

Swindon Borough Council

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education

Tuesday, 2 December 2014

Commonweal School, The Mall, Swindon, Wiltshire SN1 4JE - C6
Building, Room 608, Ground Floor
(Anticipated meeting room)

At 6.00 p.m.

**Group A:
Christian Denominations
and Other Religions or
Religious Denominations**

Mr David Burbidge, Baptist Church
Mrs Sarah Lane Cawte, United Reformed Church
Reverend David Howell, Swindon Evangelical Alliance
Mr M S Khan, Muslim Community
Mr Tony McAteer, Catholic Community
Mr Dinesh Patel, Hindu Community
Vacancy, Methodist Church
Vacancy, Buddhist Community
Vacancy, Jewish Community

**Group B:
The Church of England**

Reverend Clive Deverell
Miss Janet French
Reverend Norma McKemey
Ms Steph Mundin
Mrs Penny Summers

**Group C:
Teacher Associations**

Mrs Tracy Mason, NUT
Mrs Lottie O'Brien, NASUWT
Mrs Mandy Sandleton, NASUWT
Mrs Mel Shepherd, NASUWT
Ms Catherine Lomax, NASUWT - Deputy
Paul Sunners, NAHT

**Group D:
The Local Authority**

Councillor James Robbins
Councillor Alan Bishop
Councillor Fionuala Foley
Councillor Cindy Matthews
Councillor Gemma McCracken

Co-Opted:

Freddy Pound, Swindon Humanists

Support Officers:

Katy Staples, SACRE Advisor
Sarah Foulkes, School Improvement Adviser

Committee Officer: Stuart Figini (Telephone 01793 463612)

email: sfigini@swindon.gov.uk

Swindon Borough Council can be contacted at the Civic Offices, Euclid Street,
Swindon, SN1 2JH (Telephone 01793 445500)

AGENDA

1. Welcome from Commonweal School

Lottie O'Brien will provide the SACRE with a brief introduction to Commonweal School and their approach to RE.

2. Apologies for Absence

3. Declarations of Interest

Members are reminded that at the start of the meeting they should declare any known interests in any matter to be considered, and also during the meeting if it becomes apparent that they have an interest in the matters being discussed.

4. Public Question Time

See explanatory note below. Please phone the Committee Officer whose name and number appears at the top of this agenda if you need further guidance.

5. Chair's Announcements

- South West SACRE Conference – Monday 16th March 2015 at Dillington House, Ilminster.

6. Minutes and Matters Arising (Pages 1 - 4)

To receive the minutes of the meeting held on 16 October 2014.

7. Changes to GCSE/A Level Consultation (Pages 5 - 56)

The Department of Education are seeking views on revised subject content for GCSE and A level religious studies for first teaching from 2016. Copies of the consultation documents are attached or can be accessed from this link

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/gcse-and-a-level-reform-religious-studies>.

The consultation runs until 29 December 2014 and Swindon SACRE are asked to consider the consultation documents and forward any views/comments to the Department of Education.

8. The Development Plan 2015-2017 (Pages 57 - 62)

Activity to work on priorities detailed in the Plan. A copy of the Plan is circulated.

9. Religious Education Beyond Levels Discussion

Katy Staples to lead a discussion activity.

10. Feedback from RE Teachers' Network Meetings

To receive feedback from recent Primary and Secondary RE Teachers' meetings.

11. Date and Time of the Next Meeting

The next meeting of the SACRE is on 10th March 2015. Members of the SACRE are asked to suggest venues or indicate where this and future meetings of the Panel should be held.

Date of Despatch: 20 November 2014

Public Question Time - Swindon Borough Council is committed to increasing its accountability to the public and to promoting active citizenship. Up to 15 minutes will be allowed at the start of all Council meetings for questions to the Chair from members of the public about the work of the Committee (except for confidential matters and specific planning applications). Questions must be relevant, clear and concise. Because of time constraints Public Question Time is not an opportunity to make speeches or statements. Prior notice of a question to the Director of Law and Democratic Services is desirable - particularly if detailed background information is needed.

Access Arrangements – The Venue is wheelchair accessible and an infrared receiver hearing system is provided. If you would wish to attend the meeting but have any special requirement to enable you to do so please contact the Committee Clerk above, as soon as possible prior to the date of the meeting.

If you would like to receive any of the pages contained in this agenda in a larger print size please contact the Committee Officer whose name appears on the first page of this agenda.

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STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

THURSDAY, 16 OCTOBER 2014

PRESENT:-

Group A:
Christian Denominations and
Other Religions or Religious
Denominations

Mr David Burbidge (Baptist Church), Mrs Sarah
Lane Cawte (United Reformed Church),
Reverend David Howell (Swindon Evangelical
Alliance), Mr M S Khan (Muslim Community) and
Mr Tony McAteer (Catholic Community)

Group B:
Church of England

Reverend Clive Deverell, Miss Janet French,
Reverend Norma McKemey, Ms Steph Mundin
and Mrs Penny Summers

Group C:
Teacher Organisations

Mrs Lottie O'Brien - Vice Chair in the Chair and
Paul Sunners

Group D:
Councillors

Councillors James Robbins and Alan Bishop

Also in attendance: Katy Staples (SACRE Advisor)

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs Tracy Mason, Mrs Mandy Sandleton, Mrs Mel Shepherd, Ms Catherine Lomax, Mr Dinesh Patel, Councillor Fionuala Foley, Freddy Pound, Councillor Cindy Matthews and Councillor Gemma McCracken

56. Minutes Silence

The SACRE took time at the start of the meeting to remember Mark Cawte, who had served as the Chair of the SACRE since December 2012. The Vice-Chair led the tributes to Mark. Members of the SACRE also paid tribute to Mark for his passion, encouragement, determination, strength of character, authenticity and commitment to SACRE. The SACRE then had a few moments of silence in remembrance.

57. Appointment of Chair

Resolved: To defer appointing a Chair until early 2015 and that the Vice-Chair be asked to take on the responsibility of Chair for the next meeting on 2 December 2014.

58. Declarations of Interest

The Chair reminded Members of the need to declare any known interests in any matters to be considered at the meeting. No declarations were made.

59. Public Question Time

No public questions were received during the meeting.

60. Chair's Announcements

The Chair made the following announcements:

- a) Welcomed the Reverend Clive Deverell to his first SACRE meeting as representative of the Church of England on Group B.
- b) That SACRE members consider nominating a school to apply for the Accord Inclusive Schools Award that they think had done the most in the last year to promote inclusion, cohesion and the growth of mutual understanding, particularly on the grounds of religion and belief.
- c) Reported that Funding was available for Postgraduate teacher training for eligible graduates who were starting their training in the 2015/16 academic year on postgraduate routes including the non-salaried School Direct programme. It was noted that the numbers of places available had drastically increased especially in RE
- d) Reported that there was a new NASACRE website log-on password and that the Clerk would circulate details by email after the meeting.
- e) Reported that there was a one day conference in Birmingham on 27 November 2014, called 'The Trojan Horse aftermath - implications and opportunities' to explore the impact on RE, SMSC and collective worship. Further details could be obtained from the Clerk.

61. Minutes and Matters Arising

That the minutes of the meeting held on 17th June 2014 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

62. SACRE Website

The SACRE were reminded that Freddy Pound had volunteered to set up a working example of a website that would explain the role of SACRE in Swindon and contain information and useful links from SACRE members.

The SACRE Advisor asked all members to forward the following information to Freddy Pound for uploading to the SACRE web page:

- A profile of themselves, including picture
- Details about their role and experiences in relation to RE
- Useful resources for teachers
- Relevant information to be included in the locally Swindon pages
- Documents that would be useful for teachers

Resolved:

1. That Freddy Pound be thanked for the tremendous work already undertaken on the SACRE website.

2. That SACRE members be asked to forward the information detailed above to Freddy Pound for the website pages

63. New Ofsted Framework and Implications for RE

The SACRE received a report from the SACRE Advisor about guidance for Headteachers and Governors on Ofsted September 2014 criteria for Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development, Religious Education and Collective Worship.

The SACRE noted that the guidance supported the Ofsted Inspection Handbook July 2014 for inspections, written in the light of the Ofsted enquiry which highlighted issues to do with protecting students from possible extremism and ensuring that the curriculum was sufficiently broad that pupils would be well equipped to live in modern Britain.

The SACRE Advisor spoke about the importance of schools offering students a broad, balanced and rich curriculum that would ensure that pupils understood core British values and learned to live with difference well. She referred to the five suggestions for outstanding practice detailed in the document.

The SACRE split into group for an exercise and discussion activity based on a number of questions for governors and headteachers to check how effective their school was at Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development, Religious Education and Collective Worship. It was suggested that governing bodies should use the diagnostic tool in the guidance to check their current practice.

