



Democratic and Member Support

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STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Monday 10 July 2017

1.30 pm

University College of St Mark and St John, Derriford Road, Plymouth, PL6 8DH

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

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Tracey Lee

Chief Executive

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education

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 - 6)

To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 27 March 2017.

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. Membership Issues

The RE Adviser and Democratic Support Officer will provide a membership update.

6. Future Development of RE in Plymouth

The RE Adviser and Dr Wintersgill will provide feedback from the morning's discussion.

7. NASACRE AGM/Conference in York

MarkAndrew Dearden will provide members with feedback from his attendance at the recent NASACRE AGM/Conference in York.

8. Commission on RE

Dr David Lundie will provide members with feedback from the recent Commission on RE consultation day in Exeter.

9. LearnTeachLead RE Project and RE Hub News

Katie Freeman will provide members with an update on the LearnTeachLead RE project and news from the RE Hub.

10. Promoting Religious Tolerance in Schools - Implications for SACRE

Alizeh Abdul Rahman, a representative of the Plymouth Youth Parliament, will lead a discussion on 'Promoting religious tolerance in schools – implications for SACRE'

11. Assessment in RE Project

Katie Freeman will provide members with an update on the Assessment in RE project.

12. Collective Worship Project (Pages 7 - 14)

The RE Adviser will lead a discussion on the Collective Worship project.

**13. Plymouth Centre for Faiths and Cultural Diversity (PCFCD)
News/Developments**

Sara Wells and Claire Linden will provide members with an update on recent developments at the Centre.

14. Feedback and Updates on Other RE Related Issues (Pages 15 - 18)

The RE Adviser will provide updates on other RE related issues, including –

- Holocaust Memorial Day
- The Big NASACRE Survey (please see the interim report on the NASACRE website)
- SACRE grants
- Faiths Day
- Future RE Adviser support

15. Date and venue of next meeting

The next meeting will be held at on Monday 13 November 2017 at a time and venue yet to be confirmed.

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Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education

Monday 27 March 2017

PRESENT:

Martin Edmonds, in the Chair.

Helena Mitchell, Vice Chair.

Councillors Mrs Aspinall, Ball and Drear.

Bakari Arabi, Catherine Bowness, Penny Burnside, Katie Freeman, Gary Fatcher, Liz Hill, Anna Kelly and Alison Williams.

Co-opted Representatives: Ben Kerr and Margaret Thompson

Apologies for absence: MarkAndrew Dearden, Jon Goulder, David Lundie, Councillor Morris and Astra Parkin.

Also in attendance: Jonathan Marshall (RE Adviser) and Lynn Young (Democratic Support Officer).

The meeting started at 1.35 pm and finished at 3.52 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.

22. **Declarations of Interest**

The following declaration of interest was made in accordance with the code of conduct –

Name	Minute Number and Item	Reason	Interest
Councillor Mrs Aspinall	28 – The Big NASACRE survey	School Governor and member of a Multi Academy Trust (MAT	Personal

23. **Minutes**

Agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 14 November 2016.

24. **Chair's Urgent Business**

The Chair advised members that an investigation into Councillor Morris was ongoing and it was not appropriate to make any further comment at this present time.

25. **Welcome to new Members**

Jonathan Marshall (RE Adviser), provided an update on the current membership.

Members were advised that –

- (a) Mariella Paganuzzi is the new Special Schools representative;
- (b) Dr David Lundie is the new Roman Catholic representative.

26. **Membership Issues**

Jonathan Marshall (RE Adviser), advised members that Shilpa Kulkarni (Hindu Community representative) and Ian Kavanagh (Buddhist Community representative) had resigned from SACRE, and they had been asked to find replacements.

Jonathan Marshall expressed his concern at the lack of Teaching Union representatives on SACRE and it was agreed that Katie Freeman would endeavour to find new Teaching Union representatives.

27. **SACRE Annual Report**

Jonathan Marshall, RE Adviser, discussed the SACRE annual report.

