

2 December 2015		ITEM: 5
Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education		
Thurrock SACRE – Reviewing the Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education in Thurrock		
Wards and communities affected: All		Key Decision: Non-Key
Report of: Deborah Weston: Associate Adviser for Religious Education		
Accountable Head of Service: – Strategic Lead, School Improvement, Learning and Skills		
Accountable Director: - Director of Children’s Services		
This report is Public		

Executive Summary

With a budget of £10,000 allocated to the development of the Agreed Syllabus, SACRE is invited to consider the four options for going forward with the development to meet the needs of teachers, to respond to new guidance on assessment and to ensure that the appropriate level of training is delivered to ensure that teachers have the knowledge and skills necessary to deliver the syllabus with confidence.

1. Recommendation(s) that SACRE:

1.1 Consider the three options set out in section 3 below and make a decision on the best way forward for Thurrock and the schools it serves.

2. Introduction and Background

Thurrock SACRE held an initial meeting of the Agreed Syllabus conference in the spring term of 2015 and conducted a review of the current syllabus. This discussion included a consideration of responses from schools in Thurrock to aspects of the syllabus and their priorities for the review. Teachers overwhelming agreed that four areas were of primary importance in raising standards in RE in Thurrock:

- a. Clear guidance on assessment was needed. The conference agreed that the government’s commission on assessment would need to be taken into consideration before the syllabus review was completed.

- b. Subject knowledge in RE was a challenge for many teachers especially primary teachers and teachers with other specialisms in secondary schools
- c. Primary teachers appreciated the full unit plans for a schemes of work produced for the last syllabus but would like there to be more
- d. Training in support of the delivery of a new syllabus which had been insufficient in relation to the current syllabus
- e. In relation to point a: the commission on assessment reported on 15th September and included a clear section on the principles for assessment (see appendix A) which the commission hopes will guide the development of assessment policy in the immediate future. This can now be used to influence decisions about the new syllabus for Thurrock
- f. In relation to point b: whilst the inclusion of detailed subject knowledge in a syllabus can be challenging, one recent syllabus had been produced that takes a mastery approach to subject knowledge that could feasibly meet the needs of Thurrock teachers and that was the syllabus produced jointly between the London Boroughs of Redbridge and Havering.
- g. In relation to point c:
 - (1) The current syllabus currently includes, 14 full unit plans for primary schools
 - (2) RE Today has produced a model syllabus that can be purchased by a local authority which includes a comprehensive scheme of work.
 - (3) The Redbridge/Havering Agreed Syllabus comes with 12 full unit plans and the remainder of a complete scheme as two page and one page plans
- h. In relation to point d: The budget already allocated for the revision is £10,000 so dependent on the choices made over the revision, this could include a programme of training for teachers.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

- 3.1 Complete re-write**, based on new non-statutory National Framework (2014). This is probably unfeasible if teacher requests for more support material and/or training are to be met.
- 3.2 Keep the current syllabus and offer a supplement** to update it a little. This is a possibility – there will be costs for producing the new supplement. One advantage of this is the continuity it will bring. The disadvantage is that it will not reflect the new Framework directly or the developments on assessment without levels set out in appendix 1.
- 3.3 Adopt the Redbridge/Havering syllabus**. This would entail, using some of the Thurrock Agreed Syllabus budget to add value to the Redbridge/Havering Syllabus i.e. adapting some of the Thurrock units of work to the new mastery model and the remaining funds on training.

3.4 Buy into the RE Today ‘model’ syllabus and units of work. RE Today adviser Fiona Moss will attend the SACRE meeting to present on this option.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

4.1 Each of the three options has advantages and disadvantages and the views of all four committees of SACRE need to be taken into consideration.

5. Consultation (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)

5.1 Not applicable

6. Impact on corporate policies, priorities, performance and community impact

6.1 Not applicable

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Kay Goodacre**
Finance Manager

The Costs of SACRE are budgeted within Children’s Services Education budget

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Lucinda Bell**
Education Lawyer

The Committee is asked to consider the options presented and chose one. Decisions should be made in compliance with the law and be fair and reasonable, taking into account all relevant considerations including best value and equality issues. The Equality Act 2010 imposes the Public Sector Equality Duty, that is to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities.

7.3 **Diversity and Equality**

Implications verified by: **Natalie Warren**
Community Development and Equalities
Manager

The implications of this report are that raising standards in religious education in Thurrock will help students to gain more understanding of the religion or belief of people in the local and national community and therefore improve community cohesion.

