

CORNWALL STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION: 2021-22- ANNUAL REPORT

1) Introduction

Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education - known as SACREs - are responsible for advising Local Authorities on religious education and collective worship. Each SACRE is constituted by the Local Authority (LA) and is composed of four representative groups (or three in Wales): Christian and other religious denominations; the Church of England (except in Wales), teachers' associations and elected Councillors. Each group must consist of at least four members nominated by their respective body.

Cornwall has the four representative groups as:

Group A – Church Representatives (Other Churches)

Group B – Church of England

Group C – Teachers' Bodies Representatives

Group D – Elected Councillors (Local Authority Representatives)

Plus co-opted members

All the scheduled meetings took place in the period covered by this report and were quorate.

Chair's introduction

This is the first year since the COVID-19 lockdowns and things are starting to get back to normal. However, there is still a long way to go after two years of disruption from the pandemic, the lockdowns, 'bubbling' and the disruption of public examinations. SACRE would like to offer its thanks to teachers, officers, and many others for their work for the care and wellbeing of our young people during this challenging time.

Re-establishing the capacity of Cornwall SACRE is still ongoing. A membership list is included below and there are some vacancies that remain unfilled.

SACRE would like to thank the Local Authority. Thanks are due to Helen Snell (Clerk), and Graeme Plunkett. SACRE is indebted to Greg Parekh and Clifflynn Banfield (Cornwall SACRE's RE consultants) for their work on the Agreed Syllabus, working alongside RE Today and the Diocese in organising training and support. SACRE offers special thanks to John Keast, for his wealth of experience and knowledge, and the time he has devoted to his role as Chairman of SACRE.

SACRE would also like to offer thanks to all the teachers who have developed the units of work for the Curriculum Kernewek section of the Agreed Syllabus. These have been shared with teachers through local LTLRE network groups.

The SACRE is still concerned that its awareness of what is happening in RE in Cornwall's school is still very partial. The implementation of SACRE's ongoing action plan is crucial so that SACRE can go on to provide more effective leadership and support for RE teachers and schools. SACRE is grateful to be involved in NASACRE and other national professional bodies who are supporting the provision and effectiveness of RE nationally. SACRE was pleased to send representatives to NASACRE's AGM, the SW SACRE regional conferences and to other events.

GCSE and A level outcomes in RE for 2021 are not available due to the disruption to public examination during the COVID disruption. 2022 was the year which saw some return to normality

although the young people who sat those examinations had, of course, had their preparatory years disrupted by lockdowns and other issues. 2022 data is available for analysis and has been presented with this report. Detailed comparisons with 2020 and 2021 are not possible - due to the different methods of assessment and data collection used during COVID - and trends are therefore hard to extrapolate.

Felicity Henchley - Chair

2. Religious Education (statutory responsibilities)

Tables are appended.

Standards and achievement at Key Stages 1 – 3

With the removal of level statements from the Agreed Syllabus in April 2014, there has been no collection of teacher assessment data for RE at Key Stages 1 – 3 since 2015.

Standards and achievement of RE at KS 4 and 16-19

The number of entries in Full Course Religious Studies GCSE in Cornwall has continued to decline after the hiatus in examination results caused by COVID. The decline by almost a third from 2017 (1786 entries) to 2018 (1236 entries) and then brief stability in 2019 (1238 entries) has been followed by a further drop to 943 in 2022. The number of schools with no reported entries for Full Course Religious Studies GCSE increased from 8 schools in 2017 to 14 schools in 2019 and has risen again slightly to 15 in 2022. Factors at play here are likely to be the focus upon the EBacc subjects and the drive to 'catch up' following the lock down and 'bubbling' periods that disrupted school life, although the detailed research on this has yet to be done.

There are three schools where the full course is core and almost all students are entered, and two where half the cohort are entered. In the other cases, where RE is presumably an option course, the numbers range from 40 entries to a single student. The average for entries where RE is a GCSE option course is 20.1.

At A level, there was a further decline in numbers from 2019, with entries for 2022 standing at 50. Entries peaked in 2017 at 76: however, 50 is in line with 2015 when there were 51 entries. This is across four school sixth forms and two colleges. However, Cornish results hold up well in comparison to maintained schools and colleges in the South West, particularly at grades A* and A where the percentage increased to 35.2%, significantly up from 14% in 2019 (SW maintained schools and colleges, 29%). In addition the A*-C percentage was also up from 76% in 2019 to 84% in 2022 (in line with national average) and the average points score was 39, again in line with national average.

The wider role of RE in the curriculum

The role of RE in promoting the understanding of religion, faith and of cultural or ethnic minorities is crucial. SACRE's support for Holocaust education is noted above. The role of the Curriculum Kernewek units in supporting understanding of the National Minority status of the Cornish people and furthering an appreciation of their distinctive cultural heritage is central to the LA's wider work in supporting this status.

