

Agenda

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education

Wednesday, 2 October 2019, 2.00 pm
County Hall, Worcester

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Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education

Wednesday, 2 October 2019, 2.00 pm, County Hall, Worcester

Membership:

Group A (Representatives of Christian and other faiths)

Mrs L Thorne (Ba'hai - Chairman), Mr G Bounds (Free Church Representative), Mrs T Khawaja (Muslim Representative), Mr J Loyal (Sikh Representative), Mrs C Parker (Methodist Representative) and Dr Y Stollard (Jewish Representative)

Group B (Church of England Representatives)

Kate Cope (Church of England), Mrs T Lister (Church of England) and Ms K Poole (Church of England)

Group C (Representatives of Recognised Teachers Associations)

Charlotte Betteridge (NASUWT) and Mr C Giles (Teacher Representative)

Group D (Elected representatives of the Local Authority)

Mr M E Jenkins (Worcestershire County Council), Mr R C Lunn (Worcestershire County Council) and Dr K A Pollock (Worcestershire County Council)

Co-opted Representatives

Ms E Hill (University of Worcester) and Ms A Hooper (Humanist Representative)

Agenda

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To obtain further information or a copy of this agenda contact Kate Griffiths, Committee Officer on 01905 846630, KGriffiths@Worcestershire.gov.uk

All the above reports and supporting information can be accessed via the Council's website.

Date of Issue: Monday, 23 September 2019

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7	Plans for teacher support in 2019-2020 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update from Chris Giles Plans for the Agreed Syllabus Launch 	
8	Responding to workforce data and ensuring schools fulfil their statutory duties An update from Chris Giles and Robin Lunn.	
9	SACRE News Update Overview from Stephen Pett.	
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11	Future Meeting Dates Dates 2020 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monday 10 February 2020 Wednesday 10 June 2020 Thursday 15 October 2020 All at 2 pm at County Hall, Worcester, unless notified otherwise.	

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education
Wednesday, 15 May 2019, County Hall, Worcester,
2.00 pm

Minutes

Present:

Mr Robin C Lunn (Chairman), Mr Graham Bounds, Ms K Cope, Mr Chris Giles, Ms Ellie Hill, Mr M Jenkins, Mr J Loyal, Mrs Christine Parker, Mr K Pollock

Also attended:

Stephen Pett and Kate Griffiths

**656 Apologies for
Absence and
Substitutions**

Apologies for absence had been received from Tasnim Khawaja, Tracy Lister, Kerry Poole, Yvonne Stollard and Lindsay Thorne.

Mr Lunn took the Chair.

**657 Confirmation of
the Minutes**

Minute 650 - Clarification was given that only Chris Giles received cover for one day a month as Regional Ambassador.

Subject to the one amendment the minutes were accepted as an accurate record of the previous meeting and were signed by the Chairman.

**658 Agreed
Syllabus
Revision:
revisiting the
options**

Stephen Pett explained that as the license for the current syllabus would run out at the end of the academic year in August 2020 SACRE needed to consider the 3 options for the new syllabus:

- A. Update and re-licence the current syllabus
- B. Adopt the Model B syllabus
- C. Write a new Worcestershire specific syllabus

As options A and B were the same cost and option C substantially more, the choice was realistically between A and B. Stephen explained the differences between the two syllabuses: Model A contained three main strands with more thematic questions while model B was more systematic and built on prior learning and moving onto thematic questions afterwards. Model B also incorporated work from the Understanding Christianity resource that many schools were using.

A SACRE member commented that from a Sikh point of view the Model B syllabus was preferable because it explained the basics of religions, which included that Sikhs wear certain identifying things at an early stage as well as being more flexible than Model A.

Teachers who attend the conferences in June would be asked their opinion of the syllabuses as would teacher trainees at the University.

RESOLVED that teachers would be asked about their opinion of the syllabus and, following consideration of any comments, SACRE would decide which syllabus to adopt at its Autumn Term meeting.

659 Survey results so far

Only one response had been received to the survey about the new syllabus so far but efforts would continue to be made in order to find out the opinion of teachers before a decision was made on adopting a new syllabus.

660 Finance

Following various enquiries Cllr Lunn had received a reply from Nick Wilson, Assistant Director for Education and Skills in the Children, Families and Communities Directorate, who confirmed that Children's Services would fund the syllabus for 2020-2025.

