

## EQUALITY ANALYSIS

Please refer to Part 2 of the Equality Analysis Guidance

### **Name of Policy/Decision/Project/Activity:**

#### **Agreed Syllabus for RE**

#### **Equality Analysis completed by:**

Name Annette Parr  
Job Title: Lead Support &  
Intervention officer

Date: 23.09.2013

#### **Responsible Officer:**

Name /Job Title: Annette Parr –  
Lead Support and Intervention  
Officer

Date: 23.09.2013

**Is this a:** Policy ( ☒ ) Strategy ( ) Function ( )  
Service ( ) Project ( ) Other ( )

**Is it:** New/Proposed ( )  
Changing/Being Reviewed ( ☒ ) Other ( )

## 1. Purpose and Scope

### **Purpose**

In this section outline briefly what the policy, decision or activity is, what the intended outcomes/benefits (linked to the Corporate Outcomes Framework) are and over what period of time will the outcomes be achieved. Why does it need to be implemented or revised?

Local authorities have a statutory duty to set up and maintain a Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education as set out under Section 31 of the Education Act 1996. The Agreed Syllabus is for all maintained schools or in accordance with the school's designated denomination or trust deeds. The Agreed Syllabus must be reviewed every 5 years.

The new syllabus is a revision of the Sunderland Agreed Syllabus for Education produced in 2008. It takes into account local and regional resources for RE and make up of local religious communities. In line with national guidance, the Agreed Syllabus for Sunderland has been reviewed and re-written. An Agreed Syllabus Conference has taken place, organised by

SACRE (standing advisory committee for Religious education) on 15<sup>th</sup> July 2013.

SACRE comprises:

Group A – Christian Denominations (other than C of E) and other religions which reflect the principal religions in the area

Group B – Church of England

Group C – Teacher representatives (from a range of teacher associations)

Group D – Local Authority (LA councillors)

The new arrangements will be in place from 1 November 2013.

### **Scope**

In this section consider who or where is the target for the policy or activity, this could be specific groups of people or organisations, individual wards, neighbourhoods or communities or the entire city. Links to, and overlap with, wider, local, sub-regional, regional or national priorities or activities should also be considered.

The local agreed syllabus for RE, has been prepared under Schedule 31 to the Education Act 1996 and adopted by the Local Authority under that schedule. The Agreed Syllabus will be for all maintained schools or in accordance with the school's designated denomination or trust deeds. Religious Education is still statutory on the curriculum although Academies, Free schools and Voluntary aided schools with a religious character can choose to follow another agreed syllabus or adopt their own.

The Education Act 1996 states that an agreed syllabus must reflect the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian whilst taking account of the preaching and practices of other principal religions represented in Great Britain. It must be non-denominational and must not be designed to convert pupils or to urge a particular religion or religious belief on pupils. Teaching about denominations is not prohibited.

### **Intelligence and Information**

What sources of information have been used to inform this assessment/analysis? This should include but is not limited to consultations, resident/service user feedback and statistical data and intelligence.

An Agreed Syllabus Conference was convened on 15<sup>th</sup> July 2013 with representatives made up from four groups:

Group A – Christian Denominations (other than C of E) and other religions which reflect the principal religions in the area

Group B – Church of England

Group C – Teacher representatives (from a range of teacher associations)

Group D – Local Authority (LA councillors)

The final draft of the new syllabus was submitted to the Agreed Syllabus Conference on 15 July 2013 when it was unanimously agreed to recommend

the Syllabus to the Cabinet for formal adoption. Subject to the agreement of Cabinet, the new syllabus will be formally launched at a training day with all RE staff in Sunderland.

The report is due to go to cabinet on 9<sup>th</sup> October 2013 .

## 2. Analysis of Impact on People

This section offers an opportunity to assess the intended and potential impact of the policy, decision or activity on the people of Sunderland. This includes specific consideration of the impact on individuals, groups with protected characteristics and communities of interest within the city. Please briefly outline any positive, negative or neutral impacts on the specific groups below. In this assessment it is important to remember the Council is required to give due regard to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

| Characteristic                 | List of Impacts  |   |   |
|--------------------------------|--|---|---|
|                                | Positive   | Neutral   | Negative  |
| Age                            | n/a  | The key focus and learning outcomes for each key stage, along with the RE levels, sets out the expected standards of pupils' performance at different ages. | n/a   |
| Disability                     | n/a  | The policy is inclusive of all children and young people  | n/a   |
| Gender/Sex                     | n/a  | The syllabus not discriminatory in terms of gender  | n/a   |
| Marriage and Civil Partnership | n/a  | n/a   | n/a   |
| Pregnancy and maternity        | n/a  | n/a   | n/a   |
| Race/Ethnicity                 | The syllabus will support students to have a better understanding of multiple faiths and |   | Some parents may argue that they do not want their child to access elements of the proposed |