3. Collective Worship

It should be noted that SACRE's remit in relation to collective worship relates only to community schools and foundation and trust schools without a religious foundation.

During this year, SACRE was advised that schools had been asking via the LTLRE/SACRE hubs for advice with regards to collective worship, and this is represented in the Action plan (4. Promoting improvement in the quality of collective worship).

There were no applications for determinations in the year under report.

4. Links to other bodies and other key stakeholders

4.1 Schools

Monitoring and evaluation of the agreed syllabus is a key aspect of the SACRE consultants' action plan. The consultants are collecting feedback from schools and have been working with colleagues in Plymouth, Devon and Torbay to create evaluation tools for the syllabus. They have continued to use termly Hub meetings and regular newsletters to drive the improvement of provision and standards in RE. The Hub leaders have participated in and contributed to LTLRE training in the implementation of the agreed syllabus. Effective partnership working with LTLRE and a range of other bodies (Cornwall Faith Forum, Cornwall Association of Secondary Headteachers and Cornwall Association of Primary Heads) is key to successful work with schools.

4.2 The Local Authority

The Local Authority (LA) provided support to SACRE at meetings with Democratic Services staff for clerking and a Senior Education Effectiveness Officer for advice and guidance. The LA has facilitated SACRE meeting on-line through Teams meetings and, more recently, through blended meetings held in New County Hall and on-line.

All SACRE meetings were quorate, and meetings showed a rise in attendance through the online provision of meetings and, latterly, a blended approach.

4.3 Learn Teach Lead RE (LTLRE) and the Cornwall faith Forum

These partners continued to work with SACRE to provide schools with support, local hub meetings and special events and resources, including local materials to engage schools with the launch of Holocaust materials at Falmouth University in July 2022. This work is an important contribution to the LA's social cohesion and equalities agenda.

5. Other areas of SACRE involvement

SACRE members attended CPD events themselves to ensure an up-to-date knowledge of the new curriculum and developments in RE nationally. These events included the South-West area AREIAC conference, and the Extraordinary General Meeting of the National Association of SACREs. Members of SACRE are also members of the LTLRE steering group for Cornwall, Devon, Torbay and Plymouth.

A monitoring and evaluation programme is a significant strand of the Action Plan (Strand D of the SACRE budget plan). A working group has been established and there is a partnership with Plymouth, Torbay and Devon to support this work.

6. SACRE arrangements

Membership of SACRE as at October 2022

Group A – Church Representatives (Other Churches)

Vacancy - Baptist Churches

Ede, Ron Buddhist Community

Vacancy Christian Orthodox Churches

Buckley, Patrick Independent Churches

Vacancy Independent Churches

Rockley, Bonnie Jewish Community

Elizabeth Fowkes-Matson Methodist Church

Keast, John Methodist Church

Nicholas, Sue Methodist Church

Rifai, Dr Dureid Muslim Community

Vacancy Religious Society of Friends

Thompson, Maggie Roman Catholic Church

Easterbrook, Sandy Roman Catholic Church

Vacancy United Reformed Church

Salthouse, Eve Pagan

Group B – Church of England Representatives

Katie Fitzsimmons Church of England

Corbett, Anna Church of England Information

Rudge, Linda Church of England

Henchley, Felicity Diocesan Board of Education

Group C – Teachers Bodies Representatives

Barton, David Association of School and College Leaders

Mills, Theresa Cornwall Association of Primary Head Teachers

Barton, David Cornwall Association of Secondary Head Teachers

Pomfret, Jess National Association of Teachers of Religious Education

Mills, Theresa National Association of Head Teachers

Vacancy National Association of Schoolmaster Union of Women Teachers

Heron, Michael National Education Union

Vacancy Special Education

Rutter, Angie VOICE Union

Group D – Local Authority Representatives

Bunny, Michael

Thomas, Mike

Tilby, Shorne

Co-opted Members

Smith, Geoff, Philomena Baha'i

Letch, Roger Humanists

Stephens, Dr Rita Cornwall Faith Forum

Support for Cornwall Sacre is provided by: Clerk to SACRE Diane Bransgrove, Democratic Officer; Education Advisor Graeme Plunkett, Senior Education Effectiveness Officer; and two consultants, Clifflynn Banfield and Greg Parekh.

Cornwall Council supports the work of Cornwall SACRE with £15,000 each year for the past three years. This funds the Sacre consultants' posts (as above), one primary and one secondary specialist, appointed on a two-year basis. Both are practicing teachers released by their schools. The cost for this is £8000 per annum.

Clerking is provided by Finance and Assurance Services. It is not costed separately.

7 Appendices

Data Appendix 2022

SACRE Action Plan