

# Notice of Meeting

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

**Tuesday, 15th May, 2018 at 4.15 pm**  
in The Roger Croft Room, West Berkshire  
Council, Market Street, Newbury, RG14  
5LD

For further information about this Agenda, or to inspect any background documents referred to in Part I reports, please contact Jo Watt, Appeals Officer on (01635) 519458  
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**Agenda - Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) to be held on  
Tuesday, 15 May 2018 (continued)**

**To: Group A - Other Faith Members:**

Mrs Lucy Gallagher (Catholic), Mr Mobasshir Mushtaq (Muslim faith) and Revd David Taylor (Thatcham Baptist Church)

**Group B – Faith Members:**

Mrs Valerie Bolan (C of E), Revd Mary Harwood (C of E) and Mr Robin Sharples (C of E)

**Group C – Teaching Association Members:**

Mr Bernard Eggleton (NASUWT)

**Group D – WBC Councillors:**

Councillor Pamela Bale (WBC), Councillor Billy Drummond (WBC), Councillor Sheila Ellison (WBC) and Councillor Carol Jackson-Doerge (WBC)

**LA Advisors:**

Ms Alison Harris (Independent Consultant) and Keith Harvey (Head Teacher)

# Agenda

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Andy Day  
Head of Strategic Support

# **Agenda Item 2**

## **WEST BERKSHIRE STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE)**

### **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY, 6 FEBRUARY 2018**

**VENUE: ST NICOLAS CHURCH OF ENGLAND JUNIOR SCHOOL, LINK ROAD,  
NEWBURY, RG14 7LU**

#### **Present:**

##### **Group A – Other Faith Members**

Revd David Taylor (Thatcham Baptist Church), Mr Mobasshir Mushtaq (Muslim faith)

##### **Group B – Faith Members**

Mrs Valerie Bolan (C of E)

##### **Group C – Teaching Association Members**

Mr Bernard Eggleton (NASUWT)

##### **Group D – WBC Councillors**

Councillor Pamela Bale (WBC)

**Also Present:** Ms Alison Harris (Independent Consultant) and Jo Watt (Appeals Officer)

**Apologies for inability to attend the meeting:** Councillor Billy Drummond (WBC), Councillor Sheila Ellison (WBC), Mrs Lucy Gallagher (Catholic), Keith Harvey (Head Teacher), Revd Mary Harwood (C of E), Councillor Carol Jackson-Doerge (WBC), Ms Clare Nolan (NASUWT) and Mr Robin Sharples (C of E)

**Guest:** Mr Mark Landreth Smith, the Bridge Church, Newbury

#### **47 Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> November 2017 were approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman (The Reverend David Taylor).

David Taylor welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained the role of SACRE for those new members.

The Committee welcomed Mr Mark Landreth Smith from the Bridge Church who was in attendance as an observer.

#### **48 Matters arising from the Minutes**

There were no matters arising from the minutes of the meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> November 2017.

#### **49 Membership update**

Jo Watt provided an update on the current membership of the West Berkshire SACRE. The committee noted the following changes per group:

##### **Group A – Other Faith Members**

- Mr Mobasshir Mushtaq had been appointed as the Muslim faith representative.

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- Mrs Lucy Gallagher the Catholic faith representative would be attending meetings from the summer of 2018.

### **Group B – Faith Members**

- Mrs Valerie Bolan had been appointed as a Church of England representative.

### **Group C – Teaching Association Members**

- Ms Clare Nolan (NASUWT) had resigned from the Committee as she was finding the timings of the meetings a problem alongside her other commitments. The Committee wished Clare well for the future.
- Mr Bernard Eggleton stated that whilst he was a retired teacher, he was still a member of the NASUWT and therefore he intended to remain on the West Berkshire SACRE in the capacity as a Teaching Association Member.
- The Reverend David Taylor said that he would approach Debbie Arden-Hunt, an RE teacher at John O'Gaunt school to see if she would be interested in joining the committee as a Teaching Association representative.

The Committee agreed that it would be beneficial to have a Primary Teacher representative on the Committee to provide an alternative perspective. Alison Harris said that this might be something she could look into if it was possible to get a Primary Teachers network established in West Berkshire.

The Committee noted that there might be a possibility of Keith Harvey (Local Authority Advisor) changing roles on the committee to become a Teaching Association Member (see Item 8 – Budget) and this would ensure that Primary Teachers were represented. If Keith did change roles, a new representative from the Local Authority would need to take on the role of Local Authority representative.

### **Actions:**

**Jo Watt to pass on the thanks and best wishes of the committee to the Clare Nolan.**

**Jo Watt to speak to the Council's Education Department regarding the budget for Keith Harvey's role as the Local Authority Advisor and if a replacement could be found for Keith if he was to change roles.**

### **50 Feedback from Hub meeting held on 16th January 2018**

The Reverend David Taylor reported that he had attended the Hub meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> January 2018 in his capacity as the Chairman of the West Berkshire SACRE. It was noted that all the Berkshire SACREs had been represented at this meeting and the main focus had been the Pan Berkshire Agreed Syllabus Review 2018.

Alison Harris gave a short presentation which summarised the key points and changes to the new draft syllabus. The main points were:

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- To remove the divide between Key Stages 1 and 2 to give the syllabus a Primary Section and give teachers more flexibility as to which religions to teach alongside Christianity and how to group them.
- It was now mandatory to teach Islam by the end of Key Stage 2. Previously it was optional to teach Islam at this stage but it had been agreed that it should be compulsory. The committee noted that this fitted with a lot of other local syllabi and agreed it was very good practice.
- Key Stage 3 now had to include a secular worldview, probably Humanism.
- The new syllabus strongly encouraged the aim that all students should have access to RE teaching at GCSE level.
- Whilst the detail of assessment still needed to be considered, Alison Harris reported that the AT1 and AT2 structure would essentially remain but the language would acknowledge that used in the national framework.
- Each of the Berkshire SACREs would be looking at the draft syllabus and had been asked to give feedback before the next Hub meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> April 2018. The Hub would then ratify the draft syllabus at this meeting.
- Each SACRE would need to write their own Foreword for the revised syllabus and this would need to be signed off by the Chief Executive/Education Director of each Council and be sent to Jan Lever by email by 15<sup>th</sup> June 2018.
- The final version of the syllabus would then be available by the end of June 2018.

Having looked at the draft syllabus, the Committee was encouraged to give feedback. Mr Mushtaq said that under the 'Concepts' section on page 7 of the draft syllabus, the spelling of 'Din' in the Islam column was incorrect and should have been 'Deen'.

**Action: Jo Watt to report the correct spelling of 'Deen' back to Jan Lever in order for the draft document to be corrected.**

The Committee then gave consideration to a launch event for the new syllabus. The Committee agreed that a local West Berkshire launch was the best approach. It was agreed that the launch should be multi-faceted and in addition to providing a platform to launch the new syllabus it would be an ideal networking occasion and a chance to share good practice.

Having considered the timetable for the production of the final syllabus, the Committee agreed that the launch should take place on Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2018 and be a twilight session held between 4.15 – 5.30 pm. The Reverend David Taylor very kindly offered the use of the Thatcham Baptist Church, free of charge for the event. The Committee thanked David and agreed this was an excellent venue as it was central to the District and had good parking facilities. Consideration would need to be given as to how to disseminate the new syllabus to the schools. It was felt that emailing a link to the new syllabus would provide the most cost effective solution.

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On a separate matter, David Taylor reported that the 'Understanding Christianity' resource (produced by the Oxford Diocese) was now available for £30 rather than the usual price of £250.

**Action: Jo Watt to email the details of the 'Understanding Christianity' resource to all West Berkshire Primary Schools.**

## **51 GCSE Religious Studies Results 2017**

The Committee gave consideration to the RE GCSE results previously circulated by Keith Harvey. The information gave a breakdown of the GCSE results for 2017 across the West Berkshire Secondary Schools.

The Committee noted that the teaching of RE at GCSE level varied greatly across the schools, with some schools making RE compulsory at GCSE and others only offering RE as an option.

## **52 RE provision in West Berkshire Schools - years 10-13**

Following the discussion regarding the 2017 GCSE results, the Reverend David Taylor circulated information showing the RE provision of each Secondary School between years 10 and 13.

