

# Swindon Borough Council

## Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education

**Tuesday, 22 September 2009**

Committee Room 6, Civic Offices, Swindon  
(Anticipated meeting room)

At 6.00 p.m.

**Councillors  
(Group A)**

Councillor Doreen Dart (Chair)  
Councillor Michael Bray  
Councillor Mavis Childs  
Councillor Raymond Fisher  
Councillor Fay Howard

**Church of England  
(Group B)**

Ms Norma McKemey  
Ms Steph Mundin  
Mr. Paul Noble  
Mrs Penny Summers  
Reverend Arthur Woo

**Teacher Organisations  
(Group C)**

Mr David Easter  
Ms Jo Garton (Vice-Chair)  
Mrs Tracy Mason  
Mrs Emma McCarthy  
Mrs Helen Miller  
Miss Anne Wang  
Mrs Mandy Sandleton  
Miss Janet French (subject to Union confirmation)

**Other Faiths  
(Group D)**

Mrs Helen Hancox, United Reformed Church  
Reverend David Howell, Swindon Evangelical Alliance  
Mr M S Khan, Muslim Community  
Reverend Paul Knight, Baptist  
Mr Dinesh Patel, Hindu Community  
Mrs Wendy Tucker, Methodist Church  
Mr Malkit Singh Virk, Sikh Community  
Mr Arun Bedi, Sikh Community (Deputy)

**SACRE Adviser:**

Ms Katy Staples, SACRE Adviser

**Committee Officer:** Sarah Lawrence (Telephone 01793 463603)  
email: [slawrence@swindon.gov.uk](mailto:slawrence@swindon.gov.uk)

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Swindon, SN1 2JH (Telephone 01793 445500)

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## **AGENDA**

**1. Apologies for Absence**

**2. 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.

**3. 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.

**4. Minutes (Pages 1 - 8)**

To receive the minutes of the meeting held on 23 June 2009.

Also attached for information (ref Minute 7) is the response submitted to the consultation on Curriculum Review.

**5. Membership Update (DLDS-B) (Pages 9 - 10)**

**6. Face to Faith Pilot Final Report (DC-E) (Pages 11 - 20)**

**7. Understanding Faith**

To receive a short presentation from a member of the SACRE on their faith, with the opportunity for questions from SACRE members.

**8. Date and Time of the Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the SACRE is on 1 December 2009.

**Date of Despatch:** 14 September 2009

**Key: Officers:**

GDC – Group Director: Children

DLDS-B - Director of Law and Democratic Services

DC-E – Director of Community

**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**

**TUESDAY, 23 JUNE 2009**

**PRESENT:-**

Group A: Councillors	Councillors Doreen Dart, Mavis Childs and Raymond Fisher
Group B: Church of England	Ms Steph Mundin and Reverend Arthur Woo
Group C: Teacher Organisations	Mr David Easter, Ms Jo Garton, Mrs Helen Miller and Mrs Mandy Sandleton
Group D: Other Faiths	Mrs Helen Hancox (United Reformed Church), Reverend David Howell (Swindon Evangelical Alliance), Mr M S Khan (Muslim Community), Mr Dinesh Patel (Hindu Community), Mrs Wendy Tucker (Methodist Church), Mr Malkit Singh Virk (Sikh Community) and Mr Arun Bedi (Sikh Community (Deputy Representative))

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: - Ms Katy Staples (SACRE Adviser)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Michael Bray, Councillor Fay Howard, Ms Norma McKemey, Mr. Paul Noble, Mrs Penny Summers, Mrs Tracy Mason, Miss Anne Wang and Reverend Paul Knight.

**1. Appointment of Chair and Vice-Chair for Municipal Year 2009-10**

Resolved that - 1) Councillor Doreen Dart be appointed as Chair of the SACRE for the Municipal Year 2009-10.

2) Ms Jo Garton be appointed as Vice-Chair of the SACRE for the Municipal Year 2009-10.

**2. 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 of interest were made.

**3. Public Question Time**

No public questions were received during the meeting.

**4. Membership Update**

The Clerk to the SACRE presented a report updating the SACRE on the current vacancies on the SACRE and recommending appointment of relevant representatives.

Resolved - 1) That the Membership update be noted.

