



## **POLICY DOCUMENT**

### **Religious Education Policy**

	<b>Name</b>	<b>Date</b>
Written By	Kamal Kaur	December 2022

## 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 ranges 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.

At Midfield Primary School we encourage an enquiry approach where all students share and reflect upon responses to 'Big Questions', including their own. We include non-religious sources and views in all units when investigating enquiry questions e.g. comparison between religious and non-religious birth ceremonies when considering 'Why is new life special?' or the scientific theories about 'How did the world begin?'

#### **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 Midfield 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 and stereotypes.
- ✓ 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

Midfield Primary School is part of the Spring Trust Academy. We deliver RE in line with the Locally Agreed Bromley 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

### 3.1 Discovery R.E. Content

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

#### 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
How can Brahman be in everything and everywhere?	Hinduism
Would visiting the River Ganges feel special to a non- Hindu?	Hinduism

### 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
Are Sikh stories important today?	Sikhism
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
Do Christmas celebrations and traditions help Christians understand who Jesus was and why he was born?	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

## 3.2 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 Concept Development Documents

The development of key concepts is mapped out for each unit in each year group along with key questions that are posed to develop the concepts.

*\*\* There are key questions which are re-visited across year groups through different religions for comparison and embedding of concepts:*

*Is God important to everyone?*

*Do sacred texts have to be 'true' to help people understand their religion?*

*Is religion the most important influence and inspiration in everyone's life?*

*Can the arts help communicate religious beliefs? Do religious people live better lives?*

*Does participating in worship help people to feel closer to God or their faith community?*

### 3.4. Early Years

It is important for young children to approach early years experiences related to R.E. with open attitudes and interest and feel 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, times, 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. 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.

The key areas covered will include:-

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

## 4. Promoting citizenship and British Values through religious education

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. Adaptive Teaching 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 adaptive teaching element, many enquiries suggest creative and multi-sensory learning activities that allow children to choose the media with which they work and give them scope to work to their full potential.

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 working above age related expectations, 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.
- Considers the questions teachers will ask different groups and individuals and the ways they will check that pupils understand. Some pupils with SEN and/or disabilities will show they understand in different ways from their peers, so teachers should look at a range of opportunities for pupils to demonstrate what they know and can do.

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

- support to access text, such as through audio and visual resources/recordings, particularly when working with significant quantities of written materials or at speed.  
Printed material should not be smaller than 12 pt (24 pt for screen presentations), use clear font type (normally open dyslexic, Comic Sans) and have appropriate contrast between background and text.
- help to communicate their ideas through methods other than writing, where this is a requirement. eg drawing, scribing, word processing, mind maps, digital images, video, voice recording,
- a non-visual way of accessing sources of information when undertaking research in aspects of religious education, for example using audio materials.
- Multi-sensory approaches when teaching – eg visual, tactile, auditory and kinaesthetic approaches are used, such as supporting teacher talk with visual aids; using subtitled or audio described film/video
- At times it may be appropriate to plan smaller steps to achieve the learning goal or provide additional resources.
- Adequate preparation before visits to unfamiliar places - Preparation can include using photographs, videos, artefacts etc, so that pupils are not worried about unfamiliar situations.

### 6.1 Assessment

Teachers should ensure children are making progress with their learning throughout their RE. Therefore, each enquiry is followed up with an end of unit assessment. This assessment is in the style of an R.E. quiz, made up of at least 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, Big Book quotes from children 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 to ascertain if a child is working towards age related expectations, at age related or working above expectations. These assessment levels and exemplars can be found at the end of each half termly plan.

## **6.2 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.

## **6.3 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.

## **7 Monitoring and Evaluation**

The RE lead monitors delivery of the programme through observation and discussion with teaching staff, as well as discussions with children, 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
- Subject leader Impact meetings with trust RE leads
- Monitoring of children's work, planning and assessment to ensure progression throughout the school.
- Learning Walks and lesson observations

## **8 Organisation**

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.

At Midfield Primary School we believe in constant revisiting of prior learning through our quizzing culture hence learning about a topic is usually carried out over a period of time which will allow children to embed new knowledge in long term memory.

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

R.E. lessons are taught every week and teachers endeavour to employ outdoor learning opportunities and the application of oracy skills wherever possible, referring to the Knowledge Organisers for inspiration.

Teachers should evidence the teaching and learning of R.E. through a range of methods including written work, photos, creative pieces and recording in Big Books.

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.

## **9. Resources**

All resources are kept in the Curriculum 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 and multiple copies of religious texts can be found to complement themes within RE.

## **10. 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 (religious and non-religious) and those of the believers of that religion or other belief is encouraged at all times and that any artefacts are handled with respect and care.

## **11. Links to other policies**

We recognise the clear link between RE and many other policies. There is a strong link to the following policies and staff need to be aware of the necessity to refer to these policies when appropriate:

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

## **12. 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 given the opportunity to find out about and discuss RE through:

- Response to RE comments on reports
- Newsletters
- Displays
- Topic based homework if appropriate
- Class Dojo and Twitter
- Foyer displays for the main faith celebrations

Parents will be welcomed into school to share their knowledge and expertise of a particular religion. This will be after careful liaison with the class teacher so that experiences are appropriately linked to enhance and extend learning.

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

RE is an important subject in contribution to the school's 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.



### **13. 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.

#### **14. Withdrawal from R.E. lessons**

Parents/carers have the right to withdraw their children from all or part of the Religious Education curriculum. 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 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.

#### **15. 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 and seek support from the RE lead to team teach lessons or observe good practice. In addition to this, staff are kept abreast of developments in RE through half termly feedback meetings.

#### **16. 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.

#### **17. Policy Review**

This policy will be reviewed every other year

