

Swindon Borough Council

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education

Wednesday, 20 July 2016

Swindon Hindu Temple and Cultural centre - 103, Darby Close, Cheney Manor Industrial Estate, Swindon, SN2 2PW – Map Attached

At 6.00 p.m.

PLEASE NOTE – There will be a tour of the Temple and Cultural Centre at 5.45pm for any SACRE member to attend prior to the SACRE meeting.

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

Teresa Clerck, Jewish Community
Jo Backus, Buddhist Community
Mr Gurchoran Singh Lyal, Sikh Community
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 Community

**Group B:
The Church of England**

Reverend Clive Deverell
Miss Janet French
Reverend Norma McKemey
Ms Steph Mundin

**Group C:
Teacher Associations**

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

**Group D:
The Local Authority**

Councillor Fionuala Foley
Councillor Gemma McCracken
Councillor Fay Howard
Councillor Teresa Page
Councillor Barbara Parry

Co-Opted: Fidelma Meehan, Baha'i Community
Freddy Pound, Swindon Humanists
Support Officers: Peter Nathan
Katy Staples, SACRE Advisor
Sarah Foulkes, School Improvement Adviser

Committee Officer: Stuart Figini (Telephone 01793 463612) or 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. 6.00pm - Appointment of Chair and Vice-Chair for the Municipal Year 2016/17

Nominations are invited for the roles of Chair and Vice-Chair.

The SACRE Constitution requires that the Chair and Vice-Chair are appointed from different representative groups.

Voting for the Chair and Vice-Chair will take place in constituent groups, with each group entitled to a single vote each.

2. 6.05pm - Welcome from the Hindu Temple and Cultural Centre

3. 6.15pm - Apologies for Absence

4. 6.16pm - 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.

5. 6.17pm - 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.

6. 6.18pm - Minutes and Matters Arising (Pages 5 - 12)

To receive the minutes of the meetings held on 22nd March 2016.

(i) SACRE Website

7. 6.20pm - Membership Update

8. 6.25pm - Feedback from Conferences and Meetings (Pages 13 - 18)

- NASACRE – Notes of the AGM 2016 – Shaping the Future
- Secondary Cluster Meeting (KS)
- Primary Cluster Meeting (KS)

- Learn, Teach, Lead RE: To receive a presentation from Ed Pawson – Project Director - South West
 - Making May Matter
- 9. 6.55pm - High Court Ruling about Humanism and NASACRE and AREIAC Response** (Pages 19 - 24)
To consider the High Court ruling and its significance for the Swindon SACRE.
To access the Humanism website click on this link
<http://understandinghumanism.org.uk/>
- 10. 7.05pm - Response from Letter and Survey about Poor Exam Entry Data**
(Pages 25 - 26)
To consider further actions as a result of the poor response from schools and the findings.
- 11. 7.15pm - Launch of the Agreed Syllabus**
- Flyer and arrangements – how SACRE members can apply
 - Costings
 - Questions
- 12. 7.25pm - SACRE Representation on Other Committees**
The SACRE will be informed that following a review of Co-opted members of Committees, the Children's Health, Social care and Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee has agreed to streamline the number of co-optee's on the Committee as there are already three members who would be able to represent SACRE on that Committee.
- 13. 7.30pm - Date of Next Meeting**
The next meeting is scheduled for 1st November 2016, starting at 6:00pm.
SACRE members are asked to suggest venues or indicate where this and future meetings of the Panel should be held.

Date of Despatch: 12 July 2016

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.

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

TUESDAY, 22 MARCH 2016

PRESENT:-

Group A: Mrs Sarah Lane Cawte (Chair) (United
Christian Denominations and Reformed Church) and Reverend David Howell
Other Religions or Religious (Swindon Evangelical Alliance)
Denominations

Group B: Reverend Norma McKemey and Ms Steph
Church of England Mundin

Group C: Paul Sunners
Teacher Organisations

Group D: Councillors James Robbins, Carol Shelley and
Councillors Gemma McCracken

Also in attendance: Peter Nathan and Katy Staples (SACRE
Advisor)

Apologies for absence were received from Fidelma Meehan, Reverend Clive Deverell, Mr Gurchoran Singh Lyal, Miss Janet French, Mrs Tracy Mason, Mrs Lottie O'Brien, Mrs Mandy Sandleton, Ms Catherine Lomax, Mr David Burbidge, Mr M S Khan, Mr Tony McAteer, Mr Dinesh Patel, Sarah Foulkes, Councillor Alan Bishop, Councillor Fionuala Foley and Freddy Pound

113. 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.

