

## STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

6 February 2025

Present:-

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

Jane Carpenter, Nic Gibson, Patricia Hannam, Warren Houghton, Gurmit Kang, Jenny Morse, Leonore Newsome, Dave Regis

**Group B: The Church of England**

Sandra Gill, Kelly Keatley (Vice Chair), Jeremy Roberts

**Group C: Teachers' Associations**

Susannah Cornwall, Ruth Flanagan, Penny Hammett, Wendy Harrison, Phil Randall, Belinda Twiggs (Chair), Elizabeth Underwood

**Group D: Devon County Council**

Cllr Tracy Adams, Cllr Janet Bradford, Cllr Christine Channon, Cllr Ron Peart, Cllr Colin Slade, Cllr Dan Thomas

**Co-opted:** John Goody

Apologies:-

R Nathwani, J Hunter, C Hulbert and D Sellis

\* 93

**Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 4 November 2024 were signed as a correct record of the meeting subject to an amendment to the apologies received to add Dave Regis and Phil Randall.

\* 94

**Items Requiring Urgent Attention**

There was no item raised that needed urgent attention.

\* 95

**Devon SACRE Membership Updates**

The Committee took a moment of contemplation to remember Saxon Spence, who had been a member of Devon SACRE for many years.

The Committee **NOTED** and welcomed the following new members:

**Group A - Christian and other religion and belief communities (with the exception of the Church of England**

Nic Gibson (Pagan representative)  
Jenny Morse (Buddhist, visiting)

**Group C - Teachers Associations**

Zoe Bullamore (Ilfracombe Academy)

**\* 96      Devon SACRE Annual report 2023/2024**

The Committee heard and **NOTED** that the annual report had been finalised and sent to the Department for Education. It was noted that the foreward written by the previous chair of Devon SACRE comments included about the excellent support of the RE advisor and the outstanding work of Learn Teach Lead RE through local hubs.

**97      Data from Schools**

The Committee received and **NOTED** data collected regarding RE provision in schools.

The Committee noted the Religious Studies GCSE entries and their outcomes and concern about the drop in the number of students being entered for the GCSE RS exam. The percentage of Year 11 cohort entered for 2024 was 25.7%, a decrease from 44.8% in 2022. In 2024 only 56 entries were made for A level students

During general discussion the following points were made

- funding could be the reason that Religious Studies was not offered as a GCSE subject in some schools due to the lack of specialist teaching staff;
- the RE curriculum has been found not to be up to date in some schools;
- ongoing collaborative work could be offered to help assist with teaching;
- concern that some church school figures were not as positive as expected;
- that A Level Religious Studies was not offered as a subject at either Exeter College or Petroc College.

The Committee suggested that the Diocese be approached regarding results of church aided schools and the RE Adviser should make contact with schools who are not offering RS as a GCSE option.

**98      Standards in Schools - Monitoring and Ofsted**

The Committee **NOTED** the Ofsted reports for November 2024 – January 2025. They heard that a letter of congratulations had been sent by the RE Adviser to those schools where RE had been praised in a recent Ofsted

report. Schools were also contacted to offer support where the report showed concerns.

During general discussion it was suggested that the Governors be contacted where a school had not received a favourable result to offer advice and guidance.

\* **99**      **Devon and Torbay SACRE: Agreed Syllabus**

The Committee **NOTED** that feedback would be given at the next meeting following the results of a teachers' survey, to be carried out in May.

It was noted by colleagues of the Committee that the new syllabus had been very well received so far.

\* **100**      **Learn Teach Lead RE**

The Committee **NOTED** that Hub leaders training during 2024/25 would take place on 7 March 2025 and 4 July 2025 and £1,000 would be made to Learn Teach Lead RE hubs for the academic year 2024/25 as set out in the SACRE development plan.

The LTLRE hub groups in Devon continue to be successful, with termly meetings attracting both primary and secondary teachers of RE. The meetings take place both in person and online, dependent on the context and topic being covered.

The new hub leaders are:  
Shana Bartram-Owen and Amber Griffiths in Mid-Devon  
Lisa Lowe in East Devon  
Shelley Moss in South Devon/Torbay  
Zoe Bullamore in North Devon.

The next annual conference is planned for October 2025.

\* **101**      **Regional and National Developments: RE Hubs, Curriculum, and Assessment Review**

The Committee were reminded about the RE Hubs and the information available.

They also heard about the NATRE response to the curriculum and assessment review, which included:

- that NATRE highlighted the importance and critical role that RE plays within the curriculum
- Pupil feedback
- Absence of accountability measures for academies and outdated content

**102 Young Ambassadors Project**

Pupils from Okehampton College and Okehampton Primary School, both members of the Dartmoor Multi-Academy Trust, are taking part in the two year project.

The Ambassadors have been involved in:

- Participation in an online discussion with the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards, Lead Consultant for Advocacy for Culham St Gabriel's Trust, and AREIAC executive joint chair
- Creation of a display for Interfaith Week
- Setting up a Christian Union,
- Speaking at the Opening Ceremony for Holocaust Memorial Day commemoration events in Exeter

**\* 103 Faith and Belief Schools Visitor Training Days**

The Faith and Belief visitor training days will be held on Saturday 8 March 2025, 9.30am – 12.30pm at the Mint Church, Exeter

**\* 104 Holocaust Memorial Day - 27 January 2025 - Theme 'For a Better Future'**

The Committee **NOTED** that Holocaust Memorial Day took place on 27 January 2025. Various events took place and specific mention was made about the service in Exeter cathedral which over 400 people attended. In total, over 250 pupils took part in the day, coming from 12 schools across Devon.

**105 New Multi-faith Centre at Exeter University**

The Committee heard about the new multi-faith centre located at Exeter University.

**\* 106 South West SACRE Conference 2025**

The online South West SACRE conference will be held on Monday 3 March 2025 1pm - 4pm and is open to all SACRE members.

**\* 107 NASACRE Training Sessions**

The Committee **NOTED** the forthcoming NASACRE training sessions.

\* 108 **Future SACRE Meetings**

The Committee **NOTED** the dates of future meetings:

Tuesday 17 June 2025  
Thursday 13 November 2025

**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 12.30 pm