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To: The Chair and Members  
of the Standing Advisory  
Council on Religious  
Education

County Hall  
Topsham Road  
Exeter  
Devon  
EX2 4QD

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Date: 29 January 2024

Contact: Yvette Welsh, 01392 382406

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**STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

Tuesday, 6th February, 2024

A meeting of the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education is to be held on the above date at 10.00 am at Committee Suite - County Hall to consider the following matters.

Donna Manson  
Chief Executive

**A G E N D A**

**PART I - OPEN COMMITTEE**

1 Apologies for Absence

2 Minutes (Pages 1 - 6)

Minutes of the meeting held on 15 November 2023

3 Items Requiring Urgent Attention

Items which in the opinion of the Chair should be considered at the meeting as matters of urgency.

## **MATTERS FOR INFORMATION**

### 4 Devon SACRE Membership

To note any changes to the membership of Devon SACRE.

### 5 Standards in Schools: Monitoring and Ofsted (Pages 7 - 10)

The purpose of this report is to update SACRE members on the findings published in recent Ofsted reports, particularly where comments relate to Religious Education (RE), collective worship or Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development (SMSC) of pupils. Where appropriate, the report may recommend that SACRE officers should contact specified schools to either congratulate them on their outstanding practice, or to offer curriculum support in specified areas.

Ofsted reports from a number of primary schools make reference to issues relating to RE/CW/SMSC. Most of these comments are very encouraging.

Two schools have been followed up specifically with regard to comments in their reports.

### 6 Devon and Torbay SACRE - Agreed Syllabus Review and Launch (Pages 11 - 12)

### 7 Learn Teach Lead RE: Update (Pages 13 - 14)

### 8 Regional and National Developments: RE Hubs, National Content Standard in RE, Ofsted, Religion and Worldviews frameworks (Pages 15 - 16)

### 9 Devon SACRE Annual Report (Pages 17 - 24)

### 10 Young Ambassadors

At the last meeting of Devon SACRE the Committee noted that the Devon SACRE Advisor and staff at Dartmoor Multi Academy Trust would be undertaking work to train and empower a group of primary and secondary students to become Ambassadors for Freedom of Religion or Belief.

An update on the work will be provided.

### 11 Anthony Mangnall MP correspondence (Pages 25 - 26)

12 Holocaust Memorial Day - Feedback from 2024

**STANDING ITEMS**

13 SACRE Training

14 Future Devon SACRE Meetings

The Committee will meet on the following dates:

Thursday 13 June 2024

Monday 4 November 2024

**PART II - ITEMS WHICH MAY BE TAKEN IN THE ABSENCE OF PRESS AND PUBLIC ON THE GROUNDS THAT EXEMPT INFORMATION MAY BE DISCLOSED**

NIL

*Members are reminded that Part II Reports contain exempt information and should therefore be treated accordingly. They should not be disclosed or passed on to any other person(s). They need to be disposed of carefully and should be returned to the Democratic Services Officer at the conclusion of the meeting for disposal.*

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## STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

15 November 2023

### Present:-

#### Group A: Christian and Other Religion and Belief Communities (with the exception of the Church of England)

K Denby, J Carpenter, P Hannam, M Hext, W Houghton, M Miller, J Taylorson

#### Group B: The Church of England

S Gill, C Hulbert, K Keatley, E Underwood

#### Group C: Teachers Associations

P Hammett, M Harding, W Harrison, J Matthews, P Randall, D Tollerton, B Twiggs (Vice-Chair),

#### Group D: Devon County Councillors

Councillors T Adams, J Bradford, C Channon, D Sellis, M Squires, D Thomas

#### Co-opted Members

J Goody, R Northcott, S Spence

### Apologies:-

G Kang, R Nathwani, J Roberts, E Mihas, M Squires and R Peart

### **37**      **Election of Chair**

It was **PROPOSED** by Councillor Tracy Adams and **SECONDED** by Penny Hammett that Jeremy Roberts be appointed as Chair of Devon SACRE for the forthcoming year.

### **38**      **Election of Vice Chair**

It was **PROPOSED** by Penny Hammett, **SECONDED** by Sandra Gill that Belinda Twiggs be appointed as Vice Chair of Devon SACRE for the forthcoming year.

### **39**      **Minutes**

# Agenda Item 2

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STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

15/11/23

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 June 2023 were signed as a correct record of the meeting.

## 40 Items Requiring Urgent Attention

There was no item raised requiring urgent attention.

## 41 Learn Teach Lead RE: Update

The annual conference took place on 13 October 2023 and was well received. Future training for hub leaders are planned within the current academic year. Hubs continue to meet, some virtually whilst other have moved to in person. The autumn meeting for the Exeter Hub will be held at the Quaker House. The Committee welcomed that £1000 would be made to the LearnTeachLead RE from the SACRE budget.

