

Coventry Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education

**Annual Report
2016 - 2017**



Coventry City Council

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Introduction

This is the annual report of the Coventry Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) for 2016/17 and is published in accordance with the requirements of section 391 (6) of the Education Act 1996. It provides an account of the activities of SACRE during this period.

The report will be circulated to:

Headteachers and Chairs of Governors of Coventry schools
Coventry City Councillors
Diocesan Board of Education
Diocesan Education Service
NASACRE
SACREs in neighbouring authorities

It will also be available to download at www.warwickshire.gov.uk/sacre

Information on administrative and organisational matters is available from Lucy Lambert: Education Entitlement, PO Box 15, Council House, Coventry, CV1 5RR – telephone 024 7683 2444 or email lucy.lambert@coventry.gov.uk.

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Message from Co-Chairs of SACRE

It has been an interesting and productive year for Coventry SACRE. The main item on our agenda has been working more closely with our neighbour – Warwickshire SACRE, the first major fruit of which has been the joint production with RE Today of a personalised curriculum for all our children. This reflects our SACRE's expectation that our children will explore the six principal religions during their primary school years.

We would like to express our sincere thanks to the writing group of teachers from both Coventry and Warwickshire who helped refine our curriculum and to RE Today who produced the end product, as well as running the INSET at the extremely successful launch events.

Over the coming year, we will develop further support materials such as schemes of work, long term plans and case studies reflecting the variety and creative ways of delivering RE.

In order to provide support for our schools and teachers in the delivery of RE and the new syllabus, we hope to appoint an RE support worker in 2018, a post which has been vacant for the last year.

Our thanks go to:

- The members of SACRE for their commitment and unstinting guidance
- The Clerk to SACRE, Lucy Lambert and her colleague in Warwickshire Ruth Waterman for their unstinting support throughout
- The Local Authority, especially through the professional and personal support of Anne Brennan
- The Reference Group: Gyll Brown, Pauline Luckett and Lizzie McWhirter

Goodbyes and welcomes:

This year we said goodbye to Anne Brennan, we would like to thank her for all her work on SACRE and wish her well for the future. We welcome Sarah Mills, who will be providing support on behalf of the Local Authority.

We look forward to the challenges that 2017/2018 brings, particularly in light of the work of the Commission on Religious Education which is consulting widely on whether there should be a national curriculum for RE!

Manjit Kaur and Chris Mellers

Managing the SACRE and Partnership with the LA and other Key Stakeholders

SACRE Meetings

Coventry SACRE met on four occasions during the 2016/17 academic year. Details of venues and attendance are provided in the table below.

Date	Venue	Numbers in attendance from each group			
		Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4
19/09/2016	Diamond Rooms, Council House	2	3	2	3
23/01/2017	Diamond Rooms, Council House	2	1	2	3
08/03/2017*	County Council Offices, Warwick	3	2	1	4
12/06/2017	Diamond Rooms, Council House	2	2	1	3

* The meeting on 08 March was a joint meeting with Warwickshire SACRE.

Professional and Financial Support

The SACRE Reference group has advised the Local Authority on priorities and where funding should be spent. In 2016-17, this was used to fund the following:

- Implementation of the new Agreed Syllabus including:
 - Purchase of a five year licence per school from RE Today
 - Launching the new Agreed Syllabus into schools
 - Producing and printing additional units
- Servicing of SACRE meetings and refreshments
- NASACRE annual subscription/costs for attending AGM

The Clerk to SACRE provides ongoing professional support and is paid for by the Local Authority.

Partnerships with other key stakeholders

NASACRE (National Association of SACREs)

Coventry SACRE continues its membership with the National Association of SACREs and circulates newsletters and annual reports to members of SACRE.

SACRE's role and function

SACRE has a statutory duty:

- To advise the Local Authority on collective worship and Religious Education in community schools and foundation schools which do not have a religious character. Religious Education in these schools must be delivered in accordance with an Agreed Syllabus.
- To advise the Local Authority on collective worship and methods of teaching, choice of materials and teacher training in Religious Education and collective worship.
- To provide an annual report.
- To require Coventry City Council to periodically review the locally Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education (at least every 5 years).

In addition the SACRE can:

- Consider applications made by a Headteacher to release some or all of the pupils in a particular school from the requirement for collective worship to be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character (a Determination).

Membership of SACRE:

Coventry SACRE comprises four statutory groups:

- Group 1 – The Church of England (Christianity)
- Group 2 – Christian Denominations and other religions that appropriately reflect the principal religious traditions of the area. Currently Coventry SACRE has provision for representatives from the following faiths – Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity (Greek Orthodox, Roman Catholic, The Society of Friends and Free Churches), Baha'i, and Islam.
- Group 3 – Teacher Associations
- Group 4 – Coventry City Council

Additional members including people with particular expertise in areas of religious education or who represent perspectives not included in the statutory groups are co-opted by SACRE. There were no co-opted members in 2016/17.

Membership details are shown in Appendix A.

Determinations

In September 2016 Coventry SACRE granted a determination to Holbrook Primary School.

Frederick Bird Primary School has a current determination dating from April 2015.

There were no further applications from schools seeking a complete or partial exemption from acts of collective worship that are wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character.

Complaints

SACRE received no formal complaints concerning Religious Education or collective worship during the period of this report.

Requests for information under the Freedom of Information Act

The Local Authority received and responded to the following Freedom of Information Request during 2016/17:

March 2017 – The number and names of schools who requested an exemption from the requirement to provide an act of collective worship that is 'wholly or mainly of a Christian character' in 2015/16 and 2017 to date.

Review of the Year 2016/17

Coventry and Warwickshire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education 2017 – 2022

The main focus of 2016/17 was reviewing the Local Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education. It was agreed that this should be a joint syllabus with Warwickshire SACRE, to benefit from the expertise available across the two areas. Consultation took place with teacher writing groups across Coventry and Warwickshire throughout the year.

A joint meeting of Coventry and Warwickshire SACREs was held in March. This was attended by Fiona Moss and Mike McMaster from RE Today. At this meeting the new Staffordshire Locally Agreed Syllabus was shared, and it was explained that this syllabus could be available for use in Coventry and Warwickshire schools. Fiona and Mike also presented the RE Today model syllabus.

It was decided by both SACREs to purchase the model syllabus from RE Today, and to commission further units on Buddhism, Hinduism and Sikhism. In addition, SACRE members and the teacher writing groups added units on Buddhism, Hinduism and Peace and Reconciliation – with reference to Coventry Cathedral.

The Coventry Agreed Syllabus Conference was held in June, and adoption of the Coventry and Warwickshire Agreed Syllabus for RE 2017 – 2022 was formally agreed by all four groups.

Three launch events for the Locally Agreed Syllabus were held with RE Today. These took place during July and were held in Coventry, Bedworth and Stratford-upon-Avon. These events were well attended by both maintained and academy schools across Coventry and Warwickshire, and the feedback received from teachers was very positive.

Cabinet approval for the Locally Agreed Syllabus was formally gained from Coventry City Council in August.

Coventry Muslim Forum

Ghulam Vohra attended the January SACRE meeting to share a presentation on the 'Safeguarding in Madrasahs' project being led by the Coventry Muslim Forum. Ghulam also attended Primary, Secondary and Special Headteacher meetings to request school support and involvement with the project.

Call for Evidence: Commission on Religious Education (CoRE)

Coventry SACRE sent a consultation response to the Call for Evidence: Commission on Religious Education in January. Individual SACRE members were also encouraged to respond to the consultation, which included questions on the main aims and purposes of RE, what should be included in the scope and content of RE, suggested changes to the legal framework for RE, and any current obstacles to high quality learning and teaching.

NASACRE AGM – Preparing for life in Britain today: the contribution of RE

At the June SACRE meeting Lizzie McWhirter provided feedback on the NASACRE AGM – Preparing for life in Britain today: the contribution of RE. The keynote address was given by Dr Joyce Miller on 'Where RE is today: the work of the REC Commission (CoRE) and its implications for SACREs'. Prof. Aaqil Ahmed also spoke on the importance of religion and belief in today's world and schools.