As noted previously, the provision of RE at GCSE level varied between the schools. However, at sixth form level the provision of RE teaching was markedly reduced, with some schools not offering RE at A level.

As Chairman of the West Berkshire SACRE, the Reverend David Taylor said that it was the responsibility of the SACRE to strongly encourage schools to take part in RE provision in years 12-13 (sixth form). David added that he would personally continue to try to build relationships with the Secondary Schools with a view to increasing the provision of RE teaching amongst sixth form students.

David Taylor also mentioned that the Ranelagh School in Bracknell was extremely proactive in teaching RE in years 12-13 and he was going to invite their Head of RE to come and speak to the Committee about the school's approach.

**Action: The Reverend David Taylor to invite the Head of RE from Ranelagh School to attend a future meeting.**

## **53 Budget 2018/2019**

Keith Harvey had reported in writing that he had not yet had confirmation from West Berkshire Council of the proposed budget for 2018/2019. It was noted that if the budget for 2018/19 was similar to that for 2017/18 then there would be no budget provision for R.E. Trails (see Item 9) or to pay for Keith Harvey in his role as Local Authority Advisor.

Keith Harvey had suggested that if there was no budget provision to cover his role then it may be best for him to step down.

*Post meeting note – The Local Authority has confirmed that they were unaware that Keith Harvey was not being paid for his role and that they would pay the costs for the forthcoming year. It was also confirmed that the sum of £250 was included for one co-ordinator/network meeting in the proposed budget for 2018/19. There was no additional budget available to support additional network meetings.*

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The Committee agreed that if possible, they would like to support termly network meetings for the Primary Schools similar to those held by other Berkshire unitary authorities. The Committee noted that if the budget for 2018/19 was similar to that for 2017/18 then there was £350 available for a Spring 2018 co-ordinator meeting. It was agreed that this money could be used to cover the costs of the new syllabus launch on 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2018.

Alison Harris said that a further two Primary network meetings would cost £300 per meeting which represented a half day fee for a Jan Lever co-ordinator to prepare and attend. Any other costs such as venue and refreshments would incur an additional cost.

The Committee acknowledged that it was very late in the annual budget process but asked that the SACRE budget holder in the Education Department of the Local Authority be asked if additional funding could be made available to cover the cost of Keith Harvey's role and to fund two Primary network meetings.

**Action: Jo Watt to contact the Elaine Ricks-Neale, School Improvement Officer regarding the SACRE budget situation.**

In response to a question regarding the budget line for the annual contribution for joint syllabus (£1.7k), Alison Harris explained that this was such a large amount as the syllabus was being reviewed in 2017/18 for launch in 2018. As the syllabus was only reviewed once every five years, this budget line would not be included again until the next review.

## **54 RE Trails**

The Committee noted that the West Berkshire SACRE had been buying into the R.E. Trails website. However, Keith Harvey had provided a written update in his absence and it was noted that St Nicolas Church of England Junior School had paid for the current year which had cost £168 for the year. Keith was unsure as to how much the site was being used and if any cheaper options were available. It was noted that the site represented a lot of work that had been put in overtime but in the current economic climate, it seemed unwise to pay for something that was not being used or could be hosted in a different way.

David Taylor reported that he had contacted Media Pictures Limited who hosted the website to ascertain the level of website usage but he had been unable to access the link they had sent through. Jo Watt confirmed that she had also not been able to access the information.

Given that the Committee did not have any details of the proposed SACRE budget for 2018/19 or how much the R.E. Trails website was being used, they were not in a position to make a decision regarding the future use of this website.

## **55 Annual report - update on progress**

Alison Harris referred to the draft Annual SACRE Report 2016-2017 that she had previously circulated and asked for any comments. The Committee noted that the report would be considered by the annual meeting of West Berkshire Council on Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> May 2018.

# **STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE) - 6 FEBRUARY 2018 - MINUTES**

The Committee agreed that the attendance records of the SACRE members should be included in the report.

**Action: Alison Harris to finalise the SACRE report and send it to Jo Watt for consideration by Annual Council on 8<sup>th</sup> May 2018.**

## **56 Any Other Business**

The Committee noted that COINS (Christian Outreach in Newbury Schools) would be happy to attend the next meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> May 2018 and make a presentation on their role. The Committee agreed that the presentation should give an overview on their work and the schools that they covered.

Alison Harris suggested that the organisers could be asked if they would like to be included in the 'Crossing the Bridges' project.

**Action: Jo Watt to contact COINS to outline the requirements for their presentation on 15<sup>th</sup> May 2018 and to ask if they would like to take part in the Crossing the Bridges project.**

## **57 Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting would be held on Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> May 2018 at 4.15 pm at the West Berkshire Council Offices.

# **The Pan-Berkshire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education 2018- 2023**

**Draft 6**

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**Foreword**

Each SACRE/LA to produce its own and send to JL by 15th June

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**Introduction****WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE AGREED SYLLABUS?**

The locally agreed syllabus forms the foundation of Religious Education in maintained schools without a religious character and maintained voluntary controlled schools. Academies without a religious character must follow Agreed Syllabus RE, though they are free to choose which Agreed Syllabus they follow.

The agreed syllabus should satisfy two key requirements:

- the law (as set out in the Education Act 1996)
- the aims of RE as defined by the local Agreed Syllabus Conference

At teachers' requests, the statutory requirements of the Pan-Berkshire agreed syllabus are contained in this succinct document.

Further guidance on the Key Questions for each religion/ belief system required to be studied, implementation and delivery is offered in accompanying online support documents.

## **ALL schools have the statutory obligation to teach Religious Education to ALL pupils.**

**RE should be taught to all pupils in full-time education in schools, except for those withdrawn at the written request of their parents.**

(REFERENCE 'EDUCATION ACT' 1944, 'RE IN ENGLISH SCHOOLS: NON-STATUTORY GUIDANCE 2010, DCSF).

**WHAT IS THE PURPOSE AND AIM OF RE IN SCHOOLS?**

The purpose of RE is to promote religious literacy. Religious literacy requires pupils to gain knowledge and understanding of a range of religions and worldviews and to use that knowledge to engage in informed and balanced conversations about religions and beliefs. In addition to learning about religions and worldviews, Religious Education offers students the chance to develop spiritually, morally, socially and culturally and to reflect on their own beliefs.

The non-statutory 2013 National Curriculum Framework for RE states that pupils should:

- Know about and understand a range of religions and worldviews
- Express ideas and insights about the nature, significance and impact of religions and worldviews
- Gain and deploy the skills needed to engage seriously with religions and worldviews.

To achieve these aims, Religious Education provokes challenging questions about meaning, purpose, beliefs about God, issues of right and wrong and what it means to be human.

RE plays an important role in preparing pupils for life in the modern world, and should enable them to flourish as citizens in a pluralistic, global society.

### **HOW WILL THIS SYLLABUS HELP YOUNG PEOPLE ACROSS BERKSHIRE TO ACHIEVE THESEAIMS?**

The Pan-Berkshire syllabus (2018-2023) is based on similar "big questions" to those found in the 2012-17 version of the syllabus; the links between the three strands of "Belonging, Believing and Behaving" are made more explicit and there are now expected outcomes to replace the Attainment Levels. The links between "learning about" and "learning from" are made more explicit and integrated into the expected outcomes, as they combine the need to demonstrate knowledge with an understanding of the impact, necessitating the deployment of specific skills. It is intended that progression in learning will be assessed by the school and will probably reflect Bloom's or SOLO Taxonomy.

The supplementary guidance material that supports this syllabus will explore this further and give information regarding these suggested taxonomies.

This syllabus builds on the previous one by demanding a slightly wider range of religions and belief systems are taught as statutory requirements, bringing Islam into the Primary Phase and specifying the study of a non-religious worldview, probably Humanism, in Key Stage 3.

However, more flexibility is also built in.

Schools are free to add additional religions and belief systems as relevant to their school community.

**WHICH RELIGIONS/BELIEF SYSTEMS ARE STATUTORY IN THIS SYLLABUS****EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE (EYFS, ages 3-4)**

RE is only statutory for EYFS children registered on the school roll i.e. from their Reception Year, not for those in nursery classes in maintained schools or in other early years settings. Where it is statutory, the RE should be aligned to the most recent EYFS framework.