114. Public Question Time

No public questions were received during the meeting.

115. Welcome from Isambard Community School

The Chair welcomed SACRE to Isambard Community School and introduced Natalie Chapman and Karis Docherty, RE specialists at the School. Ms Chapman and Ms Docherty made a presentation about the successes and challenges facing RE at the School and how SACRE could offer support.

The Chair thanked Natalie and Karis for their very informative presentation.

116. Chair's Announcements

There were no Chair's announcements.

117.

Minutes and Matters Arising

Resolved - That the minutes of the meeting held on 20th October 2015, be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

Matters Arising

Minute 106 – SACRE Membership

- a) The Clerk reported that the Director of Law and Democratic Services had been consulted about extending the timescale for renewing SACRE memberships for Groups A, B and C until September 2016. He advised that the SACRE Constitution and legislation allowed the amendment and the timescales could be extended as detailed above.

The SACRE noted that membership renewal forms would be circulated in due course to Groups A, B and C.

- b) The Chair reported that the Buddhist Community and Jewish Community had nominated one representative each to attend future SACRE meetings.

118.

Draft SACRE Annual Report 2014/15

The SACRE received its draft Annual Report covering the period September 2014 to August 2015.

The Annual Report provided information in relation to the following areas:

- Support for schools
- Key events during the academic year 2014/15
- British Values, the Duty to Prevent and Religious Education
- Best Practice Forum
- New SACRE website
- Agreed Syllabus for RE in Swindon
- Attendance by SACRE members at outside events
- National Issues including - Challenging extremism, Life beyond levels and A New Settlement: Religion and Belief in Schools
- membership
- Funding and administration issues
- meetings held
- examination results data

In considering the Annual Report, the SACRE suggested that the attendance levels at Primary and Secondary Network meetings should be included in the Reports final version.

In addition to receiving RE exam data, the SACRE considered national statistics in relation to 2014/15 Key Stage 4 results for GCSE RE. The SACRE expressed concern that Swindon Borough Council had the lowest percentage of entries nationally for their Key Stage 4 cohort. It was suggested that further research was required to gain a better understanding of the figures.

The SACRE was informed that the Annual Report, once finalised, would be

submitted to the National Association of SACREs along with a copy to the Children's Health, Social Care and Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee and all schools and academies.

Resolved – 1) That the draft SACRE Annual Report is approved, subject to the inclusion of attendance levels at Primary and Secondary Network meeting, and that the SACRE Advisor be authorised to finalise the report and to submit it to the National Association of SACREs (NASACRE).

2) That the draft Annual Report be forwarded to the Children's Health, Social Care and Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee and all schools and academies in Swindon to heighten the awareness within the Council of the work of Swindon SACRE.

3) That the SACRE Advisor, in consultation with the Chair, (i) draft a letter to all Head Teachers of secondary Academies to establish reasons for the low number of pupils entered for Key Stage 4 GCSE RE exams; (ii) conduct a survey of all Swindon secondary schools to establish pupils views about their interest in studying RE and (iii) report further on the outcomes of research undertaken to the next meeting of SACRE.

4) That the Head of Education includes discussion on the low number of pupils entered for Key Stage 4 GCSE RE exams at the next Secondary Heads meeting on 20th April 2016.

119. Making May Matter Initiative

The SACRE Advisor reported on the Making May Matter initiative which aimed to raise the profile of RE and help schools celebrate great RE.

The SACRE noted that schools in South Gloucestershire, Bristol and Swindon were being invited to arrange an RE event over the coming months to which a SACRE member would be invited to share in the celebration of the schools RE event.

The SACRE Advisor explained that further information would be available shortly to help schools organise an event.

120. Better RE Conference - 29th January 2016

The SACRE considered a report on the South Gloucestershire and Bristol SACREs' RE Conference held on 29th January 2016 that a number of primary teachers from Swindon attended.

