



Mapping Discovery RE to the Sefton Agreed Syllabus

The mapping document that follows compares:

1. the pedagogies (teaching approaches)
2. the 'which religion/belief system when?' requirements
3. the subject knowledge content and
4. the assessment process

Introduction

Discovery RE is a set of detailed medium-term plans for RE from Years F1/2 to Year 6. It adopts an enquiry based approach to teaching and learning. Christianity is taught in every year group, with Christmas and Easter given new treatment each year, developing the learning in a progressive way. Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism are also covered. Humanist perspectives are added when appropriate in some enquiries. Each enquiry unit demands the equivalent of 6 lessons, but teaching time could be blocked over perhaps 3 half days to enhance learning. Each enquiry has a learning objective which shows the learning over the enquiry and SMSC (Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural) development opportunities are mapped throughout as is each enquiry's contribution to the British Values agenda.

1. The pedagogies (teaching approaches)

Discovery RE is an enquiry-based approach to Religious Education, a different enquiry for every half-term (6 per year) focusing on one religion at a time.

The aim is to deepen children's critical thinking skills through greater subject knowledge and also to allow their own spiritual development.

The Sefton Agreed Syllabus states that, "Questioning skills are encouraged from Foundation Stage upwards." In its guidance for schools for each year group it starts with a question and in the purpose of Religious Education states that it:

- 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;
- develops pupils' knowledge and understanding of Christianity, other principal religions, other religious traditions and other world views that offer answers to questions such as these;
- offers opportunities for personal reflection and spiritual development;
- enhances pupils' awareness and understanding of religions and beliefs, teachings, practices and forms of expression, as well as of the influence of religion on individuals, families, communities and cultures;
- encourages pupils to learn from different religions, beliefs, values and traditions while exploring their own beliefs and questions of meaning;
- challenges pupils to reflect on, consider, analyse, interpret and evaluate issues of truth, belief, faith and ethics and to communicate their responses;
- encourages pupils to develop their sense of identity and belonging;
- enables pupils to flourish individually within their communities and as citizens in a pluralistic society and global community;
- has an important role in preparing pupils for adult life, employment and lifelong learning;
- enables pupils to develop respect and sensitivity to others, in particular those whose faiths and beliefs are different from their own; and
- promotes discernment and enables pupils to combat prejudice.



Discovery RE, with its enquiry model, is well suited to be a key contributor to this process. Each enquiry has a big enquiry question e.g. What is the best way for a Sikh to show commitment to God? and this is explored with a **4-step process**:

Engagement (How can I relate to the underpinning concept in my own world?)

Investigation (What do I need to learn about the religion in order to answer the big question)

Evaluation (How well can I apply this knowledge to the big question using critical thinking/evaluation skills?)

Expression (Can I express what difference this enquiry has made to me, my thinking and my starting point?)

Discovery RE recognises the importance of questions with each enquiry starting with a key question (an overarching enquiry question) with each section of the enquiry supported with a series of teacher questions, with opportunities for children/young people to ask the 'Discovery RE Owl' their own questions. Discovery RE idea is that the Owls are sources of wisdom and each year group has their own owl.

2. Which religion/s when?

Discovery RE

Christianity in every year group with one other religion each year from: Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism.

Discovery RE studies Christianity in every year group with a spiral developmental approach, Christmas and Easter being given different treatment each year to deepen understanding.

Most year groups then have a choice of which other religion to study alongside Christianity, meaning that it is possible to enable children to encounter all 6 principal religions by the end of Key Stage 2 (11 years old)

Year 1 Christianity plus Judaism

Year 2 Christianity plus Judaism OR Islam

Year 3 Christianity plus Hinduism OR Sikhism

Year 4 Christianity plus Judaism OR Buddhism

Year 5 Christianity plus Hinduism OR Sikhism (whichever was not taught in Year 3)

Year 6 Christianity plus Islam

As Discovery RE is medium term planning it is perfectly possible to move planning between adjacent year groups and differentiate accordingly. If this is done then all the enquiries for the specific religion should be moved to the other year group, not just one or two.

Which religions when in the Agreed Syllabus?

The Sefton Agreed Syllabus stipulates that:

Foundation Phase - "Children may begin to explore the world of religion in terms of special people, books, times, places and objects and by visiting places of worship. They listen to and talk about stories. They are introduced to religious words where appropriate and use their senses in exploring 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."

Key Stage 1 - Throughout Key Stage 1, pupils explore Christianity and Judaism. They learn about different beliefs about God and the world around them. They encounter and respond to a range of stories, artefacts and other religious materials. They learn to recognise that beliefs are expressed in a variety of ways, and begin to use specialist vocabulary. They begin to understand the importance and value of religion and belief, especially for other children and their families. Pupils ask relevant questions and develop a sense of wonder about the world, using their imaginations. They talk about what is important to them and others, valuing themselves, reflecting on their own feelings and experiences and developing a sense of belonging.



