



STANDING ADVISORY
COUNCIL FOR
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

DRAFT Annual Report
2008-2009

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SACRE ANNUAL REPORT 2008 – 2009

FOREWORD

Chair of SACRE

DRAFT

INTRODUCTION

Plymouth SACRE is pleased to produce this report as a summary of its work in religious education and collective worship. It provides a valuable opportunity to reflect on its deliberations of the last year and to inform others of its work.

SACRE is a unique organisation and amidst the challenges and issues we face in wider society concerning the place of religion, there has never been a more important time for the teaching and learning of RE in schools.

1. RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

1.1 The Agreed Syllabus

The Agreed Syllabus - "Every Child Matters in RE" was launched at a combined SACRE Members and Teachers Conference at the College of St Mark and St John in July 2007. This represents the combined work of representatives from Devon, Plymouth and Torbay Local Authorities and SACREs under the direction of the RE Adviser for Devon. This was a wonderful achievement and now supports, guides and directs the teaching and learning of RE. The non-statutory schemes or units of work to accompany the syllabus have been posted on the Devon website at www.deseducation.org.

2 STANDARDS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

2.1 Background to exemplification of standards.

2.1.1 In September 2005 OfSTED embarked upon a new approach to inspections. One of the implications is that there is no specific requirement to report on Religious Education and Collective Worship. However, comments and grades are still required under "personal development and well being" and the sub-section under this heading of the "spiritual, moral, social and cultural development" (SMSC). From September 2007 schools have had the added duty to promote community cohesion and this has now been inspected and reported on by Ofsted Inspectors since September 2008.

The absence of specific Ofsted reports on Religious Education has meant that SACRE has lost a major "intelligence gathering" tool.

2.1.2 SACRE encourages all schools to use the excellent resource, *Self-Evaluation in RE – a toolkit for subject leaders* (Endorsed by Plymouth SACRE at the June meeting 2006). This provides exemplary support and guidance for teachers in schools and also enables them to contribute significantly to the school Self Evaluation Form (SEF).

2.2 Examination Results in Religious Studies (Provisional)

2.2.1 This year 13 Plymouth Secondary Schools entered a total of 643 candidates for the full GCSE examination in Religious Studies. This represents 27% of the year groups in these schools. Just over 70% of students achieved grades A*-C (nationally 73%) and just over 98% achieved A*-G grades (nationally 98%).

SACRE is pleased to note another increase, just over 3% this year, in students achieving grades A*-C.

2.2.2 11 Secondary Schools, three more than last year, entered a total of 743 candidates (200 less than last year) for the GCSE short course in 2009. This represents 41% of the year group. 48% achieved A*-C grades, 6% higher than last year (nationally 53%) and 92% achieved A*-G grades (nationally 96%). Although the number of candidates dropped dramatically this year SACRE is pleased to note that the number of schools entering candidates increased by three.

SACRE is very pleased to note the achievement gained by many candidates in the summer examinations.

2.2.3 Two schools entered a total of 3 candidates for Entry Level Qualifications. This provides opportunities for students, working below GCSE levels, to access accreditation in Religious Studies. Plymouth SACRE encourages all secondary schools, including special schools, to consider making such opportunities available.

2.2.4 12 Secondary Schools entered a total of 116 students for the Advanced Level Religious Studies examinations. 99% achieved grades A-E (nationally 98%). SACRE is pleased to note the continuing development of Religious Studies at A Level

2.2.5 9 Secondary schools entered a total of 21 students for AS level. Just over 95% achieved grades A-E (nationally 92%).

NB: This figure represents the aggregated results for Year 13 students only. The results for Year 12 students entered for AS level are NOT included.

2.2.6 SACRE congratulates all the successful candidates on their achievement at this summer's examinations in Religious Studies.

3 COMPLAINTS ABOUT RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

No complaints about religious education have been received by SACRE.

4 TRAINING AND SUPPORT

4.1 Plymouth Centre for Faiths & Cultural Diversity

SACRE continues to support the innovative work of the Centre which is seen as a unique and major resource for schools to support the development of high quality RE at all levels.

