

Torbay SACRE Annual Report 2024/5



Foreward

This report comes at a time of real significance for Religion and Worldviews education. The government's Curriculum and Assessment Review has thrown a spotlight on the lack of equity in the way RE is delivered in different schools, and it is hoped that the review report will herald a real opportunity to tackle some of these challenges and raise the profile of RE in Torbay's schools.

The year upon which we report has been positive for many reasons. The introduction of a number of new SACRE members means that we continue to widen our representation and make new community connections. In particular, members of the Islamic community have been active in setting up opportunities for greater engagement with teachers and schools. Building on the constructive relationships we have established over the last few years, SACRE has benefitted from links within the community of Torbay. During the year, SACRE officers held a training event for school visitors, encouraging people from the community to offer support for local schools by providing first hand learning opportunities about their 'lived experience'.

The new Agreed Syllabus is being implemented, and many positive responses have come from teachers and school leaders. SACRE has continued to support the Learn Teach Lead RE programme this year and the local hub has been flourishing. A significant number of Torbay teachers were able to take advantage of the LTLRE conference.

Lastly, I must pay tribute to Ed Pawson for all that he brings to the world of Religion and Worldviews education. His leadership and commitment both locally and nationally is very much appreciated.

Jeremy Roberts (SACRE Chair)

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1 Introduction

1.1 Membership

During the year 2024/5 SACRE was pleased to welcome the following new members:

Abdullah Thomson (Muslim Community)

Laura Kendall (Head Teachers)

Liz Kilkelly (Teacher Training/ITE)

Mark Witchell (Teaching Unions)

Hannah Baker (Strategic Lead for Education)

Many thanks to Nikki Boone (Further Education) and Carly Watson (Pentecostal Churches) who have stepped down.

1.2 Details of Torbay SACRE meetings

November 2024: 13 attendees, plus clerk and adviser, hybrid meeting

February 2025: 15 attendees, plus clerk and adviser, hybrid meeting

June 2025: 14 attendees, plus clerk and adviser, hybrid meeting

All meetings were quorate.

SACRE has been well led this year by Jeremy Roberts (Chair) and Laura Twamley (Vice-Chair).

2 SACRE's statutory responsibilities

2.1 The new Local Agreed Syllabus (2024-29)

The new agreed syllabus, launched in June 2024, has been well received by schools. RE leads report that they are embedding the new Religion and Worldviews approaches into their teaching and learning planning. Both community and Church schools have found the new teaching frameworks helpful.

A primary teacher survey reveals that 96% of schools are using the new syllabus, with 71% reporting that it has been fully implemented. 82% of respondents expressed confidence in their understanding of the term 'religion and worldviews'.

Responses show that the new units on teaching about Humanism, caring for the world and diversity within and across religions have been particularly helpful. The development of Ways of Knowing and the use of disciplinary lenses has been well received. Confidence in delivering the syllabus is moderate, and future training needs have been identified.

Some concerns have been raised about the limited engagement from some academy trust networks.

Paid-for training sessions were offered in 2024/5, but due to low take-up the dates had to be cancelled. Much of the post-launch training has been provided through the Learn Teach Lead RE hub networks, offering free twilight training CPD.

2.2 Standards and monitoring in RE

2.2.1 Secondary schools

Data from the DfE annual workforce survey points to the fact that several schools are not meeting statutory expectations for teaching RE. Some schools are only teaching RE for 1 hour every fortnight at KS3 and 4. Some schools are dropping RE in Year 11. All schools appear to be offering RS as a GCSE subject (some as an option, others as core provision), but the numbers of students being entered in a few schools is troublingly low.

Schools have been contacted and conversations with headteachers and senior leaders have taken place to explore further and offer input to encourage them to develop the place of RE in the curriculum.

2.2.2 GCSE Religious Studies exam results 2025

There is a significant variation of entry practice for GCSE RS in Torbay schools, but SACRE is encouraged to see that most schools are taking RS very seriously as a subject. In 2025, three Torbay schools entered the vast majority of their Y11 cohort for the GCSE RS exam, while four others entered more than 25%. There are two schools who are entering less than 10%.

2.2.3 Primary schools

Monitoring of RE in primary schools continues through sampling of websites and scrutiny of recent Ofsted reports. Over 70% of Ofsted reports include a mention of issues relating to

SACRE's purpose (eg RE, collective worship or SMSC) and the majority of these comments are positive.

Where SACRE has concerns, schools have been contacted to raise issues about standards or profile of the subject. SACRE officers have had conversations with a number of 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). In particular, the Torbay and South Devon LTLRE hub leaders have been a massive resource in being available to offer support and guidance where schools make contact for help.

2.2.5 Headteachers' briefing

The SACRE Adviser was pleased to be invited to give updates and to brief Torbay school leaders on the changes to the syllabus, and to give a report on the latest Ofsted evaluations of the subject.

3 Collective Worship

The current guidance on collective worship and school assemblies from Torbay SACRE is still in date. This guidance supports schools in developing a suitable CW policy and encouraging active pupil participation in 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

4.1 Strong partnerships

Strong partnerships are a hallmark of the way Torbay SACRE operates. We have good links with a number of organisations, working closely with Torbay Council, the Diocese of Exeter, the Universities of Exeter and St Mark and St John, Devon Faith and Belief Forum and Torbay Faith and Belief Forum.

The SACRE Adviser attends the annual conferences for AREIAC (Association of RE Inspectors, Advisers and Consultants) and NASACRE (National Association of SACREs), and sits on the AREIAC executive. He coordinates the SW AREIAC network of advisers (SWARE), organises the annual SW SACRE conference and acts in the role of RE Hubs lead for the SW. The 2025 SW SACRE conference hosted inputs from a number of regional and national RE figures, offering workshops on a range of important inputs for SACRE member training. During the year, RE Hubs hosted a conversation forum for regional SACRE officers to receive updates and give feedback with NASACRE.