## \* 42 Devon and Torbay SACRE - Agreed Syllabus Review

The Committee noted that the new syllabus would be introduced from September 2024, launch events are schedule in June 2024 across Devon, Torbay and Plymouth.

Changes to the syllabus included:

- Updated forewords, introduction and cover
- Updated language from 'religion and belief' to 'religion and worldviews', in line with CoRE
- Updated language from 'religious and non-religious beliefs' to 'religious and non-religious worldviews'
- Adjust language (e.g. Hinduism to Hindi dharma)
- Make non-religious worldviews, specifically Humanism, more visible:
  - What does it mean to be Humanist in Britain today?' including some of the reasons for and against belief in God as part of this.
  - What difference does it make to be an atheist or agnostic in Britain today? to include some more specific study of Humanism but also more recent data on non-religiousness/Nones.
- Updated Early Years
- Addition of opportunities to add examples showing more diversity in the impact sections of units (e.g. more global and local examples of Christian harvest celebrations, prayer, grace)
- Addition of more examples of more local Devon/Torbay/Plymouth/SouthWest places in some of the units
- Updated demographics to 2021 Census

During general discussion, it was questioned how Church Schools would use the curriculum and it was welcomed that it had not changed significantly.



In response to confirmation about the County Council underwriting the syllabus cost, it was noted that an easily transmitted document would be circulated after the launch date and delegates would pay to attend the training sessions.

Educational settings would not be charged for document as costs would have been recouped through nominal delegate training fees through the Schools Effectiveness budget. It was noted that academy schools would pay for the curriculum document.

## **43 Devon SACRE Membership**

The Chair welcomed Dr Pat Hannam, as Quaker representative to join group A (Christian and other religion and belief communities) and Jo Hunter to join Group B (The Church of England).

It was noted that the spokesperson of each group is as follows:

Group A - Christian and other religion and belief communities (with the exception of the Church of England) – Mary Hext

Group B – The Church of England – Sandra Gill

Group C – Teachers Associations – Belinda Twiggs

Group D – County Council – Councillor Dan Thomas

## **44 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in Devon schools**

Lorna Legg, Head Teacher at Ofwell Church of England Primary School led a session on equality, diversity and inclusion in Devon schools.

The presentation highlighted the following points:

- importance of language used
- treat everyone with equal respect, always aim to see the individual before the group
- avoidance of phrases which are reductive and perpetuate stereotyping
- aim not to cause offence, but be alert to apologise and learn rather than blame the victim
- make the effort to find out more information

During general discussion the following issues were raised

- barriers and prejudices around religion, race, culture, class, poverty
- what prevents children learning about other religions and worldviews
- how can schools be more aware of diversity and be more inclusive
- the recent ongoing refugee crisis
- hate crime in Devon
- whether training should be mandatory in educational settings

# Agenda Item 2

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STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

15/11/23

In response to a question about the County Council's race equality audit, this can be found at [www.devon.gov.uk/equality/news-and-reports/raceaudit21](http://www.devon.gov.uk/equality/news-and-reports/raceaudit21)

## 45 **Standards in Schools: Monitoring and Ofsted**

In reference to the report showing some schools who were in need of help and assistance, further advice and guidance would be offered to offer curriculum support in specified areas.

## 46 **Regional and National Developments - RE Hubs, National Content Standard in RE**

During general discussion the Committee was **NOTED** the report and that the RE Hubs website was available at <https://www.re-hubs.uk>. Information on the website included courses and events, local groups and how to contact your local hub.

The Religious Education Council have released the national content standard for RE. the vision for every young person to experience an academically rigorous and inspiring education in religion and worldviews. Publication of a national Content Standard provides clarification and a benchmark for excellence in religion and world views in England. The RE Council's National Content Standard provided a non-statutory benchmark for syllabus providers and other bodies to evaluate engagement in relation to religion and belief.

Content included:

how world views are formed; relate to a wider institutional world view; feature continuity and change; offer responses; provide guidance on how to live a good life; are influenced by people and societies.

In Spring 2024 the REC Religion and Worldviews project will publish new religion and worldviews frameworks.

## 47 **Devon SACRE Annual report**

The Committee **NOTED** that the annual report would be available online at the following - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ofsted-annual-report-202223-education-childrens-services-and-skills>

## 48 **Letter from Rt Hon Nick Gibb MP, Minister for Schools**

The Committee welcomed and **NOTED** the correspondence from Councillor Tracy Adams to Ben Bradshaw MP for following up an important area of SACRE concern, regarding the recruitment crisis for secondary RE teachers in the south west and nationally.

Ben Bradshaw MP had written to Nick Gibb MP (Schools minister). It was noted that the reply from Nick Gibb MP did not seem to acknowledge or address the critical shortage of RE teachers.

It was also noted that the DfE has recently responded to this issue by reinstating a bursary of £10,000 for trainee RE teachers.