The Centre, which operates as a Charitable Trust – supported by Plymouth City Council, is now in its eighth year of work – promoting education and understanding of world religion and cultural diversity. Through the exploration of different beliefs and cultures, the common thread of human/spiritual values is revealed. These are the values that ensure the future security and well-being of our local and international community. These values are therefore central to the promotion and development of community cohesion in schools.

One of the main aspects of the Centre's services is providing Faith Speakers – representatives from the main world faiths, who go into schools to support the teaching and learning of RE. Over 140 such visits took place over the past year and in addition numerous visits to the Synagogue, Islamic Centre and Greek Orthodox Church were also organised.

In June, thanks to a grant from the Faith Communities Capacity Building Fund, the Centre launched a DVD entitled "Sharing Common Ground." The project brought together, for a year, a group of ten Christian and Muslim women students from three Plymouth secondary schools. They explored their faith and beliefs and although from different backgrounds they identified common values and concerns. Copies of the DVD were distributed to all schools.

Mr Solly Irving, a Jewish Holocaust survivor from London, again visited secondary schools in January. In all, twelve schools heard Solly speak over the four days he spent in Plymouth. The impact of these visits on the hearts and minds of the two thousand or so students and teachers who listened to his personal testimony is always powerful and deeply moving. With the expert help of a local film-maker, a DVD of the visit was made, the core of which is Solly's testimony, together with students' questions and responses. This will be launched in January 2010 and will also be available to schools.

The Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress, Cllr Brian Vincent and Mrs Pauline Murphy, made two visits to the Centre over the year. In December they met with Bishops and Faith representatives at the annual lunch and in January they were the special guests at the Holocaust Memorial Day - Evening of Reflection on the theme, "Stand up to Hatred". The evening was held at the Lower Guildhall.

4.2 Courses, Conferences and Meetings

These have taken place throughout the year at various venues across the City. See Appendix B.

5. COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

5.1 Monitoring Collective Worship

Previously, SACRE has been aided in its work to monitor collective worship through Ofsted reports. Over the past year very few have specifically commented on this important aspect of school life. SACRE continues to identify collective worship as part of its Development Plan in collaboration with Devon and Torbay SACREs.

5.2 Advice on Collective Worship

Advice given in the publication *Encouraging Spiritual Development* (Devon SACRE 2000) still remains the latest advice offered by SACRE on collective worship, which is seen as one of the ways in which a school contributes to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils and students. Revision of this advice, together with further guidelines, is also part of the Development Plan which remains ongoing.

5.3. Complaints

There have been no formal complaints about collective worship in schools.

6. LINKS WITH OTHER BODIES

6.1 Devon and Torbay SACREs

Over the past year we have enjoyed good links with our neighbours in Devon and Torbay SACREs. Some collaborative work has taken place on issues within the Development Plan and in March a very successful South West regional SACRE Conference was held in Ilminster attended by Plymouth SACRE members.

6.2 Qualifications, Curriculum and Development Authority

SACRE values the opportunity to attend QCDA conferences as they provide a good opportunity for members to hear national speakers, to keep up to date with national developments and to network with colleagues from other SACREs.

6.3 NASACRE

SACRE received a report from Mrs Martin who attended the National Association of SACREs Annual General Meeting in May.

7. SACRE ARRANGEMENTS AND PRIORITIES

SACRE meets once per term and is supported by the following staff from Plymouth City Council: The Senior Education Adviser, Equality and Inclusion and the RE Adviser.

Priorities have been guided by the responsibility to monitor standards within Religious Education, SACRE's own Self Evaluation process and the Development Plan outlined below: Following each development objective there is a brief report of progress achieved over the past year.

7.1 Development Plan for 2008 – 2011

- To implement the new Agreed Syllabus "Every Child Matters in RE" and the new units of work across secondary, primary and special schools.

Led by: RE Adviser and ASTs through meetings and INSET programme

Timescale: Autumn 2008 – Summer 2009

Following individual requests from schools the RE Adviser and both Advanced Skills Teachers have worked closely with RE Co-ordinators and Heads of RE to ensure that the Agreed Syllabus has been implemented and that teachers are aware of the skilful and creative approaches to RE.

- Monitor the impact and integration of the new Agreed Syllabus.

Led by: RE Adviser/ASTs and SACRE members - through visits to schools

Timescale: 2009 – 2010

The overwhelming consensus is that the "Every Child Matters in RE" Syllabus offers teachers at all key stages the framework and support to teach RE well.

