



## Agenda

**Notice of a public meeting of North Yorkshire Agreed Syllabus Conference**

**To: Councillors Alyson Baker (Chair), George Jabbour, Professor John Adams, Tara Askew, Tom Clayton, Hayden Cohen, Jo Colledge, Chris Devanny, Sarah Hodgson, Abhijeet Kulkarni, Philippa Smith and Lee Talbot.**

**Date: Tuesday, 19th September, 2023**

**Time: 3.30 pm**

**Venue: County Hall, Northallerton**

Members of the public are entitled to attend this meeting as observers for all those items taken in open session. Please contact the Democratic Services Officer, whose details are below, if you would like to find out more.

This meeting is being held as an in-person meeting. The meeting is also 'hybrid', which enables people to attend the meeting remotely using MS Teams. Please contact the Democratic Services Officer if you would like to find out more.

Recording is allowed at Council, committee and sub-committee meetings which are open to the public, please give due regard to the Council's protocol on audio/visual recording and photography at public meetings, a copy of which is available. Anyone wishing to record is asked to contact, prior to the start of the meeting, the Democratic Services Officer. We ask that any recording is clearly visible to anyone at the meeting and that it is non-disruptive.

### Business

1. **Welcome by the Chair**

2. **Apologies for Absence**

3. **Minutes of the Meeting held on 20th June 2023**

**(Pages 3 - 8)**

4. **Declarations of Interest**

All Members are invited to declare at this point any interests they have in items appearing on this agenda, including the nature of those interests.

Enquiries relating to this agenda please contact Patrick Duffy Tel: 01609 534546

or e-mail [Patrick.Duffy@northyorks.gov.uk](mailto:Patrick.Duffy@northyorks.gov.uk)

Website: [www.northyorks.gov.uk](http://www.northyorks.gov.uk)

**5. Public Participation**

Members of the public may ask questions or make statements at this meeting if they have given notice to Patrick Duffy of Democratic and Scrutiny Services and supplied the text (contact details below) by midday on Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> September 2023, three working days before the day of the meeting. Each speaker should limit themselves to 3 minutes on any item. Members of the public who have given notice will be invited to speak:-

- at this point in the meeting if their questions/statements relate to matters which are not otherwise on the Agenda (subject to an overall time limit of 30 minutes);
- when the relevant Agenda item is being considered if they wish to speak on a matter which is on the Agenda for this meeting.

If you are exercising your right to speak at this meeting, but do not wish to be recorded, please inform the Chair who will instruct anyone who may be taking a recording to cease while you speak.

**6. Syllabus Model A+ An overview of updates and resources (Pages 9 - 12) provided for schools - discussion paper**

**7. Any Other Items**

Any other items which the Chair agrees should be considered as a matter of urgency because of special circumstances

**8. Date of Next Meeting**

Members are reminded that in order to expedite business at the meeting and enable Officers to adapt their presentations to address areas causing difficulty, they are encouraged to contact Officers prior to the meeting with questions on technical issues in reports.

**Contact Details:**

For enquiries relating to this agenda please contact Patrick Duffy, Principal Democratic Services Scrutiny Officer. Tel: 01609 534546 Or email [Patrick.Duffy@northyorks.gov.uk](mailto:Patrick.Duffy@northyorks.gov.uk)  
Website: [www.northyorks.gov.uk](http://www.northyorks.gov.uk)

Barry Khan  
Assistant Chief Executive  
(Legal and Democratic Services)

County Hall  
Northallerton

Monday, 11 September 2023

## North Yorkshire Council

### North Yorkshire Agreed Syllabus Conference

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> June 2023 at 4.00 p.m.

Group A: Christian Denominations and such other religious denominations as, in the Authority's opinion, will appropriately reflect the principal religious traditions in the area: Professor John Adams (Humanist), Tom Clayton\* (Methodist), and Abhijeet Kulkarni\* (Hindu)

Group B: Church of England: Philippa Smith\* (Diocese of York) and Lee Talbot\* (Diocese of Leeds)

Group C: Teachers Associations: Tara Askew\*, Jo Colledge and Sarah Hodgson\*

Group D: Local Authority: Councillors Alyson Baker and George Jabbour

Officers present: Adrian Clarke (Principal Education Adviser - Support), Patrick Duffy (Principal Democratic Services Scrutiny Officer), Owen Griffiths (Corporate Governance Officer), Heather Russell (Senior Education Adviser) and Olivia Seymour (Professional Religious Education Adviser)

\*Denotes joined remotely

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**Copies of all documents considered are in the Minute Book**

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**NOTE:**

**References to Agreed Syllabus, throughout these Minutes, refer to the Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education**

**1. Welcome by the Chair**

The Chair Welcomed people to the meeting and, in particular, Lee Talbot, who had been appointed to replace Reverend Simone Bennett as one of the Church of England Representatives from the Leeds Diocese.