The letter therefore has been part of a successful campaign to address the recruitment crisis, and SACRE thanked Councillor Adams for her intervention.

## **49 Young Ambassadors Project**

The Committee **NOTED** that the Devon SACRE Advisor and staff at Dartmoor Multi Academy Trust would be undertaking work to train and empower a group of primary and secondary students to become Ambassadors for Freedom of Religion or Belief.

The project aimed that the young Ambassador's would work with the students at Okehampton Primary School and Okehampton College, towards a significant community event in 2024. This would be followed by a visit to Westminster in June 2025 to address MPs and Lords about the importance of RE.

The project is led by the Association of RE Inspectors and Advisers (AREIAC) and funded by Culham St Gabriel's Trust.

## **50 Advice for Schools in Times of Conflict**

The Committee NOTED that information had recently been circulated to schools.

The Chair led the Committee in a moments contemplation.

## **51 Holocaust Memorial Day - Planning for 2024**

The Committee **NOTED** that the theme for Holocaust Memorial Day scheduled for 26 January in 2024 was 'Fragility of Freedom'.

## **52 SACRE Training**

The Committee **NOTED** the NASACRE 2023-2024 virtual training programme.

## **53 Future SACRE Meetings**

# Agenda Item 2

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STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

15/11/23

Future meetings to be held on the following dates commencing at 10am

Tuesday 6 February 2024

Thursday 20 June 2024

Monday 4 November 2024

The South West SACRE conference to be held online on Monday 4 March 2024.

## **NOTES:**

1. *Minutes should always be read in association with any Reports for a complete record.*
2. *If the meeting has been webcast, it will be available to view on the [webcasting site](#) for up to 12 months from the date of the meeting*

\* **DENOTES DELEGATED MATTER WITH POWER TO ACT**

The Meeting started at 10.00 am and finished at 12.27 pm

## Ofsted reports Oct 2023 – Jan 2024

Devon schools

This report shows the comments which have been made in Ofsted reports in areas that relate to the work of SACRE.

Primary School	Grading	Published Date	Ofsted report comments relevant to SACRE monitoring	Comments for SACRE
Marpool	Inadequate	06/11/23	pupils do not know about different faiths or cultures that are different to their own. Consequently, they are not as well prepared for life in modern Britain as they could be.	Needs a visit
River Dart	Inadequate	09/11/23		
Chulmleigh Primary	Good	09/11/23	Pupils learn to be reflective and discuss important ideas. Leaders have chosen books thoughtfully to develop pupils' understanding of diversity.	
Devon Hospitals	Good	10/11/23		
Sandford	Good	15/11/23		
Willowbrook	RI	15/11/23		
Steiner	Good	15/11/23	Class discussions and debates are used well to enable pupils to explore differences in society. Over time, pupils develop a deep respect for one another.	
Lydford	Good	20/11/23	Pupils enjoy school. They accept each other's differences so that everyone feels welcome at Lydford.	
Horrabridge	Good	21/11/23		
Pinhoe	Good	22/11/23	Pupils who attend Pinhoe understand the importance of the school's mission of 'Living life in all its fullness, together in mind, body and spirit'. This togetherness is demonstrated by the inclusivity of all members of the school community. They have welcomed refugees and those new to the country with open arms.	
Exwick Heights	Good	23/11/23		

<b>Cockwood</b>	Good	24/11/23	Pupils recall their learning about diversity. They show tolerance and respect when discussing how people can be different. Their learning is reinforced through the well-considered provision on offer.	
<b>Whitchurch</b>	Good	25/11/23	Pupils develop their spiritual, moral and social understanding well. They understand the importance of being physically and mentally healthy. They learn about different faiths and beliefs and make links with their own beliefs and values. Consequently, pupils are well informed about issues pertinent to life in modern Britain.	
<b>Newton St Cyres</b>	Good	29/11/23	Pupils debate and discuss local, national and international issues with sensitivity and maturity. The school skilfully promotes tolerance, respect, diversity and knowledge of protected characteristics. As a result, pupils have a very strong understanding of people's differences, other faiths and fundamental British values.	
<b>Halberton</b>	Good	01/12/23	Every week, pupils enjoy singing in the local church. Pupils learn about different religions. They strongly believe that all people should be treated fairly and equally.	
<b>Lapford</b>	RI	04/12/23	Pupils understand the importance of treating those with different beliefs equally. They are respectful of difference.	
<b>Bickleigh Down</b>	Good	05/12/23	Pupils are extremely polite and articulate. Pupils believe strongly in tolerance and equality. They have an insightful understanding of different cultures and religions from around the world. As a result, pupils are respectful of people from different backgrounds. The spirit detectives, school council and well-being ambassadors carry out their roles with pride. They listen respectfully to each other's contributions in class.	
<b>Eden Park</b>	RI	07/12/23		
<b>Pilton Bluecoat</b>	Good	11/12/23		
<b>The Grove</b>	Good	15/12/23	Pupils understand different beliefs, religions and cultures.	
<b>Black Torrington</b>	RI	16/01/24		
<b>Countess Wear</b>	RI	16/01/24		

