

Review of the Swindon Agreed Syllabus 2021 - Teacher Voice

Sources of Evidence

There were only 10 responses to the survey, I think the stresses and strains of Covid have directly affected people's capacity to engage with this process:

There were 11 teachers who attended the Hub Meeting (again only 2 Secondary teachers) and offered feedback on 10th November 2010 (some of those who attended the meeting had also completed the survey).

Primary 10	Secondary 2
Green Meadow Ferndale Orchid Vale Robert le kyng Nythe Peatmoor Grange Junior School Eldene Laines Mead St Francis	Lawn Manor Commonweal

Over half of these schools are Academies and therefore do not have to follow the locally agreed syllabus.

It is difficult to say, therefore, how representative the results of the survey and opinions heard at the Hub meeting are of schools as a whole in the area.

They represent the schools that most engage with training and who join in with the RE community or access support. It does represent a healthy mix of different types of schools in the area, only one of the schools that responded has a religious foundation (St Francis).

Of the 10 schools that responded to the survey the majority felt that it did meet the needs of learners and is engaging and challenging end of the spectrum.

However not all schools use the Agreed Syllabus and their main or only resource

Other resources used:

2 of the schools used 'Understanding Christianity' as a resource (this is for the teaching of Understanding Christianity)

6 use "Discovery RE" as well

5 schools mentioned using RE Today materials.

Other resources mentioned included BBC film clips and resources suggested by RE hub leaders and on training events.

The elements of the Agreed Syllabus that people were positive about were:

Having clear enquiry questions for each unit (Discovery RE has similar questions to the AS but not identical)

The units based exploring different religions e.g. L2.8 What does it mean to be a Hindu in Britain today?

Lesson plan ideas - a variety of options to meet outcome. The building of knowledge across the year groups through the three strands of learning.

How the beliefs of lots of different religions are used and relate to children's own lives.

The outlines of the lessons are easy to follow.

The children enjoy units linked to Hinduism and Islam

Outcomes for each unit of work which can be used for assessment.

We really enjoy the way the units focus on a big question.

Aspects mentioned as being dull or difficult

Some teachers/HLTA find the subject difficult as a whole, but have found Discovery RE useful for developing own knowledge and for engaging the pupils.

Pupils appear more disengaged if there is either too much discussion or too little practical activities.

Some of the units are quite tricky to teach such as U2.8 What difference does it make to believe in ahimsa (harmlessness), grace, and/or Ummah (community)?

None really - we have mixed up our curriculum by teaching a religion and then a theme as well as inter-weaving religious views into our themes.

If the children are not particularly religious some of the bible stories can do the above. More modern versions would be beneficial. I often source my own video clips to make the lessons more interesting.

The year 3/ 4 units can some times be a little difficult for our children to understand.

Some of the Christianity units can be dry

Year six units are very challenging. Difficult for non specialists unless support materials are provided.

The Hinduism units are quite tricky to resource in year 4. The unit on Mohammed and his love for animals is hard to fill a lesson with in KS1. The units in year 3 and 4 on Moses and on Communion assume a great deal of background knowledge.

Amongst the difficulties experienced

We follow the Discovery RE units which link to the Agreed Syllabus - there is good progression within it and is structured to make it easier to teach

What would make it easier is having some more information on each unit e.g. key facts, links to videos

No - the layered learning allows for good progression across both key stages.

No

There is a lot to cover in 1 session so sometimes it can feel very rushed and it is difficult to cover the whole unit in a term.

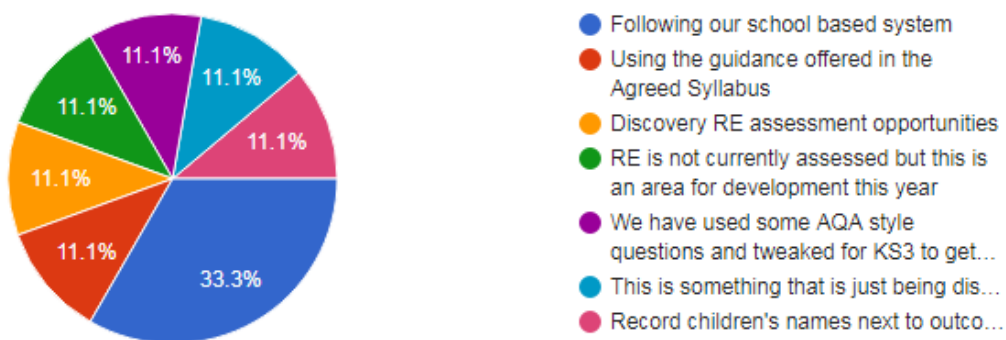
Some of the links to resources don't work. Too much content.

Almost too many ideas and outcomes to choose from

Need an accompanying scheme of work or support materials that you can just pick up and teach from for non specialists.

Generally it is well received but those teachers who do not have a church background have needed extra support re Christian doctrine, on beatitudes, parables and miracles. UC is helping with this but our subject lead has needed to provide additional information.

Assessment



Missing elements of the Syllabus,

Not from the Agreed Syllabus

As above, a little more detail for teachers with limited subject knowledge

A specific inclusion of Sikhism ideas within the lesson plans. This faith is taught within our school.

No - I feel we have got to grips with the Agreed Syllabus and there are some parts that we want to implement into our SoL moving forward. It doesn't feel as if much if anything would need to be tweaked.