Key Stage 2 - Throughout Key Stage 2, pupils continue to learn about Christianity and Judaism together with an introduction to Hinduism and Islam, recognising the impact of religion and belief locally, nationally and globally. They make connections between differing aspects of religion and consider the different forms of religious expression. They consider the beliefs, teachings, practices and ways of life central to religion. They learn about sacred texts and other sources and consider their meanings. They begin to recognise diversity in religion, learning about similarities and differences both within and between religions and beliefs and the importance of dialogue between them. They extend the range and use of specialist vocabulary. They recognise the challenges involved in distinguishing between ideas of right and wrong, and valuing what is good and true. They communicate their ideas, recognising other people's viewpoints. They consider their own beliefs and values and those of others in the light of their learning in religious education.

During the Foundation Stage Discovery RE covers aspects of RE through areas like special people, places, times and stories, this is consistent with the requirements of the syllabus.

In Key Stage 1, Discovery RE offers the opportunity to study three religions; Christianity in every year group as well as Judaism and Islam. Discovery RE recommends the study of Christianity plus just one other religion per year group to save children getting muddled.

In Key Stage 2, Discovery RE offers enquiries on Christianity (in every year group) and Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism— so by the end of Key Stage 2 Christianity and the five other principal religions could have been studied.

3. Subject Knowledge content

The overview grid below shows the Discovery RE enquiries and the key content of each to make it easier for teachers to compare the suggested content in the syllabus with the suggested content in Discovery RE, always being aware that additional content can be added to Discovery RE as it is detailed medium term planning as opposed to full short term lesson plans.

Some non-statutory units of work were developed as an extra to go with the syllabus but schools were also given the opportunity to develop their own units as long as the religions were covered as to the syllabus requirements. With this in mind, a school could choose to follow the Discovery RE scheme and add to/replace or extend units to allow complete coverage, for example adding an extra religion to Key Stage 1, or could teach one religion alongside Christianity per year group in Key Stage 1 but ensure coverage of all 6 principal religions by the end of KS2.

4. The assessment process

Assessment in Discovery RE

Mindful that the majority of agreed syllabi for RE around the country used to align themselves to the 2 attainment target and 8-level scale system of assessing children's RE learning, the original edition of Discovery RE followed this pattern in order to be of service to teachers.

Some people are still obliged to follow agreed syllabi containing this system, so Discovery RE continues to reference the 2 attainment targets (albeit teasing out the different aspects of AT2).

However, mindful of the educational landscape 'beyond levels', we also offer an alternative colour-coded system:

- **End of key stage age-related expectations for KS1, lower KS2 and upper KS2.** This is similar to the RE Council non-statutory framework for RE (2013) which also suggests end of KS3 expectations, summarised as: (Abridged NCFRE showing the 3 strands A, B and C. (For Curriculum Framework for RE, just Google).

End of Key Stage colour-coded descriptors in Discovery RE

"WORKING AT" expectation. Most children are expected to reach these expectations.	GREEN DESCRIPTORS Personal resonance with or reflection on <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The concept / belief underlying the subject matter of the enquiry • Child's own thoughts, opinions, belief, empathy. 	BLUE DESCRIPTORS Knowledge and understanding of the subject matter of that enquiry (subject knowledge)	RED DESCRIPTORS Skills of evaluation and critical thinking in relation to the big enquiry question
End of Key Stage 1 (Year 2, Age 7, 'old' Level 2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I can tell you / talk about what concepts like belonging, commitment, kindness, forgiveness mean to me in my world • I can verbalise and / or express my own thoughts 	I can recall facts about the religions / beliefs I have studied, begin to use the religious vocabulary and start to explain the significance and meaning of the facts, practices etc.	I can start to think through the enquiry question using some facts and am beginning to see there could be more than one answer.
End of LOWER key Stage 2 (Year 4, Age 9, 'old' Level 3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I can tell you / talk about the concept / belief e.g. belonging and start to relate this to the people I am studying e.g. Jews. • I can express my own opinions and start to support them with rationale. 	I can recall facts about religions I have studied, select the facts that are most significant to the enquiry and start to explain their relevance / importance.	I can apply my knowledge to the enquiry question and give an answer supported by one or more facts.
End of Key Stage 2 (Year 6, Age 11, 'old' Level 4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I can explain how the concept / belief e.g. forgiveness resonates in my own life and can also see this might be different for other people because of their religion/ beliefs • I can express my own thoughts etc having reflected on them in relation to other people's. 	I can recall facts about religions and explain differences in practice and interpretation within and between religions / belief systems.	I can weigh up evidence and different arguments / aspects relevant to the enquiry question and express my answer, supported with evidence / rationale.

- **3 age-related expectation descriptors for each enquiry in each year group.** These expectations (working AT, TOWARDS and BEYOND) give guidance for assessing each of the 3 aspects of learning involved and made explicit in Discovery RE. Schools can, of course, use the language of their choice to describe these expectations (e.g. developing, secure, exceeding) in order to ensure RE is in line with the school's system.

The 3 aspects of learning are colour-coded:

Green: personal resonance with or reflection on... (formerly AT2 personal)

Blue: knowledge and understanding of... (formerly AT1)

Red: evaluation/critical thinking in relation to the enquiry question (formerly AT2 impersonal).

