



Elmsleigh

INFANT & NURSERY SCHOOL

Religious Education Policy

‘My religion is very simple. My religion is kindness.’

Dalai Lama

Context

At Elmsleigh Infant and Nursery School, we recognise the important role that Religious Education plays in the personal development of all of our pupils, enabling them to acquire and develop their knowledge and understanding of Christianity and the other principal religions in the United Kingdom.

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).

Through our RE curriculum, we aim to encourage respect for those who hold different beliefs and to help promote the children’s spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. By learning *from* different religions as well as *about* them, children at Elmsleigh are able to reflect on what it means to have a personal faith and to develop their own spiritual knowledge and understanding.

In our school, we recognise the important inter-relationship between pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC), and the leading role in which our RE curriculum plays in some of these areas. The fundamental principles for SMSC are also embedded within our Elmsleigh Core Values, which are reinforced daily and as part of our whole school assemblies and through our RE and PSHE, Relationships and Health Education. These values are: Responsibility, Respect, Compassion, Resilience, Community and Ambition.

At Elmsleigh, we deliver RE in line with the Locally Agreed Syllabus for Derbyshire and Derby City and we use the Discovery RE programme as our scheme of work.

Intent

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 Elmsleigh 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**

Implementation

At Elmsleigh Infant and Nursery School, Religious Education is taught according to the Derbyshire County Council Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education through the scheme of work, Discovery RE. It is recommended that Religious Education be taught for a minimum of 36 hours per year at Key Stage One and, therefore, the time allocated for teaching RE at Elmsleigh Infant and Nursery School is as follows:

EYFS - planned within the EYFS Framework through short sessions and continuous provision.

KS1 – 50 minutes-1 hour per week.

Discovery RE covers all areas of RE for the primary phase, where Christianity plus one other religion is taught in each year group. The grid below shows specific enquiries for each year group.

Foundation Stage 1/2:

Discovery Enquiry	Religions studied:
What makes people special?	Christianity, Judaism
What is Christmas	Christianity
How do people celebrate?	Islam/Judaism
What is Easter?	Christianity

What can we learn from stories?	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 might Christians in my town have given Jesus if he had been born here rather than 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
Are Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur important to Jewish children?	Judaism

Year 2:

Discovery Enquiry	Religions studied
Is it possible to be kind to everyone all of the time?	Christianity
Why do Christians believe God gave 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
How important is it to Christians that Jesus came back to life after His crucifixion?	Christianity
How special is the relationship Jews have with God? OR Does going to a Mosque gives Muslims a sense of belonging?	Judaism Islam
What is the best way for a Jew to show commitment to God? OR Does completing Hajj make a person a better Muslim?	Judaism Islam

Teaching and Learning

We recognise the variety of religious and non-religious backgrounds from which our children come and strive to be sensitive towards this, welcoming the diversity that every child brings. We base our teaching and learning style in RE on the key principle that good teaching in this subject area allows children both to learn about religious traditions and to reflect on what the religious ideas and concepts mean to them.

Our teaching enables children to think about their own views and values in relation to the themes and topics studied in the RE curriculum. Each enquiry based unit in the Discovery RE scheme of work, starts from the children's own life experiences using these as a bridge into the investigation of the religion being studied.

We are also thrilled to have the active support of religious and non-religious members of our local community to support our teaching of Religious Education and, adhering to the current guidelines relating to COVID 19, we will seek to organise visits to local places of worship and invite representatives of local religious groups to come into school and talk to the children when it is safe to do so.

We maintain strong links with our local churches, who visit Elmsleigh on a termly basis and support us during special Christian festivals. This local community are called 'Churches Together'. During Key Stage 1, children visit our local church, St. John's, where the vicar will deliver a service.

During Year 2, the children will be invited to Derby Multi-faith Centre, who will visit the school if there are COVID restrictions in place.

At Elmsleigh, we recognise the importance of teaching in a creative, knowledge-rich, broad and balanced way to aid long-term memory learning. Therefore, our policy is to ensure that Religious Education is taught using art, drama, thinking skills, speaking and listening activities, visits, posters, photographs, videos, ICT use, display work and other active learning strategies in order to achieve such 'sticky' learning.

Pupils with SEN (see our SEN Policy)

We believe that all children have the right to access the RE curriculum, which is why we are, at Elmsleigh, thrilled that 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, each enquiry has exemplars for those children working towards the learning objective, at the expected level for this age group and those working beyond the expected level of achievement.

Assessment

Assessing RE is an integral part of teaching and learning at Elmsleigh and central to good practice. Teachers are eager to ensure children are making progress with their learning throughout their Religious Education and, 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 assessing whether a child is working at the expected level or towards or beyond it. Children are assessed over three aspects of learning:

- a personal resonance with or reflection on the material/religion being studied to answer the enquiry question.
- knowledge and understanding of the material/religion being studied to answer the enquiry question.
- evaluation/critical thinking in relation to the enquiry question

These are tracked throughout the planning stage so that teachers can utilise the appropriate evidence accordingly. In line with non-statutory guidance issued by the RE Council in 2013, descriptors of these aspects utilise age-related expectations of working towards, working at the expected attainment and working beyond.

Recording and tracking progress

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.

A folder of examples of pupils' work, which is designed to help teachers make judgments about attainment and progress, is available in each of the KS1 classrooms.

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.

Resources

We have a wide range of resources, to support our RE teaching, that we continue to develop. Resources are stored outside of the Rainbow Room and should be returned after use. A regular audit of resources will take place by the RE subject lead in order to update our collection.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

We intend that this policy should operate for the next 3 years, and then be fully reviewed by all staff and governors. To ensure that our RE policy is in practice, and to help teachers keep track of their own work and needs for support or training, all staff are asked to share annotated plans for RE with the subject leader each term.

The subject leader's role includes monitoring and evaluation of this policy in practice. We maintain a 'self-evaluation' of our RE work in preparation for any scrutiny.

Self-Evaluation

The subject leader for RE will assess and review the subject's strengths and areas for development on a termly basis, triangulating evidence taken from Learning walks, pupil interviews and a collection of work taken from RE folders.

Staff training and CPD

The subject leader will have access to RE CPD in line with the courses available and will disseminate information accordingly.

Withdrawal

We note the Human Right of parents to withdraw their children from RE and of teachers to withdraw from teaching the subject. We aim to provide an open curriculum, which can be taught to all pupils, by all staff.

Teachers are asked to refer to the head teacher any questions from parents about withdrawals. Requests for full or partial withdrawal from RE should be made in writing to the head teacher and a record kept of them.

Links to other policies and curriculum areas

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.

- Teaching and Learning Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- *SMSC Policy*
- *British Values*
- *Prevent Strategy*

Impact

By the time children leave Elmsleigh, we hope that they have a range of skills and experiences to be able to recall and articulate knowledge and understanding around world faiths and be able to understand some of life's fundamental questions. Through the development of SMSC and our core values, our children should have the foundations to move onto their next educational setting with a strong moral compass and the confidence to share their values.

This policy has been written in conjunction with the Headteacher and RE subject lead, Leanne Pettingale and adopted by the Governors in consultation with the Head teacher, RE subject leader and teaching staff.

Named RE subject leader: Leanne Pettingale

Headteacher: Karen Burton

Date: Sept 2023