

KS1: What do Christians believe about how the world began? I would want to know that this would be taught in a way that reflected the **mainstream Christian understanding that allows for evolution, the big bang theory etc. as opposed to a minority belief in young earth creationism**. Is this too subtle to be understood at KS1? If so, the story gets told and not thought about again for a long time, by when young teens think that Christian belief is somewhat akin to faith in the tooth fairy and Father Christmas. I'm not sure of a better question though - especially at this stage.

KS3: To what extent is Christianity inclusive? This should produce a very nuanced set of answers, particularly around human sexuality where, for example, some denominations allow same-sex marriage and some do not. How is this nuance expressed in the teaching?

KS4: I was interested in the idea that if there was some content here, it would be worth looking at something around the **diversity within faith systems**, which you will realise from my comments above, are something which I think is important for young people to understand.
(Vicci – RBWM)

It sounds like an easy option but I cannot fault what Anne has come up with. The range of faiths/worldviews seems right. I think there is a place, if possible, for both **worldwide specific** and **generic questions**. I think that ideally there should be both “Core” content and “Optional” questions. (Teachers will always pick and choose which questions they feel are most suitable for their pupils.) There could be some sort of self/teacher-assessment to ensure coherence and progression but that is yet more paperwork. Finally, yes, I think the content covered in each question should be outlined.
Christine (Slough)

- I think the faiths/worldviews range seems good. I personally don't have any alternatives that I would include.
- Thinking with my KS1 hat on sometimes more **specific questions** helps the children to access the learning and supports teachers with delivering effective and clear learning. However, the flip side is that the RE lead should be supporting the delivery of RE lessons anyway!
- I think it would be great if there was **Core Content**. I think it would make the syllabus much more accessible for school staff. Thinking of Rosenshine and more recently Tom Sherrington, the idea that there is the **key content or 'Sticky Knowledge'** makes a curriculum accessible and clear. To support this could there not be **questions which support the teaching of that core** content (this could be where the optional questions are included). Coherence and progression would need to be mapped out but that would be a fairly simple job once the core content had been identified.
- I guess I have sort of answered this question in the bullet point above. Based on my experience of using the current syllabus (which I must confess I don't find hugely user friendly) some **key non-negotiables of what needs to be covered** with each question would be a huge asset to the new syllabus.

(Laura - RBWM)

I'm looking forward to coming to my first SACRE meeting. I've had a look at the draft syllabus and have some comments and questions which I've put below. As I mentioned before though, I am concerned that my knowledge of Judaism is not enough to properly scrutinise the questions from that point of view.

Comments:

Does time need to be given in KS1 to explore the concept of religion? I.e. What does 'religion' mean? What does it mean to belong to a religion? Feel many children won't know what a religion is / have experience of anything other than a fairly non-religious Christmas so some time establishing what a religion is and being able to relate that to other forms of belonging (to a club / family etc), becoming familiar with some religious symbols, may be a good way in.

KS1 Judaism - could focus be on core values e.g. charity / helping others or artefacts rather than symbolism? Wonder if this is too 'deep' for KS1

- family life and Shabbat focus is great and lends to some lovely role-play opportunities.

-I'll be honest, I don't know what Jewish symbols are used to express Jewish beliefs about G-d! There may well be some - but this is outside my knowledge of Judaism.

LKS2 Christianity - like opportunity to look at expressing beliefs in creative ways, through art and music.

I think the questions for UKS2 look more achievable than the current syllabus.

UKS2 Judaism - focus on 'authority' - what would this look like?

Focus 'Torah' - very broad (I know it's early stages!) - up to schools to narrow down? Pick stories to look at and unpick morals etc? Or is this something we will add detail to in the SACRE meeting?

(Vanessa – RBWM)

1. I don't believe it's right in my context not to spend some time on the big 6. I'm working towards 7: Abrahamic 8: Dharmic 9: Philosophy & Ethics (when we'll dig into Humanism and go deeper into Christianity and Islam). I've started doing Hinduism across 8&9 and 2/3 of students have no recollection of studying it in primary school, so they would leave us largely ignorant of the 3rd biggest faith on the planet.
2. I prefer Anne's questions. Far more specific and I would expect most students to be able to attempt them by the end of KS3.
3. Students who went to Church schools tend to have considerable knowledge and experience but many others have little so an agreed Core content that was delivered by all would be helpful.
4. My content would allow students to answer the questions, with a little guidance.
5. KS4 we are looking to add a core RE lesson in Sept 24 in addition to the option group that has just started. I will be making that heavily Philosophy & Ethics based, probably using the units not chosen for the GCSE group.

