



HOLY TRINITY CE SCHOOL

RE Policy Jan 2016

## **Introduction**

Holy Trinity CE VA School is a Church of England Voluntary Aided School therefore the provision of RE is in accordance with the Trust Deed of the school. The school adopts the material from the Diocese of St Albans and follows the Discovery RE programme. Discovery RE meets the requirements of the diocesan syllabus and is aligned to the non-statutory guidance mentioned in the introduction.

## **School Aims**

### **Aims and values of the school**

Alta Pete – Aim High  
'Let your light shine'

**The primary aim of the school is to help each pupil reach his or her full potential so that they may develop the attitudes, skills and knowledge to take full advantage of the opportunities available in their future lives.**

We achieve this by:

- fostering the values, attributes and lifestyles that a Christian faith demands in the family, among friends, in the school and in the wider community.
- creating an environment for staff and pupils that is happy stimulating and supportive in which core values and beliefs of high expectations can flourish
- providing an appropriate balanced education designed to help each pupil reach their potential.
- ensuring that all staff have access to development opportunities in keeping with the needs of the school and individuals' expertise to enhance the educational opportunities for our children.
- providing effective management and organisation within the school to give clear guidance for its direction
- nurture the partnership role between School, Governors, Parents, ChristChurch and the wider community for the benefit of the children we are jointly responsible for.

### **Aims and objectives of the policy.**

By following the Discovery RE at Holy Trinity CE VA 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.

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).

### **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 (Appendix 1) shows specific enquiries for each year group.

### **How RE is organised at Holy Trinity**

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.

### **Assessment, Recording and Tracking progress**

Pupils are assessed against the 8 level scale, each child's progress is tracked at the end of each unit throughout the year. An overall level is provided by the teacher based upon their assessment. Each enquiry has built-in assessment which provides the half-termly 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.

### **Reporting to parents and carers.**

The assessment process described above helps teachers report to parents/carers. Discovery RE assessment forms part of the RE reports on mid and end of term reports for parents.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

Discovery RE was established from December 2015. RE is monitored closely within the Monitoring Schedule for Teaching Learning. The quality of teaching for RE is monitored and evaluated as part of the cycle and forms part of the teacher's profile of teaching over time. 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 including local clergy, local members and 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 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. (Church schools may wish to include a comment regarding upholding the Christian ethos of the school whilst still respecting the beliefs and views of others). 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/will be given the opportunity to find out about and discuss RE through:

- Response to RE comments on reports
- Curriculum newsletters
- Displays

### **Withdrawal from RE sessions.**

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.

### **Curriculum links/policy links**

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.

- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- SMSC Policy

### **CPA 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.

### **Monitoring and review**

The RE Leader and Church Leader/representative of the governing body for RE will review this policy annually. The SSIG committee will report their findings and recommendations to the full governing body as necessary, if the policy appears to need modification.

## Appendix 1 – Discovery RE Enquiries grid – half-termly units

### 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, Judaism, 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 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?	Judaism
Is it true Jesus came back to life?	Christianity
How special is the relationship Jews have with God?	Judaism
What is the best way for a Jew to show commitment to God?	Judaism

### Year 3

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? 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?	Hinduism
Would visiting the River Ganges feel special to a non-Hindu?	Hinduism

### Year 4

Discovery Enquiry	Religions studied
How special 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?	Sikhism
Is the Christmas story true?	Christianity
Are Sikh stories important today?	Sikhism
Did God intend Jesus to be crucified?	Christianity
What is the best way for a Sikh to show commitment to God?	Sikhism
What is the best way for Christians 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?	Islam