

COLEHILL FIRST SCHOOL

“Colehill First is a happy school,
where children love to learn”.

Religious Education Policy

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 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).

Colehill First School is a Community School, therefore we deliver RE in line with the Locally Agreed Syllabus ‘REsearch’ Dorset. 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

Discovery RE meets the requirements of our locally agreed syllabus and is aligned to the non- statutory guidance described above.

Rationale/Aims for teaching RE

By following Discovery RE at Colehill First School we aim 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. This also builds resilience to anti-democratic or extremist narratives.
- 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.
- *See locally agreed syllabus for specific skills and attitudes developed in RE.*

The contribution RE makes to other curriculum aims in particular to community cohesion

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Section 78 (1) of the 2002 Education Act states that all pupils should follow a balanced and broadly based curriculum which 'promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, social, mental and physical development of pupils and of society, and prepares pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life'. Learning about and from religions and beliefs, through the distinct knowledge, understanding and skills contained in RE within a broad-based curriculum, is essential to achieving these aims. Exploring the concepts of religion and belief and their roles in the spiritual, moral and cultural lives of people in a diverse society helps individuals develop moral awareness and social understanding.

Personal development and well-being

RE plays an important role in preparing pupils for adult life, employment and lifelong learning. It helps children and young people become successful learners, confident individuals and responsible citizens. It gives them the knowledge, skills and understanding to discern and value truth and goodness, strengthening their capacity for making moral judgements and for evaluating different types of commitment to make positive and healthy choices.

Community cohesion

RE makes an important contribution to a school's duty to promote community cohesion. It provides a key context to develop young people's understanding and appreciation of diversity, to promote shared values and to challenge racism and discrimination. Effective RE will promote community cohesion at each of the four levels outlined in DCSF guidance:

The school community - RE provides a positive context within which the diversity of cultures, beliefs and values can be celebrated and explored.

The community within which the school is located - RE provides opportunities to investigate patterns of diversity of religion and belief and forge links with different groups in the local area.

The UK community - a major focus of RE is the study of diversity of religion and belief in the UK and how this influences national life.

The global community - RE involves the study of matters of global significance recognising the diversity of religion and belief and its impact on world issues.

RE subject matter 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 schools development as a Rights Respecting School.

External contributors

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.

Approaches to teaching RE.

RE has an important part to play as part of a broad, balanced and coherent curriculum to which all pupils are entitled. High quality learning experiences in RE are designed and provided by careful planning in line with the locally agreed syllabus through the Discovery Programme which takes account the need to offer breadth of content.

Where possible we want our pupils to have opportunities to encounter local faith communities through visits to local places of worship or from members of local faith communities.

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 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 that Jesus came back to life again?	Christianity
How special is the relationship Jews have with God? OR Does going to a Mosque give 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 it's 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 Brahamn be everywhere and in everything? OR Do Sikhs think it is important to share?	Hinduism Sikhism
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 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

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.

Each class teacher will determine how RE is to be timetabled across the year. It may be block taught, linked to topics or taught discretely. Time allocation will vary due to the possible cross-curricular nature of the curriculum.

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.

Assessment and Recording of RE

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 original nationally agreed levels.

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

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.

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.

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

At Colehill First School we wish to be an inclusive community but recognise that parents, of course, have the legal right to withdraw their children religious education on the grounds of conscience. However, the right of withdrawal does not extend to other areas of the curriculum when, as may happen on occasion, spontaneous questions on religious matters are raised by pupils or there are issues related to religion that arise in other subjects such as history or citizenship.

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 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.

Responsibilities for RE within the school, (Head teachers and Governors)

As well as fulfilling their legal obligations, the governing body and head teacher should also make sure that:

- all pupils make progress in achieving the learning objectives of the RE curriculum
- the subject is well led and effectively managed and that standards and achievement in RE and the quality of the provision are subject to regular and effective self-evaluation
- those teaching RE are suitably qualified and have regular and effective opportunities for CPD
- teachers are aware of RE's contribution in developing pupils' understanding of religion and belief and its impact as part of the duty to promote community cohesion
- teachers explore how new pedagogies and technology can be fully utilised to support RE learning objectives and promote community cohesion
- clear information is provided for parents on the RE curriculum and the right to withdraw
- teachers are aware that they do not have to teach RE unless specifically appointed to do so
- RE is resourced, staffed and timetabled so that the school can fulfil its legal obligations on RE and pupils can make good progress
- where there are insufficient teachers in a school who are prepared to teach RE, the head teacher ensures that pupils receive their entitlement to RE. In these circumstances, head teachers might wish to seek advice from their LA or SACRE.

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