Following a discussion, it was queried whether the word 'faith' could be replaced with the word 'belief'. Jonathan Marshall advised that it could be difficult to implement this change, however he advised he would investigate whether this was possible.

Agreed that the SACRE Annual Report 2015 – 2016 is approved.

28. **The Big NASACRE Survey**

Jonathan Marshall (RE Adviser) provided members with information on The Big NASACRE Survey which had recently been launched. A major review is ongoing, through the Religious Education Council though independent of it – the Commission on RE (CoRE). The Casey Review (Dame Louise Casey DBE CB) was also completed recently and has some interesting findings and recommendations around opportunities and integration which touch on RE.

The deadline for completion of The Big NASACRE Survey was 30 April, and SACREs were being encouraged to complete this for the following reason -

In order for NASACRE to be able to represent the views of its member SACREs at a national level, including to the REC and other policymakers, it is important that we try to develop as full an understanding of the views of our members as possible. This is the reason for this quite lengthy research survey being conducted by the NASACRE Chair, Paul Smalley who is also a Senior Lecturer in RE at Edge Hill University. Data from this will be anonymised before being discussed with the NASACRE Executive and being used to inform policymakers about the strengths, views and hopes of SACREs across the country. It is also hoped that the results of this research will be published more widely in suitable journals to inform the wider RE community.

Jonathan Marshall advised members that a number of questions needed to be answered, including questions relating to the Agreed Syllabus –

- what are the strengths?

- what are the weaknesses?
- do we want to move towards a national syllabus?

Following a discussion, members raised the following points –

- (a) the role of SACRE is to inform schools what should be taught in RE lessons;
- (b) a number of schools struggled to find time to teach RE in their curriculum;
- (c) RE is not part of the National Curriculum but should it be?;
- (d) RE is the only subject that Local Authorities are responsible for;
- (e) the local RE curriculum was very popular in Plymouth;
- (f) RE had not previously been a priority for Ofsted Inspectors, however there was now a new HMI who was encouraging the inspection of RE.

Agreed that Jonathan Marshall would e-mail members to arrange a meeting to discuss the completion of The Big NASACRE Survey.

Order of business

With the permission of the Chair, the order of business was amended as set out below in the minutes.

29. Monitoring RE provision in Plymouth schools

Jonathan Marshall (RE Adviser) stressed the importance of engaging with local schools. He had been advised by the Plymouth Centre for Faiths and Cultural Diversity (PCFCD) that a number of Plymouth schools (approximately 10 – 15) did not engage with them. Three Plymouth secondary schools did not enter their students for GCSE RE, and it was important to understand the reasons for this. It was essential to ensure that teachers did not get complacent or feel unsupported when teaching RE.

30. What is Religious Literacy and how well do Secondary School teachers know the 6 major world religions? What are the implications for SACREs and for the support and training of all teachers of Religious Education?

Alison Bradley had until recently, been a member of Plymouth SACRE. She had now re-located to Liverpool to undertake a Masters Degree. She gave a presentation entitled 'What is Religious Literacy and how well do Secondary School teachers know the six major world religions? What are the implications for SACREs and for the support and training of all teachers of Religious Education?'

The presentation was well received by members, had been thought-provoking and had generated a lively debate.

The Chair thanked Alison Bradley for her presentation.

31. **Holocaust Memorial Day**

Jonathan Marshall (RE Adviser) provided members with an update on Holocaust Memorial Day 2017.

Members were advised that –

- (a) Solly Irving had been unable to make his annual visit to Plymouth this year due to ill health;
- (b) Martin Edmonds (Chair) had organised a successful and well-attended event for Holocaust Memorial Day at Plympton Academy, where a number of Plymouth schools had received a cherry tree to plant at their school so as to be able to commemorate the event in the future;
- (c) a civic event was held every year at Mount Eggcumbe House and Country Park to mark Holocaust Memorial Day. The RE Adviser expressed the hope that future events would be held at the Anne Frank Memorial on Plymouth Hoe in order to make the event more accessible to the general public.

