

**MINUTES of the meeting of Herefordshire Agreed Syllabus Conference held at Council Chamber, Brockington, 35 Hafod Road, Hereford on Monday 22 November 2010 at 2.30 pm**

**Present:** Councillor J Stone (Chairman)

Councillor WU Attfield, Mrs C Ault, Mrs L Barker, Revd. P. Barlow, Mr. P. Bowen, Mrs S Bryant, Ani-La Choesang, Brig P Jones CBE, Mrs G Jutle, Mrs S McCamley and Ms C Wolfe

**In attendance:** Councillor WLS Bowen, Mrs A Daniel and Ms. K. Mayglothling

**37. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from: Mrs S Catlow-Hawkins; Sr. D O'Donnell and Mr Z Pandor.

**38. NAMED SUBSTITUTES**

There were no named substitutes.

**39. MINUTES**

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting held 5 July 2010 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**40. RESPONSE TO WRITTEN PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

No written questions had been received.

**41. AGREED SYLLABUS REVIEW - CONSIDERATION OF FURTHER DRAFTING WORK**

The Syllabus Conference considered the further drafting work undertaken by the Consultant for RE as part of the review of the Agreed Syllabus.

Copies of the draft Syllabus had been despatched to members of the Agreed Syllabus Conference with the agenda papers for their prior consideration.

The Consultant for RE reported that in compiling this further draft he had taken account of the lengthy debate and resultant views expressed at the last meeting. He also reported that further meetings had recently been held with both primary and secondary teachers and due to time constraints he had been unable to include their specific comments in the current draft. However, he would refer to the comments when taking the Conference through the draft document.

On taking the Agreed Syllabus Conference through the draft Syllabus the following principal points were noted:

- Page 4 – Introduction – this was very similar to the previous page but updated to include anticipated government reference to core knowledge. Some of the bullet points had been slightly reworded to provide more flexibility, and teachers' request concerning the study of Islam. The final bullet point had been added to cross refer to schools developing their own key questions.

- Page 5. as requested at the last meeting, while keeping the five aims they were now encompassed by one principal aim.
- Page 7 – had been revised to reflect current government guidance. It was questioned whether reference could be made to encompassing different beliefs within a pupils family or social circle.
- Page 8 – none of the main legal requirements had changed, however, account had been taken of recent indications from government concerning academies and their teaching of RE. It was noted that no guidance had yet been received concerning RE in 'free schools'. Conference agreed that should definitive guidance be received then the new syllabus should, if possible, reflect that guidance.
- Page 9 – Conference noted that the DfE does not stipulate the minimum number of hours that should be devoted to teaching RE and that therefore it was not appropriate for the Herefordshire Agreed Syllabus to do so. Conference requested that further thought be given to the wording around 'recommends' in this paragraph. The term 'community cohesion' may be amended to reflect new government terminology when received.
- Page 12 – Breadth of Study – reflecting one of the suggestions received during the teacher consultations the Consultant for RE recommended that in the 'Religions to be taught' table for Key Stage 2 the religions should be amended to 'Christianity plus at least two from Hinduism, Islam and Sikhism. Similarly for 14-16 (Key Stage 4) it should read ...Christianity and at least one other principal religion. This recommendation was agreed. Conference questioned and debated whether Buddhism and Baha'i should also be included in the list at KS2 and noted comments from the teaching members (Committee C) particularly concerning the problems that already exist in assessing the varying level of pupil knowledge in religions when they progressed to secondary school. Increasing the list at KS2 may create further complications in teaching at secondary level. Conference agreed not to add Buddhism and Baha'i to the list.
- Further to discussing the range of religions taught at KS2, see above, a point was made that these could be introduced during Collective Worship time, particularly when near to a particular celebration date. A further point was made that schools needed to be conscious of reflecting the faiths in their local community.
- Page 15 – now included recent quotes from Ofsted.
- Page 47 – the 'Fields of Enquiry' section had been added to ensure that teachers focused on the 'themes' but also provide flexibility for teachers to plan the subject delivery when using their own line of questions.
- Page 48 – the Consultant explained the changes to the 'programme of study' sections to reflect the 'core knowledge' requirements.
- Page 57 – How to plan... - now contained revised or new elements under the 'Levelled pupil outcomes' and 'Learning opportunities'.
- Page 58 – steps to help teachers plan at each Key Stage had now been included.
- An example of how a 'steps' planner for 'KS1 Unit 1a – Who made the world' would look like were circulated at the meeting. The Conference approved of the clarity in the example.
- Page 59 – while very similar to the previous version the Consultant explained the rationale for the changes to the 'How to plan for effective RE....' section.
- Teachers had requested that, independently of the syllabus, 'crib sheets' be provided on the various world religions and this was being worked on.
- Conference noted that during the consultation with secondary teachers concerns had been expressed regarding the Abraham and Moses question and that the Consultant intended to revise the question to explore the common root of Judaism, Christianity and Islam.
- The Level Descriptors were being reviewed at a national level and the results were due to be issued shortly.

