

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

HUMANIST SUPPORT DOCUMENT FOR 'RELIGIOUS LITERACY FOR ALL'

STRAND C: LIVING

Lower KEY STAGE 2 (Connecting)

KEY QUESTION L2.9: WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM RELIGIONS ABOUT DECIDING WHAT IS RIGHT AND WHAT IS WRONG?

Humanism is above all a secular morality: a set of values that helps us live in a humane way with sensitivity to the needs of others in a community. It is a morality originating from life in this world, a meaningful alternative to any laid down from a supernatural source. This makes it relevant to those without religious faith, who need to be assured that they can lead a good life (bullet point 3) without guidance and support from God. Understanding that you can be good without God will earn respect from those who have religious faith.

Bullet point 1 makes specific reference to 'the golden rule for Humanists' – treat others as you would like them to treat you, and not in ways that neither you nor they would like. This rule is included in all the major world faiths and belief systems. For Humanists the Golden Rule is the only one that really matters: if it is followed it prevents conflict and ensures good relations and happiness, because other people's happiness is as important as our own, and most people appreciate being treated well. More important from a secular viewpoint, the Golden Rule is a natural part of living together in a successful community: not following it leads to aggression and hostility that damages and eventually destroys a community. Here is a natural explanation for understanding right and wrong as thinking, caring beings.

Bullet point 4 The Golden Rule is therefore a basic guideline for good behaviour and helps answer the question in this bullet point about where humanists look for guidance. There are two other sources of guidance in addition to parental guidance. The first is our ability to work out for ourselves the consequences of our actions, often through observing the consequences of the behaviour of others, good and bad – and human beings can be very selfish and bad. The second is our capacity to feel empathy with others, which means that we try not to cause harm to others, feel compassion when we see people unhappy and miserable, and want to help them. The understanding of right and wrong that following these sources of guidance creates is often called our conscience, a sense of right and wrong that we share with most other people. All these are things that young children can understand.

So Humanists have to look into themselves for guidance, but they also draw on assistance from other Humanists, and the inspiration of the writings of people like Epicurus, David Hume, Thomas Paine, Mary Wollstonecraft, Jeremy Bentham, John

Stuart Mill and Bertrand Russell. Thinkers like these are the sources of wisdom who have established key principles like living a life in harmony with the natural world, working to secure the rights of all men and women, aiming to produce as much happiness as possible by thinking through all possible consequences of action, avoiding doing harm and seeking to improve our world. These principles are universal, but Humanists think they can be applied to changing circumstances perhaps rather better than more detailed commandments.

Bullet point 5 suggests that decisions in difficult situations may be easier for religious people to make than others. Humanists would agree there are difficult decisions to be made, because the balance of outcomes is often very difficult to judge, and there may be unintended consequences. But careful thought in changing circumstances often means that we need to change our opinions and ways of acting. It is not easy for religious believers to do this because of doctrines, so Humanists think that it is they who are in a better position to make difficult decisions!

Bullet point 7 lists all the best qualities in life for discussion: Humanists believe in them all and try to put into effect in their lives, as do most human beings. It is supremely important that RE teaching does not imply that these depend on religious faith. If it does, often by omission of alternative viewpoints, this may explain why many young people reject or grow out of religious faith.

Non-religious and Humanist teaching suggestions and learning activities

- the British Humanist Association's excellent resource for teachers 'Understanding Humanism' has several relevant video clips with worksheets in its Teaching Toolkit 3:

How do Humanists decide what is right and wrong?	several Humanists give the reasons listed in Paragraph 3 above.
The importance of human nature	Philip Pullman suggests that a sense of right and wrong is part of our nature.
What do we mean by behaving well?	Philip Pullman discusses why children in his stories decide to behave well, for example because of the results of being good.
Humanists and the Golden Rule	Philip Pullman introduces and discusses the importance of the Golden Rule.
What is the Golden Rule?	This video clip gives examples of the Golden Rule found in eight faiths and

	belief systems.
What makes something right or wrong?	A short animated series of sketches in which Stephen Fry gives the Humanist view.