<b>Ide</b>	Good	16/01/24	Through the curriculum, pupils learn about world faiths and cultures. They understand different religious festivals and know that tolerance and acceptance are important.	
<b>Cornwood</b>	RI	16/01/24		
<b>Woolacombe</b>	Good	19/01/24		
<b>Bradworthy</b>	RI	19/01/24		
<b>South Molton</b>	Good	19/01/24	Pupils have a secure understanding of the fundamental British values and protected characteristics. They value others' opinions and beliefs.	
<b>Honiton</b>	Good	19/01/24		
<b>Holsworthy</b>	Good	19/01/24	The school is committed to helping pupils become respectful and responsible citizens of the future. Pupils learn about the lives of others outside of their immediate community. Visiting speakers teach pupils about first-hand experiences, such as the Windrush generation. The school choir has the opportunity to sing at Exeter Cathedral.	
<b>Mary Tavy</b>	O/S	24/01/24	Pupils can explain different faiths and cultures, such as Buddhism, Judaism and Sikhism. Pupils are reflective and show a deep understanding of diversity. There is a strong culture of inclusion, where difference is celebrated.	Excellent practice
<b>Beer</b>	Good	29/01/24	The school is at the heart of the village and pupils develop their understanding of the area well. For instance, they visit the church and the beach regularly.	
<b>Payhembury</b>	Good	29/01/24	There are strong links with local schools and the local community, including the church. Pupils have time to reflect and form views and opinions on their experiences. They are expertly supported and encouraged by staff to share these as well as listen to and respect those from others.	
<b>St Joseph's Catholic school</b>	RI	29/01/24	pupils have a limited understanding of different religions beyond the religious character of the school. As a result, they are not fully prepared for life in modern Britain.	Concerns

Secondary School	Grading	Published Date	Ofsted report comments relevant to SACRE monitoring	Comments for SACRE
Chulmleigh	Good	23/11/23		
Tavistock	inadequate	15/01/24		
St James	Good	15/01/24	Events such as 'culture day' as well as groups such as 'culture club' and the 'diversity group' help pupils to understand and celebrate difference.	





Title: **Agreed Syllabus Review**

This report relates to the review of the Devon and Torbay Agreed Syllabus for RE, due to be implemented in 2024

To: **Devon SACRE** On: 06/02/24

Contact Officer: **Ed Pawson**  
Telephone: **07895175852**  
E.mail: **efpawson@gmail.com**

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## 1. Key points and Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update SACRE members on the progress of the review of the Devon and Torbay Agreed Syllabus.
- 1.2 The new syllabus will be completed by the end of March, ready for the launch in the summer term.
- 1.3 The new syllabus will be introduced for teaching from Sept 2024
- 1.4 Syllabus launch events are planned to take place across Devon and Plymouth on Mon 17th, Tues 18th, Wed 19th June 2024, led by syllabus-writers Fiona Moss and Stephen Pett (RE Today).
- 1.5 The cost of the new syllabus will be £35 per school. SACRE has the assurance from the Local Authority that it will pay for a copy of the syllabus to go to every school in Devon (including academies). A significant proportion of this cost will be recouped through the 'paid-for' launch events.
- 1.6 There will need to be ongoing training for teachers as a follow-up to the introduction of this new syllabus, partly via the LTLRE conference and hub meetings.

**Jeremy Roberts**  
Chair of SACRE





**Title: Learn, Teach, Lead RE (LTLRE) report**

This report relates to the SACRE supported initiative now in its twelfth year, which seeks to support RE through local hubs.

**To: Devon SACRE**                      **On: 08/02/24**

**Contact Officer: Ed Pawson**  
**Telephone: 07895175852**  
**E.mail: efpawson@gmail.com**

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## **1. Key points and Summary**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update SACRE members on the progress of the Learn, Teach, Lead RE (LTLRE) hub network.
- 1.2 The next annual conference 2024 will take place on 11<sup>th</sup> October 2024, at the St Mellion Conference Centre.
- 1.3 Hub leaders training will be taking place on 1<sup>st</sup> March and 5<sup>th</sup> July 2024.
- 1.4 Many hubs have been meeting in person over the last year, with others continuing to offer their meetings virtually. The new SWIFT hub continues to be very successful.
- 1.5 A number of new hub leaders have been appointed recently, helping to renew the programme.

