Shropshire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education

Statutory Requirements
AGREED SYLLABUS FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

June 2009

The original Shropshire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education was first published in July 1991 and has been revised in May 1997 and again in May 2004. The syllabus has now been significantly restructured as part of the regular review of the Agreed Syllabus required by law, but contains much of the content of the old syllabus.

The restructuring is designed to support schools in distinguishing the statutory elements from non-statutory guidance and support materials.

The Agreed Syllabus Conference met in March 2008 to instigate the review of the Agreed Syllabus and the resulting Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education was formally approved in the March 2009 meeting. The new Agreed Syllabus will be phased into Community and Voluntary Controlled schools from September 2009.

Finally I must pay tribute to everyone who has contributed to creating the revised Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education. I commend it to everyone in our schools with an interest in Religious Education.

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Introduction

This new version of the Shropshire Agreed Syllabus has been developed with the cooperation of the local SACRE and teachers. It is based on the foundations laid down in previous Agreed Syllabuses, an extensive consultation with schools, teachers and pupils on strengths and areas for development. Due recognition has been taken of the Non-statutory National Framework for Religious Education and wider developments in education such as the primary and secondary curriculum reviews.

The aim is to produce an Agreed Syllabus that is flexible but which gives teachers clear guidance to develop their own curriculum models that reflect their local needs. The creative and challenging teaching and learning supported by the syllabus will develop children and young people who are religiously literate and educated for life in the 21st century.

As this syllabus has evolved from earlier syllabuses the existing example study units can be incorporated into the new schemes of work. With flexibility in mind this syllabus will not offer complete key stage schemes of work, but will contain illustrative examples of units written to a common format. It is important that individual schools take ownership of the new syllabus and work through the process of developing their own schemes of work. The intention of the syllabus writers is that on-going development and further illustration will take place throughout the life of this syllabus, making this an organic and responsive Agreed Syllabus.

On-going Continuing Professional Development will generate additional resources and alternative examples for use in the syllabus over the next five years.
The National Legal Framework for Religious Education

RE, as part of the basic curriculum, should be provided for all registered pupils attending a maintained school.

It is the headteacher’s duty to secure this provision. The governing body or, for LA-maintained schools, the governing body and the LA, must also exercise their functions with a view to securing this provision.

The headteacher and governing body must ensure that sufficient time and resources are given to RE in school to meet the statutory requirements.

RE is required to be included, alongside the National Curriculum, in the basic curriculum which all maintained schools must provide for their registered pupils; this includes those in reception classes and sixth forms, and is not confined to pupils of compulsory school age. The special status of RE as a part of the basic but not the National Curriculum is important. It ensures that RE has equal standing in relation to National Curriculum subjects within a school’s curriculum, but is not subject to statutorily prescribed national attainment targets, programmes of study and assessment arrangements, which would be compulsory for all pupils, without exception.

The Education Reform Act 1988 requires that all new syllabuses, i.e. those adopted on or after 29 September 1988, must ‘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 Britain’.

Nothing in the Education Act 1993 affects parents’ rights, as established in the 1944 Act and re-enacted in the 1988 Act, to withdraw their children from RE if they wish. To summarise:

If the parent asks that a pupil should be wholly or partly excused from attending any RE, a school continues to be responsible for the supervision of any child withdrawn by its parent from RE, unless the child is lawfully receiving religious education elsewhere.
Staff in special schools must provide RE for all their pupils, where practicable; it does not have to be taught to the locally agreed syllabus although staff are encouraged to do so and most will use the syllabus as a basis for their planning.

Circular 1/94
The Taught Syllabus

Breadth of Study

It will be expected that schemes of work will ensure that:

- Christianity is included in each key stage.
- Other world religions are included as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Stage</th>
<th>Other Religions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reception</td>
<td>At least one</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Stage 1</td>
<td>one other religion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Stage 2</td>
<td>At least two other religions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Stage 3</td>
<td>At least two other religions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Stage 4</td>
<td>At least one other religion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-16</td>
<td>Relevant material is drawn from those religions felt most appropriate for the nature of the study.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

- There is evidence of attention being given to those faiths represented in the community.
- Pupils understand how religious beliefs are applied to everyday life in a personal context, but also in a wider setting.

NB

Although schools should identify the religion(s) they will focus on during each key stage, this does not prevent reference being made to other religious and secular world views (or belief systems) when it is relevant and appropriate. Such references should be seen as ‘enrichment experiences’. Teachers and inspectors should not expect pupils to have the same in-depth knowledge and understanding of these religions and world views that they have of those on which the school has chosen to focus.

