, applying their learning to the key themes being studied. They deepen their understanding of important beliefs, concepts and issues of truth and authority in religion. They apply their understanding of religious and philosophical beliefs, teachings and practices to a range of ultimate questions and moral issues. They enquire into and explain some personal, philosophical, theological and cultural reasons for similarities and differences in religious beliefs and values, both within and between religions. They consider how the media portray religion in the modern world.

They develop their evaluative skills, showing reasoned and balanced viewpoints, when considering their own and others' responses to religious and spiritual issues. They reflect on the impact of religion and belief in the world, considering both the importance of inter-faith dialogue and also the tensions that exist within and between religions. They interpret religious texts and other sources of wisdom, recognising both the power and limitations of language and other forms of communication in expressing ideas and beliefs.

At Key Stage 3, students extend and deepen their understanding of Christianity, Buddhism and Sikhism, whilst also re-visiting and focussing on the deeper aspects of the other world religions, as appropriate, in their local, national and global contexts. A more concentrated study of non-religious worldviews is particularly relevant at this Key stage.

### **Religious Education 14-19**

Pupils have an entitlement to accredited courses and sufficient time should be available to meet the recommended learning hours requirement of courses provided.

***Unlike other national curriculum areas, Religious Education remains a statutory requirement for all students at this stage***

## **New Emphases in Religious Education Guidelines for September 2014**

Although RE remains a legal, statutory requirement we must also justify RE's inclusion in the curriculum based on sound education reasons.

RE is central to the TWO main aims of the National Curriculum:

"Every state-funded school must offer a curriculum which is balanced and broadly based, and which;

- Promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils and
- Prepares them, at school, for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life"

*National Curriculum in England: Framework document Sept. 2013 p.4 quoted in the "RE Review"*

Our revised syllabus - **Engaging with Religion and Worldviews** emphasises a more integrated approach which acknowledges that "learning about" and "learning from" religion, should not be regarded as two, entirely separate approaches. They are interrelated and help explore religion and worldviews from different perspectives, both essential to an integrated, well rounded study.

RE involves rigorous academic study, which should deepen as pupils move through the key stages.

We are keen to emphasise the need, locally and in the world today, for pupils to become religiously literate. In the recent Ofsted Report (2013) it describes this process as involving;

- Informed responses to ultimate questions
- Understanding the beliefs, practices, values and ways of life of religious and non-religious worldviews
- Understanding the nature of religious language
- Understanding the diversity of religion and belief in the contemporary world
- Understanding the impact that religion and belief can have on individuals and society

RE should also promote and encourage a deepening appreciation of the “spiritual” and its value in providing young people with the opportunity to identify and cultivate “inner resources” and a growing sense of an “inner life”; indispensable tools for the journey through life.

We would like to encourage teachers to be able to “stand in the right place” within themselves, where there is no contradiction or tension between “learning about” and “learning from” and where both are given sufficient time and space to explore.

For the time being, and until the issue is resolved nationally, we plan to retain the current 8 level scale, as a way of “measuring progress” and ensuring development. This is helpful for both pupils and teachers.

We cannot “duck” the sensitive and controversial issues either! Any serious study of religion and worldviews will raise big questions that challenge us all. Teachers do not have all the answers but they should be prepared to explore the issues and questions and create, through their skills and sensitivities, the right climate and ethos in the classroom where pupils can feel valued and respected and free to explore and share their ideas. A central task for the teacher is to facilitate RE conversation and enquiry.

Our previous Schemes of Work, bound in the “Ready to Go” Handbooks, will not be replaced and they will continue to provide the foundation for our future development, along the lines of an Enquiry model. They do, however, require updating and refreshing! The Schemes provide templates with an overall coherence and balance which should be retained.

Based on these programmes, we wish to encourage teachers to develop their own approaches, using their skills and expertise, to create activities that stimulate, excite and challenge the pupils in their schools and promote good Enquiry models. The schemes are not “tablets of stone” but guidelines.

RE should make a significant contribution to pupils’ Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development (SMSC) and provide a lead for the whole school in taking this important work further. SMSC remains a key indicator, for Ofsted, in judging the “overall effectiveness of the school”.

