



Qualifications and
Curriculum Authority

Using the framework to develop an agreed syllabus for RE

A QCA guidance paper

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Introduction

The purpose of this guidance document is to give support and advice to agreed syllabus conferences (ASCs) in reviewing and revising their local agreed syllabus for religious education (RE), to reflect best practice, and to be consistent with the non-statutory national framework for RE and the secondary curriculum review. It is intended that ASCs, when meeting to review their local agreed syllabus, will find this guidance helpful in deciding how to shape their new syllabus and in particular how to make a coherent use of the framework.

Executive summary

This guidance offers ASCs the following main messages:

- In reviewing an agreed syllabus and deciding what needs to change, ASCs need to ensure they understand how effective their existing syllabus is as a basis for planning in RE locally, and have a clear awareness of the ways in which the subject needs to evolve in the light of national developments and local needs.
- In writing a new syllabus, ASCs need to make a coherent use of the framework, taking particular care to ensure that there is a match between the concepts and the assessment arrangements as defined by levels.
- In planning the units of a syllabus, ASCs need to support coherent planning of challenging work that reflects the level of demand seen in other curriculum subjects. The eight-level scale is designed to enable this.
- In launching an agreed syllabus, ASCs and Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education (SACREs) need to offer effective continuing professional development and ongoing support that enables teachers and other users to plan and assess appropriately on the basis of the syllabus.
- For all stages, the services of a qualified RE specialist adviser or consultant are of great importance if the ASC wants to be sure of producing a high-quality syllabus.

Context

RE is a statutory subject in the curriculum. Instead of having a national curriculum document, RE is determined locally. Each local authority is required by law to establish a SACRE to adopt its own local agreed syllabus and to review the syllabus once every five years. By establishing an ASC, the local authority and the SACRE have the machinery for reviewing the syllabus and deciding whether to retain it, make small changes to it or revise it completely. This five-year cycle places the responsibility on SACREs of keeping RE up to date with other curriculum developments and with changes in society and the local community.

Over the years, local agreed syllabuses have varied considerably in approach, quality and effectiveness. At present, the only legal requirement for an agreed syllabus is that it must 'reflect the fact that religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian, while taking account of the teachings and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain' (Education Act 1996: ch 56, S375). This is essentially a requirement to balance content and it has been, generally, easy for SACREs to operate within this requirement and still have plenty of choices. Agreed syllabuses have, therefore, tended to vary in their approaches to RE, models of planning and levels of demand on pupils. While there are many advantages to this variety, it has on occasion created problems of consistency and continuity. These become noticeable when, for example, a pupil or teacher moves from one local authority to another.

In October 2004, the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) and the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) published *The non-statutory national framework for religious education* to serve as a model for local agreed syllabuses and for the authorities governing RE in maintained schools with a religious character. It was the fruit of substantial collaboration and agreement between the professional RE associations, the relevant faith communities and other groups, and the relevant government agencies. The framework represents a major achievement of cooperation and agreement in RE.

The framework serves RE by: establishing an agreed pupil entitlement from age three to 19; setting national standards through the eight-level scale; showing how continuity and progression can work through the themes and concepts; offering a coherent range of content; and promoting positive public understanding of RE and its place in the curriculum. It sets out RE in the same planning format as the national curriculum subjects. For secondary RE teachers, the evolved version of the framework (see 'Curriculum change and the evolving framework' below) does the same in relation to the new secondary curriculum.

This guidance supports the use of the framework by showing SACREs and ASCs how their own agreed syllabus can use the framework in ways that are both coherent and flexible. It draws attention to the strongest features of agreed syllabuses, offers advice on how to use the framework and other documents, and answers some of the syllabus writers' most frequently asked questions. The intention of this guidance is that SACREs and ASCs will make the best use of the framework and that RE will continue to be improved by high-quality, coherent planning and by nationally recognised standards.