2) That Reverend Arthur Woo be appointed to serve on the SACRE as a member of Group B (Church of England Group) to serve until September 2011.

3) That Miss Janet French be appointed to serve on the SACRE as a member of Group C (Teacher Organisations), subject to the approval of the relevant

Teachers Union, to serve until September 2011.

4) That Mr Arun Bedi be appointed to serve on the SACRE as a deputy to Mr Malkit Singh Virk to represent the Sikh Community on Group D (Other Christian Denominations and Other Faiths).

5) That the SACRE Advisor and Clerk continue to seek a nomination from the Catholic Diocese to the remaining vacancy on Group D (Other Christian Denominations and Other Faiths).

## **5. Chair's Announcements**

The Chair advised the SACRE that the Face to Faith project showcase involving young people from the four participating secondary schools would be held on 7<sup>th</sup> July 2009 at 8 pm at the Arts Centre. It was asked that a report come to the next SACRE meeting on the Showcase, including feedback from the schools and pupils participating.

## **6. Minutes**

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2009, be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

Further to minute 39, the SACRE Advisor reported that the questionnaire to go out to schools on delivery of Collective Worship had been prepared and the SACRE confirmed that it should be sent out to schools, for the data to form part of an annual update to the SACRE on delivery of RE and Collective Worship in the Borough. It was asked that the Clerk email to all members of the SACRE the web link to the Schools Standards Report which was reported to Cabinet.

## **7. Public Consultation on Curriculum Review**

Ms Katy Staples (SACRE Advisor) presented to the SACRE the current public consultation on Curriculum Reform, including the Primary Curriculum Review and Non-Statutory Guidance on Religious Education, for which comments had been invited by 24 July 2009. The SACRE discussed the implications of the consultation proposals on the way in which RE would be taught in schools, and particularly highlighted issues to be included in its formal response to the consultation. In addition, Ms Katy Staples reported back from the NASACRE conference, and the curriculum reform was presented and discussed at the conference.

In relation to the proposed Primary Curriculum, the SACRE expressed concern in relation to the change in the fourth area of learning from 'Human, social and environmental understanding' to 'Historical, geographical and social understanding' as this appeared to exclude Religious Education from being taught centrally within the curriculum. It was noted that the guidance still promoted the teaching of Religious Education, but there needed to be more clarity of its legal status, and whether it can be taught within a creative curriculum. The SACRE supported the use of end of Key Stage targets within the grade descriptors, which brought RE into line with the assessment of other subjects. However, there was concern that the removal of the clear requirement for both learning about and learning from elements in the grade descriptors removed assurance of quality of learning in relation to Religious Education. In relation to the non-statutory guidance, it was felt that there was no additional clarification of the position of Academies, except that the teaching of RE would be as agreed under their original contracts,

rather than in accordance with the Locally Agreed Syllabus. The SACRE advisor agreed to contact the Swindon Academy to understand if they wished to utilise any element of the agreed syllabus and SACRE support. It was noted that the non-statutory guidance proposed the removal of a time allocation requirement for teaching of Religious Education in schools. Although, it was recognised that schools might find it difficult to meet all time requirements given the pressure within the syllabus, it did give a measure of how religious education should be prioritised in the curriculum and there was some concern as to whether there would be a reduction in its priority in school as a result.

Resolved – 1) That the SACRE Advisor be authorised to respond to the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority on the public consultation on curriculum reform by the closing date of 24<sup>th</sup> July 2009 on the basis of the discussion with the SACRE including comments set out above.

2) That Members of the SACRE contact the Advisor if one or two would be willing to deputise and represent the SACRE at regional or national events when the SACRE Advisor is unable to attend, subject to approval by the Chair and within the current SACRE budget.

## **8. NASACRE Newsletter**

The SACRE noted the Spring 2009 edition of SACRE news from NASACRE (The National Association of Standing Advisory Councils for Religious Education). SACRE Members were invited to contact the Clerk to the SACRE if there were any issues raised which should be addressed by the SACRE at a future meeting. The SACRE agreed that it wished to continue to receive the SACRE News via the SACRE Agenda rather than electronically.

## **9. Feedback from Cluster Meetings**

Ms Katy Staples (SACRE Advisor) updated the SACRE on the primary and secondary cluster meetings. It was noted that attendance from the secondary sector could be encouraged further.