This colour coding runs through the planning and activity sheets so the teacher can see which activity is focused on which aspect of learning, and follow this through in the expectation descriptors (Working TOWARDS, Working AT and Working BEYOND) and in the exemplification. This will make it easier to link teaching with learning outcomes, as RE is a complex subject to assess.

Year 3 Summer 2	What is the best way for a Sikh to show commitment to God?	Comments
WORKING TOWARDS (Level 2)	I can talk about different ways that I show commitment. I can talk about some ways Sikhs show commitment to God. I can show an understanding that Sikhs choose different levels/types of commitment and that's OK.	
Year 3 expectation WORKING AT (Level 3)	I can start to evaluate the ways I show more or less commitment and can talk about when showing commitment may be difficult for me. I can describe some of the ways Sikhs show commitment to God, using correct language and vocabulary. I can start to evaluate which ways may show more or less commitment to God for Sikhs.	
WORKING BEYOND (Level 4)	I can explain that there are many different ways I can show commitment to people or to my goals and can show an understanding that I may have different levels of commitment to different things. I can explain how Sikhs have a range of ways to show commitment to God and understand that some of these will be more significant to some Sikhs than others. I can start to express my own opinion about which ways may express more commitment than others for Sikhs.	

Assessment process in the syllabus

The Sefton Agreed Syllabus states that, "In each module, set time has been given to assess children's knowledge and understanding of what they have learnt. It also provides the opportunity for pupils to question and discuss each module. Questioning skills are encouraged from Foundation Stage upwards. This syllabus suggests assessment activities take place in different forms e.g. circle time, questioning, scenarios, role-play, hot seating, brainstorm, simple worksheet etc. From Year 1, findings from assessment tasks need to be transferred onto the levelling proforma (next page) for each pupil. Teachers to highlight and date when achieved. This form is then passed on to the next teacher during transition."

Discovery RE can be used to support this requirement as it has a new set of colour-coded descriptors as well as reference to the 8-level scale and its own pro-forma which can be passed onto other teachers.

To summarise: How well will Discovery RE serve your syllabus?

Looking back over the 4 points of comparison it is clear that Discovery RE could help schools deliver key aspects of the Sefton Agreed Syllabus.

1. Pedagogies

Discovery RE, using an enquiry approach throughout, would support the aim to enable pupils to develop an awareness of the fundamental questions of life whilst developing reasoned and informed judgements about religious and moral issues. This supports the Sefton Agreed Syllabus which states that RE provides opportunities "to promote thinking skills through helping pupils to research, select, interpret and analyse information from religious traditions, to reflect and question their own views and ideas and those of others and to communicate their ideas in a variety of ways."

2. Which religions when?

Using Discovery RE, pupils could experience all six of the principal religions by the end of Key Stage 2, in line with the Sefton Agreed Syllabus. There is also scope to add material to content to cover a wider range of religions.



3. Subject knowledge

The subject content units developed with the Sefton Agreed Syllabus to go with the units are non-statutory, so Discovery RE enquiries could be used when deciding 'how' to deliver the RE outcomes which is in line with the Sefton Agreed Syllabus requirements, which states that, "The syllabus is not a scheme of work. The programmes of study provide the legal guidance for the teaching and learning at each key stage, but it is left to each school to plan its religious education programme on this basis." It also states can I adopt published units from elsewhere? "Yes, provided you make sure they meet the requirements of the syllabus."

4. Assessment

Finally, the assessment process used by the Sefton Agreed Syllabus follows a similar process used in Discovery RE.

Support for Discovery RE schools

www.discoveryschemeofwork.com

We offer the website to Discovery RE users as an ongoing hub of support. People are welcome to contribute. Termly newsletters, fresh articles and additional resources are added regularly. Alerts are sent out via email.

We do our best to offer ongoing support to schools using Discovery RE by:

- Offering each school a mentor, always on hand to answer any questions and offer support and advice
- Giving password-protected access to the Discovery RE Community Area on the website (the login details will be sent via email)
- Termly newsletters including updates and more teaching/learning ideas

Our Philosophy

Our belief is that, using an enquiry-based model well, children's critical thinking skills can be developed, their motivation to learn increased, and their knowledge and understanding of, and empathy with people and their beliefs, religious or otherwise, will be enhanced.

This approach takes very seriously the philosophy that children are free to make their own choices and decisions concerning religion and belief. RE does not try to persuade but rather to inform and develop the skills with which evaluation can take place.

Discovery RE uses a four-step enquiry model -

The four steps are: **Engagement, Investigation, Evaluation and Expression**

These steps allow for an enquiry based learning experience that starts in the child's own world, takes them on a journey into the world of religion and challenges them to think evaluatively about big questions, before reflecting on and expressing their own thoughts. It lends itself to independent work, small and whole group work and a wide range of exciting teaching and learning opportunities. Discovery RE embraces the need to challenge and extend children individually whilst encouraging skills of reflection and empathy.

Discovery RE is a thoughtful and creative set of RE planning for the whole Primary school, F1/2 to Year 6. We hope it makes teachers' lives easier and short-cuts the planning process, freeing them to design exciting and challenging teaching/learning activities for each lesson/enquiry.

Jan Lever