Resolved:

To note the report and SACRE members to encourage governing bodies to use the diagnostic tool to check the effectiveness of their Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development, Religious Education and Collective Worship.

64. Progress Reports SACRE Working Parties

The SACRE Advisor spoke about the Distinctively Local RE Working Party and reminded members that the Working Party was looking for examples of units of work that were distinctive to Swindon to resource the Swindon Agreed Syllabus RE Units. One of the units recently being worked on was in relation to the work undertaken by Swindon foodbank.

The SACRE received a presentation from Janet French about a recent visit to the Swindon Foodbank and The Gateway Furniture Project, both run by Gateway Church in Swindon. Both projects were set up by local Christians to serve those in need in their community.

SACRE noted that the presentation could be used to help resource Key Stage 1 and Lower and Upper Key Stage 2.

The SACRE Advisor explained that more examples of Distinctively Local Swindon Units were required and the issue would be raised at the next Primary teachers Network meeting. Enquiries had been made with the local mosque about a visit and

a distinctive unit. Other examples of possible distinctive Units included Lydiard and Remembrance, free English language lessons, Year 9 Holocaust lessons, Swindon Humanism.

Resolved:

1. That Janet French be thanked for a very informative presentation
2. That the work of the Working Group be noted

65. Feedback from RE Teachers' Network Meetings

The SACRE Advisor explained that there had not been any RE teacher's network meetings since the last SACRE meeting.

66. Date and Time of the Next Meeting

It was noted that the next meeting of SACRE would be held on 2nd December 2014, commencing at 6:00pm at Commonweal School 6th Form Centre.



Department
for Education

Reformed GCSE and A level subject content consultation

Government consultation

**Launch date 7 November
Respond by 29 December**

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1. Executive summary

- 1.1. The government is reforming GCSEs and A levels to ensure that they prepare students better for further and higher education, and for employment. GCSEs are being reformed so that they set expectations which match those of the highest performing countries, with rigorous assessment that provides a reliable measure of students' achievement. The new A levels will be linear qualifications that ensure that students develop the skills and knowledge needed for progression to undergraduate study.
- 1.2. Reforms to these qualifications are already underway. [GCSE subject content](#) in English literature, English language and mathematics was published in November 2013, and the new qualifications will be taught from September 2015. [GCSE subject content](#) in ancient languages, geography, history, modern foreign languages and science, to be taught from September 2016, was published in April 2014.
- 1.3. At AS and A level, [subject content](#) in art and design, biology, business, chemistry, computer science, economics, English language, English literature, English language and literature, history, physics, psychology, and sociology was published in April 2014. These new qualifications will be taught from September 2015.
- 1.4. We are now developing a further set of GCSEs, AS and A levels to be taught from 2016. We have already [consulted](#) on proposed subject content for GCSEs in art and design, computer science, dance, music, and physical education, and AS and A levels in dance, music, physical education, modern foreign languages, ancient languages, mathematics, further mathematics and geography, with final content due to be publishing final content this winter. We are currently [consulting](#) on GCSEs in citizenship studies, cooking and nutrition, drama, and design and technology; and AS and A levels in drama and theatre. We are now consulting on proposed subject content for religious studies GCSE and AS and A level, which is the final subject that will be taught from 2016 and the focus of this consultation.
- 1.5. The main change to the religious studies GCSE content is the expectation that all students must study two religions. However, students will have the option to spend up to three quarters of their time studying one religion (if textual studies is taken into account). This will ensure all students have a well-rounded education that leads to a rigorous qualification thorough grounding in religion, religions and belief. A number of changes have also been made to the religious studies A level to re-balance the breadth and depth of the subject content to support students progressing to higher education.

- 1.6.** Ofqual has [consulted](#) on proposals for the final phase of reform and will announce its decisions shortly. It is planned that reformed GCSEs and A levels in remaining subjects will then be introduced for first teaching from 2017.

2. Coverage of this consultation

- 2.1.** This consultation seeks views on proposed subject content for religious studies GCSE and A level, which will be introduced from September 2016.
- 2.2.** The proposed subject content requirements are designed to become regulatory documents which set out the minimum knowledge, understanding and skills needed for GCSE and A level qualifications. They provide the framework for awarding organisations to create the detail of qualification specifications.
- 2.3.** This consultation covers:
- proposed content for religious studies GCSE
 - proposed content for the AS and A level in religious studies.
- 2.4.** Whilst responsibility for specifying the subject content of GCSEs and A levels lies with the Department for Education (DfE), responsibility for determining the assessment arrangements lies with Ofqual, the independent regulator. Ofqual is therefore consulting in parallel on GCSE and A level assessment arrangements for religious studies, including the assessment objectives. In order to understand how students will be expected to engage with these subjects it is important to consider both the content and the assessment objectives. The Ofqual consultation can be found [here](#).

3. Background and context for the consultation

GCSE reform

- 3.1.** The primary purpose of GCSEs is to evidence the progress and achievement of students of all abilities against demanding and fulfilling subject content. GCSEs must also enable progression to further vocational and academic study. The new qualifications will remain universal qualifications which are accessible, with good teaching, to the same proportion of students who currently sit GCSEs at the end of key stage 4. At the level of a pass (currently indicated by a grade C), there must be an increase in demand to reflect that of high-performing jurisdictions. At the top end, the new qualifications should prepare students properly to progress to A level or other study.¹

The GCSE reform process to date

- 3.2.** DfE consulted widely with subject experts, education experts, schools and teachers to develop the GCSE content for reformed GCSEs in English Baccalaureate (EBacc) subjects. We published GCSE subject content in English language, English literature and mathematics in November 2013, for first teaching from September 2015. We then published GCSE subject content in ancient languages, history, geography, science, and modern foreign languages in April 2014, for first teaching from September 2016.
- 3.3.** The former Secretary of State announced the second stage of GCSE reform in April 2014. GCSEs in art and design, citizenship studies, computer science, dance, design and technology, drama, music, physical education, and religious studies will be reformed for first teaching from September 2016. We consulted on proposed subject content for art and design, computer science, dance, music, and physical education from July to September. We are also seeking views upon proposed subject content for GCSEs in citizenship studies, cooking and nutrition, drama, and design and technology, with a consultation that is due to close in November. We are now consulting on proposed subject content for religious studies GCSE, which is the final subject that will be taught from 2016 and the focus of this consultation. We will publish a Government response to all of these consultations and the final content in the winter.
- 3.4.** The Department has led on developing content for religious studies, using expert drafters and working in close consultation with subject organisations. As part of the development process the Department has worked closely with the Religious Education Council of England and Wales to draft the content, as well as awarding

¹ For more information please refer to Ofqual's response to its consultation earlier this year on how standards should be set for new GCSEs: <http://ofqual.gov.uk/news/setting-standards-new-gcses-2017/>

organisations and Ofqual. The organisations consulted for religious studies are listed in **Annex 1**.

- 3.5.** The religious studies GCSE and A level content has undergone an extensive period of informal consultation with subject experts, religious groups, higher education experts, awarding organisations and Ofqual in the run up to formal consultation. This consultation builds on the informal engagement, which included detailed discussions about the proposals and draft content, since the religious studies content development process began.

A level reform

- 3.6.** The primary purpose of A levels is to prepare students for undergraduate study. The purpose of AS qualifications is to enable students to broaden the range of subjects they study post-16, and to support progression to further study or employment. Reforms to AS and A levels are intended to ensure that they continue to meet this purpose, in particular, responding to concerns from higher education institutions that students lack some of the skills necessary for undergraduate success.² The new A levels will be linear thus allowing more time for teaching and for students to develop a deep understanding of their subject. The process for reform gives universities a greater role in the design and development of the new qualifications.

The A level reform process to date

- 3.7.** A review of A level subject content was conducted between April and July 2013 by the four awarding organisations for A levels in England. The review was independently chaired by Professor Mark E. Smith, Vice Chancellor of Lancaster University. As a result of this review [subject content](#) in art and design, biology, business, chemistry, computer science, economics, English language, English literature, English language and literature, history, physics, psychology, and sociology was published in April 2014. These new A levels will be taught from September 2015.
- 3.8.** Responsibility for reviewing subject content for the remaining facilitating subjects, modern foreign languages, ancient languages, mathematics, further mathematics, and geography, which are to be taught from September 2016, was remitted to a

² 2012 Ipsos MORI Social Research Institute, Fit for Purpose? The view of the higher education sector, teachers and employers on the suitability of A levels, <http://www.ofqual.gov.uk/files/2012-04-03-fit-for-purpose-a-levels.pdf>, Cambridge Assessment, What are the impacts of qualifications for 16 to 19 year olds on higher education? A survey of 633 university lecturers, <http://www.cambridgeassessment.org.uk/images/116010-cambridge-assessment-he-research-survey-of-lecturers-executive-summary.pdf>.

new independent body, the A level Content Advisory Board (ALCAB).³ ALCAB provided recommendations on these subjects and we consulted on them from July to September. We will publish final subject content this winter.