(Alison Bradley left the meeting after this agenda item)

32. **National and Local RE news and issues**

LearnTeachLeadRE(LTLRE) and RE Hub

Katie Freeman advised members that LTLRE was set up five years ago by the Exeter Diocese, to work with faith and community schools, and secondary and primary leads across the peninsula to train staff. In the last two years LTLRE has grown, and funding has been granted for extra areas around the country. Various training sessions have been held in Plymouth, and extra Hub meetings held. The quality of the training enables teachers to lead their own training sessions.

The Plymouth Schools RE Conference is being held on 12 May, and Lat Blaylock will be attending this event together with Deborah Weston.

A selection of books on 'Understanding Christianity' were held by Katie Freeman for members to view.

A series of three 'Teaching Judaism' sessions were held recently at Plymouth Synagogue and were a great success.

Assessment Working Group

Katie Freeman had visited Exeter with two members of the RE Hub to work with teachers from Torbay and Devon, to create overview grids to assess how children are working. Members were advised that a number of schools were now using this method.

Collective Worship Working Group

SACRE funding was available to write booklets on this important issue. A working party was already in place for this and two questionnaires have already been sent to schools. It was proposed that Plymouth SACRE (with Jonathan Marshall) provide guidance on Collective Worship. It is important to support what is going on in the city and showcase it and share knowledge with as many schools as possible. Collective Worship is not happening in all schools – in some schools it happens sometimes. It was hoped that by July a package of support was available that could be shared with Plymouth schools.

SACRE RE grants

Two grants have been awarded so far this year – to The Cathedral School of St Mary and MAP2. Jonathan Marshall would like to promote this scheme and ensure it is well publicised. He will ensure that paper copies of this scheme are circulated to Plymouth schools.

SW SACRE Conference

Helena Mitchell attended the conference which was held at Dillington House. Dr Joyce Miller, a Commissioner for the RE Council provided a keynote address. A number of workshops were held –

- The importance of bringing humanism to life with confidence in the school curriculum - Liz Payne-Ahmadi
- ‘Crossing the Bridges’ - A project from Poole SACRE aimed at engaging more fully with local faith communities - David Rees
- Introduction to the Understanding Cone on Humanism, local faith communities - Pauline Dodds
- Workshop on ‘godly play’ led by a TA of small school in Gloucestershire.

NASACRE AGM

The NASACRE AGM 2017 is being held in York on 16 May 2017, any member who is able to attend is requested to advise the Democratic Support Officer of their availability.

33. **Plymouth Centre for Faiths and Cultural Diversity**

Jonathan Marshall (RE Adviser) provided members with an update on the latest news and developments from the Plymouth Centre for Faiths and Cultural Diversity (PCFCD).

Members were advised that –

- (a) a PCFCD co-opted representative would soon be appointed to SACRE;
- (b) approximately 500 visits were arranged by PCFCD each year;
- (c) the Centre had now re-located to the old ROSLA (Raising of School Leaving Age) building on the University Technical College (UTC) campus in Devonport;

- (d) a number of faith speakers had withdrawn their services to the Centre so the Centre is urgently seeking replacements;
- (e) the Plymouth Council of Faiths are holding an event on Thursday 13 July in the Upper Guildhall. SACRE would have a stand at the event. More information would be circulated to members nearer the time.

The Chair thanked Jonathan Marshall for his report.

(Ben Kerr left the meeting after this agenda item)

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

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as Monday 10 July, to be held at Marjon. Further details would follow.

Re-framing collective worship in Plymouth schools

Guidelines from Plymouth SACRE to Schools and Academies following the Plymouth Agreed Syllabus and to all schools promoting the value of collective worship

'Our fragmented society needs a whole series of reflective pools, places where the very deepest issues of life and death may be explored and understood away from the market place'. Terry Waite

Background and Context

SACRE hopes that this document will provide schools with a timely reminder; some useful guidelines and a summary of best practice to support them in the planning and delivery of good quality Collective Worship. Collective Worship which offers a unique contribution to the preparation of our young people for the opportunities and challenges they face in twenty-first century Britain

Questions and issues around Collective Worship remain complex and often, contentious. The aim of this short guidance document is to provide support and encouragement for all schools. Enabling them, within the busy school curriculum, to provide a vital and unique opportunity to celebrate and reflect upon the School or Academy's ethos and values. Timeless and eternal values which contribute to the Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) development of all pupils and the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and respect for all.

Three years ago, Plymouth SACRE, through some creative and innovative work at Hyde Park Infants School, produced an excellent Collective Worship resource Programme which contained a wealth of material and advice.

From more recent local research, we know that approaches to Collective Worship in Plymouth schools are variable. Some schools provide a daily act of worship, which may be whole school, key stage or in individual classes, whilst other schools struggle to maintain a regular programme.

The aim of this document is not to set out the history and detail of the legal status of Collective Worship but to examine some key issues which may lead to misconceptions about the nature of Collective Worship and misunderstandings about its practise and application in schools today.

The legal position and legislation

The current Government continues to direct those enquiring about Collective Worship in schools, to the now famous, Circular 1/94 (January 1994).

The Circular states on page 20, under paragraph 50...

Aims: "Collective worship in schools should aim to provide opportunity for pupils to worship God, to consider spiritual and moral issues and to explore their own beliefs; to encourage participation and response, whether through active involvement in the presentation of worship or through listening to and joining in the worship offered; and to develop community spirit, promote a common ethos and shared values, and reinforce positive attitudes"

And under paragraph 51...

"All registered pupils attending a maintained school should take part in daily collective worship." Education Reform Act 1988

The Circular goes on to define the character of Collective Worship as needing to be *"wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character"*.

Over the past three decades these short, statements have become increasingly challenging and problematic for many schools across the country.

We hope that by clarifying some of the key terms and re-framing them, we can support schools towards Collective Worship programmes that provide meaningful and stimulating experiences for all pupils; celebrate the values and ethos of the school and, importantly, that are in line with the latest Government advice on the status of Collective Worship.

The most recent statement was issued by the Department for Education in April 2102;

"The Government believes that the requirement for collective worship in schools and Academies encourages pupils to reflect on the concept of belief and the role it plays in the traditions and values of this country. We have no plans to change the current requirement for the daily act of worship...The law is both inclusive and flexible in allowing schools to tailor their provision to suit their pupils' needs and provide a unique opportunity for schools to develop and celebrate the school's or Academy's ethos and values."

The Meaning of Collective Worship – some key extracts

Paragraph 57 of Circular 1/94 states:

"Worship" is not defined in the legislation and in the absence of any such definition it should be taken to have its natural and ordinary meaning. That is, it must in some sense reflect something special or separate from ordinary school activities and it

should be concerned with reverence or veneration paid to a divine being or power. However, worship in schools will necessarily be of a different character from worship amongst a group with common beliefs. The legislation reflects this difference in referring to “collective worship” rather than “corporate worship.”

Today, creating a special time in the school day for all pupils and staff to come together to celebrate, share and reflect on universal and enduring values is precious indeed. At such times we can remind ourselves of eternal principles which highlight what is of value and importance and what is ultimately worth doing. When we direct all of our attention and being to that which is worthy and praiseworthy; hoping and trusting that these very values and truths will guide and unite us, it can be regarded as worship.

Traditionally and for many people today, the source and focus of such worship will be found in God, Jesus, the Prophet(s) the Buddha but for others it might be in the natural world and in Humanity itself.

For Collective Worship to be truly collective and not corporate, we must ensure that our focus allows for this breadth and depth. When we gather we do so as a group of individuals, with different beliefs, views and theories. We are not a single group united by a common faith and set of beliefs as within a religious services in a church, synagogue, mosque or temple.

Worship comes from the Old English word, Weorthscipe. Weorth means worth, merit, honour and respect. Scipe is the old suffix - ship, the state of, formed and shaped by.

We shape and form ourselves by turning to and revering that we deem to be worthy and honourable.

