

Eddie Griffith
Church of England SACRE Member
Haringey SACRE

The Right Reverend Dr Kenneth Stevenson
Bishop of Portsmouth
Cathedral House
St Thomas's Street
Portsmouth
Hants PO1 2HA

1 June 2006

Dear Bishop Stevenson,

At a meeting earlier this year members of Haringey SACRE looked at the National Society's document 'Excellence and Distinctiveness' and I am writing to express my concern over the following statement in your introduction to that document:

'The Church of England is well placed to support the implementation of the National Framework for RE. Each Agreed Syllabus Conference is made up of four committees, one of which represents the Church of England. All four committees have to be unanimous in their approval of a syllabus and therefore each one has an effective veto. We recommend that the members of the Church of England committee on a SACRE or ASC make it clear from the beginning that they will not support any proposed agreed syllabus that is not based on the new National Framework, and that, if necessary, they take this commitment to its logical conclusion.'

I am a long-standing member of the Church of England group on Haringey SACRE where we have followed the debate over the non-statutory National Framework for RE from its beginning. We are clear that its status is non-statutory and have agreed to consider it when reviewing our syllabus. We are however also committed to work with our fellow SACRE members to develop and support a syllabus that we feel meets the needs of the young people of Haringey, a multi-faith and multicultural inner London borough or rich diversity.

Members of Haringey SACRE, including the Church of England group, find it incomprehensible and regrettable that your letter appears to imply that slavish implementation of the non-statutory National Framework is preferable to considered application of those elements that meet the needs of our context. Indeed the spirit of partnership and accommodation that our SACRE members have striven to develop has been shadowed by the apparent call to members of the C of E group to blackmail other SACRE members by taking 'this commitment to its logical conclusion'.

Yours sincerely

Eddie Griffith

c/o Vinothan Sangarapillai
Clerk to Haringey SACRE
London Borough of Haringey
River Park House, 7th Floor
225 High Road
N22 4HQ

