



# Edgar Sewter Primary School

## Religious Education Policy

Date Agreed by the Governing Body:

Review Date: February 2016

## Religious Education Policy – Edgar Sewter Primary School

*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).*

### Context

Edgar Sewter Primary School is a Community school. We deliver RE in line with the Suffolk Agreed Syllabus (2012). We predominantly 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

### The aims of our RE, supported by 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 Edgar Sewter 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.

### Curriculum and Content

Discovery RE covers all areas of RE for the primary phase, from Foundation Stage through to Year 6. Christianity plus one other key religion in each year group forms the pattern of coverage. The tables below show typical enquiries for each year group. Due to the nature of the intake within the school, which sometimes necessitates having mixed aged classes, it may mean some year groups cover enquiries intended for an adjacent year group. Also, on occasion, alternative plans will be used in place of, or to complement, the Discovery RE programme's medium term plans, when the classteacher and/or the subject leader feels it is appropriate to do so. Generally RE will be taught as a discrete subject unless there are clear links with the corresponding topic for that half-term. It will be at the classteacher's discretion whether RE is taught at a regular time each week or it may be 'blocked' over a number of afternoons.

### Foundation Stage & Key Stage 1

#### **Foundation Stage**

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**

Enquiry	Religions Studied
Does God want Christians to look after the world?	Christianity
What gift would I have given Jesus if I had been born in Halesworth, 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**

Enquiry	Religions Studied
How important is it for Jewish people to do what God asks them to do?	Judaism

Why did God give Jesus to the world?	Christianity
Is it possible to be kind to everyone all of the time?	Christianity
Is it true Jesus came back to life again?	Christianity
Does going to a Mosque give Muslims a sense of belonging?	Islam
Does completing a Hajj make a person a better Muslim?	Islam

## Key Stage 2

### Year 3

Enquiry	Religions Studied
Does celebrating Diwali 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

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
Do people need to go to church to show they are Christians?	Christianity
What is the best way for a Sikh to show commitment to God? (yr5 unit)	Sikhism

### Year 5

Enquiry	Religions Studied
Are Sikh stories important today?	Sikhism
Is the Christmas story true?	Christianity
Do beliefs in karma, samsara and moksha help Hindus lead better lives?	Hinduism
What is the best way for Christians to show commitment to God?	Christianity
How important are the Buddha's teachings? What is 'enlightenment'? (Double unit)	Buddhism

### Year 6

Enquiry	Religions Studied
What is the best way for a Muslim to show commitment to God?	Islam
What matters most to Humanists and to Christians?	Humanism
Is anything ever eternal?	Christianity
Does belief in Akhirah (life after death) help Muslims lead good lives? (Double unit)	Islam
Personal project - Link to sacred texts (Quran & Hadith) and/or Muhammad	Islam

### Organisation

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.

### Differentiation

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 unique needs of the children in their class. To support this differentiation, many enquiries suggest creative learning opportunities that allow children to choose the media and methods with which they work and give them scope to work to their own full potential.

### Assessment

Teachers are eager to ensure children are making progress with their learning throughout their RE. Therefore, each enquiry includes a task to formally assess a child's knowledge of that religion, their 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 contributions to class discussions and annotations from other lessons during the enquiry. Each enquiry in KS1 and 2 has level exemplars for the full range of levels likely for that age group - this supports teachers in making attainment judgements. This process enables teachers to confidently report to parents/carers on their child's attainment and progress.

### 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 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 experiences and good practise; monitoring of progression throughout the school.

### External contributors

RE gives particular opportunities to promote an ethos of respect for others, to challenge stereotypes and build an 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, eg local clergy, local members/speakers from other religions etc, make a valuable contribution to the RE curriculum 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 curriculum.

### The Learning Environment

Establishing a safe, open and positive learning environment based on trusting relationships between all member of the class, adults and children alike, is vital. To enable this, it is important that respect for others' view 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. Sensitive and controversial issues may arise when learning from real-life experience and discussing personal beliefs. Enquiries are presented using a variety of views and beliefs so that pupils are able to learn from 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 children's own expression.

### Contribution to Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

These are areas of a pupil's development to which all subjects are expected to contribute. At Edgar Sewter Primary School, Religious Education plays a part in:

- Developing an awareness of a 'spiritual' dimension to life (personal beliefs, the search for meaning and purpose, the sense of awe and wonder) and in offering opportunities to discuss this area in a structured way (spiritual).
- Providing a forum for pupils to develop and evaluate their own beliefs and values and to examine the beliefs and values others have chosen to live by (moral).
- Encouraging interest in and an understanding of others, respect for those with different beliefs, and a sense of 'community' (social).
- Evaluating the influence of Christianity on daily life in Britain, on the pattern of the year, on public occasions, festivals and ceremonies, architecture, laws, art, music, drama and literature and in considering other cultural and religious expressions in British society, evaluating the riches that diversity offers (cultural).

### Withdrawal from RE lessons

Two provisions of law need to be noted:

- Parents may ask for their child to be totally or partially withdrawn from Religious Education in accordance with the Education Act 1944, sections 25(4) and 30, which was re-enacted in 1988. Reasons for withdrawal do not have to be given and the school must enable parents to exercise this legal entitlement. Parents are asked to contact the Headteacher if they wish to withdraw their child. It is hoped that, in discussing their requirements, an understanding can be reached and arrangements made for alternative Religious Education or other supervised learning.
- Teachers may withdraw from Religious Education. Their classes, however, are legally entitled to Religious Education. The Headteacher is responsible for alternative provision for pupils. Staff are not required to give reasons for withdrawal

### Summary

We aim for Religious Education at Edgar Sewter Primary to be an exciting, relevant learning experience for our children and regard it as an area of the curriculum where values and school ethos 'come alive' in the classroom. We aim to help children develop respect and sensitivity for all people and further their own understand of the importance of religion in today's world.

**Written by Fiona Ridgwell, RE Subject Leader, February 2015**