



POLICY DOCUMENT

Religious Education Policy

	Name	Date
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Religious Education

1 Introduction - Aims and objectives

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).

Religious education provokes challenging questions about the ultimate meaning and purpose of life, beliefs about God, the self and the nature of reality, issues of right and wrong and what it means to be human. It develops pupils' knowledge and understanding of Christianity, other principal religions, other religious traditions and world views that offer answers to questions such as these. It offers opportunities for personal reflection and spiritual development. It enhances pupils' awareness and understanding of religions, a range of beliefs, teachings, practices and forms of expression, as well as of the influence of religion or beliefs on individuals, families, communities and cultures.

Religious education encourages pupils to learn from different religions, beliefs, values and traditions while exploring their own beliefs and questions of meaning. It challenges pupils to reflect on, consider, analyse, interpret and evaluate issues of truth, belief, faith and ethics and to communicate their responses.

Religious education encourages pupils to develop their sense of identity and belonging. It enables them to flourish individually within their communities and as British citizens in a pluralistic society and global community. Religious education has an important role in preparing pupils for adult life, employment and lifelong learning. It enables pupils to develop respect for and sensitivity to others, in particular those whose faiths and beliefs are different from their own. It promotes discernment and enables pupils to combat prejudice.

This links to our school ethos by:

- Developing a thirst of learning inspired by quality teaching
- Believing that through effort, dedication and commitment, anything can be achieved
- Building and developing upon individual strengths and talents
- Providing a welcoming, safe, happy school where everyone is respected and listened to; a school where we take pride in ourselves and our achievements, enabling children to become confident and successful learners.
- Valuing independence, developing a deeper level of learning and providing a curriculum which enables our pupils to become active citizens of the future

Discovery RE meets the requirements of our locally agreed syllabus and is aligned to the non- statutory guidance described above. By following Discovery RE at St Mary Cray Primary School, we intend that RE 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.
- Develop a sense of awe, wonder and mystery. Nurture children's own spiritual development.

2 Definition

St Mary Cray Primary School is part of the Spring Trust Academy. We deliver RE in line with the Locally Agreed Bromely Syllabus. We use the Discovery RE programme as our scheme of work.

This RE policy is informed by current national guidance: RE in English Schools: Non-statutory guidance 2010 RE: realising the potential Ofsted 2013 A Curriculum Framework for RE in England, REC 2013

3 Discovery/Jigsaw R.E. Content

Discovery R.E. covers all areas of R.E. for the primary phase, Christianity plus one other religion in each group forms the pattern. The grid below shows specific enquiries for each year group.

Early Years

Enquiry Question	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?	Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism
What makes places special?	Christianity, Judaism

Year 1

Enquiry Question	Religions Studied
Does God want Christians to look after the world?	Christianity
What gift would I have given to Jesus if he had born in my town, not in Bethlehem?	Christianity
Was it always easy for Jesus to show friendship?	Christianity
Why was Jesus welcomed like a king or celebrity by the crowds on Palm Sunday?	Christianity
Is Shabbat important to Jewish children?	Judaism
Are Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur important to Jewish children?	Judaism

Year 2

Enquiry Question	Religions Studied
Is it possible to be kind to everyone all of the time?	Christianity
Why did God give Jesus to the world?	Christianity
How important is it for Jewish people to do what God asks them to do?	Judaism
Is it true that Jesus came back to life again?	Christianity
Does going to a Mosque give Muslims a sense of belonging?	Islam
Does completing Hajj make a person a better Muslim?	Islam

Year 3

Enquiry Question	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
Do Sikhs think it is important to share?	Buddhism
Would visiting the River Ganges feel special to a non- Hindu?	Christianity

Year 4

Enquiry Question	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
Is it possible for everyone to be happy?	Buddhism
Is forgiveness always possible?	Christianity
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

Enquiry Question	Religions Studied
How far would a Sikh go for his/her religion?	Sikhism
Is the Christmas story true?	Christianity
How can Brahman be everywhere and in everything?	Hinduism
How significant is it for Christians to believe that 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

Enquiry Question	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? (over two half terms)	Islam

3.1 Differentiation and 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 classes with special educational needs, each enquiry has level exemplars for the full range likely for that age group, allowing children to evidence levels from L1 to L5.

Effective inclusion involves teaching a lively, stimulating religious education curriculum that:

- Builds on and is enriched by the differing experiences pupils bring to religious education.
- Meets all pupils' learning needs including those with learning difficulties or who are greater depth, boys and girls, pupils for whom English is an additional language, pupils from all religious/non-religious communities and pupils from a wide range of ethnic groups and diverse family backgrounds.

To overcome any potential barriers to learning in religious education, some pupils may require:

- Support to access text, such as through prepared tapes, particularly when working with significant quantities of written materials or at speed.
- Help to communicate their ideas through methods other than extended writing, where this is a requirement. For example, pupils may demonstrate their understanding through speech or the use of ICT.
- A non-visual way of accessing sources of information when undertaking research in aspects of religious education, for example using audio materials.

