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# **Executive Decision**

Revised Agreed Syllabus for RE  
2024 -2029

Decision to be taken by:  
Assistant City Mayor – Education

Decision to be taken on:  
01 November 2024

Lead director/officer: Laurence Jones

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## Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: All
- Report author: Melanie Gaiderman
- Author contact details: melanie.gaiderman@leicester.gov.uk
- Report version number: 1

## 1. Summary

- 1.1 It is a statutory requirement that every SACRE (Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education) carries out a review of their agreed syllabus every five years<sup>1</sup>. Leicester City's agreed syllabus was last reviewed in 2019 and at that time SACRE advised that no major changes were necessary. Non-statutory guidance was made available to schools instead.
- 1.2 In 2022 the agreed syllabus was discussed by SACRE and it was agreed that a major review of the syllabus was required to reflect current thinking, for example:
- Approaches towards RE, e.g. in relation to teaching about religion and worldviews.
  - A new Ofsted Framework, with an emphasis on the curriculum, especially in non-core subjects, including RE.<sup>2</sup>
  - The most recent Ofsted Research Review into RE (2021)<sup>3</sup>
- 1.3 During the SACRE meeting on the 12th of October 2022, SACRE recommended that the Consultant RE Adviser, Wendy Harrison, would undertake this work, as *WH Training & Consultancy Ltd*. In January 2023 members formally appointed Wendy to undertake the review and rewrite of the Leicester Agreed Syllabus, to commence work immediately, with a completion date of August 31<sup>st</sup> 2024.
- 1.4 It was agreed that all members of Leicester SACRE would form the Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC) and this body would meet as a separate entity after each SACRE meeting. During the ASC meetings Wendy Harrison would be required to provide members with detailed updates about the progress of the new syllabus.
- 1.5 It was agreed that the process would involve consultation with primary and secondary school teachers, teacher advisory groups as well as religious and non-religious communities. These groups, along with the ASC would provide the necessary checks and balances.

## 2. Recommended actions/decision

- Lead Member received a recommendation from Leicester SACRE, following a meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> September 2024, that the new syllabus is adopted as the new Local Agreed Syllabus for the city of Leicester, for implementation from November 2024.

<sup>1</sup>Pursuant to paragraph 2 of Schedule 31 of the Education Act 1996

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-inspection-handbook-eif/school-inspection-handbook>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/research-review-series-religious-education/research-review-series-religious-education>

- The Council to undertake the distribution (digitally) to all city schools.

### 3. Scrutiny / stakeholder engagement

This has been provided by:

- The Leicester SACRE Agreed Syllabus Conference
- Individual input from SACRE members
- Members of Leicester's religious and non-religious communities
- Primary Advisory Group
- Secondary Advisory Group

### 4. Background and options with supporting evidence

#### Agreed Syllabus for the City of Leicester, 2024 – 29

The syllabus is based upon a worldviews approach<sup>4</sup> which is about the ways in which people make sense of the world and the impact this has on their daily life. The term refers to both religious and non-religious worldviews. The syllabus requires pupils to consider the lived experiences of people, rather than simply study religions which may be disconnected from real experience. In this syllabus pupils learn about religion and worldviews (RWs) through the key concepts that connect them. The aim is to transform teaching and learning to achieve high quality Religious Education (RE) for all.

**The principal aim of RE in Leicester** is to help pupils develop knowledge, skills and understanding about a wide range of religions and worldviews, enabling them to play a full part in a diverse society. Pupils will:

- develop thinking skills which enable them, over time, to navigate an increasingly complex world
- understand **how** as well as **what** to learn, through disciplinary and substantive knowledge
- understand that diversity exists between and within religions and worldviews
- know and understand about non-religious and secular perspectives
- reflect upon, and respond to, the ways in which local, national and world events are linked to beliefs, communities, identities, expressions of faith and conflicting interpretations

### 5. Financial, legal, equalities, climate emergency and other implications

#### 5.1 Financial implications

There are no direct financial costs for the LA beyond the current grant from Education and SEND for SACRE, £15k for 24/25, which enabled the consultation with schools and RE teachers. Schools will be charged for support and advice from the Consultant RE Adviser as for all other curriculum support.

Signed: Paresh Radia

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<sup>4</sup> <https://religiouseducationcouncil.org.uk/rwapproach>

Dated: 26.9.2024

## 5.2 Legal implications

Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education (SACREs) are responsible to establish a 'conference' to produce an Agreed Syllabus.