The Conference aimed to assist and provide teachers of RE with material and ideas to connect RE to the British Values agenda and to make learning more playful and creative. The report highlighted the positive feedback received from delegates attending the conference.

121. Website Update

The SACRE Advisor reminded SACRE members of the need to submit their profile details to Freddy Pound for inclusion on the new SACRE website.

122.

Learn Teach Lead RE - Update

The SACRE received an update from the SACRE Advisor about a Learn Teach Lead RE (LTLRE) project in the Taunton to Swindon area.

The SACRE were reminded that the project aimed to support all teachers of RE irrespective of their experience or qualifications through practical support at hub meetings and the opportunity to participate in projects that developed their teaching skills and the learning experiences of those they teach. A successful project was running in the Devon / Cornwall area and this project would seek to replicate that model for the Taunton / Swindon area. The project would identify unmet needs in relation to the teaching of RE and support the development of the project to improve the quality of teaching and learning outcomes and leadership.

The SACRE noted that Emma McCarthy had been appointed as the Primary Hub Leader for Swindon and it was anticipated that a Secondary Hub Leader for Swindon would be appointed soon.

123.

Feedback from RE Teachers Network Meetings

The SACRE noted that the next primary and secondary RE Teachers Network meetings had been arranged for early April 2016.

The SACRE Advisor reported on a Governor Support session held on 10th February 2016 and commented on the positive feedback received from delegates attending the session.

124.

Feedback from SACRE Representatives on other Committees

The SACRE received a report from Paul Sunners, representative on the Council's Children's Health, Social Care and Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Mr Sunners reported on the meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 2nd December 2015 and 3rd February 2016. He highlighted the main issues discussed at the meetings that were relevant to the work of SACRE, in particular (i) the Education Standards and Performance report setting out the achievements of Swindon children and young people in their public assessments in primary and secondary schools and (ii) the work of the Youth Parliament, children's safeguarding update and the restorative youth service.

The Chair thanked Mr Sunners for his report.

125.

Date and Time of the Next Meeting

It was noted that the next meeting of the SACRE would be held on Wednesday 20th July 2016, commencing at 6:00pm at a venue to be agreed.

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

AGREED SYLLABUS CONFERENCE

TUESDAY, 22 MARCH 2016

PRESENT:-

Group A: Mrs Sarah Lane Cawte (United Reformed Christian Denominations and Other Religions or Religious Denominations) and Reverend David Howell (Swindon Evangelical Alliance)

Group B: Reverend Norma McKemey and Ms Steph Church of England Mundin

Group C: Paul Sunners
Teacher Organisations

Group D: Councillors James Robbins, Carol Shelley and Councillors Gemma McCracken

Also in attendance: Peter Nathan and Katy Staples (SACRE Advisor)

Apologies for absence were received from Fidelma Meehan, Reverend Clive Deverell, Mr Gurchoran Singh Lyal, Miss Janet French, Mrs Tracy Mason, Mrs Lottie O'Brien, Mrs Mandy Sandleton, Ms Catherine Lomax, Mr David Burbidge, Mr M S Khan, Mr Tony McAteer, Mr Dinesh Patel, Sarah Foulkes, Councillor Alan Bishop, Councillor Fionuala Foley and Freddy Pound

126. Minutes from the Agreed Syllabus Steering Group

The Conference received a summary of the discussions held by the Steering Group in reviewing the possible options for a new Agreed Syllabus.

The Chair reported that the Steering Group established criteria against which the following six options were considered:

- Remain with the current Agreed Syllabus
- Adopt the Awareness, Mystery and Value Agreed Syllabus currently in use in Somerset.
- Adopt the Agreed Syllabus currently in use in Oxfordshire.
- Adopt an RE Today Syllabus
- Adopt the Pan Berkshire Agreed Syllabus
- Adopt the Dorset Agreed Syllabus

The Conference noted that the RE Today Agreed Syllabus received the highest score against the Steering Group agreed criteria, based on the framework for RE. It was noted that the RE Today Agreed Syllabus could be tailored to suit Swindon needs.

127. Proposal from the Agreed Syllabus Steering Group

The Conference considered the following proposal from the Agreed Syllabus Council Steering Group:

‘Does your Group accept the Agreed Syllabus Council Steering Group’s recommendation that Swindon Local Authority buys an ‘off the peg’ Agreed Syllabus from RE Today Services which will be called ‘The Swindon Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education?’