Features of the framework

The framework consists of the following key features that ASCs will find helpful as they decide how to structure their own agreed syllabus:

- the **importance statement**, establishing the importance of RE in the curriculum, for the world that pupils are growing up in and for the pupils themselves; the importance of RE is described in educational, not theological terms (p. 7)
- the **legal requirements** relating to agreed syllabuses and RE (p. 10)
- the **attitudes** that can be promoted through RE: self-awareness, respect for all, open-mindedness, appreciation and wonder (p. 13)
- the **connections** that can be forged between RE and other curriculum elements, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSCD), citizenship, personal, social and health education (PSHE), key skills, ICT and language (pp. 14–18)
- the **programmes of study** for the foundation stage, for key stages 1–3, and for 14–19 (p. 21 ff)
- the **attainment targets**, learning about religion and learning from religion, balancing cognitive and affective processes (pp. 24 ff)
- the identification of **recommended content**, naming specific religions, beliefs and themes (pp. 11–12)
- the **themes** that ensure each religion and belief can be studied with coherence, continuity and progression across each key stage (pp. 25ff)
- the **experiences and opportunities** for each key stage (pp. 25ff)
- the **eight-level scale** for assessment of learning about and learning from, establishing national standards for RE comparable with other curriculum subjects and based on six identifiable strands or concepts (pp. 36–7).

The framework was designed as a coherent whole. Its structure should assist ASCs as they undertake their role of developing their own agreed syllabus. It is important to consider the overall coherence and to ensure that this is visible in the agreed syllabus, particularly in the choice of concepts and their match with levels.

The framework removes the need for SACREs and ASCs to 'reinvent the wheel'. For instance, ASCs do not have to originate statements on the overall place and scope of RE or on how RE contributes to aspects of general education. Nor do they have to repeat discussions about concepts and overall content, although they should determine specific content for key stages.

The framework does not offer a pedagogical approach or specific units of work, but QCA has published 11 units reflecting the themes and standards of the framework, and these can be downloaded from www.qca.org.uk/qca_7882.aspx.

Curriculum change and the evolving framework

After the framework's publication, the new secondary curriculum was published in September 2007. This will be implemented from September 2008 for year 7 pupils. The framework is included in the new curriculum, appearing under the same headings and format as other subjects, to facilitate planning across subjects. The curriculum as a whole can be viewed in www.qca.org.uk/curriculum.

The secondary curriculum review is based on a 'big picture', a way of understanding the curriculum as more than the individual subjects. The curriculum is the entire planned learning experience of the child or young person, underpinned by a broad set of common values and purposes. The intention is to provide a secondary curriculum with not only breadth and flexibility but also depth and coherence – a curriculum that can be personalised and global, adaptable and specific. In practice this will mean:

- a more coherent curriculum in which schools, teachers and other professionals choose appropriate content and processes from within a framework provided by QCA
- a more flexible curriculum in which subjects and other planned learning experiences cooperate with each other creatively
- a deeper, more challenging and relevant curriculum in which pupils engage with key concepts.

The aims of the curriculum at key stages 3 and 4 are the same for all subjects, emphasising the centrality of the learner. The secondary curriculum should enable all young people to become:

- **successful learners** who enjoy learning, make progress and achieve
- **confident individuals** who are able to live safe, healthy and fulfilling lives
- **responsible citizens** who make a positive contribution to society.

This vision of a curriculum based on concepts, less prescriptive in terms of content, and offering 'joined-up learning', is good news for RE. The programmes of study for RE come with supporting text on how RE contributes to the three aims of the curriculum and to the five outcomes of Every Child Matters. Also, case studies exemplify how the use of key concepts can work to enhance coherence and progression in RE.

All this material represents an evolution of the framework, not a fundamental change. It enables the framework to stay relevant to current curricular priorities. ASCs can make use of the new secondary RE programmes of study, based on the framework, in order to ensure that concepts are central to planning and that appropriate links are made with concepts in other subjects.

Checklist for the statutory elements of the local agreed syllabus

Most agreed syllabuses divide into those sections that are statutory and those that are guidance only. It is important that agreed syllabuses are very clear about the difference between the two sections. The framework provides a basis for drafting some of the key statutory elements. This section deals with the elements of the agreed syllabus that are most appropriate in the statutory section.

- **Legal requirements for RE:** schools must provide RE for all registered pupils, although parents may choose to withdraw their child. Schools, other than academies and voluntary-aided schools with a religious character, must teach RE according to their locally agreed syllabus. Agreed syllabuses should reflect the fact that religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian, while taking account of the teachings and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain.
- **Aims of RE in the wider curriculum:** for the primary curriculum, the aims are:
 - to provide opportunities for all pupils to learn and achieve
 - to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and prepare all pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.

For the secondary curriculum, the aims are that pupils will become:

- successful learners
- confident individuals
- responsible citizens.

