

# Haringey SACRE News

## Implementing the Haringey Agreed Syllabus

The Haringey Agreed Syllabus for religious education should be fully implemented in all Haringey schools this September.

This means that your RE schemes of work should ensure coverage of all relevant elements of the syllabus for your Key Stages.

To support you and your colleagues a series of training sessions have been organised to provide you with a range of knowledge and understanding about the faiths included in the Syllabus.

The next courses will be on Buddhism and Judaism. These will run on Friday 26<sup>th</sup> September. Further details may be obtained from the PDC.

## Haringey SACRE - what does it do?

Haringey SACRE usually meets four times annually. At these meetings SACRE considers information from a range of national and local sources and does some or all of the following:

1. Considers sections from current Ofsted reports on RE and collective worship in order to gain information about these areas in individual schools and across Haringey.
2. Congratulates schools whose OFSTED reports on RE and collective worship are good.
3. Seeks further information or ways to offer support to those schools where RE and/or collective worship are indicated as areas for improvement.
4. Works on the production of support materials for schools.
5. Reviews training being provided for teachers or for faith community representatives.
6. Considers and comments on new or urgent local or national initiatives or issues.
7. Discusses and decides on ways that it can support teachers in a range of ways including setting up or arranging exhibitions for pupils, teachers and community groups.
8. Develops or maintains links with and between faith communities locally and nationally.
9. Produces an annual report of its work.



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## Espresso 'Faiths' CD Rom

The Faiths CD Rom is free to every school in London and provides a vast archive of resources about Hinduism, Sikhism and Islam and is proving extremely popular with teachers and pupils alike.

Its video-rich materials contain information about Hinduism, Islam and Sikhism relating specifically to London examples of the faiths. Using it teachers

can take their pupils on a voyage of exploration to visit a Hindu temple, find out about Sikh festivals or what Ramadan means to Muslims!

Subject leaders need to clarify with their teachers how the content matches the requirements of the RE curriculum, how it can be incorporated into lesson planning, how to adapt resources, how to design and produce differentiated activities and how to meet the individual needs of pupils using these resources

A second CD-Rom covering Christianity, Judaism and Buddhism is promised to us from the providers in the autumn term.

## The Primary Strategy: Excellence and Enjoyment

*"One of the things I like to emphasise in RE is the way religion is practised today and its role in the search for meaning in the confusion of daily life. I hope to provide my students with an opportunity to think, explore, and express their personal views..."*

Beth Thompson  
Walton High School,  
Milton Keynes"

It is unfortunate when a really welcome initiative, such as the new coherence offered by the Primary Strategy, undermines RE. The publication *Excellence and Enjoyment*, is well produced and inviting to schools. However, sadly it fails to recognise either the place of RE or its potential benefits to children, not least in promoting their SMSC (spiritual, moral, social and cultural) development.

Although RE is not the only curriculum area that fails to get a specific mention, RE has a different status from foundation subjects. Although teachers can develop links with other curriculum areas in RE they need to be extremely careful when making decisions about placing an emphasis on some areas as opposed to others.

Schools are rightly concerned that Faith communities are anxious that schools should be aware of sensitivities about for example the use of drama in relation to their religion and no-one would wish to see schools alter the carefully designed balance of an Agreed Syllabus by spending large proportions of time on one faith to the detriment of another.

However, RE's omission from such an influential document about the shape of primary education cannot be justified.

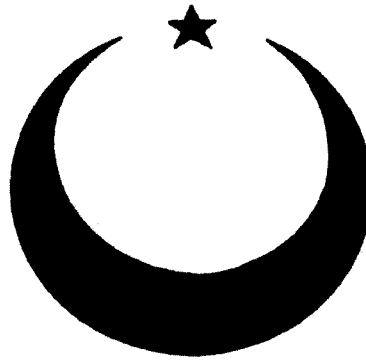
It is too late to amend this publication but hopefully there will be a better acknowledgement of breadth and balance in future work on the curriculum, and that RE's potentially valuable contribution will be recognised.