Joint working – Coventry and Warwickshire SACREs

A conversation started this year about the possibility of merging Coventry and Warwickshire SACREs into one body. It was decided to work jointly on areas where this would be beneficial (such as a joint Agreed Syllabus) while further work is carried out on the potential impacts of merging.

Ofsted Inspection Reports 2016/17

A total of 24 schools in Coventry were subject to an Ofsted inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. This also included schools subject to short inspections.

The following are quotes taken from the Ofsted reports of schools inspected during 2016/17.

Primary schools (17 inspections)

Teaching and learning/curriculum

- Through religious education lessons and assemblies, school leaders ensure that pupils learn to understand and appreciate different cultures and traditions.
- There are good opportunities for pupils to learn about other faiths, customs and traditions through religious education, the arts, music, themed topics, projects and educational visits.
- They have a good understanding of a wide range of cultures and religions. For example, a group of Year 5 pupils talked to me about creation stories and the similarities and differences that there are between some major religions.

Visits to places of worship

- You ensure that the curriculum includes opportunities for pupils to learn about a range of different cultures and religions, for example, through visits to a gurdwara and a synagogue. Pupils enjoy these trips and say that the visits help them to learn about the lives of other people.
- Pupils learn about other religions and cultures through visits to local religious centres and invitations from faith groups, which reflect the multicultural community that the school serves.

SMSC

- Pupils have a growing understanding of cultural diversity and different world religions.
- The enrichment activities, assemblies, the teaching of religious education and the work of the school council are very effective in providing pupils with knowledge and experiences that prepare them for becoming responsible adults who can contribute positively to society.

Secondary schools (5 inspections)

SMSC

- Pupils have regular, structured and often profound opportunities to explore their faith and beliefs and those of others. Leaders provide spirituality days and thoughts of the week. Pupils explore the relationship between faith and their role as exemplary citizens.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very effective. As a result, pupils have a clear understanding of what is right and wrong and show respect and tolerance for the beliefs of others.

All-through (1 inspection)

Teaching and learning/curriculum

- Religious education covers a wide range of faiths and pupils have numerous opportunities to consider and discuss the importance of fairness, democracy and respect for themselves and others.

Special schools (1 inspection)

Areas for improvement

- Work on different faiths and other cultures is not covered in the curriculum well enough to extend pupils' understanding and knowledge of the world beyond their immediate experience.

Religious Studies Examination Results 2016

GCSE full and short course

- In 2016, 1792 Coventry year 11 students were entered for Religious Studies qualifications, this is approximately 63% of the year 11 cohort. There were 1786 entries for the full GCSE and 6 for the short course GCSE.
- 16 of the 22 Coventry schools offered the full GCSE course. However of the remaining 6 schools, 3 did not have a year 11 cohort in 2016.
- Some schools (Barr's Hill, Bishop Ullathorne, Blue Coat, Cardinal Newman, Cardinal Wiseman, Grace and Lyng Hall) enter the vast majority of their students for Religious Studies. In other schools the proportion entered for GCSE ranges from zero upwards.
- The numbers taking short course Religious Studies GCSE are very low, which reflects the national situation. This decline in entries over the past few years is due to DfE performance tables no longer including short course GCSEs.
- The proportion of students attaining a C grade or above in their GCSE is 69.7% which is below the national figure of 71.7%.
- Schools with high numbers entered where students performed particularly well include Blue Coat and Cardinal Wiseman.
- Schools where relatively fewer students are entered where attainment was high include Sidney Stringer and Tile Hill Wood.

	Full GCSE Coventry	Full GCSE National
Number of entries	1786	268,435
A* - G passes	97.4%	97.8%
A* - C passes	69.7%	71.7%

Post-16

- At post-16 there were 233 year 12 students entered for AS Religious Studies and 133 for A level. 13 Coventry schools enter students for these qualifications.
- At AS level 94% attained A - G grades including 41.6% at grades A-B. The national figures were 92.7% and 45.1% respectively.
- At A level 99.2% attained A* - E grades, including 43.6% at A* - B and 12% at A* - A. The national figures are 98.6%, 54.7% and 24.4%.

Priorities for 2017/18

Priorities for SACRE in 2017/18 are as follows:

- Membership review - filling current vacancies and ensuring representation across all relevant groups and faith communities
- Reviewing and updating the SACRE constitution
- Using the SACRE toolkit to identify current strengths and next steps
- Continuing to provide support to schools using the Coventry and Warwickshire Local Agreed Syllabus 2017 – 2022
- Supplementing the syllabus with units containing a local flavour, such as Peace and Reconciliation
- Continuing conversations about joint working with Warwickshire and potential impacts of merging the two SACREs

Glossary of Acronyms

AGM	Annual General Meeting
AREIAC	Association of RE Inspectors, Advisers and Consultants
ASC	Agreed Syllabus Conference
C of E	Church of England
CCC	Coventry City Council
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
DfE	Department for Education
EBacc	English Baccalaureate
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
INSET	In-Service Training Day
KS	Key Stage
LA	Local Authority
LOtC	Learning Outside the Classroom
NASACRE	National Association of Standing Advisory Councils for Religious Education
NATRE	National Association of Teachers of Religious Education
NQT	Newly Qualified Teacher
Ofsted	Office for Standards in Education
PEBBLE	Public Body Liaison Committee for British Paganism
RE	Religious Education
REC	Religious Education Council
RS	Religious Studies
SACRE	Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education
SIAMS	Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools
SMSCD	Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development

Appendix A

SACRE Membership

Group 1 Church of England – 5 members

Emma Griffiths
Chris Mellers (Co-Chair)
Lizzie McWhirter
Vacancy
Vacancy

Group 2 Other Denominations – 12-14 members

Ajahn Manapo (Buddhist)
Jonathan Passman (Jewish)
Helen Maoudis (Greek Orthodox)
Bill Rattigan (Baha'i)
Claire Rutter (Roman Catholic)
Pauline Lockett (Free Church)
Eleanor Nesbitt (The Society of Friends)
David Bone (Muslim)
Amra Bone (Muslim)
Vacancy
Vacancy
Vacancy

Group 3 Associations representing teachers – 5 members

Georgia Allen (NASUWT)
Pam McKiernan (NUT)
Vacancy
Vacancy
Vacancy

Group 4 Local Authority – 5 members

Reverend Terry Colling
Cllr Joe Clifford
Manjit Kaur (Co-Chair)
Gyll Brown (Vice-Chair)
Vacancy

Others in attendance

Michelle Carrier
Anne Brennan (LA)
Lucy Lambert (Clerk)

Appendix B

The Servicing of SACRE 2016/17

SACRE was co-chaired by Manjit Kaur and Chris Mellers in 2016/17.

SACRE was served by the following officers of Coventry City Council:

- Anne Brennan – Head of Service 11-19 (25) Education Entitlement
- Lucy Lambert – Education Support and Improvement Service Co-ordinator

The annual cost of maintaining SACRE/ASC varies, the duties and timing of expenditure for 2016/17 is below:

- National Association of Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education (NASACRE) membership (annual cost)
- Clerking/support services to SACRE/ASC meetings (as needed, ongoing)
- Purchase of a five year license per school from RE Today (syllabus reviewed every five years)
- Launching the new Agreed Syllabus into schools (following syllabus review)
- Producing and printing additional units (as needed, ongoing)

Appendix C

Cabinet Report

A separate report is submitted in the private part of the agenda in respect of this item due to commercial sensitivity and copyright required to be kept private in accordance with Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972. An external organisation owns the commercial rights to the Coventry and Warwickshire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education 2017-2022 and the five year license provides permission for the syllabus and additional materials to be used in schools in Coventry and Warwickshire.

Name of Cabinet Member:

Cabinet Member for Education and Skills, Councillor K Maton

Director Approving Submission of the report:

Deputy Chief Executive (People)

Ward(s) affected:

All

Title:

Coventry and Warwickshire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education 2017-2022

Is this a key decision?

Yes as it affects all schools in the City.

