

**STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE)
AGREED SYLLABUS CONFERENCE
15 NOVEMBER 2023
6.25 - 7.06 PM**



Present:

Vicki Gibson, Group A: Free Churches (Chair)
Clare Hawkins, Group C: Teachers' and Teachers' Representatives (Vice-Chair)
Ossie Anderson-Peled, Group A: Jewish representative
Ron Bailey, Group A: Free Church representative
Kathy Hadfield, Group A: Baha'i
Dilip Ladwa, Group A: Hindu representative
Abi Maclean, Group A: Free Church representative
Rajdip Marok-Dhanju, Group A: Sikh representative
Alan Montgomery, Group A: Humanist
Jill Hanson, Group B: Church of England
Tim Griffith, Group C: Teachers' and Teachers' Representatives
Ruth Jackson, Group C: Teachers' and Teachers' Representatives
Anna Kennedy, Group C: Teachers' and Teachers' Representatives
Councillor Gareth Barnard, Group D: Bracknell Forest Education Authority
Councillor Tricia Brown, Group D: Bracknell Forest Education Authority
Councillor Naheed Ejaz, Group D: Bracknell Forest Education Authority
Councillor Ryan Frost, Group D: Bracknell Forest Education Authority
Tracey Bradshaw, Local Authority Advisor
Anne Andrews, Oxford Diocese Advisor

Apologies for absence were received from:

Jo Roclawski

13. Election of Chair

RESOLVED that Vicki Gibson, Group A: Free Church be elected Chair of the Agreed Syllabus Conference.

14. Appointment of Vice-Chair

RESOLVED that Clare Hawkins, Group C: Teachers & Teachers Representatives be appointed Vice-Chair of the Agreed Syllabus Conference.

15. Update and discussion on current Agreed Syllabus

The draft Syllabus had been circulated to relevant groups across Berkshire at the end of Summer 2023, and Anne had received some feedback on its content. It was noted that there had not been any feedback from non-Christian groups, and there had been more feedback from Group A Christian denominations rather than Group B Church of England.

Conference members were reminded that the Syllabus was developed in collaboration with all five Berkshire authorities.

Arising from discussion, the following points were noted:

- It was queried what the content in the syllabus would be for students at KS4 who had not chosen RE as a GCSE subject but were required to undertake compulsory hours, and similarly for the 15 hours at KS5.
- While concerns were raised about the significant focus on Christianity compared to other religions, it was stressed that the legal requirement was for Christianity to be the main religion taught in schools. It was noted that the structure of the document could be made clearer to highlight a balanced syllabus, with the three questions repeated across other religions. The syllabus intended for a 50/50 split between Christianity and other religions.
- While the syllabus didn't draw from any particular exam board, it was recommended that children follow an externally accredited course syllabus at KS4/KS5. Conference members suggested that some core KS4 content may be useful.
- It was noted that Sikh representatives across Berkshire had submitted combined representations on the syllabus to the West Berkshire consultation process, however these comments had not made their way to Anne to coordinate.
- It was commented that there was not a decent spread covering Hinduism across the three Key Stages, however it was difficult to cover breadth in the short lesson times.
- Conference members were encouraged to consider what they felt were the key things from their religions which should be covered at each Key Stage.
- It was agreed that the vision was for the teaching and recognition of non-religious worldviews not specific to Humanism at KS1, covering a broad range of traditions. It was proposed to include one non-religious worldview question per phase, perhaps to replace one of the Christianity questions.
- It was stressed that individual religious groups across Berkshire could gather to put together grouped feedback, but this would not be organised centrally.
- Conference members suggested that there was a need for a focus on common ground and commonality across religions in the syllabus, however there was concern that teachers were reluctant to draw comparisons between religions due to the risk of incorrect or disrespectful comparisons. It was noted that teachers needed to have confidence in what they taught.
- Conference members were encouraged to put written suggestions on how any specific question could be changed to Anne Andrews, and input from experts in other non-Christian religions would help.
- The difference between syllabus and curriculum was recognised, and it was down to class teachers to work out how the syllabus should best be implemented.
- It was suggested that virtues which are non-denominational such as kindness and truthfulness could be included in the syllabus.
- Conference members stressed that they wanted to support teachers and were happy to provide any resource to enable their religions to be presented correctly.

Anne Andrews agreed to circulate a revised syllabus including feedback from all Conferences across Berkshire before Christmas. It was proposed that at the March 2024, the Conference meeting could be held before the SACRE meeting to ensure good time for discussion.

CHAIRMAN