

**P**LYMOUTH  
**S**TANDING **A**DVISORY  
**C**OUNCIL **F**OR  
**R**ELIGIOUS **E**DUICATION

*Annual Report*

*2011 - 2012*



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## **FOREWORD**

This year has been a year of frustration for many SACREs including Plymouth. The national uncertainty surrounding Religious Education's position or lack of it, in the future curriculum, combined with increased local financial restraints have limited, in some respects our activity as a support and resource for R.E. teachers. However Plymouth SACRE has endeavoured to be pro-active in our promotion of SACRE. The visits to schools by some SACRE members has enabled them to have a clearer understanding of how RE is taught and how teachers can be best supported by us.

The Holocaust Memorial Day events reached out to an even wider audience and the evening event at Plymouth Art College was a truly moving and challenging time. We have continued our commitment to hold two meetings a year in places other than the Council Offices, so we have met at Plymouth Methodist Central Hall, the newly opened Plymouth Islamic Education Trust (PIETY Centre) and shortly at Mutley Baptist Church.

The national debate on the future of RE in schools prompted us to invite national speaker, John Keast to give a talk on the place of R.E. in Schools and the Community. His very knowledgeable background and front row involvement in government talks on RE, enabled us to understand the present situation and future developments in 2013. This next year will certainly be a decisive year!

SACRE's future role may well change and we have a very challenging time ahead to discern how we can best serve our teachers and schools in promoting RE as a valuable and necessary part of lifelong learning.

Helena Mitchell

Chair of Plymouth SACRE

December 2012

## **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 over the last year and to inform others of its work.

SACRE is a unique organisation and amidst the challenges and issues we face, concerning the place of religion in schools and society, 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 in Plymouth schools.

SACREs across all three Authorities have agreed to extend the use of this current syllabus for at least another 12 months, to the end of the next academic year. This will allow time for important decisions to be made by the Government regarding National Curriculum provision and for the Religious Education Council to complete its report/ recommendations on RE.

### **2 STANDARDS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

#### **2.1 Background to exemplification of standards.**

2.1.1 For several years now the absence of specific Ofsted reports on Religious Education has meant that SACRE has lost a major "intelligence gathering" tool. Since January 2012, a new Ofsted Framework for Inspection removed the requirement for Inspectors to report on Community Cohesion. However, Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development is now viewed as a key judgement contributing to the overall effectiveness of the school.

2.1.2 SACRE continues to encourage 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 document, found on the REonline/betterRE website, provides exemplary support and guidance for teachers in schools and enables them to contribute significantly to their school's Self Evaluation. It has also proved to be an excellent resource for parents.

A key feature of the Agreed Syllabus is the use of the eight-level scale for assessment in Religious Education with supporting descriptors for Exceptional Performance and the P scales. Pupil-friendly statements ("I can") across the levels help children and young-people to understand progress and standards.

## **2.2 Examination Results in Religious Studies (Provisional)**

2.2.1 This year 15 Plymouth Secondary Schools entered a total of 974 candidates for the full GCSE examination in Religious Studies. This represents just under 37% of the year groups in these schools. 62% of students achieved grades A\*-C, this compares with 73% nationally, and just over 97% achieved A\*-G grades.

2.2.2 11 Secondary Schools (including our Alternative Complimentary Education Unit ACE) entered a total number of 633 candidates for the GCSE short course. This represents just over 31% of the year group. 42% achieved A\*-C grades, compared with 53% nationally and just over and just over 93% achieved A\*-G grades.

Entry numbers have fluctuated considerably over the years but it is important to highlight that our full course entries in the summer were up 200 on the previous year but the numbers taking the short course examination were down over 300.

2.2.3 One candidate was entered for the Entry Level in Religious Studies. Entry Level Qualification 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 10 Secondary Schools entered a total of 117 students for the Advanced Level Religious Studies examinations. 99% achieved grades A-E.

