



## Religious Education Policy

### 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).

This fits with our school vision and values.

### The Windmills Junior School intent for Religious Education:

- Children gain the knowledge and understanding of different cultures in order to develop high levels of respect for themselves, others and the wider world.
- Children ask challenging questions about religion, belief, values, human life and the natural world.
- Children explore and investigate different cultures from around the world to explore big questions and provoke a personal response

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

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 The Windmills Junior 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. (*Where a choice is indicated, please delete additional units. Church schools may choose to use the extra Christianity units contained within the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition to satisfy additionality requirements or include units from Understanding Christianity. See <http://discoveryschemeofwork.com/using-discovery-re-and-understanding-christianity-together/>*)

#### Year 3:

Discovery Enquiry	Religions Studied
Would celebrating Divali at home and in the community bring a feeling of belonging to a Hindu child? OR Does joining the Khalsa make a person a better Sikh?	Hinduism  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 Do Sikhs this it is important to share?	Hinduism  Sikhism
Would visiting the River Ganges feel special to a non-Hindu? OR What is the best way for a Sikh to show commitment to God?	Hinduism  Sikhism

#### Year 4:

Discovery Enquiry	Religions studied
How special relationship is the relationship Jews have with God? OR Is it possible for everyone to be happy?	Judaism  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 Can the Buddha’s teachings make the world a better place?	Judaism  Buddhism
Is forgiveness always possible for Christians?	Christianity
What is the best way for a Jew to show commitment to God? OR What is the best way for a Buddhist to lead a good life?	Judaism  Buddhism
Do people need to go to church to show they are Christians?	Christianity

*(If you have selected the optional additional Year 4 Christianity unit “Why are there four Gospels and how are they relevant to Christians today?”, you will need to specify it here.)*

**Year 5:**

<b>Discovery Enquiry</b>	<b>Religions studied</b>
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

*(If you have selected the optional additional Year 5 Christianity unit “Does belief in the Trinity help Christians make better sense of God as a whole?”, you will need to specify it here.)*

**Year 6:**

<b>Discovery Enquiry</b>	<b>Religions studied</b>
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

*(If you have selected the optional additional Year 6 Christianity unit “How did Jesus create a “New Covenant” and what does that mean to Christians today?”, you will need to specify it here.)*

**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.

*At The Windmills Junior School, RE is taught in PPA on a rotation basis providing the children with enough curriculum time to teach the RE objectives.*

## **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. 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.

## **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 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.

### **Withdrawal from RE lessons**

Parents have the legal right to withdraw their child from all or part of Religious Education (RE). If you are considering this, please follow the steps below:

#### 1. Read our RE Curriculum Overview

Before making a decision, we encourage you to review our RE curriculum. It outlines how we explore a variety of world religions and beliefs in a respectful and inclusive way.

#### 2. Speak to your child's class teacher to discuss:

- What is taught in RE lessons.
- The aims of the subject and how it supports pupils' wider development.
- Any specific concerns you may have.

#### 3. If you wish to proceed, please send an email or written letter to the Headteacher clearly stating:

- That you would like to withdraw your child from RE.
- Whether this is full or partial withdrawal (e.g. only from learning about specific religions).
- The duration of the withdrawal, if relevant.

4. If your child is withdrawn from RE, they will do another independent activity (e.g. quiet reading, writing, completing learning from another subject, if appropriate) in a supervised space.

5. We may check in with you from time to time to confirm that you still wish the withdrawal to remain in place, especially as your child moves through different year groups.

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

### **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.