
4 November 2020

West Sussex Agreed Syllabus Conference

Report by the Director of Education and Skills

Summary

To update the Agreed Syllabus Conference on the progress made developing an Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education 2020-25 for West Sussex Schools and plans to launch it.

Recommendation

The Agreed Syllabus Conference is asked to review and approve the Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education 2020-25 and the adoption of this for schools in West Sussex for implementation in January 2021.

Details

1. Background and Context

- 1.1 An Agreed Syllabus is a document that details the statutory requirement for all schools within a Local Authority (LA) which requires that Religious Education (RE) must be provided for all pupils as set out in the Education Act 1988 and confirmed by the Education Acts of 1996.
- 1.2 Each LA must have a Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education that comprises representatives from faith groups, teachers and LA advisers. The LA also has a requirement to convene an Agreed Syllabus Conference to reconsider the Agreed Syllabus every five years.
- 1.3 The Agreed Syllabus must reflect the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian, it should also reflect other principal religions and worldviews and their religious traditions, practices and teachings.
- 1.4 The Agreed Syllabus sets out advice on what pupils should be taught and expected standards and outcomes at the end of each key stage.
- 1.5 School leaders are required to ensure the provision of RE and that sufficient time and resources are given to meet the statutory requirements.
- 1.6 This syllabus enables pupils to study beliefs, teachings and ways of living to allow them to examine and reflect upon their own ideas and values. This is particularly important in the world we currently live where we need to promote cultural diversity and worldviews.

1.7 This new syllabus outlines:

- The legal requirements for RE, including the recommendation of 5% curriculum time
- Aims of the Agreed Syllabus
- Guidance about the religions to be studied
- Outlines the breadth of study
- Syllabus content, introduction of themes
- Review of the assessment criteria
- RE in special schools, update on assessing of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities in light of the removal of the "P" scale (a set of descriptions used to record and assess the progress of children between the ages of 5-14 who have special educational needs) with the introduction of the "Engagement Model" (an assessment tool that helps schools meet their duties in supporting pupils who are working below the level of the national curriculum and who are not engaged in subject-specific study)
- Appendices of suggested resources which have been reviewed and amended
- Themes now reflect religions and worldviews

2. Next Steps

- 2.1 Once approved, the syllabus will be designed so the content will be enhanced to optimise interest in schools.
- 2.2 A remote launch is being planned for January 2021, followed by training programme and network groups for schools.
- 2.3 Communication and engagement with schools will be aligned to engagement events led by the School Effectiveness Team.

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Appendix A - Draft Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education 2020-25

Background papers – None