

# **Religious Education Policy**



**January 2024**

**Review date: January 2024**

# RE Policy including Discovery RE

## Introduction

Religious Education is unique in the school curriculum in that it is neither a core subject nor a foundation subject but the 1988 Education Act states that 'Religious Education has equal standing in relation to core subjects of the National Curriculum in that it is compulsory for all registered pupils'.

Religious Education is taught in our school because it makes:

"a major contribution to the education of children and young people. At its best, it is intellectually challenging and personally enriching. It helps young people develop beliefs and values, and promotes the virtues of respect and empathy, which are important in our diverse society. It fosters civilised debate and reasoned argument, and helps pupils to understand the place of religion and belief in the modern world". (RE: realising the potential, Ofsted 2013).

**Hawthorn Primary School** is within the Birmingham Local Authority. We deliver RE in line with the Locally Agreed Syllabus and have linked this with the Discovery R.E syllabus to ensure we deliver a diverse R.E curriculum, suitable for our pupils.

This RE policy is informed by current national guidance:

- RE in English Schools: Non-statutory guidance 2010 ([https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/190260/DCSF-00114-2010.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/190260/DCSF-00114-2010.pdf))
- RE : realising the potential Ofsted 2013 ([www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/religious-education-realising-potential](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/religious-education-realising-potential))
- A Curriculum Framework for RE in England, REC 2013 (<http://resubjectreview.recouncil.org.uk/re-review-report>)
- *C of E church schools may wish to add "Valuing all God's Children"* ([https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-11/Valuing%20All%20God%27s%20Children%27s%20Report\\_0.pdf](https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-11/Valuing%20All%20God%27s%20Children%27s%20Report_0.pdf)), "Making a Difference" (which includes the Church of England Statement of Entitlement) ([https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-10/2014\\_making\\_a\\_difference-a\\_review\\_of\\_religious\\_education\\_in\\_church\\_of\\_england\\_schools\\_web\\_final.pdf](https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-10/2014_making_a_difference-a_review_of_religious_education_in_church_of_england_schools_web_final.pdf)) and the 2018 SIAMS inspection framework (<https://www.churchofengland.org/more/education-and-schools/church-schools-and-academies/siams-school-inspections>)

## **The aims of our RE, using the Discovery RE Scheme of Work**

Discovery RE meets the requirements of our locally agreed Birmingham syllabus and is aligned to the non- statutory guidance described above.

By following Discovery RE at Hawthorn Primary school we intend that Religious Education will:-

- **adopt an enquiry- based approach** as recommended by Ofsted, beginning with the children's own life experience before moving into learning about and from religion.
- **provoke challenging questions** about the meaning and purpose of life, beliefs, the self, and issues of right and wrong, commitment and belonging. It develops pupils' knowledge and understanding of Christianity, other principal religions, and religious traditions that examine these questions, fostering personal reflection and spiritual development.

- **encourage pupils to explore their own beliefs** (religious or non-religious), in the light of what they learn, as they examine issues of religious belief and faith and how these impact on personal, institutional and social ethics; and to express their responses.
- **enable pupils to build their sense of identity and belonging**, which helps them flourish within their communities and as citizens in a diverse society.
- **teach pupils to develop respect for others**, including people with different faiths and beliefs, and helps to challenge prejudice.
- **prompt pupils to consider their responsibilities** to themselves and to others, and to explore how they might contribute to their communities and to wider society. It encourages empathy, generosity and compassion.
- **develop a sense of awe, wonder and mystery.**
- **nurture children's own spiritual development**

### Discovery RE Content

Discovery RE covers all areas of RE for the primary phase. Christianity plus one other religion is taught in each year group. The grid below shows specific enquiries for each year group.

#### Foundation Stage 1/2:

Discovery Enquiry	Religions studied:
What makes people special?	Christianity, Judaism
What is Christmas	Christianity
How do people celebrate?	Islam/Judaism
What is Easter?	Christianity
What can we learn from stories?	Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism
What makes people special?	Christianity, Islam, Judaism.