- 3.9.** In April 2014, the former Secretary of State announced that a further set of A levels would be reformed for first teaching from September 2016. These are: dance, design and technology, drama and theatre, music, physical education, and religious studies. We consulted on proposed subject content for dance, music, and physical education from July to September and are seeking views on proposed subject content for the A level and AS in drama and theatre currently. We are now consulting on proposed subject content for religious studies AS and A level, which is the final subject that will be taught from 2016 and the focus of this consultation. We will publish a Government response to all of these consultations and the final content in the winter.
- 3.10.** The religious studies AS and A level has been developed through the same process as for GCSEs, with an additional requirement to draw on advice of experts from higher education institutions to ensure that the proposed content facilitates progression to higher education and builds upon the revised GCSE content.
- 3.11.** The organisations consulted for religious studies are listed in Annex 1.

³ It was decided that A levels in modern foreign languages, mathematics, further mathematics and geography required more significant change and development time and that these subjects would be reformed for first teaching in 2016. Following a request from the Department, the Russell Group of universities set up ALCAB to review subject content in these subjects, together with ancient and classical languages.

4. Proposed changes to GCSE and A level subject content

- 4.1.** This section outlines the proposed changes to current religious studies GCSE and A level subject content. The full subject content can be downloaded from the consultation page on GOV.UK.

Religious studies GCSE

- 4.2.** To ensure the new GCSE in religious studies provides students with a well-rounded education that leads to a rigorous qualification, for the first time the content sets the expectation that all students study two religions. This will ensure all students have a thorough grounding in religion, religions and belief. The qualification will ensure that all students who achieve a GCSE in religious studies are able to demonstrate that they have an understanding of more than just one religion. This is in line with other reformed subjects, for example history, where students would not achieve a GCSE if they had only studied one period of history, and would need to show a deep and broad historical understanding.
- 4.3.** These changes reflect current practice in the majority of schools, including many faith schools, who prepare their students for life in modern Britain by teaching their pupils about more than one religion. The content is structured in such a way that ensures all students spend at least half of their time studying two religions. However, students will also have the option to spend up to three quarters of their time studying one religion (if textual studies is taken into account) and the remaining quarter studying a second religion. Schools will also have the freedom to decide which two religions are most appropriate for their students to study.
- 4.4.** The content also sets out the expectation that students recognise the diverse range of religious and non-religious beliefs represented in Great Britain and the fact that the religious traditions of Great Britain are, in the main, Christian. This will help to ensure that students develop respect and tolerance for those with different religions and beliefs.
- 4.5.** These expectations are set out in the content in Part One: 'Study of religions'. This means that, in future, all RS GCSE students will spend at least half of their time studying two religions. All students will also be expected to engage with and respond to questions about religions and beliefs, whether they come from a religious background or not. Detailed content for each religion that students can choose to study is set out in the annexes that have been prepared by representatives from religious groups on the Religious Education Council of England and Wales. The content for each religion includes the topics (beliefs and teachings of religion, and sources of wisdom and authority) that all students are expected to study in relation to their two chosen religions, as well as additional topics (practices, and forms of expression and ways of life) that students will study

if they choose to study one religion in further depth.

- 4.6.** In addition to studying two religions, students will also have the opportunity to engage with thematic studies in Part Two: 'Textual studies and religion, philosophical and ethical studies in the modern world'. This will be taught within the context of two different perspectives from one religion or two religions, depending on the choice of the school. Textual studies will include an investigation of primary religious texts from the chosen religion and should encourage students to engage in sufficiently challenging material. On the advice of subject experts, Ofsted and Ofqual, students are also expected to demonstrate an understanding of religious teachings in responding to philosophical and ethical debates rather than simply providing personal response, ensuring they are grounded in religion. This part of the content also provides scope for the study of critiques of religion and of non-religious beliefs in addition to their studies of religions. Students are required to include a study of different philosophical and ethical arguments and their impact and influence in the modern world, building on their knowledge and understanding from the study of religions.
- 4.7.** Further detail about the main options that awarding organisations can offer to religious studies GCSE students is set out in **Annex 2**.

Religious studies AS and A level

- 4.8.** One of the main concerns raised by academics from higher education was that the A level does not currently provide the right breadth and depth of study to support students progressing to higher education. A number of changes have been made to address this balance. The content previously allowed students to choose one or more of up to eight quite specific areas of study, which led some students to focus very narrowly on a particular area. These eight areas of study have therefore now been consolidated into three – the systematic study of religion; textual studies; and philosophy, ethics and social scientific studies – to broadly reflect the main areas of study at higher education. Students can choose two of these areas of study to ensure that they have sufficient breadth of understanding whilst still ensuring depth of study.
- 4.9.** The content for each of the areas of study is now specified in detail, including prescribing and increasing religious content. The content also now prescribes the minimum core knowledge, understanding and skills expected of students. Furthermore, all students will now be expected to study the beliefs and teachings of at least one religion in depth through a systematic study of that religion and/or a detailed analysis of its texts. This will ensure sufficient breadth and depth of religious understanding and comparability between the different routes.
- 4.10.** Academics also provided feedback on the broad academic skills students needed to develop to progress to higher education. To reflect these comments, there is

now greater emphasis in the content on students gaining a holistic understanding of the subject including how religious belief and practice impacts on the lives of individuals and society, and the interaction between the areas studied. There is also a greater focus on understanding change over time and critically engaging with the ideas and arguments of academics, scholars and thinkers.

- 4.11.** To encourage greater respect and tolerance students will also be expected to engage in debate in a way that is respectful of the right of others to hold a different view.

Who this is for

- Schools; colleges; organisations representing school teachers and lecturers; subject associations; parents; young people; higher education; further education; academies; employers/business sector; school governors; local authorities; headteachers; teachers; and awarding organisations.

Issue date

The consultation was issued on 7 November.

Enquiries

If your enquiry is related to the policy content of the consultation you can contact the team on:

- 0370 000 2288.

or email:

- RSGCSEandAlevel.CONULTATION@education.gsi.gov.uk

If your enquiry is related to the DfE e-consultation website or the consultation process in general, you can contact the DfE Ministerial and Public Communications Division by email: consultation.unit@education.gsi.gov.uk or by telephone: 0370 000 2288 or via the [DfE Contact us page](#).

Additional copies

Additional copies are available electronically and can be downloaded from [GOV.UK DfE consultations](#).

The response

The results of the consultation and the Department's response will be [published on GOV.UK](#) early in 2015.

About this consultation

5. Consultation questions

Questions:

This consultation document makes five proposal(s):

1. Is the revised GCSE content in religious studies appropriate? Please consider whether:
 - there is a suitable level of challenge
 - the content reflects what students need to know in order to progress to further academic and vocational education
 - the amount of content in the qualification is appropriate and comparable to other reformed GCSEs and, if not, whether you have any suggestions for removing or adding content
 - the number of optional pathways through the qualification is suitable and these present comparable levels of challenge
 - there is the right balance between breadth and depth of study.
- Please provide evidence to support your response.
2. Is the revised A level content in religious studies appropriate? Please consider:
 - whether the content reflects what students need to know in order to progress to undergraduate study.
- Please provide evidence to support your response.
3. Is the revised AS qualification content in religious studies appropriate? Please provide evidence to support your response.

6. Equalities Impact

- 6.1. In accordance with the Equality Act 2010, public bodies must have “due regard”, when making decisions, to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation; advance equality of opportunity; and foster good relations, in relation to relevant protected characteristics. It would therefore be very helpful to understand if, in your view, there is any potential for the subject content to have a disproportionate impact upon any student with relevant protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010. It would be particularly helpful to understand if you have evidence to support any concerns you may have about such impacts.

Questions:

4. Do you think that any of the proposals have the potential to have a disproportionate impact, positive or negative, on specific students, in particular those with 'relevant protected characteristics'? (The relevant protected characteristics are disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.) Please provide evidence to support your response.
5. How could any adverse impact be reduced and how could the subject content of GCSEs and/or A levels be altered to better advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a protected characteristic and those who do not share it? Please provide evidence to support your response.

We would like to hear your views on our proposals.

Respond online

To help us analyse the responses please use the online system wherever possible. Visit www.education.gov.uk/consultations to submit your response.

Other ways to respond

If for exceptional reasons, you are unable to use the online system, for example because you use specialist accessibility software that is not compatible with the system, you may download a word document version of the form and email it or post it.

