



City of York SACRE

Options for the review of the Agreed Syllabus

Meeting Date: Tuesday 15th July 2025

1. The Legal Context

Religious Education (R.E.) is a statutory subject and each local authority area is required to have an agreed syllabus for R.E. York's current locally agreed syllabus was last reviewed in 2021 and so is due for review in 2026. The current locally agreed syllabus was bought from R.E. Today and York has bought its syllabus from RE Today since 2016; this is an option used by a number of local authorities nationally, including North Yorkshire Council.

SACRE is required to conduct a review of the agreed syllabus for Religious Education (RE) every five years. The review involves an evaluation of the curriculum's content and delivery within a local authority's area. An Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC) is set up to conduct the review. The review ensures the syllabus remains relevant, effective, and aligned with legal requirements, while also considering societal and community changes.

An agreed syllabus **must** *'reflect the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are, in the main, Christian while taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain'*. Education Act (1996 Section 375 (3)/ School Standards and Framework Act (1998, Schedule 19, para 5).

The development of a clear, well-structured agreed syllabus remains one of the most important functions of SACRE. SACREs are responsible for reviewing and revising the agreed syllabus, ensuring it is up-to-date and reflects the local context.

2. Key Aspects of the Review

The review examines the syllabus's content, ensuring it is comprehensive, balanced, and age-appropriate. It assesses the effectiveness of the syllabus in supporting teaching and learning, including progression, coherence, and breadth of learning. The review evaluates the assessment methods outlined in the syllabus and their effectiveness in informing teaching and learning. It considers the syllabus's impact on pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development. The review may consider national guidance and best practices for RE. The review takes into account the specific needs and characteristics of the local community.

3. The Review Process

The review process involves the following steps:

- **Consultation:**

SACREs consult with various stakeholders, including teachers, schools, and religious and philosophical groups.

- **Evidence Gathering:**

Data is gathered through surveys, questionnaires, and other methods to inform the review.

- **Decision Making:**

Based on the evidence, SACRE and the Agreed Syllabus Conference decide whether to retain, amend, or replace the syllabus.

- **Budgeting:**

Resources need to be allocated for the review process, including potential costs for external expertise or resources.

4. The options for SACRE

In conducting the review SACRE needs to consider two options which are:

- a) **Option 1** – Developing a bespoke York locally agreed syllabus. This would involve considerable additional work and given the lack of subject adviser support would be difficult to achieve within the timeframes for the review.
- b) **Option 2**- Re-commission RE Today to deliver the revised locally agreed syllabus. York has now used RE Today twice and the advantages of remaining with them would be that it would minimise the changes for schools whilst delivering an up to date syllabus informed by the latest best practice. It would also provide SACRE and schools with support materials and on-going support from RE Today.
- c) **Option 3**- Commission a syllabus from another provider e.g. another local authority

5. Timeline for completion of the review of the Agreed Syllabus

The table below outlines the timetable for the completion of the review of the Agreed Syllabus. Given the importance of this work it will be the main focus for the work of SACRE during the academic year 2025-26.

<p>September to November 2025</p> <p>Survey the views of teachers and other stakeholders.</p> <p>December 2025</p>	<p>Consultation will include Questionnaire for schools</p> <p>Schools, SACRE members and interested groups invited to online consultation sessions</p> <p>Analysis of feedback</p> <p>Feedback to be considered at December SACRE meeting</p>
<p>January/February 2026:</p> <p>Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC) set up and meeting Options, finance and timeline for a new syllabus to be discussed.</p> <p>SACRE meeting following feedback from ASC to discuss syllabus options and approve which syllabus will be adopted.</p>	<p>An initial ASC meeting with SACRE meeting to follow. This will be a decision making meeting and the ASC is a legal body that will nominate a chair.</p> <p>Following consideration of feedback and finances the ASC will decide which option to take and present this to the SACRE.</p>
<p>March 2026-June 2026</p>	<p>½ day for ASC to meet with follow on SACRE meeting this will include SACRE members writing and approval of introductory pages and updating SACRE on progress / communication with school</p>
<p>July – September 2026</p>	<p>Communication to schools, distribution of syllabus and writing training materials for launch.</p> <p>Officers / ASC & SACRE members attendance / delivery at launch conference day</p>

The advantage of remaining with RE Today is that they are able to support all aspects of the review including the launch conference. Given the capacity of SACRE a re-commissioning of the current arrangements should be strongly considered.

Maxine Squire, Local Authority Adviser to SACRE, July 2025

