



Doncaster Council

Report

Date: 9 October 2018

To: Councillor Nuala Fennelly, Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Schools

The new agreed RE Syllabus for Doncaster

Relevant Cabinet Member(s)	Wards Affected	Key Decision
Councillor Nuala Fennelly, Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Schools	All	Yes

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. By statute, every local authority is required to adopt a Locally Agreed Syllabus (LAS) of Religious Education (RE) and to review it every five years. The current syllabus for Doncaster was agreed and implemented in 2013 and needs renewing before the end of 2018.
2. A sub-committee of SACRE met on 14 December 2017 to consider options relating to the design and implementation of a new syllabus. A representative from RE Today was also invited to provide information on options available when reviewing and implementing a new syllabus. The meeting considered the future needs of a syllabus within Doncaster as well as potential costs, impact on the quality of teaching and learning, pupil progress and effectiveness of monitoring arrangements. It was agreed that the following three options be considered:
 - **Option 1** - the design and implementation of a fully bespoke syllabus
 - **Option 2**- use of a franchised syllabus which meets statutory requirements but has enhanced features and options such as teaching materials and resources that can be adapted to meet the needs of pupils and teachers.
 - **Option 3** - Use a franchised syllabus but without the enhanced options of CPD and extra materials. The following three options for the implementation resolved to support Option 2 which is a franchised syllabus.
3. On 26 March 2018 SACRE agreed to establish an Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC) to agree a Religious Education Syllabus which is educationally sound, meets legal requirements and may be adopted by the local authority. The ASC (which has the same membership as SACRE) at its meeting on 26th March resolved to support Option 2 - a “franchised syllabus” which meets statutory requirements and has enhanced features and options such as teaching materials

and continuous professional development which meets the needs of Doncaster young people and teachers.

4. It was further agreed that SACRE would commission an external partner, RE Today, with expertise in this field and similar successful work in other local authorities to produce a new agreed syllabus in consultation with members of SACRE. RE Today is a charity established to support RE in schools including the teaching of the major world faiths and ensuring an accurate and fair representation of beliefs in all its teaching materials.
5. RE Today, following a corporate commissioning process, were awarded a contract worth £12,500 to facilitate and launch the revised RE syllabus and provide robust support across such areas as stakeholder engagement, design and implementation of the 2018 syllabus and to provide consultancy support to the clerk of SACRE.
6. It was further agreed at a SACRE meeting on 23 July 2018 with the RE Today consultant that the launch event would take place on Wednesday 7 November with the venue now confirmed as Castle Park (appendix 3). The new syllabus would include a specific introduction that sets the syllabus within the wider context of Doncaster Council's strategic priorities including ***Doncaster Growing Together*** and ***The Children and Young Peoples Plan***.
7. Members of SACRE have been consulted both on the content of the syllabus itself and have contributed to the introduction.
8. The new syllabus will be for all maintained schools in the borough or in accordance with the school's designated denomination or trust deeds. All schools must teach religious education to pupils at every key stage. Academies, Free Schools and Voluntary - aided schools with a religious character can choose to follow another agreed syllabus or adopt their own.
9. The RE Today Model Agreed Syllabus 2018 (Manchester Agreed RE Syllabus) example is included at appendix 1. The content and format of the Doncaster syllabus will be the same with the introduction and artwork tailored to the local context (appendix 2).

EXEMPT REPORT

10. This is not an exempt report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

11. That the Cabinet member for Children and Young People adopts and agrees the implementation and timescale for the introduction of the new Agreed RE Syllabus.
12. That the Cabinet member for Children and Young People authorises SACRE and LA officers to publish the new Doncaster Agreed RE Syllabus.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE CITIZENS OF DONCASTER?

13. Local Councils play a key role in helping to shape and drive forward improvement in education settings and it is important that they are involved in shaping the quality of provision in their area.

BACKGROUND

14. All maintained schools are required to follow the locally agreed syllabus for Religious Education adopted by their local authority. This needs to be reviewed every five years. A new syllabus is therefore required by the end of 2018.

OPTIONS CONSIDERED

15. SACRE considered three options:

Option 1 - the design and implementation of a fully bespoke syllabus.

Option 2 - use of a franchised syllabus which meets statutory requirements but has enhanced features and options such as teaching materials and resources that can be adapted to meet the needs of pupils and teachers.

Option 3 - Use a franchised syllabus but without the enhanced options of CPD and extra materials. The following three options for the implementation resolved to support Option 2 which is a franchised syllabus.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED OPTION

16. SACRE recommend Option 2 which meets statutory requirements but has enhanced features and options such as teaching materials and resources that can be adapted to meet the needs of pupils and teachers.

IMPACT ON THE COUNCIL'S KEY OUTCOMES

- 17.