In accordance with paragraph 2 of Schedule 31 of the Education Act 1996, a Local Authority is required to review its Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education at least every five years. The previously Agreed Syllabus was reviewed and agreed in 2019 therefore the Council must review and agree the implementation of the revised Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education no later than 2024.

In accordance with paragraph 4 of Schedule 31 of the Education Act 1996 an Agreed Syllabus Conference was convened on 12 September 2024 to produce and recommend to the Council an agreed Religious Education Syllabus for the City of Leicester.

Only an Agreed Syllabus Conference may recommend an agreed syllabus and its recommendation must be unanimously agreed by the committees constituting the Conference.

The Conference has recommended a new syllabus to be adopted in substitution for the existing syllabus which is due to be implemented from November 2024.

The new agreed syllabus is consistent with Section 375(3) of the Education Act 1996, School Standards and Framework Act, 1998, which states that it must 'reflect that the religious traditions of Great Britain are in the main Christian, whilst taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain.'

Therefore, in line with paragraph 10(2)(b) of Schedule 31 of the Education Act the Local Authority may give effect to the recommendation.

Signed: Suraiya Ziaullah Employment & Education Solicitor 0116 454 1487

Dated: 03 October 2024

## 5.3 Equalities implications

When making decisions, the Council must comply with the public sector equality duty (PSED) (Equality Act 2010) by paying due regard, when carrying out their functions, to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who share a 'protected characteristic' and those who do not. We need to be clear about any equalities implications of the course of action proposed. In doing so, we must consider the likely impact on those likely to be affected by the options in the report and, in particular, the proposed option; their protected characteristics; and (where negative impacts are anticipated) mitigating actions that can be taken to reduce or remove that negative impact.

Protected characteristics under the public sector equality duty are age, disability, gender re-assignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. The syllabus is designed to provide a framework for teaching religious education in a way that is inclusive, balanced, and relevant to the local community, and is intended to reflect the religious diversity of the area and to promote understanding and respect for different faiths and beliefs.

The syllabus was drawn up with input from the following groups:  
Leicester SACRE: which includes representation from religious and non-religious communities in Leicester. Faith communities in the city, including Buddhist, Christian, Pagan, Islam. Teacher advisory groups which included a broad representation of religions and worldviews.

The recommended learning and teaching styles, and the revised content, intrinsically promote equality of opportunity and treatment towards all. The syllabus therefore enables schools to address inequalities and bias towards people and groups, especially those with Protected Characteristics in law, by establishing opportunities within the curriculum to explore these issues with pupils of all ages and abilities.

Signed: Surinder Singh

Dated: 27 September 2024

#### 5.4 Climate Emergency implications

There are no climate emergency implications directly associated with this report.

Signed: Aidan Davis, Sustainability Officer, Ext 37 2284

Dated: 26/09/2024

#### 5.5 Other implications (You will need to have considered other implications in preparing this report. Please indicate which ones apply?)

None

### **6. Background information and other papers:**

Work with teachers' advisory groups has referred to the following papers:

Government Circular 1/94

Religious Education in English schools: Non-statutory Guidance 2010

Ofsted Deep and Meaningful: The religious education subject report 2024<sup>5</sup>

Ofsted research review series: Religious Education, 2021<sup>6</sup>

Religious Education Council. Developing a Religion and Worldviews Approach in Religious Education in England, 2024<sup>7</sup>

The Church of England Education Office. Religious Education in Church of England Schools, A Statement of Entitlement, 2019<sup>8</sup>

Woodhead, L. The rise of 'no religion in Britain: The emergence of a new cultural majority, 2016<sup>9</sup>

Putting Ideas into Practice: Big Ideas in Religious Education: Barbara Wintersgill et al.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/subject-report-series-religious-education/deep-and-meaningful-the-religious-education-subject-report>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/research-review-series-religious-education/research-review-series-religious-education#curriculum-progression>

<sup>7</sup> <https://religiouseducationcouncil.org.uk/rwapproach/>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2019-02/re-statement-of-entitlement-for-church-schools.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> [https://www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk/documents/1043/11\\_Woodhead\\_1825.pdf](https://www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk/documents/1043/11_Woodhead_1825.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.reonline.org.uk/resources/putting-big-ideas-into-practice-in-religious-education/>

'Championing the underdog: a positive pluralist approach to equality and diversity in religious education' – presentation by Professor Denise Cush, Bath Spa university.

**7. Summary of appendices:**

**8. Is this a private report (If so, please indicate the reasons and state why it is not in the public interest to be dealt with publicly)?**

**NA**

**9. Is this a “key decision”? If so, why?**

**No**