



St Mary & St John CE Primary School

Religious Education Policy

As a Church of England Primary School, we are committed to making St Mary & St John an inclusive environment, fostering curiosity, spirituality, creativity and respect. At our school we want everyone to be valued, to explore the joy of learning, and to achieve their full potential.

Definition

Religious Education is a curriculum subject, which is taught according to the Agreed Syllabus for Oxfordshire (2015 – 2020) and the 1996 Education Act. The school welcomes all children and their families regardless of their faith or worldview. It seeks to help pupils learn about and from religion, and to enhance their understanding and respect.

1. The Nature and Aims of Religious Education

We believe religious education is about people, ideas, values, ways of looking at life, and developing as a person. Religious Education should help pupils to:

- a) Develop a positive attitude to all people, respecting each other's beliefs and customs and celebrations in a diverse society.
- b) Acquire and develop knowledge and understanding of Christianity, Judaism, Islam (KS1 & KS2), Buddhism, Sikhism and Hinduism (KS2).
- c) Develop an understanding of the influence of beliefs, values and traditions on individuals and societies, and how religion has shaped and inspired human history and culture, influencing developments in art, music, architecture and literature.
- d) Develop the ability to make reasoned and informed judgements about religious and moral issues, with reference to the teachings of Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism and Sikhism.
- e) Enhance their moral, spiritual, social and cultural development, helping to develop tolerance, consideration and a concern for justice, fairness and truth, through the study of religious teachings and practices.
- f) To develop the skills of investigation, interpretation, reflection, stillness, empathy, evaluation, analysis, application, expression, and reasoning. These skills are those upon which progress in religious education is dependent, and spirituality can be developed.
- g) To develop and strengthen attitudes such as commitment, fairness, respect, self-understanding and enquiry that is fundamental to religious education.

2. Planning and Delivery

This policy document will form the basis of R.E. teaching in school, under the guidance of the R.E. Co-ordinator. It will be taught in the context of the classroom by the class teacher, or possibly the teacher covering Planning, Preparation and Assessment (PPA) time, following the medium-term planning and enquiry modules set out in the scheme of work, Discovery RE. This is used as our teaching resource throughout the school.

R.E. will usually be delivered as a discrete subject, but with due regard being paid to current themes or topics, as links can often be made with other curricular areas.

3. Assessment

Assessment will be ongoing and be used to help advance the children's learning about religion, and from religion, plan future work, and contribute to the annual report to parents.

Assessment will include:

1. Information on experiences pupils have had;
2. End of unit summative assessments using the Discovery RE resources with children assessed as being Working Towards (WT), Working At (WA) and Working Beyond (WB).

4. Class Organisation & Teaching Methods

R.E. will generally be taught as a class subject including PPA provision with opportunities for individual, pair or group activity.

Most activities will be teacher-led; others will have an investigative approach including visits to places of worship and talks from visiting speakers.

Lessons will include instruction, discussion and listening, and provide opportunities for reflection, analysis and evaluation.

5. Equal Opportunities

All pupils regardless of race, age, ability, gender, class or religious persuasion, will have equality of access to R.E. Alternative provision will be made for children whose parents have exercised the right to withdraw their child from R.E. lessons under the Education Reform Act (1988). It is currently part of our school policy that every subject be taught in such a way that nobody need be withdrawn from any lesson.

6. Resources

Resources should include books, pictures, artefacts and online resources.

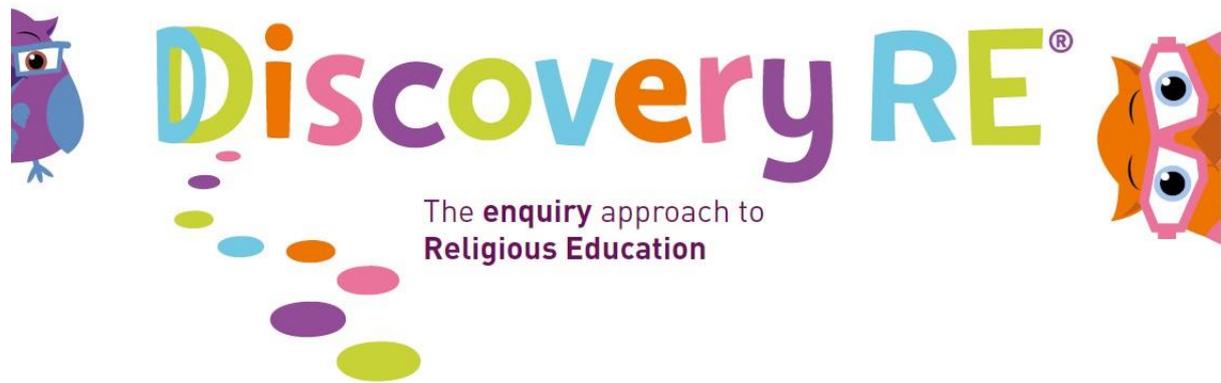
The Headteacher will ensure that a reasonable allocation of funds is available for the R.E. budget and discuss resourcing with the coordinators.

7. Monitoring and Reviewing the Policy

This R.E. policy will be reviewed every three years. The Curriculum Committee will be responsible for monitoring the policy's implementation and reporting to the full governing body.

8. Right to Withdrawal

Parents have the right to withdraw their child from R.E. lessons under the Education Reform Act (1988). Any parent wishing to withdraw their child from R.E. lessons must write to the headteacher and alternative provision will be discussed.