661 Ofsted Draft Framework

Stephen Pett explained that the new Ofsted inspection framework looked more closely at the curriculum that pupils were following, rather than concentrating on exam results. Ofsted would be reporting if they found a school was failing to carry out any of its statutory duties, so it was hoped that this would help ensure that school complied with their duties towards RE. Schools would be less likely to be able to achieve an outstanding rating if they were only teaching minimal amounts of RE. Ofsted would be looking in depth at 4-6 subjects which could include RE. Inspectors would perceive what was being learnt in schools by talking to senior teachers, visiting lessons and looking at pupils books rather than looking at exam results.

662 Support for Schools

a Regional Ambassadors

Chris Giles explained that he had become Regional RE Ambassador for the West Midlands region last September. The role was funded by NATRE for one day a month, initially for a period of two years. The role involved supporting teachers with RE and helping with networking and enabling them to support each other. The National RE Advisor was apparently concerned about the future of RE but was encouraged by Ofsted's new inspection guidelines.

b	<u>Primary Conference Update</u>	Stephen Pett explained that the Primary Conference would be held at Sixways on 25 May and 30 teachers had already signed up. As well as helping teachers, the conference would be an opportunity for Stephen to ask teachers directly for their opinion on the syllabus. Trainee teachers would have the opportunity to attend the conference for a reduced fee.
c	<u>Secondary Student Conference Update</u>	Chris Giles gave details of the Sixth form conference which was taking place at the University of Worcester. A grant had been received to help with the conference and the University had helped with advertising; all the places had been taken up. Representatives from SACRE were welcome to attend.
d	<u>Secondary Teacher Conference Update</u>	Stephen Pett said that only 7 places had been booked at the Secondary Teacher conference. Reduced cost places for trainee teachers would be made available and the conference would be advertised again highlighting the fact that the conference would help with teaching RE and fulfilling their statutory obligations and therefore would help with future Ofsted Inspections.
e	<u>Hub Groups and Hub Leaders</u>	<p>Kate Cope felt that the Hub Groups were successfully allowing RE leaders to meet up to swap ideas and gain support from fellow teachers. She gave details of a debate on RE which was being organised. The group she had set up was beginning to meet up at other schools and at other times which may encourage wider attendance although the meetings were generally the same people and no community school teachers had become involved. It was hoped that if teachers realised that the Hub meetings could help with SIAMS inspections that more teachers would get involved.</p> <p>Kate was organising one hub group but others groups had been set up such as the one for the Rivers Multi-Academy Trust.</p>
f	<u>Getting Information to Schools</u>	The difficulties of contacting RE teachers directly was discussed even though emails were addressed to RE Leads. It was suggested that a statement be added to forms at conferences that stated that email addresses would be used for future relevant mailings unless the teacher expressly opted out.
663	Responding to GCSE / A Level / School workforce data	Workforce data had been collected regarding the percentage of time individual schools spent teaching RE. A Memorandum of Understanding had been signed between the DfE and Natre that the information about RE would be provided to Natre. According to the data two

to encourage schools to fulfil statutory duties

schools appeared to not provide any RE. Stephen Pett had therefore drafted a letter which could be sent to schools on behalf of SACRE.

SACRE members felt that schools should be sent general information first on what they should be providing and information about what was available to help them, such as support from Chris Giles in his Ambassador role. This information could be sent first in the form of a newsletter and then followed up with the letter a week afterwards.

RESOLVED that Chris Giles and Stephen Pett contact the relevant schools initially and if they did not receive a satisfactory response then should follow up with the letter from SACRE.

664 News Update

Stephen distributed an RE news update:

- The new Ofsted Framework and Handbooks had been published
- Natre were currently meeting with the DfE approximately once a month on behalf of RE Teachers
- The DfE had written to NASACRE, setting out what the Government expects from schools with regard to RE, the Agreed Syllabus and schools not meeting their duties to teach RE. See <http://nasacre.org.uk/file/nasacre/1-97-item-2.pdf>
- National and Regional Ambassadors continue to support RE teachers
- GCSE RS BBC Bitesize launches revision guides for Eduqas GCSE specifications
- The RE APPG has been hearing about excellent RE
- NATRE and Culham St Gabriel's were offering a new 200 hour DfE funded subject knowledge enhancement course www.teachre.co.uk
- Better RE in 1000 project – NATRE had received funding to help Primary Schools to improve their RE. If anyone can recommend hard to reach schools they should contact Mandeep Singh Shekhon at Mandeep@natre.org.uk
- The NASACRE conference and AGM would be held on 22 May in Manchester.