The place of RE in the curriculum is strengthened when it can clearly demonstrate that it contributes to these aims for all pupils. Some agreed syllabuses include exciting vignettes, in the form of pupil quotes or visuals, demonstrating the contribution of RE.

- **Importance statement:** the function of an importance statement is that it establishes the place of the subject in the curriculum. It can be used with teachers, governors, parents and pupils to explain why the subject deserves to be in the curriculum, why it is important to the world and why it is relevant to the learning needs of pupils. The importance statement in the non-statutory national framework, and in the revised

secondary curriculum, emphasises challenge, critical reflection, spiritual development, respect and preparation for adult life in a diverse society.

- **Learning about and learning from:** successful teaching and learning spring from a balance and mutuality of 'learning about' and 'learning from' processes. This way, cognitive and affective approaches complement each other, and the challenge of understanding concepts in RE is enriched by the challenge of responding to them.
- **Key concepts:** in the past, many syllabuses have structured their content around strands such as beliefs, founders, sacred places, authority and several others. These strands were then mapped across the religions to produce specific units of work. While this approach can yield a broad and balanced RE, it has also been problematic. In key stages 2 and 3 particularly, it can lead to learning experiences that are repetitive, dominated by 'learning about' and undemanding relative to other subjects. A weakness in the level of challenge, and in progression, has become a national characteristic of RE in these key stages. It is therefore recommended that syllabuses adopt a concept-based approach, by using the six key concepts in the framework (p. 36) and the secondary programmes of study:
 - beliefs, teachings and sources
 - practices and ways of life
 - expressing meaning
 - identity, diversity and belonging
 - meaning, purpose and truth
 - values and commitments.

ASCs may wish to break these concepts down further or use different ones. What remains essential is that the key concepts should match the level statements. This creates a syllabus with coherence of design and synergy between what is taught and what it is assessed. Where agreed syllabuses lack this characteristic, this can lead to a serious disconnect between planning and assessment, to the detriment of both. When key concepts match level statements, planning and teaching is more coherent and assessment more valid.

- **Breadth of study:** the scope of content should embrace Christianity in its local, national and global forms, as well as the five other principal world religions (defined in the framework as Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism), other religions

of significance in Britain (the Baha'i, Jain and Zoroastrian faiths) and non-religious or secular world views such as humanism. Christianity should be taught in each key stage. In addition, other religions of local significance may be included, where appropriate.

- **Themes, experiences and opportunities:** many agreed syllabuses organise their programme to include themes or strands. For RE to be effective in challenging pupils at the right level, it is important for the themes to go beyond mere description of religious phenomena by raising issues. The themes in the framework each raise several issues, making them different from older strands such as founders, places of worship or festivals. It is also important for the themes to have continuity and progression. The themes can also lead to curriculum experiences and opportunities showing diverse ways and locations in which pupils can learn.
- **Eight-level scale:** the benefits of using the framework's scale of assessment are that it has been worked out by leading professionals in RE and is already widely adopted in other agreed syllabuses. For assessment in RE to have a meaningful impact on learning and on reporting, it makes sense for the levels to be credible and nationally consistent.
- **'I can' statements:** pupil-friendly level statements, sometimes called 'I can' statements, are a very useful exemplar tool for implementing assessment for learning approaches in RE. The advantage of having 'I can' statements in the syllabus is that their use will be more consistent and widespread across the local authority's schools. However, care should be taken to ensure that, in drafting such statements, the overarching challenge in the level descriptor is retained in full. A successful 'I can' statement is accessible and clear to pupils/students, but maintains the same level of demand as its 'official' equivalent. It promotes good practice in assessment by involving the learner actively in selecting evidence of his/her achievement, and in reflecting on progress against personal and national standards. While these statements do not have to be in the statutory section, they should be clearly signposted from the statutory level statements.
- **RE's contribution to statutory duties on schools:** it is of great importance to parents and other stakeholders to know about the capacity of RE to contribute to various statutory duties placed on schools, in particular the five outcomes of Every Child Matters, the promotion of personal well-being and community cohesion. The new secondary curriculum website provides text on how RE does this (<http://curriculum.qca.org.uk>).

Checklist for the non-statutory element of the local agreed syllabus

Many SACREs publish supporting guidance materials for RE, either as a non-statutory element of the agreed syllabus or as a separate document. Among the sources for this guidance are Circular 1/94 – *Religious Education and Collective Worship* (DfES, 2004), *The non-statutory national framework for religious education* (DfES and QCA, 2004), and the exemplar units of work (QCA, 2007).

