

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education

12th November 2014

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 This is the third meeting of the Agreed Syllabus Conference. At the previous meeting members decided to formally begin the Agreed Syllabus review process with the support of Cllr. Adams.

3.2 Members also began the process of sourcing funding for a radical review of the Agreed Syllabus. This included letters and meetings. Entrust will be unable to fund any Agreed Syllabus review. The Chair of SACRE will update on responses from Staffordshire County Council. .

3.3 The Agreed Syllabus Conference may wish to discuss ways forward and a possible rethink of the type of review process available to them at this time.

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 on order to play a full and active role in the new curriculum.
- In 2012 the REC completed 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 was originally 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. In reality, however, the review process is a 12 month process from start to finish.

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. What follows is a proposal for potential radical change.

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.

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6.a update of meeting held 27.10.14

Present: Trudy Pyatt, Michael Prisk, Michael Metcalf, Emma Jardine, Helen Phillips.

Focus: Meeting held to discuss funding arrangements for the Agreed Syllabus Review.

Outcome: at this time funding can only be provided via the SDA. This means that SCC will pay for an amount of days to enable Emma Jardine only to review the syllabus. There is currently no budget to facilitate any external support for the review process. SACRE members are however invited to submit a paper detailing their preferred approach to Agreed Syllabus Review for further consideration.

6.b Agreed Syllabus Review Options

	What is involved	opportunities	risks
bronze	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A set amount of days funded for Emma Jardine to review the syllabus • An update on key information which is no longer in date • New inclusions subject to SACRE approval e.g. reference to the census, a statement on British values • <i>NO new approach to assessment</i> • <i>NO focus groups</i> • <i>NO Planning and resources for use within the classroom</i> 		
silver	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding for both Emma Jardine and an external consultant e.g. RE Today • A comprehensive rewrite of the syllabus • Focus groups held with headteachers, teachers, students in order to account for their views • A new approach to assessment including a guide to assessment without levels • <i>NO Planning and resources for use within the classroom</i> 		
gold	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding for both Emma Jardine and an external consultant e.g. RE Today • A comprehensive rewrite of the syllabus • Focus groups held with 		

	<p>headteachers, teachers, students in order to account for their views</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full programmes of study for each year group/key stage including long and medium term plans • Resources available for teachers to use to support the highest quality RE • A new approach to assessment including a guide to assessment without levels 		
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6.c Review of other Locally Agreed Syllabuses

SACRE members are invited to review a range of Agreed Syllabuses to see what aspects they would like to see included in their new Agreed syllabus.