Giving time for meaningful reflection through words, music or silence can create the opportunity for worship. Through Collective Worship we invite pupils to share, in their own way, the inclusive meaning and message we offer. There can be no compunction or subtle persuasion to induct children and young people into an act of faith. Our planning and approach must be inclusive and not exclusive. When planning, content, resources and format must be carefully tailored to meet the needs of all children.

Without Collective Worship a precious opportunity is missed to bring the school together, united in the promotion and celebration of shared values. Enabling everyone to feel and know that we matter, intrinsically, as human beings. To appreciate that each one of us is unique and that each has something to offer can be both grounding and transcendental.

When we touch the humanity we all share we also come closer to that which is defined as spiritual. And when we come to experience that place within ourselves where we know, deeply, that we belong to something greater than ourselves, we may also discover a source of inner strength.

Viktor Frankl, the eminent psychotherapist, humanist and Auschwitz survivor said that, “An essential element of the good life is the feeling that you are the captain of

your soul, and that in the end things can be all right inside you whatever happens outside.”

To negotiate this complex and challenging world our young people will need to become resilient and wise. Collective Worship can help bring our lives into focus, allowing us to see ourselves within a larger and more enduring reality.

“Wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character” This phrase continues to create for some, limitations and obstacles but it need not cause us undue concern if we understand and appreciate the possibilities it affords us.

To begin with, the law states that, *“the majority of acts of worship over a term must be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character.”* This natural bias towards the principal faith of this country should also be reflected in the balance of the Religious Education Agreed syllabus. Just over half the syllabus should be concerned with exploring Christianity, in a broad diversity of forms. Collective Worship too, should reflect the broad traditions of Christianity and not be distinctive of any one particular denomination.

There is also mention in the Circular of the special status of Jesus Christ. This can be acknowledged too, with appropriate skill and sensitivity; drawing out teachings, stories and wisdom, although rooted in Christianity, yet speaking to pupils of all faiths and to those with none.

As a balance to these statements, which may, for some, imply a narrowing of the scope of Collective Worship, the following paragraph is worth pausing to consider. Under paragraph 63 it states that;

“Provided that, taken as a whole, an act of worship which is broadly Christian reflects the traditions of Christian belief, it need not contain only Christian material. Section 7 (1) is regarded as permitting some non-Christian elements in the collective worship without thus depriving it of its broadly Christian character. Nor would the inclusion of elements common to Christianity and one or more other religions deprive it of that character. It must, however, contain some elements which relate specifically to the traditions of Christian belief and which accord a special status to Jesus Christ.”

To illustrate a possible response along these lines, a leader of Collective Worship might say something like...

”As we know Jesus is a very special person for Christians and for people of other faiths or no faith, too. For Christians he is the Son of God, for others he is often regarded as a great teacher and leader. Our whole way of life in this country, even our public and school holidays are ordered around important events in his life. He taught about serving and loving others. On the night before he died he taught his followers about another commandment or rule to follow. He washed the feet of his disciples and said that they were to love one another and that their love for each other would be a sign that they were true followers.

Now, I know some of you are Christians or from Christian families but whether we are Christian or not, this is a very special way of living that Jesus spoke about. I

wonder how easy or difficult you think it is for us to even be kind to one another each day!?

From Islam, The Prophet Muhammed said that even to offer a smile to someone is an act of kindness and generosity. As we have a little time for silence now, I would like you all to think about what I have said and then we are going to sing a song about it.”

Introducing Prayer – some examples

It is extremely important that those leading Collective Worship or inviting others to do so, should understand the place of prayer.

The introduction of prayer is often seen to be at the heart of Collective Worship. However, not every session needs to include it. Prayer can be used in a variety of ways and may, for some, be more akin to wishes, hopes and a vision for the future. This is fine. Whatever we call the activity, in drawing upon sources of prayer the words we use will require skill and sensitivity.

So, something like...