**Jeremy Roberts**  
**Chair of SACRE**





Title: **National updates**

This report relates to the national updates for the Devon SACRE meeting (November 2023)

To: **Devon SACRE** On: 06/02/24

Contact Officer: **Ed Pawson**  
Telephone: **07895175852**  
E.mail: **efpawson@gmail.com**

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## Key points and Summary

### 1 **Introducing the RE Hubs project**

The RE Hubs project is now well established. SACRE members are encouraged to visit the [website](#) and explore what it has to offer: a calendar of CPD events, details of school speakers and places of worship/interest, an extensive library of resources to support schools provide better RE etc

### 2 **Ofsted reports**

#### 2.1 **HMCI's report**

In November 2023 Ofsted published its HMCI's [annual report](#) for 2022/3. This report stated the following:

'in too many primary and secondary schools, the religious education (RE) that pupils receive is of a poor quality and not fit for purpose, leaving pupils ill-equipped for some of the complexities of contemporary society.'

'RE is a complex subject, and the lack of clarity and support from government makes schools' job harder.'

These comments are very hard hitting, and back up many of the observations that have been made by members of Devon SACRE over a number of years.

Suggestion: to write to the Secretary of State for Education demanding that the DfE produces a plan to show how RE will be given more status and priority in schools. This includes dealing with the recruitment crisis and supporting the subject through mechanisms like the RE Hubs project.

#### 2.2 **RE subject report**

We are awaiting the publication of a long subject report on RE. This will give school a analysis of the state of RER in our schools.

# Agenda Item 8

## **3 National Content Standard for RE (NCS)**

How do we measure the quantity and quality of RE provision?

[The National Content Standard for RE](#) is needed to provide clarification, bring consistency and to raise standards. Educational organisations continue to sign up to show their acceptance of this mechanism which creates a standard for a school's RE provision.

The RE Council's National Content Standard provides a non-statutory benchmark for syllabus providers and other bodies to evaluate their work. It is not a curriculum, and it does not determine precisely what content schools should teach. Rather it is a standard by which different RE curricula, content, pedagogy, and provision can be benchmarked

## **4 Religion and Worldviews frameworks**

The Religious Education Council (REC) will be publishing its long-awaited Religion and Worldviews frameworks in May. These resources will show how the Religion and worldviews approach can be put into practice in classrooms. More details at the next meeting.

**Jeremy Roberts**  
**Chair of SACRE**

## Devon SACRE Annual Report 2022/3



### Forward

#### Introduction from the Chair of SACRE

To be added here

Jeremy Roberts (SACRE Chair)

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2. SACRE's statutory responsibilities
- 3 Collective Worship
- 4 Links with other bodies
- 5 SACRE local involvement
- 6 SACRE organisation
- 7 Appendices

## 1 Introduction

### Membership

During the year we were pleased to welcome new members: Jane Carpenter, Kelly Keatley, Warren Houghton, Neomi Alam, David Tollerton

Many thanks to Richard Halsey, Helena Hastie who have stepped down.

### Details of Devon SACRE meetings

November 2022: 15 attendees, plus clerk and adviser, hybrid meeting

February 2023: 20 attendees, plus clerk, hybrid meeting

June 2023: 25 attendees, plus clerk and adviser, hybrid meeting

## 2 SACRE's statutory responsibilities

### Review of the Local Agreed Syllabus

Work has been ongoing to review the current Agreed Syllabus for RE (AS), which runs from 2019-2024.

During the year an Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC) was set up to advise SACRE in how to proceed with the AS review. The ASC fed back to the full meetings with its findings. The ASC considered whether the introduction of a new syllabus should be delayed beyond 2024, given the expected publication of new exemplar frameworks on a worldviews approach in 2024. However, it was agreed that a new, updated syllabus is needed in 2024 to ensure that schools continue to see the SACRE syllabus as the most fit-for-purpose way to teach high quality RE.

This review is taking place in conjunction with Torbay, Plymouth and Cornwall SACREs, (although Cornwall's AS runs until 2025). Teacher panels and online surveys have been utilised to gain feedback on the way the current syllabus is working, and to gather views on what needs changing or updating. Evidence shows that the current syllabus, which marked a significant change from the last one, has been well received by teachers and schools. This means the new syllabus will not look radically different from the current model. However, there is a need for it to embody the significant changes in approach to the subject and new

# Agenda Item 9

ideas being introduced at a national level, in particular around a developing understanding about a religion and worldviews approach.

RE Today have been working on this update and will be presenting a draft version in Autumn 2023.

SACRE wants the LA to be aware that additional resources will be required for the introduction of a new syllabus. The LA has indicated that it is prepared to underwrite the changes being proposed.

