

# THORPE LEA PRIMARY AND NURSERY SCHOOL



*"A dedicated community working together, nurturing a safe happy school where all children can achieve their potential"*

# 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).

This fits with our school ethos of being "*A dedicated community working together, nurturing a safe, happy school where all children can achieve their potential*"

Thorpe Lea Primary and Nursery School is a community school. We deliver RE in line with the Locally Agreed Syllabus provided by the Surrey County Council. 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  
([https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/190260/DCSF-00114-2010.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/190260/DCSF-00114-2010.pdf))

- RE : realising the potential Ofsted 2013  
([www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/religious-education-realising-potential](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/religious-education-realising-potential))
- A Curriculum Framework for RE in England, REC 2013  
(<http://resubjectreview.recouncil.org.uk/re-review-report>)

### **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 Thorpe Lea Primary and Nursery 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.

#### **Foundation Stage 1/2:**

| <b>Discovery Enquiry</b>   | <b>Religions Studied:</b> |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| 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? | Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism |
| What makes people special?      | Christianity, Islam, Judaism.          |

### Year 1

| <b>Discovery Enquiry</b>  | <b>Religions studied:</b> |
|---|---------------------------|
| Does God want Christians to look after the world?   | Christianity              |
| What gift might Christians in my town have given Jesus if he had been born here rather than 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                   |
| Are Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur important to Jewish children?  | Judaism                   |

### Year 2

| <b>Discovery Enquiry</b>  | <b>Religions Studied</b> |
|---|--------------------------|
| Is it possible to be kind to everyone all of the 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                  |

|  |                      |
|--|----------------------|
| OR<br>Does praying at regular intervals every day help a Muslim in his/her everyday life?                                | Islam                |
| 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?<br>OR<br>Does going to a Mosque, gives Muslims a sense of belonging? | Judaism<br><br>Islam |
| What is the best way for a Jew to show commitment to God?<br>OR<br>Does completing Hajj make a person a better Muslim?   | Judaism<br><br>Islam |

### Year 3

| <b>Discovery Enquiry</b>   | <b>Religions Studied</b> |
|--|--------------------------|
| Would celebrating Divali at home and in the community bring a feeling of belonging to a Hindu child?<br>OR<br>Does joining the Khalsa make a person a better Sikh? | Hinduism<br><br>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?<br>OR   | Hinduism                 |

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| Do Sikhs, this it is important to share?                     | Sikhism  |
| Would visiting the River Ganges feel special to a non-Hindu? | Hinduism |
| OR   | Sikhism  |
| What is the best way for a Sikh to show commitment to God?   |          |

### Year 4

| <b>Discovery Enquiry</b>  | <b>Religions studied</b> |
|---|--------------------------|
| How special relationship is the relationship Jews have with God?              | Judaism                  |
| OR  | Buddhism                 |
| Is it possible for everyone to be happy?                                      |                          |
| 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                  |
| OR  | Buddhism                 |
| Can the Buddha's teachings make the world a better place?                     |                          |
| Is forgiveness always possible for Christians?                                | Christianity             |
| What is the best way for a Jew to show commitment to God?                     | Judaism                  |
| OR  |                          |
| 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

| <b>Discovery Enquiry</b>   | <b>Religions studied</b> |
|--|--------------------------|
| How far would a Sikh go for his/her religion?<br>OR<br>What is the best way for a Hindu to show commitment to God?                         | Sikhism<br><br>Hinduism  |
| Is the Christmas story true?   | Christianity             |
| Are Sikh stories important today?<br>OR<br>How can Brahman be everywhere and in everything?  | Sikhism<br><br>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?<br>OR<br>Do beliefs in Karma, Samsara and Moksha help Hindus lead better lives? | Sikhism<br><br>Hinduism  |
| What is the best way for Christian to show commitment to God?  | Christianity             |



## 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?<br>OR<br>Do Christmas celebrations and traditions help Christians understand who Jesus was and why he was born? | Christianity<br><br>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?<br>(Double unit)  | Islam                            |

### **How is RE organised in Thorpe Lea Primary School and Nursery?**

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 Thorpe Lea Primary School and Nursery, RE is taught once a week from Year 1-6 and once every two weeks in EYFS. Teachers use the resources from the RE Discovery Scheme to plan and teach lessons. The local agreed syllabus, is used to show skills progression through the years. Lessons are recorded in children's topic books and also through self-reflection sheets where children write about their learning experience of the topic. Discussions are recorded in class journals. As RE is such an enquiry and experience based subject, the children are given opportunities to meet religious representatives and experience authentic cultural and religious events through assemblies, trips to places of worship and visitors from the local community, e.g. police officers.

### **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 KS2, each enquiry has exemplars for those children working towards the learning objective, at the expected level for this age group and those working beyond the expected level of achievement.

## **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.

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

### **The Attainment Descriptors**

The attainment descriptors contained within Discovery RE are three fold to match with what the majority of schools are using, although their language may be different

### **Monitoring and evaluation**

The RE subject 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 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.

## **Involving Parents and Carers**

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 will be given the opportunity to find out about and discuss RE through:

- RE curriculum page on the school website
- Parental Voice Questionnaire for RE
- Displays
- Option RE Home Learning

## **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.

## **Links to other policies and curriculum areas**

We recognise the clear link between RE and the following policies and staff are aware of the need to refer to these policies when appropriate.

- Equality Information and Objectives
- Child Protection Policy
- British Values
- Prevent Strategy
- PSHE and RSHE Policy

## **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 on a yearly basis and relevant support is provided.

In addition to this, support for teaching and understanding RE issues is, incorporated in our staff INSET programme, drawing on staff expertise and/or a range of external agencies.

## **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.