By email

- RSGCSEandAlevel.CONSULTATION@education.gsi.gov.uk

If your enquiry is related to the policy content of the consultation you can contact the Department on 0370 000 2288

Email: RSGCSEandAlevel.CONSULTATION@education.gsi.gov.uk

if your enquiry is related to the DfE e-consultation website or the consultation process in general, you can contact the Ministerial and Public Communications Division by e-mail:

consultation.unit@education.gsi.gov.uk or by telephone: 0370 000 2288

or via the Department's 'Contact Us' page

By post

- Alex Smith, Floor 2, Sanctuary Buildings, Great Smith St, Westminster, London SW1P 3BT, UK.

Deadline

The consultation closes on 29 December 2014.

Annex 1: Subject experts consulted in the development of proposed subject content

Working closely with the Religious Education Council of England and Wales, views of a range of subject experts were gathered as part of the subject content development process. These included representatives from the following organisations:

Al-Khoei Foundation

Association of RE Inspectors, Advisers and Consultants (AREIAC)

Association of University Lecturers in RE (AULRE)

Avanti Schools Trust

Board of Deputies of British Jews

British Humanist Association (BHA)

British Sikh Education Council

Catholic Education Service (CES)

Church of England Board of Education

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints

Culham St Gabriel's Trust

Free Churches Education Committee (FCEC)

Hindu Council (UK)

Hockerill Educational Foundation

Independent Schools RS Association (ISRSA)

ISKCON Educational Services

Muslim Council of Britain

National Association of Standing Advisory Councils on RE

National Association of Teachers of RE (NATRE)

National Board of RE Inspectors and Advisers (NBRIA)

National Society for Promoting Religious Education ISKCON

National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Great Britain

Network of Buddhist Organisations

Network of Sikh Organisations

Pagan Federation

Religious Education Council of England and Wales

The Buddhist Society

The Stapleford Centre

The Oxford Foundation

Tony Blair Faith Foundation

TRS-UK

Annex 2: Religious Studies GCSE model

Option 1

Part One: 50% Study of religions		Part Two: 50% Thematic studies
25% Study of a first religion Two topics: 1. Beliefs and teachings 2. Sources of wisdom and authority	25% Study of a second religion Two topics: 1. Beliefs and teachings 2. Sources of wisdom and authority	ONE of the following: 50% Textual studies Four themes – two perspectives from one or two religious traditions <u>OR</u> 50% Religion, Philosophy and Ethics in the modern world Four themes – two perspectives from one or two religious traditions <u>OR</u> 25% Textual studies and 25% Religion, Philosophy and Ethics in the modern world Four themes – two perspectives from one or two religious traditions

Option 2

Part One: 75% Study of religions		Part Two: 25% Thematic studies
50% Study of a first religion Four topics: 1. Beliefs and teachings 2. Sources of wisdom and authority 3. Practices 4. Forms of Expression and ways of life	25% Study of a second religion Two topics: 1. Beliefs and teachings 2. Sources of wisdom and authority	ONE of the following: 25% Textual studies Two themes – two perspectives from one or two religious traditions <u>OR</u> 25% Religion, Philosophy and Ethics in the modern world Two themes – two perspectives from one or two religious traditions



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GCE AS and A level subject content for religious studies

Introduction

1. AS and A level subject content sets out the knowledge and understanding common to all AS and A level specifications in a given subject.
2. It provides the framework within which the awarding organisation creates the detail of the specification.

Aims and objectives

3. AS and A level specifications in religious studies must encourage students to:
 - develop their interest in a rigorous study of religion and belief and relate it to the wider world
 - develop knowledge and understanding appropriate to a specialist study of religion
 - develop an understanding and appreciation of religious thought and its contribution to the individual, communities and society
 - adopt an enquiring, critical, and reflective approach to the study of religion
 - reflect on and develop their own values, opinions and attitudes in the light of their study

Subject content

4. This section sets out the minimum range of content for AS and A level specifications in religious studies.
5. AS and A level specifications in religious studies should build on the requirements for religious studies in earlier key stages including the knowledge and understanding established at key stage 4 and GCSE qualifications.
6. Where different knowledge, understanding and/or skills are required to ensure students studying at A level go into greater depth and/or breadth than AS, this is specified.
7. Where the focus of this area of study is a particular group or denomination within a religion rather than the religion more generally, specifications must place this study in the context of the broader religious tradition to which it belongs.

Knowledge, understanding and skills

8. Religious studies specifications at AS and A level must require students to demonstrate knowledge, understanding and skills through two of the following approaches that must require an equal amount of teaching, learning and assessment:

Systematic Study of one Religion

9. At AS and A level this includes the study of:

- religious beliefs, values and teaching in their diverse manifestations in history and in the contemporary world, including those linked to the nature and existence of God or ultimate reality, the role of the community of believers, key moral principles, beliefs about the self, death and afterlife, beliefs about the meaning and purpose of life
- sources of authority and wisdom including, where appropriate; scripture and/or sacred texts and how they are used and treated by believers; key religious figures and/or teachers and how they are regarded in relation to other sources of wisdom and authority
- practices including prayer/meditation, ritual, festivals and celebration
- forms of expression inspired and influenced by religion and religious belief

10. In addition at A level this includes the study of:

- significant social and historical developments in theology or religious thought including the challenges of secularism, science, responses to pluralism and diversity within traditions, migration, the changing roles of men and women, feminist and liberationist approaches
- a comparison of the work of at least two theologians/thinkers
- two themes related to issues of identity and belonging for religious believers today such as dietary and dress codes, the compatibility of religious and other forms of identity, issues of equality in the freedom to practice a religion
- religious tolerance, respect and recognition, interfaith dialogue and the ways that religious traditions view other religious traditions and their truth-claims
- how developments in beliefs and practices have, over time, influenced and been influenced by developments in philosophical, ethical and social scientific studies of religion or by textual interpretation

Philosophical, Ethical and Social Scientific Studies of Religion

11. At AS and A level this includes the study of:

- philosophical issues and questions raised by religion and belief including at least two contrasting arguments about: the existence and non-existence of God, gods or ultimate reality; the nature and impact of religious experience; the problems of evil and suffering

- two ethical theories such as utilitarianism and virtue ethics and their application to issues related and applied to religious belief such as matters of life and death, poverty and world development
- two contrasting approaches to religion and religious experience chosen from the fields of psychology, sociology and anthropology

12. In addition at A level this includes the study of:

- how views of religious language have changed over time; the challenges posed by the verification/falsification debate and language games theory over whether religious language should be viewed cognitively; and a consideration of at least two different views about talk about God being understood symbolically and analogically.
- a comparison of the key ideas presented in works of at least two key scholars selected from the fields of the philosophy of religion, religious ethics and/or social scientific study of religion and developments in the way these ideas are applied to contemporary issues in religion and belief
- how philosophical, ethical and social scientific studies have, over time, influenced and been influenced by developments in religious beliefs and practices or textual interpretation

Textual Studies (one religion, not necessarily a religion studied for the other two approaches above)

13. Specifications should prescribe the study of clearly referenced texts from one religion. Whole texts or multiple passages from one or several texts may be specified but taken as a whole, the texts must be sufficient to enable the themes to be explored thoroughly and for all three assessment objectives to be met.

14. Decisions about the quantity of text required for study must take account of the level of challenge posed by the comprehension of the text.

15. At AS and A level this includes the study of:

- selected text(s) or substantial passages in translation from a particular religious work or corpus of scripture, examining the meaning of the material, its literary features, ideas, authorship and audience and its relationship with other texts and/or sources of wisdom and authority from the religion.
- legal/ theological/ ethical content and the role of a text or texts in religious law making and codes for living
- issues that arise from the formation, transmission and translation of the text(s)
- the origin, social and historical context of the text(s)
- the ways in which the text(s) are interpreted and used by religious communities and how these have changed over time

- the religious, cultural and other significance of the text(s) including its reception and influence beyond a religious community

16. In addition at A level this includes the study of:

- modern and historical commentary on the selected texts, including allegorical or other interpretations
- methods and methodology in interpretation
- the scientific and historical-critical challenges to the authority of texts and religious responses to these
- modern critical scholarship including different contemporary approaches, religious and non-religious, to the primary text or corpus, and the religious or intellectual assumptions that underpin them
- how textual interpretations have, over time, influenced and been influenced by developments in philosophical, ethical and social scientific studies of religion or developments in religious thought (as set out above for systematic study of religion)

17. Within the chosen approach, all AS and A level specifications in religious studies must require students to acquire and develop knowledge and a critical understanding of:

- religious thought, belief and practice and the different ways in which these are expressed in the lives of individuals, communities and societies
- how religious texts and/ or other relevant sources of authority are interpreted and applied
- major issues, challenges and questions within and about the study of religion (for example, the role of tolerance, respect and recognition and interreligious dialogue, methods of study, relevance to contemporary society) and responses to these
- the cause, meaning and significance of similarities and differences in religious thought, belief and practice within and/or between religion(s)