- discussion of issues of right and wrong works best through situations as suggested in bullet point 5, especially where there are no clear-cut answers. Some good actions benefit most people but hurt others; some break other good rules; actions against some bad behaviour may have bad results; good actions may hurt you. Some useful scenarios are:
 - you have to choose between playing a team game in an important match where you are a key player, or visiting a close friend in hospital just before they have a serious operation. Which do you do?
 - a friend asks you what you think of something they are really proud about, but you think it is rubbish. Do you tell them your true feelings or tell a 'white lie'?
 - you see a neighbour who is really poor with a large family, a person you don't really like, trying to get some food items for her children through a super market checkout without paying. Do you tell a store detective or say nothing?
 - do you join in when some friends of yours say unkind things to a less popular classmate, or stick up for him or her, or say nothing in case you become unpopular too?

How did the group decide? Did the Golden Rule help here? Did religious guidance help? Is one better than the other?

- your children might be able to discuss with you whether they need to have hope of life in Heaven or fear of life in Hell to make them behave well.
- at least one inspirational non-religious person should be added to those in bullet point 6. Nelson Mandela would be an excellent choice: although brought up in a religious school (there were no others available) he made hardly any references to divine guidance or support in his life-long struggle to end the inhumanities of apartheid in his country and end the suffering of his people.

Derbyshire Agreed Syllabus Key Questions (49 Questions)

Humanist Supplement (in bold) (27 Units)

EYFS (R)

Believing

R1. Special people: Which people are special and why? **KEY QUESTION F2: WHICH PEOPLE ARE SPECIAL AND WHY?**

R2. Special stories: What stories are special and why? **KEY QUESTION F1: WHICH STORIES ARE SPECIAL AND WHY?**

Expressing

R3. Special places: What places are special and why? **KEY QUESTION F3: WHAT PLACES ARE SPECIAL AND WHY?**

R4. Special times: What times are special and why? **KEY QUESTION F4: WHAT TIMES ARE SPECIAL AND WHY?**

Living

R5. Being special: Where do we belong? **KEY QUESTION F3: BEING SPECIAL: WHERE DO WE BELONG?**

R6. Special World: What is special about our world and why? **KEY QUESTION F6: WHAT IS SPECIAL ABOUT OUR WORLD?**

KS1 (5-7)

Believing

Believing

1.1 Who is a Christian / a Muslim / Jewish and what do they believe?

1.2 What can we learn from creation stories?

Leaders and teachers

1.3 Who is an inspiring person and why?

Story

1.4. What do stories of Jesus tell Christians about how to live?

Expressing

Symbols

1.5. In what ways is a church / mosque / synagogue important to believers?

Celebrations

1.6. How and why do we celebrate special times? **KEY QUESTION 1.6 HOW AND WHY DO WE CELEBRATE SPECIAL AND SACRED TIMES?**

Living

Myself

1.7. How do we show we care for others? **KEY QUESTION 1.8: HOW SHOULD WE CARE FOR OTHERS AND THE WORLD, AND WHY DOES IT MATTER?**

Belonging

1.8 What does it mean to belong?

KS2 (7-11)

Believing

Beliefs and questions

2.1 What do different people believe about God? **KEY QUESTION L2.1: WHAT DO DIFFERENT PEOPLE BELIEVE ABOUT GOD? KEY QUESTION U2.1: WHY DO SOME PEOPLE BELIEVE GOD EXISTS?**

2.2 Why is Easter so important for Christians?

2.3 What do religions say to us when life gets hard? **KEY QUESTION U2.3: WHAT DO RELIGIONS SAY TO US WHEN LIFE GETS HARD?**

Inspirational people

2.4. What makes a leader worth following?

2.5 How and why do Christians follow Jesus? **KEY QUESTION L2.3: WHY IS JESUS INSPIRING TO SOME PEOPLE?**

Teachings and authority

2.6 Why is the Bible so important for Christians today? Why is the Guru Granth Sahib/Qur'an so important for Sikhs/Muslims?