Generally, there is a positive attitude to teaching RE but there remain concerns about time allocation and the demands of changing curriculum models which impinge further upon RE entitlement.

- To work in collaboration with Plymouth Centre for Faiths and Cultural Diversity and other partners to foster good relationships with faith communities and promote faith literacy across the City.

Led by: RE Adviser, SACRE members and others

Timescale: 2008 – 2011

The Centre now runs a monthly training course entitled “Issues of Belief, Faith & Culture”. It is aimed at those in a variety of work contexts where the influence of Religion and Belief is an aspect of their work and/or provision of services. The Centre continues to run an on-going programme of events that provide opportunities for the development of faith literacy.

The Centre was also commissioned this year, by the ‘Prevent’ group in Plymouth, to plan and deliver ten training days around the Government’s strategy: ‘Preventing Violent Extremism’.

- In collaboration with Plymouth Centre For Faiths and Cultural Diversity and partners, review current teaching/learning around Christianity in all key stages.
Establish a small working group to produce guidelines on the challenges and opportunities of teaching Christianity in RE.
Led by: RE Adviser, SACRE members and others
Timescale: 2008 – 2009
A small working party met on four occasions to explore the issues. The group’s findings identified the need for specific training for teachers, especially in the Primary School and that this could be linked to a further project that would connect Churches (their role in community), RE (the demands and challenges) and Schools’ duty to promote community cohesion [CHURECOCO].
- Enhance role of SACRE in promoting the contribution of RE to community cohesion through effective guidance to schools (in collaboration with Devon and Torbay SACREs).
Led by: RE Adviser and SACRE members
Timescale: 2008 – 2010
*See previous point above.
The Primary and Special Schools RE Conference planned for the Autumn term will reflect this.*
- Establish a small group to review current guidance on the spiritual, moral, social and cultural dimension and collective worship. (In collaboration with Devon and Torbay SACREs produce additional guidance)
Led by: RE Adviser and SACRE members
Timescale: Autumn 2008 – Spring 2010
A small number of Plymouth SACRE members are part of these groups organised by the Devon RE Adviser. Further advice and guidance will follow.
- To collaborate with SACRE colleagues from Devon and Torbay on projects, as required, to further the quality and development of RE in schools.
Led by: RE Adviser and SACRE members
Timescale: 2008 – 2011
As above

APPENDICES

A. EXAMINATION STATISTICS 2001-2008

Previous years data has been rounded to 1 decimal point (2008 results are provisional).

Examination -GCSE Full Course	Number of schools (Total = 17 secondary schools)	Number of candidates	% of year group entered in these schools	Boys	Girls	% A*-C	% A*-G
2009 (Prov)	13	643	27.2	299	344	70.8	98.8
2008	13	570	25.0	239	331	67.0	99.2
2007	14	606	24.8	237	369	55.9	97.7
2006	12	620	28.7	269	351	59.2	95.2
2005	12	646	32.8	270	376	59.0	95.5
2004	13	622	27.1	262	360	69.3	97.6
2003	12	599	28.8	232	367	49.9	91.0
2002	10	506	33.7	197	309	61.5	93.1
2001	11	481	30.0	186	295	55.7	95.4

Examination -GCSE Short Course	Number of schools (Total = 17 secondary schools)	Number of candidates	% of year group entered in these schools	Boys	Girls	% A*-C	% A*-G
2009 (Prov)	11	743	41.0	341	402	48.9	92.9
2008	8	950	55.8	432	518	42.4	92.0
2007	8	958	56.3	425	533	46.8	95.2
2006	9	1055	56.8	487	568	48.6	90.1
2005	6	865	65.5	444	421	56.4	96.0
2004	7	907	56.9	433	474	59.2	95.5
2003	7	527	52.2	228	299	56.2	96.0
2002	9	979	58.2	508	471	42.0	92.8
2001	8	914	63.5	459	455	50.0	94.0

Examination -ELQ(C)	Number of schools (Total = 17 secondary schools)	Number of candidates	% of year group entered in these schools	Boys	Girls	% Level 3	% Level 2	% Level 1
2009 (Prov)	2	3	1.1		3	33.3	33.3	33.3
2008	2	3	1.1		3	33.3	33.3	0
2007	1	3	2.3		3	-	33.3	33.3