## Story of the Crying Camel

It was very hot and the people in Madinah were trying to keep cool. There were many beautiful gardens in the city with tall, shady trees. People came to the gardens to sit there to talk and enjoy cool, refreshing drinks. Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) was walking in one of the gardens. He greeted the people he knew as he walked along. But while he was walking, Muhammad (pbuh) heard a very strange noise that sounded a bit like someone crying and sobbing really loudly. Someone was obviously very sad.

As he came closer to the noise, Muhammad (pbuh) could see it was not a person making the sounds, it was a very sad camel. Muhammad (pbuh) felt very sorry for the camel. He could see why it was so sad. It was tied to a post, in the full sunshine where it was very hot. The camel looked very thirsty. Tears were running down its cheeks and it had been crying for a long time so its fur was very wet. Strangely no one else seemed to notice the camel's cries.

Muhammad (pbuh) stroked the camel and talked to it. Slowly it became calmer and soon the sobs stopped and the camel snorted with pleasure. The tears stopped running down its cheeks. Muhammad (pbuh) became angry. He searched the area asking, "Who owns this camel?" At last a voice said, "I do," and a man stepped out from under the shade of the biggest tree in the garden.



Muhammad (pbuh) looked at the man. He was not hot or thirsty. He was also not thinking about his camel.

Muhammad (pbuh) spoke to him quietly and as he spoke, the man's head began to hang down. He realised what he had done. Muhammad (pbuh) reminded him that the camel was one of Allah's creatures. It would work hard for the man, carrying heavy loads and travelling to places far away. The man had a responsibility to care for the camel in return for its hard work.

The owner felt very ashamed. From that day on he looked after his animals with great care, and always made sure they had enough to eat and drink and the camel never cried again.

## **Haringey Standing Advisory Council for religious education**

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## **RE - Local or National**

You may be aware that a letter was sent recently to the Minister for Education & Skills, Charles Clarke, by representatives of the Cof E, the Methodists and the Free Churches recommending a statutory national RE syllabus. It seemed to come as a surprise to everyone, even diocesan staff and members of the Methodist Education group.

AREIAC, the Association of RE Advisers, Inspectors and Educational Consultants sent a preliminary response to the Minister. This included the following points:

- ❖ It would undermine Standing Advisory Councils for RE (SACREs). **The local prerogative, through SACREs, is very well established and, whilst there** is recognised diversity of practice, the model is effective for the leadership of a subject which reflects local circumstances more than any other. The local SACRE provides a unique forum for collaboration between the Local Authority, the RE professionals and representatives of local faith communities. It also offers real opportunities for much needed inter-faith dialogue. It is a worthwhile and productive way to serve the community; it is citizenship in action. The Churches' proposal, although it leaves SACREs in place, reduces their autonomy and would severely undermine the goodwill of volunteers
  - ❖ It would increase prescription. Teachers are being encouraged to be innovative in their practice. This is challenging because schools are conditioned to so much that is determined centrally. RE has traditionally been an area in which initiative has been promoted and encouraged, both in terms of syllabus design and curriculum development. To impose a syllabus would generate uniformity but stifle innovation and discourage engagement with the process. A statutory national syllabus would not be owned in the same way as one developed locally.
- RE would lose its local connections and, possibly, the goodwill of many of the stakeholders. It would be impoverished as a result.
- ❖ It would not be a national statutory syllabus for all. Despite the Churches' initiative, voluntary aided schools would not be bound by it. This proposal would place RE in an anomalous position. It would be national but not a National Curriculum subject. The weakening of the role of SACREs is likely to lessen the commitment and the advisory support of LEAs, whilst there would be no guarantee of greater support from the government.
  - ❖ The proposal recommends the establishment of a national Agreed Syllabus Conference. This would be impossible because the structure of the local ASC cannot be replicated. It would, therefore, be difficult to ensure appropriate representation. Some stakeholders perceived that the 1988 Education Reform Act accorded to Christianity a position of inappropriate supremacy. If this proposal from the Churches were to be taken up, it would serve to confirm that perception and possibly alienate members of other faith communities, when locally it is no longer an issue. The initiative itself, coming as it does without reference to any of the other faith communities or professional bodies, shows some insensitivity on the part of the signatories.

**Haringey SACRE has also written to the Secretary of State and a copy of that letter will be part of the SACRE's annual report - in your schools next term We will keep you informed of the outcomes of this debate.**