Time Allocation

In order to fulfil the requirements of the Agreed Syllabus, it is vital that adequate time is allocated. Whilst the actual amount is left to the discretion of the school, it is important that managers recognise the statutory requirements that must be achieved in this time. The minimum recommended teaching time necessary to fulfil the requirements is:

KS1/2

R/Y1/2 25-30 hours in each year
Y3/4 35 hours in each year
Y5/6 35 hours in each year
KS3

5% of overall curriculum time, ie the equivalent of one hour a week. (This is in line with other humanities subjects)

KS4

Non – examination courses.
One hour a week, or the equivalent, is recommended. Schools can determine the appropriate delivery but it must be in accordance with the requirements of the Agreed Syllabus.

Examination Courses

- Short Course - at least 1 hour per week (In line with other exam options)
- Full course - at least 2 hours per week (In line with other exam options)

Sixth Forms in 11-18 schools

The school should provide a meaningful course based on the requirements of the Agreed Syllabus. Although the organisation of such courses may differ greatly, the time given should be appropriate to meet the course needs (based on the SACRE’s suggestion of one hour a week or its equivalent).

The time allocations given above do not include Collective Worship.
Aims

The principal aims of Religious Education are to help young people:

- To develop knowledge and understanding of religious experiences, insights, beliefs and practices.
  
  AT1 – Learning about religion

- To deepen or realise their own beliefs, and respect the freedom of other people to hold beliefs different from their own, so preparing them for adult life as citizens in a plural society.
  
  AT2 – Learning from religion

These aims will be realised by helping children and young people to:

- develop an awareness
  - that many people believe human life depends upon an ultimate being or sustaining creative power often referred to as God
  - of a spiritual dimension to life

- develop an awareness, understanding and appreciation of the broad religious, spiritual and ethical heritage of their immediate and global communities

- learn from religious and ethical teaching, enabling reasoned and informed judgements on religious and moral issues to be made for themselves whilst recognising and respecting the religious and moral choices of others

- reflect upon the experiences and the mysteries of life and to recognise the significance of awe and wonder in religious belief.
Key Concepts

The teaching of any religion needs to focus on key ideas and concepts contained within it. These must be at the heart of teachers’ planning for any scheme of work and should be prominent in their thinking when deciding what should be taught.

Identity, diversity and belonging
How do believers develop a sense of identity with their faith? What is the range of belief contained in any faith? What ceremonies take place when individuals become part of any faith group?

Practices and ways of life
What religious practices take place within a faith? How do people live their lives within that faith community?

Expressing meaning
How do different faiths demonstrate meaning through symbols, symbolic actions or colour?

Values and commitments
What shared values do faiths have and expect of their followers?

Beliefs, teachings and sources
What do different religions teach about God, life and ethical issues? What are the sources on which this teaching is based?

Meaning, purpose and truth
How do different religions give sense and purpose to life, death and the ultimate questions?
Religious Questions

Religious Education has moved from a subject that was perceived as ‘providing answers’ to one that is fundamentally about ‘the exploration of questions’.

For all children following this syllabus their RE should be an exploration, reflection or investigation of a range of appropriate questions. These questions must be both stimulating and challenging, and provide opportunities for children to gain important insights into their own beliefs and values as well as those represented in the religions being studied.

The Religious Questions that form the basis of the syllabus are set out below. It is expected that they will be identified and addressed in the schemes of work of all schools. In some cases the question may actually form the title of an actual lesson or a unit of work being covered. In others their coverage will be evident from the way the work is planned and taught.

We also recommend that each component within a unit of work, [this may be an individual lesson] should also be set out as a question. This will help ensure the teacher does not lose sight of the identified purpose of the lesson or the unit of work as well as helping make the evaluation process at the end more meaningful.

