

Heronsgate School Religion Education Policy

September 2022

Reviewed: September 2023

Vision and Aims for Pupils:

At Heronsgate we are committed to providing all children with invigorating learning opportunities to engage in RE. Religious education enables children to investigate and reflect on some of the most fundamental questions asked by both adults and children. At Heronsgate School, the core purpose of RE is to engage pupils in exploring and responding to challenging questions raised by religion and worldviews, so that they can develop the knowledge, understanding and skills needed to appreciate and appraise varied responses to these questions, including their own.

RE offers distinctive opportunities to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development. RE lessons offer a structured and safe space during curriculum time for reflection. Teaching in RE engages pupils in discussion, dialogue and debate which enables them to make their reasoning clear and which supports their cognitive and linguistic development.

RE makes a key contribution supporting schools to promote 'British values': tolerance, mutual respect between those of different faiths and beliefs, democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty; and to prepare pupils for life in modern Britain.

Curriculum:

All children will have the opportunity to explore and learn about different religion, using the Discovery RE scheme. Discovery RE gives a comprehensive structure for RE across the whole primary school, provides a key enquiry question for each half-term, selects the most appropriate subject knowledge to be taught to enable children to answer the enquiry question and goes on to provide assessment tasks, guidance and attainment descriptors, with exemplification.

Christianity will be taught in each year group, with one other religion selected for each year group, indicated in RE Overview.

The curriculum for RE aims to ensure that all pupils:

Know about and understand a range of religions and worldviews, so that they can:

- describe, explain and analyse beliefs and practices, recognising the diversity which exists within and between communities and amongst individuals;
- identify, investigate and respond to questions posed, and responses offered by some of the sources of wisdom found in religions and worldviews;
- appreciate and appraise the nature, significance and impact of different ways of life and ways of expressing meaning.

Express ideas and insights about the nature, significance and impact of religions and worldviews, so that they can:

- explain reasonably their ideas about how beliefs, practices and forms of expression influence individuals and communities;
- express with increasing discernment their personal reflections and critical responses to questions and teachings about identity, diversity, meaning and value, including ethical issues;
- appreciate and appraise varied dimensions of religion or a worldview.

Gain and deploy the skills needed to engage seriously with religions and worldviews, so that they can:

- find out about and investigate key concepts and questions of belonging, meaning, purpose and truth, responding creatively;
- enquire into what enables different individuals and communities to live together respectfully for the wellbeing of all;
- articulate beliefs, values and commitments clearly in order to explain why they may be important in their own and other people's lives.

Planning and Teaching:

Class teachers are responsible for planning the RE units being taught in their year groups, supervised with support and guidance from Subject Lead/ Year Manager/ Phase Leader. Teachers should follow the Discovery RE scheme,

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with the clear Key Questions at the beginning of each unit/half term. The key question for the enquiry is such that it demands an answer that weighs up 'evidence' and reaches a conclusion based on this. This necessitates children using their subject knowledge and applying it to the enquiry question, rather than this knowledge being an end in itself. Discovery RE focuses on critical thinking skills, on personal reflection into the child's own thoughts and feelings, on growing subject knowledge and nurturing spiritual development.

Planning and teaching follows an enquiry-based approach with a 4-step process:

Step 1 (usually 1 lesson)

Engagement:

The human experience underpinning the key question is explored here within the children's own experience, whether that includes religion or not e.g. a human experience underpinning the question, 'What is the best way for a Sikh to show commitment to God?' is 'commitment', so lesson 1 aims to help all children resonate with the experience of 'commitment' in their own lives. If they can relate to this human experience, they will be better able to understand the world of religion into which the enquiry takes them.

Their personal resonance with this underpinning human experience acts as the BRIDGE into the world of religion (which may be very much outside of their experience). The BRIDGE concept/experience is shown clearly under the Step 1 box on the planning. This guides the teacher as to the focus of Lesson 1, which does not have to include anything explicitly 'religious'

Step 2 (usually the equivalent of 2-3 lessons)

Investigation:

The teacher guides the children through the enquiry, children gaining subject knowledge carefully selected to assist their thinking about the key question. Some of the enquiries have a lot of relevant content so teachers do need to be selective and not try to cover too much. Depth is more important. The acquisition of the factual information about the religion /belief system being studied is important, but not as an end in itself.

