

PAN-BERKSHIRE AGREED SYLLABUS FOR RE REVIEW 2017 - POINTS TO CONSIDER

THE FOLLOWING POINTS ARE AN OUTLINE TO ENSURE ALL SACRES CONSIDER THE MAIN POINTS RAISED IN THE SUMMER CONSULTATION AND AGAINST THE BACKDROP OF NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS AND DRIVERS.

Overview

To consider:

1. National context and non-statutory framework for RE, 2016
2. Responses from consultation...what to keep, what to consider changing (Summary of Summer consultation attached - Paper 1)

POINTS 3-9 BELOW ARE COVERED IN POINTS TO CONSIDER PAPER 2 below

3. Which religions are mandatory at which Key Stage?

Currently

KS1 Christianity and Judaism

KS2 Christianity, Hinduism and Sikhism

KS3 Christianity, Buddhism and Islam

4. Retain AT1 and 2? Learning About and From religion
5. Assessment...levels? In a landscape beyond levels
6. Early Years...updated Early Years framework 2014 and 2017
7. Retain the Key Questions as they are?
8. Print revised syllabus or online?
9. Appendices?

Points to consider...details

<https://www.oxford.anglican.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Berkshire-RE-Syllabus.pdf>

This is the link to the current pan-Berkshire agreed syllabus for RE for your reference (hard copy also attached).

1. National context and non-statutory framework for RE, 2016
The RE Council of England and Wales has just published the Interim Report from the Commission on RE taking place this year.
Most of the points raised are for further consultation but the key points need to form the backdrop for the syllabus review.

The drive nationally over the last year or so has been towards ensuring religious literacy and holistic understanding of the whole narrative of the religions studied. This involves pupils gaining sound understanding of the concepts and beliefs underpinning them.

The current syllabus already makes this clear in the Believing/Behaving/Belonging 3Bs approach embedded throughout. Teachers want to keep the 3 Bs according to the Summer consultation.

Understanding Christianity project designed its teaching materials to emphasise the beliefs, concepts, theology core to Christianity.

The other drive is the enquiry approach since this was recommended in the last Ofsted report on RE,

<https://www.gov.uk/government/.../religious-education-realising-the-potential>

We also need to be mindful of the programmes schools are currently using and not interrupt good practice by making unnecessary changes to the syllabus e.g. the Oxford Diocese scheme of work or Discovery RE scheme of work

2. Responses from consultation...what to keep, what to consider changing (Summary of Summer consultation attached) Paper 1
The key points raised are detailed below but the original paper is attached for reference.

The main messages are:

DON'T MAKE TOO MANY CHANGES. IT IS WORKING AS IT IS. WE LIKE IT. WE ARE TOO BUSY TO COPE WITH MUCH CHANGE. WE CAN'T AFFORD NEW RESOURCES.

WE LIKE THE 3 Bs. KEEP THE ENQUIRY APPROACH. WE LIKE THE BIG QUESTIONS.

WE WOULD LIKE MORE GUIDANCE ON ASSESSING LEARNING IN RE.

POINTS 3-9 BELOW ARE COVERED IN POINTS TO CONSIDER PAPER 2 below

1. Which religions are mandatory at which Key Stage?

Currently

KS1 Christianity and Judaism

KS2 Christianity, Hinduism and Sikhism

KS3 Christianity, Buddhism and Islam

The above pattern shows which religions are the mandatory 'required' religions to be taught at each Key Stage in the current agreed syllabus. Of course schools can cover more than these but the thinking here is that if each religion is mandatory at one Key Stage they will all be encountered at least once during Key Stages 1-3, before GCSE Religious Studies is undertaken. Christianity needs to be included at every KS to fulfil statutory requirements.

The questions for SACREs to consider are...

Is this pattern still OK?

Should any of these religions be 'required' earlier or later or even be 'required' in more than one Key Stage?

Is there a better way?

Do we need to include Humanism as a 'required' belief system?