2.2.5 10 Secondary schools entered a total of 42 students for AS level and just over 88% achieved grades A-E.  
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 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 and extend the development of high quality RE at all levels.

This year the Centre, which operates as a Charitable Trust and is supported by Plymouth City Council, celebrated its tenth anniversary. A number of SACRE members were able to attend the celebration event in September.

The Centre's central aim is to promote education and understanding of world religion and cultural diversity. Through the exploration of different beliefs and cultures, the common thread of human and 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 and well-being in schools.

The main way of achieving this is the service the Centre offers to schools through the local authority's 'Trading Fair' arrangement. During this year over 300 hours was spent in schools, through Faith Speaker visits and over 40 visits to local faith communities. Of these visits over 230 involved Primary Schools.

Solly Irving, a Jewish Holocaust survivor from London, spent three days with us in January. This was his 10<sup>th</sup> annual visit, in the week before Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD). He visited eight Secondary Schools/ Colleges and also met the Lord Mayor Cllr. Peter Brookshaw. Solly visited a further three schools when he came down to Plymouth in May. This time he was a guest of the Jewish Community when they celebrated the 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the synagogue. The Chief Rabbi, Lord Sacks attended the celebration.

The Centre continues to facilitate the development of a Plymouth Council of Faiths and three meetings were held this year.

The Centre, together with Rev. Peter Chave, organised events around this year's Holocaust Memorial Day. The theme this year was Speak Up – Speak Out and students at Plymouth Art College created an exhibition of work around the theme of "The Others". In the evening a time of reflection was held in the college's lecture theatre. The Deputy Lady Mayoress Cllr. Lynda Bowyer attended and the Principal of the College, Professor Andrew Brewerton, offered a reflection, together with other invited speakers.

## **4.2 Courses, Conferences and Meetings**

The annual combined Citizenship – PSHEE and RE conference was again held in November, at Boringdon Golf Club – the theme was "Health and Wellbeing". The RE Adviser contributed a session on the importance of RE and SMSC.

In October over 20 Secondary RE teachers gathered at Plymouth Centre for Faiths and Cultural Diversity for the Annual training day. The general theme was on 'Teaching and Promoting RE'.

Four Plymouth SACRE members attended the South West regional conference at Dillington in March, on the "Effective SACREs – Effective Learning".

In May, the RE Advisor was Plymouth SACRE's representative at the AGM of NASACRE held in London. Key note speakers were Professor Bob Jackson and Lat Blaylock.

This year the RE Adviser has also been involved in supporting the establishment of the "Unmet Needs in RE" project. A successful bid to St Lukes Trust will create

support, training and resources for RE teachers in hubs across Devon, Cornwall, Plymouth and Torbay over the next three years. The project Director, Linda Rudge, has been appointed and a first conference is planned for the Autumn in Plymouth.

The RE Adviser has also hosted six twilight INSET opportunities for Primary and Special School teachers. Titles were: "Teaching Primary RE" ; "Leading and Promoting Primary RE" and "Developing SMSC and Collective Worship".

## **5. COLLECTIVE WORSHIP**

### **5.1 Monitoring Collective Worship**

Ofsted reports rarely mention Collective Worship and despite national concerns about non-compliance the Government have no plans to revisit the issues. At its July meeting, SACRE considered a recent document produced by NASACRE "Collective Worship Revisited" as a possible way forward and suggested resource/guidance for schools.

Plymouth SACRE also has a Working Group dedicated to developing resources for Collective Worship.

### **5.2 Advice on Collective Worship**

The RE Adviser and another SACRE Member have been working with the Devon Adviser on new guidelines and it is hoped that together with other resources (5.1 above) revised advice and guidance will soon be forthcoming as part of SACRE's Development Plan.

### **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 there has been increasing concern over the Devon RE Adviser's ill health and lengthy absence. We hope that he will soon be restored to full health.

Some collaborative work has taken place with colleagues from Devon and Torbay and the Spring Conference at Dillington allowed us time together to consider common challenges and concerns.