**During the Reception Year (ages 4-5), pupils MUST encounter Christianity PLUS at least one other religion from Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism.**

It is expected that learning will be experiential and thematic during the EYFS.

**PRIMARY PHASE (Years 1- 6, ages 5-11)**

By the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6, age 11), pupils MUST have:

studied Christianity in every year group PLUS Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism,  
by exploring the Key Questions for the relevant Key Stage, and have achieved the  
expected outcomes identified in the syllabus.

**LOWER SECONDARY PHASE (Years 7- 9, ages 12-14)**

By the end of Key Stage 3 (Year 9, age 14), pupils MUST have:

studied Christianity in every year group PLUS Buddhism, Islam and a non-religious  
worldview e.g. Humanism,  
by exploring the Key Questions for Key Stage 3, and must have achieved the expected  
outcomes identified in the syllabus.

*These requirements apply to ALL pupils in Key Stage 3 , even those undertaking early-entry  
GCSE courses starting in Year 9.*

**UPPER SECONDARY PHASE (Years 10-13, ages 15-18)**

By the end of Key Stage 4 (Year 11, age 16), pupils MUST have:

studied Christianity and at least one other religion or non-religious worldview.

All pupils must receive Religious Education and should follow an externally accredited  
course for Religious Studies e.g. GCSE, or an alternative, well-structured and challenging  
programme of Religious Education. Schools are encouraged to facilitate examination entry  
for as many students as possible.

**POST-16**

All students MUST receive Religious Education. Students should have the opportunity  
to follow a course, or modules, which lead to external accreditation e.g. A level Religious  
Studies. Suggested modules are set out in the supporting guidance material.

**Reception Year and Key Stage 1 (ages 4-7)****Reception Year****Which religions?**

Children's Reception Year (age 5), is part of the Early Years Foundation Stage. During this year they should encounter Christianity and at least one of the other principal religions required by the end of Key Stage 2, and their learning should be aligned to the most recent national EYFS Framework. Learning is expected to be experiential and thematic.

**Key Stage 1****Which religions?**

Christianity plus one other religion from Hinduism, Islam, Judaism or Sikhism, must be studied in each year group in Key Stage 1. Whole Primary Phase planning must ensure coverage of the required religions by the end of Key Stage 2.

**Expected Outcomes for Key Stage 1**

By the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2, age 7) pupils are expected to achieve the following four outcomes in their study of Christianity and to achieve at least two of these outcomes for each of the other religion/s studied, mindful of the holistic learning needed by the end of the Primary Phase.

<b>Key Stage 1 Expected outcomes - Enquiry and Impact</b>	
Exp.A	Recognise and give simple accounts of the core beliefs.
Exp.B	Retell a range of religious stories and explain how they link to the core beliefs and practices.
Exp.C	Describe some festivals, celebrations and practices and say how they reflect the core beliefs.
Exp.D	Recognise the roles of religious leaders and sacred texts.

These outcomes should be achieved through exploration of the following **Key Questions**:

<b>Key Stage 1 - Key Questions</b>		
Qu.1	How do some religions demonstrate that everyone is special?	(Believing/Belonging)
Qu.2	Why are religious celebrations important to some people but not to others?	(Believing/Belonging/Behaving)
Qu.3	Does everyone believe the same things about God?	(Believing)
Qu.4	Why do symbols and stories play important roles in religions?	(Believing/Belonging/Behaving)
Qu.5	Why do some people follow religious leaders and teachings?	(Believing/Behaving)
Qu.6	How do some people's religious beliefs encourage them to care for the world?	(Believing/Behaving)

**Which questions and how many at Key Stage 1?**

All 6 Key Questions must be explored in the study of Christianity by the end of Key Stage 1. For each of the other religions studied, at least two of the questions should be addressed.

*These questions can be adapted, combined or wording changed providing that the content and strands are retained and the outcomes are achieved.*

**RECOMMENDATIONS AND NOTES (NOT statutory)****Primary Phase (Key Stage 1)**

- It is recommended that just ONE of the mandatory religions is studied alongside Christianity in each year group (Reception to Year 6) during the Primary Phase.
- When the Primary Phase is split across schools, schools should liaise to ensure the full range of religions is covered and progression and continuity are considered.
- Schools should also liaise with the secondary schools they feed to ensure transition, continuity and progression.
- Sufficient teaching time, training and resources should be allocated to enable effective leadership and delivery.

**Minimum teaching time:**

Key Stage 1: 36 hours per year

- Other principal religions and worldviews of local significance may be studied in addition to the required statutory religions, at the school's discretion.
- The underpinning themes of Believing, Behaving and Belonging need to be integrated in RE planning.
- Parents have the right to withdraw their children from RE.

**Key Stage 2 (Years 3-6, ages 8-11)****Which religions?****Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism by the end of Key Stage 2**

Christianity plus one other religion from Hinduism, Islam, Judaism or Sikhism, must be studied in each year group, ensuring coverage of the required religions by the end of Key Stage 2, and building on the learning achieved in Key Stage 1.

**Expected Outcomes for Lower and Upper Key Stage 2**

By the end of LOWER Key Stage 2 (Year 4, age 9) pupils are expected to achieve the following **four outcomes** in their study of **Christianity** and to achieve **at least two** of these outcomes for each of the other religion/s studied. The choice of outcomes needs to ensure as holistic an understanding of each of the religions studied (especially the core beliefs and their application) as possible and take account of progress through the whole key stage.

<b>Lower Key Stage 2 Expected outcomes - Enquiry and Impact</b>	
Exp.A	Explain the significance of religious leaders and sacred texts.
Exp.B	Describe a range of ways that believers express their core beliefs and make the links between belief and expression.
Exp.C	Identify how core beliefs can guide lifestyle choices.
Exp.D	Recognise how religious identity can be shaped by family, community and practice.

By the end of UPPER Key Stage 2 (Year 6, age 11) pupils are expected to achieve the following **four outcomes** in their study of **Christianity** and to achieve **at least two** of these outcomes for each of the other religion/s studied. The choice of outcomes needs to ensure as holistic an understanding of each of the religions studied (especially the core beliefs and their application) as possible and take account of progress through the whole key stage.

<b>Upper Key Stage 2 Expected outcomes - Enquiry and Impact</b>	
Exp.A	Describe and explain what motivates and inspires believers and how this can be reflected in actions/practice.
Exp.B	Explain and demonstrate how and why believers show courage and commitment.
Exp.C	Explain how beliefs, practices and community can support or determine responses to matters of life and death.
Exp.D	Give examples of how core beliefs can be interpreted in different ways leading to diverse expression and behaviour.

These outcomes should be achieved through exploration of the following **Key Questions**:

<b>Key Stage 2 - Key Questions</b>		
Qu.1	To what extent does participating in worship and/or prayer generate a sense of belonging?	(Believing/Belonging)
Qu.2	Do Rites of Passage always help a believer to feel connected to God and/or community?	(Believing/Belonging/Behaving)
Qu.3	How can music and the arts help express and communicate religious beliefs?	(Believing/Belonging)
Qu.4	To what extent do religious beliefs influence and encourage 'good' behaviour?	(Believing/Behaving)
Qu.5	How do religious leaders and sacred texts contribute to believers' understanding of their faith?	(Believing)
Qu.6	How well does faith help people cope with matters of life and death?	(Believing/Behaving)
Qu.7	What difference might it make to believe in God as Creator?	(Believing/Behaving)
Qu.8	How might beliefs and community shape a person's identity?	(Believing/Belonging)

**Which questions and how many at Key Stage 2?**

**All 8** Key Questions must be explored in the study of Christianity across Key Stage 2.

For the other principal religions studied in the Primary Phase (Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism) it will not be possible to explore all 8 Key Questions for each religion. Therefore, schools are asked to select the Key Questions (at least 2 for each religion) to enable depth of study into each religion and breadth of study across the religions studied in the Primary Phase, building on the foundation learning achieved in Key Stage 1.