	Outcomes	Implications
	<p>Doncaster Working: Our vision is for more people to be able to pursue their ambitions through work that gives them and Doncaster a brighter and prosperous future:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Better access to good fulfilling work• Doncaster businesses are supported to flourish• Inward Investment	Better opportunities for learning from and about RE will help children and young people to pursue their ambitions
	<p>Doncaster Living: Our vision is for Doncaster's people to live in a borough that is vibrant and full of opportunity, where people enjoy spending time:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The town centres are the beating heart of Doncaster• More people can live in a good quality, affordable home• Healthy and Vibrant Communities through Physical Activity and Sport• Everyone takes responsibility for keeping Doncaster Clean• Building on our cultural, artistic and sporting heritage	Improved outcomes help all children and young people to make the most of the opportunities offered by the borough. A balanced RE syllabus helps children and young people to develop an understanding of different cultures and beliefs.

	<p>Doncaster Learning: Our vision is for learning that prepares all children, young people and adults for a life that is fulfilling:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every child has life-changing learning experiences within and beyond school • Many more great teachers work in Doncaster Schools that are good or better • Learning in Doncaster prepares young people for the world of work 	<p>Children and young people benefit from improved education. A balanced RE curriculum helps to provide a broader range of learning experiences and understand and appreciate different viewpoints and beliefs.</p>
	<p>Doncaster Caring: Our vision is for a borough that cares together for its most vulnerable residents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children have the best start in life • Vulnerable families and individuals have support from someone they trust • Older people can live well and independently in their own homes 	<p>Religious Education is an essential part of a broad and balanced curriculum. This entitlement helps children to make the best possible start in life.</p>
	<p>Connected Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A modern, efficient and flexible workforce • Modern, accessible customer interactions • Operating within our resources and delivering value for money • A co-ordinated, whole person, whole life focus on the needs and aspirations of residents • Building community resilience and self-reliance by connecting community assets and strengths • Working with our partners and residents to provide effective leadership and governance 	<p>Improved outcomes will help all children and young people to benefit from the development of the connected Council.</p>

RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS

18. Reputational Risk: There is a risk to the Council that not providing schools with an updated Agreed RE Syllabus would result in the Council not complying with legislation Children and young people with low educational outcomes increase the risk of being unable to reach their full potential. There is a further reputational risk to the Council if we are not seen to be actively promoting cultural and religious diversity. A final risk would be around equality if we failed to provide equal access to a broad and balanced RE curriculum.
19. Financial Risk: There would be a risk of increasing pressure on other Council resources due to limited educational opportunities for children and young people

leading to low aspirations, low expectations and ultimately low educational outcomes.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS [Officer Initials H Potts Date 26.09.2018]

20. The local authority has a duty to adopt an RE syllabus, institute a review of its locally agreed syllabus within five years of the last review, and subsequently every five years after the completion of each further review. The current syllabus is due for renewal in 2018.
21. SACRE, through an Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC), is required to produce and recommend for adoption by the authority an agreed syllabus for RE which is educationally sound and meets legal requirements. The ASC agreed the content of the syllabus at its meeting on 26th March 2018.
22. The locally agreed syllabus is a statutory syllabus of RE prepared under Schedule 31 to the Education Act 1996 and adopted by the Local authority under that schedule. It must be followed in maintained schools without a designated denomination. Once adopted by the Local authority, the agreed syllabus sets out what pupils should be taught and can include the expected standards of pupils' performance at different stages. Every locally agreed syllabus must reflect that the religious traditions of Great Britain are in the main Christian, while taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain. The law does not define what the principal religions represented in Great Britain are. ASCs can decide which are the principal religions represented in Great Britain, other than Christianity, to be included in their agreed syllabus.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS [Officer Initials SB 14.09.2018]

23. The cost of consultant support (RE Today) in 2018-19 is £12,500 and will be funded from the general fund budget of the Learning Provision Service. This was included within the Learning Provision projections at Quarter 1.
24. There are no further revenue implications of this decision to the Local Authority. If there are any additional revenue costs then the individual schools using this syllabus will meet these from their existing budgets.

HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS [Officer Initials AG Date 14.09.2018]

25. There are no HR implications

TECHNOLOGY IMPLICATIONS [Officer Initials PW Date 21.09.2018]

26. There are no technology implications.

HEALTH IMPLICATIONS [Officer Initials CW Date 14.09.2018]

27. No direct health implications

EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS [Officer Initials PR Date 13.09.2018]

28. The move to a new and responsive agreed Syllabus emphasises the need for a knowledge base as well as the development of the skills to analyse and articulate religious and ethical issues.
29. It is vital in modern society that young people understand the worldwide range of beliefs, faith and religions. Our world is increasingly diverse and we must have both knowledge and understanding to make sense of what is happening and also to appreciate how the past has shaped the present and helps us learn lessons for the future.
30. Based on this knowledge and understanding, we shall be able to respect other views be they Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu, Sikh, Humanist or Atheist.

CONSULTATION

31. The process of implementing a new revised curriculum has been done in full consultation with members of SACRE and ASC. The draft curriculum and introduction have also been shared with members of SACRE.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Draft RE Syllabus Introduction Doncaster 2018 (appendix 2)
- RE Today Model Agreed Syllabus 2018 (The example included is The Manchester Agreed RE Syllabus). The content and format of the Doncaster syllabus will be the same with the introduction and artwork tailored to the local context. (appendix 1)
- RE Syllabus Launch Leaflet to Schools (appendix 3)

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