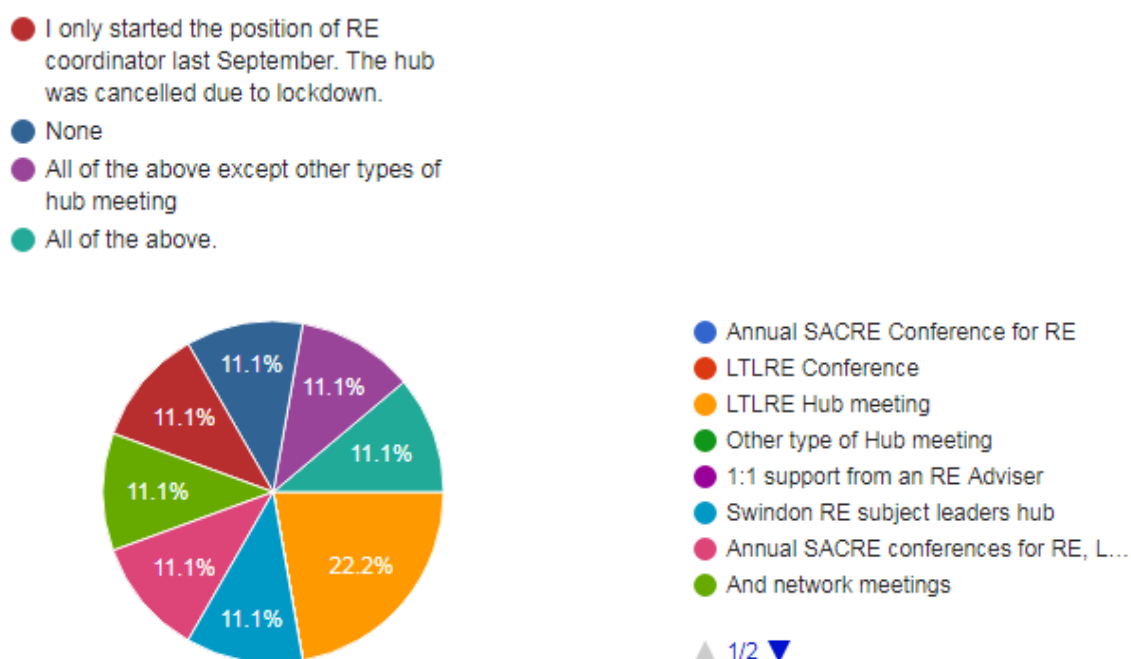
I think it's all covered but in our school we are trying to plan more whole school RE days, year group and house group activities, have more visitors in and visit more places (once COVID has settled down) to emphasise how important the subject is and how it goes towards creating open-minded individuals.

Links to resources. Less content in the units of work. Slim it down a little.

Non specialists would like lesson plans that they can pick up and teach for each unit of work. Too much content in RE Today scheme of work.

The Hinduism unit as above

Access to training for RE in their school in the last four years.



Other suggestions for improvements to the AS :

More information about SACRE and local hub support

A termly newsletter celebrating good practice and details of any new resources/websites.

It would be good to share SoL or lessons within the network. I use Seneca learning for GCSE pupils to revise / recall. However, they do not do anything for KS3 RE. Do you / or anyone else know where I could go to access similar online KS3 platforms for homework / revision exercises?

Suggestions of visitors from different religions who would be willing to come in and speak/ run whole days in schools. Lists of local religious settings that could be visited.

Resources. Keep us up to date with any changes.

Ideas how other coordinators use the scheme and how they assess; online sites to go to for support and ideas;

More user friendly. A unit of work for each term in each year group. We have to repeat some units with a different focus such as festivals or we have to carry a unit of work over two terms.

A specified order of units of work which can be used.

Further links to clips and resources. Inexpensive opportunities for people of faith to visit- especially Judaism representatives.

Specific Feedback offered at the Hub meeting

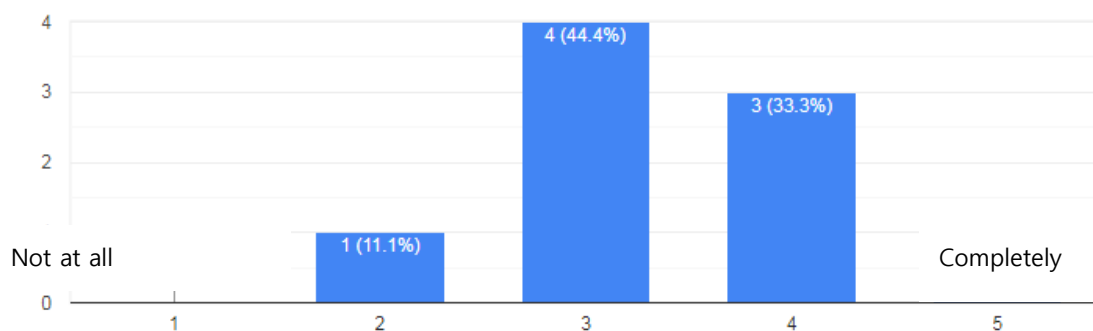
Some said it is too woolly. They use the headings but then come up with their own content. Others said it was easy to use and you don't need to have subject knowledge to teach it. Most said resources were hard to find or not available at all. Some staff like it and some use bits and bobs and then add to it to personalise it.

The RE co-ordinators in this room summed up a concern for each unit being too long, which means there won't be consistency of subject content being taught amongst Swindon schools. It was suggested having six lessons per unit would help ensure consistent coverage. There is concern that the amount of content also means that things can't be built upon throughout the year groups and having a slimmed down version would allow less content to be taught but developed further throughout the key stages.

Is the Agreed Syllabus fit for renewing for the next 5 years

Taking all of this into account, do you feel the current agreed syllabus is suitable for renewing for the next five years ?

9 responses



Katy Staples, SACRE Advisor

20/1/21