In particular, we want to emphasise the importance of our unique, local Plymouth story through focused learning and enquiry on; Heritage, Diversity and Spirituality. Teachers should seek more local links and opportunities for visits, visitors and the telling of stories about local people, faith communities, churches and other places of worship and meeting.

With the recent success of Plymouth’s bid, to Heritage Lottery, to establish a History Centre on the museum/library site there will be some amazing opportunities and links for the future!



This development, of a significant local enquiry model in RE, will also provide children and young people with a real sense of belonging and identity with Plymouth as “my city”.

In short, what is our task in RE?

By maintaining the scope, balance and structure of our previous syllabus, “Every Child Matters in RE,” established over the past six years, we now want to build on this solid foundation and integrate the guidance and new emphases, outlined above. We encourage all our teachers to focus their time and energy on creating active and innovative approaches to RE, at all levels.

With the support of schools, teachers, SACRE, faith communities, groups and individuals, we seek to create, and continue to develop, a Religious Education syllabus that every school will want to provide and every pupil will want to study.

Plymouth SACRE with

Jonathan Marshall - RE Adviser – Plymouth – June 2014

*“Our shared humanity ultimately matters more than our religious differences.” Lord Sacks*

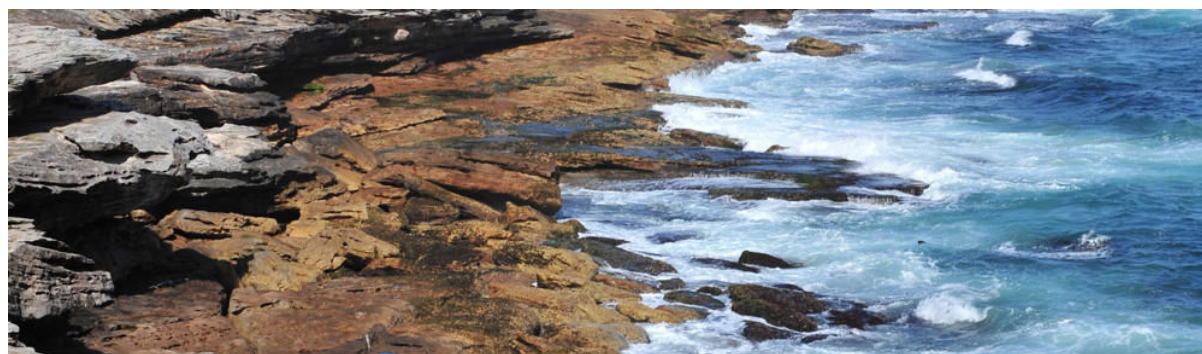
## LEARN/TEACH/LEAD: *Enhancing RE in the South-West*

**Briefing paper 11 – for partnership SACRE and Steering Group members, and Project Leaders of RE**

*Linda Rudge – Project Director*

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May 2014



[www.ltlRE.org](http://www.ltlRE.org) is managed by one of the Project Leaders of RE, and Steering Group members. Please visit it for updates and forums.

### **Context**

This briefing paper is being circulated to inform partners and PLREs about the project's recent developments and our proposed future plans.

The project was launched in October 2012 through funding in excess of £100,000, for a three year period, from the St Luke's College Foundation <http://www.st-lukes-foundation.org.uk/> This is the second full year of its programme. We received additional funding from St Luke's of just over £15,000 (June 2103) in order to enhance the project in key agreed areas.

The aim of the project is to identify and address unmet needs of RE teachers in Devon, Cornwall, Plymouth and Torbay and thereby to improve the quality of teaching & learning outcomes, and leadership. This aim is achieved principally through the leadership of local teachers (Project Leaders of RE – PLREs) in hubs across the region. These teachers are working closely with established advisory staff in local authorities, in diocesan boards of education and in universities. There is an emphasis in the project on the needs of newly-qualified or early RE career teachers, and on the needs of teachers (and teaching assistants) with other specialisms and responsibilities.

The project is being externally evaluated by Dr John Gay, and Dr Barbara Wintersgill is leading the internal evaluation. The project's steering group is chaired by Tatiana Wilson

(Exeter Diocesan Board of Education, which is also the administrative centre) and the Project Director is a freelance education consultant.