665 Feedback from Members

None

666 Any Other

SACRE had received a letter from the Clerks of Worcester Quaker meeting who were concerned about

Business

Militarism in schools. They had previously written to Robin Walker MP and copied in the Worcestershire Cabinet Member for Education and Skills. They asked if the issue was something which could be considered at the October meeting. SACRE members agreed that they should be invited to the meeting.

RESOLVED that the Clerks of Worcester Quaker Meeting be invited to the Autumn Term meeting of SACRE.

667 Future Meeting Dates

The next meeting would take place on Wednesday 2 October 2019.

The meeting ended at 3.55pm

Chairman

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Worcester Quaker Meeting

Friends Meeting House, Sansome Place, Worcester WR1 1UG

worcesterfriendsclerks@outlook.com

7th February 2019

Robin Walker
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Dear Robin Walker,

Militarism in schools.

Worcester Quakers are very concerned about the exposure of early teenage local children in Worcestershire to weapons and military careers. This concern is not a merely a reminder of our well known pacifism. It is opposition to the normalisation and the societal implications of handling weapons to pupils to **children as young as eleven years of age**. The event giving rise to our concern was an open evening for upcoming secondary pupils at Tudor Grange school in Worcester in 2017, when a military cadet group were present with weapons. Even parents who do not share our beliefs may well be concerned at the cadet presence in schools and the legitimisation and use of weapons, including rifle shooting training, when there is an understandable concern about the growing number of violent crimes and deaths among teenagers.

Our concern was reinforced by the response to the parent (of a prospective pupil). The context was promotion of military careers for particular social groups, to improve recruitment to the armed forces. You would expect Quakers to be dismayed by this perspective. However, our objection to such official encouragement to **such a young age group** may well be shared by others, particularly given the reported social problems of some when readjusting to a less regimented life style after military service.

We realise you will probably have a different starting point to ourselves but we would appreciate re-assurance that the Government has considered the **downsides** of this normalisation of weapons etc and is sure that the benefits outweigh the disadvantages of exposing the younger age groups to this kind of thinking.

You will note that we are also circulating this letter to others in the local community to alert them to this issue. We look forward to your response and would welcome a chance to discuss this issue with you.

Yours sincerely,

Lea Cowin and Val Brittin
Co-clerks of Worcester Quaker Meeting
Part of Worcestershire and Shropshire Area Quaker Meeting

Cc Brandon Clayton Chair of WCC

Simon Geraghty Leader of WCC and Cabinet Minister for Finance

Marcus Hart WCC Cabinet Member with responsibility for Education and Skills

Revd. Canon Owain Bell (Chairperson Worcestershire Interfaith Forum)

Revd. Mary Austin (Secretary Worcestershire Interfaith Forum)

Bishop of Worcester Rt Revd Dr John Inge

Local Church Groups

Kate Griffiths
Committee Officer to the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education
County Hall
Spetchley Road
Worcester
WR5 2NP

**For the Attention of the Standing Advisory Committee on Religious Education
(SACRE)**

Re: Militarism in schools

Worcester Quakers wrote to Robin Walker MP and also copied in Marcus J Hart, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills, over our deep concern over **Militarism in Schools**. (A copy of the letter is enclosed/attached)

Marcus Hart has now informed us that he has passed on our concerns to you - SACRE.

We are writing to ask how we could contribute to your discussion and explain our concerns. Maybe even sending a Quaker representative to the Meeting when this will be on the Agenda.

We note that your next Meeting is on 15th May but don't see this subject itemised on your Agenda. Perhaps it is something you will consider at the next Meeting on 2nd October?

In Friendship

Val Brittin

Lea Cowin and Val Brittin
Co-Clerks of Worcester Quaker Meeting

Friends Meeting House
Sansome Place
Worcester
WR1 1UG



Email: worcesterfriendsclerks@outlook.com



Comments on agreed syllabus options: what is your preference?

