

<b>Report to:</b>	East Sussex SACRE
<b>Date of meeting:</b>	16 November 2023
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<b>Title:</b>	Progress Review on Agreed Syllabus
<b>Purpose:</b>	To advise the East Sussex SACRE on progress with implementation of the new Agreed Syllabus and next steps.

## Overview

The new Agreed Syllabus, 'Faith and Belief in the 21st Century' is the statutory curriculum for all maintained schools in the county for first teaching from September 2022. It was developed with external advice from RE Today and significant consultation with school and subject leaders, children, young people, and their families. The curriculum also covers a second resource, 'Understanding Christianity', taught by most of our diocesan schools.

## Resources

SACRE has facilitated the provision of extensive resources and training. New schemes of work cover Key Stages 1 to 3 whilst a core programme of study for Key Stage 4 has been developed by several teachers, the RE Advisor and external support from RE Today.

## Take-up

Through sampling over the course of the first year, we ascertained the following levels of engagement from community (non-Church designated) schools:

- 41 of 41 primary maintained (100%)
- 7 of 7 secondary maintained (100%)
- 24 of 36 primary academies (66%)
- 12 of 15 secondary academies (80%)

It should also be noted that several Church of England primary schools have also engaged with the syllabus through use of 'Understanding Christianity'.

## Professional development

SACRE has organised for a 3-year programme of training and development through RE Today facilitated by Subject Network Meetings. During the first year, meetings have remained popular especially to those with limited subject expertise. Much of this training has been led by experts in their field. A small number of Special Schools have also engaged with training and receive additional support through a Special Network Lead. Feedback about the programme has been very positive.

## Primary Network meetings

Claire Rivers leads the Primary Network with meetings offered three times a year as evening twilight alongside substantial bespoke support to schools. Meetings have covered:

- Meeting to share good practice, challenges and resources
- Hinduism (Stephen Pett) (2 sessions)
- Picture News and Collective Worship (Kate Harrison)
- Islam as a World View (Dr Kate Christopher)

Primary network meetings have had a minimum of 35 teachers in attendance which also allows colleague to provide ongoing feedback on the agreed syllabus and training offer.

### Secondary Network meetings

Sam Keddie leads the Secondary Network with meetings offered three times a year as evening twilight across a more fragmented secondary sector. Sessions have included:

- Islam/Worldviews (Dr Kate Christopher)
- Hinduism (Stephen Pett)
- Collective Worship (Kate Harrison)

Secondary network meetings have up to 10 teachers in attendance but can fluctuate which provides some challenges but the work of the lead is maximising engagement.

### Annual Conferences

In the summer term, two annual conferences organised by Network Leads and delivered by RE Today were held to further support colleagues across both phases.

The primary conference covered:

- Lat Blaylock
- Planning and practical activities for the new Agreed Syllabus linked to Judaism, Hinduism and Islam plus ways to assess

47 colleagues were in attendance.

The secondary conference covered:

- GCSE Better Thinking, Better Writing.
- Peaceful and purposeful discussion in RE: handling controversial issues.
- 'Ways of knowing': using disciplinary approaches in RE.
- Hindu subject knowledge for KS3.

14 colleagues were in attendance.

### School visits

During this first year, members have begun 'Good Practice Visits' to:

- Support universal adoption of the Agreed Syllabus in all maintained schools (and more widely e.g., academies and special schools).

- Identify expertise and facilitate school-to-school support through the networks.
- Recognise and celebrate good practice in delivery of the new Agreed Syllabus.

So far, 'Good Practice Visits' have been hosted by:

- Willingdon Primary school visited by Claire Rivers and Claire Ramalli.
- Ratton School visited by Colin Belsey, Rosemary Roberts and Claire Ramalli.

More visits are intended over the next two years to support evaluation.

### Teacher views

During implementation, teacher views have been collected. In summary:

- The vast majority of attendees felt the launch event helped them implement the Agreed Syllabus.
- The majority of attendees have found materials straightforward to use.
- Only a very small minority would feel they were struggling with implementation.

Through network meetings, leads have responded by providing online shared resources, additional bespoke training, and discussion opportunities for colleagues.

### Conclusion

The first year of the Agreed Syllabus has been successful. Take-up has been high with several academies also engaged. The first year of the training and development programme has been effectively delivered with a good level of participation particularly at the primary phase. Strong Network Leads are offering schools bespoke support which provides a good grounding for sustained engagement. Good practice visits are starting to enable members to see the new syllabus in action and speak to practitioners for themselves. Members have deepened their knowledge and understanding of the needs of schools.

### Next steps

Ahead of the Annual Report:

- Know the number of schools attending Subject Network Meetings.
- Review teacher views from the Annual Conference events.
- Ascertain the number of schools that have take-up the optional units.
- Undertake further teacher voice through primary and secondary networks.

Consolidate understanding of 'take-up' by undertaking a website sift of how Religious Education is represented on school websites and providing schools with a curriculum statement if beneficial.

Continue programme of good practice visits to schools.