Examination – Advanced Extension Award	Number of schools (Total = 15 secondary schools)	Number of candidates	% of year group entered in these schools	Boys	Girls	% D	% M
2009 (Prov)	1	2	0.8	2	0	0	0
2008	2	9	1.8	8	1	11.1	55.6

Examination – A Level	Number of schools (Total = 15 secondary schools)	Number of candidates	% of year group entered in these schools	Boys	Girls	%A-E
2009 (Prov)	12	116	4.5	45	71	99.1
2008	12	126	5.4	61	65	100
2007	11	108	5.0	48	60	100
2006	9	77	8.8	23	54	98.7
2005	8	89	11.9	35	48	100
2004	10	75	4.3	23	52	100
2003	10	69	8.3	22	47	100
2002	8	64	9.4	15	49	98.4
2001	6	31	5.9	10	21	96.8

Examination -AS Level	Number of schools (Total = 15 secondary schools)	Number of candidates	% of year group entered in these schools	Boys	Girls	%A-E
2009 (Prov)	9	21	1.2	7	14	95.2
2008	9	32	1.8	16	16	93.8
2007	9	29	1.7	16	16	93.1
2006	7	27	4.1	9	18	77.8
2005	10	20	2.4	4	18	81.8
2004	10	46	2.7	10	36	91.3
2003	6	27	5.3	9	18	92.6
2002	6	22	3.6	7	15	95.5

B DETAILS OF COURSES, CONFERENCES AND MEETINGS

Over the past year, teachers have had the opportunity to meet around a variety of themes and topics relevant to the development of teaching and learning in RE . They include:-

- October (Secondary RE) – PASH Day – Active Learning
- November (All) - RE & Community Cohesion Conference
- March (Primary/Special) - Gaining Confidence in RE
- March (Primary/Special) - RE & the Integrated Curriculum
- March (Secondary) - ‘Preventing Violent Extremism’ Open Conference

Post 16 network meetings included:-
'A'Level examinations with OCR Chief Examiner
Active teaching techniques
RE and the use of ICT

C LIST OF ORGANISATIONS TO WHICH REPORT IS SENT

The report will be sent to the Headteachers. Principals and Chairs of Governors of schools including voluntary schools, the Local Authority and QCDA. It will be made available to teachers and parents on request.

The report will also be sent to the Directors of Services for Children and Young People and members of SACRE in Devon and Torbay.

D THE DUTIES OF SACRE

SACRE primarily gives advice to the Local Authority about religious education in Community and Voluntary Controlled schools. It can give advice even if the Local Authority does not seek it, but the Local Authority is not obliged to act upon it. In two areas, however, SACRE's decision is binding.

Worship 'Determinations'

It has a duty to make a 'determination' if a community school applies for complete or partial exemption from the requirement that most acts of worship in a school term shall be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character reflecting the broad tradition of Christian belief in a manner appropriate to the ages, aptitudes and family backgrounds of the pupils. (For example, there may be a preponderance of pupils of a faith other than Christianity.) It is important to note that SACRE cannot exempt a school from the requirement to provide some form of worship (even if not Christian worship) for all pupils on every school day. The act of worship need not be in the morning or for the whole school at one time and it is open to individual parents to withdraw their children by arrangement.

There have been no applications of this kind in Plymouth.

Review of Agreed Syllabus

The second matter which SACRE can insist upon is that the Local Authority should set up a conference to adopt (or write) a new or revised Agreed Syllabus. The Local Authority sub-group on SACRE does not vote on this issue.

In March 2006 SACRE appointed representatives from all four houses to serve on the Agreed Syllabus Conference convened by the Devon RE Adviser. This work took place over the following year and the launch of the new Agreed Syllabus, "Every Child Matters in RE", took place in July 2007.

Why a Report?

An Annual Report has been a legal requirement since the 1988 Education Act. The Education Act 1996, section 391.6 states:

'The Council shall in each year publish a report as to the exercise of their functions and any action taken by representative groups on the Council under Sub-Section 3 above during the last preceding year.