#### Year 1:

Discovery Enquiry	Religions studied:
Does God want Christians to look after the world?	Christianity
What gift might Christians in my town have given Jesus if he had been born here rather than in Bethlehem?	Christianity
Was it always easy for Jesus to show friendship?	Christianity
Why was Jesus welcomed like a king or celebrity on Palm Sunday?	Christianity
Is Shabbat important to Jewish children?	Judaism
Are Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur important to Jewish children?	Judaism

**Year 2:**

<b>Discovery Enquiry</b>	<b>Religions studied</b>
Is it possible to be kind to everyone all of the time?	Christianity
Why do Christians believe God gave Jesus to the world?	Christianity
How important is it for Jewish people to do what God asks them to do? OR	Judaism
Does praying at regular intervals every day help a Muslim in his/her everyday life?	Islam
How important is it to Christians that Jesus came back to life after His crucifixion?	Christianity
How special is the relationship Jews have with God? OR	Judaism
Does going to a Mosque gives Muslims a sense of belonging?	Islam
What is the best way for a Jew to show commitment to God? OR	Judaism
Does completing Hajj make a person a better Muslim?	Islam

**Year 3:**

<b>Discovery Enquiry</b>	<b>Religions Studied</b>
Would celebrating Divali at home and in the community bring a feeling of belonging to a Hindu child? OR	Hinduism
Does joining the Khalsa make a person a better Sikh?	Sikhism
Has Christmas lost its true meaning?	Christianity
Could Jesus really heal people? Were these miracles or is there some other explanation?	Christianity
What is "good" about Good Friday?	Christianity
How can Brahman be everywhere and in everything? OR	Hinduism
Do Sikhs this it is important to share?	Sikhism
Would visiting the River Ganges feel special to a non-Hindu? OR	Hinduism
What is the best way for a Sikh to show commitment to God?	Sikhism

**Year 4:**

<b>Discovery Enquiry</b>	<b>Religions studied</b>
How special relationship is the relationship Jews have with God? OR	Judaism
Is it possible for everyone to be happy?	Buddhism
What is the most significant part of the nativity story for Christians today?	Christianity
How important is it for Jewish people to do what God asks them to do? OR	Judaism
Can the Buddha's teachings make the world a better place?	Buddhism
Is forgiveness always possible for Christians?	Christianity
What is the best way for a Jew to show commitment to God? OR	Judaism

What is the best way for a Buddhist to lead a good life?	Buddhism
Do people need to go to church to show they are Christians?	Christianity

#### Year 5:

Discovery Enquiry	Religions studied
How far would a Sikh go for his/her religion? OR What is the best way for a Hindu to show commitment to God?	Sikhism Hinduism
Is the Christmas story true?	Christianity
Are Sikh stories important today? OR How can Brahman be everywhere and in everything?	Sikhism Hinduism
How significant is it for Christians to believe God intend Jesus to die?	Christianity
What is the best way for a Sikh to show commitment to God? OR Do beliefs in Karma, Samsara and Moksha help Hindus lead better lives?	Sikhism Hinduism
What is the best way for Christian to show commitment to God?	Christianity

#### Year 6:

Discovery Enquiry	Religions studied
What is the best way for a Muslim to show commitment to God?	Islam
How significant is it that Mary is Jesus' mother? OR Do Christmas celebrations and traditions help Christians understand who Jesus was and why he was born?	Christianity Christianity
Is anything ever eternal?	Christianity
Is Christianity still a strong religion 2000 years after Jesus was on Earth?	Christianity
Does belief in Akhirah (life after death) help Muslims lead good lives? (Double unit)	Islam

#### How is RE organised in this school?

Discovery RE brings together learning about and from religion, questioning and spiritual development in a comprehensive scheme of learning. Teaching strategies are varied and are mindful of preferred learning styles and the need for differentiation. Each enquiry starts from the children's own life experiences using these as a bridge into the investigation of the religion being studied.

Learning is assessed in line with the schools assessment policy, and children have opportunity to express their own thoughts and beliefs and empathise with believers of that religion or belief position.

## **Differentiation/SEN**

Discovery RE is written as a universal core curriculum provision for all children. Inclusivity is part of its philosophy. Teachers will tailor each enquiry to meet the needs of the children in their classes. To support this differentiation, many enquiries suggest creative learning activities that allow children to choose the media with which they work and give them scope to work to their full potential. To further help teachers differentiate for children in KS1 and 2, each enquiry has exemplars for those children working towards the learning objective, at the expected level for this age group and those working beyond the expected level of achievement.

## **Assessment**

Teachers are eager to ensure children are making progress with their learning throughout their RE. Therefore, each enquiry has built-in assessment. This task is the formal opportunity for teacher assessment of the children's knowledge of that religion, depth of critical thinking, and ability to answer the enquiry question. This is used in conjunction with other evidence such as records of discussions and annotations from other lessons within the enquiry to assist the teacher in assessing whether a child is working at the expected level. Children are assessed over three aspects of learning:

- a personal resonance with or reflection on the material/religion being studied to answer the enquiry question.
- knowledge and understanding of the material/religion being studied to answer the enquiry question.
- evaluation/critical thinking in relation to the enquiry question

These are tracked throughout the planning stage so that teachers can utilise the appropriate evidence accordingly. In line with non-statutory guidance issued by the RE Council in 2013 (cited on page 1) descriptors of these aspects utilise age-related expectations of working towards, working at the expected attainment and working beyond.