The Chair stated that, to save time, she would not do a round of introductions on this occasion, but asked people to introduce themselves when they spoke on any particular item of business.

**2. Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from Chris Devanny.

**3. Minutes of the meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> March 2023**

**Resolved –**

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> March 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

#### **4. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

#### **5. Exclusion of the Press and Public**

##### **Resolved –**

That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the Item Agreed Syllabus, Options Paper (See Minute No. 9, below), on the grounds that it would involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 in Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, as amended.

#### **6. Public Participation**

The Clerk confirmed that no public questions or statements had been received.

#### **7. Recap from the last meeting**

The Principal Education Adviser (Support) recapped as follows:-

- There will be a budget of £25,000 – a significant increase from the last budget. This would include the costs of the launch which could just be one event.
- The Professional Religious Education Adviser had taken the Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC) through the framework and timeline.
- Feedback from Teacher Representatives had been that COVID-19 had disrupted implementation of the current Agreed Syllabus which is, therefore, still embedding
- Members had considered the four options. They had decided not to take a decision at that stage, but to decide which option to recommend at today's meeting. This would allow for September 2024 implementation, as planned and as required.

At this stage, the Principal Education Adviser (Support) advised that he would be leaving his role at the end of the summer term to take up a post as Head of Service in the Business and Environmental Services Directorate. He added that, realistically, his replacement would not be in post until January or Easter 2024.

The Chair, on behalf of the ASC, thanked Adrian for his work and wished him good luck in his new role.

NOTED.

#### **8. Correspondence and information for Agreed Syllabus Conference Members**

##### **Considered –**

A report by the Professional Religious Education Adviser, which provided information on the exchange of correspondence between Dr. Abhijeet Kulkarni and herself, with regard to the teaching of Hinduism/Hindu people in the current Syllabus.

The report also contained reference to *The place of non-religious worldviews in the Syllabus*, together with reference to Authorities who had updated their Agreed Syllabus in the last 18 months.

The Professional Religious Education Adviser advised Members that, as well as those Authorities stated in the report, Kent, Liverpool and Thurrock Councils, among others, had updated their Agreed Syllabus during this period.

In response to questions, the Professional Religious Education Adviser confirmed that:-

- There is no legal requirement to include a particular percentage for the teaching of specific Religious Worldviews in each Key Stage, other than the requirement that Christianity is 'in the main'. The key is what is educationally appropriate and enables a coherent RE curriculum.
- OFSTED look at the contextualised curriculum within a School and its impact, rather than the specific number of hours that subjects are being taught.
- If Option A were to be chosen, further aspects can be included. For instance, the teaching of Hinduism at Key Stage 1 and Humanism in a systematic way.
- If a bespoke option is chosen, Members would need to commit to the cost for the daily rate of a Consultant and releasing teachers to ensure it works; printing and producing the document.
- She had heard back from RE Today about additions and these can be provided if Option A is chosen, with individual additional units costing £250 per unit.
- Should the option chosen be to update the current Agreed Syllabus then, whilst the wording on key elements could not be amended, it is important to highlight these are the minimum requirements and we can ensure Schools understand they can, and should, consider going beyond this. For example, including additional elements such as Hinduism and Humanism. Supporting teachers understanding of coherent and sequenced curriculum planning is key.

The Senior Education Adviser commented that, within the Schools that her work encompasses, the Schools, overwhelmingly, do not want a change - they would like support to develop framework areas. Other Senior Education Advisers have reported similar feedback.

The Chair acknowledged that there is a degree of overlap between some of the Items on today's Agenda, but felt that there was a danger of the discussion veering into the next Agenda Item. Therefore, she felt it appropriate to now move onto the next Item.

NOTED.

