

# Dorchester Primary School



## Religious Education Policy

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## **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).

The Educational and Social Values of RE will be reflected in the approach to the subject ensuring that the pupils will be presented with a broad and balanced view of religion and an understanding of our multi-cultural society.

The general outlook of the local area is secular, Christianity being the faith most in evidence. The School will endeavour to promote knowledge, understanding and respect for Christianity and a variety of beliefs.

At Dorchester Primary School, we deliver RE in line with the Locally Agreed Syllabus (East Riding Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education.) We use the Discovery RE programme as our scheme of work.

## **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 Dorchester 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. 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 in each group forms the pattern. The grid below shows specific enquiries for each year group.

### Foundation Stage

Discovery Enquiry	Religions studied
What makes people special?	Christianity
What is Christmas?	Islam/Judaism
How do people celebrate?	Christianity
What is Easter?	Christianity
What can we learn from stories?	Buddhism, 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 would I have given Jesus if he had been 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 on Palm Sunday?	Christianity
Is Shabbat important to Jewish children?	Judaism
Does celebrating Chanukah make Jewish children feel close to God?	Judaism

### Year 2

Discovery Enquiry	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? OR Does praying at regular intervals every day help a Muslim in his/her everyday life?	Judaism Islam
Is it true Jesus came back to life again?	Christianity
How special is the relationship Jews have with God? OR Does going to a Mosque gives Muslims a sense of belonging?	Judaism Islam
What is the best way for a Jew to show commitment to God? OR Does completing a Hajj make a person a better Muslim?	Judaism Islam

### Year 3

Discovery Enquiry	Religions studied
Does 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 think it is important to share?	Sikhism Hinduism
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 a relationship 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 they are Christians?	Christianity

### Year 5

Discovery Enquiry	Religions studied
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
Did God intend Jesus to be crucified?	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 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 is Jesus' mother?	Christianity
Is anything ever eternal?	Christianity
Is Christianity still a strong religion 2000 years after Jesus was on Earth?	Christianity
What is the best way for a Jew to show commitment to God?	Judaism
Does belief in Akhirah (life after death) help Muslims lead good lives? (Double unit)	Islam

## **How is RE organised at Dorchester?**

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.

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 Dorchester, RE is taught for 45 minutes per week (or equivalent.) We also understand that RE can make important contributions to other parts of the school curriculum such as PSHCE and humanities. RE offers opportunities for personal reflection and plays a significant, though not exclusive, role in contributing to SMSC development and the promotion of fundamental British values.

## **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 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.

## **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 reaching a best-fit level. Each enquiry has assessment levels and exemplars based on the current nationally agreed levels. The assessment process described above helps teachers report to parents/carers. Discovery RE enquiries give teachers meaningful evidence to cite in reports.

## **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.

## **Withdrawal from RE 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.

**Reviewer:** RE Lead