By following Discovery RE at St Mary and St John CE 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.
- Encourage empathy, generosity and compassion.
- Help children to 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:

Discovery Enquiry	Religions studied
Is it possible to be kind to everyone all of the time?	Christianity
Why do Christians believe God gave Jesus to the world?	Christianity
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
Does going to a Mosque gives Muslims a sense of belonging?	Islam
Does completing Hajj make a person a better Muslim?	Islam

Year 3:

Discovery Enquiry	Religions studied
Would celebrating Divali at home and in the community bring a feeling of belonging to a Hindu child?	Hinduism
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?	Hinduism
Would visiting the River Ganges feel special to a non-Hindu?	Hinduism

Year 4:

Discovery Enquiry	Religions studied
How special is the relationship Jews have with God?	Judaism
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?	Judaism
Is forgiveness always possible for Christians?	Christianity
What is the best way for a Jew to show commitment to God?	Judaism
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?	Sikhism
Is the Christmas story true?	Christianity
Are Sikh stories important today?	Sikhism
How significant is it for Christians to believe God intended Jesus to die?	Christianity
What is the best way for a Sikh to show commitment to God?	Sikhism
What is the best way for a 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 was Jesus' mother?	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 and children have opportunity to express their own thoughts and beliefs and empathise with believers of that religion or belief position.

RE will be taught 1 lesson per week. 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, those at the expected level for this age group, and those working beyond the expected level.

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 stand-alone evidence 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 or towards or beyond it. 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.

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.

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 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 other's 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:

- * RE comments on reports
- * Displays

Links to other policies and curriculum areas

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

- Collective Worship
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- SMSC Policy
- British Values
- Prevent

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.

Appendix

How does Discovery RE support the promotion of British Values?

Specific links between British Values and Discovery RE by Key Stage:

Please note for “Rule of Law”, ticks have been added because even though Discovery RE does not teach UK law, it teaches children of the laws of that religion so that they understand what a law might be. As the whole point of any RE curriculum is to promote tolerance of those of different faiths and beliefs and mutual respect, these values are ticked throughout.

Key Stage 1

Discovery RE Enquiry	Religions studied:	British Values				
		Democracy	Rule of Law	Individual Liberty	Mutual Respect	Tolerance of those of different faiths and beliefs
Year 1						
Does God want Christians to look after the world?	Christianity		✓ not to damage others' property /graffiti etc.		✓	✓
What gifts might Christians in my town have given Jesus if he had been born here rather than in Bethlehem?	Christianity				✓	✓

		Democracy	Rule of Law	Individual Liberty	Mutual Respect	Tolerance of those of different faiths and beliefs
Year 2						
Is it possible to be kind to everyone all of the time?	Christianity			✓	✓	✓
Why do Christians believe God gave Jesus to the world?	Christianity				✓	✓
Does praying at regular intervals 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		✓		✓	✓

Let all that you do be done in love...

1 Corinthians 16:14

Does going to a Mosque give Muslims a sense of belonging?	Islam		✓ (prayer in the Qur'an/pillar of Islam)		✓	✓
Does completing Hajj make a person a better Muslim?	Islam		✓ (Hajj as a pillar of Islam)		✓	✓

Lower Key Stage 2 (3 & 4)

Discovery RE Enquiry	Religions studied	British Values				
		Democracy	Rule of Law	Individual Liberty	Mutual Respect	Tolerance of those of different faiths and beliefs
Year 3						
Would celebrating Divali at home and in the community bring a feeling of belonging to a Hindu child?	Hinduism		✓	✓	✓	✓
Has Christmas lost its true meaning?	Christianity				✓	✓
Could Jesus 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?	Hinduism				✓	✓
Would visiting the River Ganges feel special to a non-Hindu?	Hinduism				✓	✓

		Democracy	Rule of Law	Individual Liberty	Mutual Respect	Tolerance of those of different faiths and beliefs
Year 4						
How special is the relationship Jews have with God?	Judaism		✓ (The Covenant/ Torah)	✓	✓	✓
What is the most significant part of the nativity story for Christians today?	Christianity				✓	✓

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1 Corinthians 16:14

How important is it for Jewish people to do what God asks them to do?	Judaism		✓ (kashrut/ UNCRC)	✓	✓	✓
Is forgiveness always possible for Christians?	Christianity		✓	✓ (Jesus willingly gave his up)	✓	✓

Upper Key Stage 2 (5 & 6)

Discovery RE Enquiry	Religions studied:	British Values				
		Democracy	Rule of Law	Individual Liberty	Mutual Respect	Tolerance of those of different faiths and beliefs
Year 5						
How far would a Sikh go for his/her religion?	Sikhism		✓ (Vedas)	✓ (how much does a Sikh give up)	✓	✓
Is the Christmas story true?	Christianity				✓	✓
Are Sikh stories important today?	Sikhism		✓ (Guru Granth Sahib)		✓	✓
How significant is it for Christians to believe God intended Jesus to die?	Christianity				✓	✓
What is the best way for a Sikh to show commitment to God?	Sikhism		✓ (Guru Granth Sahib)		✓	✓
What is the best way for a Christian to show commitment to God?	Christianity		✓ (10 commandments)	✓ e.g. Martin Luther King	✓	✓

Discovery RE Enquiry	Religions studied:	British Values				
		Democracy	Rule of Law	Individual Liberty	Mutual Respect	Tolerance of those of different faiths and beliefs
Year 6						
		Democracy	Rule of Law	Individual Liberty	Mutual Respect	Tolerance of those of different faiths and beliefs

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1 Corinthians 16:14

What is the best way for a Muslim to show commitment to God?	Islam		✓ (5 pillars)	✓	✓	✓
How significant is it that Mary was Jesus' mother?	Christianity	✓		✓ (her choice)	✓	✓
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	✓ (respecting law and leading peaceful lives)	✓ (Qur'an)	✓	✓	✓

Policy adopted: March 2022

Review date: November 2024

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