### **6.2 Qualifications, Curriculum and Development Authority**

This organisation has been disbanded over the past year and, sadly for RE another national voice has been lost.

### **6.3 NASACRE**

SACRE acknowledges the central role of NASACRE in providing essential support, representation and guidance for local SACREs in the vital role they perform. The Annual Conference always provides an opportunity for SACRE representatives to meet and consider best practice and ways forward in these extremely challenging times for RE.

## **7. SACRE ARRANGEMENTS AND PRIORITIES**

SACRE meets once per term and is supported by the following staff from Plymouth City Council: The RE Adviser and a Democratic Support Officer.

Priorities have continued to be guided by SACRE's responsibility to monitor standards within Religious Education and Collective Worship.

There are also working groups, with a lead SACRE member, established to lend support to the current Plymouth SACRE Development Plan, which is as follows:

### **7.1 Development Plan for 2011 – 2014**

- to seek on-going opportunities to raise the profile of SACRE – Miss Helena Mitchell;
- to establish a planned approach to the development of RE and particularly its contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural life of the school – RE Adviser
- to establish a biennial celebration/ exhibition of RE work – Ms Teresa Griffiths;
- with Devon and Torbay SACREs, revise, as appropriate, the RE syllabus – RE Adviser
- to revise guidance and identify key resources for collective worship – Mrs Liz Hill
- to maintain and extend further the excellent work which contributes to community cohesion/ social integration in school and across the city – Cllr. David Stark;



APPENDICES

Religious Studies Examination Statistics 2001-2012

Examination -GCSE Full Course	Number of schools (Total = 17 secondary schools, 2009 onward = 16)	Number of candidates	% of year group entered in these schools	Boys	Girls	% A*-C	% A*-G
2012 Prov	15	974	36.9	389	585	62.5	97.4
2011	13	766	32.1	306	460	68.3	97.0
2010	11	600	30.3	288	312	66.0	96.0
2009	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, 2009 onward = 16)	Number of candidates	% of year group entered in these schools	Boys	Girls	% A*-C	% A*-G
2012 Prov	11 (inc ACE)	633	31.3	320	313	42.7	93.4
2011	10	969	54.0	479	490	43.4	93.1
2010	10	855	44.4	390	465	49.1	94.5
2009	11	744	41.0	342	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, 2009 onward = 16)	Number of candidates	% of year group entered in these schools	Boys	Girls	% Level 3	% Level 2	% Level 1
2012 Prov	1 (Mount Tamar)	1	5.6	1	0	0	0	0
2011	1	3	2.3	3	0	33.3	66.7	0
2010	1	8	5.8	8	0	12.5	50.0	37.5
2009	2	3	1.1	3	0	33.3	33.3	33.3
2008	2	3	1.1	3	0	33.3	33.3	0
2007	1	3	2.3	3	0	-	33.3	733.3

Examination - Advanced Extension Award	Number of schools (Total = 15 secondary schools, 2010 onwards = 16)	Number of candidates	% of year group entered in these schools	Boys	Girls	% D	% M
2012 Prov	0	0					
2011	0	0					
2010	1	1		1	0	0	0
2009	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, 2010 onwards = 16)	Number of candidates	% of year group entered in these schools	Boys	Girls	%A-E (A*-E from 2011)
2012 Prov	10	117		45	72	99.1
2011	9	120		48	72	95.8
2010	10	110		36	74	96.4
2009	13	119		45	74	99.2
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, 2010 onwards = 16)	Number of candidates	% of year group entered in these schools	Boys	Girls	%A-E
2012 Prov	10	42		17	25	88.1
2011	9	32		11	21	90.6
2010	8	31		11	20	93.5
2009	9	21	1.2	7	14	95.2
2008	9	32	1.8	16	16	93.8
2007	9	29	1.7	13	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 LIST OF ORGANISATIONS TO WHICH REPORT IS SENT**

Our report will be sent, in electronic form, to Head teachers, Principals and Chairs of Governors of schools including voluntary schools, the Local Authority and NASACRE. 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 Chairs of SACRE in Devon, Torbay and Cornwall.

