

Pan-Berkshire SACRE hub meeting

13-12-2022

4pm – 5.30pm

Attendance: Madeline Diver (BF), Mark Laynesmith (R), Ashpreet Singh (S), Christine Isles (S), Sue Elbrow (S), Stephen Vegh (Wok), David Taylor (WBerks), Karen Butler (RBWM)

Advisers: David Rees (R, S & W Berks), Angela Hill (Wok), Anne Andrews (BF & RBWM)

Apologies: None

Item 1:

Syllabus review and Concept charts

A long discussion was had over the concept charts that had been filled in by some SACRE members. RBWM, Slough and BF had responded quite well, with only one or two from W Berks and Wok. None had been received from Reading to date.

AA reported that many of the people who had completed the charts did not seem to understand either the questions or the educational context. This raises questions about the suitability of the questions, and the ease with which they can be interpreted. The vast majority received were from Christian members (13) with only a small number from other faiths and worldviews – Hindu dharma (1), Sikhi (1), Judaism (1), Humanism (2), Islam (2), Baha'i (1) and one which is unclear...

Some of the responses were unhelpful as rather than giving concepts specific to their faith, as requested, answers were generic often referring to the fact that different people would have different opinions.

The suggestion was made that we need to incorporate two perspectives: the faith and the educational, so we need the correct information.

The issue of a 'Knowledge Rich' curriculum was raised – this being the current terminology used by Ofsted, who are seeking for RE that prepares pupils for life in a 'multi-religious and multi-secular world'. It is clear from the responses that the current syllabus questions, with their broad enquiry lens do not make it easy for non-specialist teachers to identify the core knowledge.

Although the new census data shows an increase in the number of 'nones' it is not for SACREs to respond in their syllabus creation, especially as 'none' does not equal strident humanist. According to Theos data approx. 1/3 of those who identify as non-religious would also describe themselves as anti-religion.

So to some extent, we are still at the starting point, having not gathered the information that we need to assess the conceptual content of the current syllabus.

The proposal made and refined by several SACRE members is this:

- Gather from faith leaders and adherents (both SACRE members and others) the core concepts and facts of their faith that they think pupils should learn
- Decide ahead of this information gathering which key stages should focus on which religions and how much structure/ flexibility should the syllabus give
- This information is best gathered either in online or face-to-face meetings.

- Each SACRE therefore needs to identify some people from each faith group who they feel would best be able to contribute to such a discussion, and share their contact details (with permission) with AA.
- Initially an email will ask those we aim to invite about their preferred day/time and these will be organised into faith based events, accommodating as many as possible.
- AA, DR and AH will design a grid/series of questions that will unpick the core information to be gathered and share with hub members who will ultimately co-ordinate these meetings. This would be best done in pairs.
- Christianity will to some extent be the easiest to plan, as it is the only tradition which must legally be taught in all key stages and to every year group.
- The general feeling is that the other faiths should remain as they are. Over KS1 – 2 (age 5 – 11) pupils should encounter Judaism, Hindu Dharma, Islam and Sikhi, with appropriate reference to non-religious worldviews. At KS3 (12- 15) pupils should encounter Islam, Buddhism and Humanism.

Questions still to be answered:

1. Do we gather information about optional religions?
2. Do we specify what must be taught in non-examined KS4 and KS5?
3. Where do we bring in other religious traditions, such as Baha'i or Rastafari? What do we do with non-religious spirituality?
4. How do we help to clarify the time to be spent on RE?
5. How do we cater for both 2- and 3- year KS3? (Though Ofsted don't like 2-year KS3...)

We must not forget that the option to buy in and localise a different syllabus is a possibility. Buckinghamshire, for example, though it recommends a smaller range of religious tradition and does not specify knowledge, has quite a good cycle for covering the faiths:

Key Stage	Religions
Key Stage 1 (KS1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Christianity plus one other Abrahamic religion in depth (the syllabus recommends Judaism). • With reference to one Dharmic tradition and non-religious backgrounds (not necessarily a specific non-religious worldview).
Lower Key Stage 2 (LKS2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Christianity plus one different Abrahamic religion and one Dharmic tradition in depth (the syllabus recommends Islam and Hinduism). • With reference to other religious traditions and non-religious perspectives as appropriate.
Upper Key Stage 2 (UKS2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Christianity plus one other Abrahamic religion and one Dharmic tradition (these could either be a continuation from LKS2 or different ones, the syllabus recommends continuing with Islam and Hinduism) and Humanism. • With reference to other religious traditions and worldviews as appropriate.
Key Stage 3 (KS3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Christianity and two other faiths, at least one from Dharmic traditions, (the Agreed Syllabus recommends Buddhism and Sikhi) plus Humanism in depth. • With reference to other religious and non-religious worldviews as appropriate.

In this way pupils gain an understanding of all six principal faiths and Humanism. However, schools remain free to choose which religions other than Christianity to study and when, **although it is not good educational practice to study all religions over a single key stage, as this results in a lack of depth and conceptual understanding.**

Item 2

Update on the films:

Humanist films are ready to go as soon as the notes are finished. The Buddhist films also need the notes to be written and the Baha'i films have been received but not yet watched. One humanist and one Buddhist film to be shared via WeTransfer with the hub member.

Other avenues have as yet proved unfruitful, but a Greek Orthodox will now be investigated.

The meeting closed at 5.30