

CABINET

20 March 2018

RUTLAND AGREED SYLLABUS

Report of the Director for People

Strategic Aim:	Reaching our Full Potential	
Key Decision: No	Forward Plan Reference: FP/301117	
Exempt Information	No	
Cabinet Member(s) Responsible:	Councillor D Wilby, Portfolio Holder for Lifelong Learning	
Contact Officer(s):	Gill Curtis, Head of Learning and Skills	01572 758460 gcurtis@rutland.gov.uk
Ward Councillors	N/A	

DECISION RECOMMENDATIONS

That Cabinet:

1. **Recommends to Council** to adopt Rutland Agreed Syllabus as the locally agreed framework for the teaching of Religious Education in Rutland schools.

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The Rutland Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education sets out the statutory requirements for schools. The syllabus provides teachers with a framework from which to plan and to deliver lessons that are informative and challenging and will allow pupils to gain a developing understanding of the range of religious and non-religious world views studied.
- 1.2 The Agreed Syllabus must be formally adopted by each local authority. This report presents the draft Agreed Syllabus for adoption by Rutland County Council.

2. BACKGROUND AND MAIN CONSIDERATIONS

- 2.1 Religious Education (RE) is a legal requirement; as education policy changes, the legal requirement for RE remains unchanged.
- 2.2 RE is a necessary part of a 'broad and balanced curriculum', in accordance with the Education Reform Act (1988) and must be provided for all registered pupils in state-funded schools in England, including those in the reception year and sixth form, unless withdrawn by their parents (or withdrawing themselves if they are aged 18 or over). The Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education sets out the statutory requirements for the teaching of RE in schools:

- 2.2.1 Local authority maintained schools without a religious character must follow the locally agreed syllabus.
 - 2.2.2 Voluntary controlled schools with a religious character should follow the locally agreed syllabus, unless parents request RE in accordance with the trust deed or religious designation of the school.
 - 2.2.3 Voluntary aided schools with a religious character should provide RE in accordance with the trust deed or religious designation of the school, unless parents request the locally agreed syllabus.
 - 2.2.4 Academies, Free Schools and Voluntary Aided schools may choose to follow their locally agreed syllabus or a different locally agreed syllabus (with the permission of the SACRE concerned) or devise their own curriculum (which must broadly reflect the requirements of an agreed syllabus).
 - 2.2.5 Maintained special schools are required to ensure that as far as practicable, pupils receive RE according to the locally agreed syllabus.
- 2.3 There is no national syllabus for the teaching of RE; the syllabus is produced locally and must be formally adopted by each local authority. Under the Education Act 1996 (Sections 375 and 390 to 392 and Schedule 31) as amended by the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, every local authority has a duty to establish a permanent body known as the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) and, at least every five years, to establish a body known as an Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC) to develop an Agreed Syllabus for the teaching of RE in its area.
- 2.4 This agreed syllabus is the key document in determining the teaching of RE and explains the value and purposes of RE for all pupils, and specifies, for teachers, what shall be taught in each age phase. It provides a coherent framework for setting high standards of learning in RE, and enabling pupils to reach their potential in the subject. The syllabus does not dictate the detail of what it should contain other than 'every agreed syllabus shall reflect the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian whilst taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain'
- 2.5 However, RE is not simply about gaining knowledge and understanding about religions and beliefs. It also helps pupils to develop their own understanding of the world and how to live, in the light of their learning, by 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.
- 2.6 Rutland adopted the Northamptonshire Agreed Syllabus for use for a five-year period from September 2011, ending in September 2016. In July 2016, Rutland SACRE recommended that the Local Authority approve the existing syllabus until a new syllabus was agreed locally with Cambridgeshire, Northamptonshire and Peterborough.
- 2.7 On 5th December 2016, members from Cambridgeshire, Peterborough and Northamptonshire SACREs met in Northampton and convened as a joint Agreed Syllabus Conference (jASC) to co-produce a concise new syllabus. Rutland SACRE joined in April 2017. The four local authorities share the services of Amanda Fitton as Religious Education Advisor.
- 2.8 The jASC has written a new syllabus and recommends that Rutland County Council, as Education Authority, adopt it for use in schools from September 2018. The jASC

has noted the 2010 Department for Children Schools and Families' 'Religious Education in English schools: Non statutory guidance 2010' within the development of this syllabus.

- 2.9 The jASC has considered national changes and developments, both in RE and in education in general, and proposes changes which will allow many schools to continue as before with no need to significantly change lesson content, whilst being free to plan learning in a more enquiring and learning-focused way. It will also allow individual schools to ensure that younger pupils acquire the foundation knowledge needed for whichever GCSE and higher examinations they may take in the subject. There is less focus on content, allowing schools the freedom to plan a curriculum which is appropriate for their pupils yet still maintaining the integrity of RE as a discrete subject, promoting religious literacy.

3. CONSULTATION

- 3.1 The Agreed Syllabus Conference consulted with Head Teachers and with wider teaching staff through network meetings and this has continued throughout the process.

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 4.1 The Agreed Syllabus is a statutory requirement and therefore if it was not provided the Council would not be undertaking its statutory functions and could be open to legal challenge.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no significant financial implications for Rutland County Council associated with the adoption of a new syllabus for the teaching of Religious Education in Rutland from September 2018.
- 5.2 A small amount of funding may be required for a launch event to ensure school leaders, governors and relevant teaching staff in Rutland maintained schools and academies have knowledge and understanding of this new syllabus. This is accounted for within the Learning and Skills Service budget in funding annually allocated to support SACRE.

6. LEGAL AND GOVERNANCE CONSIDERATIONS

- 6.1 The actions outlined above have been carried out in order to comply with the requirements of the Education Reform Act 1988 and the Education (Schools) Act 1996

7. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been completed. No adverse or other significant issues were found. A copy of the EqIA can be obtained from Gill Curtis, Head of Learning and Skills gcurtis@rutland.gov.uk

8. COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are no community safety implications associated with the Rutland Agreed Syllabus. Religious Education encourages children and young people to develop and express their insights and to agree or disagree respectfully and contribute respectfully to an open, articulate and understanding society.
- 8.2 Schools do not accept intolerant attitudes to members of the community; attitudes which reject other people on the basis of race, faith, gender, sexual orientation or age are rightly challenged. RE can challenge children and young people to be increasingly respectful and to celebrate diversity which will contribute to maintaining community safety.

9. HEALTH AND WELLBEING IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Good religious literacy supports the teaching and understanding of British Values, Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development and the PREVENT agenda. It is important to prepare children and young people in Rutland for life in a twenty-first century world, and it is clear that religion and belief play a central role in local and global affairs.

10. CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 Religious education gives Rutland pupils an ideal opportunity to explore matters of religions and non-religious beliefs, to find out what matters most to people in a wide range of traditions represented in our county and beyond, and to discern what is of value for themselves as they develop their own ideas and ways of living.
- 10.2 This new agreed syllabus has been developed as a resource to support pupils in this endeavour. It sets out what should be studied in RE and offers clear advice and guidance on how this can be done so that pupils can develop a coherent understanding of religions and non-religious beliefs and will promote high standards of RE in Rutland schools.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 11.1 There are no additional background papers to the report

12. APPENDICES

- 12.1 Appendix A – Rutland Draft Agreed Syllabus
- 12.2 Appendix B – Draft Guidance for Assessment and Draft Progression Documents
(These documents are part of the Agreed Syllabus and are included to provide additional support for teachers of RE)

A Large Print or Braille Version of this Report is available upon request – Contact 01572 722577