4.2 Devon Faith and Belief Forum

SACRE works closely with the Devon Faith and Belief Forum and Torbay 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.

4.3 Learn, Teach, Lead RE

Torbay SACRE is pleased to continue to partner and give funding support to the Learn, Teach, Lead RE programme ([LTLRE](#)). The Torbay and South Devon LTLRE hub is working well to support teachers of RE, offering termly twilight meetings and networking opportunities. LTLRE meetings

Autumn 2024: visit to Galampton CofE Primary School to see Religion and Worldviews in action in classrooms, embedded into a challenging and exciting curriculum.

Spring 2025: exploring the use of Disciplinary Characters to teach about 'Ways of Knowing' in RE

Summer 2025: discussing how to maximise the use of faith visitors and visits for RE.

Hub leaders continue to be a significant resource to teachers of RE in their locality, and termly training days enable hub leaders to keep up to date with current RE issues and initiatives.

The 2024 LTLRE conference was well attended, with over 90 teachers attending from across the region. Both conference and hub meeting evaluations show how valuable teachers are finding these networking and CPD offers.

Here is a sample of the evaluation comments from conference delegates:

- Great networking opportunity
- Practical ideas for staff development
- Understand how to implement a worldviews approach
- Inspiring, uplifting, imaginative, motivating
- Great choice of workshops for beginners and experienced teachers
- Fantastic wide range of workshops

5 SACRE: local involvement

5.1 RE Newsletter

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

5.2 Holocaust Memorial Day

SACRE officers organise Holocaust Memorial Day events in Exeter for schools every year, attended by some Torbay schools. On Holocaust Memorial Day in January 2025 a ceremony was held at Exeter Cathedral where schools participated in remembrance and reflection.

The theme, For a Better Future, provided a poignant opportunity for pupils to reflect on issues of conflict in today's society.

Over 250 school pupils were involved in the Exeter events from eight schools across the area. Presentations were given on Kindertransport, the Gypsy Holocaust and Holocaust history. The closing ceremony was hosted by the Jewish community.

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

5.3 Training local speakers for schools

Torbay SACRE Adviser held a Faith and Belief Speaker training day in Exeter for prospective RE schools speakers from Devon and Torbay participating.

6 SACRE: regional and national involvement

6.1 Curriculum and Assessment Review (CaAR)

Torbay SACRE was pleased to contribute to the consultation for the DfE's Curriculum Review. In particular SACRE expressed its concern about the huge and unjustifiable

variability of standards for RE in schools both locally and nationally. SACRE emphasised the need for a National Content Standard and gave support for the idea of RE becoming part of the National Curriculum.

Concerns were expressed regarding the huge crisis in RE teacher recruitment and the poor provision in training bursaries. SACRE also highlighted the need for systemic support and funding for the subject.

6.2 National Content Standard

SACRE is fully supportive of the REC's National Content Standard. The NCS provides a benchmark for excellence in religion and worldviews in schools or across a MATs in England.

6.3 RE Hubs

SACRE continues to be supportive 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. The school speakers database is of particular importance for schools who want to invite people into their classrooms with a particular 'lived experience' relating to the worldviews they are studying.

7 SACRE organisation

7.1 SACRE leadership and organisation

Torbay SACRE is well served through its clerk (Louise Willmott), LA lead (Hannah Baker), Chair (Jeremy Roberts), Vice-Chair (Laura Twamley) and adviser (Ed Pawson). Torbay Council is responsive to SACRE's needs and supportive in its administration and organisation. It is well supported financially.

SACRE membership is vibrant and well-engaged, although there are still a few significant vacancies. The 2022 SACRE constitution 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.

As a result of this change there has been some transfer of representative roles on SACRE, opening up opportunities for new members.

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.

8 Appendices

Appendix 1

Membership of Torbay SACRE August 2025

A Christian and other Religions other than Church of England	Christian denominations and other religions and religious denominations ¹	Roman Catholic	Helen Brown
		Quaker	Bill Becher
		Muslim	Yousif Al-Nassar/ Abdullah Thomson
		Jewish	Sheila Gewolb
		Pagan	Maia Miller

¹ the number of whose representatives shall, 'so far as consistent with the efficient discharge of the committee's functions, reflect broadly the proportionate strength of that denomination or religion in the area'.

		Humanist	Lisa Robillard Webb
		Hindu	Vacancy
		Buddhist	Vacancy
		URC / Methodist / Baptist	Vacancy
B The Church of England	The Church of England		Lyndsay Thomas
			Angela Sumner
			Katy Burns
			Vacancy
C Associations representing teachers	Such associations representing teachers as, in the opinion of the authority, ought to be represented, having regard to the circumstances of the area	Teaching Unions	Belinda Twiggs
			Corrine Guntrip
			Mark Witchell
		NATFHE	
		NATRE/LTLRE	Laura Twamley
		ITE	Liz Kilkelly
		SHA	Jeremy Roberts
		NAHT	Laura Kendall
		NATRE	Claire Bird
Special school	Vacancy		
D The Local Education Authority	The Local Authority		Cllr Nick Bye
			Cllr Christine Carter
			Cllr Martin Brook
			Cllr Ras Virdee
			Cllr Margaret Douglas Dunbar
Coopted members	SACRE itself may appoint co-opted members		Sivita Harrison, Kim Moore-Cullen

SACRE Officers

Clerk: Louise Willmott

Adviser: Ed Pawson

LA lead: Hannah Baker