The 14 Religious Questions that form the core of the syllabus have been set out below and listed under the Key Concept they link to. If, for example, in the planning an individual teacher is setting out to explore an issue surrounding identity, diversity or belonging then question 1, 3 or 5 could be the central question to use. If the issue is about practices and ways of life then question 2 or 14 would be appropriate.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RQ1</th>
<th>Why am I special and what is important to me?</th>
<th>Who am I?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RQ2</td>
<td>What are the special times in my life and why are they significant?</td>
<td>How do people express their beliefs through worship and celebration?</td>
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<tr>
<td>RQ3</td>
<td>Who is my neighbour?</td>
<td>Who is my neighbour?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ4</td>
<td>How should I behave towards others?</td>
<td>How should I lead my life?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ5</td>
<td>Where do I belong?</td>
<td>Where do I belong?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ6</td>
<td>Why should we respect and value the planet and life in a variety of forms?</td>
<td>How should we relate to others and to the natural world?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ7</td>
<td>Why is there suffering?</td>
<td>How do people make sense of hardship and suffering?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ8</td>
<td>Has science got all the answers?</td>
<td>Has science got all the answers?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ9</td>
<td>Is there a God?</td>
<td>What do people believe about God?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ10</td>
<td>How is belief expressed?</td>
<td>How is belief expressed through symbols and action?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ11</td>
<td>What is truth?</td>
<td>How do people express their beliefs about truth?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ12</td>
<td>What happens when we die?</td>
<td>How do people make sense of life and death?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ13</td>
<td>How does religious belief guide and influence a person’s lifestyle?</td>
<td>Where do people’s beliefs come from?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ14</td>
<td>Why celebrate?</td>
<td>Why do people’s belief and practice differ?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Exploring the Key Concepts Through the Religious Questions

**Identity, diversity and belonging**
How do believers develop a sense of identity with their faith? What is the range of belief contained in any faith? What ceremonies take place when individuals become part of any faith group?

- RQ1 Who am I?
- RQ3 Who is my neighbour?
- RQ5 Where do I belong?

**Practices and ways of life**
What religious practices take place within a faith? How do people live their lives within that faith community?

- RQ14 Why do people’s belief and practice differ?
- RQ2 How do people express their beliefs through actions, worship or celebration?

**Expressing meaning**
How do different faiths demonstrate meaning through symbols, symbolic actions and colour?

- RQ10 How is belief expressed through symbols and action?

**Values and commitments**
What shared values do faiths have and expect of their followers?

- RQ4 How should I lead my life?
- RQ6 How should we relate to others and to the natural world?
Beliefs, teachings and sources
What do different religions teach about God, life and ethical issues? What are the sources on which this teaching is based?

RQ9 What do people believe about God?
RQ13 Where do people’s beliefs come from?
RQ8 Has science got all the answers?

Meaning, purpose and truth
How do different religions and belief systems give sense and purpose to life, death and the ultimate questions?

RQ7 How do people make sense of hardship and suffering?
RQ12 How do people make sense of life and death?
RQ11 How do people express their beliefs about truth?
Assessment, Recording and Reporting

All schools should be planning and assessing with reference to the Shropshire Agreed Syllabus level descriptors. To ensure that children and young people make progress in RE it is important that in planning our schemes of work due recognition is taken of the level of challenge. Good quality RE will be developed when planning takes into account the Key Concept to be developed, the specific question to be explored, the process through which this will be done in the classroom and the ‘pitch’ or challenge in the work.

Good quality planning will be clear about the link between the Key Concept and the specific Religious Question e.g. exploring values and commitments through RQ4 How should I lead my life? The teaching and learning process that will be used to explore this can be then decided upon e.g. an individual enquiry, a role play, devising a code of conduct etc. The level of challenge will be determined and differentiated by reference to the level descriptors contained in the syllabus.

The level descriptors have been rewritten so that they more clearly reflect both the Key Concepts and the Religious Questions in the syllabus. They set out lines of progression from Level 1 through to Exceptional Performance (EP) for both AT1 and AT2.
Reporting

The Law requires that Parents receive a specific annual report on RE. This should indicate the progress made along with significant strengths and weaknesses. [Statutory Instrument 2000 No. 297 The Education (Pupil Information) (England) Regulations 2000].

Recording

The syllabus does not specify how a school should record the progress made by a pupil in RE. However the syllabus recommends that the method used should reflect that used by the school for subjects such as geography or history.

In addition to providing this information whenever possible schools should indicate to their next phase partner schools what were the ‘focus religions’ they had chosen to study with their pupils. This will enable the receiving school to take this into account when designing their own schemes of work.

Using the Level Descriptors.

Planning will take account of the Key Concepts, Religious Questions and level descriptors. The Key Concepts can be identified within each of the level descriptors and used to construct mark schemes for specific activities.

