

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education
10th July 2013

Report of the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of People

Agreed Syllabus Review 2014

1 Purpose of Report

1.1 To set in motion the process to review the Staffordshire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education

2 Summary

2.1 The Education Act 1993 requires the Local Authority to institute a review of its locally agreed syllabus every five years after the completion of its last review.

2.2 The Staffordshire Agreed Syllabus was last reviewed and issued to school in 2009. A review therefore falls due in 2014.

2.3 It is for the Local Authority to convene an agreed syllabus conference for the purpose of reviewing a syllabus. However the SACRE can, in writing, request that the LA reconsider its agreed syllabus.

3 Recommendation

3.1 That members of SACRE convene an agreed syllabus conference to consider making a request to the LA that the agreed syllabus be reconsidered.

3.2 That the recommendations of the agreed syllabus conference be conveyed to the Entrust Consultant and LA for amendments if necessary.

4 Background

4.1 The last revision of the Staffordshire Agreed Syllabus was issued to schools in 2009.

4.2 Since the revision a number of major changes have taken place in education which have a direct impact on religious education:

- From September 2013 a new curriculum will be introduced to all schools (Key Stages 1-4), with a clear focus on slimming down the curriculum to allow for more cross curriculum dimensions and inter-disciplinary studies and the removal of levels of attainment. Religious education needs to take account of these changes in order to play a full and active role in the new curriculum.
- In 2012 the REC began a review of the current National Non-statutory Framework for Religious Education. This is the document that SACRE's must take account of and is referred to in all national documentation relating to RE, including examination syllabuses and the SACRE self-evaluation materials produced by Ofsted.

4.3 It is proposed that should any revisions be required the revised Staffordshire agreed syllabus should be in place for September 2014 in order to make best use of the momentum generated by the implementation of the changes in the curriculum.

4.4 SACRE has a number of options available to it. SACRE may choose to make radical changes to the syllabus. SACRE may choose to make small changes to the syllabus. SACRE may choose to make no changes to the syllabus preferring to wait until the REC review of Religious Education is completed in order to be in a position to reflect on this major piece of work.

4.5 In order to proceed officially, it is proposed that at the next meeting the SACRE requests that the LA reconsider its agreed syllabus. This requires a majority vote of the Church of England,

Christian denominations and other religions' and teachers' groups. The vote should be taken by convening an agreed syllabus conference.

4.6 The composition of an agreed syllabus conference is the same as that for SACRE. Details from circular 1/94 are attached to this document.

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 Expenses incurred will be met from the SACRE budget and from further funding and support provided by the School Improvement Division.

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Circular 1/94

Composition of SACRE and conference

A SACRE and a (agreed syllabus) conference are each to comprise four ...groups or committees representing, respectively:

- A Christian denominations or other religions and religious denominations, the number of whose representatives shall, 'so far as consistent with the efficient discharge of the committee's functions, reflect broadly the proportionate strength of that denomination or religion in that area';
- B the Church of England;
- C such associations representing teachers as, in the opinion of the authority, ought to be represented, having regard to the circumstances of the area;
- D the local (education) authority

A SACRE may also include co-opted members, who are not members of any of the ...groups. There is no provision for the agreed syllabus conference to include co-opted members.