We will have our own forward, written by the Chair.

We can also have our own appendices to include:

- a) Local units to our area
- b) Non exam units for KS4
- c) Other possible exemplary units such as Humanism or Sikhism

Yes or No’

The Chair thanked the Steering Group and teachers for their hard work, dedication and contributions towards the final proposal detailed above.

The Chair asked the Conference to consider and respond to the proposal in their respective Groups A, B, C and D.

Resolved – That the proposal to adopt the RE Today Agreed Syllabus be agreed.

(Note: The above decision was agreed by all Groups)

128. Costings of Proposal

The SACRE Advisor reported on the financial implications of adopting the RE Today Agreed Syllabus and explained that a budget was in place to purchase 51-100 Agreed Syllabus’ at a cost of £45 each.

Schools would be asked to contribute towards the cost of the launch and invited to buy a scheme of work. Detailed costing would be produced prior to the launch of the Agreed Syllabus.

129. Next Steps

The SACRE Advisor confirmed that the launch of the Agreed Syllabus would be held on 7th November 2016 at Tadpole Farm Primary School.

The Conference noted that the Agreed Syllabus would be trialled at a number of schools prior to its official launch in September 2017.

Resolved – That the SACRE establish an Agreed Syllabus Conference Sub-Committee to consider the detail of the launch event.

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NASACRE AGM 2016: Shaping the future

Chair's Report: As well as official engagements I have also worked with a variety of SACREs on specific issues as they have arisen during the year. This has mostly involved supporting Chairs of SACREs but also sometimes clerks or advisers. Much of this has been regarding support, or lack thereof, for SACREs from the local authority, the possibility of merging SACREs or ASCs and, increasingly common, vexatious members and how to deal with them. What is clear is that as local authority support for SACREs and ASCs is diminishing in some areas, the role of NASACRE becomes increasingly more important. I notice this when taking calls from advisers, many of whom have little or no training in that role. The priorities for the coming year are clear to me as the Chair: continued involvement in the public debates about RE and collective worship, such as the APPG on RE and other forums; making a clear response to the implications of the Government White Paper and its plans for local authorities; continued support for member SACRE as they face challenges in their locality; where appropriate, ensuring that NASACRE keeps a high profile in the media.

The government intend to take teacher training out of Higher Ed. and put it into schools – but just because a school is 'outstanding' it might not have good RE – so what happens to RE trainees?

Secretary's Report This year we have adopted a patron! Rt Hon Charles Clarke PC has kindly agreed to become our first patron, and we are considering who else amongst the great and the good might become our second.

Treasurer's Report In spite of the pressures on Local Authorities, income from Annual Subscriptions has continued to be robust, with 134 paid up member SACREs by December 31st compared with the remarkable combined figure of 140 paid up member SACREs for all of 2014. Your Executive Committee felt we were in a strong enough position financially to commit our funds to two important pieces of work: the upgrading of our website (this is in addition to, and separate from, the ongoing work of maintaining and running our website), and the updating and re-writing of some of our key information and training materials for the benefit of and to support SACREs in their ongoing work. Of a 13K budget, 6 1/2 spent on travel; the rest on website and consultations. The AGM costs around 10K

The Rt Hon Baroness Elizabeth Butler-Sloss GBE chaired a report Living with Difference - the Commission on Religion and Belief in Public Life – took 2 years to research widely, led by a multi-faith working party. Religion is no longer a glue that binds, but all too often a source of division, mistrust and sometimes hatred. The proportion of people who do not follow a religion has risen from just under a third in 1983 to almost half in 2014. Elsewhere, the

report reveals that almost half the population today describes itself as non-religious. We need a 'new settlement for religion and belief in the UK. Too many agreed syllabuses are too Christian and non-religious views underrepresented. RE should have equal standing with humanities subjects * and be in EBacc. Many syllabuses tend to "portray religions only in a good light ... and they tend to omit the role of religions in reinforcing stereotypes and prejudice around issues such as gender, sexuality, ethnicity and race." In all teacher education attention is given to religion and belief that is of a similar level to that which is given to reading and maths, so that every primary class teacher is confident and competent in this curriculum area, whether implicit or explicit, and so that in secondary and further education teaching all staff have general awareness of relevant sensitivities. Faith schools admissions criteria should reduce the element of religion and they are often the only school in an area. The religion should be inspected by OFSTED, not SIAMS. It recommends scrapping the law requiring schools to hold acts of collective worship (but they still want inclusive, spiritual assemblies **. Counter terrorism legislation contributing to a further demonisation of muslims.