Resolved – 1) That the update on the primary and secondary cluster meetings be noted.

1) That in the future these meetings be referred to as Network Meetings to avoid any confusion with other 'cluster' forums.

2) That the SACRE Advisor approach the Chair of SASH (Swindon Association of Secondary Headteachers) to consider the best way to advertise the opportunity the Secondary cluster sessions give to provide peer support and to share best practice, and to encourage more secondary teachers to attend.

## **10. Date and Time of the Next Meeting**

The SACRE noted the following dates had been scheduled for meetings of the SACRE in 2009/10:

- ⌘ Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2009, 6 pm
- ⌘ Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> December 2009, 6 pm
- ⌘ Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> March 2010, 6 pm

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## Swindon SACRE responses to the Curriculum Reform Consultation

### **The Primary Curriculum**

One central point about this curriculum that was raised by Swindon SACRE is the **absence of spirituality** in the aims and throughout the curriculum.

A further point, raised by the teachers group, was that in these plans there was still a **gap between theory and reality** and another layer of explanation seemed to be missing before they became useful for schools.

**The change between the draft to the final report that excluded RE** from the "Pizza diagram" was lamented by all. It was felt that changing the "human, social and environmental understanding" to "historical, geographical and social understanding" area of learning, was a retrograde move for the position of RE in the primary curriculum.

RE now apparently stands outside the important central part of the curriculum; this may lead many to make it even more of a periphery subject and may even cause schools to break the law of entitlement.

RE plays a central part in ensuring good **Community Cohesion** in schools, particularly in educating and encouraging debate about all faiths and none; to obviously marginalise this subject will not serve the needs of a peaceful nation.

Swindon SACRE would again like to reiterate its objection to RE no longer being easily included within this area of learning that has become "Historical, Geographical and Social Understanding". Other subjects suffer from RE not being able to be integrated with them and RE will suffer from it apparently being a subject where teachers are being encouraged to teach it separately in all situations. This may well **encourage the practice of teaching RE within PPA time**.

If the Government is serious about Community Cohesion, and really acknowledges the vital part that RE plays in this, it would be ensuring it was obvious to curriculum planners that RE should have an important place in the curriculum. For RE to seem vital to teachers it needs to be easily interpreted as being in the main circular diagram (as it was in the draft).

Swindon SACRE is happy that the format and organisation of RE is displayed in such a way that gives it parity with other subjects and makes organisation of cross-curricular planning easy. It also means that teachers will have a clear vision of standards and progression

across the key stages. This shared language across areas of the curriculum is to be welcomed, however the apparent way that RE still stands on the side of the central curriculum is unfortunate and potentially to its detriment.

Another important point made seemed to be that there were **contradictions between this new curriculum and the inspection framework** – this leaves teachers and Headteachers in a confused and untenable position.

### **Non-statutory guidance for a statutory subject**

Swindon SACRE is very pleased that the level descriptions **reflect secular viewpoints as well as religious ones**.

The fact they are non-statutory and the **confusion** schools may have in using these alongside the Locally Agreed Syllabus was raised. As they use exactly the same shared curriculum language as other areas of learning, is there a danger that they may render the Locally Agreed Syllabus a lesser used document?

The absence of the labelling of the essential knowledge under the **categories of AT1 and AT2** may lead teachers to plan programmes of study that do not blend the learning about religion with the learning from religion. This may lead to the exacerbation of racism and religious intolerance as pupils learn about beliefs and practices without considering how they can learn from those.

### **Religious Education in English Schools: Non –Statutory Guidance 2009**

Swindon SACRE expressed that they felt much of this document was very practical and useful and were grateful for clear guidance.

The omission of any **time allocation** was noted and the fear that particularly at KS4 within the new 14 to 19 curriculum, with a greater complexity of curriculum routes for young people, schools may start to offer entitlement through inadequate “drop down days”.

There are equal fears for Primary Schools with the New Primary Curriculum and for KS3 with many schools offering a skills-based curriculum and offering little RE within that.

It was articulated that any guidance such as this had no teeth without “the stick” of prosecution/Ofsted down-grading, for non-compliance.

The section about **Academies** and SACREs is also woefully unhelpful. It fails to clarify what relationship a SACRE can hope to achieve with the

Academies within its area. Legally, what RE curriculum can DCSF be recommending for individual academies as there is no curriculum other than the local RE curriculum according to the law? This seems to be a huge anomaly that the government needs to be urged to address.