Here is a summary of changes to the AS:

- Availability of more 'lesson-ready' resources
- Teaching units to embody more diversity
- Teaching units to reflect the local lived experience of people's religious and non-religious worldviews
- More input on Humanism required in primary phase
- More detail on assessment
- More input for special schools
- More input on progression in language and vocabulary across the syllabus
- Updated use of terminology and information on demographics
- More materials on how to link learning into local places of interest and places of worship

Launch events are planned for June 2024 with teachers being offered opportunities for follow-up training

## **Standards and monitoring in RE**

### **Secondary schools**

Data from the DfE annual workforce survey points to the fact that a number of local secondary schools do not teach any/enough RE. Schools have been contacted and conversations with headteachers and senior leaders have taken place to explore further and offer input to enable them to develop the place of RE in the curriculum.

### **GCSE exam results 2022**

Appendix 1 shows entry data for Devon schools for 2019-23 GCSE exams. This chart shows that the percentage of Y11 cohort in Devon schools who were entered for GCSE RS has dropped by more than half in the last 5 years from 58% in 2018 to 27% in 2023. This fall demonstrates a significant reduction and is mainly explained by a (national) trend that is seeing schools moving away from entering their full Y11 cohort for the GCSE RS exam, moving towards entry via more limited option groups. In some ways this is a positive shift, where schools are more accurately targeting students who want to study RS as an exam subject. However, it raises the question: what RE is being offered as part of the core curriculum, for those students who do not opt for the GCSE option. This is something which has been raised with a number of Devon schools in conversation over the last year, to explain the legal requirement that schools offer 5% of curriculum time at KS3 and 4. In terms of attainment, Devon schools are significantly below the national average. However, Devon schools have caught up a bit over recent years which is encouraging. The national average for level 9 is 29%, as opposed to 24% in Devon. The national average for level 5-9 is 60%, as opposed to 53% in Devon. This continues to raise concerns about standards in local schools.

### **Primary schools**



Monitoring of RE in primary schools continues through sampling of websites and scrutiny of recent Ofsted reports. Schools have been contacted where issues arise or where RE does not appear to be taught or delivered well. Visits have been made to schools where their Ofsted report has highlighted weaknesses in RE or related areas. Where RE is mentioned positively schools have been contacted to thank them for their strong provision.

Resources have been shared and advice has been given to a number of schools with regard to parental requests for withdrawal from RE (and/or collective worship).

### **Monitoring RE in Multi-Academy Trusts**

Devon SACRE continues to monitor RE in schools which are in Multi-Academy Trusts (MATs) to ensure that RE is given its statutory place in the curriculum. There are an increasing number of MATs who have appointed RE leads across their schools, which is a positive development. SACRE, along with NATRE and RE Hubs, is active in drawing these hub leaders together and working with them to develop an understanding of how MATs need to make provision for the subject.

### **3 Collective Worship**

Guidance from Devon SACRE on collective worship and school assemblies has been well received by schools. This guidance supports schools in developing an up-to-date policy and encouraging active pupil participation in collective worship/assemblies. We want to help schools put in place effective practice, offering opportunities for reflective experiences for their pupils. The guidance document offers an explanation of the legal obligations, including the right to withdrawal, and outlines some of the rich opportunities that assemblies/collective worship can offer pupils for spiritual, moral, social, cultural and personal development.

There have been no formal complaints about collective worship in schools and no applications for determinations.

### **4 Links with other bodies**

Devon SACRE has strong links and partnerships with a number of organisations. It works closely with Devon County Council, the Diocese of Exeter and the University of Exeter. The SACRE adviser coordinates the SW AREIAC network of advisers (SWARE), and organises the annual SW SACRE conference. We were pleased to invite Trevor Cooling (former Chair of the RE Council) to speak at the 2023 SW SACRE conference, with a number of other workshops offering a range of important inputs for SACRE member training.

SACRE members and SACRE advisers across the SW often collaborate and share training and initiatives. A number of SACRE members have accessed training from NASACRE and the adviser attended the NASACRE national conference in May 2023 in London.

SACRE has discussed issues raised in recent NASACRE reports. The Still Standing report has helped SACRE members consider how SACREs may need to evolve their membership to be responsive to the representation of the diversity of local religion and worldviews communities.

SACRE members continue to be fully informed about national developments being made by the REC. In particular to understand how a new vision for RE is being developed through a worldviews approach. SACRE is aware of the new national Religion and Worldviews resource which has been produced to enable syllabus writers to construct a new generation of RE syllabi. SACRE members are fully supportive of development of a National Content Standard for RE.

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SACRE works closely with the Devon Faith and Belief Forum to establish strong links to local faith and belief organisations. This enables schools to draw on visitors to school classrooms and to inform who will be the most suitable faith and belief representatives when member vacancies occur.

## **Learn, Teach, Lead RE**

Devon SACRE is pleased to continue its support of the Learn, Teach, Lead RE programme ([LTLRE](#)). Devon hubs are working well to support teachers of RE, offering termly twilight meetings and networking opportunities.

The recent evaluation of the programme has brought forward a number of recommendations which are being put in place. This includes a better system for sending out hub meeting dates in advance, and encouraging more recognition for the hub leaders' roles from their leadership teams in their schools.

