

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education
17th November 2021
Report of the Deputy Chief Executive and Director for Families and
Communities
Procedures for Agreed Syllabus review

1 Purpose of Report

1.1 To remind members of the review process for the Staffordshire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education to SACRE Members.

2 Summary

2.1 Members of SACRE are reminded of the following-

2.2 The Education Act 1996 requires the Local Authority to institute a review of its locally agreed syllabus every five years after the completion of its last review.

The legal requirements regarding RE and school worship can be found in the Education Reform Act 1988 (Sections 6-13). They are reaffirmed in the Education Act 1996 (Sections 375-389) and the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 (Sections 69-71)

2.3 The Staffordshire Agreed Syllabus was last reviewed and issued to school in 2016. A review therefore falls due in 2021, ready for implementation in September 2022.

3 Recommendation

3.1 That members of SACRE receive the information

4 Background

4.1 The Staffordshire Agreed Syllabus was last reviewed and issued to schools in 2016. A review therefore is now underway in 2021.

5 Equal Opportunities

5.1 This report has been prepared in accordance with the County Council's policies on equal opportunities.

6 Financial implications

6.1 Financial implications may be raised by individual items. These have been dealt with elsewhere or will be raised at future meetings of SACRE.

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Agenda item 6

Procedures for Agreed Syllabus (AS) review 2021- reminder

Staffordshire SACRE Agreed Syllabus review information due to be reviewed 2021-2022.

Requirements:

SACRE must consider reviewing its RE Agreed Syllabus after five years. An Agreed Syllabus Conference is set up to conduct the review.

Background:

The provision of a clear, well-structured, up-to-date and professional agreed syllabus is probably the single most important function of SACRE. Combined with on-going implementation training and resources, a new syllabus offers the possibility of raising achievement in RE in all local schools.

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)

In 2021 and going forward... it is essential to consider how this relates to

- the revised inspection requirements
- to developments in assessment and in teaching and learning
- revised GCSEs
- the National Report from the Commission on RE
- the 'British Values' agenda
- all related educational change.
- Ofsted emphasis on curriculum planning-their intent, implementation and the impact.

An effective AS needs to be able to support schools in all three of these aspects.. It needs to have a good rationale for its structure; it needs to be operable in diverse school settings; it needs to show schools how they can see what impact the syllabus is having on pupil achievement.

In addition it is essential that the AS

- be clear about expected knowledge and understanding about religion(s) and belief(s)
- support and empower teachers to plan effectively
- offer coherent progression across the ages and key stages
- support clear and focused assessment

Religious education is not a national curriculum subject, but it must be taught in all state funded schools as enshrined in the 1988 Education Reform Act.

The curriculum for religious education is to be determined locally by Agreed Syllabus Conferences (ASCs) (Bastide, 2007), formed under Standing Advisory Councils for Religious Education (SACREs).

The focus is that: 'Every agreed syllabus shall reflect the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian whilst taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain.' (Great Britain. Education Act, 1996, section 375)

Local authorities are required to establish a SACRE which, as its chief aim, is to advise the said authority upon matters pertaining to religious education and collective worship.

The Education Reform Act states the composition of SACRE members, who may also comprise Agreed Syllabus Conferences, are drawn from: Christian and other faith communities, the Church of England, teachers' groups and democratically elected councillors.

In addition to this role, it can require a local authority to review its agreed syllabus which then necessitates a standing conference to review it. It is called an agreed syllabus because it must be agreed by those with an interest in the teaching of religious education.

This process continues in this November 2021 meeting.

SCC and Entrust are aware of the need to review the syllabus and have agreed for this to be carried out in house by the current advisor as agreed by SACRE

There is separate funding provided by SCC.