

North Yorkshire Council

North Yorkshire Agreed Syllabus Conference

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 19th September 2023 at 3.30 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), Hayden Cohen (Judaism), Chris Devanny* (Catholic), and Abhijeet Kulkarni* (Hindu)

Group B: Church of England: Not represented on this occasion

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

Group D: Local Authority: Councillor George Jabbour (in the Chair)

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

*Denotes joined remotely

Copies of all documents considered are in the Minute Book

NOTE:

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

12. Chair for today's meeting

The Clerk, Patrick Duffy, advised that, due to a bereavement, the Chair, Councillor Alyson Baker, was unable to attend today's meeting. The Agreed Syllabus Conference does not have a Vice-Chair.

He added that Councillor George Jabbour had kindly agreed to chair today's meeting, subject to Members agreement.

Members confirmed they were happy with this.

Councillor George Jabbour in the Chair

13 Welcome by the Chair

The Chair advised Members that he had attended both of the previous ASC meetings and was therefore familiar with the subject matter.

He welcomed people to the meeting and, in particular, Hayden Cohen, who had been appointed as a representative of Judaism, and Julie Pattison, Principal Education Adviser, who would lead on matters related to the ASC and SACRE.

14. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Councillor Alyson Baker, Tom Clayton, Philippa Smith and Lee Talbot.

15. Minutes of the meeting held on 20th June 2023

Professor John Adams stated that, whilst he was not requesting that the Minutes be amended, as such, he disagreed with the wording in Minute No. 9, North Yorkshire SACRE: Options for Agreed Syllabus Review (for Autumn 2024 implementation), that “A lengthy discussion followed...” This was the third ASC he had been involved with and the previous two had had much lengthier discussions. Professor Adams added that, on this occasion, the ASC had, effectively, agreed to purchase the simplest option – Option A. Members had not had the opportunity to see this and it lacked specificity.

Resolved –

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 20th June 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair, but that the view expressed by Professor Adams, above, be noted.

16. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

17. Public Participation

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

18. Syllabus Model A+ An overview of updates and resources provided for Schools - Discussion Paper

Considered –

A paper by the Professional Religious Education Adviser, which provided an overview of updates and resources provided for Schools in respect of Syllabus Model A+.

Before introducing the paper, the Professional Religious Education Adviser referred to the comments made earlier in the meeting by Professor Adams. It was not the case that the Agreed Syllabus had not been seen by Members before, in that it is already being used in Schools – and it is this that is being updated.

She stressed that the decision to adopt Syllabus Model A+ does not prevent enhancement of the Syllabus. For example:-

- Early Years Foundation Stage will reflect the new profile
- Curriculum design will be reflective of OFSTED Inspections and Religious World Views
- Anti-racist Religious Education will be included
- Special Education Needs and Disability will be expanded
- The national conversation in Religious Education will be reflected

It is anticipated that the Syllabus will be a digital resource.

The paper – which you can view [here](#) – outlined updates from Model A that will be built into the new Syllabus, together with:-

- additional questions for the ASC to consider;
- the proposed Appendices;
- online support information; and
- an outline of the Launch Event

The Professional Religious Education Adviser informed Members that supplements to the Agreed Syllabus can be written at any stage.

She felt that it would be helpful if the document contained some quotes from SACRE Members and asked Members to consider the development of a logo.

In response to a comment by the Chair, the Professional Religious Education Adviser confirmed that the Launch Event is scheduled for *14th June 2024*. **All Members are asked to diary this date.**

In response to questions raised by Members, the Professional Religious Education Adviser:-

- clarified the situation with regard to copyright; whilst we cannot amend the Agreed Syllabus itself, which will be purchased from RE Today, it is entirely acceptable to include appendices, additions and support materials;
- confirmed that the Agreed Syllabus provides a high-level *framework* for Schools, which then becomes part of a contextualised curriculum. Schools are under no compulsion to use the enquiry questions suggested; it can be adapted so that it is right for their pupils; and
- stated that there is a minimum – not maximum – entitlement and, as stated above, the ASC can choose to add things.

The Professional Religious Education Adviser mentioned that the *One-minute Guide* could be updated; together with resources for Religious World Views. Are these the sort of things that Members want to see undertaken? Work can be started on these elements, but officers would look for some support with these tasks from Members. Hayden Cohen and Abhijeet Kulkarni indicated that they would be happy to volunteer to assist with these endeavours.

NOTED.

19. Any other Items

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

20. Next Meeting

The Chair advised that future discussions would take place through SACRE, as the ASC had now, effectively, done its job (its primary task being the recommendation to the Local Authority as to which Agreed Syllabus Option should be adopted.)

Therefore, this would be the last meeting of the ASC in respect of the 2024/2029 Agreed Syllabus.

The Chair concluded the meeting by thanking Members for their time and contribution to the debate at this and the previous ASC meetings. Implementation will take place over the next few months and robust discussions can continue.

The meeting concluded at 4.15 p.m.

PD

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