A teacher survey with regard to LTLRE showed that engagement with a local hub had given teachers greater confidence in leading RE and Hub leaders were reported as approachable and supportive.

The LTLRE conference in October 2022 took place online and attracted over 100 delegates. Feedback was very positive, valuing the input from speakers and workshops. Delegates were especially interested in the address from Dr Richard Kueh, Ofsted lead for RE.

## **5 SACRE: local involvement**

The half termly RE newsletter gives schools in depth support, information and networking links. It signposts current CPD, hub groups and conferences. Though it SACRE sign-posts guidance to schools about significant events, eg religious festivals such as Easter, Ramadan and Diwali, Interfaith Week etc

SACRE officers organise Holocaust Memorial Day events for schools every year. On Holocaust Memorial Day in January 2023 a service was held at Exeter Cathedral where schools participated in remembrance and reflection. The key speaker, Rob Rinder (AKA Judge Rob), attracted a large audience and much media attention. Over 200 school pupils were involved in the Exeter events from eight schools across the County. Presentations were given on Kindertransport and the Gypsy Holocaust. The closing ceremony was hosted by the Jewish community.

HMD resources and [links](#) were shared with schools.

## **6 SACRE: regional and national involvement**

Following a presentation from Exeter University about the current shortage of secondary RE teachers SACRE members have expressed concern about the recruitment and retention crisis facing the subject. Consequently a letter was sent to Nick Gibb (schools minister) to raise this issue with the Department of Education.

SACRE has been keen to be updated on the development of the [RE Hubs](#) initiative, which is providing teachers with a 'one-stop-shop' website, offering links to school speakers, places of interest, CPD events, local network groups, blogs and resources etc.

## **7 SACRE organisation**

Devon SACRE is well served through its clerk (Yvette Welsh), LA lead (Simon Bissett) and adviser (Ed Pawson). Devon County Council is responsive to SACRE’s needs and supportive in its administration and organisation. It is well supported financially.

In July 2022 the administration of SACRE was transferred back to Devon County Council, along with all systems and materials previously available on the Babcock website.

SACRE membership is vibrant and well-engaged, although there are still a few important vacancies. The new SACRE constitution, approved by DCC in Feb 2023, stipulates that SACRE members will serve a 4 year period, followed by a further 4 year period, if invited to continue. After this (8 years) most SACRE members will come off SACRE, to allow others to join and gain the valuable experience of being on this body. This change will begin to be enacted in 2024.

SACRE is aware of the need to continue to increase the diversity of its representation, and it is a priority to bring in some training on diversity for SACRE members. All meetings in the year 2021/2 have been quorate.

A number of SACRE members have taken advantage of useful training opportunities over the last year, both through attendance at the SW SACRE conference and national online NASACRE training events.

During 2021/2 SACRE reviewed its constitution, through input from a working party. This needs to be signed off by Devon County Council.

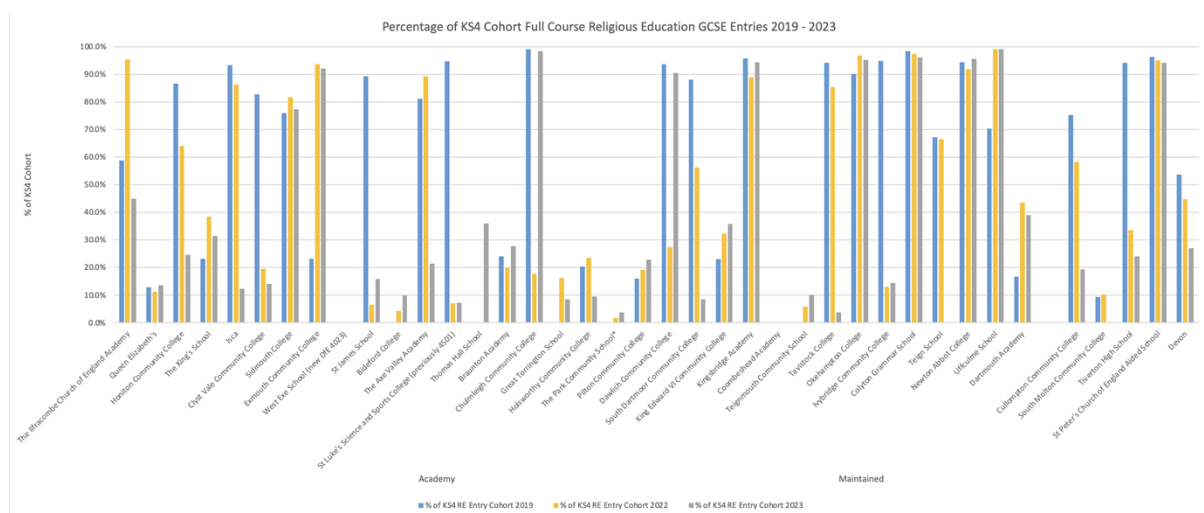
### Devon SACRE logo

Devon SACRE is pleased to have adopted a new logo in 2022. This has been well received.