* Some from the floor disagreed – RE goes well with English, the arts etc. sometimes

** The current law, as interpreted by most of us, already allows for this

Professor Adam Dinham produced a report RE for Real: The Future of Teaching and Learning about Religion and Belief – 1944 Act has been amended piecemeal but religious landscape has changed much more rapidly. White an average of £6K is spend per pupil, only £1 goes to their RE. Students are concerned that they hear a lot of stereotypes in the media and in some of their learning. They want to know what's real. They think that learning about religion and belief is becoming more and more relevant because they see more of it, and what they see is more diverse. . Students really enjoy learning about real 'lived' religion, especially through thinking about religion and belief controversies. Most of this cohort think RE needs to be a separate subject with subject specialist teachers. Many think that RE lacks status. The majority think they should they should study religion and belief up to Year 10, but then GCSE should be optional, not compulsory. Teachers think RE has an important task in rebalancing media stereotypes. They are frustrated by how little time there is for RE, often resulting in teaching about only one or two traditions. There is concern about a tension in RE between academic and personal purposes. 86% of teachers in the study feel that RE should be a National Curriculum subject and be included in the EBacc. 72% say it should be compulsory to at least 16. The majority of teachers in the study think teaching and learning about religion and belief should take place in a distinct RE subject (specific) and also be included as a theme in other learning areas (distributed). Most supported the inclusion of humanism. It was also thought that GCSE simplifies religion. There's a tension between people wanting all religions taught and the desire by specialist teachers to concentrate on fewer religions in more depth. There should be increased investment in continuing professional development for non-specialist teachers of religion and belief. Which religions should be included? Who are the stakeholders and how are they represented?? 'What's disability got to do with RE?' Nobody can know everything so shouldn't be

heavy content. 'Understanding each other' doesn't necessarily lead to live – can make us kill each other better. Move from 'tolerance' to 'improving the quality of our disagreement'. Those who work in health and social work also need training in religion.

Charles Clarke believed that the government is further ahead in planning a National RE syllabus than most suspect.

Derek Jay

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Commonweal School's Making May Matter event

On the afternoon of Friday 13th May, the RE Department put on their very own Question Time in the C6 auditorium. Mr Battye took up the role of David Dimbleby with great skill, fielding questions that were posed by year 11 Philosophy and Ethics students to an invited panel. The panel represented a variety of different views answering questions on ethical and philosophical issues from the GCSE course, to allow students to see differing religious and secular views in action. On the invited panel were Rev'd Simon Stevenette from Christ Church in Old Town, Fidelma Meehan representing the Baha'i faith and our own teachers Mr Elsley, a Buddhist and Mr Drew, a Materialist/ Naturalist.

The questions, on a wide variety of topics including 'When does life begin?' to the proposal of the reintroduction of the death penalty, sparked a fascinating debate and demonstrated differing opinions from opposing world views which can also, as we found out, be in agreement.

As a tool for revision for the year 11's, the panel raised some excellent points which certainly gave the students food for thought, bringing skills needed for showing knowledge and understanding in the upcoming exam to life.

Mrs Bracher and the RE department would like to thank the panel for their involvement, giving up their time to provide a brilliant afternoon of philosophical and ethical debate.





The Advice of Dr Satvinder Juss, King's College, University of London re: the High Court ruling on Religious Education

We have spoken to the DfE and can confirm that, it is not for the British Humanist Association to issue legal guidance to schools, that the BHA document has no official status and is inaccurate. The DfE has confirmed that the guidance published in December is still correct (to access the guidance go to: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/488477/RS_guidance.pdf).

Likewise they state:

"The Judicial Review of the Religious Studies (RS) GCSE was based on a narrow technical point relating to the meaning of a single paragraph in a guidance document for Awarding Organisations. That has been dealt with; and led to the guidance which is linked above. Contrary to the BHA document, the judgment should not be taken as having any broader impact on any religious education curriculum or the RS GCSE subject content in either faith or non-faith schools."

