



**Democratic and Member
Support**

Chief Executive's Department
Plymouth City Council
Ballard House
Plymouth PL1 3BJ

Please ask for Helen Rickman/
Jamie Sheldon
T 01752 398444

E

helen.rickman@plymouth.gov.uk/
jamie.sheldon@plymouth.gov.uk

www.plymouth.gov.uk/democracy

Published 03/11/17

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Monday 13 November 2017

1.30 pm

Warspite room, Council House Plymouth

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 <http://www.plymouth.gov.uk/accesstomeetings>

Tracey Lee

Chief Executive

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education

PART I

Agenda

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 10 July 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 will provide a membership update.

6. Annual Report and Examination Results

The RE Adviser will provide an update on the Annual Report and Examination Results.

7. Commission on Religious Education - Interim Report

Katei Freeman and Ed Pawson will lead a discussion which will also include the recent NATRE and REC report regarding non-compliance in RE.

8. Developing RE in Plymouth

The RE Adviser will provide an update on Developing RE in Plymouth.

9. National and Local RE Updates (Pages 7 - 8)

Katie Freeman will provide an update on National and Local RE Updates.

10. Promoting Religious Tolerance in Schools and Implications for SACRE

Alizeh Abdul Rahman will provide an update on Promoting Religious Tolerance in Schools and Implications for SACRE.

11. Collective Worship in Schools (Pages 9 - 18)

The RE Adviser will provide an update on Collective Worship in Schools. Please see paper attached for approval.

12. Plymouth Centre for Faiths and Cultural Diversity

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

13. Remembering Solly Irving

A tribute from the RE Adviser acknowledging Solly's unique contribution to holocaust education across Plymouth schools.

14. HMD Plans for January 2018

The RE Adviser will provide an update on HMD Plans for January 2018.

15. Date and venue of next meeting

The next meeting will be held at on Monday 12 March 2018 at 1.30pm at a venue yet to be confirmed.

This page is intentionally left blank

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education

Monday 10 July 2017

PRESENT:

Martin Edmonds, in the Chair.

Helena Mitchell, Vice Chair.

Councillors Mrs Aspinall and Morris.

Bakari Arabi, Cathy Bowness, Penny Burnside, MarkAndrewDearden, Gary Futcher, Liz Hill, Anna Kelly and Alison Williams.

Co-opted Representatives: Ben Kerr, Margaret Thompson and Dr Barbara Wintersgill.

Apologies for absence: Councillor Drean, Katie Freeman and David Lundie.

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

The meeting started at 1.31 pm and finished at 3.30 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.

1. **Declarations of Interest**

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

2. **Minutes**

Agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 27 March 2017.

3. **Chair's Urgent Business**

There were no items of Chair's urgent business.

4. **Membership Issues**

Jonathan Marshall (RE Adviser), advised members that Astra Parkin (Baptist representative) and Jon Goulder (Plymouth Association of Governors (PAG) representative) had resigned from SACRE, and they had been asked to find replacements. In addition, he advised that a representative of the Plymouth Centre for Faiths and Cultural Diversity (PCFCD) would, as agreed, take up a co-opted place on SACRE in the near future.

5. **Future development of RE in Plymouth**

Jonathan Marshall (RE Adviser) advised members that Barbara Wintersgill is involved in the 'Big Ideas in RE' project, and had made an excellent presentation to members at the training session earlier in the day. The RE syllabus is due for review in 2018-19. The current syllabus, "Engaging with Religion and World views" encourages teachers to use the basic foundation and framework from the previous syllabus, "Every Child Matters in RE", and to be creative and imaginative in updating new schemes of work.

A number of ideas were shared in the morning session, which was extremely helpful and SACRE thanked Barbra Wintersgill for her leadership and inspiration. Further discussions will continue in the near future. There remains a lot of misunderstanding surrounding RE and its philosophy and it is important that SACRE places greater emphasis on "how" to teach good quality RE in any future syllabus.

6. **NASACRE AGM/Conference in York**

MarkAndrew Dearden provided members with a report of his attendance at the NASACRE AGM/Conference in York in May, at which he represented both Plymouth and Cornwall SACREs. Agenda items included Question Time and SACRE discussions. He has produced a comprehensive written report which is available to members on request.

(Post meeting note: draft AGM minutes and podcasts are now available on the NASACRE website)

7. **Commission on RE**

Due to the unavailability of Dr David Lundie, an update on the Commission on RE was unavailable, although a report on this would be available in September.

8. **LearnTeachLead RE Project and RE Hub News**

Due to the unavailability of Katie Freeman, Jonathan Marshall (RE Adviser) provided members with an update on the LearnTeachLead (LTL) RE Project and news from the RE Hub.

