

## Forewords

To follow: from Chair of SACRE and representative from Herefordshire Council (Cabinet Member) or Chief Executive/Director of Children and Families.

## Introduction

The 2020 Herefordshire Agreed Syllabus has been created for Herefordshire SACRE and approved by Herefordshire County Council. It provides a syllabus for Religious Education (RE) for Herefordshire schools. Since 1944, all schools have been required to teach RE to all pupils on roll (except those withdrawn by their parents, see p. 9). RE remains part of the basic curriculum for all pupils.

This syllabus explains the value and purposes of RE for all pupils and specifies for teachers what shall be taught in each age group. It provides a coherent framework for setting high standards of learning in RE and enabling pupils to reach their potential in the subject. It builds on the good practice established in the previous Herefordshire syllabus. These elements will be familiar to teachers:

### Continuity:

- **Religions and worldviews:** The 2020 syllabus maintains the required study of religions and non-religious worldviews in each key stage, as in the 2015 syllabus. Teachers are still free to teach RE flexibly, through weekly timetabled lessons, RE days or RE weeks, for example, or a combination of different models.
- **RE and personal development:** The 2020 syllabus retains its emphasis on RE contributing to the personal development of pupils. RE is not simply about gaining knowledge and understanding about religious and non-religious worldviews. It also helps pupils to develop their own understanding of the world and how to live, in the light of their learning, developing understanding, skills and attitudes. It makes a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, as well as important opportunities for exploring British values.
- **Open, enquiring RE:** The 2020 syllabus continues to offer open, enquiring, exploratory RE, suitable for pupils who have a religious faith of their own as well as for those who have no religious background – the latter form a substantial proportion of pupils in many of our classrooms, often the majority (note the local census statistics on p. 146).
- **Planning process:** The planning process that was integral to the 2015 syllabus has been retained. It encourages and empowers teachers to develop their own excellent RE lessons, taking them through the steps of using the syllabus to underpin their planning (long-, medium- and short-term) and creative classroom practice. It supports careful sequencing of lessons for pupils to retain their knowledge and understanding.

### New emphasis:

- **Coherent understanding:** There is an increased emphasis on helping pupils to develop a coherent understanding of several religions, by studying one religion at a time (systematic study) before bringing together and comparing different traditions (thematic study). The thematic study allows pupils to draw together their learning each year, as well as offering opportunities for retrieval and recall (see sample long-term plans p. 147).
- **Core concepts:** Clarity about identifiable core concepts of religions and beliefs helps teachers and pupils to understand how beliefs and practices connect, so that pupils are able to build effectively on prior learning as they progress through the school (see key question overview pp. 16–17 and concept outlines on pp. 137–145). The syllabus forms a 'spiral curriculum, whereby pupils encounter and engage with the core concepts on a number of occasions, embedding their learning.
- **Teaching and learning approach:** There is a clear teaching and learning approach at the heart of the 2020 syllabus, whereby all units enable pupils to 'make sense' of the religions and non-religious

worldviews studied, '**understand the impact**' of these beliefs in people's lives, and to '**make connections**' in their own learning and their wider experience of the world (see p. 13—14).

- **Assessment:** Flexible assessment opportunities are given, based on end-of-phase outcomes, linked to the teaching and learning approach. Each unit has specific outcomes that help pupils to achieve the end-of-phase outcomes (see pp. 18—19).
- **Understanding Christianity:** The 2016 resource from RE Today is being used in many schools in Herefordshire. This syllabus incorporates the *Understanding Christianity* approach, as well as a number of units, so that schools who are using that resource can be confident that they are meeting the requirements of the agreed syllabus with regard to the teaching of Christianity.