Stick with current syllabus:

- Current: to prevent more cost and upheaval of changing a system which is currently working for us – using mix of Worcs AS and UC. As a mixed year school and being an unusual mix (R/1, 1/2 3/4 4/5 5/6) we have created a long-term plan that works for us. I like the idea of religion/religion/thematic unit approach. We can easily rearrange our LTP to do that too. No more change for a few years please. Let us embed what we do! (JH Martley CE Pri)
- Current: syllabus that is more useful for a Reception and Y1 mixed class. (ES, Martley CE)

Change to new syllabus:

- New syllabus: It would be very beneficial to fuse UC together with the agreed syllabus. (TL, Whittington CE)
- New syllabus including UC; Syllabus units of work to go alongside; examples of mixed-year group LT plans to be provided. (SS Lindridge St Lawrence CE)
- New syllabus is more in line with Ofsted and spiral curriculum – makes sense to adopt this. However, support to implement should be available. We use UC and so this might help our long-term planning and pleased it would fit with split year groups. [SP, Client CE]
- New syllabus: Good to have UC and AS in one with same terminology again. Previous thoughts that eventually there would be separate 'Understanding' resources for each religion – will this be the case? This would mean disruption in implementation again. (LN, St John's CE)
- Like the look of the prospective new agreed syllabus. Would Worcester diocese pay for each school to have new additional units of work? (PS, St Barnabas CE Primary).
- Like the idea of new syllabus. Like that it uses UC project. Be good if SACRE paid for schemes of work. Like the approach. (LL Bengeworth Academy)
- Would prefer to move to the new syllabus. Would like SACRE to pay for the supporting materials. (anon)
- New syllabus. Will support our work with UC. Guides to world religions/info on demographics/systematic responses rather than thematic / links to current Ofsted and SIAMS thinking – all these reasons are contributing factors! (DM, Ipsley)
- New syllabus: it would be wonderful if units of work came with the syllabus. (ZD, Wilden)
- I have not taught the agreed syllabus for Worcester yet as I have returned from teaching abroad, but if Understanding Christianity is included in the new syllabus that sounds excellent. The systematic approach also sounds good with some thematic units. I really like the look of the new syllabus and the way it is arranged. (RD, St Barnabas)
- New syllabus looks very clear. I like the idea of the thematic units for children to compare and contrast. (BS, Far Forest CE).
- Good to have links between syllabus and Understanding Christianity resources. Anything that reduces number of units to choose between enables us to 'dig deeper'. Still concerned at the number of learning outcomes on each unit - impossible to cover all properly. (HW, St Peter's Droitwich)
- Probably the 'new' one but as a school we're currently not using understanding Christianity. Would Worcestershire consider paying for training resource is etc.? (SW, Witton Middle)

Mixed responses:

- It'd be good for UC and the AS to be linked up. Reviewing/changing the AS every 5 years seems a very short time – a cohort will never even get through one syllabus before it changes. Glos syllabus looks lovely but will it then be reviewed by SACRE in 5 years? (FF, Wilden)
- The thought of telling my colleagues at school that the syllabus is changing, again – after working hard to implement UC – fills me with **dread**! However, if we are provided with the syllabus and supporting teaching materials (all the units) it would help to soften the blow. (DD, Malvern Parish)
- Unsure. I value the RE Today unit resources which we purchased separately – as a school with budget constraints replacing those has cost implications. However, I like how this new version includes UC and the thematic approach. (NU, Elmley Castle CE First)

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Worcestershire SACRE: options for Agreed Syllabus review 2019 (for 2020)

Stephen Pett, RE Today

The legal requirements:

- SACRE must review its RE Agreed Syllabus every five years
- An Agreed Syllabus Conference is to be set up to conduct the review

An agreed syllabus must '*reflect the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are, in the main, Christian while taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain.*'

Education Act (1996 Section 375 (3))/School Standards and Framework Act (1998, Schedule 19, para.5).

Background: the need for a high-quality syllabus

The provision of a clear, well-structured, up-to-date and professional agreed syllabus is probably the single most important function of SACRE. Combined with on-going implementation training and resources, a new syllabus offers the possibility of raising achievement in RE in all local schools. In 2019/20, it is essential to consider how this relates to new inspection requirements, to developments in assessment and in teaching and learning, revised GCSEs, the National Report from the Commission on RE, the 'British Values' agenda, and all related educational change.

Ofsted's Subject specialist RE reports 2010 and 2013 highlight the need for syllabuses to:

- be clear about expected knowledge and understanding about religion(s) and belief(s)
- support and empower teachers to plan effectively
- offer coherent progression across the ages and key stages
- support clear and focused assessment, useful for raising standards
- encourage enquiry-based RE.

Implications of new Ofsted framework

The draft new Ofsted Education Inspection Framework (EIF, 2019) places great emphasis on curriculum planning. It asks schools what the thinking is behind their curriculum plan for the school – their intent. It then examines how they implement it – including a context and narrative for its implementation in the school. And then it examines the impact. An agreed syllabus needs to be able to support schools in all three. It needs to have a good rationale for its structure; it needs to be operable in diverse school settings; it needs to show schools how they can see what impact the syllabus is having on pupil achievement.

