



- (ii) Are there theological / religious studies problems associated with the content of the syllabus that could lead to reductionism and/or essentialisation in the teaching of religion at GCSE level?
- (iii) Is the syllabus content too great and is this likely to lead to teaching GCSE over 4/5 years, compromising KS3 and the proper teaching of RE using the Agreed Syllabus Living Difference III?

### **3.2 Is the GCSE too difficult and as a consequence has led to a reduction in the number of students taking RS GCSE?**

4.2.1 Since the unverified data was not yet available, preliminary GCSE results that been informally accessed were discussed. In general indications so far show that where RS GCSE is taught as an option group by specialist teachers in the correct amount of time recommended by Ofqual and sat in year 11, results have been extremely good. In addition examples of two schools where all students were taught and entered for the examination and taught in the correct amount of time by specialist teachers were considered. These groups achieved on or above the national result. This indicates that the course can be taught well and students achieve well. Although, it was agreed that if students have not freely chosen the subject there may be a reduced motivation that brings the results down. However where whole groups of students have been entered who have been taught in less time than the recommended time and by a mixture of teachers (either all non-specialist or some specialist and other s non-specialist), results have continued to be well below the national.

3.2.2 In conclusion evidence would seem to show that students are enjoying the new GCSE and it is not too difficult where taught in the right amount of time by specialist teachers who are familiar with a dialogical approach to teaching and whose subject knowledge is thorough and reflected.

### **3.3 Are there theological / religious studies problems associated with the content of the syllabus that could lead to reductionism and/or essentialisation in the teaching of religion at GCSE level?**

3.3.1 There has been some concern expressed nationally about the use of texts in the new GCSE. The religions being taught by teachers in this review group were Christianity (all) and then either Islam or Judaism. These three traditions have a similar approach to the role of scripture in the tradition.

3.3.2 Our findings would show that despite the early indications by the exam boards and Ofqual, in the event there seemed to be less demand for reference to texts in the examination that was at first thought. This is unless students take the textually based papers. Nevertheless it is possible that the way texts are referred to in specifications relating to Buddhism and/or Hinduism could be handled poorly, especially where students were encouraged to compare across religions. Regarding the essentialisation of religion or reductionism, both things were possible in the hands of poorly trained teachers.

3.3.3 The group agreed that any problems that may be present in the specifications would more than likely be at least ameliorated by ensuring that all teachers teaching RS GCSE are well trained, knowledgeable in their understanding of the religious traditions and further knowledgeable regarding the range of ways it may be possible to live a life in that tradition. These will also be teachers who are skilled in their professional classroom skills for teaching RE and this include dialogical enquiry such as found in P4C training.

### **3.4 Is the syllabus content too great and is this likely to lead to teaching GCSE over 4/5 years compromising KS3 and the proper teaching of RE using the Agreed Syllabus Living Difference III?**

3.4.1 The group agreed that any problems that may be present in the specifications would more than likely be at least ameliorated by ensuring that all teachers teaching RS GCSE are well trained, knowledgeable in their understanding of the religious traditions and further knowledgeable regarding the range of ways it may be possible to live a life in that tradition. They are teachers who are skilled in their professional classroom skills for teaching RE and this includes dialogical enquiry such as found in P4C training.

## **4. Overall Conclusions**

4.1. Any problems or challenges that may arise from the new specification can be at least ameliorated by ensuring that all teachers teaching RS GCSE are well trained, knowledgeable in their understanding of the religious traditions and further knowledgeable regarding the range of ways it may be possible to live a life in that tradition. In addition to this the group agreed that for the new GCSE it would be essential that young people are taught in sufficient time as recommended by the exam boards and that the exam is likely to be best sat in year 11. However, some evidence will be forthcoming regarding groups sitting in year 10. It will also be essential for teachers to have a strong repertoire of professional classroom skills appropriate for teaching RE including dialogical enquiry such as found in P4C training.



**CORPORATE OR LEGAL INFORMATION:****Links to the Strategic Plan**

<b>Hampshire maintains strong and sustainable economic growth and prosperity:</b>	no
<b>People in Hampshire live safe, healthy and independent lives:</b>	yes
<b>People in Hampshire enjoy a rich and diverse environment:</b>	yes
<b>People in Hampshire enjoy being part of strong, inclusive communities:</b>	yes

**Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents**

**The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)**

DocumentLocation

None

## **IMPACT ASSESSMENTS:**

### **1. Equality Duty**

1.1. The County Council has a duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ('the Act') to have due regard in the exercise of its functions to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Act;
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, gender and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

**Due regard in this context involves having due regard in particular to:**

- a) The need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons sharing a relevant characteristic connected to that characteristic;
- b) Take steps to meet the needs of persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- c) Encourage persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

### **1.2. Equalities Impact Assessment:**

- (a) This project/proposal intends to have a positive impact on groups with protected characteristics through enabling children and young people in Hampshire to think, speak and act in more thoughtful ways with regard to others in the community.

### **2 Impact on Crime and Disorder:**

This project intends to have a positive impact on Crime and Disorder especially with regard to hate crime in the county.

### **3 Climate Change:**

How does what is being proposed impact on our carbon footprint / energy consumption?

Through the use of electronic and digital media.

How does what is being proposed consider the need to adapt to climate change, and be resilient to its longer term impacts?

The teaching strategies employed in Hampshire RE should encourage resilience and thoughtful behaviour in the wider community.