



Motivate and Celebrate Success

Religious Education

at Mount Charles School

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1. The importance of RE to the curriculum

Religious Education is taught in our school because we agree that it makes:

“a major contribution to the education of pupils 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 exploring democracy across the curriculum, the importance of becoming an active citizen and making a positive contribution to the school, local community and the wider world.

The National Association of Teachers of Religious Education (NATRE) have recently published a report detailing and summarising Ofsted comments on RE. They state: “learning in RE helps to underpin the development of respect and tolerance and supports school values and the preparation of pupils for life in modern Britain.”

According to the latest guidance from the government, via the National Curriculum for England, every school needs to have a broad and balanced curriculum that:

- promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, social, mental and physical development of pupils
- prepares pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life

The intent of Discovery RE, and therefore Mount Charles School in employing it is:

“Our belief is that, using an enquiry-based model well, pupils’ critical thinking skills can be developed, their motivation to learn increased, and their knowledge and understanding of, and empathy with people and their beliefs, religious or otherwise, will be enhanced. This approach takes very seriously the philosophy that pupils are free to make their own choices and decisions concerning religion and belief. RE does not try to persuade but rather to inform and develop the skills with which evaluation can take place.”

2. Aims and Objectives

By following Discovery RE at Mount Charles School we intend that Religious Education will:

- adopt an enquiry- based approach, beginning with the pupils' 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 pupils' own spiritual development.

By the time pupils leave our school, they have a strong understanding of their own views and an awareness and empathy of the views of others. They are able to discuss issues, ask questions and know how to answer them. They understand how other people choose to live and to understand why they choose to live in that way. They have developed a religious vocabulary and can interpret religious symbolism in a variety of forms. They reflect on questions of meaning, offering their own thoughtful and informed insights into religious and secular world-views.

3. Teaching and Learning

RE is planned and taught through an enquiry-based approach, encouraging pupils to ask questions and discover through finding answers. Each half termly unit starts with a 'Big Question', such as 'Is the Christmas story true?' and 'Is it good to fast on special occasions?' Each unit then guides the pupils through an enquiry-based learning approach.

The four steps are:

- Step 1: Engagement: the pupils' own human experience is explored to act as bridge from their world (which may or may not include religion) into the world of the religion being studied.
- Step 2: Investigation: over approximately 3 lessons the teacher will guide the pupils to explore and investigate appropriate subject knowledge relevant to that question of enquiry.
- Step 3: Evaluation: An assessment activity enables each child to show their thinking and the depth of critical evaluation.
- Step 4: Expression: This refers the pupils back to the starting point of their own experience and allows them to reflect on whether their findings have influenced their own thinking.

Each year there are three units focused on Christianity and three units exploring a second religion. Across the key stages, pupils will learn about Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism and Islam. The progression map, knowledge organisers and planning are used to ensure skills and knowledge are built on from the previous year and previous religions are revisited.

4. Organisation

Discovery RE is structured to teach Christianity plus one other principal religion in every year group, and enables all six principal religions (Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, Sikhism) to be considered by the end of Key Stage 2.

The coverage across the school is as follows:

Reception - Christianity, Hinduism, Judaism, Islam and Sikhism

Year 1- Christianity and Judaism

Year 2- Christianity and Judaism

Year 3- Christianity and Hinduism

Year 4- Christianity and Buddhism

Year 5- Christianity and Sikhism

Year 6- Christianity and Islam

Whilst this does not cover the religions in the year groups specified in the Cornwall agreed syllabus, it does ensure that all core concepts from the syllabus are covered. At Mount Charles, pupils study a religion in depth in each year group to ensure they retain core curriculum content.

5. Progression

Discovery RE is a comprehensive enquiry-based, teaching programme for Religious Education for Years Reception-6 (4-11 year olds). *Our belief is that using this model well, pupils' critical thinking skills can be developed, their motivation to learn increased, and their knowledge and understanding of, and empathy with people and their beliefs, religious or otherwise, will be enhanced. This approach takes very seriously the philosophy that pupils are free to make their own choices and decisions concerning religion and belief.* (Jan Lever, Discovery RE)

Discovery RE is developed to revisit and develop; critical thinking skills, personal reflection, subject knowledge and nurture spiritual development. Throughout the units pupils are encouraged to apply the knowledge they have learnt about key elements of the religion. By teaching in this way, we will build skills and knowledge progressively. Our pupils will make progress in incremental steps and will have plenty of opportunities to consolidate skills and knowledge they have previously learned.

6. Planning and resources

Discovery RE provides a medium-term plan (MTP) overview with; learning objectives, key lesson ideas and resources to teach the 'Big question' for each unit. In addition, there are knowledge organisers and teacher's resources with background knowledge and information on the subject area. Staff use these alongside the RE progression map and year group MTP to create their detailed short-term plans (STP) and resources, that are modified to meet the needs of their pupils and follow the lines of enquiry the pupils follow.

7. Assessment

We assess pupils' work in RE by making informal judgements as we observe them during each RE lesson. On completion of a piece of work the teacher marks the work and comments as necessary. In addition, Discovery RE provides an end of unit assessment activity which covers the three key areas:

- personal resonance with or reflection on...
- knowledge and understanding of...
- evaluation/critical thinking in relation to the enquiry question.

This is used to recap the knowledge of the unit, demonstrate understanding and ensure pupils are making the expected progress. Reports to parents are completed during the academic year when indicators are made to the individual's progress in this area of the curriculum.

8. Equal Opportunities and Inclusion

All pupils 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 pupils, matched to their knowledge, understanding and previous experience. Planning and teaching of RE will ensure pupils' diverse needs are responded to.

Discovery RE is written as a universal core curriculum provision for all pupils. Inclusivity is part of its philosophy. Teachers tailor each plan provided to their class, differentiating and planning for challenge where necessary. Teachers use the progression map to build in prior learning.

Many enquiries suggest creative learning activities that allow pupils to choose the media with which they work and give them scope to work to their full potential. To further help teachers differentiate for pupils in KS1 and 2 classes with special educational needs, each enquiry has level exemplars for the full range required for that age group.

9. Role of Subject Leader

The leadership of the RE curriculum is the responsibility of the subject leader who:

- * ensures the school has an effective RE curriculum for staff to follow. They ensure staff new to the school, including ECTs understand the RE curriculum and how to deliver it effectively;
- * supports colleagues in their teaching by keeping them informed in current developments in RE primary education;
- * writes a subject action plan, informed by the whole school improvement plan;
- * carries out triangulated monitoring to identify strengths across the school, CPD priorities and inform action planning;
- * delivers and/or sources appropriate training for staff;
- * tracks progress across the school with particular emphasis on identified target pupils;
- * leads planning, preparation and effective execution of specific RE celebration days and/or events;
- * ensures RE resources required to deliver effective class teaching, are looked after and updated/replaced as necessary.
- * plays an active role in the Trust primary RE group and ensures content is disseminated to staff.

Policy Agreed:

Policy Review Date:

