

The New Secondary Curriculum – RE

The roll of the new secondary curriculum is now gathering pace; this brief document is to update you on what is happening and to open up discussion about how Local Authorities and the Dioceses can support the initiative.

Organisation

NATRE and RE Today are working with CfBT to deliver the roll out on behalf of the DCSF. To achieve this we have appointed **Dave Francis** as the **National Subject Leader for RE**; my role is that of support and project manager.

We are in regular communication with the REC and PREG (which includes NASACRE) and we are pleased to have their support for this significant initiative.

RE in the curriculum

The statutory position of RE remains unchanged and the locally agreed syllabus or aided school syllabus had to be taught. The materials used will make reference to the non-statutory National Framework for RE (2004) and the revised Programmes of Study published by QCA in July 2007. For RE, these PoS represent minimal change due to the relative youth of the Framework; other subjects have seen much significant changes and reductions in content.

This whole-curriculum initiative provides us with a **range of new approaches to consider, to enhance delivery of the agreed or aided schools syllabus, maximise student engagement and raise standards.**

Regional Subject Advisers

In the **summer term 2007** we emailed some 200 advisers with responsibility for RE, asking them to suggest high calibre teachers (possibly AST's, but not necessarily) who would be suitable for the role of Regional Subject Adviser (RSA). We were encouraged by the response and wrote to all the suggested teachers, along with those already known to us, to alert them to the advert for the post of RSA. As a result, **32 RSAs** were appointed, almost all of them serving teachers and with between 2 and 5 in each DCSF region. The RSAs will all be aware of the place and status of the agreed and aided schools syllabuses but will not need to know the details and particularities of each one in their area. They will also be aware of the role of RE in the various types of school (e.g. community, aided etc).

The RSAs attended a subject-specific briefing meeting on the **18th September**, led by Dave Francis and Rosemary Rivett, during which their role was outlined, and the process of identifying how that role might best be carried out in their local context was begun. The RSAs are employed for just **2 days per month** between September 2007 and March 2008, which means that they will need to be very alert to opportunities for maximising their impact (e.g. a session at a teacher training event is more effective use of time than visiting an individual school). We hope that they will all receive the support of their LA and/or Diocesan adviser for this work and be an additional reference point for work on the new curriculum.

The RSAs will be adding temporarily to a region's capacity to support schools as they work with the new curriculum; they are not in any way a replacement for current provision.

Senior leader training

During late **autumn term 2007**, training for senior leaders in schools will take place - this will be delivered by the NCSL and SSAT. Although the Subject Associations are not involved in this, the curriculum messages are the same. At least one senior leader from every school (presumably the head) will be invited to a training event. Therefore, when the RSAs start work there will already be at least one person in every school who understands the initiative and is thinking of its implications for their school. ASPECT will be involved in this training and they are also working with the Subject Associations on the subject-specific parts of the roll out. Details of dates and venues for this training can be found on NCSL's website: www.ncsl.org.uk/region/leadership_network/partnershipevents.cfm#leadership

Regional Conferences for Subject Leaders

Between January and March 2008 there will be **one regional conference for RE in each of the 9 regions**. This will be for up to 100 delegates, including teachers, subject advisers and representatives of other stakeholder groups. CfBT is working out the details of this – each subject will have the same opportunities. The national Subject Leader and myself will lead these conferences, with input from the RSAs in that region. No dates are available for this as yet. As soon as they become available these will be circulated.

Materials

The materials for this project will all be web-based. This is one of many ways in which this strategy roll out is different to previous ones. The website went live on 1st September and some materials are already there. The majority of the subject-specific materials are currently being written and filmed and will be available from 1st January (possibly slightly earlier). The web link is <http://curriculum.qca.org.uk>. This was mentioned in the QCA newsletter circulated earlier this month.

Local Authority and Diocesan Advisers

RE today and NATRE are very keen to ensure that we have a comprehensive and up-to-date list of Local Authority and Diocesan RE Advisers who work with secondary schools, so that they can be included in all updates. If you think we might have missed anyone out, please **send names and contact details to me**.

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28th September 2007