



# *Working on an Agreed Syllabus Conference*

- **supporting**
- **strengthening**
- **promoting**

September 2025

# What is an Agreed Syllabus Conference?

An agreed syllabus conference (ASC) is a statutory body brought together to produce an Agreed Syllabus for RE. It is a separate legal body from a SACRE.

## Statutory Requirements

Every LA is required to establish and support an occasional body called an Agreed Syllabus Conference which must:

- produce and recommend to the LA an agreed syllabus for RE;
- meet in public;
- unanimously recommend a syllabus for adoption by the LA;
- include on any sub--committee at least one member of each of its constituent committees.

# Cont.

- An ASC has the same group structure as the SACRE but these are called committees;
- It is made up of representatives from the same interest groups as the SACRE, who may or may not be the same people but has no provision for co-opted members;
- It may be chaired by an appointee of the local authority or may be permitted to choose its own Chair
- must specify what will be taught through the Agreed Syllabus;
- may not specify the amount of curriculum time that must be allocated to RE but may provide an estimate of how much time the syllabus would require to help schools to plan their timetable.

The LA's responsibility to convene the ASC implies a duty to provide funds and support for its work.

# SACRE prepares for an ASC 1

Your preparation could have included:

- Conversations / surveys with schools to discover what is working well and what isn't with the present RE provision.

## What needs to be developed or re-written?

- After monitoring and reviewing the AS a SACRE can decide not to change anything, or to update part/s of the AS or its resources, refresh specific elements or create a brand-new AS.

## Review & decide what is best for schools in your LA to provide high quality RE for the next 5 years.

- Conversations and **planning with the LA** can take from 2 terms to 18 months, depending on the path SACRE decides to take.

# SACRE prepares for an ASC - 2

- If possible, create a document showing what the Agreed Syllabus production will cost, to enable SACRE to **secure funding for the ASC from the LA.**
- Create a projected timeline for ASC production, including the **LA process** the syllabus needs to go through - legal, equalities as well as design and communications,, adoption by the council...
- Build in time for the SACRE RE Adviser to explore with national bodies about **recent national developments in RE.**
- Consider **how to launch** a new revised / updated / new Agreed Syllabus to schools, teachers and the local community.

# SACRE asks the LA to convene an ASC at a SACRE meeting then approaches sponsoring bodies to confirm membership

Dear / Good afternoon.....

Your representative on XXXXX SACRE is .....

XXXXX is about to convene an Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC) to review the locally Agreed Syllabus. This requires us to approach all the membership nominating bodies to enquire whether your SACRE member will also represent you on the ASC. This will entail attendance at a separate series of meetings over the next year or so to progress this work.

I would therefore be grateful if you could confirm to me the name of the person you wish to represent .... on the ASC along with their email contact details.

Thankyou very much and kind regards

# Questions which should concern an ASC include:

- What is the impact on RE of new curricular developments?
- What should pupils learn at each key stage and how is the Agreed Syllabus best delivered to each age group?
- What mixture should there be of formal content, thematic work, group work, personal discovery, visits to specified buildings or events, and visitors?
- What is the relationship of RE to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and other whole-school priorities?
- How will local faith and belief be reflected in the locally agreed syllabus?
- What should be statutory within the Agreed Syllabus, and what should be non-statutory guidance, to be placed in appendices?

# ASC agrees the text of the Agreed Syllabus then....

- After the detailed review work has been done the final version of the AS document is **passed and Agreed at an ASC meeting**, together with any supporting documentation around lesson plans, resources.
- The agreed document then goes through **LA process** to be adopted for use in its schools by the council. For some this is via a Cabinet meeting, for others it is at Full Council and become the new legal syllabus document for all schools.
- This document is a public document and the LA **must** make it available to the public.

# SACRE launches the Agreed Syllabus

- As part of the plan for work on the AS, SACRE considers funding an appropriate **launch** to schools and the LA.
- A formal launch may include councillors, faith leaders, representatives of schools and SACRE members taking part. It may have a keynote speech from a significant person in the RE field.
- Publicity for the launch in local press will raise the status of the syllabus and the subject.
- **Training** for teachers and faith and belief leaders, gives the community understanding, confidence and ownership of the newly adopted AS.

# Ongoing review of the new Agreed Syllabus

- It is best practice to **review the new AS, training and support** materials with schools/teachers/pupils a year on.
- This allows little adjustments to be made, or SACRE to consider and find funding to develop or provide something that schools require, in order to use the AS to **teach high quality RE**.
- And **the AS cycle continues.....!**

# Top tips from NASACRE executive

- **Providing High Quality RE** necessitates a **shared understanding** of what that looks like – so how as an ASC will you involve the different stake-holders in this discussion?
- Reflect on shared understandings of the nature and purpose(s) of RE. These might differ slightly according to age and context, but an over-arching, general response to ‘Why do we teach RE?’ is helpful.
- Take into **account recent research**, but also **consider interpretations and ideas from your local interest groups**.
- **Be clear about the process**, communicate this effectively and ensure that there is agreement about what will happen, how and by whom.
- Ofsted and other research is clear that we should **aim for depth over breadth**. This is challenging in RE. As an ASC, how will you balance this?
- Always keep in mind that **this is for the pupils** and their academic and personal development.