(Dai- RBWM)

Need to ensure (in terms of Abrahamic faiths) we do teach the origins of Judaism as that is important to the understanding of all Abrahamic religions. My initial reading of the proposal was that it may be possible to avoid Judaism altogether. (No, it is essential at KS1 or LKS2)

Having worked with non-specialists, I think that there needs to be more information/guidance given as to what should be included when teaching each question (e.g. Catholics would like the Sacraments to be included (LKS2) but they might not feature if a non-specialist was teaching). May also need to mention at some stage about priests and vicars and their role in Christianity. I would suggest that I read the document from the viewpoint of a practising Christian (worldviews in action!) so trying to read it as if I had limited knowledge is quite a challenge!

I would suggest an age specific vocabulary bank (with definitions) for non-specialists.

KS3 Christianity: 'Can the Bible be reliable.....?' I would change the wording as it feels as if it is a closed question. I know that the document says that the questions are just a rough idea and not set in stone. (What do you propose instead?)

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KS4 - I like the **thematic idea** and relating it to life in our world: how do our worldviews influence our interactions in society, e.g., different worldviews (religious and others) approach to **justice, poverty, equality, sanctity of life, scientific discoveries, etc as well as diversity.**

Possible question: what makes **a religion a religion**, given that Buddhism is considered a religion yet does not have a god, supernatural being or deity? How do the 'parameters' of a definition of religion apply in different faiths?

Barbara – RBWM

- Does the range of faiths/worldviews seem right? Do you have alternatives?

The range of faiths is excellent. It is a very good idea to have the syllabus set out with Abrahamic faiths and then Dharmic faiths. I have also created my curriculum in light of this and followed the teaching of the religions in **historical order Judaism, Christianity and Islam.** So that students see that it is a history of ideas as much as a history of religions.

Just one note here about the questions I would change the wording to be:

What do Christians believe about God and what symbols are used to express this **reality**? (As religious people are not just believing in an idea).

I would also change the wording of:

What does family life/daily routine look like for some... in modern Britain?

To:

How does your religious belief influence your daily life?

As someone might answer the first one about routine as I get up at 6am and I think the question wants to know how religion changes life etc.

- Do you think creating worldview specific questions is better than creating generic ones?

I think having **worldview specific questions** is vital because to have generic ones we are falling into the trap of thinking that religions all use the word for example 'God' in the same way. Which they don't.

In relation to Judaism when you say focus on symbolism what exactly does this mean? What list of symbols are you thinking about here? As I think that is very interesting and would make an interesting was to teach about Judaism but I wonder which ones you would choose etc: maybe list them.

What are the most important markers in Christian's life?

I'm interested to know exactly what you mean about this. Do you mean what are important milestones for Christians? Or does markers mean what things in weekly life make people a Christian?

- Should there be 'Core' content and 'Optional' questions? If so, how do we ensure coherence and progression?

Symbols, Daily Life, Festivals, Birth, Marriage, Death, Afterlife. These headings and others could make for an interesting set of headings for "Core" content in relation to all religions.

Progression is an interesting notion because for example the symbol of the Khanda symbol in Sikhism could be introduced at Year 8 with a clear understanding of what the swords and the circle mean etc. It would only be at a GCSE level that the significance of how it links to the reality of the Khalsa, the 5 Ks and the names of Singh/Kaur is made. Progression in RE can be a deepening over time rather than a calculable thing.

- Should the content to be covered in each question be outlined?

I think that all of the content should be covered but all the questions don't necessarily have to be followed.

(Tom – RBWM)

KS1/LKS2 perspective, it all looks positive. The KS1 Christianity questions are well thought out and connect with real life context and understanding for the children.

The KS1/LKS2 core questions for Judaism, Islam, Hindu etc build on the same key questions, and the repetitiveness of the nature of the questions will enable children to begin to make connections.

I don't have any further thoughts at the moment. This is all very new to me, and when we are all together, it will possibly provoke further thoughts and questions from me.

Karen – RBWM

The range of **faiths/worldviews seems right.**

Creating **specific questions** will support the planning and delivery of the curriculum. It will ensure that teaching is focused, and concepts are understood. Outlining how the **content of each question** should be covered would be very helpful, especially to non-specialist teachers.

I would suggest that **optional questions would allow for the curriculum delivered** to represent each school's community.

Suzanne - RBWM

Does the range of faiths/worldviews seem right?

The range of faiths seems appropriate to the year groups however I couldn't see what non-religious worldviews were to be studied, it just says:

"Proposed worldviews" and "Other worldviews can be introduced as schools wish, but the main progression will be through these traditions".

Yet in the document it states "We need to ensure that non-religious worldviews, including humanism are included. A syllabus that did not include these ideas would likely be illegal under current legislation".