|                              |   |     |   |
|------------------------------|---|-----|---|
|                              | belief systems  |     | syllabus  |
| Religion/belief              | The syllabus will support students to have a better understanding of multiple faiths and belief systems | n/a | Some parents may argue that they do not want their child to access elements of the proposed |
| Sexual Orientation           | n/a   | n/a | n/a   |
| Trans-gender/gender identity | n/a   | n/a | n/a   |

**Other individuals or groups impacted on:**

The policy or action may also have an impact on other groups or individuals which are not covered by the statutory requirements. Please outline any additional individuals or groups which have not already been covered. This could include socio-economic groups, voluntary and community sector, carers or specific communities which face additional challenges (such as former coal mining areas or areas of high deprivation)

Teaching staff will need relevant professional development opportunities to be familiar and confident in the delivery of the Agreed Syllabus. Thought should be given to how schools are supported in dealing with any objections that might arise from parents.

The legal requirements for teaching religious education were set out in the Education Act 1988 and confirmed by Education Acts 1996 and School Standards framework Act 1998. Parents have the right to withdraw their children from all or part of religious education lessons.

**Gaps in intelligence and information:**

Having undertaken the analysis are there any areas of intelligence or information which need to be improved? Please outline and areas where the current information is not complete enough to take a decision. Addressing this gap should be covered in the action plan.

The Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) will be required to monitor and evaluate the implementation and outcomes related to the Agreed syllabus. Any omissions will be identified and used by the group to inform future decision making processes.

**Policy/Decision/Project/Activity Title:**

**Agreed Syllabus for RE**

**Responsible Officer: Annette Parr**

**3. Summary of Impacts and Response to Analysis**

Please provide a summary of the overarching impacts that have been highlighted through the analysis process through the three questions below. It is important to recognise that individuals may belong to one or more of these characteristic groups and the combined impact could be greater than any single impact.

**Who will the policy/decision/project/activity impact on and who will benefit?**

All pupils and students in all maintained schools or in accordance with the school's designated denomination or trust deeds.

**Who will not benefit and why not?**

Schools who have control over their own syllabus i.e. Academies, Free schools and Voluntary aided schools, will not necessarily benefit as they can choose to follow another agreed syllabus or adopt their own

**Who should be expected to benefit and why don't they?**

The legal requirements for teaching religious education were set out in the Education Act 1988 and confirmed by Education Acts of 1996 and School Standards and Framework Act 1998. Parents have the right to withdraw their children from all or part of Religious Education lessons.

**4. Response to Analysis, Action Plan and Monitoring,**

In this section please outline what actions you propose to take to minimise the negative, and maximise the positive, impacts that have been identified through the analysis. By considering and implementing these actions the policy or action can be refined to make sure that the greatest benefits are achieved for the people of Sunderland. The performance monitoring process should also be set out to explain how ongoing progress is going to be followed to make sure that the aims are met.

From the analysis four broad approaches can be taken, (No major change, continue with the policy/action despite negative implications, adjust the policy/decision/action or stop the policy/action). Please indicate, using the list below, which is proposed.

- No Major Change ( **x** )
- Continue Despite Negative Implications ( )
- Adjust the Policy/Decision/Project/Activity ( )
- Stop ( )

**Action Plan**

| ACTION   | WHO   | WHEN   | MONITORING ARRANGEMENTS |
|--|-------|--------|-------------------------|
| To monitor and devalue the impact of the Syllabus on pupil outcomes  | SACRE | Termly | Formal SACRE meeting    |
| Provision of relevant professional development opportunities to teaching staff so that they are familiar and confident in the delivery of the Agreed Syllabus. | SACRE | Termly | Formal SACRE meeting    |
| Development of support for schools to help deal with any objections that might arise from parents.   | SACRE | Termly | Formal SACRE meeting    |
|  |       |        |                         |
|  |       |        |                         |
|  |       |        |                         |
|  |       |        |                         |
|  |       |        |                         |
|  |       |        |                         |

**Comment [s1]:**  
 upil outcomes have not been previously mentioned in this Equality Analysis. Please describe what these are in section 1 which asks what the benefits/outcomes are of the Agreed Syllabus.