18. In addition A level specifications in religious studies must require students to demonstrate critical awareness of:

- questions, issues and arguments posed by scholars from within and outside religious traditions
- social, religious and historical factors that have influenced developments in the study of religions and beliefs
- connections between the various elements of the area(s) of study, as set out in content above

19. GCE AS and A level specifications in religious studies must require students to demonstrate their ability to:

- reflect on, select and apply specified knowledge
- construct well informed and reasoned arguments substantiated by relevant evidence
- understand, interpret and evaluate critically religious concepts, texts and other sources
- present responses to questions which are clear and coherent
- use specialist language and terminology appropriately
- identify, investigate and critically analyse questions, arguments, ideas and issues arising from the chosen approaches
- engage in debate in a way that is respectful of the right of others to hold a different view

20. In addition, A level specifications in religious studies will require students to demonstrate their ability to:

- critically analyse and evaluate the views and arguments of scholars/ academics
- account for the influence of social, religious and historical factors on developments in the study of religions and beliefs
- analyse the nature of connections between the various elements of their course of study
- develop breadth and depth in their understanding of the connections between the knowledge, understanding and skills set out in the specification as a whole

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Department
for Education

Religious studies

GCSE subject content

November 2014

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Introduction

1. GCSE subject content sets out the knowledge, understanding and skills common to all GCSE specifications in a given subject. It provides the framework within which awarding organisations create the detail of their specifications, so ensuring progression from the Key Stage 3 curriculum and the possibilities for progression to GCE A level.
2. By setting out the range of subject content and areas of study for GCSE specifications in religious studies, the subject content is consistent with the requirements for the statutory provision for religious education in current legislation as it applies to different types of school.

Subject aims and learning outcomes

3. GCSE specifications in religious studies should:
 - develop students' knowledge and understanding of religions and non-religious beliefs
 - develop students' knowledge and understanding of religious beliefs, teachings, and sources of wisdom and authority, including through their reading of key religious texts, other texts, and scriptures of the religions they are studying
 - develop students' ability to construct well-argued, well-informed, balanced and structured written arguments, demonstrating their depth and breadth of understanding of the subject
 - provide opportunities for students to engage with questions of belief, value, meaning, purpose, truth, and their impact on human life
 - challenge students to reflect on and develop their own values, beliefs and attitudes in the light of what they have learnt and contribute to their preparation for adult life in a pluralistic society and global community
4. GCSE specifications in religious studies must require students to:
 - demonstrate knowledge and understanding of **two religions**
 - demonstrate knowledge and understanding of key sources of wisdom and authority including texts which support contemporary religious faith
 - understand the impact of religion on individuals, communities and societies
 - understand significant common and divergent views between and within religions and beliefs

- apply knowledge and understanding in order to analyse questions related to religious beliefs and values
- construct well-informed and balanced arguments on matters concerned with religious beliefs and values set out in the subject content below

Programme of Study

5. Specifications may offer alternative routes through the qualification, drawing from the content set out below in order to provide students with one or more of the following programmes of study:

- Study of religion: the beliefs and teachings and sources of wisdom and authority (topics a and b from Part One) in relation to two religions (making up 50% of the overall qualification weighting, shared equally between the two religions); AND either:
 - a study of four different themes from Part Two adopting a textual approach (50% of the qualification), OR
 - a study of four different themes from Part Two adopting the approach of religious, philosophical and ethical studies in the modern world (50% of the qualification), OR
 - a study of four different themes from Part Two adopting a textual approach for two of those themes and the approach of religious, philosophical and ethical studies in the modern world for two themes (50% of the qualification)

OR

- study all four topics from Part One in relation to a primary religion (50% of the overall qualification weighting); AND beliefs and teachings and sources of wisdom and authority (topics a and b from Part One) in relation to a second religion (25% of the qualification); AND either:
 - two different themes from Part Two, adopting a textual approach (25% of the qualification), OR
 - two different themes from Part Two, adopting the approach of religious, philosophical and ethical studies in the modern world (25% of the qualification)

6. Throughout all of the programmes of study, specifications should include the study of common and divergent views within traditions in the way beliefs and teachings are understood and expressed.

7. Specifications may offer students the ability to study the themes within Part 2 in relation to differing perspectives from either one or two religions. Where students approach a theme in relation to one religion, they must study differing perspectives from within that religion in order to ensure they meet the assessment objectives.
8. Awarding organisations can develop, combine or cross reference the required content in any way appropriate to the specification, as long as the overall criteria are met.

Subject content

Part One: Study of religions

9. The content outlined below sets out the requirements for the study of religions, which is described for specific religions in annex A.
10. Where a religion is studied from the perspective of one group or denomination the second option chosen must be from another principal religion (e.g Christianity and Catholic Christianity could not be combined). Where a group or denomination is studied it must be studied in the context of the wider religion to which it belongs.
11. The four (study of religion) topics from which specifications may draw, in line with the programme of study set out above, are:
- a. beliefs and teachings of religion: beliefs about God, gods or ultimate reality; the role of communities of faith, key moral principles and the meanings and purposes of human life
 - b. sources of wisdom and authority: the nature, history and treatment of key religious texts or scriptures; and where appropriate, of key religious figures and/or teachers from the early history of the tradition and/or the modern age
 - c. practices: the application of beliefs and teachings to the lives of modern believers including the study of places and forms of worship (as appropriate to each religion) rituals, prayer, meditation, festivals and celebrations, fasting, rites of passage, religious journeys and pilgrimage
 - d. forms of expression and ways of life: the impact of beliefs on individuals, communities and societies through ways of life and moral codes, through art forms such as drama, dance, literature, architecture and music inspired by religions and belief, and the role of these art forms in worship or ritual
12. In addition, all specifications must require students to demonstrate knowledge and understanding that:

- religious traditions in Great Britain are diverse and include the following religions: Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism, as well as other religions and non-religious beliefs
- the fact that religious traditions of Great Britain are, in the main, Christian

Part Two: Textual studies and religious, philosophical and ethical studies in the modern world

13. Students should engage with the subject content set out below for thematic studies through either a 'textual studies' or a 'religious, philosophical and ethical studies in the modern world' approach.

Textual studies

14. If following a textual studies approach, all students must investigate primary religious texts from one or both of the religions they have studied for Part One: Study of Religions relating to:

- the significance, importance and impact of the texts for individuals, communities and societies
- how varied interpretations of the meaning of such texts may give rise to diversity within traditions
- how far communities give authority to such texts especially in relation to other sources of contemporary authority

15. Specifications must require students to demonstrate an understanding of these three issues in relation to the text as whole, while also studying themes of central concern to the religious text they are exploring.

16. Specifications should prescribe the study of clearly referenced material from the particular religion or religions selected. A single extended extract or multiple shorter ones from one or several texts may be specified, but taken as a whole the material must be sufficient to enable the themes to be explored thoroughly, for different perspectives to be explored and for the assessment objectives to be met.

17. Decisions about the number and length of the extracts must take account of the level of challenge posed by the comprehension of the material and whether the selection is taken from one religious tradition or two.

Religious, philosophical and ethical studies in the modern world

18. If the approach to thematic studies is through a religious, philosophical and ethical studies in the modern world approach, students must be required to include a study of different philosophical and ethical arguments and their impact and influence in the modern world. They should demonstrate the depth of their understanding of religion through the application of teachings from religions and beliefs including through specific references to sources of wisdom and authority.