Members were advised that –

- the LTL Annual Conference for Area 1 is being held on 19-20 October 2017 at St Mellion, Cornwall. There will be a variety of speakers and workshops, and teachers who have not attended before will be encouraged to attend;
- Linda Rudge, the previous project Director, has limited her involvement with LTL as she has a new job; however she has been invited to speak to Area 2;
- the Plymouth Hub continues to meet each term (six times a year) and is developing very well under Katie Freeman's outstanding leadership. The RE conference in April was very well attended;
- Plymouth University has a new project due to start in September which is looking at science and religion.

9. **Promoting Religious Tolerance in Schools - Implications for SACRE**

Alizeh Abdul Rahman, a sixth form student at Devonport High School for Boys, discussed her Youth Parliament campaign, and advised members that her manifesto was based on her own experience. She advised members that –

- there can be a lack of understanding in religious beliefs and how they are applied;
- every person has their own interpretation of RE and their own opinion;
- RE lessons need to focus on contemporary life and how religion affects people;
- leading discussions sensitively and skilfully is required and a priority.

Members debated the issues raised by Alizeh and welcomed the contribution she made to the meeting.

The Chair thanked Alizeh for her contribution to the meeting and looked forward to working with her again in the future. It is hoped that Alizeh will be able to join us again for our autumn meeting to explore further SACRE's role.

10. **Assessment in RE Project**

Jonathan Marshall (RE Adviser) advised members that Katie Freeman and other Plymouth teachers were involved in this project. A great deal of work had been undertaken, and a number of assessment documents are due to be written. Teachers are to be encouraged to assess RE in new ways and it is noted that some schools do not assess students in RE at all. More generally, it is important that senior leaders understand the place and importance of RE. RE is approached in many different ways in schools – in some schools RE lessons are being reduced and are in danger of completely disappearing; in others RE is taught by Teaching Assistants, or is being taught through 'guided reading'.

Order of business

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

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

Sara Wells and Claire Linden from the Plymouth Centre of Faiths and Cultural Diversity (PCFCD) provided members with an update on recent developments at the Centre. Members were advised that –

- the Centre had developed over the past few years and now operated a subscription service (Gold, Silver, Bronze) for Plymouth schools depending on how often they used the Centre and its services;
- 70 schools now subscribed to the Centre;
- requests for faith speakers/visits had increased year-on-year;
- the Centre offered a selection of workshops for schools;
- the Centre encouraged feedback from speakers and schools;

- the Centre now completes 600 visits to schools each year, an incredible achievement and great benefit for pupils and their teachers.

The Chair thanked Sara Wells and Claire Linden for their update.

12. **Collective Worship Project**

Jonathan Marshall (RE Adviser) and Liz Hill provided members with an update on the Collective Worship Project. Members were advised that –

- a number of meetings had been held to discuss this subject, and two questionnaires had been sent to schools;
- not all schools had completed the questionnaire, however a number of teachers had spoken to Liz Hill regarding the project;
- it was hoped that a document could be produced for schools, containing best practice guidelines, along with useful information;
- it was important to ensure that schools and pupils engaged in this project;
- it was essential that Plymouth SACRE produced a statement on collective worship.

Jonathan Marshall asked members to send any feedback/comments to him regarding the document already circulated.

The Chair thanked Jonathan Marshall and Liz Hill for their update.

13. **Feedback and Updates on Other RE Related Issues**

Jonathan Marshall (RE Adviser) provided members with updates on a number of RE issues -

Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD)

Solly Irving (a holocaust survivor who has made an annual visit to Plymouth for the past 16 years) is recovering from his illness. Jonathan recently attended a meeting with Plymouth City Council who have commissioned the Plymouth Council of Faiths to take a lead on HMD events for Plymouth in January 2018 (the theme for HMD 2018 is the 'Power of Words'); they will be working with Churches Together In Plymouth to put together a programme of events for this day. It is hoped that a meaningful event involving local schoolchildren will also be held in the city centre. Jonathan has offered the services of SACRE and the Plymouth Centre for Faiths and Cultural Diversity to help and support the events.

Various events are being held in Exeter -

- Devon SACRE are hosting events in Exeter Cathedral and are inviting the last surviving member of the holocaust orchestra;
- the Brent Singers are presenting their 'Holocaust Cantata';
- a free HMD workshop is being held in Exeter – more details are available on the HMD website – www.hmd.org.uk

Councillor Morris advised members that he would contact Councillor Downie who is leading on events in Plymouth, and determine what arrangements are in place for the day.

The Big NASACRE Survey

A small group of Plymouth SACRE members had met recently to discuss this survey. 35 SACREs had completed this survey (representing one quarter of the number of SACREs and one third of NASACRE membership). The survey had presented some interesting results, full details of which are available to view on the NASACRE website.

SACRE grants

Details of SACRE grants which are available had been sent to schools in the previously circulated newsletter. Jonathan Marshall asked that members promote this scheme through their networks.