Current situation

Worcestershire worked with RE Today to develop its 2015-2020 agreed syllabus, which is currently licensed to Worcestershire for 2015-2020. The licence runs out at the end of the academic year, August 2020, and so SACRE needs to consider its options.

The current Worcestershire syllabus was developed in the light of the National Curriculum Framework for RE (NCFRE) produced in October 2013 by the RE Council (REC). It is a mainly thematic syllabus, constructed around three broad strands (believing, expressing, living), and based on the progression outcomes developed in the NCFRE.

SACRE bought 240 licences for all state-funded schools in Worcestershire, including academies. The number of academies has increased, but it may well still be the wish of SACRE to support all schools in the county, and encouraging them all to use the local syllabus makes it much easier to offer subsequent support through training and CPD.

Commission on RE National Report 2018

Since the development of the Worcestershire syllabus, the RE Council has published the result of a two-year commission into RE. Among its recommendations are:

- A change of name for the subject, from *Religious Education* to *Religion and Worldviews*
- The removal of the responsibility for SACREs to produce a local agreed syllabus
- Instead, to have a national statement of entitlement and national example programme of study, upon which Local Advisory Networks for Religion and Worldviews (the body replacing the reconstituted SACRE) can base local guidance and support.

The Report has had a positive response from the RE community, in general, although there remain some strong differences of opinion. Its impact on the role of SACREs is limited as yet. The Department for Education gave a lukewarm response to it, and indicated that there would be no time or inclination for any legal change for the foreseeable future. This means that SACREs retain the requirement to set up an Agreed Syllabus Conference and decide upon development of an agreed syllabus.

The RE Council is seeing this as part of a long process, however, and even though there is not any immediate structural change, the Report is having an impact on how people think about the content and purpose of RE, and may well end up having an impact on the structures of RE too.

Implications for Worcester SACRE

It would be wise to consider the impact of the description of our subject as outlined in the Commission Report. Whether or not we wish to embrace the name change, there may be some adjustments (at least) that we could make to RE. On the other hand, the national conversation being held among RE professionals may not reach quickly down to the classroom. It is part of SACRE's role to mediate this impact, as it sees fit.

Decisions to take:

- The licence for the syllabus from RE Today ends in 2020, so SACRE needs to do something. There is not an option that just allows everything to roll on without change.
- There is the opportunity to make some amendments to the current model, and SACRE should consider the options below.
- There are funding implications for each of the options. It is better that these do not drive the decisions – better to decide what is the best option for the teachers and then pursue the funding!

The options for SACRE include:

- a) **SACRE renews the licence with RE Today, which includes a supplement to insert into the 2015-2020 folder, delivered electronically.** This supplement includes updates on, for example, the Commission Report, tighter requirements at KS4 and 5, assessment, and some additional guidance. This relicensing would include a 'relaunch' conference, to support teachers with ideas and resources.
- b) **SACRE could adopt RE Today's more recent Syllabus Model B.** This syllabus shares some DNA with the current Worcestershire syllabus, but offers a more systematic approach, incorporating questions from the Understanding Christianity resource being used in many schools, and a revised assessment model.
- c) **SACRE could commission a bespoke new syllabus from RE Today.** This could reflect the Commission on RE national report recommendations closely, exemplifying its new direction for Religion and Worldviews.

Worcs SACRE have decided against Option C.

Option A

Renew licence with RE Today syllabus (model A) plus supplement

The Worcestershire syllabus was written by RE Today in conjunction with Worcestershire SACRE and teachers. It has been adopted by over 15 other local authorities, with very positive feedback as to its effectiveness. This syllabus provides the minimum for a SACRE / LA to fulfil its legal requirement.

- The licence renewal would include a slight update to the 2015 syllabus – including new dates, a few corrections and potentially an updated Foreword.
- It would also include a **supplement**. This would be produced electronically, so that it can be sent around to all schools together with the updated syllabus.

The supplement would include, for example:

- An update on the developments in RE, post-Commission Report 2018
- Updated guidance on assessment, withdrawal, Ofsted and SIAMS priorities, legal judgments on Humanism, sample long-term plans for a range of school types, GCSE and A level reform, and links with Understanding Christianity
- Some additional guidance on religions and worldviews
- A limited number of additional unit questions, as alternatives to current questions.

