

What is an Agreed Syllabus Conference?

This is a statutory body brought together in order to produce an agreed syllabus for Religious Education. It is a separate legal body from a SACRE. Every Local Authority is required to support this occasional body, and therefore is required to provide funds and support for the work.

What must the Agreed Syllabus Conference do?

- Produce and recommend to the Local Authority an agreed syllabus for RE
- Must specify what is to be taught through the agreed syllabus
- May not specify the time that must be set for RE in the curriculum, but it can an estimate of what time would be required to teach the syllabus for planning
- Meet in public
- Unanimously recommend a syllabus for adoption by the LA
- Ensure it is made up from the same interest groups as the SACRE, but who might not be the same people
- Include on any sub-committees/ working groups/ task and finish groups at least one member of its constituent committees
- Has no provision for co-opted members
- May be chaired by the LA or another agreed person to be decided by the group

What should an Agreed Syllabus Conference consider?

- How will this build on or link to the current syllabus – Living Difference III?
- How will local faith and belief be reflected?
- What will schools be required to do or amend?
- What is the relationship of this RE syllabus to other whole school priorities such as Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development or catch-up?
- What should pupils learn at each Key Stage?
- What is statutory?
- How will the syllabus best be delivered?
- Does it meet out local requirements?

What decision will be made at the Agreed Syllabus Conference meeting – 8th November 2021?

Following a presentation and discussion regarding the syllabus, developed since September 2020, through the working groups that have combined with Hampshire, Portsmouth and Isle of Wight working groups Southampton ASC will be asked to vote to approve and recommend the Syllabus – Living Difference IV to the Local Authority.

The ASC decision will then be recommended to the cabinet in December as per the constitution.

The formal launch for Living Difference IV in Southampton will be in January 2022, for implementation by September 2022.

Summary of considerations

A wide range of educational and religious educational research has been reviewed during this process, together with consultations and pilots of some new aspects.

National changes such as the new EYFS framework, Statutory assessment frameworks, changes to PSHE and Relationships education, Education Inspection Framework changes

Local findings from monitoring visits, training engagement and feedback has also been included as well as some direct consultation with teachers

Revisions and additions from Living Difference III into Living Difference IV

- An optional cycle, named “Pondering time” has been introduced – for schools to be able to offer a child-led enquiry approach appropriate to needs for upto 20% This will enable pupils to be able to develop independent inquiry skills alongside building their own understanding of a particular question, concept or interest in order to know and understand more about a chosen aspect of RE guided by the teacher in an age and developmentally appropriate manner.
- Golden concepts or words have been established to provide greater connection of curriculum across the Key Stages, therefore enhancing the building on prior learning from Key Stage 1 to 2 and 2 to 3 in particular. “**belonging, community, love and special**”. It will enable teachers at the next phase of education to “pick up the golden threads” and enable children to bring some more coherent prior learning to the more advanced aspects that will be studied moving forward and apply this to, for example, more C concepts.
- The theoretical underpinning of educationally sound research remains central to the syllabus.
- The further development of assessment has been included. There has been much change in statutory assessment since the previous review occurred and this syllabus has retained the familiar pedagogy of teaching through the cycle of enquiry whilst highlighting aspects that may be assessed at different steps of the cycle accordingly.
- Further clarity regarding the evaluate step of the cycle is included in supporting materials and training planned so that teachers are clear evaluate is not assess. It for a pupil to evaluate the concept or question from their own perspective- to bring the learning they have gained to a point where they are able to reflect and consider what they have learnt and what that means to them, but also to their family and community.
- Further clarity for the now re-named Inquire step (previously enquire). This makes clear that the Inquire step is where the teacher introduces the child/young person to new material in the form of a more structured inquiry or investigation. This is where the substantive knowledge is taught. This small change also makes a distinction between the overarching cycle of enquiry (which is more open ended) and what the Inquire step entails.

Explanation and exploration of how this syllabus can be brought to life to achieve its aims will be presented at the Agreed Syllabus Conference, 8th November 2021.