

Agenda Item No: 12

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE) - AGREED SYLLABUS FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

To: Cabinet

Date: 15 January 2013

From: Executive Director - Children And Young People's Services and Adult Social Care

Electoral division(s): All

Forward Plan ref: n/a *Key decision:* n/a

Purpose: This report explains the reasons for revising Cambridgeshire's Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education and describes the new syllabus

Recommendation: Cabinet is asked to approve the revised Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education for Cambridgeshire for teaching from September 2013

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1 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Religious Education is unique in the National Curriculum in that it has a locally determined syllabus rather than being nationally approved.
- 1.2 A locally agreed syllabus is a statutory syllabus of Religious Education prepared under Schedule 31 of the Education Act 1996 and adopted by a local authority under that Schedule. Every locally agreed syllabus must reflect that the religious traditions of Great Britain are in the main Christian whilst taking into account the teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain.
- 1.3 Each local authority must have a Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) and must from time to time convene an Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC) to produce an agreed syllabus for religious education.
- 1.4 Once adopted by the Local Authority the agreed syllabus sets out what pupils should be taught and includes the expected standards of pupils' performance at different stages.
- 1.5 SACREs are required to review the locally determined Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education every five years.
- 1.6 There have been significant changes to the direction of Religious Education as a result of Ofsted (Office for Standards in Education) reports in the last three years and local SACREs have been encouraged to consider the changes and adopt the direction and guidance that has been given by NASACRE (National Association of SACREs) in the last two years.

2 THE POSITION IN CAMBRIDGESHIRE

- 2.1 Cambridgeshire's Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education is the legal basis for RE in Cambridgeshire. The present Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education for Cambridgeshire was approved in **2007** and the five-yearly review has resulted in a revised syllabus that now requires local authority approval.
- 2.2 The Standing Advisory Council and the Agreed Syllabus Conference for Cambridgeshire have a common membership. Cambridgeshire's SACRE is chaired by Cllr Tony Orgee.
- 2.3 There have been extensive consultations with teachers and faith communities about the current Agreed Syllabus over the last 18 months. The new agreed syllabus has been produced as a result of local teachers, members of different religions and beliefs and representatives of the local authority working together on the Cambridgeshire SACRE and the Cambridgeshire Agreed Syllabus Conference.
- 2.4 The revised syllabus reflects community involvement and supports community developments and cohesion. It provides opportunities to give schools links

with local bodies which can support their work. Guidance, on-going support and training are important in providing the help and support necessary at local level to support the successful implementation of the new agreed syllabus.

- 2.5 As well as meeting the statutory requirement to review and revise the Agreed Syllabus, Cambridgeshire SACRE's new syllabus "Together we learn" aims to capture the current and future climate for learning.
- 2.6 The Agreed Syllabus will be for all maintained schools or in accordance with the school's designated denomination or trust deeds. Religious Education is still statutory on the curriculum, although Academies, Free Schools and Voluntary-aided schools with a religious character can choose to follow another agreed syllabus or adopt their own.
- 2.7 In Cambridgeshire, several teachers from Academies have worked on the revised agreed syllabus. It is hoped that most secondary schools will continue to follow the local agreed syllabus.
- 2.8 The revised syllabus has taken into account the Equality Act 2010, the new Ofsted Framework, and current curriculum changes outlined by the DfE.
- 2.9 A summary of the contents of the Agreed Syllabus is provided in Appendix 1.
- 2.10 Approval of the revised agreed syllabus for religious education for Cambridgeshire at this meeting will enable the relevant materials to be published before the official launch on 14th March.
- 2.11 The changes in the revised syllabus encourage teachers to use enquiry based learning for all their units of work, focused around a key question for each unit of work. There are some core units that all schools must teach to ensure progression and rigour across the key stages and across all major religions but ensuring that the majority of the units of work are Christian in nature. Other units of work, known as school designed units, will be developed by the schools alongside guidance and support information in the DVD Additional Support materials.
- 2.12 The significant changes in the revised Agreed Syllabus are:
 - introduction of **statutory core units** (CU) in all phases of education with specified religions to be studied in the core units. The number of school designed units (SDUs) is specified for each year year;
 - the promotion of **enquiry based learning** as a pedagogical approach for teaching religious education that ensures rigor, challenge and progression;
 - **assessment and monitoring progress.** Schools will be invited to submit their teacher assessment levels at the end of each key stage to SACRE;
 - At GCSE level students must study **Christian** and **one other religion's** perspective;

- At ages 16-19, students choose **two topics from a choice of 10 topics** to enrich the curriculum to ensure that their statutory entitlement is met.

2.13 **Appendix 2** sets out in more detail the key changes **described above**.

2.14 **Appendix 3** (*available electronically on the County Council website and sent separately to Cabinet Members as a background document*) is the draft of the Agreed Syllabus but it should be noted that details of formatting and layout may change in the final document.

3. ALIGNMENT WITH PRIORITIES AND WAYS OF WORKING

3.1 Developing the local economy for the benefit of all

Religious Education is a statutory component of the curriculum, which aims to improve educational outcomes for all.

3.2 Helping people live healthy and independent lives

There are no significant implications for this priority.

3.3 Supporting and protecting vulnerable people

There are no significant implications for this priority.

3.4 Ways of Working

The report recognises the leadership role of the Local Authority in convening the Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC) and in developing the partnership of faith communities, teachers and LA officers that has prepared the new syllabus. It also recognises the importance of community involvement, providing opportunities for schools to link with local bodies that can support their work.

4. SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Resource and Performance Implications

There are no significant implications.

4.2 Statutory, Risk and Legal Implications

See paragraph 1.2 above.

4.3 Equality and Diversity Implications

This syllabus has taken into account the Equality Act 2010, the new Ofsted Framework, and current curriculum changes outlined by the DfE (Department for Education).

4.4 Engagement and Consultation Implications

Faith communities and teachers across the statutory age range have been consulted over the course of the last eighteen months as the revised agreed syllabus has been prepared.

4.5 Public Health Implications

There are no significant implications.

Source Documents	Location
<i>The Agreed Syllabus 2007: Religious Education in Cambridgeshire</i>	These documents (paper and electronic versions) are available from Sue Ward, General Adviser (Humanities), ELH2001, Stanton House, Stanton Way, Huntingdon PE29 6XL
<i>The Agreed Syllabus 2013: Religious Education in Cambridgeshire</i>	susan.ward@cambridgeshire.gov.uk