‘I am going to read a prayer from the Christian faith, which may be very familiar to some of you but I would like us all to listen and think about what this means for each one of us today’. At the end of the prayer Christians often say, “Amen” which means, “I agree” or “Yes, indeed”. So, if you would like to say that out loud, or quietly to yourself or just remain thoughtful; these are all suitable responses.”

‘This morning I am going to share some words by Mahatma Gandhi. He was a very famous and inspirational leader from India, and was a member of the Hindu religion. I know we have some children in our school who are Hindu but whatever our faith or beliefs I think we can all learn from these wise words. So I want us all to think about them quietly...’

Perhaps with the introduction of a bell, gong or the lighting of a special candle, (safely at the front!) a period of silence can be established. Then...”While we are quiet, I would like you to listen to a song, it comes from the Jewish religion and is about the importance of peace. I think this is very important to us all in the world at the moment, so whilst we listen let us all think about what we can each do to make our school a more peaceful place where everyone feels welcome.”

Following a Buddhist Faith Speaker who took a whole school Assembly on the life of the Buddha. Mention was made of the importance of kindness and compassion for all beings, even animals

“Even though we are not Buddhists and I don’t think we have any Buddhist children in the school I know we can all learn from what we have heard about being kind to one another. In fact one of our school rules says that....

So let’s all either say a quiet prayer now, to ourselves, or think quietly about what we have heard this morning. Jesus also said that being kind to each other was very important.”

We need to remember that it is the private response of each participant that constitutes worship. If each person has the opportunity to make their own response then no one is excluded by their religious or non-religious stance.

“I do not pray in order to change God’s mind, but to change my own.” C. S. Lewis

With older children especially, Humanist or atheist sources should also be considered especially when universal, human and shared values are promoted.

The Dalai Lama once said that it is far better to be a compassionate Humanist than an angry Buddhist!

Albert Einstein offers us a great deal of food for reflection when he said, “It is everyone’s obligation to put back into the world at least the equivalent of what he or she takes out of it.” He went on to declare that, “I am a deeply religious non-believer; this is somewhat a new kind of religion!” We might explore that today this “new kind of religion” has a wide appeal and many followers.

A brief word about withdrawal

Schools should ensure that parents are made aware of the legal right to withdraw their child(ren) from Collective Worship, in the same way as they may do from Religious Education.

However, SACRE would hope that parents, aware of the value and profound educational contribution of Collective Worship to SMSC development, would choose to opt in!

The following extract summarises the key aspects and characteristics of a re-framed approach to Collective Worship. It comes from an important, much longer paper, written by Julie Grove, an Independent RE Consultant.

Plymouth SACRE hopes that in providing the above clarification, together with the following guidelines, schools, teachers and pupils will gain a deeper appreciation of the value and importance of Collective Worship.

Collective Worship:

- is collective and educational rather than corporate and religiously devotional;
- offers opportunities to pupils that are different from other learning experiences;
 - promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, encouraging them to know themselves and have respect for others;
- creates opportunities for pupils to consider their own beliefs and values, both religious and secular;
- encourages a reflective approach to living and deepens every individual's capacity for emotional response;
- helps pupils to consider what it means to be human;
- offers a school opportunities to articulate its ethos, shared values, (British values) and build a sense of community;
- should draw on a rich variety of religious and spiritual sources, reflecting diversity whilst recognising the significance of Christianity and the position of Jesus;
- can include elements of conventional worship, if used appropriately, including prayer, music, drama, but does not have to do so; however, time for reflection enhances the potential for SMSC development;
- should interest and inspire young people, whether from religious backgrounds or not;
- should not undermine or compromise the values of the family from which the child comes;
- should not be actively intended to promote religious faith or commitment.

It is noted that **best practice** in the provision of Collective Worship depends on:

- a commitment from senior leaders to the value of collective worship;
- thorough planning to meet the needs of the particular school and its pupils and community;

- educational use of religious and other material, ensuring variety in its form and presentation;
- an open approach that gives pupils opportunities to respond and get involved, without compromising them in any way;
- taking advantage of the freedom to provide collective worship at any time of day and in any school group;
- taking every opportunity to interest and inspire pupils.