(Sub-Section 3 refers to the procedure for requiring a review of the Agreed Syllabus). The Council's report shall in particular:

- a) specify any matters in respect of which the Council has given advice to the Authority;
- b) broadly describe the nature of the advice given; and where any such matter was not referred to the Council by the Authority, give the Council's reason for offering advice on that matter'.

E SACRE MEMBERS 2007 – 2008

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

Eight places

Mrs Pam Shelmerdine	Baptist Church
Kelsang Lekma	Buddhist Community
Dr Jatindra Saha	Hindu Community
Mrs Zainab Abubakar	Muslim Community
Dr Peter Lee	Jewish Community
Ms Helena Mitchell	Methodist Church
Mr Louis Basquill	Roman Catholic Diocese of Plymouth
The Reverend Peter Chave	United Reformed Church

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

Five places

Mrs Patricia Martin	Diocesan Board of Education, Exeter
Mrs Catherine Bowness	Diocesan Board of Education, Exeter
Mrs Val Armitage	Diocesan Board of Education, Exeter
Mr Tim Lyddon	Diocesan Board of Education, Exeter
Mr Jim Knight	Diocesan Board of Education, Exeter

Group C: Teachers' Associations, who should nominate RE teachers

Nine places (five vacancies)

<i>Vacant</i>	NASUWT
Ms Gwen Hughes	NUT
Mr Pete Grainger	PASH (NAHT)
Ms Teresa Griffiths	NATRE
<i>Vacant</i>	PAT
<i>Vacant</i>	UCL
Mrs Elizabeth Hill	PAPH (NAHT)
<i>Vacant</i>	ATL
<i>Vacant</i>	Special Schools

Group D: The Local Authority

Six places

Councillor Mary Aspinall	Plymouth City Council
Councillor Jonathan Drean	Plymouth City Council
Councillor David Stark	Plymouth City Council
Councillor David James	Plymouth City Council
Councillor Susan McDonald	Plymouth City Council
Councillor Wendy Foster	Plymouth City Council

Co-opted Representatives

Six places (one vacancy)

Mrs Donna Briggs	AST (Primary)
Miss Caroline McVicker	AST (Secondary)
Dr Clare Hamon	Quaker Community
Father Gregory Carpenter	Greek Orthodox Community
Mr Tony Blackler	Plymouth Association of Governors
<i>Vacant</i>	

Officers

Mr Arnet Donkin	Senior Education Adviser – Equality and Inclusion
Mr Jonathan Marshall	Religious Education Adviser
Mrs Gemma Pearce	Democratic Support Officer

F. NUMBER OF MEETINGS, RECORD OF ATTENDANCE AND A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF MAIN ISSUES DISCUSSED AT EACH MEETING

Plymouth SACRE meets once per term and has met on three occasions in the academic year 2008-2009

The Autumn Term meeting was held on 24 November 2008. Twenty members and three officers were present and the issues discussed included:-

- Holocaust Memorial Day
- Membership Issues
- 'Common Ground' – Young People's Interfaith Project
- Development Plan
- SACRE Annual Report
- RE Updates
- Religious Studies at Post 16
- Plymouth Centre for Faiths & Cultural Diversity

The Spring Term meeting was held on 9 March 2009. Twenty members and two officers were present and the issues discussed included:-

- HMD – Feedback and Future Plans
- SACRE Sub Group and Working Groups
- HMI Inspection of Religious Education – Report and Reflection
- Religious Education Updates
- Plymouth Centre for Faiths & Cultural Diversity
- South West Annual SACRE's Conference

The Summer Term meeting was held on 22 June 2009. Eighteen members and two officers were present and the issues discussed included:-

- Membership Issues
- 'Preventing Violent Extremism' Strategy and Conferences
- South West SACRE Conference Feedback
- NASACRE Update
- Holocaust Memorial Day 2010
- Secondary RE Teachers Meetings
- Plymouth Centre for Faiths and Cultural Diversity
- The Primary Curriculum – The Rose Review
- Religious Education in English Schools – Non Statutory Guidance 2009

Clerk to SACRE – Gemma Pearce

Plymouth City Council Senior Education Adviser - Equality and Inclusion
– Arnet Donkin.

Plymouth City Council RE Adviser – Jonathan Marshall MBE