## **C 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'.

## SACRE MEMBERS 2012 – 2013

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

Eight places

Mrs Pam Shelmerdine	Baptist Church
Ben Seel	Buddhist Community
Dr Jatindra Saha	Hindu Community
Mrs Zainab Abubakar	Muslim Community
Anna Kelly	Jewish Community
Ms Helena Mitchell	Methodist Church
Vacant	Roman Catholic Diocese of Plymouth
Rev. Peter Chave	United Reformed Church

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

Five places (three vacancies)

Cathy Slow	Diocesan Board of Education, Exeter
Mrs Catherine Bowness	Diocesan Board of Education, Exeter
<i>Vacant</i>	Diocesan Board of Education, Exeter
<i>Vacant</i>	Diocesan Board of Education, Exeter
<i>Vacant</i>	Diocesan Board of Education, Exeter

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

Nine places (three vacancies)

Mr Martin Edmonds	NASUWT
Ms Gwen Hughes	NUT
Mr Pete Grainger	PASH (NAHT)
Ms Teresa Griffiths	NATRE
<i>Vacant</i>	VOICE
<i>Vacant</i>	UCU
Mrs Elizabeth Hill	PAPH (NAHT)
Mrs Alison Bradley	ATL
Ms Heather Farrow	Special Schools

### Group D: The Local Authority

Six places

Councillor Mary Aspinall	Plymouth City Council
Councillor Ian Gordon	Plymouth City Council
Councillor Chaz Singh	Plymouth City Council
Councillor Jonathan Drean	Plymouth City Council
Councillor Steven Ricketts	Plymouth City Council
Councillor David Stark	Plymouth City Council

**Co-opted Representatives**

Six places

Miss Caroline McVicker  
Clare Hamon  
Father Gregory Carpenter  
Mr Brendan Brookshaw

AST (Secondary)  
Quaker Community  
Greek Orthodox Community  
Plymouth Association of  
Governors  
Humanist  
RE Consultant

Ben Kerr  
Barbara Wintersgill

**Officers**

Mr Jonathan Marshall  
Mr Ross Johnston

Religious Education Adviser  
Democratic Support Officer

## **E. 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 2011 – 2012

The Autumn Term meeting was held on 28<sup>th</sup> November 2011 at the Council House. Nineteen members and two officers were present and the issues discussed included:-

- Membership Issues
- Annual Report and Examination results
- National and Local Updates including:  
English Baccalaureate implications  
Religious Education Council  
New OFSTED framework
- Holocaust Memorial Day plans
- Plymouth Centre for Faiths & Cultural Diversity – 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary
- SACRE working groups – progress reports
- Unmet Needs in RE project

The Spring Term meeting was held on 5<sup>th</sup> March 2012 at the Central Methodist Hall. Fourteen members and two officers were present and the issues discussed included:-

- Membership Issues
- Holocaust Memorial Day – report on events
- OFSTED framework
- “Creating Conditions for Integration” – new strategy
- SACRE working groups – progress reports
- Visiting schools – opportunities for SACRE members
- Plymouth Centre for Faiths and Cultural Diversity – news and events
- Unmet Needs in RE – funding secured from St Lukes Trust

The Summer Term meeting was held on 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2012 at the Plymouth Islamic Education Trust – PIETy. Sixteen members and two officers were present and the issues discussed included:-

- Membership Issues
- National and Local Updates
- NASACRE AGM – report
- Unmet Needs in RE project
- Minster Project - new work
- Plymouth Centre for Faiths and Cultural Diversity – news and events
- OFSTED reports on Plymouth Schools - review
- RE - SMSC and “Collective Worship Re-visited” AREIAC document
- SACRE working groups update

Clerk to SACRE – Ross Johnston – Democratic Support Officer  
Plymouth City Council RE Adviser – Jonathan Marshall MBE