**9. North Yorkshire SACRE: Options for Agreed Syllabus Review (for Autumn 2024 implementation)**

**NOTE: The Clerk confirmed that the press and public are excluded for this Item of business, as resolved by the Committee at Minute No. 5, above.**

**Considered –**

A report by the Professional Religious Education Adviser which informed Members of:-

- the legal requirements;
- the need for a high-quality syllabus;
- implications of the new OFSTED Framework and OFSTED Research Review;
- the current situation; and
- implications for SACRE

The report, which had also been considered by the ASC at its initial meeting in March 2023, set out the four main options and outlined the advantages and disadvantages of each.

The options are:-

- a) Renew the licence with RE Today, which includes updating the 2019-2024 folder
- b) Adopt RE Today's more recent Syllabus Model B
- c) Adopt a Syllabus from another local authority
- d) Commission a bespoke new Syllabus

**NOTE: Prior to the meeting, views submitted by Professor John Adams, Tara Askew and Chris Devanny were emailed to Members of the ASC.**

A lengthy discussion followed, which is summarised below. Where appropriate (i.e. a response was not always required) the response of officers is in italics:-

- Dr. Abhijeet Kulkarni – No issue with Option A or B, particularly, but the problem is their inflexibility in terms of minimum requirements. The balance between different Faiths is not reached. Dharmic Faiths cannot be taught until the other Faiths have been covered in Key Stage 1.  
*It is typically the case we have ensured that Hindu and other Dharmic Religions are covered in Primary School. If additional subjects are included this could start to crowd the curriculum. The key point is the Local Authority ensures that the Agreed Syllabus is not the sum total of the conversation with Schools.*
- Dr. Kulkarni also enquired how the context is decided by a School.  
*This might be based on diversity or a lack of diversity. Schools make that decision. OFSTED look at the language used and the coherence of the curriculum. Therefore, these aspects are covered as part of the Religious Education Networks.*
- Tara Askew – The Agreed Syllabus is working well on the ground, with an intertwining focus on other Faiths. If Option A or B are chosen, might it be possible to undertake to look at Humanism and Eastern Religions going forward?
- Professor John Adams – The current Agreed Syllabus is deficient in a number of ways. He had summarised these in his paper that had been emailed out to ASC Members. For example, it is not possible to read the current Agreed Syllabus from RE Today and conclude that it is not written from a particular point of view. It is, basically, a cut and paste operation. This has to be the most important task of any SACRE and we have an opportunity to do something new. It is not reflective of where we are in understanding religion – over half of people class themselves as non-believers - among young people, 17% say they are believers.
- Professor Adams added that, in his opinion, if the ASC choose Option A, it is not doing its job properly. Oxfordshire County Council's is one example of a very good Agreed Syllabus. What is required is something that is more relevant; inclusive and up-to-date.

- Councillor George Jabbour – Does Option A satisfy OFSTED Review?  
*Any option chosen will provide a Framework, but no Agreed Syllabus offers a contextualised Religious Education. This is for schools to do, taking the Agreed Syllabus as the legal framework.*  
  
*The Agreed Syllabus cannot be viewed in isolation - curriculum considerations are taken into account. Therefore, the current document speaks to the Curriculum Development Framework, whilst applying an OFSTED lens. OFSTED does not inspect an Agreed Syllabus, per se. Rather, it examines how an Authority has taken the Statutory Framework and shaped it to meet the needs of its pupils.*
- Sarah Hodgson – What is the turnaround in Religious Education Subject Leads – could that be why Schools do not want change? Option B would be more systematic and children learn well systematically.
- Tom Clayton – Agree that this is an opportunity to do something different. However, a balance has to be struck. Would favour Option B.
- Lee Talbot – Can understand the points made against continuing with RE Today, but the general feeling within Schools is echoing what has been said by others at this meeting. Would favour Option A.
- Philippa Smith - Schools do not want change, but this does not mean they are not constantly developing the curriculum; it is not remaining stagnant. Would prefer Option A.
- Jo Colledge – Agree with much of what Professor Adams has said – by continuing with RE Today, we could be missing an opportunity.
- The Chair – If Option A or B is chosen, perhaps we could look at the Oxfordshire County Council Agreed Syllabus at a future meeting.

The Professional Religious Education Adviser clarified that if Option A or Option B are chosen, it will not be possible to change minimum requirements. However, addendums and supplementary units can be included.

It was proposed and seconded that a decision be made as to the Option for an Agreed Syllabus at today's meeting.

On being put to the vote, the proposal was carried.

It was then further proposed and seconded that Option A be recommended. On being put to the vote, this was carried. Therefore, it was...