Step 3 (usually 1 lesson)

Evaluation:

This lesson draws together the children's learning and their conclusions about the key question of that enquiry. This is an assessment task (the activity sheet and resources are included) which the teacher can assess by using the age-related expectation descriptors at the end of each enquiry. The expectation is that the assessment activity sheets provided will be seen in conjunction with teacher observations of the children's work and responses throughout the enquiry.

Step 4 (usually 1 lesson)

Expression:

Children are taken back to Step 1, their own experience, to reflect on how this enquiry might have influenced their own starting points and beliefs. There is often further evidence for their books produced in this lesson.

The role and responsibility of the subject leader

- To support and guide the classroom practice of teachers and support staff
- To ensure coverage, continuity and progression in planning
- To monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of RE teaching and learning
- To update documentation where necessary
- To prepare and lead training/information sessions

Assessment and Feedback:

The whole learning experience of the class is recorded in a class Discovery RE floor book. There should be a double page completed for each religion unit per half term. Evidence includes the examples of children work through the whole 4-step process (photos, notes recorded during group tasks etc). Marked children worksheets from Step 3 lessons are stored in an A4 envelop for each unit of work.

The expectation is that the assessment activity sheets provided will be seen in conjunction with teacher observations of the children's work and responses throughout the enquiry. The strands of learning are colour-coded in the planning, the assessment activity and attainment descriptors.

GREEN DESCRIPTORS Personal resonance with or reflection on The concept / belief underlying the subject matter of the enquiry Child's own thoughts, opinions, belief, empathy.

BLUE DESCRIPTORS Knowledge and understanding of the subject matter of that enquiry (subject knowledge)

RED DESCRIPTORS Skills of evaluation and critical thinking in relation to the big enquiry question.

Children progress is recorded on track sheets provided for each year group (unit of work/learning objectives).

The legal position of religious education

Heronsgate's curriculum for religious education meets the requirements of the 2014 National Curriculum. It contributes to the children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. RE is not taught to propagate religion in general or a particular religion, it is not to nurture or convert; it is an academic discipline with levels of achievements.

Parents who wish to withdraw their children, because of personal choice or religious affiliation, are permitted to do so, once they have made a formal written request to the school, and this has been agreed by the head teacher and governors. Where the pupil has been withdrawn, the law provides for alternative arrangements to be made for RE of

the kind the parents want the pupil to receive. These arrangements will be made by the parents. A record of withdrawals is kept by the teacher and RE coordinator.

Inclusion and SEND:

All children will be given an equal opportunity to maximise their individual potential; this is regardless of ability, gender, race, religion/beliefs, disability or talent. Activities both within and outside the classroom are planned in a way that encourages full and active participation by all children, matched to their knowledge, abilities, understanding and previous experience.

Lessons will be taught with respect and the tolerance of those with difference faiths and beliefs.

Resources and Displays:

All classes have access to topic books and practical resources for each religion, which are stored in LSB room, in clearly labelled boxes.

The list of online resources is provided on Discovery RE website and available for teachers in the shared RE folder. Samples of children work are going to be displayed in the shared area (each religion taught at Heronsgate on its designated board).

Monitoring:

At the end of a whole unit of work, teachers assess their pupil's skills based on evidence taken from their written work, through observation, discussion or debate. Children are assessed as working towards, working at or working above the age-related expectations. The skills based approach allows us to plan for and assess progression as the children move through the school. A record children's levels are recorded in by the teacher and monitored by the RE Lead. We use these levels as a basis for assessing the progress of the child, and we pass this information on to the next teacher at the end of the year.

An example of work is selected from each lesson and displayed in an RE floor book which is displayed in each class. These demonstrate what the expected level of achievement is in religious education for each age group in the school.