

**Decision maker:** SACRE Agreed Syllabus Conference

**Subject:** Ratification of the revised Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education

**Date of decision:** 17 November 2010

**Report by:** Clive Erricker, Consultant

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## **1. Purpose of report**

- 1.1 To present the Agreed Syllabus Conference with the proposed revisions to the agreed syllabus for RE, Living Difference, for ratification.

## **2. Background**

- 2.1 This paper supports the Corporate Strategy (maximising well being) by ensuring children's provision in religious education is secure.
- 2.2 Primary legislation requires that an agreed syllabus for RE is reviewed every five years. The syllabus, Living Difference, was published and launched in schools in July 2004 and a review has been carried out during 2009-2010.

## **3. Recommendation**

**That the agreed syllabus conference approves the revised Agreed Syllabus and that it is distributed to schools in January 2011.**

## **4. Arrangements with local SACREs:**

- 4.1 Meetings have taken place with representatives from Portsmouth, Hampshire and Southampton SACREs to carry out the joint review. Funding arrangements and schedules have been discussed and agreed at the SACRE meetings and Agreed Syllabus Conferences within each authority.

## **5. Surveys on the level of implementation and the quality of Living Difference:**

- 5.1. Since its publication in 2004, two surveys have been carried out in Portsmouth, Hampshire, and Southampton schools to evaluate the success of Living Difference.
- 5.2. A quantitative survey was carried out in 2005/6 with regards to the level of implementation of the syllabus within schools. The results were very positive and illustrated the initial impact of the syllabus on schools in the three authorities. Findings were discussed at SACRE meetings.
- 5.3. A qualitative survey/research project was carried out later (2007-2008) by Katherine Wedell, an independent researcher, to investigate the impact of Living Difference on pupils' attainment in RE. The findings were very positive and demonstrated the success of the conceptual enquiry led approach and its methodology. The results of the research have been published nationally and have initiated considerable interest. The findings from the survey and research project have informed the review of the agreed syllabus

## **6. The Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency (QCDA) collaboration group:**

- 6.1. The QCDA established a collaboration group attended by SACRE support officers of local authorities whose agreed syllabi are under review. The purpose of the group was to establish more consistency for RE syllabi across the country and to offer opportunities to network and share successes. Living Difference has been recognised by QCDA (Qualification and Curriculum Development Agency ) and OFSTED as providing a very effective approach to RE .

## **7. The review process:**

- 7.1. A series of full day meetings was scheduled. Working party meetings were for representatives from the SACREs of each authority, Advanced Skills RE teachers (ASTs) and the SACRE support officers. The task was to identify revisions required in the light of the surveys carried out, the QCDA meeting and changes within the primary and secondary curriculum since the implementation of Living Difference in 2004. The syllabus was also enriched by more recent initiatives within the curriculum such as the development of thinking skills and philosophical enquiry. Feedback from teachers also enabled the group to simplify some of the text and diagrams. A writing group of ASTs for RE and the support officers of the 3 authorities wrote the recommended revisions.