Suggestion:

Key Stages 1 and 2

Could we lift the barrier between KS1 and 2 and say the 'required' religions needing to be encountered by the end of Key Stage 2 are:

Christianity in every year group plus

Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism

Schools could decide when they deliver which religion alongside Christianity.

If the syllabus maintains its recommended enquiry approach through the big questions this would be perfectly possible and is probably more in line with the reality of what is happening in Berkshire schools already.

Key Stage 3

Christianity in every year group plus:

At least 2 other religions/belief systems in depth from

Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, Sikhism and Humanism

This would leave the choice of religions in KS3 up to the school giving flexibility in terms of preparation for GCSE courses and according to the demographic of the school.

Or any other suggested patterns you think would work.

Page 17 in Bournemouth agreed syllabus (link below) shows another option.

<https://www.bournemouth.gov.uk/childreducation/Schools/SACREdocuments/SACREdocs/Bournemouth-and-Poole-Agreed-Syllabus.pdf>

Another suggestion would be to include KS4 in with KS3 so we have a Primary school set of required religions...to be encountered before the end of KS2 (or maybe a number of religions to be encountered by the end of KS2 selecting from...as well as Christianity) and a Secondary school set of 'required religions' to be encountered during KS 3 and 4, or more realistically

this might be setting down a number of religions to be encountered by the end of KS4 as well as Christianity.

2. Retain AT1 and 2? Learning About and From religion

The National Curriculum framework for RE (2013, non-statutory) moves away from 2 attainment targets and suggests 3 strands of expectations:

- A. Know about and understand a range of religions and worldviews
- B. Express ideas and insights about the nature, significance and impact of religions and non-religious worldviews
- C. Gain and deploy the skills needed to engage seriously with religions and non-religious worldviews
(NCFRE pages 11-12)

Some syllabi are reflecting this,

An example

The Poole and Bournemouth agreed syllabus published in 2016 adopts the 3 strand approach
(see link above)

Some are keeping the 2 attainment targets.

Some have taken away the labels of AT1 and AT2 but kept the content and put it under different headings!

The most important factor is to keep the syllabus as easy to understand and translate into practice in the classroom as possible.

3. Assessment...levels? In a landscape beyond levels

Teachers are looking for more guidance on how to assess RE in a landscape in which schools are devising their own methods of assessment, since the government has removed the national 'levels'.

The format of the syllabus will determine what the guidance on assessment looks like. If we retain the 2 attainment targets the assessment process will need to reflect this.

If we move towards the 3 strands of the national non-statutory framework, the assessment expectation would reflect this.

The Oxford Diocese has devised its own assessment process to serve the Oxfordshire agreed syllabus.

Discovery RE has its own colour-coded assessment process helping teachers tease out the different aspects of RE learning:

Green: personal resonance
Blue: Knowledge and understanding
Red: Critical thinking and evaluative skills

This will depend on previous decisions on nature of the syllabus.

4. Early Years...updated Early Years framework 2014 and 2017
This would be a straightforward process of updating the language aligned to the most recent EYFS framework.

5. Retain the Key Questions as they are?
We need to be mindful that teachers have planned their schemes of work based on a selection of the current questions so too much change would cause a lot of extra work. Some of the questions could be tidied up in terms of wording and maybe new ones added.

6. Print revised syllabus or online?
Teachers seem to be happy with online resources and obviously this would be the cheapest option. Maybe giving those who attend the launch events (if we run any) a usb stick with the syllabus on it?

7. Appendices?
The suggestion is that the appendices are removed from the actual syllabus document and become available online under a new title e.g. Additional/Support materials
This may make the statutory body of the syllabus itself more straightforward for people and would certainly make it appear slimmer and more manageable.
This will depend on what is decided about the syllabus itself, which religions are 'required' when etc as if teachers have a choice of which religions they do at each KS all the options need to be included in the statutory body of the document, making it clear what the choices might be.

JL 4/10/17