MINUTES – PART 1

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence were received.

2 REVIEW OF ASC QUESTIONNAIRE

Teachers were invited to give feedback on the ASC teacher questionnaire and they were asked what were the priorities for the new syllabus – curriculum or assessment?

2.1 It was reported that some schools have only half a term for RE – they asked what they need to cover. SP advised that RE was a statutory subject and there should be a minimum number of hours provided.

2.2 It was noted that there are always areas which teachers are stronger on than others. The syllabus could give more insight to help them teach their weaker areas. A bank of resources could be suggested for different religions, e.g. links to appropriate videos on YouTube.

2.3 A previous syllabus had suggested lesson plans – teachers would like to see
this again, especially to help address issues which they are less confident in covering.

2.4 Children would like more experiences in the community, e.g. visits to places of worship. Teachers would like a list of local places which are happy to have school visits. SP suggested that there should be a compulsory educational visit or guest speaker for RE in each Key Stage. Teachers agreed this should be included. Schools to be asked to contact SACRE with any suggestions and PS will compile a list. Schools should also conduct risk assessments as they do for any other educational visits.

2.5 It was noted that some guest speakers or hosts at places of worship need to be better at using language appropriate to the age of the pupils. SP suggested that schools arrange a preparatory meeting to discuss this before a visit.

3 AGREED SYLLABUS

Each section of the current syllabus was reviewed.

3.1 Foreword
This will be updated with contributions from the current Director of Children’s Services and new Chair of SACRE.

3.2 Membership
The SACRE membership list to be updated.

SP asked if teachers would like to attend the termly meetings of SACRE as observers or members. RT suggested co-opting people who have areas of expertise, and input from different faith groups is welcome. Teachers can contact SP if interested.

Teachers were informed that SACRE minutes are published on the Council website.

3.3 Introduction
This includes which religions will be studied. Teachers were asked if they would like more information here, and if the templates provided were useful. Teachers said they would like a working document with points for each week, this would help teachers who are less familiar with the subject. SP advised that the syllabus provides a curriculum and teachers are able to use their professional judgement. More detail for non-specialists, e.g. schemes of work, could be provided in a separate document.

Teachers commented that RE tends to get pushed back in schools because it isn't assessed.

It was noted that this is a diverse community and this should be taken into account when setting the vision for RE. Knowledge of faiths is to be encouraged, also need to cover the shared values of different faiths.

It was suggested that there should be a central library of resources with correct information about different religions.
3.4 **Syllabus overview**
This will set out a framework to help teachers plan, with suggested topics each term for every year group to help pupils develop their knowledge and understanding over time.

3.5 **Foundation Stage**
Teachers would like to see more examples for the Foundation Stage. They asked what were the expectations for Early Years and were informed that children should be introduced to values and beliefs, e.g. through religious festivals. There are no fixed RE lessons in this age group and different settings have their own approaches. It is very cross-curricular. Teachers asked for guidance on festivals to avoid upsetting parents.

3.6 **Key Stage 1**
SP asked how schools differentiate topics which are covered every year for different year groups, e.g. Easter. Teachers confirmed that more in-depth work is done for older year groups and knowledge is developed by bringing in new key words and concepts. Schools should try to avoid repeating the same stories every year.

SP asked how much freedom schools want, or would they prefer a more prescriptive syllabus? Teachers agreed that they would like more prescription to help non-specialists. Also need to cater for all faiths and none – some religions such as Jehovah’s Witnesses not covered, and children can feel excluded.

Teachers asked for a summary of prior learning which is expected before moving on to the next key stage.

It was suggested that progression could be encouraged by giving an award to schools which show strong progress outside the core requirements. If time allows, schools could join together and give different presentations as part of a competition. It was agreed that having some form of assessment could help to motivate teachers to ensure the key topics have been covered. However, some schools teach RE in PPA cover time, so class teachers might not have assessment records. SP will include ideas for gathering evidence for non-written assessment.

3.7 **Key Stage 2**
Teacher agreed that the same issues applied as in Key Stage 1.

3.8 **Key Stage 3**
No secondary school teachers were present to discuss this. A teacher whose own children were in Key Stage 3 expressed concern that Sikhism was not covered in their school unless they took GCSE RE. It was suggested that pupils could use the same study methods which were used for other faiths, perhaps for an independent study topic.

Schools would like a central list of contacts for different religions. It was suggested that school governors of different faiths could be suitable as contacts in the local community.
3.9 **Assessment**

Teachers noted the assessment scale with exemplars, and these would be updated to replace the old National Curriculum levels.

SP asked if the “I can...” statements were useful for assessments. It was agreed that they were helpful for the core content. Learning goals would also be helpful. A teacher advised that they had produced an assessment scheme based on the skills for each year group and they were happy to provide this as an example. This had worked well, especially for upper Key Stage 2 where children were good at self-assessment.

RT reported that he had recently observed an outstanding RE lesson elsewhere. This had clear success criteria which could be applied in principle to different topics. Pupils of all abilities were able to contribute to the lesson because it was carefully structured. Teachers commented that it was more difficult for non-specialist staff to make lessons interesting if they have less knowledge.

4 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

SP reported that a primary teachers’ meeting would be held the following day to begin curriculum mapping.