We have sent a position paper to St Luke's (April 2014) outlining our plans for the continuation of the project beyond its current 'end date' of summer 2015. The third phase, for which we will be applying for a reduced level of funding from St Luke's, will be focused on building the capacity for hubs to become self-funding.

### **Hub Leaders (PLREs)**

We have now appointed twelve out of fourteen Project Leaders for RE (PLREs)<sup>i</sup> who are all teachers of RE in primary and secondary schools across the region. One reserve PLRE covers absences where feasible. PLREs have tenure on these roles (and an annual honorarium) until at least January 2015. Supported by steering group members, and by the equivalent of two days training each year, PLREs lead the hub groups in developing quality RE. We have referred in our training to the 'RE Quality Mark' standards and have encouraged schools to participate in this scheme where appropriate and feasible. Hubs are also formally linked to the National Association of RE Teachers (NATRE).

We are still looking for two colleagues to fill the PLRE roles in mid/north Cornwall following the successful application for funds for this hub. Interviews for these two new roles are on 12<sup>th</sup> June 2014. The hub new has met once in the Spring term of 2014, and fifteen people attended the session. The main topics were project and RE updates from the area and nationally, and routes to achieving 'outstanding' in RE.

### **Hub Meetings**

Details about dates of termly hub meetings and venues are posted on the website and they are sent round to schools through partnership networks and by PLREs. These meetings are now underway in all areas and some have met more than once each term since the Spring term of 2013. Extra meetings are becoming a feature of at least one hub, and another uses a Newsletter compiled by the PLREs to keep people in touch between meetings. Reports of the meetings are added to the website by PLREs through the website manager, Ian Hartley.

### **Training for PLREs**

The first of the two PLRE training days for 2013-14 took place in Newquay in February 2014. Topics included national and local developments in RE (Linda Rudge) best practice in hub leadership (PLREs), routes to achieving 'outstanding' in RE (Tatiana Wilson), introductory subject knowledge enhancement on Hinduism (Mike Heron), and a report on the Exeter University project 'Researchers' by Rob and Giles Freathy. These topics emerged from discussions at PLRE and Steering Group meetings during and after the second annual conference. The second training date is 12<sup>th</sup> June at the University of St Mark and St John, Plymouth. This day coincides with the Steering Group's meeting, and it will be an

opportunity for all to meet prior to the third annual conference in October 2014. Topics on the second training day will include updates on website resources, developments in new agreed syllabus implementation (Torbay, Devon, Cornwall and Plymouth), and an in-depth session on approaches to Hinduism in the classroom presented by guest speaker Dhirasanta Das.

### **The role of the Project Director**

Previous briefing papers have focused on the role of PLREs and the steering group. The role of the Director is likely to change in the third phase from 2015 onwards and partners might like to consider how these proposed changes coincide with their own priorities for the project. The Director's role has already expanded, through the 2013 enhancement grant, to include visits to support PLREs in their own schools. Eight schools have been visited so far, and the range of activities negotiated with the schools has been challenging, relevant, and highly informative for schools and for the Director. These activities have included meetings with senior school leaders about the project and RE, in-depth discussions with individual PLREs about departmental or subject plans, joint observation of lessons to help subject leaders develop observation and subject monitoring skills, and observation of lessons taught by PLREs in order to learn about the school and its pupils.

Another of the key (original) aspects of the work is to oversee the selection of PLREs and to organise the support for them through the training days and through e-mail distribution of national and local RE news, new resources, and CPD opportunities within and beyond the region. This aspect also involves preparing and disseminating high quality RE input to training sessions in order to enrich learning and improve standards in the subject. The role of the Director is also one of mentor to PLREs, for example through liaison with hub leaders so that meetings are purposeful, focussed and organised to help improve learning in RE.

