

**STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE)
14 MARCH 2024
5.00 - 6.00 PM**



Present:

Vicki Gibson, Group A: Free Churches (Chair)
Councillors Brown and Frost
Clare Hawkins, Group C: Teachers and Teachers' Representatives
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
Dr Oludolapo Ogunbawo, Group B: Church of England representative
Anna Kennedy, Group C: Teachers and Teachers' Representatives
Tracey Bradshaw, Local Authority Advisor
Anne Andrews, Oxford Diocese Advisor

Apologies for absence were received from:

Councillors Barnard and Ejaz
Father David Clues, Group B: Church of England
Tim Griffith, Group C: Teachers and Teachers' Representatives
Ruth Jackson, Group C: Teachers and Teachers' Representatives

16. Agreed Syllabus - feedback from faith groups

Anne Andrews presented the latest version of the Agreed Syllabus which had been revised to take account of previous feedback from SACRE members across Berkshire. Anne was due to meet with the other advisors to Berkshire SACREs to further develop the key stage 3 materials.

If SACRE was happy to accept the proposed draft, writing panels of teachers would be convened during the summer term to refine the language. It was noted that if the statutory content was kept to a minimum, teachers would have greater flexibility for their lesson planning. Anne explained that it was important to tie religions to particularly key stage phases to avoid any religion being missed between key stages, such as between Infant and Junior schools.

SACRE members broke into groups to provide feedback. Any further feedback not captured in the groups should be sent to Anne by email.

On reconvening, the following points of feedback were noted:

Group A: Christian denominations and other religions:

- There were concerns around the tone of language in the Humanist section, and it was suggested that more exploratory than declaratory language could be used here.

- It was noted that comparison between different faiths should seek to include commonality rather than just differences.
- It was suggested that the natural order to study religions in would have been Judaism, followed by Christianity and then Islam.
- Group A members were pleased to recognise that Christianity was looked at in a wide breadth. It was noted that there were differences within all religions.
- It was suggested that more focus should be given to each religion's views and connections with science, as the science module seemed to be linked to Humanism only.
- There were concerns raised around the perceived lack of coverage of Dharmic religions in key stage 3, although it was noted that Buddhism was a Dharmic faith studied at key stage 3.
- It was recognised that while each religion would like to see greater representation across the key stages, there were very few hours of Religious Education lessons which needed to cover all religions.

Group C: Teachers and teachers' representatives

- It was recognised that teachers may choose to study religions thematically on those topics studied by key stage.
- It was stressed that schools only had an hour per week or fortnight for RE lessons, and there was a lot of content which needed to be covered in this time.
- RE content in the UK must include Christianity but could also include a range of religions and ethical and philosophical discussion.
- Religious Education could play a key role in promoting diversity and understanding in schools, for example if a pupil's religion meant that they wore particular clothing. However, it was also recognised that diversity and inclusion would be promoted in schools in many different ways in addition to Religious Education. It was noted that the pan-Berkshire syllabus covered lots of communities across Berkshire and the representation in each area would be different. Schools addressed cultural understanding as relevant to their community.
- The teacher group supported the proposal that Judaism should be studied before Christianity and Islam to provide context and continuity.

Group B: Church of England

- The progression from key stage 1 to key stage 2 was well developed, and the way in which Christianity was developed across key stages was simple and effective.
- There was no mention of the Holy Spirit at key stage 1, but this was brought in at key stage 2 with other more complex concepts.

Group D: Local Authority Councillors

- It seemed that all religions were covered.
- It was suggested that all religions could be covered from a more thematic approach, such as what people wear, or when people from different religions worship.
- Members thanked Anne for the amount of work which had gone into the syllabus already.

In response to feedback, Anne commented that a thematic approach wouldn't be understood by children if it was introduced too early in the syllabus.

SACRE members were asked to send any further reflections or comment to Anne by email in a separate word document, including any specific comments on representation of their traditions.

It was commented that the only reason why any matter specific to a faith would be excluded from the syllabus would be because there was not sufficient time to cover everything. Curriculum leaders in schools are keen to ensure that all areas are covered correctly and fairly.

17. **Process going forward**

This matter was discussed under the previous agenda item.

CHAIRMAN