Themes

- a. accounts in texts of key events in the lives of founders or important religious figures, their significance and impact, including on life in the 21st century. How varied interpretations of the meaning of such texts may give rise to diversity within traditions (textual study only)
- b. the significance, importance and impact of religious texts as a source for religious law making and codes for living in the 21st century. How varied interpretations of the meaning of these sources may give rise to diversity within traditions (textual study only)
- c. the significance, importance and impact of stories and/or parables that communicate religious, moral and spiritual truths. How varied interpretations of the meaning of such texts may give rise to diversity within traditions (textual study only)
- d. relationships and families, religious teachings about the nature and purpose of families in the 21st century, sex, marriage, cohabitation and divorce. Issues related to the nature and purpose of families; roles of men and women; equality; gender prejudice and discrimination. How varied interpretations of sources and/or of teachings may give rise to diversity within traditions (textual study or religious, philosophical and ethical studies in the modern world)
- e. religious views of the world, including their relationship to scientific views; beliefs about death and an afterlife; explanations of the origins of the universe. How varied interpretations of sources and/or of teachings may give rise to diversity within traditions. (textual study or religious, philosophical and ethical studies in the modern world)
- f. the existence of God, gods and ultimate reality, and ways in which God, gods or ultimate reality might be understood; through revelation, visions, miracles or enlightenment. How varied interpretations of sources or of teachings may give rise to diversity within traditions. (textual study or religious, philosophical and ethical studies in the modern world)

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- g. religion, peace and conflict; violence, war, pacifism, terrorism, just war theory, holy war; the role of religion and belief in 21st century conflict and peace making; the concepts of justice, forgiveness and reconciliation (religious, philosophical and ethical studies in the modern world only)
- h. crime and punishment; causes of crime, aims of punishment, the concepts of forgiveness, retribution, deterrence, reformation; the death penalty, treatment of criminals; good, evil and suffering (religious, philosophical and ethical studies in the modern world only)
- i. dialogue within and between religions and non-religious beliefs; how those with religious and non-religious beliefs respond to critiques of their beliefs including the study of a range of attitudes towards those with different religious views – inclusivist, exclusivist and pluralist approaches (religious, philosophical and ethical studies in the modern world only)
- j. religion, human rights and social justice; issues of equality and freedom of religion or belief; prejudice and discrimination in religion and belief; human rights; wealth and poverty; racial prejudice and discrimination (religious, philosophical and ethical studies in the modern world only)

Religious studies short course

19. The content for GCSE religious studies short courses will be half the content of the GCSE full course. Specifications must offer the opportunity to either:

- study beliefs and teachings and sources of wisdom and authority (topics a and b from Part One) in relation to two religions

OR

- study beliefs and teachings (topic a from Part One) only in relation to two religions, AND two different themes from Part Two adopting the approach of religious, philosophical and ethical studies in the modern world

Annex A: Part One: Study of religions

Buddhism

All specifications must cover the following core knowledge and understanding, which represents 100% of the content for Part One.

Beliefs and teachings

- the Buddha: the narratives of Siddattha (Siddhartha) including his early life, the Four Sights/Signs; Enlightenment
- the Dhamma (Dharma): Dependent origination/conditionality (paticcasamupada/pratityasamutpada); three marks of existence: dukkha-suffering-unsatisfactoriness (lakkhanas/lakshanas), anicca/anitya-impermanence; anatta/anatman (no fixed self, essence or soul), Four Noble Truths
- the First Noble Truth: dukkha (suffering), different types of dukkha
- the Second Noble Truth (samudaya): The causes of dukkha (suffering/unsatisfactoriness), Three Poisons, rebirth/rebecoming (punabbhava), Factors governing rebirth
- the Third Noble Truth: cessation of craving/desire(tanha), interpretations of nirvana (nibbana) and enlightenment
- the Fourth Noble Truth: The Eight Fold Path (magga/marga) to nirvana (nibbana), three strands: sila (ethics), panna/prajna (wisdom) and samadhi (concentration)
- the human personality: In addition to the three marks of existence: Theravada - Five Aggregates (khandas/skandhas), Mahayana views - shunyata;tathagata - garbha; Buddha-nature
- Human destiny: arhat (arahant) and bodhisattva ideals, Buddhahood and The Pure Land
- Ethical and moral principles: kamma/karma; actions have consequences: panna/prajna(wisdom); karuna (compassion); metta/maitri (loving kindness); five precepts (pancha sila); In Mahayana: development of the six perfections (paramitas) or virtues

Sources of wisdom and authority

- Buddha: different meanings of Buddha: Gautama, other Buddhas such as Amitabha/Amida, Mahayana concept of Buddha-nature

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- Buddhas and archetypal Buddhas and Bodhisattvas: Avalokiteswara/Chenrezig (in Chinese Buddhism, Kuan Yin), Manjushri-Jamyang
- Dharma (note different scripture collections in different types of Buddhism)
- Sangha: Interpretations of the term sangha: monks; monks and nuns; all Buddhists; sangha as the community of spiritual friends
- roles in the monastic and lay sangha including additional precepts for ordained monastic sangha (monastic community); forms of ordination: including married priests in Japanese traditions; ordination in the Triratna Order
- preceptors and elders in Theravada, gurus/lamas in Tibetan Buddhism, master-pupil in Zen/Ch'an
- the Tripitaka (the Three Baskets): the Vinaya Pitaka; the Sutta Pitaka; the Abhidhamma Pitaka; the Prajnaparamita Sutra; and the Lotus Sutra
- individual and personal experience as authoritative: the Kalama Sutta
- key figures (Historical) including King Ashoka; (contemporary) Tenzing Gyatso (His Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Lama); Soto Zen: Rev. Master Jiyu-Kennett; Sangharakshita

Practices

- meditation (in most but not all forms of Buddhism); samatha (concentration), vipassana (insight) and metta bhavana, visualisation, zazen
- chanting: including memorising key scriptures, making offerings, aiding mental concentration
- mantra recitation: chanting sacred syllables, concentration and the visualisation of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas; use of malas
- features and functions of Buddhist centres including temples, gompas, and viharas, shrines, artefacts and offerings
- puja in different Buddhist contexts
- ceremonies and rituals associated with death and mourning in Theravada communities and in Japan and Tibet
- festivals: Theravada: Wesak; Vassa/Rain Retreat and Kathina; uposatha days; Mahayana: Hanamatsuri and Obon (Japanese); Lama Tsong Khapa Day (Tibetan); Parinirvana Day

Forms of expression and ways of life

- Rupas (statues) of the Buddha and bodhisattvas within different traditions
- Thankas (In Tibetan Buddhism) including their use in worship
- symbols: the lotus flower, the wheel, the stupa
- Mudras (hand and body gestures) in iconography and worship
- Tibetan Wheel of Life: relationship to key teaching on causation and dependent origination (pratitya samutpada/paticca samuppada)
- one example of Buddhist charitable work in the UK (e.g. UK Buddhist development charity, the Karuna Trust), Buddhist chaplaincy (Angulimala, the UK Buddhist Prison Chaplaincy)
- pilgrimages and retreats including; India: Bodh Gaya (the Buddha's enlightenment); Deer Park at Sarnath (the Buddha's first teaching of the dhamma)

Common and divergent views within Buddhism in the way beliefs and teachings are understood and expressed should be included throughout.

Christianity

All specifications must cover the following core knowledge and understanding, which represents 100% of the content for Part One.

Beliefs and teachings

- the nature of God, such as omnipotence, the problem of evil/suffering and a loving and righteous God
- Creation, including the role of Word and Spirit, with textual references to Genesis 1-3, and John 1
- the Trinity, including the Oneness of God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit
- the person of Jesus Christ, including beliefs and teachings relating to his incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection and ascension
- Christology, including the titles of Jesus in the Gospels and the creeds
- salvation, including law, sin, grace and Spirit, the role of Christ in salvation, and the nature of atonement

- Eschatological beliefs and teachings, including the importance of resurrection and life after death, judgement, heaven and hell

Sources of wisdom and authority

- the Bible, including its development, structure and purpose (Old Testament: law, history, prophets, writings; and New Testament: gospels, letters), its unity as the Word of God, and two contrasting interpretations of its authority
- the Gospels as a source of authority for the events in Jesus' life, including the commonalities and differences between the synoptic gospels (Matthew, Mark and Luke) and the fourth gospel (John)
- Jesus as the Word of God and the role of Jesus in modelling practices such as love for others, forgiveness, servanthood, reconciliation and social justice, and in establishing the Kingdom of God
- the growth of the church, including belief in the Church as the body of Christ; the development of different churches: Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant and Pentecostal/Charismatic
- leadership in the church, including the Pope, bishops, priests/ministers/ pastors; the role of women in leadership
- the role of the individual, including religious experience, reason and personal conscience
- the use of the Bible in worship and in personal and ethical decision making by Christians

Practices

- different forms of worship including liturgical, informal and individual
- the role and meaning of the sacraments in Christian life, including: baptism and Eucharist
- prayer, including the Lord's Prayer, set prayers and informal prayer
- the role of pilgrimage and celebrations, including at least two contrasting examples of Christian pilgrimage (such as Walsingham, Taizé, Iona) and celebrations
- mission, evangelism and church growth
- the role of the church in the local community

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- the worldwide church including working for reconciliation, the persecuted church and the work of Christian Aid/Tearfund/Cafod
- common and divergent views within Christianity in the way beliefs and teachings are understood and expressed should be included throughout

Forms of expression and ways of life

- the significance and meaning of at least three forms of art, drawn from:
 - icons
 - drawing/painting
 - sculpture
 - music
 - drama
 - film
 - new technologies and social media
- the use of symbolism and imagery in religious art including Christian symbols such as ChiRho, Cross, fish, Alpha and Omega, symbols of the four evangelists
- the use of different styles of music in worship, including: psalms, hymns and worship songs

Christianity (Catholic Christianity)

All specifications must cover the following core knowledge and understanding, which represents 100% of the content for Part One.