## 8 Appendices

### Appendix 1

#### Percentage of KS4 Cohort Full Course Religious Studies GCSE Entries 2019-23



### Appendix 2

#### Membership of Devon SACRE August 2023

Group A: Christian and Other Religion and Belief Communities, with the Exception of the Church of England

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Name	Faith / belief community
Keith Denby	Humanist
Jane Carpenter	Jewish
Warren Houghton	Baha'i
Mary Hext	Methodist
Ravi Nathwani	Hindu
Maia Miller	Pagan
Jude Taylorson	Buddhist
Bill Becher	Quaker
Gurmit Kang	Sikh
Helen Brown	Catholic

## Group B: The Church of England (Diocesan Board of Education)

Name	Organisation
Sandra Gill	Church of England
Claire Hulbert	Church of England
Jeremy Roberts	Church of England
Tatiana Wilson	Church of England
Elizabeth Underwood	Church of England

## Group C: Teachers' Associations

Name	Organisation
Dr Edgar Mihas	UCU (FE)
Belinda Twiggs	NAS/UWT
Phil Randall	Secondary School Leaders (DSLs)
Caitlin Cornwell	NEU
Wendy Harrison	NEU
Ruth Flanagan	UCU
Penny Hammett	Primary School Leaders (DSLs)
Gerry Winnall	NATRE
Joe Matthews	NATRE Secondary

## Group D: The County Council

Name of Councillor	Organisation
Christine Channon	DCC
Margaret Squires	DCC
Ron Peart	DCC
Debo Sellis	DCC
Daniel Thomas	DCC
Tracy Adams	DCC
Janet Bradford	DCC

## Co-opted Members

# Agenda Item 9

Name
Saxon Spence
Rosemary Khreisheh
Bex Northcott
John Goody

## **SACRE Officers**

Clerk: Yvette Welsh

Adviser: Ed Pawson

LA lead: Simon Bissett





HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Ms Belinda Twiggs  
32 Raddicombe Drive  
Brixham  
Devon  
TQ5 0EZ

AM26217/RR  
November 2023

Dear Ms Twiggs,

Thank you for your letter regarding religious education.

I strongly believe in the importance of RE for developing pupils' understanding of the rich diversity of faiths and communities and their role in shaping the values and traditions of Britain and other countries. Indeed, these are some of the reasons why RE is a statutory part of the curriculum. The syllabus is not, however, set by the Government, but locally by schools and local authorities.

The Department for Education welcomed the publication of Ofsted's research review into RE in May 2021, particularly given that it sought to identify factors that contribute to high quality RE curricula and teaching in schools. The Government's policy is to allow the RE curricula to be designed at a local level, through locally agreed syllabuses or by individual schools and academy trusts developing their own curriculum. Whilst it is important that the review is taken into account, the Government does not prescribe how much time a school devotes to any individual subjects, including RE. It is for individual schools to plan, organise and deliver their own curriculum.

While all schools must teach RE, academies have the freedom to set their own curriculum under the terms of their funding agreements, and voluntary aided faith schools can teach RE in accordance with their faith.

To ensure high standards of RE teaching, resources will be procured by Oak National Academy during the second tranche of its work. Oak will work closely with the sector and utilise sector experience when producing new materials for RE. This will ensure that high quality lessons are available nationwide, benefitting both teachers and pupils, should schools opt to use them.

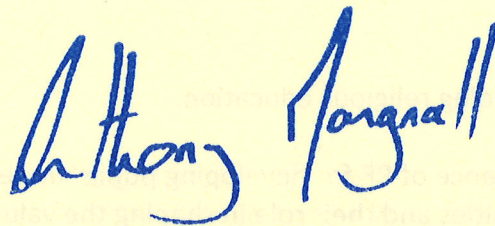
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To support high standards of RE teaching in all schools, the Department is continuing to offer eight-week subject knowledge enhancement (SKE) courses for candidates who have the potential to become outstanding teachers, but need to increase their subject knowledge. The eight-week SKE course, available in RE, can be undertaken on a full time or part time basis, but must be completed before qualified teacher status can be recommended and awarded. Eligible candidates could be entitled to a SKE bursary of £175 per week to support them financially whilst completing their SKE course.

More information on these courses is available here: [www.gov.uk/guidance/subject-knowledge-enhancement-an-introduction](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/subject-knowledge-enhancement-an-introduction).

I hope this reassures you that the Government is committed to ensuring that children receive a well-rounded religious education.

With best wishes,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Anthony Mangnall". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'A' and 'M'.

**Anthony Mangnall MP**  
**Totnes and South Devon Constituency**