Expressing

Symbols and religious expression

2.7 How do people express their faith through the arts? **KEY QUESTION U2.5: IS IT BETTER TO EXPRESS YOUR RELIGION IN ARTS AND ARCHITECTURE OR IN CHARITY AND GENEROSITY?**

2.8. What is the purpose and value of a sacred space?

2.9 Why is prayer important for religious believers?

Worship, pilgrimage and special places

2.10 What are the deeper meanings of festivals? **KEY QUESTION L2.5 WHY ARE FESTIVALS IMPORTANT TO RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES?**

2.11 Why is pilgrimage important to some religious believers?

Journey of life and death

2.12 How and why do believers show their commitments during the journey of life? **KEY QUESTION L2.6: WHY DO SOME PEOPLE THINK THAT LIFE IS A JOURNEY, AND WHAT SIGNIFICANT EXPERIENCES MARK THIS?**

Living

Religion and the individual

2.13 What can we learn from religions about deciding what is right and wrong? **KEY QUESTION L2.9: WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM RELIGIONS ABOUT DECIDING WHAT IS RIGHT AND WHAT IS WRONG? KEY QUESTION U2.7: WHAT MATTERS MOST TO CHRISTIANS AND HUMANISTS?**

Religion, family and community

2.14 What can be learned from the Muslim way of life?

2.15 How can we make our village/town/county a more respectful place?

Beliefs in action in the world

2.16 Can religions help to build a fair world? **KEY QUESTION U2.6: WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A (HUMANIST) IN BRITAIN TODAY?**

2.17 What do religions teach about the natural world and why should we care about it? **KEY QUESTION U2.8: WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES IT MAKE TO BELIEVE IN AHIMSA (HARMLESSNESS)?**

KS3 (11-14)

Believing

Beliefs and concepts

3.1 How can people decide if God is real, and what God is like? **KEY QUESTION 3.1: DO WE NEED TO PROVE GOD'S EXISTENCE?**

3.2 How can we answer the big questions of life?

3.2a Is death the end? Does it matter? **KEY QUESTION 3.4: IS DEATH THE END? DOES IT MATTER?**

3.2b Why is there suffering? Are there any good solutions? **KEY QUESTION 3.5: WHY IS THERE SUFFERING? ARE THERE ANY GOOD SOLUTIONS?**

3.3 If God came to earth, what difference would it make?

3.4 What's the point? Do religions help make sense of life?

3.5 What does the Holocaust teach us about a Jewish way of life and about human nature?

Authority

3.6 Do the teachings of Jesus / Muhammad / the Buddha stand the test of time? **KEY QUESTION 3.3: WHAT IS SO RADICAL ABOUT JESUS?**

Religion and science

3.7 Where is truth about religion to be found?

3.8 Where did the universe come from?

Expressing

Expressions of spirituality

3.9 What, how and why do people worship?

3.10 How do humans express their spirituality through words, art, music and activism? **KEY QUESTION 3.7: HOW CAN PEOPLE EXPRESS THE SPIRITUAL THROUGH THE ARTS?**

Living

Ethics and relationships

3.11 How do we decide what is right and wrong? **KEY QUESTION 3.10: DOES RELIGION HELP PEOPLE TO BE GOOD?**

Rights and responsibilities

3.12 Do beliefs about justice, love and equality make any difference to the actions of religious and non-religious people today? **KEY QUESTION 3.9 SHOULD HAPPINESS BE THE PURPOSE OF LIFE?**

Global issues

3.13 Religion: Does it do any good?

3.14 Religion: source of peace or cause of conflict? **KEY QUESTION 3.12: IS RELIGION A POWER FOR PEACE OR A CAUSE OF CONFLICT IN THE WORLD TODAY?**

Interfaith dialogue

3.15 What does it mean to be a Christian/ Muslim / Sikh / Hindu /Buddhist /atheist in Britain today? **KEY QUESTION U2.6: WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A (HUMANIST) IN BRITAIN TODAY?**

3.16 How can we make our town/local area/county/nation a more respectful place?