*These questions can be adapted, combined or wording changed providing that the content and strands are retained and the outcomes are achieved.*

**RECOMMENDATIONS AND NOTES (NOT statutory)****Primary Phase**

- It is recommended that just ONE of the mandatory religions is studied alongside Christianity in each year group (Reception to Year 6) during the Primary Phase.
- When the Primary Phase is split across schools, schools should liaise to ensure the full range of religions is covered and progression and continuity are considered.
- Schools should also liaise with the secondary schools they feed to ensure transition, continuity and progression.
- Sufficient teaching time, training and resources should be allocated to enable effective leadership and delivery.

**Minimum teaching time:**

Key Stage 2: 45 hours per year

- Other principal religions and worldviews of local significance may be studied in addition to the required statutory religions, at the school's discretion.
- The underpinning themes of Believing, Behaving and Belonging need to be integrated in RE planning.
- Parents have the right to withdraw their children from RE.

**Key Stage 3****Which religions/belief systems?****Christianity, Buddhism, Islam and a non-religious worldview e.g. Humanism, by the end of Key Stage 3**

Christianity plus one other religion/belief system from Buddhism, Islam and a non-religious worldview e.g. Humanism, must be studied in each year group, ensuring coverage of the required religions/worldview by the end of Key Stage 3, building on the Primary Phase learning.

Additional religions/worldviews may be included to allow a range of beliefs to be studied in relation to a specific key question.

**Expected Outcomes for Key Stage 3**

By the end of Key Stage 3 (Year 9, age 14), pupils are expected to achieve **all four** of the following outcomes in relation to **Christianity** and to achieve **at least two** of these outcomes for each of the other religions/belief systems studied.

Over the course of this phase pupils must acquire as holistic an understanding of all the religions/belief systems studied (especially the core beliefs and their application) as possible.

*These requirements apply to ALL pupils in Key Stage 3, even those undertaking early-entry GCSE courses starting in Year 9.*

<b>Key Stage 3 Expected Outcomes - Enquiry and Impact</b>	
Exp.A	Identify the nature of spiritual experience and its influence on believers' lives, sense of purpose and religious practice.
Exp.B	Evaluate how far concepts of truth, right and wrong generated by different belief systems are used to justify behaviour.
Exp.C	Explain and evaluate how beliefs about God determine responses to personal, social and global issues.
Exp.D	Evaluate the 'sacredness' of texts and the impact of divergent interpretations.

These outcomes should be achieved through exploration of the following **Key Questions**:

<b>Key Stage 3 - Key Questions</b>		
Qu.1	Is there more than one way to be spiritual?	(Believing/Behaving/Belonging)
Qu.2	How far does a person's understanding of God influence their sense of purpose?	(Believing/Belonging/Behaving)
Qu.3	How might beliefs shape concepts of truth, right and wrong?	(Believing/Behaving)
Qu.4	In what ways do science, belief and religion interact and what difference might this make?	(Believing/Behaving)
Qu.5	To what extent should people from different belief systems manage their differences and co-operate for the common good?	(Believing/Behaving/Belonging)
Qu.6	To what extent do religious or non-religious beliefs affect personal relationships?	(Believing/Behaving)
Qu.7	Why might it matter that sacred texts are often open to interpretation?	(Believing/Behaving)
Qu.8	How might belief affect people's responses towards social and global issues?	(Believing/Behaving)

**Which questions and how many at Key Stage 3?**

**All 8** Key Questions must be explored in the study of Christianity across Key Stage 3.

For the other principal religions/ belief systems studied in Key Stage 3, (Buddhism, Islam and Humanism/ non-religious world-views) it will not be possible to explore all 8 Key Questions for each. Therefore, schools are asked to select the Key Questions (**at least 2** for each religion/belief system) to enable depth of study into each and breadth of study across them in the Key Stage 3.

*These questions can be adapted, combined or wording changed providing that the content and strands are retained and the outcomes are achieved.*

**RECOMMENDATIONS AND NOTES (NOT statutory)****Secondary Phase**

- Schools should liaise with their feeder schools to ensure progression and continuity through the transition into the Secondary Phase.
- Sufficient teaching time, training and resources, should be allocated to enable effective leadership and delivery

**Minimum teaching time:**

Key Stage 3: 45 hours per year

(Key Stage 4: 40 hours per year)

Post-16: 10 hours per year

- Other principal religions and worldviews of local significance may also be studied at the school's discretion
- Schools are encouraged to facilitate external-examination entry for as many pupils/students as possible.
- The underpinning themes of Believing, Behaving and Belonging need to be integrated in RE planning.
- Parents have the right to withdraw their children from RE before they reach 18

# The Pan-Berkshire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education 2018-2023

## Rationale and Acknowledgements

Much thought, consideration and time has been devoted to this 2018-23 agreed syllabus for Religious Education, in order to bring clarity to the requirements and expectations of RE, whilst ensuring the excellent RE practice in many schools across Berkshire is maintained and not disrupted by a new syllabus.

All 6 Berkshire SACREs (Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education) worked together, using the Pan-Berkshire SACRE Hub as the conduit for consultation, and invited consultation with teachers and faith and belief communities to ensure the revisions made move RE in Berkshire forward.

Understanding the ever-present pressures competing for teacher-time, the statutory aspects of the syllabus have been condensed and collated on just a few pages, each Key Stage being seen in its own right whilst always understanding that planning should be undertaken across the Key Stages to ensure as comprehensive and holistic an RE learning journey as possible for every pupil.

The aims are:

- to clarify and make concise the statutory aspects of the syllabus,
- to retain the enquiry-approach,
- to simplify the layout of the Key Questions, making the wording more ‘open’ and encompassing both Attainment Targets 1 and 2 (learning about and from religion and belief systems) within each question,
- to keep the underpinning Believing, Belonging, Behaving structure to ensure the focus on core beliefs and their application
- to make the expectation as to what is taught in the given RE curriculum time as realistic as possible
- to set out the expected learning outcomes for each Key Stage to enable the planning process to start with clear aims for pupils’ RE learning

Thanks go to all those who have dedicated time and expertise to the revision of the Pan-Berkshire agreed syllabus for RE, including:

All 6 SACREs, chairs, vice-chairs, clerks, members and advisers

Headteachers and teachers of RE

Leaders and members of faith and belief communities

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## Pan-Berkshire SACRE Hub Meeting

24 April 2018 Shute End, Wokingham

### Note and actions for SACREs from the meeting

ACTIONS AND PROMPTS FOR FORTHCOMING SACRE MEETINGS ARE HIGHLIGHTED IN GREEN

#### Agenda:

1. Future of the Pan-Berkshire SACRE Hub
2. Agreed syllabus review: progress
3. Agreed syllabus launch/intro events

**Present:** Jan Lever, Michael Freeman, Stephen Vegh, Karen Butler, David Taylor, Alison Harris, Zvi Solomon, David Rees, Brian Crisell, Beth Rowlands, Mark Laynesmith, Anne Andrews, Natasha Airey

**Apologies:** Mobsshir Mushtaq; Julie Siddiqi; Hardip Singh Sohal; Madeline Diver

The Hub meeting was followed by an open meeting to discuss the syllabus review.

Comments from both meetings have been incorporated into Draft 6 of the syllabus.

#### 1. Future of the Pan-Berkshire SACRE Hub

ACTION

Discuss, and send thoughts/decisions to Jan Lever by Friday 22 June

JL outlined the question about the continuation of the hub and reiterated the rationale behind the hub when it was set up: to pool resources, offer consistency across the 6LA areas, to work on a joint project... the Crossing the Bridges Project, all of which would establish the Hub before it became the main conduit for revising the agreed syllabus.

Now the syllabus is almost completed, the question was posed as to whether the 6 SACREs wish to continue the Hub. Ongoing work could include moving forward with the Crossing the Bridges Project and building the body of online support and guidance materials to accompany the revised syllabus. Questions of ongoing work e.g. the Crossing the Bridges and the syllabus support and guidance material.

To continue the hub will need finance, unless a volunteer takes it on. SACRES need to decide whether they have the funding and if so, how they wish this to be spent.

There was general consensus that the hub is a good idea, but appreciation that there may not be funding sufficient for it to continue at the moment.