#### **RESOLVED –**

That the Agreed Syllabus Conference recommend to the Local Authority that, in respect of the Agreed Syllabus for 2024-2029, Option A be chosen – namely, Renew the licence with RE Today, which includes updating the 2019-2024 folder.

#### **10. Any other Items**

The Chair confirmed that she had not been notified of any other business of urgency.

## 11. Next Meeting

### Resolved –

- a) That the next meeting be held before the next SACRE on Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> September 2023 – either immediately prior to SACRE or on a separate day (This will be determined by the Chair).
- b) That the next meeting consider addendums and supplementary units to be included with Option A.

The meeting concluded at 5.40 p.m.

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## North Yorkshire Council

### North Yorkshire Agreed Syllabus Conference

#### **Syllabus Model A+** **An overview of updates and resources** **provided for schools – discussion paper.**

**19 September 2023**

#### **1.0 Purpose of this paper**

To provide an overview of updates and resources provided for schools in respect of Syllabus Model A+.

#### **2.0 Key Information**

The updates and resources are also built into the launch event. We are anticipating the syllabus to be a digital resource.

#### **Updates from Model A that will be built into the new syllabus:**

- Updated EYFS outcomes, in line with 2020 EYFS Profile
- Guidance on curriculum design
- Guidance on idea of worldviews (in line with CoRE - institutional/personal)

#### Additional questions:

- L2.5a How do people from religious and non-religious communities celebrate key festivals? (multidisciplinary approach)
- L2.10 How do family life and festivals show what matters to Jewish people?
- U2.9 What can be done to reduce racism? Can religion help?
- U2.10 Green religion? How and why should religious communities do more to care for the Earth?

#### Three systematic units for KS3:

- 3.13 The Buddha: how and why do his experiences and teachings have meaning for people today?
- 3.14: What is it like to be a Muslim teenager in the UK today?
- 3.15 How are Sikh teachings on equality and service put into practice today?
- Expanded SEND guidance
- Revised and rewritten guidance on assessment
- Local demographic information

Appendices on:

- cultural capital
- creating a coherent curriculum
- types of knowledge (in line with Ofsted Subject Review - substantive knowledge, ways of knowing, personal knowledge)
- introduction to knowledge organisers
- keywords and core concepts
- descriptions of achievement for pupils with SEND working below national curriculum outcomes
- planning RE in special school settings

Online support including:

- Knowledge organisers
- Sample long-term plans
- Guidance on religious and non-religious worldviews (religions guide, do's and don'ts etc)

**Additional unit plans requested by NYC SACRE (additional cost of £3000)**

*Decision to be taken by the Agreed Syllabus Conference on this.*

- Systematic unit of study for Hinduism at KS1
- Additional unit on Hinduism KS2
- Non-religious worldviews unit KS1
- Non-religious worldviews unit KS2

**Introductory pages of the Syllabus**

*We need to consider what additional information we wish to include (deadline 25<sup>th</sup> March 2024):*

Introductory pages

This could include:

- Foreword by the Chair of NYC SACRE and LA representation
- Information about SACRE and its Members
- Quotes from SACRE Members on the importance of RE

Appendices

We can produce materials as a SACRE in addition to what the syllabus provides. Some examples include:

- Updated Visits and visitors guidance and information
- Update to one minute guide to RE
- Further details on the census information
- An outline of resources for a range of religions and worldviews (building on information shared in RE networks over the last year?)

## **Launch Event**

Friday 14<sup>th</sup> June 2004 has been secured for a launch event for the Syllabus. School Improvement are currently finalising a venue, likely to be in Harrogate, that can accommodate 150+ teachers for the event.

We would encourage SACRE Members to put the date in their diary and attend for all or part of the day if possible.

### **Brief Outline of the day:**

(From 11.45 a.m./12 noon Primary and secondary split into groups)

#### 9.15 a.m. - 10.45 a.m.

Session 1: The RE Syllabus renewed, introduced and explored: creative and ambitious RE for all.

#### 11.15 a.m. - 12.45 p.m.

Session 2: Teaching and learning to enable progress: planning the curriculum for good learning for all. Practical examples

#### 1.45 p.m. -3.15 p.m.

Session 3: Progress in RE for every pupil: rich knowledge, growing vocabulary and clear sequences of learning. Using the assessment arrangements and resources.

*Is there anything else Members would like to consider in terms of features of the day?*

Olivia Seymour  
Professional Adviser to North Yorkshire SACRE

County Hall, Northallerton

07/09//2023

Report Author: Olivia Seymour

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