Using the levels before the end of a key stage

Levels represent an end of key stage judgement made on the basis of a range of samples of work completed in a variety of different learning contexts. A single piece of work can be used to give an indication of an aspect of a level only.
### Agreed Syllabus Level Descriptors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level 1</th>
<th>Pupils can talk about themselves and their immediate friends and communities. They can say how what they think affects what they do. They can recall a range of signs and symbols. They can identify rules that determine their behaviour and the ways in which people respond to the world around them. They can express their own views on what they find interesting and puzzling.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level 2</td>
<td>Pupils demonstrate a sense of their own identity and recognise that belonging to religious groups is important to different people. Through religious stories they show how belief affects people’s lives and actions in the world around them. They can suggest meanings for some religious symbols, stories or language. Using some religious words and phrases they identify questions that cause people to wonder, and suggest answers that religions might offer. They can recognise that different people have different views from their own.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Level 3</td>
<td>Pupils can demonstrate how belonging to different faith communities has an impact on the way believers’ live their lives. They make links between religious practices and the ways that religions are expressed through stories, actions, festivals and sacred texts. They can identify some key religious teaching relating to life and death, truth and God, hardship and suffering. They demonstrate that by asking questions they can begin to develop their own attitudes and ideas.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Level 4</td>
<td>Pupils can describe what belonging to different religious faiths means in terms of practice. They can make some comparisons between the practice in the religions they have studied. They can describe key ways of expression in a variety of religions and make comparisons with other faiths. They can show how the behaviour of believers derives from religious guidance. They can outline some of the different religious teaching and secular views relating to life and death, truth and God, hardship and suffering, and respond with their own ideas to the issues studied.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Level 5</td>
<td>Pupils can explain why it is important to believers to belong to a faith community and how this impacts differently on a range of individuals and religious communities. They understand how some religious practices and forms of expression differ between and within religions, and can give some reasons to explain this. They can explain key ways of expression in a variety of religions and make comparisons with other faiths. They can explain their own ideas and beliefs in relation to the issues studied.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 6</td>
<td>Pupils, making use of technical vocabulary, can analyse and compare how belonging to a faith community, the forms of religious expression and the behaviours and practices followed differ among different groupings, denominations and traditions. They can outline and defend their personal responses through reasoned explanations.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Level 7</td>
<td>Pupils evaluate how historical and cultural contexts have impacted on religious life, expression and practice. They explain why the consequences of belonging to, and expressions of, a faith are not the same for all people within the same religion or tradition. They can explain and evaluate their own, and others’, views on religious and ethical issues studied.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 8</td>
<td>Pupils critically evaluate the impact of religious belief and expression on different communities and societies. In doing this they make use of accurate and comprehensive religious vocabulary and take account of the impact of a range of cultural, historical, social and philosophical influences. When evaluating responses to ultimate questions or ethical issues they can do so through critical evaluation of sources, interpretations and methodology to justify their own views and beliefs. They can coherently analyse and synthesise from a range of responses to justify their own views and beliefs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EP</td>
<td>Pupils can consistently analyse and evaluate the significance and impact of religious belief in a variety of different contexts, including the importance of religious diversity in a pluralist society and a rapidly changing world. They offer an independent and insightful analysis of religious and secular viewpoints on a range of issues and can synthesise these into structured and cogent accounts reflecting their own well-substantiated views and beliefs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Membership of the Shropshire SACRE

Chair: Jimmy Bullock
Vice Chair: June Cook
Clerk to SACRE: Sue Round

Committee A – OTHER CHRISTIAN DENOMINATIONS/OTHER FAITHS

Catherine Pocock: Salvation Army
Mr D Ahir: Buddhism
Ina Taylor: Religious Society of Friends
Mr Austin Atkinson: Roman Catholic Church
Mr Henry White: Methodist Church
Mrs K Day: Bahai
Qamar Maqsood: Islam
Rabinder Singh Dhami: Sikhism
Mr Manu Sudhra: Hindu Mahan Sabha
Dr C Wilson: United Reformed Church
Mrs J Osmund-Smith: Baptist Church
Mrs Cathryn Hodges: Pentecostal/Charismatic/Independent Evangelical Churches
Mr W P Morris: Greek Orthodox
Dr Eve Clevinger: Judaism

Committee B – CHURCH OF ENGLAND

HEREFORD DIOCESE
Tristram Jenkins
John Hodson

LICHFIELD DIOCESE
Mrs J Cook
Mrs Rosemary Woodward
Committee C – TEACHERS ASSOCIATIONS
Mr R Pugh     NASUWT
Mr J Cornall   NAHT

Committee D – SHROPSHIRE LA MEMBERS
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Cllr J Drummond
Cllr K Calder

CO-OPTED MEMBER
Ms S Falder     Humanist