SACREs to discuss their position re continuation of the Hub, whether they can commit funding to it in this financial year, and if so, how much.

£900 contribution from each SACRE would be less than the £1700 from each contributed this year to cover the syllabus review work, but enough to achieve worthwhile work.

If this is manageable, how would SACREs like to spend this money (i.e. the pot of £5400)?

Possibilities:

### Hub management

- Hub management/co-ordination done by a consultant would cost £500 a term, to include preparing for each of the 3 termly meetings, following up with notes and action points, advising between meetings
- Hub management done by a SACRE member on a voluntary basis
- Another management arrangement

**Project work** could be led/managed either by consultants @£500 a day or by a designated project leader who could be a volunteer or maybe a teacher with supply costs covered @ £250 a day paid to their school. A project Lead is a necessity with accountability and project plans monitored by the Hub. Suggested projects:

- Enhance and disseminate Crossing the Bridges Project
- Project work on guidance and online support materials to accompany the new syllabus

## 2. Agreed syllabus review

### ACTION

Discuss Agreed syllabus, Draft 6, and send comments to Jan Lever by 25 May.

As the next round of SACRE meetings (excepting West Berkshire) are scheduled for June, please send Draft 6 to members for comment before those meetings as the deadline for comments to be with Jan Lever is 5pm 25 May.

Notes from the meeting:

JL talked through the summary document explaining the consultation/work so far. See summary chart:

You said	We did
Make it smaller	Succinct statutory syllabus PLUS online guidance
Make the statutory aspects clearer	Each age phase on separate page/s
Keep the enquiry approach	Yes, more in guidance
Keep Believing, Behaving, Belonging	Made more explicit with the key questions
Keep the distinction between AT1 and AT2	Integrated into questions and outcomes. More holistic
2013 non-statutory framework: mixed responses	Syllabus not arranged by the 3 strands of this framework but all 3 are integrated into this syllabus questions and outcomes
Align EYFS to most recent EYFS framework	EYFS added and explained. More in guidance
More flexibility at Primary Phase	Divide between KS1 and 2 removed: Primary Phase, so more flexibility

<b>Add Islam at Primary Phase</b>	<b>Done</b>
<b>Add Humanism at Secondary Phase</b>	<b>Done</b>
<b>Strengthen KS4 requirement</b>	<b>Wording to be agreed 24 April</b>
<b>Help us with assessment</b>	<b>Added clear outcomes</b>
<b>Make the 4-step planning cycle more explicit</b>	<b>More in guidance</b>
<b>Keep the Key Question approach but word the questions as OPEN questions</b>	<b>Most questions are framed as open questions. The couple that are not will not affect enquiry pedagogy as this is established already.</b>
<b>Re-word some of the questions</b>	<b>Done</b>
<b>No need for ‘concepts’ page</b>	<b>Taken out (Could move to guidance)</b>
<b>Give teachers as much guidance as possible</b>	<b>Guidance and support materials to be updated and uploaded as online documents, then added to</b>

JL explained how the statutory aspects of the syllabus have been brought together into a succinct 12-page document which:

- Incorporates the 3 strands of the 2013 non-statutory national curriculum framework for RE,
- Has new key questions that are mostly framed as open questions and integrate attainment targets 1 and 2, maintain the enquiry approach and address the same content /subject knowledge as the previous syllabus questions, keep ‘believing, belonging, behaving’.

This succinct document is designed to make it easy for teachers working in the different Key Stages to see what the expectations are for their particular Key Stage, by providing a 2-page ‘pull-out’ piece summarising the outcomes, questions etc

The group discussed Draft 5 and useful points were made that have been incorporated into the attached Draft 6.

SV asked a question about the guidance and how soon it could be ready. Some will be ready by the syllabus launch dates and new material would need to be added during the coming year.

SACREs need to work out where the guidance will be hosted e.g. on their LA web pages?

JL asked if each LA wants to design their own syllabus in terms of appearance and logo but it was agreed that JL sources a graphic designer as this will keep consistency in what is, after all, a joint syllabus.

SACREs need to decide how many copies they will print, how it is bound and how they will disseminate it.

ML suggested that SACREs will need to form working groups to maintain, produce and work on the guidance.

DT requested that the requirement for all schools to teach RE is highlighted. (Now done in Draft 6)

SV requested information on withdrawal to make it clear what the expectation is. (Noted to include in guidance)

ML asked a question about the Foreword and the legal situation was clarified.

SV required that the requirement for Y9s who have started GCSE still to receive RS be made much clearer. (Now done in Draft 6)

Lively, informed discussion about the key questions leading to debate about the underpinning purpose of RE and the best approach and pedagogy.

NA raised the question of humanism/non-religious world view/atheist/secularist – group agreed the wording: a non-religious worldview e.g. Humanism (Now done in Draft 6)

**Syllabus review actions, next steps and deadlines:**

1. SACREs and teacher Focus Group to discuss Draft 6 during May and send any last thoughts to JL by email by 5pm, 25<sup>th</sup> May. No amends/thoughts will be accepted after this date as the syllabus will need to be ratified and printed etc in time for launch events in July;
2. SACRE Hub members to be sent the final copy early June to ratify;
3. Forewords for the revised syllabus. Each SACRE will need to write its own Foreword for the revised syllabus. This will need to be signed off by the Chief Executive Officer/ Director of Education of each Council and be sent to Jan Lever by email by 5pm 15<sup>th</sup> June 2018;
4. SACREs will also need to make their own decisions as to how they will disseminate the revised syllabus to their schools;
5. Please send JL your current LA logo if it has changed since the printing of the current syllabus in 2012.

**3. Agreed syllabus launch/intro events**

**ACTION**

Each SACRE to send ALL details f their launch event to JL so she can invite all Directory contributors to attend all the events.

JL needs confirmation of:

Date, time, venue, name and contact details of the person they should RSVP to

Send to JL by 5pm on 25 May so invitation can be sent out in time for the July events.

Each SACRE is organising its own launch/introductory event:

West Berkshire: 3 July

Wokingham 9 July

RBWM 9 July

Bracknell Forest 10 July

Slough 12 July

Reading tbc

***Deadline dates: 25 May and 22 June***

Thank you for all the comments and thought on the syllabus so far.

Jan Lever (Hub manager on behalf of Berkshire SACREs)

[jan@janlevergroup.com](mailto:jan@janlevergroup.com)

## **Feedback/comments on Draft 6**

**From: ..... SACRE**

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## **Proposed SACRE Budget 2018/19**

Provider	Service provided	
Wokingham Council	- contribution to Berks SACRE HUB - annual contribution for joint syllabus	£1,700.00
Wokingham Council	Contribution to SACRE conference	£140.00
St Nicolas	LA link to SACRE (based on 3 days - 1 per term annually)	£750.00
Jan Lever ECT	<a href="#">1 RE Co-ordinator Meet (combined with syllabus launch)</a>	£250.00
Jan Lever ECT	<a href="#">Annual SACRE report</a>	£500.00
Jan Lever ECT	<a href="#">SACRE meetings Consultancy (x 3 annually)</a>	£1,500.00

**Total                    £4,840.00**

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# Agenda Item 7

## West Berks SACRE: An Overview

### 1. What is our Purpose?

Advise West Berkshire Council on:

- a) matters of collective worship
- b) Religious Education, in accordance with the locally agreed syllabus

### 2. How do we achieve this?

- a) Publish and launch the agreed syllabus.

*We are about to do this on 3 July. All SACRE members are encouraged to come.*

- b) Encourage the development of material to support the implementation of the syllabus.

*Alison, our Adviser, is involved with this.*

- c) Support the provision of termly meetings for RE coordinators in primary schools and occasional RE conferences.

*At the moment we cannot fulfil this vital role either at primary or secondary level because of lack of funding*

- d) Provide a copy of the *Non-statutory guidance on RE* published by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority and the DfE to each school in West Berkshire.

*Have we done this?*

- e) Receive presentations from teachers and members of faith communities on issues related to RE and collective worship.

