

Thomas Gray Religious Education Policy

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

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).

At Thomas Gray Primary School we deliver RE in line with the Sefton Agreed Syllabus 2016. 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

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 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 covers all areas of RE for the primary phase. The grids below show specific enquiries for each year group.

Foundation Stage

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

Year One

Discovery Enquiry	Religions studied
Does God want Christians to look after the world?	Christianity
What gift would I have given to Jesus if he had been born in my town, not 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
Does celebrating Chanukah make Jewish children feel close to God?	Judaism

Year Two

Discovery Enquiry	Religions studied
Is it possible to be kind to everyone all at the same 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?	Judaism
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?	Judaism
What is the best way for a Jew to show commitment to God?	Christianity

Year Three

Discovery Enquiry	Religions studied
Does 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?	Christianity
What is good about Good Friday?	Christianity
Does praying at regular intervals help a Muslim in his/ her everyday life?	Islam
Does going to a Mosque give Muslims a sense of belonging?	Islam

Year Four

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?	Christianity
What is the best way for a Jew to show commitment to God?	Judaism
Do people need to go to church to show that they are Christians?	Christianity

Year Five

Discovery Enquiry	Religions studied
What is the best way for a Hindu to show commitment to God?	Hinduism
Is the Christmas story true?	Christianity
How can Brahman be everywhere and in everything?	Hinduism
How significant is it for Christians to believe God intended Jesus to die?	Christianity
Do beliefs in karma, samsara and moksha help Hindus lead better lives?	Hinduism
What is the best way for Christians to show commitment to God?	Christianity

Year six

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	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?	Islam (Two terms)

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 is taught discretely on a weekly basis.

Differentiation/Inclusion

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 of challenge exemplars for the full range likely for that age group.

Assessment

Teachers are eager to ensure children are making progress with their learning throughout 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 reaching a best fit level. Each enquiry has assessment levels and exemplars.

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 to report to parents/carers. Discovery RE enquiries give teachers meaningful evidence to cite in reports.

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.

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 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.

Resources

We keep resources for religious education in a central store where there is a box of artefacts and R.E topic books for each faith to enrich teaching in religious education.

Teaching Sensitive and Controversial Issues Involving parents and carers

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

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 Headteacher 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 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.

Signed:

Date:

Date of next review: