

Agreed Syllabus Review – Consideration of Further Drafting Work

Report by S Pett, RE Consultant

Following the last ASC meeting on 15th March 2010 there have been meetings with primary and secondary teachers, and, of course, a change of government. Below are the key messages from the consultation and some comments on the impact of anticipated policy changes on the AS review in Herefordshire.

Hereford Secondary teachers 23.4.10

1. **Outline of proposal:** teachers considered the outline agreed by the last agreed syllabus conference. They were happy with the proposed model, with a slimming down of the current syllabus.
2. **Planning process:** teachers approved the planning process and requested that a version for doing cross-curriculum planning be included.
3. **Development of new questions:** teachers thought that the revised AS should allow for the flexibility of teachers being able to develop new questions, whether for cross-curriculum units or to reflect current affairs and issues. The planning guidance should demonstrate the rigour required for such new questions, including levelled learning outcomes etc.
4. **Programmes of study:** teachers requested that Islam be included in KS3 as a major component of KS3, alongside Buddhism and Judaism. They would like examples from Islam to be added to current questions where appropriate, and ensure that it has sufficient prominence. The ASC should consider if it replaces Judaism in level 1 of the breadth of study.
5. **Future input:** teachers recommended that future secondary network meetings should include time revising and updating non-statutory schemes of work to reflect the structure of the planning guidance.

Hereford Primary teachers 17.5.10

1. **Outline of proposal:** teachers generally approved of the proposed structure. They want to ensure that this is as useful and helpful as possible, noting that few teachers are going to wade through the whole syllabus.
 - The summary pages showing the importance and contribution of RE will be helpful.
 - We need to keep the page from the non-statutory guidance on planning for mixed year groups.
 - Significant discussion took place on the importance of making this reflect a distinctively local Herefordshire flavour. Units should reflect the rich resources available, e.g. links with the cathedral, with local churches including free churches, other places of worship, local faith groups e.g. Sufi Centre, the multifaith days etc.
 - We need to make RE more integrated in Foundation Stage and consider the extent to which there is an overlap with KS1. The syllabus needs to be coherent

at this point. At the moment the themes are not sufficiently broad and teachers need to be given clear permission to do the RE where it fits in with what they are doing, rather than having to do discrete RE.

- Exemplar “I can...” statements are very helpful.
 - P-levels requested.
2. **Planning process guidance:** There was some discussion about this guidance. Some were concerned that RE has the potential to get lost in schools, especially as part of cross-curriculum work, and that we need to do what we can to ensure that it is maintained and distinctive. Comments about the guidance included the idea that it would be useful but the question was raised as to who would use it. Responses to this included the idea that the planning guidance offers something that keeps the RE in the planning process, supporting rigour by including the need for levelled learning outcomes as part of the initial thinking. RE co-ordinators will use the planning guidance but it is envisaged that the process should be clear enough to support classroom teachers too, so that they can see the aims and purpose of their RE lessons.
- There was some disquiet over the thought that non-statutory schemes of work were not being provided for all units. Perhaps some current schemes of work can be worked on to match them to the planning process, to work as exemplars.
3. **Development of new questions:** the new syllabus should allow teachers to develop new questions. This is particularly important for cross-curriculum studies.
4. **Programmes of study:** Not discussed due to lack of time.
5. **Future input:** network groups will play an important part in keeping teachers informed about progress, allowing opportunities for feedback.

There was an encouraging turnout for the Primary meeting, with several emails from teachers and head teachers unable to make it, expressing interest in the process. We will build on this interest in network groups in the autumn term.

Department for Education:

With the recent change of government there has been some obvious effects on education. The demise of the proposed primary curriculum is a key result. This means that there is little use in sticking with the Early-Middle-Late progression statements, unless they have an intrinsic value. The review of the AS, with its focus on supporting teachers to use the syllabus better to develop more creative and rigorous RE, should still be in line with education policy, whatever changes occur.

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