Katy Staples, Adviser to Swindon SACRE      21/07/2009

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## Membership Update

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE)

Date: 22 September 2009

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**Author:** Director of Law and Democratic Services / SACRE Adviser

**Parish / Wards Affected:** All

### Purpose

- To ask the SACRE to note the Membership update.

### Recommendation

- To note the Membership update.
- That the SACRE thank Paul Knight for his service to the SACRE over many years.
- That the SACRE Advisor and Clerk seek a suitable representative to fill the vacancy arising in Group D 'Other Faiths'.

## 1. Reasons

- 1.1 The Council appoints the membership of SACRE every four years, but the SACRE approves changes to membership mid term. The Council formally renewed the Membership of the SACRE in September 2007. All appointments made by the SACRE in the interim run until September 2011, the date of the next formal review.

## 2. Detail

- 2.1 Reverend Paul Knight has written to the Clerk to the SACRE to advise that he will be stepping down as a member of the SACRE at the end of September to take up a new position in Northamptonshire, and this is therefore his last meeting. .
- 2.2 The SACRE will wish to extend its thanks to Paul Knight for his service to the SACRE over many years. It is recommended that the SACRE Advisor and Clerk be authorised to seek a new representative for the Other Faiths Group (Group D) to represent the Baptist Church and Community.

### Alternative Options

- None.

### Risk Management

#### *Financial and Procurement Implications*

- There are no direct financial implications associated with this report.

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Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Sarah Lawrence on 01793 463603, Email [slawrence@swindon.gov.uk](mailto:slawrence@swindon.gov.uk).

## Membership Update

### Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE)

Date: 22 September 2009

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#### *Legal / Human Rights Implications*

- This report has no specific legal or human rights implications. The legal requirements for appointment of representatives is set out in the SACRE Constitution.

#### *Links to Corporate Plans and Policies (in particular to Swindon 2010 Promises)*

- The work of the SACRE contributes to the aims to improve the opportunities for children and young people.

#### **Consultees**

- The Director of Finance (Section 151 Officer) and Director of Law and Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer) are consulted on all reports.
- Director of Schools and Learning
- Principal Advisor (School Improvement)

#### **Background Papers and Appendices**

- None

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Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Sarah Lawrence on 01793 463603, Email [slawrence@swindon.gov.uk](mailto:slawrence@swindon.gov.uk).

## Face to Faith Pilot Final Report

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE)

Date: 22 September 2009

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**Author:** Paula Harrison Community Support Manager, Directorate of Community

**Parish / Wards Affected:** All

### Purpose

- To report the final Face to Faith project outcomes to the Swindon SACRE

### Recommendation

SACRE is requested to

- Approve the Face to Faith booklet
- Consider how best to distribute the Face to Faith booklet and DVD to Swindon schools

## 1. Reasons

- 1.1 The Swindon SACRE piloted the Face to Faith project following a successful application for funding to the NASACRE, the National Association of SACREs.
- 1.2 The project ran during the academic year of September 2008 – July 2009. The four secondary schools engaged in the project were Kingsdown Secondary School, Commonweal School, Ridgeway School and Hreod Nova.
- 1.3 This paper follows previous reports to SACRE detailing the progress of the project and in light of this, focuses on pupil experience, disseminating the outcomes of the pilot and potential opportunities for new work.

## 2. Detail

- 2.1 The Face to Faith project was an opportunity for over 50 young people from 4 Swindon secondary schools to reflect creatively on faith and beliefs.
- 2.2 The style of the delivery was largely determined by school preferences. This gave the pilot a range of different ways of working with pupils on an exploratory discussion about faith and identity. The project input was a

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Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from *Paula Harrison* on 466418 or Email [pharrison@swindon.gov.uk](mailto:pharrison@swindon.gov.uk).

# Face to Faith Pilot Final Report

## Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE)

Date: 22 September 2009

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combination of engagement worker-led discussion time followed by time with an artist through Create Studios.

