

Herefordshire SACRE options for Agreed Syllabus Review

Requirements:

SACRE must consider reviewing its RE Agreed Syllabus after five years. An Agreed Syllabus Conference can be set up to conduct the review.

An agreed syllabus must *'reflect the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are, in the main, Christian while taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain'*.

Education Act (1996 Section 375 (3)) / School Standards and Framework Act (1998, Schedule 19, para.5)

The development of a clear, well-structured agreed syllabus is probably the single most important function of SACRE. Combined with on-going implementation training and resources, a new syllabus offers the possibility of raising achievement in RE in all local schools.

Ofsted reports 2010 and 2013 highlight the need for syllabuses to:

- be clear about expected knowledge and understanding about religion(s) and belief(s)
- support and empower teachers to plan effectively
- offer coherent progression across the ages and key stages
- support clear and focused assessment
- encourage enquiry-based RE

Herefordshire Agreed Syllabus 2011-2016 has been praised by Ofsted for its high quality in meeting these requirements.

The RE Council (REC) Review of RE produced the National Curriculum Framework for RE (NCFRE) in October 2013, to run in parallel with National Curriculum changes. The links will enable RE programmes of study to be easily understood and implemented alongside the new orders for National Curriculum subjects such as Science or History. To this end, the NCFRE should be taken into account when revising the agreed syllabus, as well as building on what is good in the current Herefordshire agreed syllabus.

Feedback from Strategy Group meeting 7th July 2014

SACRE strategy group had a long discussion about the value of the current syllabus, the changes to national education policy and their implications for a review. The detailed discussion is available, but here are the options set out by the Group:

The options for SACRE include:

- a) **Complete re-write**, based on new Framework. This is probably unfeasible due to cost, unless the LA finds substantial extra funding
- b) **Keep the current syllabus and offer a supplement** to update it a little. This is a possibility – Stephen will offer a costed model for this to SACRE in November, although there will be costs for producing the new supplement. One advantage of this is the continuity it will bring. The disadvantage is that it does not reflect the new Framework directly. However, there is no statutory reason for following the Framework, which does have its detractors as well as supporters.
- c) **Buy into the RE Today 'model' syllabus**. By November, there will be some draft material on this, although that will be commercially sensitive as far as RE Today are concerned. Certainly we will know more about what it is likely to look like. Stephen will be involved in writing it, and is keen for it to represent continuity from syllabuses like Herefordshire and Gloucestershire. Worcestershire are buying into this process.

Note: our Syllabus runs until 2016. Middlesbrough purchased HAS, relabelled it – and paid the LEA over £2,000 for it (which should be in the SACRE budget!)

Option B: Herefordshire supplement

In 2011, Gloucestershire added a 24-page supplement updating its 2006-2011 syllabus. This model could be applied to Herefordshire's syllabus.

This process would be the same as for the full re-write but would take less time, and cost less in terms of development and production, and involve the Strategy Group rather than teacher groups.

This would need to be launched with either a county conference day or a series of regional CPD sessions, to provide training and resources to enable teachers to implement the syllabus in their schools.

Advantages:

- This builds on the strengths of the current syllabus, and allows for continuity at a time of great change.
- The syllabus can reflect the local area closely.
- It is a cheaper option than a full review.

Disadvantages:

- The current syllabus does not easily allow for an insert, so it would be a separate document, leading to some confusion about the syllabus, perhaps.
- It won't be possible to reflect the new Framework fully.
- Some changes (e.g. use of levels for assessment) are significant changes with implications throughout the 2011-2016 syllabus, so a supplement may not be feasible.
- Duplication of work with other local SACREs.

Likely cost:

£4,800 (as with full review, just fewer words and less time: establishing, managing and supporting the review process, writing time, draft and redraft services and production supervision; run teacher consultations: setting the parameters for writing review materials, and developing local applications of national materials; teachers to represent different phases/key stages) plus cost of strategy group days c£1200 plus cost of production c£1800

Total: c£7,800

Option C: Purchase an RE Today Syllabus plus schemes of work.

RE Today is currently writing a model agreed syllabus, based on the NCFRE and NSNF, and building on all of the experience in syllabus writing that the charity has developed over the last 26 years.

A syllabus would provide the minimum for a SACRE /LA to fulfil its legal requirement.

To make a positive impact on raising standards in RE in the county, additional resources will be available for purchase.

Costs are set out below.

Advantages:

- Full syllabus available with minimal effort from LA/SACRE
- Up to date
- Flexibility built in to allow schools to adapt to their particular situation
- Support materials available
- On-going support from RE Today with potential upgrades within the 5-year review period if necessary.
- Worcestershire is buying into this syllabus, which would make cross-county support and co-operation much easier for future savings.

Disadvantages:

- Little involvement from local teachers or SACRE on the content and style.

Details and likely costs

Syllabus licensed for adoption by SACREs.

Syllabus includes:

- Aim/purpose of RE
- Legal requirements
- Contribution of RE to whole-school: SMSC, well-being, literacy, PSHE, citizenship
- Breadth of study: which religions/beliefs and when
- Programmes of study EYFS-KS5
- Core knowledge outline
- Assessment processes
- Planning processes
- Inclusion
- Creative curriculum and cross-curriculum outlines
- Application of syllabus requirements to special school contexts

Flexibility and freedom will be built in to requirements, to encourage creative development and adaptation within a school.