

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education

8th July 2015

Report of the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of People

Agreed Syllabus Review 2014/15

1 Purpose of Report

1.1 To continue 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 fourth meeting of the Agreed Syllabus Conference. At previous meetings 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.

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:

- September 2014 a new curriculum was introduced to all schools, except for Year 2 and Year 6 and KS3 and 4 (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.

- September 2015 the new curriculum applies to all pupils at KS 1 and KS 2.
- 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 required to 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 had 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.

4.5 These decisions were placed on hold pending further communication from Entrust and SCC regarding costings.

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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Update

Since the November 2014 meeting an agreement in principle to a review of the Agreed syllabus was given the go-ahead by SCC via the commissioning process. SACRE were asked to forward a more detailed breakdown of the costs involved in the different types of review that had previously been outlined. This was sent in December 2014. It was compiled with input from RE Today and was approved by Sharon Kelly prior to sending. A further response from SCC is yet to be received.

Mary Gale and Michael Metcalf have been in contact with Sharon Kelly. The message continues to be that this is in the hands of SCC. Mary Gale emailed SCC to ask for a progress report in early June 2015 and is still waiting for a reply.