Extract from; “Collective worship Re-visited – a Paper for all who are or should be interested in Collective worship” a joint document from the National Association of Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education (NASACRE) and the Association of RE Inspectors, Advisers and Consultants (AREIAC) by Julie Grove, 2012

Seefor a full copy of this paper

Circular 1/94 can be viewed....

Hyde Park Infants school – Collective worship

For further information about Collective Worship or any of the issues raised in this document, please contact Plymouth SACRE.

Email: sacre@plymouth.gov.uk

Or telephone 01752 304163 - Lynn Young - SACRE Democratic Support Officer



To all Leaders and Heads of RE in
Plymouth schools using the Plymouth
Agreed Syllabus

**Standing Advisory Council on
Religious Education (SACRE)
c/o Democratic and Member
Support**

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Dear all

SACRE and RE News - April 2017

I am writing to you on behalf of the Plymouth Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE).

As you probably know, the Commission on Religious Education (CoRE) an independent body, established by the Religious Education Council, is currently undertaking a thorough review of: *"The legal, education and policy frameworks for religious education and to make evidence-based recommendations for policy makers and educationalists to consider. CoRE presents a "once in a lifetime" opportunity to think deeply and broadly about the character, significance and role of religious education in our current local, national and global context. CoRE will publish an interim report in mid-2017 and a final report in mid-2018. CoRE consists of fourteen Commissioners, all appointed as individuals, with a wide range of expertise in RE or in other relevant areas."*

Plymouth SACRE has also been asked recently, to contribute to the Big National Association of SACREs (NASACRE) survey, as a way of trying to build up a picture of what the state of the nation's SACREs is! So, there is a great deal going on and we await the outcomes of these two important reports.

Meanwhile, here in Plymouth, we are also thinking about how best to develop plans for religious education. RE that is academically rigorous, provides opportunities for spiritual development and prepares our young people for the opportunities and challenges of life in twenty-first century Britain.

So, if you have thoughts and ideas about this, please contact me. We say in our current syllabus; "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."

If you teach in an Infant, Primary or Special school you should find an excellent resource book enclosed, "Opening-Up Judaism". If not, this will indicate that you have already received a copy when you or a colleague attended some recent *Teaching Judaism* sessions at the Synagogue. If this is not the case, please contact me!

Support for teachers of RE:

Enclosed is some information about services for schools, from the **Plymouth Centre for Faiths and Cultural Diversity** which is now situated on the University Technical College campus in Devonport.

Our **Plymouth RE Hub** continues to meet each term, (six times a year). Led by Katie Freeman, these regular meetings provide a wealth of practical help, resources, inspiration and support.

Contact Katie for further information: katie.freeman@stmattewsstcmat.org

The **Annual RE conference**. This year Lat Blaylock will be joined by Deborah Weston OBE, on Friday 12th May at the Copthorne Hotel for an amazing day of inspirational RE! If this reaches you in time, there may still be places available so contact Katie immediately!

SACRE has some **funding grants of £250** each, to support the development of RE in your school. Projects must address and illustrate something of the approach highlighted in our syllabus which states that: *"we want to emphasise the importance of our unique, local Plymouth story, through focussed learning and enquiry on; heritage, diversity and spirituality."*

References and connections to the Mayflower 400 event would be particularly welcome. A project should create good quality, active learning experiences and outcomes that will inspire and deepen understanding. Please contact me for further details.

The Plymouth **SACRE/RE website** contains some information and key documents with links to other RE sites and resources. This can also be useful for parents and members of the public. www.plymouth.gov.uk/schoolroom

If you have good news stories about RE in your school or concerns about RE or Collective worship or you have ideas for training and other forms of support, please let me know.

Thank you for all you are doing to help educate and inspire our young people.

Best wishes

Jonathan Marshall MBE - RE Adviser to Plymouth SACRE and Centre for Faiths.

Email: jonathan.marshallRE@hotmail.com

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