Beliefs and teachings

- the belief in one God as a Trinity of persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The scriptural origins of this belief and its historical development and significance
- the doctrine of Creation and its implications: a belief in the goodness of the created world and the dignity of each person made in the image and likeness of God
- the interpretation of Genesis 1-3 within the Catholic interpretative tradition in contrast to creationism. The compatibility of the doctrine of Creation and the theory of evolution
- the doctrine of the Fall and original sin, its meaning and significance for Catholic beliefs about sin and freedom and its role in sacramental theology, especially baptism

- the belief in Jesus as incarnate Son, divine Word, both human and divine. The scriptural and historical origins of this belief and its historical development through the early councils of the Church
- the significance of Jesus' crucifixion, resurrection and ascension and the implications these have for Catholic beliefs about salvation and grace
- an understanding of the work of the Holy Spirit in the history of the Catholic Church and in the lives of people today
- Catholic beliefs about life after death: heaven, hell and purgatory and the meanings and implications of each

Sources of wisdom and authority

- the nature and importance of Scripture as a source of revelation, an understanding of the shape of the Bible and the historical origins of this shape, including an understanding of the Catholic method of biblical interpretation
- an understanding of the authority of the Church's magisterium: both conciliar and pontifical, and the weight given to different kinds of Church teaching
- an understanding of the Church as "one, holy, catholic and apostolic" and the significance of each of these marks of the Church
- the role and example of Mary as a model of the Church and perfect disciple
- the Second Vatican Council – its history and key documents
- the role of individual reason and Catholic teaching on the relationship between conscience, freedom and authority
- sources of moral teaching: the Ten Commandments, Natural Law, the virtues and the Catholic Church's teaching on the primacy of conscience

Practices

- the Catholic teaching on sacraments, including a knowledge of each of the seven sacraments, their form and matter. The central place of the Eucharist as source and summit of Catholic Christian worship and life
- the daily office as an expression of the constant work of praise to which all Catholic are called as part of Vatican II's universal call to holiness
- popular piety as expressed in such devotions as the Rosary, Eucharistic adoration, Stations of the Cross

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- the Church's liturgical calendar, including an understanding of its fasts and feasts and the significance of each
- the Church at each level: domestic, local, national and global, including church structures, positions of authority and the papacy
- an understanding of the different features of a Catholic church and how these reflect Catholic beliefs and facilitate Catholic prayer and devotion

Forms of expression and ways of life

- a study of church and monastic architecture, design and decoration as expressive of Catholic beliefs and worship
- a study of one of the Church's great visual artists, for example Raphael, Michelangelo or other Catholic devotional artists
- a study of a Catholic devotional poet, for example Gerard Manley Hopkins
- Catholic iconography and statuary, for example different renderings of the Stations of the Cross or medieval rood screens
- Catholic liturgical music, including plainchant and other liturgical music
- other non-liturgical religious music, for example Elgar's Dream of Gerontius
- Catholic literature, for example the work of Graham Greene or Evelyn Waugh
- Catholic beliefs and practices as explored in film, for example The Mission, A Man for All Seasons or Of Gods and Men

Common and divergent views within Catholic Christianity in the way beliefs and teachings are understood and expressed should be included throughout.

Hinduism

All specifications must cover the following core knowledge and understanding, which represents 100% of the content for Part One.

Beliefs and teachings

- the individual, eternal self (atman), distinct from material mind and body
- Samsara (cycle of birth and death), the law of karma (moral action and reaction); types of moksha (liberation), prakriti (matter); the tri-guna (three qualities); maya (illusion); cosmology; eschatology; many worlds; cycle of four ages

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- Brahman (spirit; the ultimate reality or absolute truth); nirguna and saguna brahman
- three features of the divine: brahman (everywhere, as non-personal); antaryami (within the heart); bhagavan (beyond, as a personal loving God)
- manifestations of the divine: the tri-murti; male and female deities; avatara; murti
- the four aims of human life; dharma; sanatana dharma; varnashrama dharma
- Dharma and its meaning; Sanatana Dharma (eternal religion); Varnashrama Dharma (relative duties relating to the four varnas & four ashramas), to be distinguished from the later hereditary Jati
- individual free will, and responses to suffering; knowledge and ignorance
- personal virtues e.g. ahimsa, respect, empathy, mind/sense control, humility, love

Sources of wisdom and authority

- main sources of authority: 1. texts (oral and written) 2. holy people 3. personal insight
- main divisions of text: 1. Shruti (revealed scripture) and 2. Smriti (remembered scriptures)
- key texts: Vedas; Upanishads; Ramayana; Mahabharata; Bhagavad-gita; Puranas
- Sad-darshana (six schools of Indian philosophy); Vedanta theology (which largely represents modern thought), especially dvaita and advaita; debates about the existence, nature and identity of God
- the four primary religious traditions/denominations
- the role of guru and sacred lineages; the guru-disciplic relationship
- views on Hinduism's origins, history and founding figures; reformers
- Rishis; brahmins; saints; sannyasins; temple priests; gurus and swamis; famous women; key theologians (e.g. Shankara and Ramanuja)
- the Sanskrit language; its role and meaning within liturgy and scholarship

Practices

- the four paths towards yoga (union with the divine): karma (action), jnana (knowledge) astanga (meditation) and bhakti (devotion)

DRAFT

- forms of worship/meditation: havan, puja, arati, darshan, bhajan/kirtan, japa, mantra
- places of worship: inside the home; temple; outdoors (e.g. shrine); within the space of the heart
- focusses of worship and representations of the divine (deities, guru, holy hills, rivers)
- sacred festivals and the origin and meaning of: Diwali, Holi, Navaratri, Dussehra, Ram Navami, Ratha-yatra, Janmashtami, Raksha Bandhan
- pilgrimage; associated purposes, practices and sacred sites
- ascetic traditions; world-affirming traditions - brahminism; social systems; family life
- modern leaders and movements in the UK: VHP, ISKCON and Swaminarayana
- Hindu responses to contemporary moral issues: Hindu environmental projects; charities to help others and promote peace, social inclusion and women's rights

Forms of expression and ways of life

- classical, medieval and modern (e.g. Gandhi) social reformers
- world-renouncing and ascetic traditions: sadhus and naked babas; austerity and penance. World-affirming traditions: Hindu social systems; brahminism; family life, children and education
- decorative arts: symbols, rangoli, temple architecture, sculpture, decoration of shrine and sacred image
- expressive and literary arts: song, dance, music, painting, drama, poetics, television and film; Sanskrit and scholarship
- Hindu etiquette; food, diet and hospitality; dress and ornamentation; respect for elders; modern expressions of culture
- Hindu achievements in mathematics (zero, pi, trigonometry), physics (speed of light, heliocentric cosmology), medicine (herbal medicine and surgery) and astronomy

Common and divergent views within Hinduism in the way beliefs and teachings are understood and expressed should be included throughout.

Islam

All specifications must cover the following core knowledge and understanding, which represents approximately 100% of the content for Part One.

Beliefs and teachings

- the six articles of faith in Sunni Islam and five roots of 'Usul ad-Din in Shi'a Islam
- teaching about the nature of Allah: His 99 Names, oneness (Tawhid), immanence, transcendence, omnipotence, beneficence, mercy, fairness and justice (Adalat in Shi'a Islam)
- teachings about Risalah (prophethood), including Adam, Ibrahim, Ismael, Musa, Dawud, Isa, Muhammad
- teaching about Kutub (Books); Sahifah (Scrolls), Injil (Gospel), Tawrat (Torah), Zabur (Psalms)
- teaching about Malaikah (angels) including Jibril, Izra'il, Mika'il, Israfil, Munkar/Nakir and Kiraman/Katibin
- teaching about al-Qadr (predestination) and human freedom and its relationship to the Day of Judgement; teaching about Akhirah: life after death, human responsibility and accountability, heaven and hell

Sources of wisdom and authority

- the Qur'an including its revelation, compilation and its use by Muslims
- the Prophet Muhammad: life, teaching and authority including his call; work in Makkah and Madinah, the hijrah, role as 'seal of the Prophets' and as a role model
- Ahl-al-Baht (the family of the Prophet Muhammad including Caliph/Imam Ali) in Sunni and Shi'a Islam; the origins of differences and implications for questions of authority
- the Hadith as a record of the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad, compilation, main collections (Sunni and Shi'a), elements of Hadith - isnad and matn
- Shari'ah: how it is agreed including sources used by the main schools of Sunni and Shi'a Law; Qur'an; Hadith, Qiyas (analogy) and Ijma' (consensus); the role of qadis (judges) and the 'ulama (scholars)
- the Imam in Sunni and Shi'a Islam: origins, nature, role in individual and community life. The doctrine of Nass, the inerrancy and intercession of Imams in Shi'a Islam. The implications of teaching on Imams for the lives of Muslims today

