

DERBYSHIRE SACRE 13th March 2017

'DERBYSHIRE AGREED SYLLABUS: A HUMANIST SUPPLEMENT'

Background to the Humanist Supplement

The Humanist Supplement has been written by Robin Grinter, Humanist Representative to the Manchester SACRE, and North West Regional Co-ordinator for Humanist school speakers. The supplement has been written to accompany the Agreed Syllabus, 'Religious Literacy for All', adopted from 2016 by a consortium of five SACREs in Greater Manchester (Manchester, Salford, Stockport, Tameside and Trafford).

The Humanist Supplement has been written in close consultation with Maurice Smith, the retired RE adviser for Tameside. Lat Blaylock, the editor of 'RE Today', and Luke Donnellan, Head of Education at the British Humanist Association, have made invaluable contributions as Assistant Editors.

Overview of the Humanist Supplement

Its purpose is to provide teachers with information and guidance to enable them to include the study of 'World Views' or 'Beliefs', and to meet the needs of young people without religious belief by explaining and exploring the values of the Humanist belief system.

SACRE syllabuses are not detailed enough to provide the necessary information for teaching about Humanist perspective, nor suggestions for appropriate teaching and learning activities. This Supplement provides the necessary information and suggestions. The Supplement follows the three strands 'Believing', 'Expressing' and 'Living'.

In each Support Unit there is a general statement of the Humanist answer to the Key Question, then a detailed response is provided. Both the statement and the responses contain all the relevant Humanist information needed for each Unit of Study.

Finally, a number of detailed teaching and learning suggestions are provided for each Unit of Study to explore the Humanist perspective, and these are all written at the appropriate age level. They include detailed references to material developed by the British Humanist Association in its invaluable resource for teachers 'Understanding Humanism'.

The strategy adopted is permeation by discussion of the Humanist and non-religious perspective wherever relevant, and includes an additional half Unit 'What does it mean to be a Humanist in Britain today'.

The introduction for teachers stresses that it is really important that permeation is consistent if they are going to give religious and non-religious beliefs equal respect. Only in this way can young people build up a full understanding of the Humanist secular belief system which is so much more than just not being religious. It is about living a good life for the benefit of other human beings, even though without help from God, with values and beliefs that will be shared by most RE teachers, and many children and young people.

Adapting the Humanist Supplement for the Derbyshire Agreed Syllabus

The Humanist Supplement has been approved in principle by Manchester SACRE. The final version will be presented to their March SACRE meeting.

The attached mapping document summarises how the 27 units of the Humanist Supplement map to the Key Questions in the Derbyshire Agreed Syllabus. The attached sample unit provides an example of content. I do not propose to alter the content of the Supplement as this has been agreed by the British Humanist Association, and RE Today, however I will adapt the numbering and references to the Key Questions and suggested content in the Derbyshire Agreed syllabus.

The final Derbyshire Humanist Supplement will be ready for the SACRE meeting in July.

Teaching about Humanism in RE

The inclusion of non-religious beliefs such as Humanism is crucial to fulfilling the aims and purpose of RE; learning about religion and belief, and learning from religion and belief, for all children.

It is extremely important for children with no religion to feel included in RE teaching by having their views discussed and respected, and so develop their sense of identity and belonging. By exploring Humanist answers to challenging questions about meaning, right and wrong and what it means to be human, non-religious children will have an opportunity for personal reflection and moral development.

It is equally important for children of all religions and none to develop knowledge and understanding about non-religious world views, in order to develop respect for and sensitivity to others, and to flourish individually within their communities and as citizens in a pluralistic society.

I therefore hope that the Supplement can be adopted by the SACRE as a support for teachers developed in association with RE Today and the BHA.

Ellen Johnson, March 2017