

Bath & North East Somerset Council

MEETING/ DECISION MAKER:	Cllr Dine Romero, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, Communities and Culture	
MEETING/ DECISION DATE:	On or after 6 th November 2021	EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE:
		E 3320
TITLE:	Request for the Updated Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education to be Approved	
WARD:	All	
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM		
<p>List of attachments to this report: Appendix 1: The Agreed RE Syllabus: 'Awareness, Mystery, Value'.</p>		

1 THE ISSUE

1.1 Every local authority (LA) has to have a Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) by law. SACRE can require the LA to review its agreed Syllabus for RE (This must happen at least every five years). As well as its regular work in monitoring standards and promoting interfaith respect and understanding, B&NES SACRE recently conducted its five-yearly review of the locally agreed Syllabus (LAS). This was carried out in partnership with three other LA SACREs that all share the Syllabus. They are Bristol, North Somerset and the London Borough of Haringey. At that meeting, constituted under Schedule 31 of the Education Act 1996, a unanimous recommendation was made to adopt an updated Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education. (See Appendix 1 for the full Syllabus).

2 RECOMMENDATION

2.1 The Cabinet Member is asked to; Review the updated Syllabus for Religious Education and support the recommendation, from the B&NES

Syllabus Conference, to ratify the current syllabus 'Awareness, Mystery & Value', to which, following a review, no changes have been made.

3 THE REPORT

3.1 Every local authority (LA) has to have a Standing Advisory Council on RE (SACRE) by law. The law says that religious education (RE) must be taught in all schools and academies and a SACRE's role is to advise its LA on what needs to be done to improve RE and collective worship for schools in its area. This is because RE is not part of the National Curriculum; it is a local responsibility. Through the SACRE, local communities and teachers have the opportunity to influence and support what pupils learn in RE.

SACRE:

- can require the LA to review its agreed Syllabus for RE (This must happen at least every five years);
- must consider applications from a headteacher that the school be allowed to modify the 'wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character' requirement for collective worship (This is known as a 'determination')
- must publish an annual report of its work.

More broadly, SACREs support good RE and collective worship within its schools by:

- giving advice on ways of teaching agreed syllabus RE, including the choice of teaching materials
- monitoring schools' provision for RE and collective worship as well as the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils
- advising the LA on the provision of training for teachers in RE
- considering complaints about the provisions and delivery of RE or collective worship referred to it by the LA.

SACRE is made up of four committees:

Group A: The Christian denominations and other religions and their denominations, reflecting the principal religions of the area.

Group B: The Church of England

Group C: Teacher and headteacher associations

Group D: The Local Authority

Bath & North East Somerset SACRE is well represented in each of these groups and a full list of members can be provided as required.

Current work

SACRE currently reviews school websites as part of its remit for monitoring standards in RE and collective worship in local schools and regularly reminds schools and Multi-academy Trust leaders of the need for clarity about its curriculum arrangements on their website. There have been improvements in this regard in recent months, but many still do not have easily found information on how they meet legal requirements for RE and collective worship.

As well as its regular work in monitoring standards and promoting interfaith respect and understanding, B&NES SACRE has recently conducted its five-yearly review of the locally agreed Syllabus (LAS). We have done this in partnership with three other LA SACREs that all share the Syllabus. They are Bristol, North Somerset and the London Borough of Haringey.

Consultations with schools and SACREs has taken place and work undertaken by the representatives of the four SACREs to address issues raised in those consultations.

4 STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS

- 4.1 The law says that religious education (RE) must be taught in all schools and academies and a SACRE's role is to advise its LA on what needs to be done to improve RE and collective worship for schools in its area. This is because RE is not part of the National Curriculum; it is a local responsibility. Through the SACRE, local communities and teachers have the opportunity to influence and support what pupils learn in RE.

5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCE, PROPERTY, PEOPLE)

- 5.1 None

6 RISK MANAGEMENT

- 6.1 A risk assessment related to the issue and recommendations has been undertaken, in compliance with the Council's decision-making risk management guidance.

7 EQUALITIES

- 7.1 An EIA has been carried out and submitted to the Equalities Team

8 CLIMATE CHANGE

- 8.1 Approving the online Syllabus minimises climate implications by minimising the need to use paper resources.

9 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 9.1 None

10 CONSULTATION

Members of the SACRE Committees were consulted on the proposal to reconsider the Syllabus (these included Cllrs Jackson and Kumar as nominated LA representatives)

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Background papers	
Please contact the report author if you need to access this report in an alternative format	