Advantages:

- Teachers build on the work they have put into implementing the 2015 syllabus. Change at this stage may not be welcome.
- All schools receive an updated digital copy of the 120+ page document, in full colour, plus the supplement
- Supplement offers useful updates and additional guidance, to enhance and promote good learning in RE.
- No difficulty with it being ready for summer 2020, with recommendation that we run re-launch conferences for the update.
- There is scope for some additional unit questions to extend options for teachers
- Support materials schools have purchased already continue to be relevant
- On-going support from RE Today with potential upgrades within the 5-year review period if necessary
- Note that the units of work for the 2015 syllabus are still available for schools to purchase, if they missed out first time around.
- Feedback from local authorities using this syllabus has been very positive.

Disadvantages:

- Little involvement from local teachers or SACRE on the content and style.
- Local RE is less prominent (though Worcestershire can insert additional appendices if desired)
- If the Commission Report recommendations are put into action, the syllabus will not reflect its fullest extent.

Details and likely costs

Syllabus licence renewal includes cost of update and supplement.
Supplement will be printed and PDF supplied.

Option B

Adopt RE Today's more recent syllabus model B

In 2017, RE Today developed a new syllabus model. It has some questions that are very similar to the Worcestershire syllabus, but its approach is different.

Features:

- The syllabus follows a more systematic approach to the study of religions, in contrast to the more thematic approach of Worcestershire. This means that most questions address one religion at a time. For example, in each year a class will generally study two religions separately before addressing a thematic question in the summer term, allowing them to build on their learning through the year.
- The syllabus follows a coherent teaching and learning approach, with clear assessment outcomes for each unit and each phase.
- The syllabus contains additional guidance on religions and worldviews, and is accompanied by a selection of units of work that can be purchased by SACRE for its schools, or by schools themselves.
- This syllabus incorporates key questions from the Understanding Christianity resource that is currently in use in many Church of England and community schools.

This syllabus would include some of the key updates from Option A.

Advantages:

- The systematic approach is more in sympathy with a knowledge-rich curriculum, and its spiral curriculum reflects the contemporary emphasis on embedding pupils' knowledge and understanding in their long-term memory. This idea of curriculum coherence ties in well with new Ofsted emphases.
- This syllabus is a substantial move forward for RE for pupils and for teachers.
- Many schools using Understanding Christianity would be delivering the agreed syllabus as they use it; and schools who have not discovered Understanding Christianity would benefit from the structural coherence of the study of Christianity in the syllabus.
- The syllabus includes additional scope for the examination of non-religious worldviews, in line with the Commission Report 2018.
- Syllabus is ready for summer 2020 launches.
- On-going support from RE Today with potential upgrades within the 5-year review period if necessary.
- Feedback from local authorities using this syllabus has been very positive.

Disadvantages:

- A substantial change of syllabus may not be welcomed by schools, who are just getting used to the current one, even though the syllabus Model B has been greeted very positively by schools in other LAs.

Costs:

Syllabus licence for five years, plus hard copy of syllabus for each school.

Notes for SACRE meeting 2 October 2019:

Costs have been kept at the 2015 price, as Worcestershire was RE Today's first client on this syllabus model.

SACRE needs to weigh up the feedback given by teachers at the summer 2019 conference (see evaluations).

SACRE must vote to decide the syllabus option, voting according to committees, one vote per committee.

Additional cost of units of work and training for *Understanding Christianity* will be presented at the meeting, to discuss how far SACRE can go in providing additional resources, and how to defray those costs against income from launch conference(s).

University Conference sees Sixth Formers Reflect on Religious and Ethical Issues

Sixth formers from across the region came to the University of Worcester to debate and discuss issues around religion, faith, philosophy and ethics.



The University's A-Level Sixth Form Conference saw more than 200 Religious Studies students participate in a number of seminars and meet faith and world view leaders.

The event, titled *Suffering and Evil*, aimed to both improve their academic performance, but also to broaden their discussion and thinking, while giving them a taste of university life.

There were keynote lectures from the University's Professor [Darren Oldridge](#), a Professor of Early Modern [History](#), and Dr David Webster, Director of the Centre for Innovation in Learning and Teaching at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London.

Seminars looked at a wide range of issues, such as 'Has evil and suffering contributed to secularisation?', feminist theology, the ethics of euthanasia, business ethics and religious views on gender identity. There were also more practical seminars, such as how to achieve high grades, revision techniques and essay writing advice.

Students at Christopher Whitehead Language College and Sixth Form said they enjoyed the event.