Practices

- the Five Pillars of Sunni Islam and Ten Obligatory Acts of Shi'a Islam
- Shahadah: declaration of Faith, the place of the Shahadah in Muslim practice
- Salah: how and why Muslims pray, ablution, times, directions, movements and recitations, in the home and mosque and elsewhere. Jummah prayer, diversity of practice
- Sawm: fasting during the month of Ramadan. Origins, duties, benefits, those who are excused and why, the Night of Power
- Zakah: giving alms: origins, how and why it is given, benefits of receipt. Khums (Shi'a)
- Hajj: Pilgrimage to Makkah: the origins, how and why it is performed
- Jihad: greater and lesser, origins, impact and conditions for declaration of lesser jihad.
- festivals and commemorations: Id-ul-Adha, Id-ul-Fitr, Id-ul-Ghadeer and Ashura

Forms of expression and ways of life

- Muslim identity expressed through the ummah including the ceremonies for welcoming a child into the ummah; expectations about modesty including dress codes
- one national Muslim organisation working to relieve poverty and suffering in the UK
- halal and haram; categories, how they are applied to laws of food and drink, riba - prohibition of interest
- the use of art forms as an expression of Muslim belief including calligraphy, music, poetry and architecture
- the mosque: religious features of mosques including design, furniture, artefacts and associated practices
- Shi'a obligatory actions: Amr bil Maruf and Nahy Anil Munkar, Tawallah and tabarra; Love for the Prophet Muhammad and his family and disdain for their enemies

- Sufi ways of life including the origins, the Sheikh, teachers such as al-Ghazālī, ibn al-ʿArabi and Rābiʿa al-ʿAdawiyya, Key practices including orders, music, dance, poetry, fasting, dhikr, saints

Common and divergent views within Islam in the way beliefs and teachings are understood and expressed should be included throughout.

Judaism

All specifications must cover the following core knowledge and understanding, which represents 100% of the content for Part One.

Beliefs and teachings

- beliefs and teachings about the nature of God including God as One, Creator, Law-Giver and Judge
- beliefs and teachings about the divine presence (Shekhinah)
- beliefs and teachings about the importance of the Covenant at Sinai (the Ten Commandments)
- beliefs and teachings about the importance that Judaism places on the sanctity of human life, including the concept of Pikuach Nefesh
- beliefs and teachings about the nature and role of the Messiah
- beliefs and teachings about the Promised Land
- beliefs and teachings regarding key moral principles including the relationship between free will and the 613 Mitzvot
- beliefs and teachings about Mitzvot between man and God and Mitzvot between man and man
- beliefs about life after death including judgement and resurrection

Sources of wisdom and authority

- diversity of beliefs regarding the interpretation of sources of wisdom and authority amongst the Jewish community
- the Tenakh (the Written Law): Torah, Neviim and Ketuvim (use in daily life)
- the Talmud (the Oral Law): collection of the Mishnah and Gemara (use in daily life)
- different denominations of Judaism including Orthodox (to include Hasidic and Modern Orthodox), and Liberal and Reform (the Pluralistic movement)

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- practices associated with sources of authority in daily life including the use of tefillin, mezuzah and tzitzit
- interpretation and application of sources of authority through study in yeshivot and authority and role of the Beth Din
- different denominations of Judaism including Orthodox (to include Hasidic and Modern Orthodox), Reform and Liberal (the Pluralistic movement)
- the role of the rabbi in the synagogue and the community

Practices

- public acts of worship: synagogue services
- the use of Tenakh and Talmud in daily life
- worship in the home and private prayer
- prayer in Jewish worship including amidah – the standing prayer
- rituals: birth ceremonies; Bar and Bat Mitzvah; marriage; mourning rituals
- Shabbat in the home and synagogue
- Jewish Festivals including Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Pesach, Shavuot and Sukkot
- the synagogue; religious features of synagogues including design, artefacts and associated practices

Forms of expression and ways of life

- symbolism: how symbols and artefacts are used in worship including, Magen David and chanukiah
- expressing beliefs through Tzedekah and Gemilut Chassidim
- expressing beliefs through Bikur Cholim
- expressing beliefs through Tikkun Ha Olam – ‘Repairing/healing the world’ and Chessed – kindness to others
- different attitudes to Zionism and the State of Israel among Jewish people
- the nurture of the young in the Jewish family

- the work of one national Jewish organisation working to care for those in need such as to relieve poverty and suffering, to support families or to promote Jewish learning and education in the UK
- dietary laws: kosher and trefah, separation of milk and meat

Common and divergent views within Judaism in the way beliefs and teachings are understood and expressed should be included throughout.

Sikhism

All specifications must cover the following core knowledge and understanding, which represents 100% of the content for Part One.

Beliefs and teachings

- beliefs about the nature of God as expressed in the Mul Mantra
- belief about God as Creator
- beliefs about the nature of human life as an opportunity to unite with God
- beliefs in karma and rebirth, and the aim of mukti (liberation)
- beliefs about the importance of being gurmukh (God-centred) and the elimination of haumai (pride/ego)
- the belief in the oneness of humanity: equality of all human beings; complete gender equality as expressed in the Guru Granth Sahib and in stories from the lives of the Gurus and Sikhism today
- equality as expressed in stories from the lives of the Gurus and in Sikhism today
- the priority of the service of others
- the role of the sangat (community)

Sources of wisdom and authority

- the concept of 'Guru' and the place of the Ten Gurus in Sikhism
- the life and work of Guru Nanak including his three days in the river, his teachings about God and about equality, and his establishment of Kartarpur
- the life and work of Guru Gobind Singh: life and work including Vaisakhi and the formation of the Khalsa

DRAFT

- the authority and status of the Guru Granth Sahib, its origins, compilation, authority and status as the living Guru shown in practices including reading in worship and study
- the Rahit Maryada (Sikh Code of Conduct) as a guide to life and practice.
- the role of the granthi and other gurdwara functionaries such as rigis (custodian/reader of the Guru Granth Sahib)

Practices

- the gurdwara: religious features of the gurdwara including design, furniture, artefacts and associated practices
- role of the gurdwara within the Sikh community
- Langar as expression of sewa (selfless service to others)
- the practice of nam japa (meditating on the name of God) in daily life and in the gurdwara
- prayer in the home
- Gurpurbs (festivals): Guru Nanak's birthday, Vaisakhi, Divali, commemorations of the martyrdom of Guru Arjan and Guru Tagh Bahadur Ji
- the akand path (continuous 48 hour reading of the Guru Granth Sahib)
- birth and naming ceremonies; the significance and use of the names Singh and Kaur, Amrit sanskar (the initiation ceremony)
- visiting Sikh historical gurdwaras including the Harimander Sahib in Amritsar (the Golden Temple)

Forms of expression and ways of life

- Sewa in its various forms - tan (physical service), man (mental service) and dhan (material service)
- symbols, such as the Ik Onkar and khanda as expressions of belief
- Panj Kakke (the 'Five ks') and their significance
- respect for all religions as written in the Guru Granth Sahib and practiced through langar and within the Sikh community
- the role of kirtan (singing) in diwan

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- Nam japna and avoidance of five evils of lust, anger, pride, greed and undue attachment, kirat karo (honest work), and vand chakko (service of those in need) as key values in life
- the work of one Sikh organisation working to relieve poverty and suffering
- work of a Sikh organisation promoting community cohesion and interfaith understanding
- no use of pictures or statues for worship, the availability of artists' expression of Gurus' pictures for decoration

Common and divergent views within Sikhism in the way beliefs and teachings are understood and expressed should be included throughout.



Department
for Education

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Swindon SACRE Development Plan 2015 -17

Context

This plan reflects the current context that Swindon SACRE finds itself in: –

- a) effected by national education curriculum decisions
- b) local responses to the Academies Act 2010 which has meant that there are now no longer any Secondary Schools under Swindon local authority control , some primary schools have become Academies too and therefore SACRE's remit as funded by Swindon LA is unclear
- c) SACREs role in challenging Swindon LA about RE is redundant and the powers SACRE has in ensuring standards and entitlement in RE and Collective Worship in Academies is under question.

Key Priorities

1. To raise the standards and quality of the teaching and learning in Religious Education within Swindon
2. To ensure that Swindon SACRE is effectively managed and has good partnerships with the LEA and other key stakeholders
3. To ensure the effectiveness of the locally agreed syllabus
4. To effectively fulfil SACREs responsibility for the provision and practice of Collective worship
5. To ensure that SACRE contributes to the wider social and racial harmony agenda.

Priority	Action	Person(s) responsible	Review date	Cost
1.				
1				

2.	2.	3.

3.	4.	4.

5.	5.

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