Faiths Day

Faiths Day is being held on Thursday 13 July in Plymouth Guildhall, 10 am – 5 pm.

Future RE Adviser support

Members were advised that Jonathan's current two year contract is due to end in April 2018. He and his wife are planning to move abroad in November 2017; however he will honour his contract until it finishes. He wanted to bring this to member's attention and to ensure that there is time to plan for on-going support for SACRE.

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

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as Monday 13 November, time and venue to be confirmed.

This page is intentionally left blank

**RELIGIOUS EDUCATION NEWS AND REMINDERS – NOVEMBER
2017 FROM PLYMOUTH STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE)**



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

Dear all

This is a brief update and reminder of the resources and sources of support available to you in your important work as a Leader/Head of RE.

As you know there is currently a national Commission on RE which has just released an interim report. There are opportunities to express views and submit evidence, so do help to shape the future of RE! [Religious Education for All](#)

A **SHAP wall chart of Religious Festivals** for 2017/2018 is enclosed and the “key” to access further information is: <http://shapworkingparty.org.uk/festivalsdates2017-2018/>

Please note these resources are purchased from SHAP by SACRE for use in your school. The key should therefore not be distributed more widely, as this would undermine the future work of SHAP.

The Plymouth **SACRE and RE website** contains some useful documents such as the current RE syllabus guidance and SACRE annual reports. There are also links to other important RE sites and resources. Useful for teachers as well as members of the public.

www.plymouth.gov.uk/schoolroom

Our **Plymouth RE hub**, established through the Learn Teach Lead RE project, continues to meet each term (six times a year) and goes from strength to strength under the inspiring leadership of Katie Freeman. Louise Skingle, head of RS at Hele’s, has recently joined to offer secondary support and perspectives. (Last term Hele’s were awarded the REQM Silver Award so many congratulations to Louise and the RS department!) The hub is a really active group which provides practical help, resources, inspiration and fun! For further information contact: Katie.Freeman@StMatthewsStCMAT.org or skingle@heles.plymouth.sch.uk

The annual **Learn Teach Lead RE** conference was held at St. Mellion, from late afternoon Thursday 19th October through Friday 20th October. It was a great success and provided fantastic opportunities to extend learning and be inspired by national speakers and fellow RE teachers!

For information and details of presentations and workshops, see the website www.ltlRE.org

Plymouth SACRE has funding grants of £250 each to support the development of RE in your school. Projects must address and illustrate an aspect of the approach highlighted in our Plymouth RE syllabus, “Engaging with Religion and Worldviews” 2014, which states that:

“In particular, we want to emphasise the importance of our unique, local Plymouth story through focused 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 resources that will inspire and deepen understanding. If you have project ideas, please provide a simple outline of your plan to me: jonathan.marshallRE@hotmail.com

The Plymouth Centre for Faiths and Cultural Diversity has moved to a spacious classroom on campus at the University Technical College, Devonport. The Centre's work in schools has grown enormously over the past two years and an amazing 600 visits, from Faith Speakers to schools or to places of worship are now completed each year! Nationally, this is a unique service of support which enables children to grow in their understanding and appreciation of the place of religion and belief in people's lives in their local city.

For information about the Centre and its services contact Sara Wells: info@pcfcd.co.uk

A reminder that the 27th January each year is **Holocaust Memorial Day**. I know many of you already plan for this through RE work and contribute to collective worship and assemblies. HMD reminds us of the important link between hate crime and preventing violent extremism. It reminds us too of our work around British Values and our role in helping children and young people develop resilience, which is closely related to spiritual development. (There is a short paper about this on the SACRE/RE website).

Sadly, our good friend Solly Irving, a Jewish holocaust survivor from London, passed away last month. His contribution to holocaust education across secondary schools in Plymouth was unique. We estimate that during 17 years over 30,000 pupils and their teachers heard his powerful testimony. There have been heartfelt tributes to him and *The Herald* has written a number of moving articles. They would welcome any further memories and reflections some of you may have.

Solly always told his young audiences that he wasn't going to be here for ever and that in the future they should remember meeting him, a survivor; "Please be my witnesses and never let anyone deny that the holocaust happened. When you go out into the world try to make it a better place." We shall miss him dearly.

Thank you for all you are doing to help promote a deeper understanding of the role and importance of RE in your school. With the information above, we hope you know there is support but please do contact me if you feel SACRE can do anything further to help.

On a personal note my wife and I will soon be moving away from Plymouth and next March I shall be stepping down from my very part time, freelance role that I have enjoyed over the past three years!

On behalf of Plymouth SACRE

Best wishes

Jonathan Marshall MBE RE Adviser, Plymouth SACRE

jonathan.marshallRE@hotmail.com

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; captains of their souls! 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 be kind to one another, even for a day!?

From Islam, The Prophet Muhammed said that 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 this for reflection, 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 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 and re-visited 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

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 - Democratic Support Officer for SACRE