*e.g. Mobasshir's paper on the needs of Muslim pupils taking exams during Ramadan.*

- f) Support and send representatives to the Pan Berkshire Hub

*David and Alison go to this each term*

- g) Through the Pan Berkshire Hub, the West Berkshire SACRE is part of the Crossing the Bridges project

*What more can we do to promote this?*

- h) Publish an annual report of its work

*Alison has submitted our 2017-8 report to the LA*

### How are we resourced?

The LA provides us with:

- a) An annual budget

*In 2017-8 this was £4,120. £2,000 of this went to Jan Lever Education Consultancy Trust for the consultancy work Alison does for us. £1,700 was paid to Wokingham Council as our annual contribution to the production of the agreed syllabus. We also funded one RE Coordinators' meeting for £350 and made a contribution of £140 to the SACRE conference.*

- b) The services of a Clerk

*Jo Watt does a fantastic job for us in this role.*

- c) An Adviser to act as a strong link between us and the LA.

*Currently Keith Harvey fulfils this role for us.*

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West Berkshire Council

# Celebrating Diversity!

2018

A briefing paper on Ramadan  
by West Berkshire SACRE for schools



**SACRE**



FUNDED BY STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

## **SACRE briefing papers: an explanation**

West Berkshire Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) has been aware that religious and cultural issues can impinge to a greater or lesser degree, on the life of schools in West Berkshire. It is also aware that head teachers, in particular, can find making a response perplexing because of a lack of background knowledge or understanding.

SACRE briefing papers are designed to provide a context of knowledge and understanding within which schools can make appropriate and sensitive responses to cultural and religious issues. They have been written in response to questions posed by schools and carefully discussed by a SACRE sub-group before being tabled at a full SACRE meeting.

In the case of this particular briefing paper, it is important to note that the SACRE sub-group included Muslim members and that Muslims, both locally and nationally, have been consulted. However, though every attempt has been made to check the accuracy of statements made, they should not be taken as authoritative. In understanding the place of Ramadan within Islam, schools are advised to consult with members of their own local Muslim community.

This paper has been written to support schools especially during the next few years as Ramadan will fall during the time of public and internal school examinations in the summer term, and to support schools in making informed decisions about handling Muslim pupils who might be fasting in these circumstances.

For further information about this or other SACRE matters please do get in contact with

[MobasshirMushtaq@hotmail.com](mailto:MobasshirMushtaq@hotmail.com)

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- Though it is easy to describe the features of Islam as a world religion, it must not be forgotten that Islam, at root, implies a relationship between human beings and *Allah*, the One God (Allah is the Arabic word for the one God). A 'Muslim' is a person who submits to the will of God, the result of this obedience being 'Islam' ('submission'). It is through this submission that, Muslims believe, a person finds peace: note the similarity between the words *Islam*, *Muslim* and *salam* ('peace'). Fasting during the month of Ramadan is one expression of submission to the will of *Allah*.
- In West Berkshire we have two main denominations of Muslims - Sunni and Shi'a. The vast majority of our Muslim pupils in schools here are Sunni. Both groups of Muslims use the same Qur'an, but there are differences in the way they practice their faith. In West Berkshire we have Muslim people from a variety of continents & countries these differences are cultural as well as scriptural, at times. Knowing a Muslim family's heritage can help a school understand differences in the ways in which individuals practice their religion.
- Fasting (*sawm*) during the twenty-nine or thirty days of Ramadan is one of the five basic duties of Islam for all Muslim people. These duties for Sunni Muslims are called 'pillars' in that they support and strengthen a Muslim's life as do pillars in a building. The other pillars for Sunni Muslims are: the declaration of faith, prayer/worship five times daily, paying a portion of wealth to charitable causes and making the pilgrimage to Makkah once in your lifetime. Fasting is the fourth pillar and is seen as an act of worship. |
- During the daylight hours of Ramadan, Muslims are supposed to refrain from eating, drinking (including water) and sexual activity. It is a time when they try to be even more aware of *Allah* (God). Muslims will also try to live a better life generally during Ramadan – by trying not to use bad language or think ill of others, for example.
- Because of variations in timing due to geographical location, timetables showing when daylight begins and ends during each day of Ramadan are published by Muslim communities and are often printed in local newspapers.
- Fasting during Ramadan binds the Muslim community (*Ummah*) together, both locally and world-wide. Even those Muslims who, for whatever reason, do not pray five times daily will often try to keep the Ramadan fast.
- There are exemptions to the Ramadan fast. Those who are ill, those who are travelling and pregnant or nursing women need not fast if it would be harmful to their health. Menstruating women should not fast. Such people will be expected to make up for days missed later, however.
- As well as obeying God's laws (the requirement to fast is stated in the Qur'an which Muslims believe to be God's words – see page 5) and lead to a greater consciousness of God, Muslims believe that fasting has many benefits. For example: it strengthens self-discipline; it creates a sympathy for the poor and the destitute; it reminds them that they belong to a larger Muslim community.
- It is the practice for Muslims to rise before dawn and to share a light meal (*sahur* or *sehri*) with the family. Having stated the intention to do so, fasting then takes place during daylight

hours. Just before the end of the fast at dusk, people will return home in order to share an evening meal (*iftar*) to which family and friends are often invited.

- Some Muslims gather at the mosque and, immediately at the end of the fasting day, share a light snack (sometimes including dates and water) as did the Prophet Muhammad with his companions over 1400 years ago.
- Tarawee prayers are performed during the month of Ramadan. Many men and some women attend prayers at the mosque (or at home) which last about an hour or 1 ½ hours each evening. Combined with waking up early before dawn to eat breakfast, this may lead to Muslims feeling very tired during the month of Ramadan
- Ramadan is also associated with the Qur'an. During the 'Night of Power' (*Laylat ul-Qadr*) which comes on an odd numbered night during the last ten days of Ramadan, Muslims remember the occasion when Muhammad was given the first words of the Qur'an to recite: the title *Qur'an* means 'recitation'. (Words continued to be revealed to Muhammad for the remainder of his life). Some Muslims spend the last ten days of the month in the mosque (a practice called *itikaf*, 'seclusion') during which they can pray and read the Qur'an in the company of others.
- Muslims use a lunar calendar which creates a year eleven days shorter than the solar year more familiar to Westerners. This means that Ramadan begins eleven days earlier each year according to the Gregorian calendar and so gradually moves through all the seasons. This has implications for fasting in that here in the UK, when Ramadan occurs in the summer, for example, fasting is more arduous because there are more daylight hours and it is hotter.

Muslim students who will complete the month of fasting are now faced with longer and hotter days. Schools on the other hand, may now find sports day and end of year trips are scheduled to take place during the month of Ramadan. Eventually, in two or three years time, Ramadan will align with exam times for GCSE and A level students.

(Taken from *Advice to schools on fasting and Ramadan during the summer by Shaqib Juneja, a Muslim teacher*)

- The sighting of the new moon at the end of Ramadan marks the start of the tenth month, Shawwal, which begins with the festival of Id ul-Fitr (the festival of breaking the fast). Coming straight after the austerities of Ramadan, Id ul-Fitr is a joyous occasion (it is forbidden to fast on Id ul-Fitr). After prayers, often held in the open air, people give presents, wear new clothes and visit relatives. The greeting is *Id Mubarak* or *Eid Mubarak*, 'happy id', which is also printed on greetings cards exchanged at this time. Just before Id ul-Fitr, Muslims must give money (*fitrana*) so that those who cannot afford to do so are also able to celebrate the festival.

## **Some Quotations from the Qur'an**

"Fasting is prescribed for you as it was for those before you, so that you may be conscious of Allah."

(2:183)

"But he who is ill or on a journey shall fast a similar number of days later on. Allah desires your well-being, not your discomfort."

(2:185)

"Ramadan is the month in which the Qur'an was sent down, as a guide to mankind. So any [one] of you who is present (in his home) during that month should spend it in fasting."

(2:185)

"Eat and drink until the white thread of dawn appears to you distinct from the black thread, then complete your fast until the night appears."