7.4 **Other implications** (where significant) – i.e. Staff, Health, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder)

- Not applicable

8. **Background papers used in preparing the report** (including their location on the Council's website or identification whether any are exempt or protected by copyright)

- None

9. **Appendices to the report**

- Appendix 1 The principles of assessment from Final report of the Commission on Assessment without Levels September 2015

Report Author:

Deborah Weston

Associate Adviser for RE

Appendix 1

The principles of assessment from Final report of the Commission on Assessment without Levels September 2015

The primary principle of assessment is that it should be fit for the purpose intended. Assessment is an integral part of teaching and lies at the heart of promoting pupils' education. It should provide information which is clear, reliable and free from bias.

The Commission on Assessment Without Levels is primarily concerned with supporting schools with in-school formative and summative assessment. The Commission believes that the guiding principles of these two types of assessment can helpfully be expressed in the form of questions that school leaders and teachers might ask themselves when developing effective approaches to assessment, as set out below.

Principles of in-school formative assessment

1. What will this assessment tell me about pupils' knowledge and understanding of the topic, concept or skill?

- *For example: whether knowledge and understanding is secure enough to move forward, or whether further consolidation work or a different approach is necessary.*

- *For example: whether a pupil has been able to demonstrate application of a skill with increasing independence or confidence.*

2. How will I communicate the information I gain from this assessment to pupils in a way that helps them to understand what they need to do to improve?

- *For example: whether this is better done orally (e.g. through targeted question and answer), in writing or through an alternative form of communication; and whether it is communicated to individuals, groups or the whole class.*

3. How will I ensure pupils understand the purpose of this assessment and can apply it to their own learning?

- *For example: building in time before the assessment to ensure pupils are prepared for it in a way which clarifies its purpose and after the assessment to support pupils in identifying what they have learned from the assessment about where they need to target their efforts.*

- *For example: where it may be a challenge for a pupil to understand the purpose of assessment, communicating the outcomes in ways that help the pupil understand their achievements.*

4. How will I ensure my approaches to assessment are inclusive of all abilities?

- *For example: finding alternative ways to enable pupils to demonstrate their understanding through practical application that can be observed or discussion with the pupil and parents.*

5. How will I use the information I gain from this assessment to inform my planning for future lessons? How could I improve, adapt or target my teaching as a result?

- *For example: identifying which pupils to target for additional support or which areas of the topic to recap.*

6. What follow up action should I take to plug gaps in knowledge and understanding or to support progression where learning is secure?

- *For example: assessing whether pupils who have demonstrated secure understanding can apply the concept in an alternative context or exploring ways in which the concept can be taught differently for pupils who have demonstrated less secure understanding.*

- *For example: providing opportunities for exploring a concept in greater depth before moving on to new work.*

7. Is it necessary to record the information gained from this assessment? And if so, how can this be done most efficiently?

- *For example: do not assume that everything needs to be recorded. Identify which assessment outcomes are essential to record for the teacher pupil, parent or carer and keep it simple.*

- *For example: do not assume that formative assessment must be recorded using the same scale or terminology as summative assessment.*

Principles of in-school summative assessment

1. Who will use the information provided by this assessment?

- *For example: the teacher responsible for these pupils the following year.*

- *For example: senior leaders for curriculum or institutional review.*

- *For example: for reporting to parents.*

2. Will it give them the information they need for their purposes?

- *For example: how secure a pupil was in their knowledge of the previous year's curriculum and how ready they are for progression.*

- *For example: useful information on levels of independence, confidence and attitudes to learning of pupils with SEN and disabilities.*

3. How will it be used to support broader progress, attainment and outcomes for the pupils?

- *For example: how the information provided by the assessment can support the following year's teacher in differentiating the support given to pupils in the class to achieve the positive outcomes.*

4. How should the assessment outcomes be communicated to pupils to ensure they have the right impact and contribute to pupils' understanding of how they can make further progress in the future?

- *For example: as part of end of year progress meetings, so that attainment marks are supported by the broader context of the child's progress and understanding.*

- *For example: using visual methods such as learning journals or videos with pupils with SEN and disabilities as part of their personal learning plan reviews.*

5. How should the assessment outcomes be communicated to parents to ensure they understand what the outcomes tell them about their child's attainment, progress and improvement needs?

