

GUIDANCE FOR THE AGREED SYLLABUS CONFERENCE

Report By: Clerk to SACRE

Purpose

1. To inform the Conference of a number of issues relating to the role of an Agreed Syllabus Conference and agree key principals and a draft timetable to guide the formulation of an Agreed Religious Education Syllabus.

Background

2. At the meeting of the Herefordshire Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) held on 9 March 2009, SACRE noted that Herefordshire Schools are using the Herefordshire Agreed Syllabus which was introduced in September 2006. It is a requirement that the Syllabus be reviewed every 5 years. Therefore the current syllabus needs to be reviewed and agreed for implementation by September 2011. Having considered the time needed to undertake consultation and redrafting of the Agreed Religious Education Syllabus, particularly in view of the changes to guidance and the introduction of the new secondary curriculum and the Primary Curriculum Review, SACRE agreed to recommend that the Local Education Authority re-establish the Herefordshire Agreed Syllabus Conference.
3. In accordance with Section 35, Schedule 31 of the Education Act 1996 the Local Education Authority (LEA) established a Herefordshire Agreed Syllabus Conference to produce and recommend to the LEA an agreed Religious Education Syllabus for Herefordshire.
4. The Conference should be aware that the process of undertaking a syllabus review is governed by legislation and legal advice will be made available at the meetings as necessary.

Current Guidance

5. In late spring 2009 the DCSF produced a consultation document "Religious education in English Schools: Non-statutory guidance 2009" which is designed to supersede the guidance in circ DfE 1/94. At the time of writing the new guidance has not been confirmed, however, the basic principals governing the workings of an Agreed Syllabus Conference have not changed from those given in cir DfE 1/94 and therefore an extract from the 2009 draft guidance is attached at Appendix 1.

Key Principles for the Review

6. It is important that the review of the Herefordshire RE syllabus is linked to some key principles that provide both a foundation for the review and give direction to the task ahead. These principles will therefore provide an important reference point for those practitioners involved with any working parties formed to revise the syllabus and report back to the Conference. In accordance with the decision of SACRE on 9 March 2009 the Chairman (Cllr J Stone), SACRE Lead Officer (Mrs B Knight) and the Consultant for RE (Mrs J Mackley) have undertaken some preliminary work to inform

the Syllabus review. As a result the Consultant for Religious Education has compiled 6 key principles for the review for consideration (Appendix 2).

Timetable for the review

- 7 To ensure that the review meets the Syllabus implementation date of September 2011, the Consultant for Religious Education has compiled a draft timetable for consideration (Appendix 3).

Decision-making

- 8 On any question to be decided by conference, the representative committees, as outlined in Appendix 1 paragraph 5.4.2, shall each have a single vote.
- 9 Only an Agreed Syllabus Conference may recommend an agreed syllabus and its recommendation must be unanimously agreed by the committees constituting the conference.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT

- a) **the report be noted and the key principles for the review, set out in Appendix 2, be adopted and;**
- b) **the timetable set out in Appendix 3 for the review be accepted.**

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- DFE Circular 1/94 "Religious Education and Collective Worship"
- DCSF - Religious Education in English schools: Non-statutory guidance 2009