

MINUTES of the meeting of Herefordshire Agreed Syllabus Conference held at Council Chamber, Brockington, 35 Hafod Road, Hereford on Monday, 28th November, 2005 at 3.15 p.m.

Present: Councillor J. Stone (Chairman)

**Mrs. C. Ault, Revd. P. Barlow, Mrs. J. Brown, Dr. D. Goodman,
Mrs S McCamley, Mrs A. Mundy, Mr. J. Rendall and Mr M. Rollnick**

In attendance: Ms. K. Mayglothling and Mr K. Scot.

6. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllr. Mrs. W. U. Attfield, Cllr. P. E. Harling, Mr Z. Pandor and Rev. I. Terry.

7. NAMED SUBSTITUTES

There were no named substitutes.

8. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held 24th June 2005 be approved and signed by the Chairman.

9. ACTION PLAN FOR THE REVIEW OF THE AGREED SYLLABUS

The Syllabus Conference were informed of actions taken to progress the RE Agreed Syllabus to the current draft stage and considered whether any revision to the Syllabus production action plan were necessary.

The Chairman thanked the Diocesan Authority for their hospitality in hosting the Syllabus Review Working Group meeting on 2nd November 2005. It was agreed that the meeting had been extremely productive in its analysing and drafting amendments to the Syllabus. Detailed consideration of the draft Syllabus is reported in the next agenda item.

The Conference acknowledged the work and leadership of the RE Consultant in compiling the re-drafted version of the Syllabus for consideration.

To clarify the actions needed to progress the review of the Agreed Syllabus Mr Rendall circulated an Action Plan and highlighted that the Working Party would meet in February 2006 to consider any feed back from the consultation with schools and produce a final draft for consideration by the Syllabus Conference at its meeting on 20th March.

The Syllabus Conference were advised that they were still on target to produce the draft Syllabus for consideration, and unanimous recommendation to the Local Education Authority, at its meeting in March 2006. However, the RE Consultant warned that it was still a tight timetable and a number of important administrative and

production issues still needed to be considered. These are reported in a later agenda item.

RESOLVED: That the current position regarding the Agreed Syllabus production target be noted.

10. CONSIDERATION OF DRAFT AGREED SYLLABUS

The Agreed Syllabus Conference considered initial recommendations and agreed a draft Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education for consultation with schools.

Arising from the drafting work by the Working Parties (involving teachers) culminating in the Syllabus Review Working Group (members of the Syllabus Conference) meeting on 2nd November 2005, and subsequent re-drafting by the RE Consultant, a draft Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education was presented for detailed consideration by the Conference. (Copies having been previously issued to Members).

During discussion the following principal comments were noted:

- In response to recommendations by the Secondary Working Party, who had specifically reviewed L6-Exceptional Performance, a number of changes were considered.
- Page 37. No major changes were proposed for Level descriptor 6.
- The Exceptional Performance level (EP level) had been very difficult for teachers to translate into teaching.
- Level 7 & Level 8 had been modified to ensure that each was challenging but achievable and to ensure that pupils performed at that level. This was particularly so where the Non-Statutory National Framework (NSNF) wording for Level 7 was considered not particularly helpful in this respect.
- The examples in the “I Can” statements were considered to be very useful.
- That the syllabus would need proof reading to ensure any grammatical errors are corrected throughout.

The following principal amendments to the draft were noted during discussion:

- Page 24. Wording for “Promoting values education” had now been received from Bridget Knight, Education General Inspector, and would be inserted in this section.
- Page 35 numbered paragraph 2 – the word “use” be deleted and substituted by “include wording in relation to the”.
- Page 37. An amended page 37 was circulated at the meeting. This indicated changes to Attainment Targets AT1 & AT2 by incorporating Herefordshire changes from the Non-Statutory National Framework (red wording). Minor changes to the summary statement, in the Level descriptor column of text, indicated amendments suggested by secondary teachers (blue wording). Elements from the Exceptional Performance level (EP level) had been integrated into level 8. The Herefordshire scale would therefore not have an EP level.
- As a consequence of changes to page 37 indicated above the “I Can” statements at page 41 would be revised to reflect the changes.
- The singular reference to Apostle be amended to plural.

The Syllabus Conference appreciated the considerable work and commitment by the

Working Parties and the RE Consultant in preparing the revised Agreed Syllabus to this draft stage.

RESOLVED: That the above amendments be incorporated into the draft RE Agreed Syllabus and the revised RE Agreed Syllabus be issued as the consultation document in the Consultation Pack.

11. FURTHER WORK TO PROGRESS THE SYLLABUS REVIEW

The Syllabus Conference considered a number of issues as part of the review of the RE Agreed Syllabus.

The Consultation process.

The Syllabus Conference debated options in relation to the level of consultation with schools and concluded that, while more expensive in terms of printing and administrative costs, to ensure early dissemination and to instil a feeling of ownership and inclusiveness, all schools rather than a sample should receive the full draft Syllabus and consultation pack.

Consultation Pack distribution and return

It was suggested that consultation packs be issued at the Secondary School RE Co-ordinators meeting in January 2006. It was also suggested that the covering letter should suggest that the draft RE Syllabus could be discussed during a school staff meeting.

The consultation pack should include an easy to answer questionnaire to be returned by 31st January, 2006, a draft of which was suggested by the RE Consultant.

Consultation feedback and final draft

Feed back from the consultation to be considered by the Working Party at their meeting scheduled for 8th February. A final draft RE Agreed Syllabus will be presented to the Agreed Syllabus Conference meeting on 20th March 2006 for consideration and recommendation to the Local Education Authority.

Design and layout of Syllabus

The Syllabus Conference were reminded of the design and layout of the current RE Syllabus. The Syllabus Conference appreciated that the printing/production costs were currently unknown. However, they expressed a view that the current 4 ring binder was very useful format in that information can be inserted or taken out.

The Syllabus Conference appreciated that the foldout "Programme of Study Overview" at page 43 may cause problems with production. However, the general view was that it should remain as a complete document. It was further suggested that the "Programme of Study Overview" could also be offered by the LEA to schools as a laminated wall chart.

It was suggested that the LEA should also consider issuing the Agreed Syllabus in Compact Disc format thereby enabling teachers to 'copy and paste' sections to their individual work plans. The Agreed Syllabus should also be available via the Internet.

Use of Photographs/Art work

The use of photographs e.g. pupils at work or visiting a place of worship, should be explored. While the LEA had a stock of photographs these may have been use in other publications. It was suggested that schools be invited to submit photographs for consideration. This invitation should be included in the covering letter in the

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consultation pack. Appropriate permissions would need to be sought.

Training for the introduction of the new RE Agreed Syllabus

The Conference were reminded of the training provided for the current Agreed Syllabus and discussed the desirability of training being given in cluster area meetings in school time. The LEA advised that it could promote the courses in their training newsletter. However, due to the newsletter production timetable the dates and venues would need to be arranged well in advance.

It was agreed that the Working Party on 8th February, 2006, will assemble a programme of Inset training to implement the new Syllabus for confirmation by the Conference at its meeting on 20th March 2006.

Non-Statutory Guidance

The RE Consultant reported that Non-Statutory Guidance would be produced to support the new RE Syllabus. However, she warned that due to limited time and resources, the guidance may not be as comprehensive as previously issued.

RESOLVED: That the above suggestions in relation to the consultation, production, publication training and issue of Guidance connected with the RE Agreed Syllabus be considered by the LEA and a report on their proposals be made to the March 2006 meeting.

The meeting ended at 4.21 p.m.

CHAIRMAN