## **Recording and tracking progress**

To support the teacher in tracking each child's progress throughout the year, there is an overview sheet for each enquiry on which to record the progress of the whole class. This supports teacher overview and facilitates subject leader monitoring and moderation.

## **Reporting to Parents/Carers**

The assessment process described above helps teachers report to parents/carers. Discovery RE enquiries give teachers meaningful evidence to cite in reports.

## **The Attainment Descriptors**

The attainment descriptors contained within Discovery RE have been adapted to fit the schools assessment policy for foundation subjects.

## **Monitoring and evaluation**

The RE leader monitors delivery of the programme through observation and discussion with teaching staff, as well as discussions with children and scrutiny of their written work to ensure consistent and coherent curriculum provision.

Evaluation of the programme's effectiveness is conducted on the basis of:

- Pupil and teacher evaluation of the content and learning processes
- Staff meetings to review and share experience

- Monitoring of assessment to ensure progression throughout the school.

### **External contributors**

RE gives particular opportunities to promote an ethos of respect for others, challenge stereotypes and build understanding of other cultures and beliefs. This contributes to promoting a positive and inclusive school ethos that champions democratic values and human rights. The British Values agenda is intrinsic to Discovery RE, and a map of coverage is available on request. RE is an important subject in contribution to the school's development as a Rights Respecting School.

External contributors from the community, e.g. local clergy, local members/speakers from other religions etc make a valuable contribution to the RE programme as do visits to places of worship. Their input is carefully planned and monitored so as to fit into and complement the programme.

Teachers are always present during these sessions and remain responsible for the effective delivery of the RE programme.

### **The Learning Environment**

Establishing a safe, open and positive learning environment based on trusting relationships between all members of the class, adults and children alike, is vital. To enable this, it is important that respect for each others' views and beliefs and those of the believers of that religion is encouraged at all times and that any artefacts are handled with respect and care.

### **Teaching Sensitive and Controversial Issues**

Sensitive and controversial issues are certain to arise in learning from real-life experience and discussing personal beliefs.

Topics are presented using a variety of views and beliefs so that pupils are able to form their own, informed opinions but also respect that others have the right to different opinions. Teachers should never feel obliged to discuss their own beliefs unless they feel comfortable doing so and can ensure that this will not influence or restrict the children's own expression.

### **Involving parents and carers**

The school believes that it is important to have the support of parents, carers and the wider community for the RE programme. Parents and carers are/will be given the opportunity to find out about and discuss RE through:

- \* Response to RE comments on reports
- \* Curriculum newsletters
- \* Displays
- \* (Where RE is integrated- topic based homework as appropriate).

### **Withdrawal from RE lessons**

Parents/carers have the right to withdraw their children from all or part of the Religious Education. Those parents/carers wishing to exercise this right are invited in to see the head teacher and/or RE Leader who will explore any concerns and discuss any impact that withdrawal may have on the child. The school will ensure that parents who want to withdraw their children from RE are aware of the RE syllabus and that it is relevant to all pupils, and respects their own personal beliefs. Parents will be made aware of the learning objectives and what is covered in the RE curriculum and should be

given the opportunity to discuss this, if they wish. The school may also wish to review such a request each year, in discussion with the parents.

The use of the right to withdraw should be at the instigation of parents and it should be made clear whether it is from the whole of the subject or specific parts of it. No reasons need be given. Where parents have requested that their child is withdrawn, their right must be respected, and where RE is integrated in the curriculum, the school will need to discuss the arrangements with the parents or carers to explore how the child's withdrawal can be best accommodated. Once a child has been withdrawn they cannot take part in the RE programme until the request for withdrawal has been removed.

As a school it is our duty to inform our local Standing Advisory Council on RE regarding the numbers of children being withdrawn. This is the responsibility of the R.E Leader.

### **Links to other policies and curriculum areas**

We recognise the clear link between RE and the following policies and staff are aware of the need to refer to these policies when appropriate.

- Teaching and Learning Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Prevent Strategy
- PSHE policy
- Rights Respecting Gold Award

### **Training and support for staff**

All staff benefit from training in order to enhance their RE delivery skills. Opportunities are provided for staff to identify individual training needs on a yearly basis and relevant support is provided.

In addition to this, support for teaching and understanding RE issues is incorporated in our staff INSET programme, drawing on staff expertise and/or a range of external agencies.

### **Dissemination**

This policy is available on our school website where it can be accessed by the community. Training is regularly delivered to staff on the policy content. Copies are available from the school office on request from parents/carers.

### **Policy Review**

This policy is reviewed annually.

Review Date: January 2024