(2:187)

## Ramadan and the school

*In framing answers to the following questions, advice has been sought from both local Muslims and national Muslim organisations. The information and guidance in this briefing paper is intended to be used as a source of reference for schools when adapting their practices to the needs of Muslim pupils in their schools.*

### **How should schools regard Ramadan?**

The month of Ramadan may well have implications for school life and its ethos. Individual pupils as well as the Muslim community would be affirmed if it were treated positively rather than negatively. The Muslim Council of Britain says in its publication ‘meeting the needs of Muslim pupils in state school’:

During Ramadan, Muslims should focus on additional worship and God-consciousness, in order to improve themselves in all aspects of their lives and dealings with others, including their character, respect for others, kindness, forgiveness and avoidance of bad language and poor behaviour. In addition, having empathy with the poor, donating generously for charitable causes, the sharing of food and inviting others to one’s home to open the fast are important features of Ramadan. Muslims also focus on reading more of the Qur'an and performing additional prayers in the mosque every evening.

Schools can develop the spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects of their children and school life by recognising and building upon the essence and spirit of Ramadan. Whilst the discipline and the challenge of fasting is to continue with the normality of everyday life, staff should exercise a degree of understanding, by encouraging pupils to avoid excessive exertion in physical education to prevent dehydration. By the same token they may praise pupils who are clearly making a special effort regarding their attitudes and behaviour.

The *Muslim Guide* published by The Islamic Foundation (see ‘Further Reading’, p11) advises that:

‘Teachers should avoid giving the impression that fasting is “a nuisance, disruptive to school routine and work”, but should view it as something positive.’ (p49)

The last time Ramadan took place in the summer term in the UK was in 1982.

When Ramadan coincides with the winter and spring academic terms there is less of an impact on Muslim students. However, a range of impacts may arise when Ramadan coincides with the summer term as exams, deadlines, sports days and end of year celebrations may all be scheduled within the month. The greatest impact will inevitably be a combination of fasting longer hours during summer days and having to take part in activities that require physical or mental endurance, like exams or sports days.

(Taken from *Advice to schools on fasting and Ramadan during the summer* by Shaqib Juneja, in 2013 a Muslim Newham teacher)

### ***At what age are children expected to start observing the Ramadan fast?***

*Shari'ah* (Islamic law, based on the Qur'an and the practice of the Prophet) states that fasting during Ramadan is only obligatory from the age of puberty.

It is natural, however, that Muslim children will wish to emulate their elders and so, from an early age, Muslim children will often fast for one, two or more days during Ramadan. They will be proud of this and their elders will express pleasure. A competitive spirit will often develop between children in that they will compare the number of days on which they have fasted with others, and this is something that elders will educate them against. The level of observance among children, of course, will depend upon the particular individual, family or community. **But most Muslim parents would not wish their children at primary school to be fasting on school days, but rather make this an activity that they do at the weekends at home, when they can rest or sleep in the afternoons of the fasting days and have the experience of community as they fast as a family together.**

### ***What is the responsibility of a school if a child becomes ill or suffers as a result of fasting while at school?***

The responsibility which a school should exercise towards fasting pupils is no different to that applying to any pupil in the school. A school will obviously want to be sensitive towards pupils who are fasting, but Muslim scriptures are clear that if you are not able to operate normally (at school or work), you are not well enough or old enough to be fasting. Fasting is something that no-one should really know about.

Given that the obligation to fast does not override health considerations, a pupil who faints can be offered water if judged appropriate by a suitably qualified first-aider or if the pupil requests it. If the child does not want to take water, the school should consider whether the home should be contacted.

If a person accidentally bleeds or vomits, the fast day will still count, in the sense that the day will count as a day when they fasted. A Muslim pupil might need to be reassured that this is the case.

### ***Can a fasting child use an asthma inhaler?***

This is probably not an issue for the school to concern itself over in that, if a Muslim pupil has an inhaler to use in school, it can be assumed that the family has sanctioned the use of this during the month of Ramadan<sup>1</sup>. If, however, a pupil does not possess an inhaler which he/she clearly needs – or refuses to use the inhaler stored in school – the school should treat it as with any other medical emergency and consider contacting the home.

### ***Is it true that Muslims cannot swallow their saliva (and must therefore spit) during the month of Ramadan?***

In that it is a necessary bodily function, swallowing saliva does not invalidate the fast during Ramadan.

Schools would obviously regard the practice of spitting as contrary to health and safety in the school community and should strongly discourage it.

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<sup>1</sup> There would appear to be some differences of opinion about whether an inhaler breaks the fast. It is therefore advisable to check with parents.

## ***What are the implications of Ramadan on internal and public examinations?***

For the next few years Ramadan will fall earlier, gradually missing the exam period for secondary schools, however, it will clash with National Curriculum exams for primary school pupils. A school will need to consider how to raise this with Muslim families in advance of Ramadan so that the school, staff and pupils as well as the school's wider community can understand the approach towards fasting in relation to the examination period the school has decided to take.

As stated earlier in this document the Qur'an, "... he who is ill or on a journey shall fast a similar number of days later on. Allah desires your well-being, not your discomfort." (2:185). Some Muslim families would interpret this verse today to say in the same way as it was applied to camel drivers, who didn't have to fast on days of their journeys, Muslims can make up for days when not fasting because of the need for their body to be at its best physically to perform well. So a Muslim family may decide for a young person to delay the start of their fast until after their public examination period is over, or to not fast on certain days. This approach is a pragmatic one taken by many UK Muslim families in 2017 and 2018 . The brain's ability to work at its best is affected by lack of hydration, especially in hot weather, and so fasting during the time of examinations could potentially disadvantage pupils. Therefore, many Muslim pupils will delay doing their fast until after the exam period is over. Others will decide not to fast on certain days, and make up these days at a later point. ***It is the advice of West Berkshire SACRE that schools have a discussion with parents and pupils to raise this matter with them well in advance of the month of Ramadan. It is important that a school decides on an approach that all staff take, so advice is coherent for families and respectful. Schools might decide to send a letter home (an example template is in appendix 1) explaining the school's suggestions or policy.***

A good example to use with families and pupils is often that of well-known Muslim's from the UK. Mo Farah did not fast during the 2012 London Olympic Games as he was competing on those days. He did his fast at another time after the competition had ended.

The Muslim Council of Britain states in its publication 'Meeting the needs of Muslim pupils in state schools'

### **Examinations during Ramadan**

It is inevitable that certain statutory and internal school examinations may fall during Ramadan. Schools should give appropriate consideration when scheduling internal examinations, since the combination of preparing for exams and fasting may prove challenging for some pupils.

### **Exemption from fasting**

There are certain circumstances and conditions in which Muslims are exempt from fasting. These include menstruating women, those for whom fasting is likely to have a seriously detrimental effect on health and physical well-being and those who cannot survive without taking medication or nourishment, for example diabetics. Those travelling on long and difficult journeys may not fast if it is likely to cause serious hardship. Any missed fasting days have to be made up at a later date or in some circumstances compensated for, by feeding the poor.

## ***What are the implications of Ramadan on National Curriculum physical education and sporting activities?***

There is no sporting or physical education activity that is forbidden during the month of Ramadan.

However, it must be remembered that *Shari'ah* (Islamic law) places actions in five categories:

- those which are forbidden;
- those which are not forbidden but which it is better not to do;
- those which are neutral;
- those which are not obligatory but which it is better to do;
- those which are obligatory.

Different Muslim groups might place a particular action in different categories.

Teachers are advised to use their discretion regarding physical education during Ramadan for those pupils at secondary schools. Some Muslim pupils who are fasting, will feel weak or languid and teachers might decide that certain activities (such as those involving climbing, trampolining or distance running) need to be modified for particular pupils. This has, of course, to be weighed against the educational value of these activities and the requirements of the National Curriculum. The season of the year within which Ramadan falls may have a bearing on any decisions that are made.

Primary schools might want to advertise early to parents when, for example, sports day will take place, as for the next few years it might well take place during Ramadan. There is no reason for primary school pupils to choose to fast on such a day or for parents to want them to do so; there is no requirement for children under the age of puberty to fast. Schools might find it to be helpful to highlight with parents some of the comments found in this publication from national and local Muslim leaders so they know children under the age of puberty not fasting is fine. Some schools will choose to move the date of their sports day to a date that falls outside Ramadan. The vast majority of primary school pupils of course will not be fasting, but schools should consider whether parents (who will be fasting) can participate and support events in school at this time.