The Director also plans the annual residential conferences, in partnership with the steering group and hub leaders. Regular discussions with the PLRE website manager help to ensure that the website is effectively utilised to enhance the quality of the project and that resources developed during the project are shared effectively and promoted nationally. The role also involves regular liaison with the administrator (Exeter DBE) and the Project Lead. This is to ensure all aspects of the project (conferences, hub sessions, training for hub leaders, steering group meetings) are clearly and effectively administered. In consultation with the Project Lead and the Steering Group the Director also provides the Trust with annual reports of the project's progress. There will also be a final summative evaluation of the project and its impact on participants, written by the Director in consultation with internal and external evaluators.

### **Internal evaluation data**

The Steering Group will receive a full report on the current data on June 12<sup>th</sup>. The report is written to address the impact of the project on teaching and learning, and leadership and management. Two extracts below point to the quality of the work so far:

#### *(Teaching and Learning – raising expectation of pupils' attainment)*

The liaison between primary and secondary RE teachers has been particularly instrumental in heightening secondary teachers' awareness of what pupils are capable of when they enter Year 7. They have also become aware of the tendency of secondary schools to lower rather than raise the levels of challenge in RE when pupils enter the school. This too has often been reported on by Ofsted. The development reported by one teacher is unusual and reflects the positive impact of the project. *'We now work more closely with all of our feeder primary schools to figure out why there is such a difference in expectations and what we can do to change this. We have now started to develop new schemes of work together for the end of primary school to ensure all students start with the same knowledge as they enter secondary school'.*

#### *(Leadership and Management)*

Team leaders have had opportunities to hone their training skills and have developed between them a significant body of knowledge and expertise which is now disseminated across the region. One PLRE writes; *'I feel we have become better at picking out specifically what our hub requires at each meeting and trying to plan activities to really meet areas where needs have not been met before. An example of this is our current work to try and set up links with the new local Mosque to give all teachers more confidence in using Muslim speakers and taking groups of students out to the Mosque on visits'.*

Dr Wintersgill concluded her report by commenting on the overall value of the project:

Although teachers' responses are overwhelmingly positive and the project is clearly effective in transforming many schools in the south west, it will inevitably take time for an enterprise of this kind to extend its impact across the region. During this first stage, systems and procedures have been put in place and trainers identified. But some of the hubs are still very new while others are yet to be established.

These findings, and the support of the external evaluator who attended the Steering Group meeting in March 2014, are informing our plans for continuation to 2017, if we can achieve a suitable level of funding.

### **2014 conference**

This will take place at the St Mellion Resort Hotel near Callington, Cornwall. More than 50 places have already been booked by teachers, PLREs and project partners. Entitled '*The Learning Journey in RE: leading the way through religious understanding*' this third annual conference will focus on subject knowledge and understanding for RE teachers. Keynote speakers include Dr Geoff Teece and Dr Karen Walshe from the School of Education at the University of Exeter, and Mr Lat Blaylock, RE Adviser for RE Today Services and editor of *REtoday* magazine. An after dinner speech by John Keast OBE, outgoing Chair of the RE Council of England and Wales, will reflect on 'a life in RE'. Workshops will be led by specialists and faith community leaders on key aspects of the RE curriculum.

### **Bid to St Luke's Foundation for third phase**

The LTLRE Steering Group agreed in March 2014 that the project's new direction under third phase funding (if available) would be:

- to consolidate the working practice, pedagogy and partnership philosophy of the project
- *through* securing the capacity for most of the 'inner' local hubs (and other elements of the programme) to become self-supporting by 2017-18
- *by*
  - a) obtaining an agreed level of continuation funding from St Luke's Foundation;
  - b) adjusting Director, Lead and PLRE roles suit the new aim of consolidating the project's practice and its legacy;
  - c) extending the membership of the steering group to include senior leaders from schools;
  - d) reinforcing the culture of teacher-led networking and conferencing in RE across the south-west;
  - e) meeting national expectations for RE CPD and subject development by establishing the project as a regional training hub with accredited CPD programmes.

A formal bid for funds will be presented in April 2015. The annual conference 2015 will need to be planned in contingency terms before we have the outcome of the bid.

Meanwhile, we are looking forward to the final year of this second phase of the project, and I would like to thank everyone for their support, creativity, enthusiasm and professional commitment to RE.

*(Briefing paper 11 ends – LR/06/14)*

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