The Lead Officer for SACRE reported that due to the limited budget, the new syllabus needed to be printed and paid for before the end of the current financial year and questioned whether a further meeting be held in February 2011 to formally recommend the new Syllabus to the Local Authority.

The Democratic Services Officer reminded the Conference of the process for recommending a new syllabus to the Local Authority and emphasised that all Committees constituting the Conference must be satisfied with the revised syllabus before unanimously agreeing that it be recommended to the local authority. He sought the views of Conference on whether a further meeting in February was required or whether agreement could be reached at this meeting.

The Syllabus Conference were satisfied that all the major aspects of the syllabus had been addressed and were confident that the minor issues described above would be addressed in accordance with the discussion at the meeting.

The Agreed Syllabus Conference thanked the RE Consultant for his work in drafting the syllabus and congratulated him for bringing together the new Syllabus in a clear and understandable format.

**RESOLVED: That**

- 1. subject to making the suggested changes outlined at the meeting and the amendment of any layout or typographical errors found during final proof reading the revised Herefordshire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education be agreed; and**
- 2. it was UNANIMOUSLY AGREED that the revised Herefordshire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education be recommended to the Local Authority for implementation in September 2011.**

**42. FURTHER WORK TO PROGRESS THE SYLLABUS REVIEW**

Conference considered further issues requiring attention as part of the review of the Agreed Syllabus.

**Publishing and launch of the new syllabus**

Bearing in mind the budget limitations and the need to maximise the value for money the Lead Officer for the Conference sought the views of Conference on the publishing and launch of the new syllabus.

In relation to the publication Conference noted that there would be no cost involved in placing the syllabus on the web site and that this would be done as a matter of course. In relation to issuing paper copies to schools, Conference expressed a preference for a paper copy to be sent to RE teachers for placing into the existing folder. However, Conference agreed to leave the matter in the hands of the Lead Officer for the Conference.

On debating the launch of the new Syllabus, the Consultant for RE circulated a suggested programme for consideration. Due to budgetary constraints the launch would replace the traditional SACRE Annual conference for 2011, usually held in the autumn. In relation to the date for the launch Conference were mindful of the need to give teachers time to plan for the delivery of the new syllabus in September 2011 and possible problems with teachers needing to be out of school during exam times. May or June was suggested. It was suggested that the Earl Mortimer College be explored as a possible venue.

The Lead Officer for the Conference commented that she was already exploring whether twilight teacher training sessions could be supported to supplement the launch.

Conference noted that due to the May Local Government elections members of Committee D may not be appointed until June.

**RESOLVED: that the local authority be requested to note the views expressed concerning the publishing and launch of the new syllabus.**

**Multi-faith Events**

The Chairman reported that he had attended the very successful Multi-faith event at Queen Elizabeth High School, Bromyard. Conference noted that Whitecross High school had hosted a very successful multi-faith event for many primary schools which had been video linked to pupils in another primary school.

**RESOLVED: That the reports be noted.**

The meeting ended at 4.06 pm

**CHAIRMAN**