Executive Summary:

Local Authorities have a statutory duty to set up and maintain a 'Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education' (SACRE) whose duties include giving advice to the LA on the Religious Education (RE) given under the Agreed Syllabus, and to monitor the provision and quality of Religious Education provided by the Agreed RE syllabus in the Local Authority's Community Schools (LA maintained schools that do not have a religious character). The LA also has a statutory duty to set up and appoint members to an occasional body that is required to review the locally Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education every five years known as the Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC). All Community, foundation and voluntary aided or voluntary controlled schools in Coventry without a religious character must teach RE according to the locally agreed syllabus adopted by the LA. Academies and schools which do have a religious character may use the locally agreed syllabus.

Recommendations:

Cabinet is asked to approve the Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education for use in Coventry schools over the next five years (2017-2022).

List of Appendices included:

Coventry and Warwickshire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education 2017-2022

Other useful background papers:

None

Has it been or will it be considered by Scrutiny?

No

Has it been or will it be considered by any other Council Committee, Advisory Panel or other body?

Yes:

The ASC on the 12 June 2017 unanimously agreed to recommend the final draft of the new Syllabus to Cabinet. Coventry SACRE agreed the new syllabus on 12 June 2017.

Warwickshire County Council's Cabinet has approved the Agreed Syllabus for use in Warwickshire schools from September 2017.

Will this report go to Council?

No

Report title:

Coventry Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education 2017-2022

1. Context (or background)

- 1.1 Coventry has a SACRE which meets once per term.
- 1.2 Coventry SACRE is a statutory body made up of four groups of members representing:
 - Christian denominations and other religions, and religious denominations that appropriately reflect the principal religious traditions of the area. Currently, SACRE has representatives from the religious backgrounds of Baha'i, Buddhism, Christianity (Roman Catholic, Orthodox and Non-Conformist), Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism;
 - the Church of England (Christianity);
 - Teachers' Associations;
 - Coventry City Council.
- 1.3 In addition members are co-opted to the group to include people with particular expertise in the area of Religious Education or to represent other groups.
- 1.4 The Local Authority has a duty to set up and appoint members to an occasional body known as the Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC). The ASC is responsible for reviewing the locally adopted Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education every five years.
- 1.5 The Agreed Syllabus Conference has the same membership as Coventry SACRE and is convened at SACRE meetings.

2. Options considered and recommended proposal

- 2.1 Coventry's ASC began the process of reviewing the current syllabus in academic year 2014-2015. This led to some progress being made, but was insufficient to be in a position to have a full syllabus ready to launch for first teaching in September 2017.
- 2.2 After considering a number of different options, Coventry's SACRE decided to work jointly with Warwickshire's SACRE to develop the Agreed Syllabus. By working together both SACREs have benefitted, for example: both have shared goals and values and by working together they have gained from a wider skills base and expertise. The teacher groups have complimented each other well and have ensured all key stages are represented and joint working echoes changes in school organisation, e.g. multi academy trusts working across multiple authority areas.
- 2.3 There are a number of members who sit on both Coventry and Warwickshire SACREs, this includes the Chair, Church of England and Buddhist representatives.

- 2.4 At a joint Coventry and Warwickshire SACRE meeting on 8th March 2017, the Coventry and Warwickshire ASCs were convened to jointly consider four options:
- Commissioning a fully bespoke syllabus
 - Re-issue the existing syllabus
 - Purchasing a model Agreed Syllabus from RE Today
 - Adopting Staffordshire's Agreed Syllabus
- 2.5 A vote was taken and the decision made by the two ASCs to recommend that the model Agreed Syllabus by RE Today should be purchased for use in Coventry and Warwickshire.
- 2.6 RE Today are a registered charity who work nationally and internationally to support Religious Education in schools. They have a wealth of experience supporting SACREs in their syllabus development and other RE requirements.
- 2.7 As RE Today have written the model Agreed Syllabus they own the commercial rights to it. The five year license provides permission for the syllabus and additional materials to be used in schools in Coventry.
- 2.8 Additional units have been produced by separate writing groups made up of teachers from primary, secondary and special schools and SACRE members. These units will accompany the model syllabus to ensure it reflects the local context of both Coventry and Warwickshire schools.
- 2.9 Members will see that the Agreed Syllabus consists of statutory information for schools, programmes of study for each key stage, it also contains a wealth of additional resources to support the teaching of RE in schools.
- 2.10 All schools (academies and LA maintained schools without a religious character) will receive a paper based copy of the syllabus and an electronic version for future use.

