

Cabinet – 16 March 2016

Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education

Portfolio: Councillor Towe, Learning Skills and Apprenticeships

Related portfolios:

Service: Children's Services

Wards: All

Key decision: No

Forward plan: No

1. Summary

The purpose of the report is to seek approval for the review of the Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education (RE) attached at **Appendix A**. The draft Agreed Syllabus is being presented to SACRE on 14 March 2016.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That Cabinet recommend to Council the process behind the development of the draft Agreed Syllabus which will be implemented from 1 September 2016.
- 2.2 That Cabinet recommend that Council approves the draft Agreed Syllabus subject to any amendments which the SACRE make at their meeting on 14 March 2016
- 2.3 That Cabinet approve the launch and promotion to schools of the Agreed Syllabus.

3. Report detail

- 3.1 Every five years the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) is required by law to review / revise its Agreed Syllabus to ensure that the teaching of RE in schools is relevant and appropriate.
- 3.2 In order to review the Agreed Syllabus members of SACRE undertook a series of Consultations with schools, community leaders and Diocesan representatives, supported by an external consultant. The external consultant worked with a

task and finish group made up of members from a cross-section of Walsall schools.

- 3.3 The requirement to revise local guidance for the Religious Education curriculum is to ensure that current national statutory requirements are met. The draft agreed syllabus was reviewed by an external consultant to ensure compliance with current national statutory legislation.
- 3.4 The Draft Agreed Syllabus will be considered by SACRE on 14 March 2016. It will then be referred to Cabinet on 16 March 2016 to make recommendation to Council on 11 April 2016, that the Syllabus is agreed for Walsall schools.
- 3.5 SACRE intend to review aspects of the Agreed Syllabus every year to ensure that the content remains relevant to the Walsall context and fit for purpose for its schools and communities. All schools will be advised accordingly of any amendments. The next full review of the syllabus will take place in 2020.
- 3.6 SACRE is required to ensure all schools receive training on the new Syllabus. A launch of the new Agreed Syllabus will take place on 6 June 2016 where external consultants will play a major role in the delivery of the training and guidance on that day. A copy of the letter sent out to all schools is shown in **Appendix B**.
- 3.7 All members of the SACRE and the teachers in the task and finish group have worked hard to support the review of the documentation for schools. The current membership of SACRE is shown in **Appendix C**.

4. Council priorities

- **Creating safe, sustainable and inclusive communities**
The implementation of the Agreed Syllabus is important in helping to shape the education of young people in Religious Education. Intrinsic in this are values of self-respect and respect for others. There is also an emphasis on understanding the background to a wide range of different religions and cultures reflective of the diversity of Walsall. This supports good community cohesion and tolerance.
- **Improving safeguarding, learning and the life chances for children and young people, raising aspirations**
This important part of the curriculum will enhance and enrich pupil's learning. There is also a great emphasis on the value and worth of each individual to help raise self-esteem and aspirations.

5. Risk management

There are no direct risk issues.

6. Financial implications

- 6.1 Budgets for schools, which would be used to cover the costs of delivering

religious education, are funded through the dedicated schools grant. The dedicated schools grant is distributed to schools in Walsall by way of a local funding formula, which utilises a number of allowable funding factors. None of these factors specifically relate to religious education, and as such any review or amendment to the syllabus in this area is not expected to have any financial implications. Additionally there is a small revenue budget, £5k, within the School Improvement service which is utilised to provide financial support for agreed projects and publications in relation to SACRE, and the review is not expected to impact on the use of this funding.

7. Legal implications

There are no direct legal issues.

8. Property implications

There are no property implications.

9. Health and wellbeing implications

The successful introduction and implementation of the Agreed Syllabus will contribute to the Health and Wellbeing of young people in Walsall by:

- Supporting children in getting the best start in life by emphasising the importance and unique value of each individual
- By encouraging young people to make the most of their talents and to exercise control over their lives.

10. Staffing implications

There are no direct staffing issues.

11. Equality implications

The Agreed Syllabus provides all schools with the resource to support schools in developing children and young people's learning, personal development and their well being. The Syllabus can also support schools in developing and understanding the religious, ethnic and socio-economic characteristics of its community in a local, national and global context.

12. Consultation

The following people were consulted during the writing of this report

SACRE

Local Authority representation

Church of England representation

Christians and other religious denominations

External Consultant

Schools

Background papers – none.

Author

Sean Flynn

Education Adviser

Tel: 01922 652836

Mob 07867783204

Email. Sean.flynn@walsall.gov.uk

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Haley', with a stylized circular flourish at the beginning.

David Haley
Executive Director
1 March 2016

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Towe', with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke at the end.

Councillor C Towe
Portfolio holder
7 March 2016