- *For example: how might you communicate to parents that a child who got 12/40 on the test has actually done quite well, all things considered?*

- *For example: how might you communicate to parents the importance of their child with complex needs building on and applying previously learned knowledge and skills?*

6. How should the assessment outcomes be recorded to allow the school to monitor and demonstrate progress, attainment and wider outcomes?

- *For example: how it can be used to provide evidence for Ofsted of how pupil progress informs teaching, or how it informs school improvement, e.g. curriculum development.*

Appendix B:

Comparing the current Thurrock with the new Redbridge and Havering Agreed Syllabus:

Thurrock Agreed Syllabus 2010	Redbridge and Havering RE Agreed Syllabus 2015 – 2020
Two attainment targets: 'Exploring' (AT1) and 'Responding' (AT2)	3 aims in RE in order to develop pupils' religious literacy
Syllabus based on previous Agreed Syllabus, Non Statutory National Framework (2004) and good practice from local schools	Syllabus based on previous Agreed Syllabus, good practice from local schools and the Non-Statutory National Curriculum Framework for Religious Education (2013)
An eight level scale to be used when assessing progress in RE	End of key stage outcomes for pupils' knowledge and understanding of individual religions. End of key stage aims based on expectations for pupils' religious literacy
12 detailed plans provided for the main units	Planning outline provided for each primary unit. 8 units also have 2 page exemplifications which extend the planning outlines. 12 units also have detailed and updated plans that provide compelling learning experiences in RE for pupils.
Clear links with the Early Learning Goals	Clear links with the 2012 Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework Separation of expectations for Nursery and

	Reception
KS1 (5-7): Christianity and Judaism Teachers can also plan to study the other religions or belief systems significantly represented in the school and the local area	KS1 (5-7) Christianity and Islam Pupils will also learn from other religions and worldviews in thematic units
KS2 Christianity, Islam and Sikhism in Lower key stage 2 (8-9) In addition: Christianity, Islam and Hinduism in upper key stage 2 (10-11)	KS2 Christianity, Hinduism and Judaism in lower key stage 2 Christianity, Islam and Sikhism are mainly studied in Upper key stage 2. Students will also learn from other religions and worldviews in such a way that complements these studies. This allows for more comparisons to be made between religions and worldviews.
Christianity, Buddhism, one other religious tradition and non-religious worldviews in KS3	Christianity and at least two other religions in depth chosen from Buddhism, Hinduism, Judaism, Islam and Sikhism at KS3. Students will also learn from other religions and worldviews in such a way that complements these studies.
Christianity and one religion is the minimum requirement; all students must follow an accredited course leading to a recognised national qualification in Religious Studies.	Christianity and one religion or worldview is the minimum requirement; all students must follow an accredited course leading to a recognised national qualification in Religious Studies.

What's included in the RE Today and Redbridge/Havering Agreed Syllabuses?

RE Today Syllabus	Redbridge/Havering Agreed Syllabus
Aim/purpose of RE	Aim/purpose of RE
Legal requirements	Legal requirements
Contribution of RE to whole-school: SMSC, well-being, literacy, PSHE, citizenship, British values	Contribution of RE to whole-school: SMSC, well-being, literacy, PSHE, citizenship, British values
Breadth of study: which religions/beliefs and when	Breadth of study: which religions/beliefs and when
Programmes of study EYFS-KS5	Programmes of study EYFS-KS5
Core knowledge outline	Core knowledge outline
Assessment processes	Assessment, achievement and attainment
Planning processes	Planning processes
Inclusion	Inclusion
Creative curriculum and cross-curriculum outlines	Creative curriculum and cross-curriculum outlines
Application of syllabus requirements to special school contexts	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.	Flexibility and freedom will be built in to requirements, to encourage creative development and adaptation within a school.
	End of KS1, lower KS2, upper KS2, KS3 outcomes in relation to knowledge, understanding of each religion taught
	A progression statement relating to developing religious literacy
A full scheme of work is available for SACRE to purchase for Schools. Thurrock SACRE would be able to purchase the syllabus and scheme of work for all schools from the budget put aside for the syllabus	Redbridge/Havering Agreed Syllabus comes with 12 full unit plans and the remainder of a complete scheme as two page and one page plans [Note: Thurrock could commission RE Today to complete the remaining scheme of full unit plans as part of its 'value-added deal' to purchase the syllabus]