Forms of useful supporting guidance that SACREs can provide include:

- **Assessment opportunities** written into units.
- **Old units re-worked** to be consistent with new architecture of syllabus, especially use of key concepts.
- **Units combining learning about and learning from opportunities** in order to promote balanced learning and progression.
- **Statements on how RE upholds and contributes to:**
 - the overall aims of the curriculum in both primary and secondary schools
 - personal, learning and thinking skills – reflective learners, creative thinkers, self-managers, team workers, effective participators and independent enquirers
 - functional skills – literacy, numeracy and ICT
 - cross-curricular dimensions: identity and cultural diversity, healthy lifestyles, community participation, enterprise, global dimension and sustainable development, technology and the media, creativity and critical thinking
 - the values statement
 - attitudes
 - spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils
 - the six strands of diversity – race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, age and belief

- inclusion, such as those with special educational needs and gifted and talented pupils
 - national strategies including teaching and learning, social and emotional aspects of learning (SEAL)
 - other locally relevant aspects of the curriculum
 - other curriculum subjects, such as citizenship, PSHE, language and ICT.
- Programmes of study and units of work for:
 - foundation stage
 - key stage 1
 - key stage 2
 - key stage 3
 - 14–19.

To make best use of opportunities to collaborate with other subjects, units could be structured around key concepts, key processes, range and content and curriculum opportunities, generated by questions of the sort that pupils want to ask. Year 6–7 transition units, and units promoting learning outside the classroom, are important features of any suite of units.

- **Some agreed syllabuses include lists**, such as ‘dos and don’ts’ with regard to each religion or belief, for example in relation to pronunciation of words or use of artefacts. Some include glossaries. Pronunciation guidance is available commercially. Care should be taken to ensure that any advice of this sort reflects both local and national scholarly opinion.
- **Pedagogical approaches**, including what makes a good RE lesson, approaches to concepts and processes. This section should make systematic reference to national strategies.
- **Guidance on planning across the curriculum**: some agreed syllabuses include advice and good practice examples for RE as part of cross-curricular collaboration in key stages 1, 2 and 3.

- **Guidance on assessment:** some agreed syllabuses include guidance on assessment in RE, emphasising the importance of effective assessment to provide feedback for pupils, parents and school staff. Assessment guidance should be flexible enough to allow teachers to use professional judgement, to gather and interpret evidence of achievement, to use national levels when appropriate and to plan in the light of assessment information.
- **Time allocation for RE in each key stage:** in many agreed syllabuses, this is set at between 36 and 45 hours per year, or 5 per cent of curriculum time, in every key stage. In some agreed syllabuses this is a statutory requirement.

Frequently asked questions

- **How do we set about reviewing a syllabus?**

The first step in the process is to convene an ASC with the support of the local authority to carry out the review of the agreed syllabus on its behalf. The ASC consists of representatives of each of the committees on the SACRE. Additional people may be co-opted to the ASC where they have particular expertise in terms of the task in hand. A chairperson is elected, and a programme of meetings/activities is drawn up. Key questions the SACRE and the ASC need to ask and resolve before proceeding are:

- What is the capacity of the SACRE and the ASC to carry out the review?
- What is the SACRE's analysis of what needs to change, based on its monitoring of RE and its knowledge of national developments?
- Is there a specialist RE adviser or consultant available?
- Is there a budget?

The ASC and its activities take place outside of SACRE meeting time, but reports on progress are made to the SACRE at regular intervals. When completed, the new agreed syllabus is presented to the SACRE for approval, and then submitted to the local authority for adoption. Once it has been adopted, the new syllabus is the legal document outlining what must be taught in RE in maintained community and voluntary-controlled schools in the local authority.

- **What documentation governs an agreed syllabus?**

RE takes place within the context of both legislation (statutory) and guidance (non-statutory) – it is important not to confuse the two. RE is a component of the basic curriculum, to be taught alongside the national curriculum in all maintained schools.

Legislation comes in the form of the 1988 Education Reform Act and its successors, which require:

- local authorities to review their syllabus every five years
- agreed syllabuses to 'reflect the fact that religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian, while taking account of the teachings and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain' (Education Act 1996: ch 56, S375)

Guidance comes in different forms including Circular 1/94 – *Religious Education and Collective Worship* (DfES, 1994), *The non-statutory national framework for religious education* (DfES and QCA, 2004), and the exemplar units of work (QCA, 2007).