Recently clerks to SACREs, professional officers to SACRE, schools and academies will have received a mailing from the British Humanist Association that has an attachment with the title:

High Court ruling on Religious Education

Legal guidance on what it means for local authorities, academies, schools, teachers, Agreed Syllabus Conferences, and SACREs.

The publication comes directly from Professor Juss, Kings College, University of London in light of his understanding of the High Court judgement of Mr Justice Warby of 25th November, 2015.

It is important to recognise that the judgement by Mr Justice Warby was answering a specific point. The claim was that The Assertion made in the 2nd paragraph of the Religious studies GCSE subject content that was published in February 2015 was unlawful. The contested 2nd paragraph states, "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."

In making his judgement on this specific question Mr Justice Warby said: I have no doubt that an RS GCSE specification consistent with The Subject Content could satisfy the state's legal obligations. The question however, is whether it is true to say that such a specification will satisfy those obligations. The answer to that question is no; and it follows that in my judgment The Assertion is materially misleading." (para 68)

To explain his judgement Mr Justice Warby, in paragraph 74, adds the following words: '...the complete exclusion of any study of non-religious beliefs for the whole of Key Stage 4, for which the Subject Content would allow, would not in my judgment be compatible with A2P¹.'

It is important to note that Professor Juss's publication is guidance by one lawyer and not the statutory requirement as set out in current legislation. SACREs and ASC would normally consult their local authority's legal services on matters such as these.

¹A2P1 relates to: Human Rights Act 1998, of Article 9 of the Convention (Freedom of thought, conscience and religion) and Article 2 of the First Protocol ("A2P1") (Right to education).

Professor Juss finishes his advice by stating: a syllabus that excluded detailed study of Humanism but included such study of minority religions would almost certainly be unlawful. There are three points to note here:

- a. It is the opinion of Professor Juss that to include minority religions but not Humanism would almost certainly be unlawful. Only a court could decide this.
- b. The guidance appears to be discouraging agreed syllabuses to require the study of a 'minority' religion if Humanism is not to be studied. The legislation is clear that RE syllabuses must reflect the fact the religions to be studied are in the main Christianity and the principal religions represented in Great Britain – although what those principal religions are is determined by each Agreed Syllabus Conference.
- c. The implication of the guidance is that there will be a systematic study of any religion as a requirement of an agreed syllabus. This does not follow.

According to our latest communication from the DfE (20th May, 2016), Mr Justice Warby's judgement does not have broader impact on any RE curriculum, especially as it was explicitly confined to Key Stage 4. Whilst an ASC may wish to include the study of a non-religious world view, Professor Juss's statement: 'if there is an option to study a module or modules on one or more principal religions the choice should include a module or modules on one or more principal non-religious worldview's' does not follow from the judgement.

An agreed syllabus could make it explicit that in any module on a religion there should be critical engagement with the material and issues should be raised and explored as to the truth and worth of what the religion claims or asserts within a context of mutual respect. This would satisfy the expectation of the judicial review that non-confessional education about religions needs to be 'critical and pluralistic'. This is not the same as having the requirement to have a module on a non-religious worldview, such as Humanism, to sit alongside modules on the principal religions represented in Great Britain. Professor Juss appears to be arguing that a non-religious worldview should have equality of time with specific religious traditions, something that the judicial review specifically rules out (see paragraph 74 of the High Court judgement).

SACREs and ASCs might wish to note Professor Juss's guidance, but there is no compulsion to act upon it.

David Hampshire
Chair of NASACRE

Dilwyn Hunt
Chair of AREIAC

B2 What religions are to be taught?

This agreed syllabus requires that all pupils learn from Christianity in each key stage. In addition, pupils will learn from the principal religions represented in the UK, in line with the law. These are Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism, Buddhism and Judaism. Furthermore, children from families where non-religious worldviews are held are represented in almost all of our classrooms. These worldviews, including for example Humanism, will also be the focus for study.