3. Results of consultation undertaken

- 3.1 This syllabus has been prepared in consultation with the RE Today team, members of both Coventry and Warwickshire SACREs and practising teachers in Coventry and Warwickshire.

4. Timetable for implementing this decision

- 4.1 Although this syllabus has been introduced for use from September 2017, the 2017-18 academic year will be used as an implementation year and Coventry and Warwickshire SACREs would expect to see it fully embedded and in use across schools from September 2018.

5. Comments from Director of Finance and Corporate Services

- 5.1 Financial implications

The Local Authority has a duty to set up and maintain SACRE/ASC. From 2017/18 this is funded from centrally retained dedicated schools grant with agreement from the Schools Forum. The annual cost of maintaining SACRE/ASC varies, and the Local Authority will manage this from within centrally held dedicated schools grant. The duties and timing of expenditure is below:

- National Association of Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education (NASACRE) membership – annual cost
- Purchasing a five year license per school from RE Today – cost incurred every 5 years
- Producing and printing additional units – as and when required
- Launching the new Agreed Syllabus into schools – cost incurred every 5 years
- Clerking/support services to SACRE/ASC meetings – annual cost

5.2 Legal implications

The Local Authority has a duty under s390 of the Education Act 1996 to set up and appoint representatives to a permanent body known as the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE). Additionally the Local Authority has a duty to set up and appoint members to an occasional body known as the Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC). The ASC is responsible for reviewing the locally adopted Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education every five years. The ASC must produce and unanimously recommend for adoption by the LA, an agreed syllabus for RE which is educationally sound and meets the statutory requirements.

6. Other implications

None

6.1 How will this contribute to achievement of the Council's key objectives / corporate priorities (corporate plan/scorecard) / organisational blueprint / Local Area Agreement (or Coventry Sustainable Community Strategy)?

Good Religious Education makes a positive contribution to the learning of pupils. This agreed syllabus will enable pupils through RE to develop their knowledge and skills to prepare them for life in a modern, diverse Britain and in a plural world. It is structured so that pupils are challenged to think rigorously and creatively, to make informed judgements and to understand that it is acceptable to have doubts and to disagree in a reasoned and sensitive way. In the process they can examine and reflect upon a range of questions about spirituality and identity, morality, values and commitments. Living in and growing up in the world of the 21st century will challenge all pupils. RE is important to help pupils to become literate and articulate about religions and beliefs, and to be thoughtful members of society. In learning from religion they are able to make informed choices about how they want to live their lives whilst

also understanding more about the faith of other people they meet. RE is therefore relevant to every pupil and every citizen of Coventry.

6.2 How is risk being managed?

Failure to have and/or adopt an Agreed Syllabus would lead to a breach of the Local Authority's statutory duties in relation to Religious Education in schools.

6.3 What is the impact on the organisation?

None

6.4 Equalities / EIA

An Equalities Analysis is in the process of being completed and will be signed off before implementation.

6.5 Implications for (or impact on) the environment

None

6.6 Implications for partner organisations?

Coventry and Warwickshire SACREs decided to work together and agree on a syllabus that promotes good, effective and thought provoking RE across both city and county; a syllabus that both builds bridges and engages with the aim of peace and reconciliation as pupils explore matters of faith, spirituality, religious community and moral issues.

All Community, foundation and voluntary aided or voluntary controlled schools in Coventry without a religious character must teach RE according to the locally agreed syllabus adopted by the LA. Academies and schools which do have a religious character may use the locally agreed syllabus.

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Appendix

The Appendix is private due to commercial sensitivities and is attached to the corresponding private report.

As RE Today have written the model Agreed Syllabus they own the commercial rights to it. The five year license provides permission for the syllabus and additional materials to be used in schools in Coventry.