Do you have alternatives?

No. As a representative of a Christian Denomination I am happy to see that Christianity will continue to be taught, although 50% does not seem to represent "wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian Character" (Is a 50/50 split typical in a syllabus?). I assume that this is due to the new data in the census that showed different values have been placed in society on worldviews and non-religious worldviews.

Do you think creating worldview specific questions is better than creating generic ones?

I think generic ones are easier to apply.

Should there be 'Core' content and 'Optional' questions?

Yes, the core questions help get to the fundamental roots of each worldview and identify specifics. Optional questions allow for progression and ensures that the syllabus is offering the challenge and depth that is required.

Perhaps some specific themes or topics could be added so that comparisons and conclusions could be drawn out in the optional questions.

If so, how do we ensure coherence and progression?

The optional questions could focus less specifically on the worldview, perhaps drawing on particular themes or topics, allowing for individuals to draw their own conclusions and ideas

Should the content to be covered in each question be outlined?

I think having the content outlined makes it easier to see what the objective is.

Worldviews and non-religious worldviews are personal and there are no right or wrong answers, however there are common themes and strands in all of them and having the content outlined at least gives the person delivering the information a clear idea of what answers could be expected.

(Abi – BF)

1. **Yes - the range of faiths is about right.**

However, we wanted to make sure that the ability to choose which religions didn't lead to any left out (i.e. more specific guidance: do X now if you haven't already studied it).

2. **On the questions overall:** we wanted to make sure that the **Guidance** before emphasised the *breadth* of answers; and encouraged teachers to be imaginative in unpacking the questions. Are these proscriptive questions, or suggestive ones?

3. **On specific questions:**

KS1 instead of the good/bad question - **'what rules do Christians live by?'**

LKS2: Why do most Christians read the Bible? change to **Why is the Bible important to Christians?**
and

What are the most important markers in Christian's life? - we weren't sure what this referred to - are we talking about celebrations or rites of passage? (clarify)

What do people gain by following a leader? - we thought this an odd question: is it about priesthood?*** [we discussed this somewhat in the Hub]

Y9 Islam - we thought the 'How does the lived reality...' question tough.

How about: **How have Islamic teachings been expressed in different cultures and at different times?**

And on the KS3 questions, I think (for myself) that the weakest Christian questions are the KS3 ones, and NB especially, we have lost the Science/religion one.

Here are my *personal* comments/alternatives as drafts (I don't think they are perfect...):

- Why do Christians believe that Jesus is God on earth? (Theology)

How about: what difference does it make for Christian to believe that Jesus is the Incarnation of God?

- What is the impact of Pentecost on Christians beliefs? (Theology)

How about: What do Christians mean by the 'Spirit of God' being still at work today?

- How biblical are the concepts of Judgement, Heaven and Hell? (Theology)
- How do Christians live out Jesus' teaching in relation to 'love thy neighbour'? (Human and Social Science)

ok

- To what extent is Christianity inclusive? (Human and Social Science)

don't quite get this - is this getting at ethical issues, e.g. sexuality... **If so: What ethical and moral issues Christians are currently exploring?**

- How far should personal relationships be influenced by beliefs? (Human and Social Science)
- Are Christian beliefs about creation logical? (Philosophy)

This is a Y/N qu; is it better replaced by a '**what sources of authority do Christians rely on?**' type question?

- Are Biblical revelation and prophecy compatible with wisdom? (Philosophy)

not sure what 'wisdom' means here and wonder if this is actually a sci/faith question in disguise? Perhaps put back in the original science faith one: **In what ways do scientific and religious beliefs interact?**

- Can the Bible be reliable if it has been translated and interpreted? (Philosophy)

'If' should be 'since' - but anyway:

Would: **What could it mean to describe the Bible as authoritative for Christians?** be better...

ML and Reading SACRE

- Concrete ideas within the syllabus as to **how** to teach it
- A progression map
- Material to supplement the knowledge organisers (info sheets) that you currently use.
- In general, more training

W Berks (school)

The only response was from Clare Hawkins: "I think it looks really good. It's accessible to teachers and make it clear. The plan for KS4/KS5 looks good too. I think a more thematic approach would work, but we have to be cautious as they are 'opt in', so looking for things that would bridge multiple options. I'm also looking forward to their being some guidance on the KS5 options. It makes it easier for me to convince SLT of what is needed!"

My own feeling is just to reiterate that the Christianity focus group was asking for the broad outline of the Bible story and its themes to feature more prominently. If we can't reflect this in the syllabus

itself, might we include it as an Appendix pointing teachers to Biblical stories and passages that they could choose to use if they wished? I'd be happy to produce an Appendix and could enlist some of the people in that group to help?