Religious traditions are to be studied in depth as follows:

Schools should consider the pupils they serve in deciding whether to go beyond the minimum entitlements to learning about religions, which are that pupils should learn from:	
4–5s Reception	Children will encounter Christianity and other faiths, as part of their growing sense of self, their own community and their place within it.
5–7s Key Stage 1	Christians and Muslims or Jewish people
7–11s Key Stage 2	Christians, Muslims, Hindus and Jewish people
11–14s Key Stage 3	Christians, Muslims, Sikhs and Buddhists
14–16s Key Stage 4	Two religions required, usually including Christianity. This will be through a course in Religious Studies or Religious Education leading to a qualification approved under Section 96 ⁹
16–19s RE for all	Religions and worldviews to be selected by schools and colleges as appropriate.

Important notes:

This is the **minimum requirement**. Many schools may wish to go beyond the minimum.

- **The range of religious groups in the UK.** Groups such as Jehovah's Witnesses, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the Baha'i faith or the Jains are not excluded from study in this scheme for RE. Schools are always advised to make space for the worldviews of the local community, which is why the table above expresses minimum requirements.
- Schools should consider the pupils they serve in deciding whether to go beyond the minimum entitlements to learning about religions and beliefs.
- Notice the language: Christians rather than Christianity; Hindus rather than Hinduism. This is to reflect the fact that RE starts with encounters with living faiths rather than the history and belief structures of traditions. This also recognises the diversity within and between people of the same and different religions.
- **Non-religious worldviews:** Good practice in RE, as well as European and domestic legislation, has established the principle that RE in schools without a religious character should be inclusive of both religions and non-religious worldviews. Schools should ensure that the content and delivery of the RE curriculum are inclusive in this respect.
- This syllabus requires that, in addition to the religions required for study at each key stage, non-religious worldviews should also be explored in such a way as to ensure that pupils develop mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. This is enabled through the following key questions: L2.6, L2.9, U2.1, U2.5, U2.7, 3.1, 3.4, 3.9, 3.10 and 3.12.
- However, learning from four religions across a key stage is demanding: the syllabus does not recommend tackling six religions in a key stage. Depth is more important than overstretched breadth. Schools are encouraged to teach less but teach it better.
- The key questions offered in this syllabus allow for schools to draw in different traditions, where they fit the theme and question, and where there are representatives of those traditions in the school and local community.

⁹ Section 96 of the Learning and Skills Act 2000. This requires maintained schools to provide only qualifications approved by the Secretary of State. http://www.dfes.gov.uk/section96/uploads/download_records_full.xls

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Further guidance for schools, local authorities and agreed syllabus conferences about the religious studies gcse and the religious education curriculum

The Department for Education is aware that there continues to be some confusion about the nature and extent of schools' obligations regarding the Religious Education (RE) curriculum and the Religious Studies (RS) GCSE content.

The Department is therefore issuing this further Guidance to schools, local authorities and Agreed Syllabus Conferences (ASCs). It should be read together with the "Guidance for schools and awarding organisations about the Religious Studies GCSE" which was issued in December 2015 ("the December 2015 Guidance"), which can be found at www.gov.uk/government/publications/gcse-religious-studies.

Schools, local authorities and ASCs are not under any obligation to have regard to guidance issued by other specific bodies, groups or individuals and should instead follow the Department's Guidance when making decisions about their RE curriculum. In particular, schools, local authorities and ASCs should not follow what purports to be 'guidance' issued recently by those associated with the British Humanist Society (including views on the law of Dr Satvinder Juss dated 28 April 2016) – that guidance and those views have no official status and are contentious.

As set out in the December 2015 Guidance, the Department's view has always been that schools should be free to determine their own approach to the teaching of RE, in line with statutory requirements. Those statutory requirements are summarised in sections 2 and 3 of the long-standing 2010 non-statutory guidance "Religious Education in English schools: non statutory guidance 2010" which is to be found at www.gov.uk/government/publications/religious-education-guidance-in-english-schools-non-statutory-guidance-2010.

As made clear in the December 2015 Guidance, the Government's policy was and remains that:

- Schools and Agreed Syllabus Conferences (ASCs) should be free to determine their own approach to the teaching of RE and the selection of the appropriate RS GCSE.
- There is no requirement for an individual school's curriculum to mirror the make-up of the national or local population. Curriculums should continue to be locally determined.