- 2.3 The final projects are showcased in a DVD. There is also an accompanying film, which interviews the engagement workers and the pupils and describes the different projects within the Face to Faith pilot. Both films will be shown to the SACRE during the meeting. The DVD is proposed to be distributed with an accompanying booklet outlining ways to promote interfaith discussion, see Appendix A. Both the National Association of SACREs and the Swindon SACRE are acknowledged in the booklet.
- 2.3 The level of dialogue and debate facilitated by the Council's engagement workers meant that the point at which Create Studios became engaged with the participants, some good thinking and planning had already taken place. This resulted in more innovative and challenging pieces than would normally be achieved with young people who were meeting with artists for the first time. The success of this 2-stage model would be good to emulate in further collaborations. Information about Create is set out in Appendix B.
- 2.4 All pupils reported positive experiences from their participation in the project. These are collated in Appendix C.

### 3. Achievement of Project Outcomes

- 3.1 The Face to Faith pilot achieved its objectives to ensure that each club would
- Explore faith and religious belief and non faith positions across their school community
  - Consider how well religious education in their school helps them understand faith matters
  - Create a project that captures what they have discovered and their views of faith
  - Showcase their findings to the Swindon Sacre and the other participating schools
- 3.2 Outcomes which were not fully achieved were
- Promoting links with community and faith groups within the town – opportunities to achieve this were not fully realised however, the Face to Faith booklet suggests that this is a good way to facilitate interfaith discussion.
  - Pupils considering faith and its impact on their lives in Swindon – this did not really materialise in discussions and may in some part be due

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Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from *Paula Harrison* on 466418 or Email [pharrison@swindon.gov.uk](mailto:pharrison@swindon.gov.uk).



# Face to Faith Pilot Final Report

## Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE)

Date: 22 September 2009

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to the participants; the majority of pupils did not strongly identify with any single faith and some had gone so far as to reject their religious upbringing.

- Showcase findings to their schools – all schools attended the launch of the Face to Faith DVD at the Swindon Arts Centre. All schools will be receiving the booklet and DVD which should enable schools to use this material.

### 4. Next Steps

- 4.1 The Community Directorate are working with Create Studios to explore new opportunities for external funding to support further Face to Faith style project work with young people and their schools.
- 4.2 The Face to Faith booklet and DVD is planned to be sent to every school to promote interest and support for interfaith discussion. This could be accompanied by a letter from SACRE.
- 4.3 A summary of the Face to Faith project will be posted on the Swindon Borough Council website. Copies of the DVD will be available.

### Alternative Options

- None. This project has achieved its objectives and is at an end.

### Risk Management

#### *Financial and Procurement Implications*

- This project was achieved with a combination of external and internal funding including in-kind officer time. No further funding is committed by this report.

#### *Legal / Human Rights Implications*

- Interfaith dialogue activity closely connects with equality initiatives. It promotes respect and appreciation of difference. In order to be successful, it also requires challenge to discriminatory or inappropriate language and behaviours.

#### *Links to Corporate Plans and Policies (in particular to Swindon 2010 Promises)*

- National Indicators:
  - NI 1** % of people who believe people from different backgrounds get on well together in their local area
  - NI 23** Perceptions that people in the area treat one another with respect and dignity

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Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from *Paula Harrison* on 466418 or Email [pharrison@swindon.gov.uk](mailto:pharrison@swindon.gov.uk).

# **Face to Faith Pilot Final Report**

**Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE)**

**Date: 22 September 2009**

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## **Consultees**

- The Director of Finance (Section 151 Officer) and Director of Law and Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer) are consulted in respect of all reports.
- Partners listed have been involved in the development of the Framework itself.

## **Background Papers and Appendices**

- Appendix A – Face to Faith Booklet
- Appendix B – Information about Create Studios
- Appendix C – Comments from pupils participating in the Swindon SACRE Face to Faith Project

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Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from *Paula Harrison* on 466418 or Email [pharrison@swindon.gov.uk](mailto:pharrison@swindon.gov.uk).

Schools Resource

# Face to Faith



Face to Faith is an opportunity for young people to discuss religion, faith and belief at a Personal, Local and Global level.

**The activities and resources in this booklet result from a successful pilot of a face to faith project funded by Swindon Borough Council and the National Association of SACREs in 2009. This is detailed further on the DVD enclosed. The content is designed to encourage young people to engage in a spiritual exploration and to prompt dialogue and discussion about respect and difference.**

Activities can be adapted and mixed to suit the age, interests of participants and timescale for delivery. In addition, the experience of the participant will be richer if they are supported to interact with people who are willing to share their own personal, spiritual and non spiritual perspective.