Molly Cutler Stevens, age 17, said: “The A-level Religious Studies day was an interesting and eye-opening event for all religion, philosophy and ethics students. The seminars were fantastic.”

Ori Colthurst, also age 17, added: “The whole day was informative and helpful to apply to our subject. I particularly enjoyed chatting to the different faith leaders.”

The quality of teaching at the conference was outstanding, which is evidenced by feedback we received in the evaluation postcards, comments included:

“Super engaging lectures”

“I loved the different styles of teaching (lectures and seminars). [Dr] David Webster’s lecture was great”.

“The lectures were great, particularly on evil and suffering”

“All the teaching was useful for our A Levels”

“The feminist theology seminar was extremely interesting and led by a gripping teacher – so knowledgeable”

“Seminars expanded the knowledge we had learnt in lectures and I discovered new ideas to use”

Gemma Coley, Head of Religious Studies at Christopher Whitehead, said: “The experience of university life for the day was an excellent opportunity for our A-level students. The facilities and organisation from the University made the day run smoothly and gave the students the feeling of being undergraduates. The RE community came together to put the conference on, and the support from fellow colleagues to be part of the conference, just shows how passionate we all are about the importance of RE in education. It was excellent to see so many students take part in a thought provoking, engaging and academic day, all full of questions and thoughts, religion, philosophy and ethics related.”

[Rebecca Davidge](#), Senior Lecturer and [PGCE RE](#) Tutor at the University of Worcester, who helped co-ordinate the event, said: “I was delighted to welcome so many sixth form students to Worcester to have a taster of what university life might be like. They seemed to really enjoy the day, making the most of the facilities and learning opportunities.

“It was a privilege to also welcome members of local faith communities who contributed to the conference. The students had great conversations with them and they learnt so much from each other.”

Worcestershire Primary RE Conference 2019
EVALUATIONS 31 delegates/26 response forms

	excellent	good	satisfactory
Session 1 Effective assessment [26] Fiona Moss	73%	27%	
Session 2 RE, learning and the brain [26] Stephen Pett	62%	38%	
Session 3 Teaching non-religious worldviews [26] Fiona Moss	69%	31%	
Session 4: Building local groups [23] Local teachers	48%	52%	
Venue: how do you rate it? [25]	76%	23%	
Overall value of the conference [26]	73%	27%	

Further comments about the conference

- An excellent day! Thank you for sharing rich and engaging teaching and learning ideas and offering a simple solution to assessment! (TL, Whittington CE)
- Would have been useful to be able to download slides beforehand or have a copy so can write notes on relevant slides. (JH, Martley)
- Super ideas especially liked the assessment unit and hubs. (SS Lindridge St Lawrence CE)
- This was a well-planned and informative conference which helped to focus my mind on relevant/current topics within RE. (LN, St John's CE)
- A fab day with lots of ideas to share back at school. (DD, Malvern Parish)
- A very well organised day where lots of relevant information was shared. We did not know the venue in advance. Be good if this info was on the RE Today website just in case. (AW, ST Mary's CE Primary, Dudley)
- Excellent practical ideas eg talking tubs. Good teaching ideas. (PS, St Barnabas CE Pri)
- Very useful to consider next steps for my school and how to move RE forward / creative ideas ways to encourage questioning/ how to assess successfully (DM, Ipsley CE RSA Academy)
- Lots of food for thought and very useful practical ideas. (RP, Gloverspiece)
- Very useful and well presented. Engaging and enjoyable day. Thank you. (RD, ST Barnabas CE First and Middle)
- Very useful with lots of good advice and ideas. Well-presented and engaging delivery. (BS, Far Forest CE)

Actions you will take to follow up from this conference

- Tweaking assessment and monitoring; share non-religious worldviews with staff.
- Revise our assessment; lead a staff meeting to support teaching, referring to non-religious worldviews. Create 'chatterboxes' – super idea! Attend next Malvern hub meeting.
- Try out new assessment/accountability in RE and look at commonality across other foundation subjects. Introduce teaching non-religious beliefs into KS1.
- Try to establish a Wyre Forest hub group. Assessment system. Look at how non-religious views are taught across the school.
- Relay info to staff and SLT. Access to more resource through RE today curriculum subscription.
- Feedback to SLT and other staff, show PowerPoint and discuss assessment. Improve assessment; show how it can be adapted for other subjects.
- Ideas for formative assessment; ideas on how to encourage less confident RE teachers with summative assessment; pro-actively work on facilitating a hub; consider the approach of teaching units for growth mindset/repetition/hill-skill-will.
- Read 'Why don't students like school?'; organise hub; look at whole-school assessment; consider ways in which teachers assess; look at how non-religious views are taught.