- **How long should an agreed syllabus be?**

An effective agreed syllabus can be presented in just a few pages. It is when guidance materials are added that the size of the document can grow substantially. The difference between the statutory section (which sets out the statutory basis for RE in the local authority) and the non-statutory or guidance section (which is to support, guide and exemplify) needs to be clear at the writing stage, in the final document(s) and in how the material is presented to teachers and other users.

- **How long does it take to develop an agreed syllabus?**

This depends on factors such as whether any guidance material is planned and the size and degree of professional expertise in RE which the ASC comprises and/or can draw on. Typically, developing an agreed syllabus along with non-statutory guidance can take anywhere between 12 and 18 months. If left too long, the process can become bogged down and important local authority deadlines can be missed. If completed too fast, there may be inadequate time for consultation of all the stakeholders. Remember that a local authority is compliant with the law if it has taken the decision to review every five years. This is not the same as having a new syllabus.

- **What common mistakes should be avoided?**

- Not evaluating the effectiveness of the existing syllabus rigorously in the light of local monitoring information, including pupil/student voice, and national developments
- Confusing the statutory and the guidance materials
- Not addressing the concepts adequately – and not exemplifying them in the units of work
- Being too prescriptive about content
- Not aligning the concepts and content with the eight-level scale
- Providing levels expressed in pupil-friendly language that reduce the degree of challenge of the level
- Publishing an agreed syllabus without a system of support for teachers.

'Pupil voice proved invaluable in the process. A conference for young people aged 9–19 informed us that they were much more interested in the way the subject was taught, insisting that this should be active, about their interests and involving faith communities.'

- **Why should our ASC use the framework?**

The framework is non-statutory but it has become the main national expression of standards and breadth in RE, reflected in many agreed syllabuses. In addition it is the basis of much initial teacher training, of the secondary curriculum review, the new GCSE criteria and many commercially published pupil resources. The content and structure was agreed by all the professional bodies involved in RE and by representatives of all the faith communities and other interest groups whose belief system is represented in it. Its breadth of content, themes and opportunities command widespread national support.

The framework sets out a structure for ASCs and faith communities to use, to determine what should be taught. It is designed to be inclusive and flexible. The main advantages of using it are:

- ensuring consistency with national standards in RE, including neighbouring authorities, and creating a meaningful assessment structure comparable with other subjects
- saving the expenditure of time, energy and money involved in reaching consensus on key RE terms and processes that have already been agreed nationally by representatives of teachers, religions and beliefs
- accessing the full range of resources designed to support the delivery of a framework-consistent agreed syllabus.

- **Can a SACRE just issue copies of the national framework to schools?**

The framework is not a syllabus. It has been written mainly for local authorities, ASCs, and SACREs, to inform them in their development of an agreed syllabus. As with any framework, it needs interpreting and making relevant to the local context; this is the job of the ASC. This ensures that there is coherence across the local authority, and that the framework fulfils its aims of 'benefiting all pupils by helping them to improve the quality of religious education across the country'.

- **How much needs to be added to the framework to make an agreed syllabus?**

The framework is best used as the basis of a coherent syllabus. However, the framework needs to be *interpreted* in the light of the local context, and made relevant to it. It is this interpretation that is crucial in order to build on the framework to create an agreed syllabus. Examples of this include units of work reflecting local priorities, resource material on visits to local places of worship, contact details for local speakers and centres, and examples of work by local pupils and teachers.

- **Can an ASC take aspects of the framework and simply add them to its current agreed syllabus?**

Some ASCs have taken this approach; many more have opted for minimal changes or additions, for the sake of continuity. Both options seem attractive, but both have serious disadvantages: more often than not, the result is an agreed syllabus that lacks coherence. This is often because the content taught does not match the content and concepts assessed, and sometimes because new curriculum or pedagogical features are not worked into the syllabus. Such a document is likely to impede the planning and delivery of good quality RE. While in the short term, minimal change may be popular, in the longer term, it is frustrating for teachers as it does not provide a sufficient basis for planning and progression. Great care needs to be taken to ensure that a new syllabus enhances RE and makes it relevant to a modern curriculum, inspiring and challenging all learners. Where possible, it is better to persuade teachers and other stakeholders of the need to revise more substantially and to implement the agreed changes.

- **How can we ensure a reasonable representation of local, regional, national and global religious diversity in our work in RE?**

Today's children are growing up in a globalised world. Whether they live in a religiously and culturally diverse part of the UK or not, they still need, and are entitled to, an education that gives them experience of diversity. Partnerships with local and regional representatives can prove fruitful in ensuring authentic encounters with faith both in and beyond the classroom. The breadth of content of religions and beliefs identified in the framework is based on the main religious groupings in the UK plus secular world views. This range of beliefs also comprises the most substantially sized belief systems globally. For this reason it is recommended that ASCs adopt the framework's breadth of religions and beliefs, and place them in the context of local or regional issues. For example, it might make sense locally to study Sikhism in each key

stage because of a strong local Sikh community that can resource and support RE. Whatever sequence of religions and beliefs is agreed locally, ASCs should strive for a balance of western and eastern faiths in each key stage.

- **What should the particular character of RE in the local authority be, given the nature of our community?**

To answer this important question, a SACRE should spend time discussing its community and reaching a shared understanding of its needs, the diversity of its beliefs and other factors that might affect community cohesion. The SACRE needs a shared understanding that can be clearly expressed as a piece of advice for its ASC.

- **Where can an ASC find guidance?**

With just over 150 agreed syllabuses, each being revised on a five-year cycle, there is considerable expertise in this area nationally. Is a local authority nearby also undertaking of revision of its agreed syllabus? It might be possible to make contact with members of their SACRE or ASC to share expertise and provide mutual support. The main RE associations, including the National Association of SACREs (NASACRE), the Association of RE Inspectors, Advisors and Consultants (AREIAC), the National Association of RE Teachers (NATRE) and the RE Council (REC), will also be able to provide some guidance. It is likely that anything more than brief general guidance would be on a consultancy basis. An RE specialist subject adviser or consultant will be able to provide support tailored to your context.

- **What are the best ways to implement an agreed syllabus?**

Once an agreed syllabus is adopted, SACREs will wish to see it implemented as thoroughly as possible, especially if it differs significantly from its predecessor. The best way to make sure that implementation is effective is through a dialogue involving teachers, advisers/consultants and faith communities. Each of these stakeholder groups will have interests that need to be reconciled in the final version of the syllabus. The role of the adviser or consultant includes initiating dialogue and giving expert leadership to the analysis of what needs to change. This leadership role is most effective if it continues all the way through the writing and extends into the implementation. If faith communities have been involved from the start, they will be more likely to have confidence in the syllabus and more willing to resource it through visits. Likewise, if teachers have been consulted from the outset, they will have an understanding of the new challenges, a sense of ownership of the final product, and a desire to make it work. Often it will be necessary to make the case for buying a few

teachers out of school for some writing days. This case can be made in terms of value for money, as the final version of the syllabus is likely to be more effective in raising standards if teachers are involved. In the same way, SACREs will wish to ensure that faith representatives are able to contribute without compromising their commitment to their workplace.

Ways to involve stakeholders include:

- soliciting their views at the outset through methods such as forums, consultation meetings, questionnaires and pupil/student voice, while also giving clear information and leadership about what needs to change
- inviting representatives to join the ASC
- setting up working groups, for each key stage, to review the developing programme of study and to develop units of work to exemplify it
- holding a launch event to which all stakeholders are invited
- providing continuous professional development opportunities to introduce the agreed syllabus for all teachers and faith representatives, particularly those who were not actively involved in the process.

'Involving teacher networks at every stage raised the profile of the syllabus and made them feel this was their document as well.'

'The syllabus launch was only part of an ongoing process. Supporting RE means that SACREs are continually "painting the Forth Rd Bridge", looking for ways of making RE the best it can be in our schools.'

Conclusion

QCA's intention in publishing this advice is to support ASCs in their commitment to providing agreed syllabuses of the highest possible quality. RE is part of a curriculum that is changing, becoming more personalised and flexible while maintaining national standards. ASCs can ensure that, through a local agreed syllabus, RE more than adequately demonstrates its relevance to contemporary curriculum aims and priorities. When ASCs make a coherent and flexible use of the framework and the new secondary curriculum materials on RE, this gives school staff the tools they need in order to inspire and challenge all learners.