

COUNCIL			
Report Title	Review of the Lewisham Agreed Syllabus for religious education 2018		
Key Decision	Yes	Item No.	
Ward	All		
Contributors	Executive Director for Children and Young People		
Class	Part 1	Date:	18 July 2018

1. Summary

- 1.1 This report summarises the work of the Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC) and seeks approval for the new Lewisham Agreed Syllabus for religious education 2018. The Syllabus is attached as Appendix 2.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 The Mayor and Cabinet reviewed the Lewisham Agreed Syllabus for religious education 2018 for use in Lewisham schools on 27th June 2018 and agreed it prior to this being presented to Council for final approval.

3. Policy Context

- 3.1 In 2015, the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) requested that the Local Authority (LA) establish an Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC) to revise the 2009 syllabus and draft a new Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education (RE) for Lewisham schools. All Local Authorities are required by statute to undertake this activity in line with Section 375 of the Education Act 1996.
- 3.2 Whilst the ASC is a standalone body set up specifically to undertake this piece of work, the group has developed the syllabus in accordance with the following Corporate Priorities:

community leadership and empowerment – the ASC is comprised of local religious and faith group leaders who have worked together to develop an appropriate religious education syllabus for the children and young people of Lewisham.

young people's achievement and involvement – the ASC listened to the views of young people (working with the Young Mayor's Advisors) and to school teachers and leaders (who are represented on the ASC)

- 3.3 The syllabus also reflects a number of specific aspects of Lewisham's Community Strategy including:

Ambitious and achieving – the syllabus provides comprehensive programmes of study for all children and young people from Reception to post-16. The syllabus advises all schools to ensure that all children and young people study for a GCSE in RE during Key Stage 4.

Safer – The content of the syllabus has been specifically designed to ensure all children and young people have access to learning about a wide range of different faiths and beliefs, which are reflective of the communities in which they live as well as national and international/global experiences. This syllabus will support all schools in Lewisham to ensure that they are providing spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development in accordance with fundamental British values. *“Pupils must be encouraged to regard people of all faiths, races and cultures with respect and tolerance”* (see: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/380595/SMSC_Guidance_Maintained_Schools.pdf).

Empowered and responsible – The syllabus will equip children and young people in Lewisham with knowledge and understanding about a wide range of different faiths, beliefs and cultures whilst enabling them to explore their own beliefs and attitudes. This will help our children and young people to be empowered and responsible citizens

4. Background

- 4.1 Every maintained school in England must provide a basic curriculum covering religious education (RE), sex education and the National Curriculum. This includes provision for RE for all registered pupils at the school (including those in the sixth form), except for those withdrawn by their parents (or withdrawing themselves if they are aged 18 or over) in accordance with Schedule 19 to the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. The key document in determining the teaching of RE is the locally Agreed Syllabus within the LA concerned.
- 4.2 The ASC has met on a number of occasions since 7 July 2015 and has included a wide representation of local faith leaders to support and agree the content for the syllabus. Contributors to the development of the Syllabus can be found at Appendix 1. All the agendas, papers and minutes for ASC meetings are available on the

council's website (see <http://councilmeetings.lewisham.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?CId=341&Year=0>) along with the membership of the ASC. The final proposed syllabus was agreed in May 2018.

5. Financial Implications

This will be the first Agreed Syllabus maintained entirely online. This will reduce the cost of production and distribution. The costs of developing and publishing the syllabus will be met from within existing budgets. There are no further material financial implications from this decision

6. Legal implications

- 6.1 Local authorities must ensure that the Agreed Syllabus for their area is consistent with Section 375 (3) of the Education Act 1996, which requires the syllabus to reflect the religious traditions of Great Britain, which are in the main Christian, whilst taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain.
- 6.2 The Equality Act 2010 (the Act) introduced a public sector equality duty (the equality duty or the duty). It covers the following protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
- 6.3 In summary, the Council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:
 - eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the 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.
- 6.4 It is not an absolute requirement to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation or other prohibited conduct, or to promote equality of opportunity or foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. It is a duty to have due regard to the need to achieve the goals listed at 8.4 above.
- 6.5 The weight to be attached to the duty will be dependent on the nature of the decision and the circumstances in which it is made. This is a matter for the Mayor, bearing in mind the issues of relevance and proportionality. The Mayor must understand the impact or likely impact of the decision on those with protected characteristics who are potentially affected by the decision. The extent of the duty will

necessarily vary from case to case and due regard is such regard as is appropriate in all the circumstances.

- 6.6 The Equality and Human Rights Commission has issued Technical Guidance on the Public Sector Equality Duty and statutory guidance entitled “Equality Act 2010 Services, Public Functions & Associations Statutory Code of Practice”. The Council must have regard to the statutory code in so far as it relates to the duty and attention is drawn to Chapter 11 which deals particularly with the equality duty. The Technical Guidance also covers what public authorities should do to meet the duty. This includes steps that are legally required, as well as recommended actions. The guidance does not have statutory force but nonetheless regard should be had to it, as failure to do so without compelling reason would be of evidential value. The statutory code and the technical guidance can be found at:

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/equality-act-codes-practice>

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/equality-act-technical-guidance>

- 6.7 The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) has previously issued five guides for public authorities in England giving advice on the equality duty:

- [The essential guide to the public sector equality duty](#)
- [Meeting the equality duty in policy and decision-making](#)
- [Engagement and the equality duty: A guide for public authorities](#)
- [Objectives and the equality duty. A guide for public authorities](#)
- [Equality Information and the Equality Duty: A Guide for Public Authorities](#)

- 6.8 The essential guide provides an overview of the equality duty requirements including the general equality duty, the specific duties and who they apply to. It covers what public authorities should do to meet the duty including steps that are legally required, as well as recommended actions. The other four documents provide more detailed guidance on key areas and advice on good practice. Further information and resources are available at:

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/public-sector-equality-duty-guidance#h1>

7. Crime and Disorder Implications

- 7.1 There are no crime and disorder implications relevant to this report.

8. Equalities Implications

8.1 Religious education contributes to promoting fundamental British Values and to supporting community cohesion. The draft Syllabus has involved multi faith working and the result reflects the vibrant diversity of Lewisham. The group that wrote this curriculum were at pains to ensure that all aspects of equalities and diversity are respected in the document.

9. Environmental Implications

9.1 There are no specific environmental implications. As it is proposed to have the new syllabus as an online document, there is minimal environmental impact, e.g. no printed paper.

Appendices

Appendix 1	Contributors to the development of the Syllabus
	Lewisham Agreed Syllabus for religious education
Appendix 2A	Introduction
Appendix 2B	Early Years Foundation Stage
Appendix 2C	Key Stage 1 & 2 Faith Content
Appendix 2D	Key Stage 1 Units
Appendix 2E	Key Stage 2 Units
Appendix 2F	Key Stage 3 Statutory Units
Appendix 2G	Key Stage 3 Optional Units
Appendix 2H	Key Stage 4
Appendix 2I	Key Stage 5
Appendix 2J	Glossaries
Appendix 2K	Appendices

If there are any queries on this report please contact Suhaib Saeed on 020 8314 7670.