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Three Counties Secondary RE Conference 2019
EVALUATIONS 23 delegates/18 feedback responses

	excellent	good	satisfactory
Session 1 Better thinking, better writing for GCSE [18] Angela Hill	83%	17%	
Session 2 Deeper thinking in Islam [18] Stephen Pett	100%		
Session 3 Enquiry-based learning [18] Angela Hill	72%	22%	6%
Session 4: Exploring non-religious worldviews [18] Stephen Pett	89%	11%	
Session 5: TeachMeet [17] Local teachers	82%	18%	
Venue: (Puckrup) how do you rate it?	89%	11%	
Overall value of the conference	100%		
Further comments about the conference <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excellent resources – informative and practical (CR, Sir Thomas Rich's) • As always, excellent value for money and relevant materials with easily implemented ideas (DG, Sir Thomas Rich's) • Always good to get together with like-minded people – new ideas every year. (LC, The Bewdley School) • Always good to meet up again, like a huge TeachMeet. Will use Islam resources to centre Y7 learning to be mosque focused. (JC, Archway School) • I absolutely love coming to these conferences and look forward to it each year. Stephen is so inspiring and always go back to my school with fresh and exciting ideas. Everybody should come to this! (KP, Maidenhill) • An excellent first experience. I enjoyed the diverse input. (IP, Pittville) • All very good, as per usual. Good length and variety of sessions linked clearly to research, resources, strategies and practice. (CW, Wycliffe College) • Very practical ideas and accompanying resources. Very user-friendly. (SB, Bishop of Hereford Bluecoat) • Great practical resources to use in the classroom. Very informative – clear structures and important information. (BV, The Hereford Academy) • This was my first RE Today conference and it was incredibly useful! I really enjoyed meeting new people and the quality of the content was amazing! (AP, The Dorcan Academy) • Great resources and classroom techniques. GCSE support is always needed. (CW, Sir William Romney's) • This was a superb course. Angela and Stephen were so knowledgeable and great presenters. I've learnt so much! (Session 4 was a bit heavy for after lunch – for a non-specialist). Thank you, this was a great event! (RD, Forest High School) • Excellent selection of topics and concepts. Lots of great practical ideas to use. (AS, The Cheltenham Ladies' College) • An excellent day to network and reflect on my own practice. Lots of practical ideas to revamp our curriculum and enhance learning in a deeper and more meaningful way. (AR, Bristol Free School) • Excellent to hear the common experiences of other teachers and the problems/joys we are currently working with. (AF, Sir Thomas Rich's) 			
Actions you will take to follow up from this conference <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the activities in future lessons, especially the evaluation grid. Excellent to have updated Amir. (DG Sir Thomas Rich's) • Disseminate info to team; use resources in lessons. (JC, Archway School) • Embed some resources, particularly a few of those related to non-religion at GCSE level. (CW, Wycliffe College) • Feedback to our ethics dept. Will experiment with the resources. (SB, Bishop of Hereford Bluecoat) 			

- Use ideas and resources in teaching. Share with non-specialists within school. (BV, The Hereford Academy)
- Incorporate more on atheism in Y9; use materials for evaluation on GCSE courses; implement ideas about diversity in Islam with Y8. (AS, The Cheltenham Ladies' College)
- I'm going to scrap using a prescribed structure for GCSE evaluation questions, with more of a checklist-based approach. (AR, Bristol Free School)

Requests/suggestions for further support: what do you want/need, and what is the best way SACRE can support you?

- Keep sending us links and ideas. Need to meet up annually (probably not more often). Maybe once a term email something interesting to read. (JC, Archway School)
- Nothing I can think of! Great CPD and networking/resource sharing opportunity – hopefully just more people will come next year! (CW, Wycliffe College)
- GRETA to be resurrected. Perhaps a Facebook group for building connections and a teachmeet each term. (AK, Barnwood Park)
- Time to chat with other teachers – a specific time to do that. GRETA – need this please. Any chance of an area to share resources? Google drive? (CW, Sir William Romney's)
- Stretch and challenge – A to A* at A level; 10/12 to 12/12 GCSE evaluation. Development in Christian Thought – A level Christianity. (AS, The Cheltenham Ladies' College)