- Schools and ASCs are at liberty to use a range of relevant factors to determine their RE curriculum, including the intellectual rigour it presents and its role in supporting pupils' development as world citizens.
- There is no obligation for any school or ASC to give equal air time to the teaching of religious and non-religious views.
- Curriculum balance (and, therefore, compliance with statutory requirements) can be achieved across the key stages. There is no obligation on any school to cover the teaching of non-religious world views (or any other particular aspect of the RE curriculum) in key stage 4 specifically. Rather it is for schools and ASCs to determine how they meet their wider obligations across the key stages.
- Schools are, therefore, not obliged to choose a GCSE specification that meets the entirety of their wider obligations, as long as they are satisfied that they will meet them through their RE curriculum across the key stages.
- For schools without a religious character, the RE curriculum needs to reflect the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are, in the main, Christian whilst taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain¹

For the avoidance of doubt, the Government also considers that:

- There is no obligation for any school or ASC to allocate 'air time' according to the apparent popularity of a religious or non-religious view.
- There is no obligation for any school or ASC to "balance out" the detailed teaching of a religion by teaching, in equal depth, about a non-religious view.
- It is for schools to determine which religious and non-religious views to cover in their RE curriculum in line with statutory requirements.

Overall, the important thing is that a balance is achieved during a child's education, rather than in any particular stage of a child's education. In those circumstances and building on the statutory requirements, it is recommended that there should be a wide ranging study of religious and non-religious beliefs across the key stages.

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Reference: DFE-00160-2016

¹ S375 Education Act 1996



To: Headteachers/Principals and Chairs of Governing Boards of all schools and academies in Swindon

Worrying data about Religious Education in Swindon

Last year's examination data for entries for public examinations in Religious Education reveal that Swindon has the lowest numbers of entries for GCSE Religious Studies nationally at only 17%.

Naturally, Swindon SACRE (Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education) is most concerned about this and seeks to ask questions about the opportunities offered to pupils in Swindon schools and academies at both primary and secondary level. To this end we would be very grateful if a member of your staff could answer the questions on this survey:

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/CDJND63>

Swindon SACRE would like to draw attention to the fact that every maintained school in England must provide a basic curriculum (RE, and the National Curriculum). This includes provision for RE for **all** registered pupils at the school except for those withdrawn by their parents.

SACRE also wishes to remind all headteachers, principals and members of governing bodies of the following, in relation to academies:

"In accordance with their funding agreement, where an Academy has not been designated with a religious character the Academy must ensure that the religious education is given to all pupils with a curriculum that reflects that the religious traditions in Great Britain are, in the main Christian, while taking into account the teaching and practices of the other religions present in Great Britain." (Please see the attached leaflet).

In Swindon, we hope that all schools and academies will seek to be part of the community of shared practice, and so improve the quality of Religious Education for all schools in the area. To support this, SACRE arranges and supports RE Network meetings to share good practice and improve standards of teaching and learning in the subject.

In relation to Key Stage 4, it is recommended by NATRE (National Association of Teachers of RE) that a period of 120-140 learning hours is to be allocated for the appropriate time needed to follow a GCSE course and, thereby, be equipped to live well with religious difference in modern Britain.

New Religious Education Agreed Syllabus for Swindon

There is a legal requirement that every SACRE must review its Agreed Syllabus every 5 years. Swindon SACRE has decided that it is time for a New Agreed Syllabus for RE. We have agreed to adopt a new Agreed Syllabus written by RE Today services (nationally acclaimed providers of Religious Education materials and guidance).

It is expected that schools will be teaching this from September 2017 with 2016-17 being a trial embedding year.

SACRE is providing all schools and academies with an Agreed Syllabus (gratis) and the opportunity to buy complete detailed schemes of work to support the syllabus written by RE Today services at £180 for Primary schools and £80 for Secondary Schools/Academies.

KEEP THE DATE - the launch event, providing focused CPD relating to the Agreed Syllabus will be held on November 8th 2016 at Tadpole Farm CE Primary Academy. Please follow the link below for further details and to register.

<http://www.bristol.anglican.org/event/launch-of-swindon-re-agreed-syllabus-conference/>

Yours faithfully,

Sarah Lane Cawte
Chair of Swindon SACRE