Face to Faith can be run as an after school or lunch club, but is ideally a workshop. Young people of mixed age ranges and with differing or no Religious or World views should be encouraged to take part—with the aim of creating a presentation to express the impact of a topic or concept they have learnt about.. This could be a series of photographs, a piece of art, poetry, dance, film, music, drama or animation. This work can then be used as a resource and inspiration for future participants.

To deliver a Face to Faith project, participants need a safe space to ask questions, express views and challenge assumptions. The workshop activities proposed encourage participants to explore their identity. This supports personal confidence building and links to curriculum inputs on citizenship and religious education.

National Association of SACREs

SACRE



Involvement in a range of media production (film, animation, music, visual arts) can be an effective way of crystallising and sharing important learning on any topic. With the Face to Faith project, participants were able to grapple with challenging, sensitive and important themes in a way that built up their own learning and understanding and encouraged them to communicate these issues to a new audience.



**Ask students to think of three ground rules/ top tips for living/ morals that they would always try to stick to.**

What influences us to adopt these rules?  
Religion, family values, personal convictions, peers, passions etc.

## Activity 1

# Common Ground

- I am a religious person.
- I can talk about what I believe in openly at School
- What I believe affects how I behave at School
- What I believe affects how I behave at Home
- I like to make my own mind up
- I am easily influenced by my friends
- You shouldn't make judgements about people because of their beliefs
- I think there are lots of similarities between different religions
- I have seen or heard someone get labelled, teased or bullied because of their religious beliefs
- I enjoy going to RE lessons at school
- I think of Christmas as a religious festival

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## Activity 3

### 1994

This individual activity encourages participants to identify moments in their life that determine a belief on an individual timeline. On a long piece of paper—ask participants to draw a line across the middle. Mark the start “birth” and the end with “current age”. Along the chart, individuals need to mark down events in their life, which led them to believe in something, or influenced their worldview.

Encourage a discussion and look for similarities and differences amongst the group.

Note: For this activity—it is possible that participants may reveal difficult or emotional personal experiences. Ensure that the participants feel comfortable in expressing themselves and that anything they don’t want to talk about can be left out.

## Activity 4

### Symbols

Look at some examples of the symbols associated with different Religions. Participants can work individually or in small groups to design a logo about their own or shared beliefs. This may incorporate an existing religious symbol or be something new. Ask



participants to describe why they chose their design and what are the important aspects of it.



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## Schools Resource



“Talk about why people might engage in these activities and try to focus on feelings”

### Activity 5 Shrine

**Talk about some of the activities or customs associated with different religions—Prayer, Celebration, Meditation, Pilgrimage, Fasting etc. Talk about why people might engage in these activities. Include a focus on feelings, peace, calm, reflection and the personal, spiritual impact of religious activity.**



Explain to participants that they are going to create a shrine. What kind of feelings do they want to feel when they visit the shrine? What would they like to see there? How will they negotiate what goes into the Shrine?

Give the participants access to fabric, rugs, furniture, stones, ornaments, incense, flowers, coins, photographs mirrors, holy books, poems, music—anything they might want to consider as part of the Shrine. Encourage discussion and debate. When the Shrine is

complete ask the participants to think about how they want to visit the shrine, are there any rules?

Encourage a group visit to the Shrine. Try listening to some music if that is appropriate.

After the visit encourage a discussion about how the experience made the participants feel.

## Activity 6

# Photographs

Choose some photographs as a starting point for discussion—choose images that will provoke a debate appropriate for the age and maturity of the participants. This activity is a good starting point for identifying stereotypes and assumptions. Some of the photographs used could include people in religious clothing, famous religious people, events associated with religions etc

*Ensure that participants feel safe to express their views but where necessary support them to identify stereotyping or misrepresentation.*



## Activity 8

# Media impact

Research Faith-related articles on National newspaper websites. Choose a selection that demonstrate the power of the media to layer our understanding with assumptions, for example—“Sikh Girl wins right to wear bangle” “Catholic Girl expelled for wearing cross”. Encourage a discussion around media spin and the positive or negative impact of it.