Accidental swallowing of water in normal circumstances would not invalidate the fast. Concerning whether fasting children should swim during Ramadan, some Muslim parents would advise fasting pupils who are going swimming to be particularly careful not to swallow water. Since swimming will almost certainly result in the swallowing of water, other Muslims would say that it is better for fasting pupils not to swim at all during Ramadan or would wish to forbid them from doing so completely. Again, SACRE would urge schools to talk with their parents about these nuances to find agreed ways of operating.

Schools may wish to consider the location of Ramadan in the school calendar a year in advance when responding to enquiries regarding the allocation of intensive swimming time. Any request for withdrawal from swimming should be considered carefully by schools. The schools should inform parents of National Curriculum requirements and of the effect of withdrawal on the whole school community but, in the final analysis, discretion should be used.

## ***Are there any other parts of the curriculum for which Ramadan has implications?***

As well as the month of Ramadan being a time of fasting, it is also a period when Muslims try to be even more conscious of God and to lead better lives.

Undoubtedly, the Muslim community would appreciate and respect a sympathetic and understanding stance by schools during the month of Ramadan. In turn, most schools would have as one of their underlying values – whether implicit or actually stated – respect for the family backgrounds from which children come.

The summer term is often a time when Relationships education might be covered in Year 5 & 6 or in KS3, and schools might want to move this component to another time so it does not clash with Ramadan. Schools should consider the needs of any Muslim teachers who might be required to teach this element of the curriculum at a time when their religion asks them not to think about such matters. Even if pupils are not fasting they might be uncomfortable with thinking about sexual matters during Ramadan, or parents may find it difficult to talk through issues with their children if they are fasting.

It may be considered provocative if, in food technology at secondary school for example, a teacher insists that a fasting Muslim pupil tastes and swallows food during Ramadan. (Though, in that it is done under pressure, this does not invalidate the fast. Neither is the fast invalidated if a Muslim forgets that he/she should be fasting and eats or drinks something).

### ***Should a school make special provision during Ramadan?***

This is a matter for a school's discretion but the following may be considered:

- being aware of the impact of Ramadan on meetings for parents (in that Muslim parents may find attendance at such meetings difficult because of involvement in customs associated with Ramadan);
- making sure that all staff are aware that it is Ramadan and its possible implications for school and informing teachers of the approach taken in school towards matters related to Ramadan;
- including a statement in the staff handbook (which might refer to the existence and whereabouts of this briefing paper);
- dedicating specific assemblies to Ramadan so that the whole school community can learn about its place in Muslim life; as well as considering fasting in different religions;
- arranging a meeting with Muslim parents prior to Ramadan to discuss issues such as lunchtime arrangements, examinations or sporting activities; and
- writing a letter to Muslim parents prior to the month of Ramadan. A good argument can be made for writing a letter to Muslim parents some time before Ramadan: in order to acknowledge the importance of Ramadan for the Muslim community, to make special arrangements known to parents and to offer Muslim parents the opportunity of contacting the school should the need arise. (see page 12).

### ***Should special provision be made during the lunch break for those children/young people who are fasting?***

This is a matter for a school's discretion and will be affected by a number of factors such as the population makeup of the school, precedent, the governing body, relationships with parents and resource issues.

Some secondary schools allow Muslim pupils to go home at lunchtime during Ramadan with consent from parents. Schools should not and cannot be expected to incur any extra costs resulting from pupils fasting.

***Extra support***

There is a webinar at [www.interfaithexplorers.com](http://www.interfaithexplorers.com) on Ramadan with the chair of the Muslim teachers association and our RE advisor Claire Clinton which can be viewed by staff, along with accompanying PP notes. Schools may find extracts played at a staff meeting will support all staff in feeling knowledgeable and confident in dealing with issues around fasting in schools.

## Further reading

- *Meeting the needs to Muslim pupils in State schools*, booklet published by the Muslim Council of Britain available on-line as a pdf from [www.mcb.org.uk](http://www.mcb.org.uk)
- *Fasting in Islam*, a small pamphlet available from Iqra Trust (see below)
- *The Muslim Guide: For teachers, employees, community workers & social administrators in Britain* by M Y McDermott & M M Ahsan  
116 pages, paperback, £2.75 (including postage & packing) available from:  
The Islamic Foundation, Ratby Lane, Markfield, Leicester LE67 9RN  
(Tel: 01530 244944/5 Fax: 01530 244946)
- Meet My Muslim Neighbour: Ramadan Guide for schools [www.mymn.org.uk](http://www.mymn.org.uk)

## Further guidance

The following organisations can be consulted on issues relating to Ramadan in particular and on matters relating to Islam in general:

- **Meet My Muslim Neighbour**  
[info@mymn.org.uk](mailto:info@mymn.org.uk) , [www.mymn.org.uk](http://www.mymn.org.uk)
- **Iqra Trust**  
24 Culross Street, London W1Y 3HE (Tel: 020 7491 1572 Fax: 020 7493 7899)
- **Muslim Council of Britain**  
PO Box 57330, London. E1 2WJ (Tel: 0845 2626766) [admin@mcb.org.uk](mailto:admin@mcb.org.uk), [www.mcb.org.uk](http://www.mcb.org.uk)
- **Islamic Cultural Centre**  
146 Park Road, London NW8 7RG (Tel: 020 7724 3363 Fax: 020 7724 0493)
- **The Islamic Foundation**  
See 'Further reading' above [www.islamic-foundation.com](http://www.islamic-foundation.com)
- **The Muslim Educational Trust**  
130 Stroud Green Road, London N4 3RZ (Tel: 020 7272 8502) [www.muslim-ed-trust.org.uk](http://www.muslim-ed-trust.org.uk)
- **The Muslim College**  
Creffield Road, Ealing, London W5 3RP (Tel: 020 8992 6636 Fax: 020 8993 3946)
- **Muslim Youth Helpline**  
Is a confidential and reputable helpline for young Muslims. [www.myh.org.uk](http://www.myh.org.uk)
- Muslim Youth Group UK  
33 Pound Street Newbury RG14 6AE (Tel: 01635673156, Mobile: 07540916508)  
<https://www.facebook.com/MuslimYouthGroupUk/>

## Appendix 1

### **Example of a letter which might be sent out to Muslim parents by a school prior to Ramadan**

Dear Parents

#### **Concerning Ramadan**

The school is aware that Muslim families will be preparing for the month of Ramadan at present.

We wanted to make you aware that we have spoken to your child this week about ... (public examinations/fasting during Ramadan). Having been given advice from Muslim leaders in West Berkshire, as well as reading advice from National Muslim groups like the Muslim Council of Britain we are suggesting to pupils at this school consider... (delaying when they fast until after their public examinations, or to not fast on those days when they need to write their examinations, or ensure that they rest and sleep as much as possible if they decide to fast during their public examinations, or the stance of many Muslims is that mature children who will be fasting start preparation for exam revision much earlier, or if at primary school they do their fasting at weekends with their family not in school time as fasting is not obligatory for them).

(For secondary) After all the hard work the pupils have put into getting ready for these examinations across the last two years we do not want anything to prevent them from being able to perform at their best in their exams.

(For secondary and primary) As a school we hope to support the Muslim community during the month of Ramadan by (might mention focus of assemblies or daily reflections/ Iftar celebration all families are invited to/lunchtime arrangements)

If you would like to discuss further with us anything to do with matter then please do get in contact with (name and contact number of member of staff).

The school wishes you and your family a peaceful and blessed month and a very happy Eid ul-Fitr.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

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Newham SACRE and Claire Clinton, Religious Education Advisor RE Matters  
Muslim Teacher Association and Rukhsana Yaqoob it's chair

Newham North Islamic Association

Meet my Muslim Neighbour Association

Minhaj Ul Quran

Quwwat-ul-Islam Society

Elmhurst School

Brampton Primary School

Plashet Secondary School

We would like to make clear the final guidance given in this booklet is that of the LA to schools, it is not necessarily in all places the view of individual Muslim people or mosques who have kindly given us their time and advice.

We would also like to acknowledge the help of other SACRE briefing papers that have been shared nationally, especially that of Redbridge's SACRE paper on Ramadan which became our starting place in writing this advice.

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**SACRE**



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