3.2 Knowledge Organisers

Every unit of study is accompanied with a Knowledge Organiser that outlines key knowledge for the unit, key vocabulary with definitions, key questions, age expected attainment targets for the unit and 'possible experiences' linked to the unit. These experiences include at least one outdoor learning opportunity to reflect our school's priority on the importance of utilising hands on learning to enhance the delivery of all aspects of the curriculum.

Words in bold on the Knowledge Organisers are taken from the 'RE vocabulary Skills Progression 2020' document. Teachers must ensure that children are taught how these words link to the unit they are studying and should teach the correct spelling of the vocabulary through their delivery.

3.3. Early Years

It is important for young children to approach Early Years experiences related to R.E. with open attitudes and interest, while feeling free to talk about the place of religious experience in their own lives. During the Foundation Stage, children will begin to explore the world of religion in terms of special people, times, books, places and objects and by visiting places of worship. They listen to and talk about stories. They are introduced to religious words and use their senses to explore religions and beliefs, practices and forms of expression. They reflect on their own feelings and experiences. They use their imagination and curiosity to develop their appreciation and wonder of the world in which they live. Children also talk about, share and celebrate their own family customs and traditions. It is important that R.E always starts from the child's own experiences. R.E would be covered under the area of Knowledge and Understanding of the World with aspects of Personal, Social and Emotional Development.

The new EYFS curriculum strand 'People, culture and communities' has strong links to the RE curriculum but teachers adopt a cross-curricular approach to teaching and learning, hence will frequently cross into other areas of the EYFS curriculum.

4 Assessment

Teachers are eager to ensure children are making progress with their learning throughout their RE. Therefore, each enquiry has built-in assessment. This assessment is in the style of an R.E. quiz, made up of seven questions and a challenge question. This quiz will be used to assess where children's progress levels are in line with the attainment descriptors.

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 reaching a best-fit level. Each enquiry has assessment levels and exemplars based on the current nationally agreed levels.

4.1 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.

4.2 Attainment Descriptors

Please be aware that the levels contained in Discovery RE match the current nationally agreed attainment descriptors at the time of implementation. As the locally agreed syllabus is reviewed and changes are made to the national requirements it may be necessary to move to a different method of measuring progress and attainment.

4.3 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.

4.4 Reporting Progress 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.

5 How is R.E. organised in our school?

Discovery RE brings together learning about (AT1) and from religion (AT2), 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.

R.E. is taught for either once a week or blocked into fortnightly continuous sessions at the discretion of the class teacher. One session usually lasts approximately forty five minutes. It can be linked to the wider curriculum, depending on which topic is being taught, or taught discreetly. R.E. can be taught by the class teacher or by relevant PPA cover. This is also at the discretion of the class teacher.

Teachers can also endeavour to teach R.E. through a meaningful cross-curricular approach where possible by seeking links with other topics currently being taught.

Teachers should endeavour to employ outdoor learning opportunities wherever possible, referring to the Knowledge Organisers for inspiration.

Teachers should evidence the teaching of R.E. through written work in Learning Journals or through pictorial evidence in books/on display. There should be one longer piece of writing to finish the unit of learning.

Flexibility of recording will be given to occasions when R.E. learning objectives are being met through other scheduled learning opportunities in the week i.e. religious or cultural celebrations.

5.1 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.

5.2 Links to other policies

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:

- Collective Worship Policy
- Teaching and Learning Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Child Protection Policy

- SMSC Policy

5.3 Promoting Citizenship and British Values through R.E

Religious education plays a significant part in promoting citizenship and British Values through:

- Developing pupils' knowledge and understanding about the diversity of national, regional, religious and ethnic identities in the United Kingdom and the need for mutual respect and understanding
 - Enabling pupils to think about topical spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues including the importance of resolving conflict fairly
 - Exploring the rights, responsibilities and duties of citizens locally, nationally and globally
 - Enabling pupils to justify and defend orally, and in writing, personal opinions about issues, problems and events.
- The Discovery scheme of work clearly maps out specific links between British Values for each unit of enquiry

5.4 Resources

All resources are currently kept in the resources cupboard. A wide range of resources are in place for each theme within RE. These are all individually shelved or boxed according to religion and a list of contents for each resource shelf/ box is displayed. In addition, there is also a shelf where a selection of posters and books can be found to complement themes within RE.

6 Involvement of Parents, Carers and the Wider Community

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 (if applicable)
- Curriculum newsletters
- Displays
- Where RE is integrated- topic based homework is appropriate

6.1 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 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.

6.2 Withdrawal from R.E. 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.

6.3 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. If appropriate: RE is an important subject in contribution to the schools 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.

7 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.

7.1 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.

8 Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every other year.