This activity can be enhanced by providing participants with the opportunity to interview a faith representative or religious person and ask for their views on how their faith is represented in the media.

## Activity 7

# Headlines you will never see

Ask participants to write an article for a *newspaper with a difference* with headlines you will never see ‘i.e. stories where faiths are making a positive contribution, community celebrations, inter-faith dialogue or positive relationship building.’ Some prompts could be: What are the similarities between Islam and Christianity? Research the achievements of a British born Sikh.



## Insights from the Pilot's Projects

Facilitators of Face to Faith work need to take responsibility to maintain a respectful environment where views can be shared and heard and that participants feel able to explore ideas and views. Don't be afraid of tackling potentially unfamiliar or difficult issues. Pupils enjoyed being allowed and encouraged to look at potentially unfamiliar or difficult issues. Promote peer moderation through a shared agreement to challenge comments or views that may be discriminatory or misinformed.

Many participants will get confused between Religion/Faith, Culture and Heritage. Allow the sessions to unpick whether a behaviour or custom is cultural or religious and look for links and connections in other cultures or religions.

Be conscious of use of language. Words like "them", "us" and "our" can indicate that a participant is categorising people in an unhelpful and potentially discriminatory way. Challenge in an appropriate way - it is important to question and reflect on comments and views but never damage the "safe space" created for open and honest discussion. Develop a culture where the participants feel able to challenge each other if offensive language is used.

### Tips for Challenging include:

**Re-framing:** repeat the main points of a participant's contribution but remove any discriminatory language or implications.

**Explanation:** If a participant makes an assumption explain why this may be considered offensive and insulting and ask them not to use it.

**Direct Challenge:** Always challenge language, which you

know to be offensive. It helps to have a stock statement such as "language like that is insulting and unacceptable - please do not use it".

**Mythbusting:** where a view based on assumption, stereotype or deep-seated belief emerges; it may be helpful to build in an opportunity to identify an alternative view.





For further information about Swindon's Face to Faith pilot, please contact the Community Support Team on 01793 466418.



For further information about working with artists on the Face to Faith DVD please contact Swindon's Create Studios on 01793 465333.



## Top Tips for Mythbusting

1. Identify the root causes of the myth - is it generated through fear, ignorance, anxiety, prioritizing others, physical consequences? Use this information to steer your mythbusting responses.
2. Bring people together who can understand and communicate with the people and communities associated with the issue.
3. If there is a practical and appropriate solution, tackle the issue or problem early on.
4. Challenge misinformation.
5. Remember experiences are not always positive for people believing a myth and those that are the subject of it. Mythbusting should include a response to both. Events, learning and activities that allow for positive encounters should be supported and developed.
6. Be prepared to repeat the activity or revisit it again in the future. Populations and issues change and tensions can emerge at any time. Established partnerships with a collective commitment to cohesion and equality enable mythbusting to move forward effectively.

This information about Face to Faith is available on the internet at [www.swindon.gov.uk](http://www.swindon.gov.uk). It can be produced in a range of languages and formats (such as large print, Braille or other accessible formats) by contacting the Customer Services Department on tel: 01793 445500 or fax: 01793 463331 or e-mail: [customerservices@swindon.gov.uk](mailto:customerservices@swindon.gov.uk)

## Recommendations:

- Avoid making assumptions about individuals based on religion and belief, e.g. don't assume that everyone is the same e.g. "Sikhs don't cut their hair"
- Do not assume that a person's appearance defines their Religious belief
- Avoid the term "Christian name". Instead try "forename"
- Avoid language that could offend people's feelings around their religion faith and/or belief.
- Allow participants to deviate from the subject of Religion. The topic is very personal and participants need to be able to express ideas around their own identity and purpose.

## **Appendix B**

### **Note re: CREATE Studios**

Create Studios sits within the Culture Swindon team that is part of the Environment, Community and Regeneration Division of Swindon Borough Council. As such Create are natural partners for the Community Support Team and its cohesion/interfaith activity, working towards shared aims and using our complementary expertise to develop dialogue and understanding within Swindon's communities.

Create Studios has worked for almost 30 years within Swindon's communities, and our outreach project, Mobile Media, whose team facilitated the Face to Faith project, have spearheaded innovative formal and informal learning using media for the last 10 years.

Create's expertise and resource in professional media production can be used as a tool by colleagues within Swindon to enable effective and innovative outreach to young people and their communities. The Face to Faith project enabled Create to work alongside the Community Cohesion team in a meaningful way over a prolonged period of time.

Feedback from participants and the Community Cohesion team confirmed Create's aspiration for involvement in a range of media production (film, animation, music, visual arts) to be an effective way of crystallising and sharing important learning on any topic. With the Face to Faith project, participants were able to grapple with challenging, sensitive and important themes in a way that built up their own learning and understanding.

**Create Studios is able to provide its staff and equipment resources to a range of education and community projects at subsidised rates. For more information please contact 01793 465333 or visit [www.createstudios.org.uk](http://www.createstudios.org.uk)**

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## **Appendix C**

### **Comments from pupils participating in the Swindon SACRE Face to Faith Project**

*Source:– interview comments and comments whilst filming*

#### **Commonweal School**

I learnt about a new religion. Someone came in and talked about paganism and we learnt quite a bit about that religion.

I learnt a lot of new things about religions – a lot more in depth that I wouldn't usually know.

I felt that I was able to express my views quite a bit – everybody listened and everybody could develop the idea.

We could express our views very clearly – if that's how we felt and we all developed the ideas and moved from them to the next ones and if anything was said that some people didn't like then it didn't leave the room and arguments weren't caused because of that.

I enjoyed working with the artists quite a lot – it was something that I had personally never done before and I thought it was a good experience to do and we had a lot of fun doing it.

The film day when we did the whole day at school when were doing the filming – I really enjoyed that. We had a really good time and we all worked together really well.

The filming day was great fun and some of the group sessions at lunchtime were fun as well.

Yes, I would do it again if I had the chance to – I think it was a very good experience to do.

I think it worked really well with the discussions and the faith side of it going together with the media and it encouraged more people to want to do it.

I am proud of the film that we have made – it has got more than one person and the sound that went with it made it even better.

We decided to create a film with all these different religions expressing themselves in the way they do because in the classroom discussions we talked about stereotypes and how to perceive different people just as you walk past them and you see them and assume they are one type of person, whereas if you actually got to know them, they aren't like that and we just wanted to show people that they can be these religions but they are just the same as you – just normal people.

I think that it was a very unique experience and I think that anyone that gets the opportunity to do it should do it and I don't believe that you would get another opportunity to do the same thing outside of the school environment and it was the really in depth discussions about the stereotypes and the different religions we discussed about that we incorporated into the film.

## **Nova Hreod**

I thought that we met people that were really friendly so we could trust them and they wouldn't like contradict our ideas so if we said something they would be like, that's fine.

Animation is actually quite a good way of putting your view across. You can almost do anything, that isn't physically possible.

I would say I would have a better understanding of different religions now.

I think we kind of learnt that all religions all have some kind of common ground that can all be linked to as one religion.

There are many similarities between certain religions and about how people can dress sometimes makes them feel different or say anything they want.

I think the best bits were when we were actually putting it all together and actually filming it and when we got to make all the models and have discussions.

Yes we would definitely do this again.

I feel proud about this because I got to do something different that I don't usually do.

## **Kathryn Davies, Teacher, Nova Hreod**

It started out as quite a big group of students. I think in a way it actually worked better for them that there were only a few left at the end because they were able to connect a lot more with the adults involved – the adults coming in that they hadn't met before I think it was really good that they felt confident speaking to them and not feel judged or anything like that.

## **Kingsdown School**

We realised you don't have to be religious to celebrate a religious festival.

The project made me feel more confident at home and at school.

We had a great time filming the project, but it wasn't just about the great time we had, it was about all the stuff we learnt as well.

It's the best thing I have ever done or will ever do.

I joined the group to find out what it would be like to experience what other religions are like, and to give me an insight on their Faith.

I feel a lot more comfortable in a mixed race situation. Because even if people look different or believe in different things really were all the same.

I really enjoyed wearing the Sari's It made me feel like I was part of something.

It was really fun - an experience of a lifetime.

## **Ridgeway School**

Having a debate about a subject with the whole class is better than having a teacher use a white board.

If everyone could do this project I think it could make them a better person.

I like how we used a personal tragedy in our school to base our idea upon.

It was good we had a lot of freedom - we had a full range of what we based our project on, which made us think more.

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